

INDICATORS OF DEMOCRATIZATION
<b>SS.912.CG.4.4</b> Identify indicators of democratization in foreign countries.

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2023 BENCHMARK UPDATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Updated from SS.912.C.4.4               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Changed from “<del>Compare</del> indicators of democratization in <del>multiple</del> countries.” to “<u>Identify</u> indicators of democratization in <u>foreign</u> countries.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Depth of Knowledge Changes within Benchmark               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Changed from “Compare” to “Identify”</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Addition of Benchmark Clarifications               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Benchmark clarifications are an addition to the 2023-2024 high school civics and government benchmarks. Benchmark clarifications are listed in the lesson summary below.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# Essential Teacher Content Background Information

*[Teacher Content Notes Not Appropriate For Student Use]*

**This section addresses the following topics:**

1. The Process of Democratization
2. Indicators of Democratization
3. Applying the Indicators: A Case Study

## 1. The Process of Democratization

“Democratization” is the process by which a country changes from a non-democratic form of government to a *more* democratic one. Indicators of democratization include: free and fair elections, active civic participation, the protection of human rights, and the rule of law. Nations that undergo democratization can begin as any form of government from authoritarian dictatorships to monarchies. Sometimes democratization happens very quickly, while other times countries make slower progress in their transition.

What motivates a country to begin the process of democratization may be a result of many factors. Sometimes the motivation comes from the citizens living within the country. For example, dissatisfaction with current governments and practices may lead to an internal rise in political opposition and pro-democracy protest movements. This can cause a more radical transformation toward a democratic government. Other times the move toward democratization is inspired by new generations of leadership willing to lead the country through more gradual reform. The motivation that pushes a country toward democratization may also come from external factors. Oftentimes, a country's ability to participate in international organizations, establish diplomatic relations, and garner economic trading partners is contingent on the presence of these democratization indicators. These motivators often work in combination, as they did in both the communist Soviet Union and apartheid-era South Africa in the 1980s.

Once a country begins moving towards democratization, a key step is establishing or revising a constitution. A written document that guarantees fundamental rights to citizens, establishes the principle of rule of law, and sets up an elected government that is transparent and accountable to the people is crucial for the continued success of any democracy. Other key components include ensuring the creation of an independent judiciary, ensuring the military is under civilian control, and fostering a civil society open to free speech, free press, and free assembly. Structures need to be in place for free and fair elections and peaceful transfers of power.

An important thing to understand is that democratization is not a single event or destination on a timeline, but rather an ongoing process that requires active civic engagement, accountability of elected officials, a free press serving as a check on the government, and more. It is possible for even the most democratic of nations to backpedal into authoritarianism if the indicators of democratization begin to erode. It is why leading researchers will often use categories for countries such as “full democracy”, “flawed democracy”, “hybrid regime” “partial democracy” and “authoritarian”.

## 2. Indicators of Democratization

When measuring the democratic health of a foreign country, there are numerous indicators of democratization that may be examined. Four of the essential indicators include:

- A. Free and Fair Elections: A system with competitive elections, universal suffrage, voting that is free of intimidation and coercion, a transparent electoral process, and respect for the outcome of the election by the ruling authorities
- B. Civic Participation: High levels of active civic participation, including voter turnout
- C. Protection of Human Rights: Safeguards for natural and individual rights, respect for minority rights, and the presence of due process of law
- D. The Rule of Law: Laws are applied consistently, fairly, and impartially, the government and elected officials are accountable to the law, and an independent judiciary is able to act as a check on executive and legislative authority

Additional factors include political pluralism, the existence of and respect for robust civil liberties, separation of powers, and a free press.

The process of democratization is complex. While no single measure can fully capture everything, policymakers and the international community use these indicators to assess the health of democracy in a given country, or to monitor a country's progress on the road to democracy and help identify areas that may require improvement. No two countries will travel the same path towards democracy. Researchers often use a combination of these indicators to gain a comprehensive understanding of the health of a country's democratic institutions.

### **3. Applying the Indicators: A Case Study**

If using the indicators of democratization to evaluate the countries of the world in the year 2022, the following highlights about the state of democracy around the world are as follows:

- The biggest challenge to democracy was Russia's invasion of Ukraine
- Russia recorded the steepest decline of any country as they cracked down on dissent, stepped up oppression, and slid toward dictatorship
- The return of individual freedoms that had been restricted during COVID-19 lockdowns had a positive impact on democratization
- More than half of the countries in the world either stagnated or declined
- Western Europe is the region with the most "full democracies"
- Nordic countries occupy five of the top six spots if ranking democracies
- Chile, France, and Spain moved up to a "full democracy" category
- Papua New Guinea and Peru were downgraded from "flawed democracies" to "hybrid-regimes"
- The biggest improvement score was in Thailand, where space for political opposition opened up
- The U.S. retained its score

## Lesson Summary

BENCHMARK		
SS.912.CG.4.4 Identify indicators of democratization in foreign countries.		
BENCHMARK CLARIFICATIONS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Students will recognize indicators of democratization as a system of free and fair elections, active civic participation, the protection of human rights, and the rule of law.</li></ul>		
FLORIDA CIVIC LITERACY EXAM COMPETENCY CONNECTION		
<b>Competency 1:</b> Understanding of the basic principles and practices of American democracy and how they are applied in our republican form of government		
OVERVIEW		
In this lesson, students will identify indicators of democratization and apply those indicators to an evaluation of foreign countries.		
ESSENTIAL QUESTION		
What factors indicate democratization in a country?		
GOVERNMENT CONTENT VOCABULARY		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>civic participation, democracy, democratization, forms of government, free and fair elections, human rights, rule of law</li></ul>		
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES		
Close reading of text	Group research	Report card activity
MATERIALS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>President Ronald Reagan Clip: Tear Down This Wall video (external link)</li><li>Tank Man   Story Of Historic Tiananmen Square Photograph In China 1989 video (external link)</li><li>United States' Constitutional Republic Infographic (optional)</li><li>Introduction to Democratization reading</li><li>Democratization Report Card Activity Instructions slides</li><li>Democratization Report Card Activity</li><li>Student digital devices</li></ul>		
B.E.S.T. STANDARDS		
The grade in which this lesson is taught will determine the specific B.E.S.T. standards correlation. Thematically, this lesson aligns to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ELA.C.4.1 Researching and Using Information</li><li>ELA.R.3.2 Paraphrase and Summarize</li></ul>		

- ELA.V.1.1 Academic Vocabulary

## Suggested Student Activity Sequence & Pace

DAY	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE
DAY 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Begin the lesson by having students watch the following two video clips that relate to major moments for democracy in world history: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <a href="#">“President Ronald Reagan Clip: Tear Down This Wall”</a> in which President Reagan demands that the losing side of the Cold War, the Soviets, remove the Berlin Wall separating communist east Berlin from democratic west Berlin.</li> <li>■ <a href="#">“Tank Man   Story Of Historic Tiananmen Square Photograph In China 1989”</a> in which individuals reflect on the pro-democracy protest in China and the famous image that captured the world’s attention.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Have students identify similar themes in the two videos. Discuss.</li> <li>3. Explain to students that throughout world history, nations across the globe have often worked to change their form of government in attempts to become more democratic. The United States has entered wars alongside nations for this cause and used foreign policy tools at our disposal to help promote and support nations trending towards democracy.</li> <li>4. Ask students: If a nation wants to become ‘more democratic’ what would help us identify if they have achieved this goal? What elements would have to be in place in their government and society in order to be considered a free democratic nation?  <b>Teacher Note:</b> As you review answers students come up with, you may want to project the “United States’ Constitutional Republic Infographic” from SS.912.CG.3.1 to remind students of the essential elements of our constitutional republic.</li> <li>5. Explain to students that in this lesson, they will examine more closely the indicators of democratization and apply those indicators to an evaluation of foreign countries.</li> <li>6. Distribute the “Introduction to Democratization” reading.</li> <li>7. Read the handout together as a class, modeling text marking strategies as you progress through the text.  <b>Teacher Note:</b> Ensure students either take notes or mark the four indicators of democratization mentioned in the text.</li> <li>8. Next place students into pairs.</li> <li>9. Explain to students that they will now apply their knowledge of the indicators of democratization by evaluating a foreign country.</li> <li>10. Project slide 1 of the “Democratization Report Card Activity Instructions”.</li> <li>11. Either have pairs select a country of their choosing or assign each pair a country.  <b>Teacher Note:</b> You may also change the countries on the list if desired.</li> <li>12. Distribute the “Democratization Report Card Activity” to each student.</li> <li>13. Review the handout with the students. Explain to students that in the left column are listed indicators of democratic health: 1). ‘Elections and Governance’, 2). ‘Civic Participation’, 3). ‘Human Rights’, and 4). ‘The Rule of Law’. Each row outlines the specific qualifications for meeting that indicator. Explain to students that using the websites provided, they will research answers to the questions in each row. Based on the information they find for their country, they will circle that box if the answer to the question is ‘yes’. If the answer is ‘no’, they will draw an X over the box. Then, in the far right column, they will total the number of points for each category based on how many ‘yes’ questions they circled in that row. Have students record their notes in the evidence boxes listed as they research.</li> <li>14. Use slide 2 to review with students the websites they should be using for their research.</li> </ol>

Navigate them together first if necessary.

15. Provide students time to research and complete their report card.
16. Walk around, checking in with each pair to ensure they understand the task and are making progress with their research.
17. Once all groups have finished researching each of the indicators, bring the class back together.
18. Have students add the points from the far right column in order to get a final total.
19. Project slide 3 and have students use the scale to assign their country a final grade.
20. Lead a review of the activity, calling on each group to share their country and what indicators their country did well in and did poorly in, ending by sharing the letter grade their country earned.

**Teacher Note:** The Democratization Report Card Activity research, completion, and group discussion will take you beyond Day 1 to however many days you deem necessary.

## Government Content Vocabulary

Word/Term	Definition
<b>civic participation</b>	individual participation in issues of public concern
<b>democracy</b>	a form of government in which political power is held by the people
<b>democratization</b>	the introduction of a democratic system or democratic principles
<b>forms of government</b>	the way a government is structured and operates
<b>free and fair elections</b>	an election free of coercion and characterized by genuine choice
<b>human rights</b>	the right to “have”; afforded to all people despite age, race, sex, religion, ethnicity, or any other status; subset of natural rights; often provided by governments and may change over time
<b>rule of law</b>	the idea that those who govern must also follow the same laws as everyone; no one is above the law



### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Florida Department of Education: Florida Civic Literacy Exam Homepage](#)

Florida Department of Education's Civic Literacy Reading List

- N/A

### ANSWER KEYS

N/A

### SOURCES

Background on democratization:

<https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/dilemma-democratization-fragile-states>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/democratization>

<https://gsdrc.org/document-library/processes-and-mechanisms-of-democratization/>

Freedom House: <https://freedomhouse.org/explore-the-map?type=fiw&year=2023>

CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/>

U.S. Department of State Country Reports of Human Rights Practices:

<https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/>

Economist Democracy Index: <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2022/>

President Ronald Reagan Clip: Tear Down This Wall video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WX00QkvK-mQ>

Tank Man | Story Of Historic Tiananmen Square Photograph In China 1989 video:

[https://youtu.be/DpFjw6b\\_yak](https://youtu.be/DpFjw6b_yak)