

Name _____ Date _____

Representative Democracy

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1. b'

In the 17th and 18th centuries, Britain owned 13 colonies in the New World that is, America. But in 1776, the United States declared its independence. And in 1783, the United States won the Revolutionary War. It was its own country at last. What kind of government would the new country have?

America's revolutionary leaders didn't want to have a system like England's, with a king holding all the power. In their view, it was too easy for all-powerful rulers to misuse their power and behave cruelly towards their own people. Instead, they thought America's people should govern themselves. This type of government is called a democracy. In a democracy, power is held not by a king, but by a country's people.

2. b'

There are different forms of democracy. In a direct democracy, for example, the people vote on all major decisions. The government of Switzerland largely fits with direct democracy.

In a representative democracy, on the other hand, major decisions are made by government officials. The people elect these officials to represent their views. The United States is governed by representative democracy.

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3. b'

If you're an American citizen, you can start voting in elections at age 18. Once you check in at your polling place, you'll be handed a paper called a ballot. It lists the people who are running for office. You'll then go into a voting booth and mark your choices on the ballot. Every four years, this ballot will include the people who are running for president. But there are other positions on the ballot as well, such as senators and representatives. These are the government officials who make new laws.

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