

Chapter 1. Foundations of the United States Political System

How do you define democracy?

Is the United States a democratic country?

How have the events of 2020 and 2021 impacted your thinking and the thinking of students in schools about our country's political system?

Take a few moments to explore the winning videos from the [2021 "Democracy Challenge" Student Video Contest](#) (sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts Citizen Education Fund):



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



[Watch on YouTube https://edtechbooks.org/-G1k](https://edtechbooks.org/-G1k)

The students' videos focus on the United States today. Viewing the development of our government and our democracy historically, it was the political systems of ancient Greece and Rome, revolutionary thinking about individual rights by Enlightenment philosophers, the struggles for power between nobles and kings in medieval England that led to the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights, and governmental practices of First American tribes in North America that contributed to the governmental philosophies and practices that emerged from the American Revolution.

The media literacy activities in this section explore modern-day social media policies and democratic principles, peoples' right to Internet access and control, women as revolutionary technology innovators, media coverage of England's royal family, and how Native Americans are portrayed in films and television.

You can read more about the definition of democracy and its place as a system of government in different countries in the world in the [Introduction to this topic](#) in our companion eBook, *Building Democracy for All*.

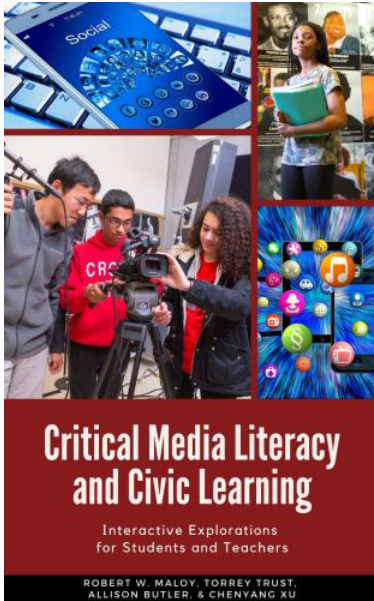
Media Literacy Activities Choice Board

<p>Evaluate Social Media Community Guidelines</p> <p>Analyze whether the community guidelines of a social media platform of your choosing upholds the foundational features of democracy.</p> 	<p>Design a Film or TV show About Native Americans' Influence on the U.S. Government</p> <p>Write a script for a movie or TV show that portrays First Americans accurately and showcases how Native American government shaped the U.S. government.</p> 	<p>Evaluating Whether the Government of the Roman Republic Would Have Made the Internet a Public Utility</p> <p>Write an opinion article and draw an editorial cartoon commenting on whether the Roman Empire would have made the Internet a public utility at the time.</p> 
<p>Analyze Movie Trailers About British Kings and Queens and American Presidents</p> <p>Compare how British Kings/Queens and U.S. Presidents are portrayed on film. Then, design your own movie trailer that showcases how British ideas about and practices of government influenced the American colonists and the political institutions that developed in colonial America.</p> 	<p>Foundations of the U.S. Political System</p> <p>Media Literacy Activities Choice Board</p>  <p><i>Building Democracy for All</i>, a free eBook by Robert Maloy & Torrey Trust explores all these topics and more</p>	<p>Assessing, Revising, & Writing School Social Media Policies</p> <p>Evaluate a school or district social media policy for its alignment with foundational features of Athenian Democracy. Then, either suggest revisions or write one for your own class, school, or district.</p> 
<p>Analyze Media Coverage of Harry and Meghan's Interview with Oprah</p> <p>Compare and contrast media sources from the U.K. and U.S. covering this interview.</p> 	<p>Analyzing the Portrayal of Women in Science and Politics Then and Now</p> <p>Assess how women Enlightenment thinkers and women in science and politics today are presented in online materials and media.</p> 	<p>Research and Rewrite First American Histories of the Place Where You Live Today</p> <p>Analyze how local websites and history materials present the history First Americans from where you live today.</p> 

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Media Literacy Activities



Maloy, R. W., Trust, T., , & Xu, C. (2021). *Critical Media Literacy and Civic Learning*. Equity Press.
<https://equitypress.org/mediaandciviclearning>