

# Competing Ideologies

Lesson Video: Grades 9-12

# Overview

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**Teacher:** Wendell Brooks  
**Grade:** 9  
**School:** Berkeley High School  
**Location:** Berkeley, California

**NCSS Standards-Based Themes: Individual Development and Identity; Individuals, Groups, and Institutions; Power Authority, and Governance**

**Content Standards: History, Civics, Economics, Psychology**

## Video Summary

From declaring war to waging peace, history is shaped by the ideological beliefs of the people who lived it. Different people hold different ideas about human nature and how a society should be organized. In his ninth-grade world history class, Wendell Brooks explains how competing ideologies drive the world events that make up history.

Using concrete examples that students can relate to, Mr. Brooks begins by defining ideology. He introduces democracy as one example of an ideology at work in their lives. Students identify the specific principles and institutions representative of a democracy, as well as the conditions necessary for a democratic republic to survive.

Focusing on the period between World War I and the present, the class goes on to explore other ideologies and the tensions between them. The class divides into five groups, each representing a major ideology since World War I: democracy, totalitarianism, communism, fascism, and Nazism. Mr. Brooks asks students to assume the mindset of each ideology. He has each group develop a symbol, slogan, and mission statement for its ideology, find examples of the ideology at work in historical events, and describe its impact on people and cultures. The lesson concludes with group presentations, followed by class discussion.

## Standards

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*Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* defines what students should know and be able to do in social studies at each grade level. This lesson correlates to the following standards for high school students:

### **IV. Individual Development and Identity**

Examine the interactions of ethnic, national, or cultural influences in specific situations or events; analyze the role of perceptions, attitudes, values, and beliefs in the development of personal identity; compare and evaluate the impact of stereotyping, conformity, acts of altruism, and other behaviors on individuals and groups.

# Standards, cont'd.

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## V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Identify and analyze examples of tensions between expressions of individuality and efforts used to promote social conformity by groups and institutions; describe and examine belief systems basic to specific traditions and laws in contemporary and historical movements; analyze the extent to which groups and institutions meet individual needs and promote the common good in contemporary and historical settings.

## VI. Power, Authority, and Governance

Examine persistent issues involving the rights, roles, and status of the individual in relation to the general welfare; explain the purpose of government and analyze how its powers are acquired, used, and justified; analyze and explain ideas and mechanisms to meet needs and wants of citizens, regulate territory, manage conflict, establish order and security, and balance competing conceptions of a just society; compare different political systems (their ideologies, structure, institutions, processes, and political cultures) with that of the United States, and identify representative political leaders from selected historical and contemporary settings.

## Content Standards: History, Civics, Economics, Psychology

# About the Class

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## Classroom Profile

"I have a strong commitment to addressing the importance of ideologies in the world. It's not enough to know about historic events if students don't, at the same time, understand the force of ideologies behind the actions of individuals, societies, and nations in our modern world. We need to focus on the ideas behind the facts."—Wendell Brooks

Wendell Brooks teaches ninth-grade world history at Berkeley High School in Berkeley, California. Situated near the University of California at Berkeley, the high school has 3,500 students representing the city's ethnic and socioeconomic diversity.

Mr. Brooks began his year by reviewing the U.S. history that students had studied the previous year and looking at the rise of democratic ideas. By the time students got to the lesson on competing ideologies, they had studied world history through World War I, focusing on patterns of interaction among nations and their ideologies. Mr. Brooks expected students to have a solid understanding of economics, the concept of the nation-state, and the contractual relationship between each type of government and its citizens.

The lesson shown in "Competing Ideologies" fell within the unit Years of Crisis, which covers the international tensions that existed between the world wars. The lesson was based on two specific standards within the California Frameworks: 1) Analyze the emergence of capitalism as a dominant economic pattern and the responses to it, including Utopianism, Social Democracy, Socialism, and Communism; and 2) Analyze the rise of totalitarian governments after World War I. In this lesson, Mr. Brooks used the Socratic method to generate class

Year at a Glance
The Rise of Democratic Ideas
The Muslim World Expands
The Columbian Exchange and Global Trade
The French Revolution and Napoleon
Nationalist Revolutions Sweep the West
The Industrial Revolution
The Age of Imperialism and The Great War
Years of Crisis
World War II
Restructuring the Postwar World
New Nations: The Middle East

# About the Class, cont'd.

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discussion by asking questions, and then asking students to discuss the thinking behind different governing ideologies during the “years of crisis.”

The class went on to study units on World War II, the Holocaust, and the postwar world. Mr. Brooks built on the concepts presented in the lesson to help his students understand the ongoing connection between ideologies and world events.

## Lesson Background

Read this information to better understand the lesson shown in the video.

### Content: Ideology

An ideology is a doctrine or belief that forms the basis of political, economic, or other systems.

**Democracy** is a form of government based on participation by an informed citizenry and majority rule, with protection of minority rights. The values of a democratic society include the protection of individual civil liberties; commitment to individual dignity without government intrusion; freedom of speech, religion, press, and assembly; and processes and institutions to seek justice under due process of law. A direct democracy is one in which citizens make and vote on laws directly. Ancient Greece was a direct democracy, as are the local governments of some New England towns today. In an indirect, or representative democracy, citizens vote for persons who will hold office and represent their views.

Democracy allows for the formation of competing political parties, a choice among candidates, and regularly held elections that follow processes established by law. A cornerstone of democracy is an educated citizenry who are prepared and willing to exercise civic rights and responsibilities. **Capitalism** in democratic nations is characterized by mostly privately owned industries and production based on supply and demand.

**Fascism** and **Nazism** are militaristic political philosophies that elevate the nation (and in the case of Nazism, race) above the welfare of the individual. They are based on centralized dictatorial leadership and complete control of all aspects of life by the government. Minorities and dissenters are often persecuted or murdered.

Fascism originated in Italy in 1919 under the leadership of Benito Mussolini and survived until he was deposed in 1943. Nazism, led by Germany's Adolf Hitler from 1921 to 1945, is closely modeled on Italian fascism. Nazi anti-Semitism and persecution of other minorities led to the establishment of concentration camps and to the death of six million Jews and others in the Holocaust. At the turn of the last century, fascism and Nazism were fueled by the dire economic circumstances of the poor and unemployed middle class, who were easily stirred by nationalistic promises and propaganda.

**Communism** is a social system characterized by government control of the economy—especially public services, industry, and property. It is based on the theories of political philosopher and economist Karl Marx. Marx believed that history is determined by class struggle and that workers should unite and overthrow the bourgeoisie, thereby ending the unproductive alienation of the working class. He theorized that in the final stages, social classes would disappear along with the clashes between them caused by capitalism.

The first communist state was established in Russia following the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the collapse of the government under Tsar Nicholas II. In the years following 1917, communism evolved under Lenin and Stalin. In 1949, Mao Zedong founded the Chinese Communist Party, which was based on Russian communism but adapted to the conditions of China. In 1966 he launched the Cultural Revolution, denouncing intellectuals and replacing local government with revolutionary committees. As China has moved into the modern age, it has become more economically linked to the West. Yet, it has resisted political change—crushing opponents in a massacre of pro-democracy protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in June of 1989.

**Totalitarianism** is a form of government that in some instances seeks to control all aspects of public and private life. Limits on individual freedoms are severe. The state controls society's resources and means of production, and determines how goods and services are distributed.

# About the Class, cont'd.

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Totalitarian regimes may or may not be sanctioned by a written constitution, but they are generally absolute and controlled by one party. They reject the current state of society, destroy existing institutions and customs, and propose new alternatives. Religion and other aspects of life that inspire loyalty are superseded by allegiance to the state. Fueled by propaganda, totalitarian regimes often use violent processes without the benefit of legal restraint to bring about a new order. China under Mao, Germany under Hitler, Italy under Mussolini, and a more decentralized model in the Soviet Union under Stalin are all examples of totalitarian nations.

## Teaching Strategy: Presentations and Examples

Presentations, also called direct instruction, can be used to introduce new topics, build background knowledge about an unfamiliar topic, orient students to complete an activity, or review content. When presenting information, teachers can organize their presentations into a logical sequence, ask a variety of types of questions, use rich examples such as metaphors and analogies that link to the lives of students, and respond to students' questions and comments.

Examples can help students link new learning with what they already know. Teachers can recall personal experiences or use analogies, metaphors, and similes to help students create vivid pictures of what they are learning, clarify complex topics, or think about content in unique and memorable ways.

# Watching the Video

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As you reflect on these questions, write down your responses or discuss them as a group.

## Before You Watch

Respond to the following questions:

- How would you define *ideology*?
- Ideologies shape not only world events, but also community ideals. What are some informal ideologies students can relate to in their school or community?
- Why is it important for students to understand the role of ideologies in shaping history?
- What do you consider when assigning and grouping students to do work on complex (and possibly controversial) ideological questions?

## Watch the Video

As you watch "Competing Ideologies," take notes on Mr. Brooks's instructional strategies, particularly how he engages students through questioning. Write down what you find interesting, surprising, or especially important about the teaching and learning in this lesson.

# Watching the Video, cont'd.

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## Reflecting on the Video

Review your notes, then respond to the following questions:

- What struck you about the classroom climate, background information, lesson preparation, teaching strategies, and materials used in this lesson?
- What strategies did Mr. Brooks use to engage the students in learning about ideologies?
- How do the content and methodologies used by Mr. Brooks make this lesson memorable for students?
- What sequence of ideas and examples did Mr. Brooks use to develop the concept of ideology? What made this an effective sequence?
- How did Mr. Brooks use questioning in the lesson?
- What prior knowledge did the students have that made their group work possible?
- Why do you think it was important that Mr. Brooks gave his students the opportunity to ask questions or add comments after the student presentations?

## Looking Closer

Here's an opportunity to take a closer look at interesting aspects of Mr. Brooks's lesson.



### **Linking Concepts to Students' Lives: Video Segment**

Go to this segment in the video by matching the image (to the left) on your TV screen. You'll find this segment approximately eight minutes into the video. Watch for about five minutes.

At the beginning of the lesson, Mr. Brooks and his students define and discuss democracy.

- How does Mr. Brooks link the concept of democracy and its attributes to the lives of the students?
- How does he draw on the personal experiences of students to enhance the learning?
- Why is it important to activate students' prior knowledge and support them in linking new learning to what they already know?

# Watching the Video, cont'd.

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## **Group Work and Presentations: Video Segment**

Go to this segment in the video by matching the image (to the left) on your TV screen. You'll find this segment approximately 18 minutes into the video. Watch for about three minutes.

The class is divided into groups, with each representing a different ideology. Then the students in each group work together to identify examples of their ideology in history, choose a slogan, and design a poster with a logo.

- What do you believe Mr. Brooks expects the students will learn as they complete this assignment and present their findings?
- What does the discussion in the "communism" group reflect about the learning that is occurring in this classroom?

# Connecting to Your Teaching

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## **Reflecting on Your Practice**

As you reflect on these questions, write down your responses or discuss them as a group.

- How are ideological concepts a part of your own social studies teaching?
- How does your class differ from Mr. Brooks's class? How would you introduce an ideology to your own students?
- How can you use life experiences, examples, analogies, or metaphors to teach a concept?
- What kinds of questions do you use when you teach? How do you determine when to use different kinds of questioning techniques?
- When do you use class presentations, and why? What factors do you consider most important in planning and giving class presentations? How do presentations fit in with the other teaching strategies you use?
- How do you assess your students' presentations?
- How do you ensure that all students have met specific content and skill standards when you assess group presentations?

# Connecting to Your Teaching, cont'd.

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## Taking It Back to Your Classroom

- After studying a major ideology, ask your students to spend the next week or month looking for evidence of the ideology in their everyday lives. Then divide the class into small groups to think of ways to categorize and present what they have found.
- Select a major topic or process and ask students to think of questions that will help them apply and extend what they have learned. For example, "How can I apply my understanding of democracy to my life outside the classroom?"
- Plan how students can present what they've investigated to the class. Work with students to develop criteria that their presentations must meet. Then use the criteria to assess how successfully they have fulfilled the assignment.

## Resources

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### Print Resources for Students

Morin, Isobel V. *Politics, American Style: Political Parties in American History*. Breckenridge, Colo.: Twenty First Century Books, 1999.

Scruton, Roger. *A Dictionary of Political Thought*. New York: HarperCollins, 1983.

Lindop, Edmund. *Political Parties (Inside Government)*. Breckenridge, Colo.: Twenty First Century Books, 1996.

### Print Resources for Teachers

Gerring, John. *Political Ideologies in America, 1828–1996*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Littell, McDougal, ed. *Modern World History: Patterns of Interaction*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin School, 1999.

Joyce, Bruce R., Marsha Weil, and Emily Calhoun. *Models of Teaching*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2000.

Dagger, Richard, and Terrance Ball. *Ideals and Ideologies: A Reader, 4th ed.* South Melbourne, Australia: Longman, 2001.



# Resources, cont'd.

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## Web Resources for Students and Teachers

Political Dictionary: <http://www.fast-times.com/political/political.html>

This alphabetized reference for political terms provides a quick guide for students, teachers, and politicians alike.

American Political Science Association: <http://www.apsanet.org>

The APSA Web site is a forum for ideas, seminars, and information about the study of politics.

The Institute for Inquiry: <http://www.exploratorium.edu/IFI/resources/workshops/artofquestioning.html>

From the Institute for Inquiry, The Art of Questioning article is based on observations of student/teacher interactions and questions in the classroom.

The Education Technology Journal: <http://www.fno.org/toolbox.html>

The ETJ site offers classroom strategies to promote students' questioning skills and practice.

Social Science Information Gateway: <http://www.sosig.ac.uk>

This site presents information on social sciences for students and educators and contains links to many political resources.

# Notes

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