

# CONSTITUTE IN INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE HISTORY CLASS

EMERGENCE AND  
DEVELOPMENT OF  
DEMOCRATIC STATES



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## CONSTITUTE IN INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE HISTORY CLASS

This lesson uses *Constitute* as a research tool for International Baccalaureate (IB) Curriculum's World History diploma paper topic 9, **Evolution and Development of Democratic states (1848-2000)**. In studying the emergence of democratic states, students explore how democratic institutions are formed. This lesson asks students to closely examine the constitution of a nation-state (country) for evidence of democratic principles and features. Students share their findings in a student-led small group dialogue.

See an introductory *Constitute* video at <http://bit.ly/constitute-intro>.



# CONSTITUTE

## OVERVIEW

### IB CURRICULUM WORLD HISTORY TOPIC 9

Evolution and Development of Democratic States

- Emergence of democratic states – development of constitutions and electoral systems and the significance/impact of those developments

**GRADES:** 11-12

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- understand democratic principles and features of a democratic state
- research a country's constitution for evidence of democratic features
- evaluate the strength of the principle as reflected in the words of the constitution
- dialogue the essential question in a student-led small group

### MATERIALS

- Student research link(s) for background on chosen country (e.g. CIA's [The World FactBook](#), Economist Backgrounders, etc.)
- Student handouts, "Research Activity: Key Democratic Principles and Features of a Democratic State" and "Small Group Dialogue: Your Turn to Practice Democracy" (p. 7-13)
- Sources (see p. 8-9 for more information)
  - *History for the IB Diploma Evolution and Development of Democratic States (1848-2000)*
  - *Deliberating in a Democracy in the Americas*
  - *Respectful Conversations in Schools*

**DURATION:** 2 class periods (about 90 minutes)

- Day one introduces topic and students' research
- Day two is a student-led small group dialogue

## PROCEDURE

### A. INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY (DAY 1: 10 MINUTES)

- Germany, India, South Africa, Russia – What do these countries have in common? According to each country’s written constitution, they all envision their country’s government as a **democratic state**.
  - The Federal Republic of Germany is a **democratic** and social federal state. (Germany 1949, rev. 2014)
  - WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR **DEMOCRATIC** REPUBLIC (India 1949, rev. 2016)
  - We, the people of South Africa, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic to build a united and **democratic** South Africa. (South Africa 1996, rev. 2012)
  - The Russian Federation – Russia is a **democratic** federative law-governed state with a republican form of government. (Russian Federation 1993, rev. 2014)
- But how do we know if the label democracy accurately describes the framework for government outlined in the rest of the constitution?
- Today’s lesson will look deeper into a country’s constitution to see if there are democratic principles and features supportive of an emerging democratic state.

### B. INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

**Introduce the country that is the focus of this lesson (Day 1: 10 minutes).**

- Country choices suggested in IB World History Curriculum Topic 9 are democratic states with evolving and developing democracies (1848-2000). (Possible example countries: Tunisia, South Africa, Colombia, Ecuador.)
  - Provide historical background on the country’s road to independence and constitution.
  - Display the country’s constitution located on the website, [Constitute](#).
  - Identify and discuss language used to describe its type of government.
  - Today’s essential question: Is this country an emerging democratic state?

**Students search for constitutional evidence of democratic principles and features of a democratic state (Day 1: 30 minutes)**

## PROCEDURE (CONT'D)

- Divide students into four groups. Each group is assigned a democratic principle giving focus to their constitutional search for features of a democratic state.
  - Group A: Rule of Law
  - Group B: Citizen Participation
  - Group C: Control of the Abuse of Power
  - Group D: Human Rights
- Give each group the Key Democratic Principles and Features of a Democratic State handout and relevant group handout (p. 9-13).
  - Read description of assigned democratic principle and key features
  - Explain principle in your own words
  - Brainstorm search topics linked to principle
- Using *Constitute* as a research tool, examine the country's constitution for evidence using specific topic guides
  - Go to *Constitute* at [www.constituteproject.org/search](http://www.constituteproject.org/search)
  - Select your chosen country's constitution from the list of world constitutions
  - Scroll through the left sidebar to identify search topics linked to your democratic principle
  - Click on a subtopic or type it in the search box to find highlighted references
- Complete group handout
  - Paraphrase highlighted references in constitution
  - Discuss the strength of the principle based on evidence in the constitution

### **Prepare for Small Group Dialogue (Day 2: 15 minutes)**

- In research groups, review the evidence of democratic features found in the constitution.
- Evaluate the strength of the principle as reflected in the words of the constitution.

### **Dialoguing on Essential Question: Is this country an emerging democratic state? (Day 2: 30 minutes)**

## PROCEDURE (CONT'D)

- Reorganize class into groups of five; four students each representing their democratic principle (one from each Group A, B, C, and D) and a fifth student who will facilitate the dialogue.
- Introduce dialogue – an exchange of ideas and opinions on important issues – as one way citizens participate in a democracy. In this dialogue activity, you will share your research and discuss the topic of emerging democratic states.
- **DIALOGUE TOPIC:** Emerging democratic states
  - Round 1: What constitutional evidence influences your thoughts on whether a country is a democratic state?
  - Round 2: What are your hopes and concerns about labeling this country as an emerging democratic state?
  - Round 3: Questions of genuine interest
    - ✦ What did someone say that you want to hear more about?
    - ✦ Is there something you wish a person had had more time to talk about?
    - ✦ Do you wonder what other evidence would help determine the development of a democratic state?
- **DIALOGUE GUIDELINES:**
  - Be prepared to participate
  - Refer to evidence from your research
  - Follow procedures for each question round
  - Comments must be
    - ✦ focused
    - ✦ appropriate
    - ✦ respectful
  - Listen to and build on one another's comments
- **DIALOGUE STEPS:**
  - **Step One:** Student leader (SL) asks group to review Dialogue Guidelines and have participants express verbal agreement.
  - **Step Two:** Round 1.
    - ✦ SL reads the question for Round 1 – What constitutional evidence influences your thoughts on whether a country is a democratic state?
    - ✦ Participants reflect and jot down thoughts for 30-60 seconds.
    - ✦ Go around in a circle, giving each participant 1 minute to respond.

## PROCEDURE (CONT'D)

- **Step Three:** Round 2.
  - ✦ SL reads the question for Round 2 – What are your hopes and concerns about this country as an emerging democratic state?
  - ✦ Participants reflect and jot down thoughts for 30-60 seconds.
  - ✦ Go around in a circle in the opposite direction of Round 1, giving each participant 1 minute to respond.
- **Step Four:** Round 3, Questions of general interest.
  - ✦ This is a time for an open exchange of ideas and questions. Participants may refer to notes taken in earlier rounds. SL times this round, approximately 5-10 minutes.
    - What did someone say that you want to hear more about?
    - Is there something you wish a person had had more time to talk about?
    - Do you wonder what other evidence would help determine the development of a democratic state?
- **Optional Quick Write** (3 minutes).
  - ✦ What did you learn from listening to others?
  - ✦ What are you thinking now that you didn't before?
  - ✦ Is there anything you are still wondering about?

### C. LESSON CLOSURE (DAY 2: 10 MINUTES)

- Teacher led class discussion
  - What else do you want to know about your country to answer the essential question, 'Is this country an emerging democratic state?'
  - Students write out three questions and turn them in at the end of class.  
Sample questions:
    - ✦ Have changes to the law (constitution) been proposed?
    - ✦ Do members of all religions have the equal right to practice their faith and/or participate in the government?
    - ✦ In the constitution, some basic human rights aren't listed. Do they still exist?
  - Student-generated questions can be the focus for further research on Topic 9's themes, the country's historical development of democracy and its impact on society.

**EXTENSION ACTIVITY:** Using [Freedom House](#) or other sources, have students research how well the government actually follows the constitutional provisions that relate to the democratic principles. Assign them to write a short response on how well the country upholds democracy in practice.



## STUDENT HANDOUT: SMALL GROUP DIALOGUE

### YOUR TURN TO PRACTICE DEMOCRACY

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Citizen participation encourages dialogue – an exchange of ideas and opinions – on important issues. In this dialogue, you will share your research and discuss the topic of emerging democratic states.

In your group of five, each of the four democratic principles is represented by one student (one from each Group A, B, C, and D) and one student leader (SL) facilitates the dialogue. The SL enforces dialogue guidelines and keeps time during the dialogue without participating in the discussion.

**DIALOGUE TOPIC:** Emerging democratic states

- **Round 1:** What constitutional evidence influences your thoughts on whether a country is a democratic state?
- **Round 2:** What are your hopes and concerns about labeling this country as an emerging democratic state?
- **Round 3:** Questions of genuine interest
  - What did someone say that you want to hear more about?
  - Is there something you wish a person had had more time to talk about?
  - Do you wonder what other evidence would help determine the development of a democratic state?

**DIALOGUE GUIDELINES:**

- Be prepared to participate
- Refer to evidence from your research
- Follow procedures for each question round
- Comments must be
  - focused
  - appropriate
  - respectful
- Listen to and build on one another's comments

**DIALOGUE STEPS:**

- **Step One:** Student leader (SL) asks group to review Dialogue Guidelines and have participants express verbal agreement.
- **Step Two:** Round 1.
  - SL reads the question for Round 1 – What constitutional evidence influences your thoughts on whether a country is a democratic state?
  - Participants reflect and jot down thoughts for 30-60 seconds.
  - Go around in a circle, giving each participant 1 minute to respond.

## STUDENT HANDOUT: SMALL GROUP DIALOGUE (CONT'D)

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- **Step Three:** Round 2.
  - SL reads the question for Round 2 – What are your hopes and concerns about this country as an emerging democratic state?
  - Participants reflect and jot down thoughts for 30-60 seconds.
  - Go around in a circle in the opposite direction of Round 1, giving each participant 1 minute to respond.
- **Step Four:** Round 3, Questions of general interest.
  - This is a time for an open exchange of ideas and questions. Participants may refer to notes taken in earlier rounds. SL times this round, approximately 5-10 minutes.
    - ✦ What did someone say that you want to hear more about?
    - ✦ Is there something you wish a person had had more time to talk about?
    - ✦ Do you wonder what other evidence would help determine the development of a democratic state?
- **Optional Quick Write** (3 minutes).
  - What did you learn from listening to others?
  - What are you thinking now that you didn't before?
  - Is there anything you are still wondering about?

**Source:**

Student led small group dialogue strategy adapted with permission from *Respectful Conversations in Schools*, a protocol developed by Minnesota Civic Youth which allows students to discuss challenging issues while increasing civic knowledge, participation and listening skills, and empathy across differences.

# STUDENT HANDOUT: RESEARCH ACTIVITY

## KEY DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AND FEATURES OF A DEMOCRATIC STATE

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### STUDENT DIRECTIONS

- Get student handout on your assigned principle (p. 10-13).
  - Read description of assigned democratic principle and key features
  - Explain principle in your own words and describe its democratic features
  - Brainstorm search topics linked to principle
- Using *Constitute* as a research tool, search the country's constitution for evidence of the principle using specific topic guides.
  - Go to *Constitute* at [www.constituteproject.org/search](http://www.constituteproject.org/search)
  - Select your country's constitution from the list of world constitutions
  - Scroll through the left sidebar to identify search topics linked to your democratic principle
  - Click on a subtopic or type it in the search box to find highlighted references
- Complete group handout
  - Paraphrase highlighted references in constitution
  - Discuss the strength of the principle based on evidence in its constitution

### Sources:

Principles adapted from Democracy for All, (Silver Spring; MD: Street Law, Inc., 1994) © 2011 *Deliberating in a Democracy in the Americas*, a joint initiative of the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago, Constitutional Rights Foundation, and Street Law, Inc.

Democratic features adapted from Bottaro, J. & Stanley, J. (2016). *History for the IB Diploma Evolution and Development of Democratic States (1848-2000)*. Cambridge University Press.

# STUDENT HANDOUT: GROUP A

## RULE OF LAW

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### **Democratic principle: Rule of Law**

In a democracy no one is above the law, not even a king or an elected president. This is called the rule of law. It means that everyone must obey the law and be held accountable if they violate it. Democracy also insists that the law be equally, fairly, and consistently enforced. This is sometimes referred to as "due process of law."

### **Key features in a democratic state**

A constitution, as the highest law, may embody this principle. This means that the state is governed according to its constitution and laws, and not according to decisions made by leaders or political parties.

### **Explain in your own words:**

### **Research topics:**

### **Evidence in Constitution:**

- What makes this strong evidence for Rule of Law?
- What makes this weak evidence?

## STUDENT HANDOUT: GROUP B

### CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

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#### **Democratic principle: Citizen Participation**

One of the most basic signposts of a democracy is citizen participation in government. Participation is the key role of citizens in a democracy. It is not only their right, but it is their duty. Citizen participation may take many forms including standing for election, voting in elections, becoming informed, debating issues, attending community or civic meetings, being members of private voluntary organizations, paying taxes, and even protesting. Participation builds a better democracy.

#### **Key features in a democratic state**

- role of a citizen in the democratic state
  - universal franchise (all adults have the right to vote)
- freedom of expression, allowing public debate and criticism of government policies and ensuring that the media are free of government control or restrictions
- freedom of association, permitting the formation of political parties and pressure groups
- citizen duties

#### **Explain in your own words:**

#### **Research topics:**

#### **Evidence in Constitution:**

- What makes this strong evidence for Citizen Participation?
- What makes this weak evidence?

## STUDENT HANDOUT: GROUP C

### CONTROL OF THE ABUSE OF POWER

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#### **Democratic principle: Control of the Abuse of Power**

Democratic societies try to prevent any elected official or group of people from misusing or abusing their power. Governments are structured to limit the powers of the branches of government; to have independent courts and agencies with the power to act against any illegal action by an elected official or branch of government; to allow for citizen participation and elections; and to check police abuse of power.

#### **Key features in a democratic state**

A constitution is a basic framework for distribution of power between levels of government (unitary and federal) and branches of government (legislative, executive and the judiciary).

- a “separation of powers” ensuring that the three branches of government do not overlap
  - ✦ Legislature (parliament) makes the laws
  - ✦ Executive (the government) administers the laws
  - ✦ Judiciary (law courts) upholds the laws

A constitution determines how a specific democratic state will operate, democratic institutions may include:

- a legislature elected by universal franchise (all adults have the right to vote) in regular elections by secret ballot
- an independent judiciary
- an executive that can be removed for illegal actions

#### **Explain in your own words:**

#### **Research topics:**

#### **Evidence in Constitution:**

- What makes this strong evidence for Control of the Abuse of Power?
- What makes this weak evidence?

## STUDENT HANDOUT: GROUP D

### HUMAN RIGHTS

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**Democratic principle: Human Rights**

All democracies strive to respect and protect the human rights of citizens. Human rights mean those values that reflect respect for human life and human dignity. Democracy emphasizes the value of every human being. Examples of human rights include freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, the right to equality and the right to basic education.

**Key features in a democratic state**

- civil and political rights
- right to equality
- economic rights
- right to basic education

**Explain in your own words:****Research topics:****Evidence in Constitution:**

- What makes this strong evidence for Human Rights?
- What makes this weak evidence?

## NOTES