

Finding a Narrative

| Heroic Qualities | Heroic Image | Organizing Content into Story Form |
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| <p><i>What “heroic” qualities or values are central to the topic? What makes the characters in this story full of wonder?</i></p> <p>Courage and generosity of spirit.</p> <p>Democratic governments can inspire awe in that they work at all, despite the riot of ambitions, greed, disregard for the rights of others, intolerance, and blind self-interest that seem so common in the individual citizens. It takes courage and generosity of spirit for citizens to have faith in the democratic process; as well, those political leaders who seem to be most effective have a kind of courage and generosity of spirit that contributes to the success of a democratic government.</p> | <p><i>What image captures the heroic qualities of the topic?</i></p> <p>The image of a well-meaning but unstable giant, carrying a population on a huge tray, contoured and shaped like the country, constantly stumbling a zig-zagging, trying to follow the directions given by the people being carried. The giant has to struggle over treacherous terrain, but persists. The people on the tray ignore him, getting on with their lives, but occasionally shout directions at him. Much of his stumbling is due to trying to follow all these directions at once. And yet he keeps going, more or less forward, managing to stay upright and keep the country going more or less on an even keel.</p> | <p><i>What “heroic narrative” will allow us to integrate the content we wish to cover?</i></p> <p>The class can become a nation, the profile of which is based on a real county (such as New Friesland for New Zealand). Students can be organized into various interest groups (e.g. Indigenous people, trade employees, agricultural workers). Students have to use or develop democratic principles/ practices to solve problems. As a group, then, the class will try to use courage and generosity of spirit to keep the giant of democracy from toppling over. The class can role play democratic processes such as campaign speeches and voting practices and be given problems by the teacher which they have to attempt to solve through democratic means (e.g. on what grounds to allocate limited resources, such as computer use).</p> |

Looking Forward and Concluding

Courage in Democratic Government

| Towards Further Understanding | A Celebratory Ending | Assessment |
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| <p><i>How can the unit develop embryonic forms of Philosophic and Ironic understanding? What cognitive tools characteristic of the disciplines or embodied self-awareness can be introduced here?</i></p> <p><i>(Note: teachers should be sparing in their use of these additional tools, only introducing them when they believe a strong Romantic understanding of the topic has been developed.)</i></p> <p>How does the political climate of the society in which you grow up shape your worldview/ beliefs about human nature?</p> <p>Could the same people choose different types of governments for different purposes (e.g. in times of peace/ war)?</p> <p>At what point does trying to ensure greater equality undercut the form of democratic government that we have, and at what point does the degree of inequality undercut the form of democratic government that we have?</p> <p>How do animal groups make decisions? Is it a form of government?</p> | <p><i>What is the best way of resolving the dramatic tension inherent in the unit? What communal project or activity will enable the students to experience and share this resolution?</i></p> <p>Students could finish the unit by celebrating Friesland Day or Constitution Day, in which every interest group plays a vital role. Activities could include cultural presentations (such as traditional dances), games and competitions (such as races or sports), an art show, etc. The day could include a presentation by a student-appointed government member who comments on the challenges and accomplishments of democracy: balancing the specific interests of many different groups with the shared needs of all.</p> | <p><i>How can one know whether the topic has been understood, its importance grasped and the content learned?</i></p> <p>Do students understand the nature of their own government and know its composition, the relationship of its parts, and so on?</p> <p>Do students know of particular governments which exemplify various political models?</p> <p>Do students have a sense of both what is gained and lost from various types of governments?</p> |