7th Grade History Lesson Plan: The Rise of Democracy

Expected duration: 2-3 days

Objectives
SWBAT:
1. Examine and analyze four forms of government in ancient Greece.
2. Identify and explain advantages and disadvantages of monarchy, oligarchy, tyranny, and democracy.
3. Construct, as a class, four tableaux representing the different forms of government under study.

Focus Question
How did democracy develop in ancient Greece?

Rationale
As part of our study of the roots of American government, it is important to understand how, over time, different forms of rule led to another. The ancient Greeks had four forms of government: monarchy, oligarchy, tyranny, and democracy. Although the United States’ representative democracy is not identical to ancient Athens’ direct democracy, there are many similarities that help explain some of the principles included in our government today.

Materials
“The Rise of Democracy” reading packet; “The Rise of Democracy” notes packet; “The Rise of Democracy Quiz”; one “regal” chair; three ordinary chairs; two crowns (one more glamorous than the other); fake money; yardstick; audio speakers; computer with Internet connection

Assessment
1. Students complete interactive notes packet, including timelines, fill-in-the-blanks, taking perspectives, and report card evaluation for each form of government.
2. Students actively participate in music selection activities and discussions.
3. Students actively participate in kinesthetic review activity (modification of “Beach, Boat, Ballroom”).
4. Students complete “The Rise of Democracy Quiz” (format includes multiple choice, True/False, report card with explanations, sketches).

Arts Mediums
1. Drama
2. Movement
3. Music
**Procedure**

1. The day prior to beginning the lesson, assign students for homework to e-mail the teacher a link to their favorite (school-appropriate) song. Teacher assembles the links in an easy-to-access and viewable format (e.g., PowerPoint slide).

2. Upon entering the classroom the next day, students are greeted with music selected by the teacher as his/her favorite. Teacher explains why he/she likes the song.

3. Begin lesson with Preview scenario: Suppose that you are on a sports team that is one play away from winning a game. Which of these options do you think is the best way to choose the final play of the game?
   - a. Have the coach or the assistant coach choose the final play.
   - b. Have the three most talented players choose the final play.
   - c. Have the most popular player choose the final play.
   - d. Have all the team members choose the final play.

   Students should make a selection independently, pair-share with a partner, and then engage in a full-class discussion about reasons for their choices.

4. Read Introduction of reading packet, which reviews how Greece’s unique geography affected how settlements developed in ancient Greece (i.e., isolated communities, separated from each other by steep mountains, grew in diverse ways, including in how they governed themselves).

5. Introduce key vocabulary terms (monarchy, oligarchy, tyranny, democracy, assembly, aristocrat, citizen).

6. Begin discussion of first form of government -- monarchy -- by selecting one student to be the king/queen and one student to be the queen/princess. The two students sit at the front of the class in their designated chairs and wear their designated crowns. As king/queen, the first student gets to play his/her favorite song for the class, and no one can question the choice. The student should explain his/her song selection.

7. After king’s/queen’s song, explain how power is transferred upon death to the prince/princess. He/she then takes king’s/queen’s position and gets to select the next song.

8. Following prince’s/princess’ song, class reads Monarchy section of reading packet and completes the corresponding notes section of the notes packet.

9. Continue with related Steps 6-8 for Oligarchy, Tyranny, and Democracy.
   - a. Oligarchy: Three students sit at front of class and receive fake money to flaunt. The three students must agree upon one song to play for the class.
   - b. Tyranny: Remaining students play Rock-Paper-Scissors to determine who will receive the yardstick (honorary sword) and be the tyrant who gets to select the next song.
   - c. Democracy: Entire class votes for a final song to play, and the majority wins.

10. In pairs, students complete the Report Card section of the notes packet.
    - a. Give a grade to each form of government for the following categories: Making efficient decisions; Giving equality to all people; Meeting the needs of the people.
    - b. Select which of the four forms of government you think deserves the highest overall grade, and explain why.
11. Student pairs report out to the class; teacher records an average grade for each form of government based on student input.

12. In an outdoor space (or a particularly large classroom), introduce students to kinesthetic activity: Beach, Boat, Ballroom. Divide the space into three equal areas. Practice making a group tableaux for each location. Teacher acts as caller for first round. At the third location, the last student to arrive and get into his/her position is out and becomes the new caller. Teacher takes that student's place. Play 2-3 rounds.

13. Add a fourth area, and change the "locations" to Monarchy, Oligarchy, Tyranny, and Democracy. Students again practice making a group tableaux for each area, discussing and explaining different features of each form of government. Play a few rounds, again with teacher substituting in for any student who gets “out.”