

We the People

Activate Prior Knowledge

If possible show pictures of the President, the Senate, the White House, and a local government office or official. Tap students' prior knowledge and experiences by discussing the idea of government.

Ask:

- Do you ever want to be the President of the United States? Why?
- Who is the President of the United States now? What does this person do?
- What do you know about the United States government?

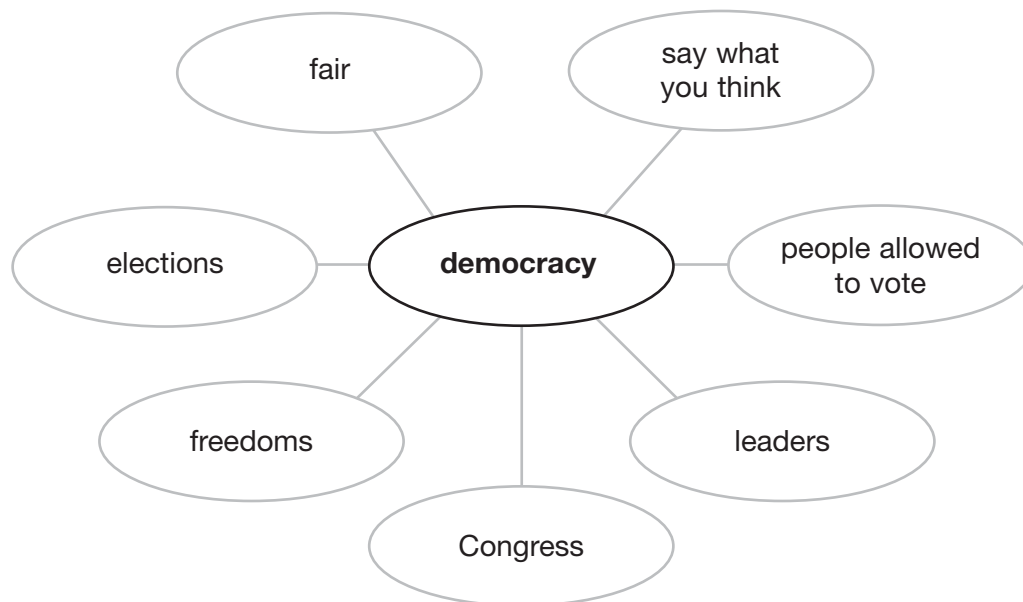
Build Background

democracy

In this lesson students learn how the republic of the United States is a representative democracy. To build background for this concept, have them think about what democracy is by asking the questions below. List student responses in a word web.

Ask:

- What do you think the word *democracy* means?
- If a country is democratic, are people allowed to vote?
- How can you tell our nation is democratic?



Access Content

Preview the Lesson

Read aloud the *Focus on the Main Idea* sentence on page 46. Then ask the questions below.

Suggested Questions:

- Who do you think “We the People” are? Do you recognize this phrase from anywhere?
- How do people participate in government?
- Why do people in the United States vote?

Picture Walk



- Page 47** ■ What do you think the section heading “A Government for the People” might mean? Why do you think so? How does this picture relate to the section heading?
- Page 48** ■ Read aloud the captions for the diagram. *Local* refers to the town or community you live in. *State* refers to one of the fifty states of our country. *National* refers to our country as a whole. All three of these levels are run by citizens.
- Page 49** ■ Which level of government would you deal with if you wanted to put up a new stop sign in your town?
- Page 50** ■ Read the captions in the diagram. The executive branch is run by the President, who lives in the White House. The legislative branch helps make laws, and this work is done mainly in the Capitol building. The judicial branch refers to the court system. That’s why the Supreme Court Building is shown.
- What do you think the word *branches* in the section heading means?
- Page 51** ■ What do you know about judges? What do judges do?
- What do you think the Supreme Court does?
- Page 52** ■ This picture shows the members of Congress meeting. Congress makes new laws for the country. What kinds of situations do you think members of Congress discuss when they meet?

My Lesson Guide



Have students write the title of each level of government in their social studies notebooks. As they read, have students fill in the duties of each level of government under its title. Show them how these notes will help them complete *My Lesson Guide*.

My Lesson Guide

Directions: Complete the chart using the details below.

- usually run by a mayor or village president
- run by the President of the United States
- run by governors
- make laws that affect daily living
- decisions must be approved by Congress
- provide police and fire protection

Level of Government	Details
national	
state	
local	

Talk About It

Work with a partner. Discuss which branch of the United States government you would like to work in—the executive branch, the legislative branch, or the judicial branch. Explain your choice.



Notes for Home: Your child learned how the United States government works.

Home Activity: Ask your child to tell you what an amendment is.

Extend Language

In this *Extend Language* students learn about suffixes. Tell students that a suffix is a word part added to the end of a word to change the word's meaning.

*“The **government** is made up of the rules, or laws, that we follow and the people who run our country.”*

page 47

government What part of speech is *government*? (noun)

Break the word *government* down. (govern, -ment)

What does *govern* mean? (to rule) What part of speech is *govern*? (verb)

Explain that adding the suffix *-ment* often changes a verb into a noun.

Write this sentence on the board: *They will amend the Constitution.*

What part of speech is *amend*? (verb)

What new word is formed when we add the suffix *-ment* to *amend*? (amendment) What part of speech is *amendment*? (noun)

With a partner, think of some other nouns that end with the suffix *-ment*. (announcement, management)

Government: the rules, or laws, that we follow and the people who run the country

Root: Old French—*governer* meaning *govern*

Other nouns that end with the suffix *-ment*: enjoyment, entertainment, judgment

Verb	Suffix	Noun
govern	-ment	government
amend	-ment	amendment
announce	-ment	announcement
manage	-ment	management

Conversation Starter

Read students the following sentences from page 48: “The power of our government does not come from government leaders. It comes from citizens who elect those leaders.”

Ask students to tell you what they think these sentences mean. Then ask: **How does voting give people power? What are some things people can do because they have the power to vote?**