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## LESSON

# DEMOCRACY

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

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- ① Understand the meaning of democracy.
- ② Understand the basic spirit of democracy.
- ③ Understand direct democracy and representative democracy.

## TERMS TO KNOW

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- Democracy
- Parliament
- Positive freedom
- Negative freedom
- Direct democracy
- Representative democracy

## What is Democracy?

We live in a democratic society. Democracy comes from the Greek word *demokratia*. *Demokratia* is a combination of the words *demos*, meaning “the people,” and *kratos*, meaning “domination.” In other words, democracy is a political system in which the people rule. Prior to the development of democracy, a few specific people, such as a king or aristocrat, ruled the country. In addition, the majority of the people had to be unilaterally governed by them. However, as democracy developed,

the people were no longer ruled by a king or nobility, but by the law. Furthermore, the people themselves have political rights and become actors who participate in the operation of the state.

A word similar to democracy is republic. A republican system, like democracy, is a political system in which sovereignty rests with the people. The two words have almost the same meaning, but there are some differences in their usage. For example, in the United Kingdom there is a monarch, but they do not have political power. Power resides in the people and in a parliament elected by the

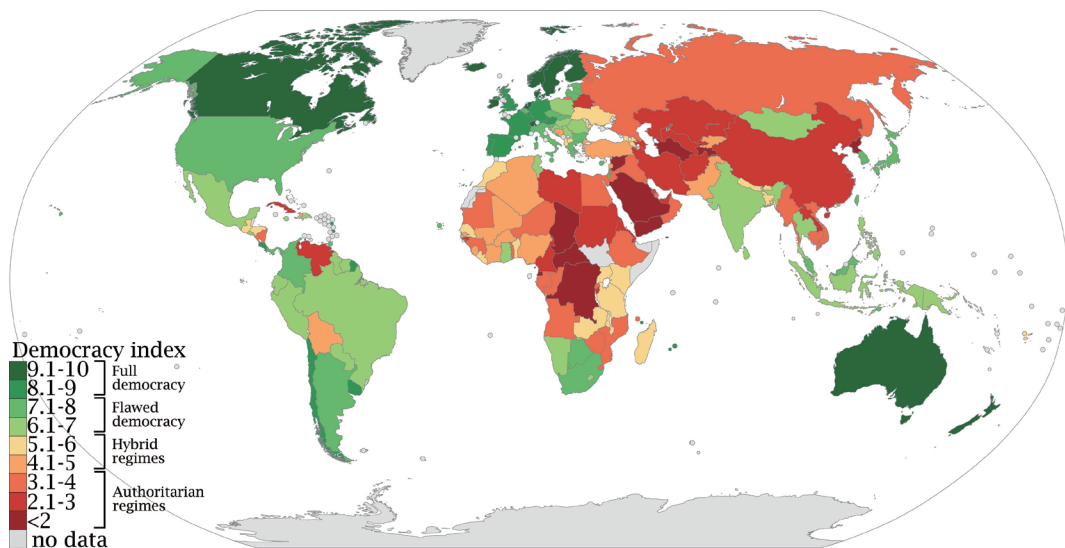


Figure 1-1 World map of the 2019 Democracy index

people. Thus, the United Kingdom is actually a democratic country where the people rule, but formally it is not called a republic because there is a monarch.

Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States, defined democracy simply and clearly. He said democracy is “a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” Let’s find out what this phrase means. First, “of the people” means that the power of the state comes from the people, and the people can form and control the government. “By the people” means that national laws are made by the people and their representatives. To this end, anyone over a certain age can participate in voting and can engage in political activities on their own. “For the people” means that the state should respect the will of the people and work for what the people want.

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## The Basic Spirits of Democracy

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The three basic spirits of democracy are human dignity,

freedom, and equality. Human dignity is the most important among the basic spirits of democracy, and it means that we must recognize the dignity that all human beings have from birth. A democratic state has an obligation to guarantee the basic human rights of its citizens.

The general meaning of freedom is the state of being free from oppression or restrictions and being able to do what you want. Freedom includes negative freedom and positive freedom. Negative freedom refers to not being subject to unnecessary interference and control from the state, and positive freedom refers to demanding one’s right from the state or participating in state affairs.

Equality means not being discriminated against based on race, gender, religion, etc. Equality in democracy does not mean that individuals should be equal without acknowledging differences in talents and abilities, but rather it refers to equality before the law, the right to exercise equal voting rights, and equality in human dignity.



Figure 1-2 *basic spirits of democracy*

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## Direct Democracy and Representative Democracy

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Direct democracy refers to the direct participation of the people in national policymaking. For example, the people directly vote to decide which countries to trade with, whether to build new airports or ports, and how much to tax companies. Athens, an ancient Greek city-state, was the first direct democracy. Athenian citizens were free to attend the assembly, speak, and vote.

Representative democracy is a method in which representatives

of the people are elected through elections, and national policies are discussed and handled through the elected representatives. Most countries in modern society are adopting representative democracy. The reason is that as the size of the country grows and the number of populations increases, it is difficult for all citizens to gather frequently, and it becomes difficult to hear the opinions of all citizens directly. However, not all matters are



**Figure 1-3** Raphael's *School of Athens*, ancient Athenians freely discussing and participating in politics

decided through representatives alone. When it is necessary to decide on an important national issue, the direct democracy method

called a referendum is used to directly listen to the opinions of the people.

## Reviewing the Lesson

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- 1 From what word does the word democracy come from, and what does it mean?
- 2 What did President Abraham Lincoln mean by “government of the people, by the people, and for the people”?
- 3 What are the basic spirits of democracy?
- 4 What is the difference between direct democracy and representative democracy?

## Activities

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- 1 Let’s have a family meeting and come up with an agenda for the family to decide together. Let’s discuss the agenda together and decide by voting.
- 2 Create a group in your class to discuss the pros and cons of direct democracy and representative democracy.

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**Figure 1-2** <https://images.pexels.com/photos/8899175/pexels-photo-8899175.jpeg>

**Figure 1-3** [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/68/Raffael\\_058.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/68/Raffael_058.jpg)

## Lesson1. Democracy

5th floor 20, Nambusunhwan-ro 347-gil, Seocho-gu, Seoul, South-Korea

Tel. +82 02-514-1963

Fax. +82 02-514-1961

<http://www.hwpl.kr>

[hwpl@hwpl.kr](mailto:hwpl@hwpl.kr)

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