"In a democracy, the poor will have more power than the rich because there are more of them, and the will of the majority is supreme."

Aristotle (384 BC – 322 BC), Greek philosopher

1. Democracy Discussion

1. What is democracy? How does it work?
2. Is democracy the best form of government? What are some problems with it?
3. Which are the most democratic countries in the world and why? Which are the least democratic countries in the world and why? What makes a country more or less democratic than another?
4. Would you say your country is democratic? How could it be more democratic?
5. Is democracy only for rich countries? Why or why not? What is the connection between the level of democracy and the level of economic success of a country?
6. Can a government or president that less than 50% of the electorate voted for ever be considered democratic?
7. Isn't democracy just a popularity contest where people vote for the most attractive, charismatic or well-spoken candidate, rather than the candidate with the best ideas? Why or why not?
8. When do you think democracy produced the wrong results?

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2. Democracy Vocabulary

- **representative democracy** (noun) – *a form of democracy where politicians are elected in order to make decisions on behalf of the people who voted for them, or to represent people in the area they were elected from.*
- **direct democracy** (noun) – *a form of democracy, sometimes called "pure democracy", where the public are consulted, often through referendums or meetings, on all decisions made by government.*
- **two-party system** (noun) – *a political system that is dominated by two large parties, where smaller parties struggle to gain influence.*
- **mob rule** (noun) – *a situation in which legitimate authority is lost to a mob of people; an oppressive form of government by the majority against the minority.*
- **minority rights** (noun) – *the protection of groups that form a minority in a society.*
- **demagogue** (noun) – *a leader who appeals to popular desires and prejudices or makes false claims and promises instead of presenting rational arguments and ideas.*

Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun):

1. Switzerland is one of the only countries to practice a form of **direct democracy**. Every decision, local or national, is put to a public vote.
2. In the absence of government authority, the streets descended into **mob rule**.
3. The United States' **two-party system** ensures that the only choice in elections is extremely limited to the centre, and other views from the left or right are silenced.
4. A country in which **minority rights** are not guaranteed cannot be called a true democracy.
5. While having referendums for every new law may seem more democratic, **representative democracy** is simply a much more efficient and cheaper way to make decisions.
6. With his empty promises and dangerous views, he will be nothing more than a **demagogue**.

Democracy vocabulary comprehension questions

1. In a representative democracy, do politicians always represent the people who voted for them? If not, does that mean the country is not democratic?
2. Is direct democracy more democratic than other decision-making processes? What are the pros and cons of direct democracy?
3. Can a country that has a two-party system be considered democratic?
4. Is democracy anything more than mob rule?
5. How can the rights and wishes of the minority be protected in a democracy?
6. Which leaders, past or present, would you describe as demagogues?

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3. Video: The Problem with Democracy

You are going to watch a video by The School of Life called "Why Socrates Hated Democracy."

Watch the video here: https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/esl-conversation-lesson-plan-democracy/

While you watch the video, answer the following questions:

Multiple choice

1. Which civilisation created the idea of democracy?
   a) Ancient Greece ***b) Ancient Athens*** *c) Modern Americans*

2. Who was the founding father of Greek philosophy?
   a) Socrates *b) Plato* *c) Aristotle*

3. How did Socrates feel about democracy according to Plato?
   a) hateful ***b) cynical*** *c) cheery*

4. What form of transport did Socrates compare society to in order to explain his feelings about democracy?
   a) a horse and cart *b) a chariot* ***c) a boat***

Sentence completion

5. Voting is a **skill** that needs to be taught.
6. In 399 BC, Socrates was sentenced to **death** for corrupting the youth of Athens.
7. Socrates believed that only those who had thought about the issues **rationally and deeply** should be able to vote.
8. If voting is not connected to **wisdom**, it could lead to demagoguery.

Short answer

9. What did the demagogue Alcibiades erode? **Basic freedoms**
10. Socrates understood that people seeking election could exploit what? **Our desire for easy answers**
11. Socrates asked people to imagine an election debate between a sweetshop owner and whom? **A doctor**
12. Democracy is only as effective as what? **The education system (that surrounds it)**

4. Democracy Conversation Questions

1. Is majority rule the same as democracy? Why or why not?
2. If democracy simply means that every person has an equal say in the running of the country, does that mean there are no democracies in the world? Why or why not?
3. Is it possible to have a true democracy considering the amount of money spent on elections?
4. What are the greatest threats to democracy?
5. How does the media affect democracy?
6. How has social media affected democracy?
7. What do you think about the idea of random members of the public being selected to be politicians for a certain amount of time as in jury service? Would this be a more democratic form of government?
8. In 1992, after the end of the Cold War, American political scientist Francis Fukuyama declared that history had ended, and liberal democracy had proven to be the ultimate form of government. What do you think he meant, and do you agree with him?

5. Democracy Writing Task

Write about your opinion of democracy. Try to use some of the vocabulary you learned earlier in this lesson. In your answer, you could include some of the following topics:

- What democracy means to you.
- How your country could be more democratic.
- Some of the problems with democracy.

Alternative exam practice question:

Aristotle said that in a democracy, the poor would have more power than the rich because there are more of them. As this is clearly not the case in any country in the world, that must mean there are no democracies in the world. Do you agree or disagree with this?

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