



INTRODUCTION TO DEMOCRACY

LEARNING OUTCOME

In this lesson you will learn about the meaning of democracy and the need for rules. You will see a student discussing these topics and then have the opportunity to do an activity which will give you the opportunity to discuss what you have learned.

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Democracy is a system of government and that is the system we have in Ireland. The word 'Democracy' comes from two Greek words: demos meaning 'People' and kratia meaning 'To Rule'. So, Democracy means 'Rule by the People'.

In a democracy, the people or citizens elect others to represent them and to make laws for them. Former US President Abraham Lincoln, said that democracy was 'government of the people, by the people, for the people'.

Citizens vote at elections to choose their representatives. Elections are held at regular intervals so that citizens can decide who should be elected to political positions.

This way, everyone can have an equal say in how things are run because essentially Democracy is about decision making.

ACTIVITY

Inform the class that there is a decision to make. The issue to be decided is:

"That Saturday will be a normal school day from now on and pupils will be expected to be at school at 9 a.m. next Saturday."

- Who should make this decision?
- Should it be just one person or should everyone affected by the decision have a say?
- What does the class think and why?

If everyone has a say then that is an example of democracy in action.

If only one person or a small group of people decide, that isn't democracy. The term for that type of decision-making is dictatorship.

If the class decide that they should have a democratic say in the decision to open the school on Saturday ask them to vote on the issue by a show of hands. At this stage students should have decided that democracy is a good idea compared to the alternatives.