

Introduction for Educators

BUILDING DEMOCRACY FOR ALL

Interactive Explorations of Government and Civic Life

TEACHER EDITION



[Image](#) by [geralt](#), licenced under [CC 1.0](#)

Senior Contributing Authors

Robert W. Maloy, University of Massachusetts Amherst,
robert.maloy7@gmail.com

Torrey Trust, University of Massachusetts
Amherst, torrey@umass.edu

Contributing K-12 Teachers

Irene S. LaRoche, Amherst Public Schools

Lexie Brearley, Monomoy Regional School District

Katrina Sherrick, Westfield Public Schools

Amy Cyr, Hampshire Regional School District

Erich Leaper, Greenfield Public Schools

Cathering Harding, Sharon Public Schools

Sharon A. Edwards, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Book Designers

Chenyang Xu, Graduate Student, University of Massachusetts
Amherst

Maria McSorley, Graduate Student, University of Massachusetts
Amherst

Media Literacy Project Team

Allison Butler, Senior Lecturer & Director of Undergraduate
Advising, Director of Media Literacy Certificate Program, University

of Massachusetts Amherst

Ifat Gazia, Graduate Student, University of Massachusetts Amherst

[J.D. Swerzenski](#), Graduate Student, University of Massachusetts
Amherst

Yuxi (Cecilia) Zhou, Graduate Student, University of Massachusetts
Amherst

Natalie Passov, Undergraduate Student, University of Massachusetts
Amherst

Eleanor Sprick, Undergraduate Student, University of
Massachusetts Amherst

Benjamin Mendillo, Undergraduate Student, University of
Massachusetts Amherst

Kyle Balis, Undergraduate Student, University of Massachusetts
Amherst

Kendra Sleeper, Undergraduate Student, University of
Massachusetts Amherst

*We gratefully acknowledge the support of the University of
Massachusetts Amherst
Public Service Endowment Grant for this project.*



Watch on YouTube <https://edtechbooks.org/-dZrK>

Welcome

Welcome to *Building Democracy for All* - an interactive, multimodal, multicultural, open access eBook for teaching and learning key topics in United States Government and Civic Life. **Open access** means these materials are “digital, online, and free of charge” (Billings, 2019). This book is available online to anyone with an internet connection. The eBook can also be viewed and printed as a PDF file.

Designed as a core or supplementary text for upper elementary, middle and high school teachers and students, *Building Democracy for All* offers instructional ideas, interactive resources, primary documents, multicultural materials, and multimodal learning materials for interest-building explorations of United States government as well as students’ roles as citizens in a democratic

society. It focuses on the importance of community engagement and social responsibility as understood and acted upon by middle and high school students—core themes in the [2018 Massachusetts 8th Grade Curriculum Framework](#), and which are found in many state history and social studies curriculum frameworks around the country.

Building Democracy for All has been developed by a collaborative writing team of higher education faculty, public school teachers, educational librarians, and college students who are preparing to become history and social studies teachers. The primary editors and curators are from the University of Massachusetts Amherst College of Education. Contributing teachers come from school districts in the Connecticut River valley region of western Massachusetts (Amherst, Gateway, Westfield, Hampshire Regional, and Springfield). As an open resource, the book is being revised constantly by the members of the writing team to ensure timely inclusion of online resources and information.

Book Overview

We are writing this book (which began in summer 2019 and is continuing through 2021) within the context of what Joe Biden in his 2021 presidential inaugural address called the "**cascading crises of our era**," including the COVID-19 pandemic, accelerating climate change, widespread economic inequality, long-denied demands for racial justice, America's shifting position in the world, and Trumpism and its attacks on democracy and the rule of law. The challenging impacts of these six crises on our government and our lives are present in every chapter.

We recognize that in teaching and learning about government and civic life at this time in our country's history means recognizing in the words of [The 1619 Project](#)'s Nikole Hannah-Jones that "the United States is a nation founded on both an ideal and a lie" ([2019, para. 9](#)). The American ideal, articulated in the Declaration of Independence

and the Constitution, is that all people are created equal and have the inalienable rights to full participation in free and just democratic society. The lie, or fundamental contradiction, is that the promise and reality of democracy has been denied Black Americans, women, Native Americans, Latinx Americans, and LGBTQ individuals from the nation's beginnings and is still denied to many today.

In designing and writing this book, we have sought to value both the ideals of America and the realities of people's historical and contemporary experiences. To build democracy for all, as the book is titled, we seek to move beyond a fact-based government and civics curriculum, that while important does not often face hard histories, address controversial topics, confront false narratives, and teach students to how to become active, engaged citizens committed to freedom and justice for all ([National Council for the Social Studies, 2020](#)).

Our goal is to build interactive and inquiry-based learning experiences for students in upper elementary, middle and high schools, as well as college courses. When thinking about teaching, learning, and school curriculum, writer Daniel Osborn (2020) reminds us, that "we have to remain vigilant of the role this institution plays in shaping collective memory and forming identities" ([para. 6](#)). In his publication, [Let's Rethink How We Teach Black History](#), Osborn asks:

- What narratives are we privileging as educators?
- What narratives are we silencing?
- What can we do to change this today, tomorrow, and in a sustained way moving forward?"

Building Democracy for All is based on our belief that civic learning will be impactful and lasting when teachers and students act together as pedagogical partners. We offer ways for teachers and students to explore the ideals of the United States as set forth in its founding documents, its governmental institutions, and its laws and policies to

envision how a government and a society that follows democratic principles can function equitably and fairly for everyone. At the same time, we provide resources and learning plans for examining the hard histories and untold stories of how decisions and structures have blocked those ideals from becoming reality for many people. Understanding the tensions between the ideal and the reality of American life includes exploring how oppressed groups and courageous individuals have fought for social justice and political change through ongoing struggles and protests with the goal of realizing the dream of democracy for all.

Topics

Building Democracy for All is organized around seven major topics and 50 learning modules based on standards set forth in the [Massachusetts 8th Grade History & Social Science Curriculum Framework](#).

- [Topic 1: The Philosophical Foundations of the United States Political System](#)
- [Topic 2: The Development of United States Government](#)
- [Topic 3: The Institutions of the United States Government](#)
- [Topic 4: Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens](#)
- [Topic 5: The Constitution, Amendments, and Supreme Court](#)
- [Topic 6: The Structure of Massachusetts State & Local Government](#)
- [Topic 7: Freedom of the Press and News/Media Literacy](#)

A future eighth section will be devoted to strategies for conducting civic action/community engagement projects with students, as mandated by [Massachusetts Law S2631: An Act to Promote and Enhance Civic Engagement](#).

Modules for Learning

Each module includes an INVESTIGATE, UNCOVER, and ENGAGE module that students and teachers can use to explore topics in greater depth in face-to-face classes and online learning formats.

INVESTIGATE, UNCOVER, ENGAGE MODULES

1. **INVESTIGATE** offers **learning field trips** with historical context and online links to primary source materials, historical timelines, biographies of influential people, interactive websites, and relevant factual information to promote awareness and understanding of the principles, values, institutions, and practices of American democracy. Investigating our nation’s governmental history and foundations introduces students to their rights and responsibilities as members of a democratic society.
2. **UNCOVER** presents **little-known histories and stories** of women, Black Americans, indigenous peoples, LGBTQIA individuals, children and teens, and others who are under-represented in textbooks, curriculum frameworks and learning plans. These sections connect the struggles of diverse individuals and groups to major events and institutions of United States democracy. UNCOVER invites students to explore deeply the ongoing struggles of individuals and groups to achieve equal status in American society. Students participate in inquiry learning where questions, rather than answers, are the focus of the learning activities (Lesh, 2011).
3. **ENGAGE** poses **public policy issues and questions** for students to analyze and act upon through discussion, writing, and civic action projects. ENGAGE questions ask students to think deeply about the choices they face as members of a

democracy and then act on their decisions as engaged members of their communities. Researchers have documented that **political-based discussions** among students in classrooms **increase civic knowledge and dispositions** while expanding individual perspectives beyond one's immediate group of family and friends (Hess & McAvoy, 2014; Korbey, 2019).

Each module includes the following resources.

Suggested learning activities provide interactive explorations of the topic. These activities encourage higher order thinking and learning by students as they explore issues, discuss ideas, analyze documents, design solutions to community problems, formulate personal positions about public policies, and create knowledge to share with others. Activities emphasize higher-order thinking using interactive web-based learning materials and digital tools and apps to support and extend student thinking and learning.

Online resources include digital primary sources, secondary source background materials, historical biographies, multimedia resources, landmark court cases, LGBTQ history resources, women's history materials, and other online information drawn from reliable and trusted academic and educational sites. Many of the online resources feature links to pages in the free [resourcesforhistoryteachers wiki](#), a multimedia/multicultural resource hosted by the College of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Bonus Features

Teacher-Designed Learning Plans are found in boxes throughout the book. These plans can be adapted to in-person, online, remote, and blended learning formats. We encourage book readers to submit their own lessons to be included in the text.

Media Learning Connections are placed throughout the book as opportunities for students and teachers to critically investigate media and its influence on education and society.

Digital Choice Boards invite interactive high- and low-tech explorations of curriculum topics. A choice board is a "graphic organizer that allows students to choose different ways to learn about a particular concept" ([Reinken, 2012, para. 1](#)). Each box on the choice boards features higher order thinking activities for students to complete when using the board for learning. To use choice boards for learning, teachers can split students into groups or teams and ask them to research topics found on the board. Each topic offers points of departure for further research. Higher order learning suggestions for student-designed choice boards include:

- Code a [Scratch story](#)
- Create an [interactive digital story](#)
- Construct [3D digital artifacts](#)
- Design a [multimodal book](#)
- Construct an [augmented reality exhibit](#)
- Build a 3D [model](#)
- Build an [interactive map](#)
- Create an [Interactive Timeline](#)
- Create a [video](#)

How to Use This Book

This book is designed for teachers and students working together in collaborative learning environments. Topics and standards are accompanied by easy-to-read introductions, designed to interest readers. Links throughout the sections make the book an interactive reading and viewing experience. Learning activities for each module in each standard are written to encourage students to connect with and act on issues facing our democratic society.

The book may be a core or supplementary text for 8th grade classes. It can also be useful in high school government and history courses, including Advanced Placement (AP) United States Government and Politics. The Table of Contents is organized based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework, but topics presented can be aligned to curriculums in middle and high schools around the country that are teaching government and civic life.

This book is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#), which means that you are free to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format. You can also remix, transform, and build upon the material as long as the remixed materials feature a similar Creative Commons license.

References

A list of references to the sources cited throughout the chapters can be found on this Google Doc: [Building Democracy for All eBook References](#).

Student Edition

We are also developing a Student Edition of *Building Democracy for All*. Like the Teacher Edition, this edition will address each of the Topics in the Massachusetts 8th Grade Civics and Government curriculum framework in a more interactive and student-accessible format. Standards and modules in the Student Edition will have short written introductions followed by one or two selected learning activities for students to complete, individually or in small groups. This edition will feature multimedia-based activities and interactive learning experiences that stress creative self-expression and critical thinking among students. Like the Teacher Education, the Student Edition will be available online to anyone with an internet connection,

free of charge. We anticipate that the Student Edition will be ready in fall 2021.

About the Book Team

[Robert W. Maloy, Ed.D.](#) is a senior lecturer in the Department of Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies in the College of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst where he coordinates the history and political science teacher education programs.

[Torrey Trust, Ph.D.](#) is an Associate Professor of Learning Technology in the Department of Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies in the College of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where she is the coordinator of the [Learning, Media and Technology master degree program](#) and [Digital Media Design and Making in Education online graduate certificate program](#).

Irene S. LaRoche, Ed.D. is a teacher and social studies department chairperson at Amherst Regional Middle School in Amherst, Massachusetts, a clinical faculty member in the College of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and a 2019-2020 Climate Resiliency Fellow with Shelburne Farms organization in Vermont.

Lexie Brearley is a middle school teacher at Monomoy Middle School in Chatham, Massachusetts.

Katerina Sherrick is a middle school social studies teacher at Westfield Middle School in Westfield, Massachusetts.

Amy Cyr is a middle school social studies teacher at Hampshire Regional School in Westhampton, Massachusetts.

Erich Leaper is a middle school social studies teacher at Greenfield

Middle School in Greenfield, Massachusetts.

Catherine Harding is a high school history teacher at Sharon High School in Sharon, Massachusetts and former Senate education staff member at the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate in Boston, Massachusetts.

Sharon A. Edwards, Ed.D. is an author, retired elementary school teacher and a clinical faculty member in the College of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Stephen McGinty is a research librarian at the W.E.B. Du Bois Library at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Maria McSorley is a former high school English teacher and doctoral candidate in the College of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Chenyang Xu is a doctoral candidate in College of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

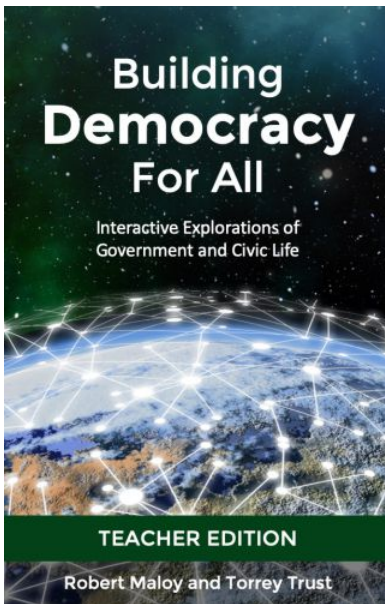
Kendra Sleeper is an undergraduate student at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the following individuals for their ideas and support with this project: Sadie Perlow, Christopher Oo, Carly Hallp, Jon Galanis, Roshan Price, Oliver Ward, Joel Flores, Chris Martell, Tyler Volpe-Knock, Molly Sullivan, Sydney Turcot, Alex Fossa, Christina Dabek, Marissa Best, Briana Ball.

We want to thank Maria McSorley for copyediting and book chapter reviews and Chenyang Xu for ebook formatting. Thanks also to Leah

Charifson, Francesca Panarelli, Kelly Marsh, Stephanie Osber and April Muraco for Topic reviews.



Maloy, R. W. & Trust, T. (2020). *Building Democracy for All*. EdTech Books. <https://edtechbooks.org/democracy>



CC BY-NC-SA: This work is released under a CC BY-NC-SA license, which means that you are free to do with it as you please as long as you (1) properly attribute it, (2) do not use it for commercial gain, and (3) share any subsequent works under the same or a similar license.