

Pericles | Lesson Plan

How does democracy afford citizens great freedom yet great responsibility?

Students will learn about Pericles, an elected official from Ancient Athens, Greece. They will learn that in a democracy, citizens must be informed participants, meaning that freedom requires responsibility and work.

Learning Objectives:

- Explain the concept of democracy in the context of ancient Athens, emphasizing the idea of citizens participating in decision-making processes.
- Analyze civic participation by exploring the roles and responsibilities of citizens in Athens, Greece.
- Compare and contrast the democratic principles of ancient Athens with contemporary democratic systems to develop a broader understanding of the evolution of democratic ideals.
- Describe democratic values of freedom and responsibility, taking into account how these principles inspire responsible citizenship today.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Civic duty:** Responsibility to actively participate in one's community and government.
- **City-State:** Independent city with its own government.
- **Statesman:** A political leader or elected official in the government.
- **Democracy:** A government run by citizens' voting decisions or elected officials.

Educational Standards: CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.R.7, CCRA.W.8, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.L.6

Academic Subject Areas: Biography, Western Civilization, Civics

What You'll Need

- Video: *Pericles: The Greek Statesman* (Watch [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *Pericles: The Greek Statesman* (Click [Here](#))

Lesson Plan (45 minutes)

Warm-Up: (10-15 minutes)

1. Open the lesson with an example of democracy. Present students with an option, such as new chairs for the classroom or new water fountains for the school building, and have them vote on which option they think the school should implement.
2. After students have voted, facilitate a class discussion on what was fair and unfair about this process. Brainstorm why it is important for students to be a part of the



decision-making process and what responsibilities it requires to cast an informed vote. Some guided questions could include:

- Should kindergartners be allowed to vote for the type of chairs in a 5th-grade classroom? Should 5th graders be allowed to vote for the type of chairs in a kindergarten classroom? Why or why not?
 - How do you think the needs of kindergartners and 5th graders differ when it comes to classroom chairs? Should these differences affect who gets to vote on this issue?
 - Should students who use the water fountains the most have a bigger say in the decision? Why or why not?
 - Should teachers and staff have a vote in the decision about new water fountains, or should it be just students? Why or why not?
3. Introduce the vocabulary at this time, fostering connections between the lesson illustration and the history of democracy.
 4. Transition to introducing the video by connecting this experience to Pericles and the democracy of Athens, Greece, in 431 BC. Prime students' understanding of the new information in the video by explaining that our democratic principles of today are inspired by the democracies of ancient Greek city-states.

Watch & Complete: (20 minutes)

1. Hand out the worksheets to the students. Quickly review the worksheet with the students so they know what to listen for.
2. Play the video for the class.
3. Pause after key sections to ensure comprehension and help students answer pertinent questions as they watch.
4. After watching the video, have students complete the Making Connections section in small groups. Invite students to share their results with the class.

Wrap-Up: (10 minutes)

1. Conclude with a brief recap of how democracies work, emphasizing the importance of being educated civic participants in one's local government.
2. Ask reflective questions to assess understanding:
 - What does "freedom isn't free" mean in your own words?
 - How does living in a democracy help everyone to thrive and be the best they can be (like the Athenians)?
3. Collect the worksheets for assessment or use them to guide further discussion.

Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15-20 minutes)

Distribute the worksheet and allow students to complete it while they follow along with the video.