

Lesson Plan

Forms of Government: Introduction

Length

Three 45 Minute periods

Grade Level

High School

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to explain the major differences between different forms of government (democratic/authoritarian, capitalist/communist, left-wing/right-wing, communist/fascist).
- Students will be able to identify the challenges faced by democratic governments.

[Forms of Government: Introduction](#)



[Guided Reading Handout](#)



[Presentation](#)



[Gallery Walk Slides](#)



[Additional Worksheets](#)



Homework

- Students should read and complete Part 1 and 2 of the guided reading handout.

Class One

1. **(5 Minutes) Homework Debrief:** Ask students to share their key takeaways. Potential questions include: What distinguishes democracy from autocracy? What distinguishes a communist system from a capitalist system? What distinguishes left-wing and right-wing ideologies?
2. **(25 Minutes) Activity - Identifying Forms of Government** (Gallery Walk OR Worksheet)
 - Option 1 Gallery Walk: Print the *Forms of Government: Introduction* | *Gallery Walk Slides* out to create a gallery walk. Students should rotate between stations to identify various forms of government. The slides include the following types of government and can be edited as needed to match the needs of the class.
 - Authoritarian v. Democratic
 - Capitalist v. Communist
 - Left-Wing v. Right-Wing
 - Option 2 Worksheet: Have students complete the *Worksheet: Identifying Left-Wing and Right-Wing Governments* (found in the *Worksheet Document*)
3. **(15 Minutes) Class Debrief:** Ask students to share their thoughts on the following questions:

- Why is democracy an attractive form of government? Why is authoritarianism?
- What are some of the underlying factors that might have drawn people to fascist leaders between World War I and World War II? Might some of those underlying factors still exist today?
- Why might people be drawn to the ideology of communism? What problems has history shown related to the implementation of communism?

Homework

- Divide students into two groups. Assign each group one of the learning resources below and have them complete the corresponding section (Part 3 or 4) of the guided reading handout for homework:
 - Group 1: *What Are the Origins of Communism?*
 - Group 2: *What Is Fascism?*

Class Two

1. **(10 Minutes) Homework Debrief:** As a class, ask students to create a working definition of communism and provide 2-3 examples of a leader or country (either historical or contemporary) considered communist. Do the same for fascism.
2. **(15 Minutes) Activity:** Create small groups consisting of students who read both readings. Students will compare and contrast the central tenets of communism and fascism in a Venn diagram. Attached is the list of attributes for the Venn diagram. Students will categorize them as common attributes of communism, fascism, or both. You can create the Venn diagram on a whiteboard, poster paper, or online tool such as Padlet. For each, students should discuss and provide a brief justification for their placement.
3. **(15 Minutes) Response:** Have students examine the completed Venn diagram in their groups. Identify examples of attributes of these forms of government that run counter to democracy and other American values. Have students write a short written response: does one form of government or the other seem to present a greater threat to American values? Why do you say so? Time permitting, have a few students share out.
 - Note: if you are teaching this lesson in the context of a U.S. History course, this is a great time to make a connection to the interwar period.
4. **(5 Minutes) Preview:** As a class, discuss:
 - Why might fascism be an attractive form of government?
 - Why might communism be an attractive form of government?

Homework

- Students will complete Part 5 of the guided reading handout.

Class Three

1. **(5 Minutes) Debrief Homework:** Have students share key takeaways from last night's homework.
2. **(35 Minutes) Democratic Backsliding Op-Ed**
 - Students should reference Laws, Norms, and Democratic Backsliding, paying particular attention to examples of how democracies can backslide.
 - Using *Regions of the World* or a news source, have students choose a country experiencing democratic backsliding. Students should choose a country that is not used as an example in Laws, Norms, and Democratic Backsliding.
 - Assign students to write an op-ed article that describes the backsliding in their chosen country, explains why it is a problem, and proposes a course of action for the country to become more democratic.
3. **(5 Minutes) Wrap Up** - Students will likely need homework time to finish writing their op-eds. At this point, ask students to pause their work and provide a quick preview of what countries they are writing about through a whip-around.

Homework

- Students will finish writing their Democratic Backsliding Op-Ed.

Vocabulary

alliance

an official partnership between two or more parties based on cooperation in pursuit of a common goal, generally involving security or defense.

communism

a political and economic system in which private property is eliminated in favor of common, public ownership of the means of production (such as factories), natural resources, and more, leading to the creation of a stateless, classless society.

cult of personality

the phenomenon in which a public figure, usually a political leader, is presented by their government as an idealized individual or a role model, often through propaganda.

democratic institutions

the organized bodies associated with a democratic form of governance, like freely elected legislatures.

norm

commonly accepted standard of behavior. Because international law is not always binding, international relations is highly influenced by norms.

pandemic

disease outbreak that has reached at least several countries, affecting a large group of people.

radicalization

the process by which individuals come to adopt extreme religious, political, or social beliefs.