

Disclaimer: contents are based on the Alberta curriculum (social studies, grade 6) from 2015.

LTTA SESSION PLAN | Ancient Democracy

OVERVIEW

Students will undergo a broad review of the Iroquois Confederacy and Athenian democratic system, their government and social structures, through a roleplay of each system's decision making process.

Core curriculum objectives

6.2.3 analyze the structure and functions of the democratic system in ancient Athens by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:

- How was the government of ancient Athens structured?
- How did the structure of the government in ancient Athens provide opportunities for citizens to participate in decision making?
- How did identity, status and class structure impact citizenship in ancient Athens?
- How did the social structure of ancient Athens impact its political structure?
- To what extent were democratic ideals of equity and fairness part of the structure of government and society in ancient Athens?

6.2.4 analyze the structure and functions of the Iroquois Confederacy by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues:

- How was the Iroquois Confederacy structured?
- What was the role and status of women within the Iroquois Confederacy?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of consensus as a decision-making model for government?
- How did the Six Nations use the consensus-building process?
- How did the Wampum Belt address collective identity?
- How did the social structure of the Iroquois Confederacy impact its political structure?
- To what extent did the decision-making process within the Iroquois Confederacy reflect democratic ideals of equity and fairness?

Keywords include:

wampum
consensus
direct democracy

Art objectives

Students will use catch phrases and gestures to represent key concepts. Students will mimic the language and mannerisms of different social classes in the two ancient systems, and remain in character for the roleplays.

Keywords include:

Think/Pair/Share - students have a minute to think individually, then share with a partner, and then share with the class their answers to a question
tableau - a frozen scene in drama, often composed of low, mid, high, and extended elements
role play - to act out the characters and setting of a particular, often historical setting
Venn diagram - a diagram showing whether statements belong to one or more classifications

SESSION 1

Plan

Review the Iroquois Confederacy, its concepts, and its structure.

Hook: Iroquois Symbols

Development: Identity Grid

Application: Machine

Closure: People Meet People

Iroquois Symbols

The class divides into groups of 3-5, each receiving a picture of one of the following:

Iroquois flag (Hiawatha Wampum)

Two Row Wampum

Text of the Great Law of Peace

Iroquois Tree of Peace

Canada Flag

NAFTA agreement

Text of Canadian Constitution

Canadian coat of arms

Using textbooks and handouts, students label the different parts of their document with their meaning. Groups then tell the class the key parts of their document, and whether it is Iroquois or Canadian in origin. The class pairs each Iroquois document with the corresponding Canadian document. The class discusses the meaning behind the symbols, and then uses Think/Pair/Share to reflect on why symbols are important to a nation or culture.

Duration: 15 | Materials: textbooks, handouts, pictures of symbols, markers and pencils | Objectives: identity

Identity Grid (Iroquois Nations and Clans)

Students sit throughout the classroom in a large rectangular area. The class divides into 5 columns representing 5 nations:

Seneca “Older Brothers, Keepers of the Western Door”

Cayuga “Younger Brothers, of the west”

Onondaga “Keepers of the Council Fire”

Oneida “Younger Brothers, of the east”

Mohawk “Older Brothers, Keepers of the Eastern Door”

Each nation chants their name and title, and strikes a dramatic pose that represents them. We then layer the chants together, encouraging nations to compete in volume. The class then divides into 3 rows representing 3 major clans: wolf, bear, and turtle, and do a chant and pose. The artist and teacher then lead the columns and rows respectively in starting and stopping their chants.

Once the activity is completed, students receive a nametag on which they write their nation and draw the symbol of their clan. Nametags are colored as follows: wolf in red, bear in blue, and turtle in green. Students keep their nation and clan identity until the end of session 2.

Duration: 20 | Materials: nametags, colored markers/pencils, picture of clan symbols | Objectives: identity, Iroquois society

Machine (Iroquois Society)

The class collaborates to act out a machine representing the different parts of Iroquois society. The artist selects groups of 1-3 to represent each of the concepts below using a repetitive action and chant. Groups combine and synchronize their actions with other groups to form the machine, each link representing a relationship below:

Men selected to 3 Hoyaneh per clan

Women selected to 3 Clan Mothers per clan

Women form Women’s Councils

Men form Men’s Councils

Women's Councils advise Clan Mothers
Men's Councils advise Clan Mothers
Clan Mothers select Hoyaneh
Clan Mothers advise Hoyaneh
Clan Mothers may give Hoyaneh two warnings, replace Hoyaneh third time
Hoyaneh form Grand Council

Duration: 15 | Materials: projection of vocabulary | Objectives: Iroquois society, political system

Machine (Iroquois Political Structure)

The class forms a second machine to represent the function of the Grand Council:

Tuscarora are represented by the Oneida
Mohawk and Seneca (Older Brothers) reach consensus
Cayuga and Oneida (Younger Brothers) reach consensus, or return decision to Older Brothers
Onodaga (Center) give judgement, or return decision to Older Brothers

Duration: 10 | Materials: projection of Iroquois political flowchart | Objectives: Iroquois political system

People Meet People (Iroquois)

Students have a few minutes to imagine a character from the Iroquois Confederacy, by writing answers to the following prompts:

Are you a man or woman, child or adult?
What is your nation, clan, and title? (e.g. Mohawk, Bear, Hoyaneh)
What is one of your responsibilities? (represent Mohawk at Grand Council)
What is one of your concerns?
Who do you talk to about your concerns?
Who makes important decisions? Is it yourself, or someone representing you?
Do you feel the decision making process is fair to you? Why or why not?

The artist will demonstrate a short 2 minute interview with the teacher, by asking and answering the above questions in character. Students then come to the front in groups of 4, with 2 acting as interviewers and 2 as interviewees. We will complete as many interviews as time permits.

Duration: 20 | Materials: character sheet, talking stick/fake microphone | Objectives: identity, roles

SESSION 2

Plan

Dramatic reenactment of the political life of the Iroquois Confederacy.

Hook: Tableau Introduction
Development: Tableau (Iroquois Longhouse)
Application: Roleplay (Iroquois Grand Council)
Closure: Venn Diagram (Iroquois and Canada)

Tableau Introduction

In a circle, the artist introduces the idea of tableau and its components: a low, mid, high, and extension position, and a facial expression. On a sentence prompt everyone strikes a tableau: for example, "You just won the lottery!"

Duration: 5 | Materials: none | Objectives: tableau, role play

Tableau (Iroquois Longhouse)

The classroom is organized into a longhouse with desks in a rectangle, and entrances on either end. Students are given the following scenario:

“Britain’s colonies in America are fighting for their independence. The Grand Council has come to meet today and decide whether the Iroquois will go to war. We live near the colonies, and more and more colonists seize our lands. If we do not go to war, we will continue to lose land to the colonists. But if we go to war, we must choose to side with the British or the colonists. If we win, we could make a treaty to get land back. But if we lose, we may be forced out of all of our land.”

Students divide into groups of 3-5, which are assigned one of the following roles: men, women, Clan Mothers, and Hoyaneh. Groups have a few minutes to discuss the following questions.

In your role, where are you in or by the longhouse? What are you doing?

Do you think the Iroquois should side with the British, the colonists, or remain neutral? Why?

The artist and the teacher assume the roles of the eldest Clan Mother and Hoyaneh to moderate the proceedings, and may freeze the action using sound cues from finger cymbals and flutes. The class practises freezing into tableau. Students then act out the daily life inside and near the longhouse, discussing the scenario. The artist and teacher then freeze the action to select groups to present their thoughts. Written prompts on the board guide the discussion.

Duration: 30 | Materials: cue instruments, background pictures and prompts on projector screen | Objectives: Iroquois politics

Roleplay (Iroquois Grand Council)

Students are divided into Hoyaneh and Clan Mothers, and sit in the longhouse in a circle/rectangle to come to a consensus on whether the Iroquois will go to war. Written prompts will be placed on the board to help guide the discussion. The artist and teacher may freeze the action using their sound cue. Students must remain in character and remember their roles and responsibilities, including the Great Law of Peace. If time remains, students also reach consensus on the symbols that will record their decision on a wampum belt.

Duration: 35 | Materials: cue instruments, background pictures, written prompts | Objectives: consensus

Venn Diagram (Iroquois and Canada)

On pairs of sticky notes of different color, students write down an observation about Iroquois society and government, and its closest parallel in Canadian society and government. They place the sticky notes in one of 3 areas on the board: unique to the Iroquois, shared, or unique to Canada. The artist and teacher read the notes out to the class. The notes will remain on the board to be extended in session 4.

Duration: 10 | Materials: sticky notes, board space | Objectives: reflection, compare Iroquois and Canadian systems

SESSION 3

Plan

Review Athenian democracy, its concepts, and its structure.

Hook: Athenian Places

Development: Reverse Identity Grid

Application: Machine

Closure: People Meet People

Athenian Places

In groups of 3-4 students receive pictures of the following places:

Agora

Bouleuterion

Pynx Hill
Athenian home
Canadian downtown
Canadian Parliament
House of Commons
Canadian home

Using textbooks as an aid, students identify each location and label each place with its function, and the things people might do or say there. Groups then share with the class this information, and decide whether the place is Athenian or Canadian in origin. The class pairs each Athenian location with its Canadian counterpart. The class discusses the importance of each location, and then uses Think/Pair/Share to reflect on who is permitted in each location.

Duration: 30 | Materials: pictures of above locations | Objectives: Athenian political system

Reverse Identity Grid (Athenians)

Students each receive a playing card, their rank identifying them as one of the following: slaves (2-5), metics (6-10), and citizens (J-A). Their card's suit identifies them as follows: men (clubs, spades), women (hearts), or children (diamonds). The class forms an identity grid, with columns representing the demographic categories and rows representing the social classes (slaves at the rear, citizens at the front). The class forms chants for each row and column, but with one important difference: the artist and teacher will refuse to let slaves answer questions or give suggestions, and while all others are allowed to speak, their suggestions will be refused unless they are male citizens. Afterwards, the class shares their experience through Think/Pair/Share.

Duration: 30 | Materials: pack of playing cards | Objectives: Athenian society, fairness

Machine (Athenian Society)

The class collaborates to act out a machine representing the different parts of Athenian society. The artist selects groups of 1-3 to represent each of the concepts below using a repetitive action and chant. Groups combine and synchronize their actions with other groups to form the machine, each link representing a relationship below:

- Slaves owned by Citizens
- Slaves owned by Metics
- Land owned by Citizens
- Metics sponsored by Citizens
- Metics serve in military
- Male citizens serve in military
- Citizens born in Athens
- Boys go to school
- Boys train as soldiers
- Boys grow to Male citizens
- Citizens are drawn to Boule
- Citizens fund Boule
- Male citizens form Assembly
- All go to Agora for business, leisure

Duration: 15 | Materials: projection of vocabulary | Objectives: Athenian society, political structure

Machine (Athenian Democracy)

The class forms a second machine representing the following functions of the political structure:

- Male citizens drawn by lottery to 500 members of Boule
- Boule meets in Bouleterion
- Boule decides on issues to present before Assembly

Male citizens meet weekly in Assembly
Any citizen may speak to Assembly
Assembly votes by show of hands or using black/white stones for no/yes (direct democracy)

A separate machine will be made for the courts:
Citizen brings complaint to Courts
Citizens are selected by lottery as Jury
Defendants deliver timed speeches to Jury
Jury votes on the case

Duration: 10 | Materials: projection of vocabulary | Objectives: Athenian political structure

People Meet People (Athenians)

Students have a few minutes to imagine a character from ancient Athens, by writing answers to the following prompts:

Are you a citizen, metic, or slave?
Are you a man or a woman? Are you a child or an adult?
What is your job? (e.g. miner)
What is one of your rights? Can you go to school? Own land?
What is one of your duties? Do you fight in the military? Attend the Assembly?
Where do you spend most of your time? The Bouleterion? The Agora? Home?
What is one thing you wish you could do?
What is one thing you wish you didn't have to do?

The artist will demonstrate a short 2 minute interview with the teacher, by asking and answering the above questions in character. Students then come to the front in groups of 4, with 2 acting as interviewers and 2 as interviewees. We will complete as many interviews as time permits.

Duration: 25 | Materials: character sheet, talking stick/fake microphone | Objectives: Athenian society, fairness

SESSION 4

Plan

Dramatic reenactment of the political life of ancient Athens.

Hook: Character Walk (Athenians)
Development: Tableau (Athenian Agora)
Application: Roleplay (Athenian Assembly)
Closure: Venn Diagram

Character Walk

Without touching others or talking, students walk around the room in the manner of a character that the artist names. Examples: male slave, metic merchant, member of the Boule, child, woman citizen, woman slave, citizen, citizen serving in the military, etc.

Duration: 5 | Materials: none | Objectives: identity, role play

Tableau (Athenian Agora)

The classroom is organized into 2 buildings and a square represented by desks: a smaller Bouleterion and larger Pnyx Hill, opposite the open Agora. The following scenario is presented:

“Twenty years ago the Persians invaded our homeland. After a long and difficult war, in which even our great city Athens was burnt to the ground, we have finally driven the Persians out of Greece. But the Persians still rule Greek cities on the other side of the Aegean Sea. Fellow Athenians, we must decide whether to continue our war into Persian territory. We need to rebuild our city, and our allies the Spartans have withdrawn from the fight. But if we strike now while Persia is weak, Athens could gain enough wealth and power to make up for what we have lost.”

Students divide into groups of 3-5, which are assigned one of the following roles: citizens, women, metics, children, slaves. The artist and the teacher assume the roles of a venerated playwright and philosopher moderating the proceedings, and may freeze the action using sound cues from finger cymbals and flutes. Students act out the daily life of the Agora, discussing the scenario. On a sound cue, the class freezes into tableau, and the artist and teacher select a group to present their thoughts and discussion in front of the class. Written prompts on the board guide the discussion.

Duration: 30 | Materials: cue instruments, background pictures and prompts on projector | Objectives: Athenian politics

Roleplay (Athenian Boule and Assembly)

Students are divided into members of the Boule and the Assembly, and enter into the Bouleterion and Assembly respectively to make a decision. Written prompts will be placed on the board to help guide the discussion. The artist and teacher may freeze the action using their sound cue. Students must remain in character and remember their roles and responsibilities. Speeches are begun by saying “Who wishes to address the Assembly...”. At the end, students carry out a vote by show of hands. If time is available, students will vote using colored “stones” instead.

Duration: 35 | Materials: prompts, timer, box, colored tokens | Objectives: direct democracy

Venn Diagram (Athens and Iroquois combined)

On a sticky note, students write down one observation about Athenian society and government. They place the sticky note in one of 3 areas on the board: shared with the Iroquois, shared with Canada, shared with all, or unique to Athens. The artist and teacher read the notes out to the class.

Duration: 10 | Materials: sticky notes | Objectives: reflection, compare democratic systems