Grade Four

Standard 6: Government

**Step 1: Big Question**

Democracy: Is it possible?

**Step 2: Goals and Objectives**

Goals:

- Students demonstrate an understanding of the voting process.
- Students analyze different parts of a democratic society.
- Students demonstrate an understanding of what the government's role is in their lives and how they are held accountable to us.

Objectives: Students will…

- Participate in a mock election.
- Write a letter to a government representative on an important issue in their life.
- Weigh the pros and cons of a democratic society.
- Define the different roles of the government and what a day would look like with various parts of the government control and sanctions absent.
- Create a Venn Diagram comparing democracy and dictatorship.
- Define the differences between political parties.

**Step 3: Inquiry Questions**

- How do we elect government officials for our country?
- What is an issue that our society is faced with that affects me?
- How did our nation really come to be free?
- What does it mean to be a free nation?
• What benefits and disadvantages are there to being in a democracy?
• What does the government do for me?
• What is a dictatorship?
• Is the statement ‘All men are created equal’ from the Declaration of Independence true?
• What are the beliefs and values of the democrats, republicans and third party members?

Step 4: Resources

• 4th grade text book
• Count on me video on voting 20 minutes
• Declaration of Independence video 24 minutes
• Local government officer speaker
• Internet

Step 5: Assessment

My overall assessment strategies for this unit will be on an informal level. Many of the activities that will happen for this unit are based on group work and class wide discussions, so I will assess the students based on their ability to write informal summaries of what happened. The mock election, pros and cons of democracy and Venn Diagram activities will allow for students to work as a class to come to new understandings. Some possible reflective questions for each of the lessons could be:

• What do you think is fair and unfair about the voting process?
• What do you feel is the most positive and negative thing about democracy? Why?
• What were some of the similarities and differences between the two forms of government, why are they significant?

For the final assessment of the unit, students will have an option of what they will do for their final project. The project needs to somehow answer the question “Democracy: is it possible? Students will have a choice of what to do for their final project and will be encouraged to come up with their own ideas (ideas must be okayed by the teacher). The options that I will present to the students are a brochure, newspaper page, recipe, menu, poster, essay, imovie, oral presentation or advertisement. The final project will be assessed based on the rubric provided, titled Democracy: Is it possible? Final Project Rubric.

**Step 6: General Lesson plans**

**Day One:** Introduction to the unit, all day with explanation during last 10 minutes of the school day. What will happen is all the students with blonde hair and blue eyes (BB’s) will be treated better than the rest of the students. The BB’s will be able to line up first, get longer water breaks, choose the free choice activities for the class and not have to take any quizzes for the day. When students ask why the BB’s are getting special treatment I will tell them that the BB’s are just lucky I guess. If they ask why the BB’s are getting special treatment, I will say because they are blonde with blue eyes. Any protesting done by other students will result in being last in line ect. During the social studies portion of the day students will be asked to choose a topic that they are passionate about (saving the rainforest, water conservation, smaller class sizes ect) and write a letter to their local representative. Then, at the end of the day we will discuss how this made everyone feel, pointing out if they were getting the special treatment or not. This is the
lead into democracy and why our nation felt to have a democratic society, so all people are treated fairly.

**Day Two:** (40 minutes) Forming of the constitution. Watch Declaration of Independence video (24 minutes). Read portion of text relating to the constitution and talk about any differences from the video and reading. Talk about the phrase “all men are created equal” and decide if this is a true statement.

**Day Three:** (90 minutes) Voting. Count on me video (20 minutes) Draw out of a hat to choose different roles in the voting process and hold mock presidential election in class. Roles to be filled, 2 candidates, 2 running mates, 2 campaign managers, 6 assistants, 1 election official, the rest of the class are citizens. The candidates will have to take opposing positions on the issue of school uniforms. The running mates will have to help the candidates write the speech. The campaign manager will help to come up with a slogan and theme for the posters. The assistants will help make the posters. The voting official will create a private voting area and fair ballot. The citizens will research the two parties represented and make an informed decision after hearing the campaign speeches.

**Day Four:** (90 minutes) Government and their role. Speaker from local office come in and talk about the different things that they help run in our community. Have students break up into 4 groups and research how trash disposal, water, food safety, road maintenance is controlled and come up with a solution to who would run these areas of our lives if there wasn’t a government. Solution will be presented the following day, students will be encouraged to create a poster or sample flyer for the solution.

**Day Five:** (60 minutes) wrap up research and solution to a day without government and present ideas to the class.
**Day Six:** (30 minutes) Talk about what a democratic society is and make a list of what it entails. Do the same process for a dictatorship (students will have text books and internet printouts to help them come up with the answers). As a class we will make a Venn Diagram to show the similarities and differences of the two governments and students will be able to make a personal decision of which style they like better.

**Day Seven:** (45 minutes) Students will have 2 work days to work on their final project. The project has to somehow answer the question if democracy is possible. Possible choices for a project medium could be a brochure, newspaper page, recipe, menu, poster, essay, imovie, oral presentation or advertisement. Students can choose to do a different project, but it must be approved by the teacher first.

**Day Eight:** (45 minutes) Work on final presentation

**Day Nine:** Presentation day, each student will have 3-8 minutes to present. Final projects will be graded according to the attached rubric.