

Understanding Democracy

Suggested Duration: 60 minutes

Learning Objectives

- ▶ To find out what democracy is
- ▶ To discuss our role in a democratic society

Key Words

- ▶ Democracy, equality, rights, responsibilities, human rights, demos, kratia, civil life

Islamic Values

Islam teaches us to respect all human beings equally, and that everyone has equal rights to determine how they live their lives. Islam encourages us to take part in decision making and consultation, especially in important matters.

Citizenship Values

To be good citizens, we are encouraged to take part in local and national elections and to uphold everybody's human rights.



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M (B)



Resources

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.2001:
Lesson Objectives

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.2002:
Democracy Factsheet

Activities

Ask some quick questions to recap the last lesson.

Share the lesson objectives.

A Starter Activity

Ask pupils to discuss the following scenario:

'A group of friends meet after school – it's summer and the evenings are light. They want to play a game of some kind. "Let's ride our bikes and practise our jumps," says one. "I'd rather play football," says another. "I'd rather just hang around, I'm tired," says a third. No one can decide what to do.'

Ask pupils what should happen next. How would they decide what to do now? Here are some possibilities you can discuss:

- A They all go home because they can't agree.
- B They all do what the most popular guy in the group wants (though he's the only one who wants to ride his bike).
- C They work out a fair way to decide together what to do.

Ask pupils if they can think of any other options.

Ask them why Option A is not a good reaction to the situation. Is it a fair option?

Ask pupils what the advantages and disadvantages of Option B are. Are there more advantages or disadvantages?

Ask them what they think of Option C. What is the fairest way to make a decision of this kind? Some of the pupils might say 'to take a vote' or 'to go with the majority' is the fairest way. Ask them for their reasons. What happens when people vote for one thing but the decision goes the other way? Is it fair for them to pull out or should they stick to the decision which the majority has made?

Now emphasise that this is the fairest option, as people were free to give their opinion and the decision was made by a majority. Explain this is how adults vote to elect a government and it is called 'democracy'.

B Development

Activity 1: Democracy Factsheet

Hand out Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.1802 and explain facts about democracy using the following information:

The word democracy comes from two Greek words, demos (people) and kratia (power, rule).

Although there are different ways of organising democracy, for us here in the United Kingdom democracy means that citizens over the age of 18 have a right to vote to elect their local and national governments, which run the country and pass laws on their behalf.

These elected members, known as MPs (Members of Parliament), uphold our human rights and try to make sure we have the freedom to go about our lawful business without interference.

They are our representatives in the Houses of Parliament – this is why it is also known as the House of Commons.

Activity 2: Voting and Democracy

Explain that Islam teaches us a lot about the rights of parents, relatives, neighbours, poor people, the sick and even animals. In Islam these rights are called 'huquq'.

Ask pupils what the rights and responsibilities of a citizen in a democratic society are.

Take quick feedback, for example:

- ▶ to respect the law
- ▶ to respect other people's opinions
- ▶ to vote (when 18 years old)
- ▶ to defend your country and its interests
- ▶ to follow your religion and let other people follow theirs.

Ask pupils what their rights and responsibilities as Muslims in a democracy are. Take feedback and stress the above.

Explain that as fellow citizens they have a **right to vote**, and they have a responsibility to vote, but like all citizens they do not have to vote as it is not a duty.

Activity 3: Multiple-choice Questions

Ask the following multiple-choice questions:

- 1 Who lives at number 10 Downing Street?
 - a The Prime Minister
 - b The Queen
 - c The Pope

Answer: a
- 2 Who runs the country?
 - a The Prime Minister
 - b The Queen
 - c Members of Parliament and other government officials (MPs)

Answer: c
- 3 If you disagree with a government decision or policy, should you:
 - a try to blow up Parliament like Guy Fawkes?
 - b demonstrate on the streets?
 - c work to get them voted out at the next election?

Answer: b and c
- 4 Who makes the laws that govern our country?
 - a The Prime Minister
 - b Parliament
 - c The Queen

Answer: b
- 5 If the government tries to pass an un-Islamic law, do you:
 - a demonstrate peacefully on the streets?
 - b quietly obey it and try to get change through democratic means?
 - c challenge it and quote the Human Rights Act?

Answer: a, b and c
- 6 British democracy is:
 - a rule by the people
 - b rule by one person
 - c rule by Mickey Mouse

Answer: a
- 7 Democracy promotes:
 - a human rights
 - b cruelty
 - c intolerance

Answer: a

Resources

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.2003:
Multiple-choice Questions

Resources

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.2004:
Feedback

Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.2005:
Follow-up Worksheet

C Plenary

Recap the lesson by emphasising that we have learnt today that:

- ▶ Britain is a democratic country, where people choose their representatives, from whom the government is formed.
- ▶ Democracy is a Greek word, meaning 'people's power'.
- ▶ As Muslims it is our right and responsibility to take part in decision making and vote but, like all citizens, it is not our duty. We have the right not to vote.
- ▶ People must be 18 years old before they can vote.

Ask pupils to complete Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.2004.

Suggested Follow-up Work

Ask pupils to answer the following questions using Pupils' Activity Sheet 3.2005:

- ▶ Which Muslim country is the largest democracy?
- ▶ Look up the word 'democracy'. Where does it come from?
- ▶ Ask your parents and relatives if they voted. If so, who did they vote for and why? If not, why did they not vote? (Note that it is their right not to tell you.)
- ▶ Find out if your parents are members of a political party. If so, which one and why? (Note that it is their right not to tell you.)

Lesson Objectives

- ▶ To find out what democracy is
- ▶ To discuss our role in a democratic society



Democracy Factsheet

The word 'democracy' comes from two Greek words, demos (people) and kratia (power, rule).

Although there are different ways of organising democracy, for us here in the United Kingdom, democracy means that citizens over the age of 18 have a right to vote to elect their local and national governments, which run the country and pass laws on their behalf.

These elected members, known as MPs (Members of Parliament), uphold our human rights and try to make sure we have the freedom to go about our lawful business without interference.

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Multiple-choice Questions

- 1 Who lives at number 10 Downing Street?
a The Prime Minister b The Queen c The Pope
- 2 Who runs the country?
a The Prime Minister b The Queen c The Government
- 3 If you disagree with a government decision or policy, should you:
a try to blow up Parliament like Guy Fawkes?
b demonstrate on the streets?
c work to get them voted out at the next election?
- 4 Who makes the laws that govern our country?
a The Prime Minister b Parliament c The Queen
- 5 If the government tries to pass an un-Islamic law, do you:
a demonstrate peacefully on the streets?
b quietly obey it and try to get change through democratic means?
c challenge it and quote the Human Rights Act?
- 6 British democracy is:
a rule by the people b rule by one person c rule by Mickey Mouse
- 7 Democracy promotes:
a human rights b cruelty c intolerance

Feedback

Lesson Title: Understanding Democracy

Name:

Madrasah/Organisation:

Today I have learnt about:

As a result of this lesson I have learnt that a good Muslim should:

I am going to follow up this topic in my home/school/community by:

Follow-up Worksheet

Lesson Title: Understanding Democracy

Name:

Madrasah/Organisation:

Task: Ask pupils to answer the following questions in the space below:

- 1 Which Muslim country is the largest democracy?
- 2 Look up the word 'democracy'. Where does it come from?
- 3 Ask your parents and relatives if they voted. If so, who did they vote for and why? If not, why did they not vote? (Note that it is their right not to tell you.)
- 4 Find out if your parents are members of a political party. If so, which one and why? (Note again that it is their right not to tell you.)