

Civilizations: Abuse of Power

Teacher's Guide

Grade Level: 9-12

Curriculum Focus: World History

Lesson Duration: Three class periods

Program Description

Struggles for Power (37 min.) – Explores the growth of the Roman Empire and how key leaders defined, used, and abused their power. *Down Came the Wall* (4 min.) – A look at the forces that led to the building of the Berlin Wall, and why it finally came down 28 years later. *End of Apartheid* (6 min.) – Explains the South African system of racial segregation called apartheid, how it affected the country, and how it was finally abolished.

Onscreen Questions

- How do corrupt leaders affect their citizens?
 - How did Caesar abuse his power?
 - Why did the government of East Germany build the Berlin Wall?
 - Is it important for a government to keep its people happy?
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Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

- Discuss the role of government.
- Research a period of time from the perspectives of different people when it may have been difficult for a government to fulfill beneficial roles.
- Role-play what life was like during that time for each individual.
- Take a position about how the government handled the situation, given all the variables it had to consider.

Materials

- *Civilizations: Abuse of Power* video and VCR, or DVD and DVD player
- Computer with Internet access
- Newsprint and markers
- Newspapers or newsmagazines (optional)

Procedures

1. Begin the lesson by asking students what they think the role of our government is. Students may suggest the following:
 - To protect all citizens from outside enemies
 - To keep people safe
 - To ensure that people are free to live as they choose
 - To ensure freedom of speech
 - To ensure that all people are treated equally under the law
2. Ask students to think of any time in history, in the United States or another country, when it was difficult for a government to perform the roles discussed. There are examples throughout the world during all periods of history:
 - The middle and latter parts of the Roman Empire
 - The decades of apartheid in South Africa
 - The Berlin Wall era
 - Slavery in the United States
 - Racial segregation and the civil rights movement in the United States during the 20th century
3. Point out to students that the examples given above involve many different perspectives. Tell students that during the lesson, they will work with their classmates to understand one example from different perspectives:
 - A government official
 - An individual benefiting from the government's policy
 - A citizen adversely affected by the policy
 - A reformer

4. Divide students into groups of four. Have each group select one example above, and assign a role to each person in the group. Tell the groups that their task is to research the example and then perform a skit showing how the situation affected each individual.
5. Give students time in class to research their topic. If they selected Roman rule, apartheid, or the fall of the Berlin Wall, suggest that they watch the appropriate segment of the video *Civilizations: Abuse of Power*. The following Web sites, organized by topic, also have helpful information:

- Roman Rule

<http://ireland.iol.ie/~coolmine/typ/romans/intro.html>

<http://www.crystalinks.com/romemperors.html>

<http://www.royalty.nu/Europe/Rome/Augustus.html>

- Apartheid

<http://www-cs-students.stanford.edu/~cale/cs201/apartheid.hist.html>

<http://www.africanaencyclopedia.com/apartheid/apartheid.html>

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1953geyer.html>

<http://www.anc.org.za/un/>

- Fall of the Berlin Wall

<http://www.andreas.com/berlin.html>

http://www.newseum.org/cybernewseum/exhibits/berlin_wall/index.htm

<http://www.wall-berlin.org/gb/berlin.htm>

- Slavery in the United States

<http://www.afro.com/history/slavery/main.html>

<http://www.iabolish.com/today/background/us.htm>

http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/maritime/slavery/abolition_americas.asp

- Segregation and the Civil Rights Movement

<http://www.watson.org/~lisa/blackhistory/civilrights-55-65/>

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/text.htm>

http://www.cnn.com/EVENTS/black_history/travel/index.html

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aopart9.html>

6. After students have completed their research, allow enough time in class to meet with their groups and prepare their presentations. Try to give each group the opportunity to perform.
7. During the next class period, discuss what students learned from the activity. Do they have a better understanding of why certain policies are put in place, even if they are unjust? Help students understand that many situations affect people in different ways.
8. Conclude the lesson by asking students whether they think the governments in each situation were fulfilling their responsibility to the people. If they did not at first, did they do so later on? What role did individuals play in changing a government policy?

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- 3 points: Students were highly engaged in class discussions; researched their topic thoroughly; and produced a presentation that reflected a thorough understanding of their situation and its impact on different people.
- 2 points: Students participated in class discussions; conducted an adequate amount of research, and produced a presentation that reflected some understanding of their situation and its impact on different people.
- 1 point: Students participated minimally in class discussions; did not research their topic thoroughly; and produced an incomplete presentation that reflected little understanding of their situation and its impact on different people.

Vocabulary

apartheid

Definition: A government policy in South Africa lasting from 1948 to 1991 during which black South Africans were separated from white South Africans and were not granted the rights or opportunities offered to the whites

Context: The African National Congress (ANC) worked very hard to eliminate apartheid; many leaders, such as Nelson Mandela, were imprisoned unjustly, or even killed for their cause.

Berlin Wall

Definition: A wall that went up in 1961 around democratically controlled West Berlin separating it from communist controlled East Germany.

Context: When the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, it symbolized the end of the Cold War.

civil rights movement

Definition: An organized effort that began in the 1950s to use non-violent protests as a way of ending segregation and other discriminatory practices against African Americans.

Context: During the civil rights movement, African Americans worked to end segregation in schools and restaurants and on buses.

government

Definition: A political system designed to keep order, safeguard the rights of the people, and protect against enemies

Context: During the Roman Empire, the republican government was replaced with absolute rule by emperors, which ultimately contributed to the empire's downfall.

segregation

Definition: An intentional separation of institutions, facilities, and services among different ethnic groups

Context: Segregation bred conditions that were separate but not equal; African-American neighborhoods were usually less prosperous than white neighborhoods.

slavery

Definition: An institution that permitted people to own others and consider them as property

Context: In the 19th century, the economy of the southern part of the United States became dependent on slavery.

Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Historical Understanding— Understands and knows how to analyze chronological relationships and patterns
- World History: Across the Eras— Understands long-term changes and recurring patterns in world history
- Language Arts: Viewing— Uses a range of strategies to interpret visual media

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

NCSS has developed national guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands/>

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Time, Continuity, and Change
 - Individual Identity and Development
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Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>
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