

University of Virginia Center for Politics



Democracy Corps Lesson Plan 1: What is Government?

“If students are going to embrace their civic responsibilities, it is critical that they understand why we have a government and what it demands of its citizens.”

—Dr. James Huneycutt, Social Studies Teacher and Department Chair

Purpose:

This lesson is a part of YLI’s Democracy Corps service learning program. It defines the term “government” and challenges students to explain why people need a structured government.

Materials:

- Novel: *The Lord of the Flies By William Golding*
Chapter 1 (excerpt)
Chapter 11 (excerpt)
OR
- Video: *The Lord of the Flies* (1990) R-rated. Castle Rock Entertainment/Columbia Pictures
Clip 1: First 18 minutes
Clip 2: Last 14 minutes
- Student Deliberation Guidelines
- Student Guide 1: *Lord of the Flies*

Central Questions:

What is government?

Why is it necessary?

Procedure:

1. Warm Up - Present the scenario below and brainstorm answers in small groups. Imagine all the adults vanish from the school building and the students are left in charge.
 - Who would decide the rules for the school?
 - How would decisions be made?
 - Who would be sure the rules were followed?

Record student answers. Inform students that they are about to read/view a situation close to what they just imagined. Ask them to pay close attention to how the boys organize themselves, how they pick a leader and how they make decisions.



2. View movie clip one or read the Chapter 1 excerpt beginning with the passage “Signs of life were now visible on the island.” Stop at the end of the meeting on the beach.
3. Pause and describe the middle of the story as a battle for control between the two tribes. Jack’s tribe, the Hunters, stop following the rules and over time become violent. Now the tribes are in a struggle for the most valuable item on the island, Piggy’s glasses.
4. View movie clip two or read the Chapter 1 excerpt beginning with the passage “They set off along the beach in formation” and stop at the end of the chapter.
5. Distribute Student Guide 1:
Lord of the Flies and ask students to complete.
6. Close session with class deliberation.
 - Deliberate
Introduce and discuss **Deliberation Guidelines** with students.
Use the questions below to complete the first Democracy Corps deliberation.
 - Questions:
Based on the examples of government in this story, which type of government is more effective? Why?
 - Differentiation
Ask students to read the entire novel.

Lord of the Flies

Step 1

Answer the following questions in small groups.
Be prepared to share your answers with the class.

1. Give a general overview of what happened, from beginning to end, to the boys on the island.

2. What were some of the rules at the beginning of the story?

3. Why was it important for the cadets to have rules to follow?
Why is it important that society have rules to follow?

4. What is government? What is its purpose in society?

5. Do we need government? Why or why not? Explain your answer.

6. What do we call the type of government on the island when Ralph was the leader?
What do we call the type of government under Jack?



Student Deliberation Guidelines

1. Bring a copy of the text or the deliberation questions with you to reference during the discussion.
2. Share your ideas often.
3. Be respectful of your peers' views and opinions by listening AND not criticizing other students for differing responses.
4. When discussing information from a text, support your ideas with references from the text.
5. Ask questions during the seminar that are related to the discussion.
6. Speak in a conversational tone.
7. When speaking to your peers, use their names.
8. Recognize that many times, there are no "right" or "wrong" answers.