



AROUND THE WORLD

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students discover the role that suffrage plays in different forms of government.

MATERIALS

Slips of paper

GET READY

- ✓ Give each student a slip of paper: On a third of the slips should be written, “Democracy,” on another third, “Dictatorship” and on the last third, “Oligarchy.”
- ✓ Have your students divide into three different groups: one “Democracy” group, one “Dictatorship” group, and one “Oligarchy” group. Have each of the three groups meet in a different part of the room.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Remind your students that a democracy is a form of government in which policy is decided by the majority of adult citizen’s votes.
- ✓ Ask your class, *Are you aware that there are many people in the world who don’t live in a democracy? Some people live in countries with other forms of government, such as dictatorships and oligarchies.*
- ✓ Explain that in a dictatorship one person has absolute and complete control over the government; this person, the dictator, cannot be held responsible for what he or she does to the general population.
- ✓ Let your class know that in the case of oligarchies, just a few people make the decisions for everyone.

- ✓ Ask the groups to consider a question like, “What is your favorite movie?” or “What is your favorite color?” Tell them that in a few minutes their group will need to answer the question.
- ✓ Have those students in the “Democracy” group answer the question in a way that allows everyone to share their opinion, such as voting. Provide paper to this group to act as ballots.
- ✓ Randomly select one person in the “Dictatorship” group to be the dictator. Have that student answer the question for the group based on what he/she thinks is best. Make sure the other “Dictatorship” group members remain quiet and do not give their opinion.
- ✓ Similarly, at random select three people in the oligarchy group to answer the question for the entire group. The rest of the group members must remain quiet.
- ✓ Have the groups give their responses to the question.
- ✓ Next, have the groups switch to a different form of government (i.e. dictatorship to democracy, democracy to oligarchy, and oligarchy to dictatorship) and vote on another question. Have the groups switch governments one last time, so each student has experienced each type of government.
- ✓ Discuss with your class the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of governments. Use the discussion questions found on the next page.

**AROUND THE WORLD** (continued)

- ✓ To end the activity, hold a vote on what your class's favorite form of government is. If any students list oligarchy or dictatorship, explain that if the classroom was an oligarchy/dictatorship and you (the teacher) were the leader, then it is likely the vote they just had would have never occurred.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Which form of government allows citizens to have the most input in decision-making?*
 - ★ *Why do you think some countries are democracies and others oligarchies/dictatorships?*
 - ★ *What has this activity taught you about suffrage?*
 - ★ *What has this activity taught you about being an American citizen?*
- ★ *What are the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of governments we examined?*
 - ★ *Which form of government did you like the most? Which one did you like the least?*