

Why must DEMOCRACY be learned by each generation?

The YMCA Youth & Government program teaches democracy to the youth of our state. In order to begin the learning process, it is important to think critically about democracy and understand how democratic processes affect our lives politically, socially and personally.

Democracy, the word and the process, is often taken for granted. Individuals assume their definition of democracy matches those of others around them. In reality we need to be aware of our own definition and understand how it fits, or doesn't fit with those of our friends, family and political leaders.

Definitions of democracy:

- **Greek** – from words “demos” (people) and “kratos” (rule)
- **Honest Abe** – “A government of the people, for the people, and by the people.”
- **Alexis de Tocqueville** - “The very essence of democratic government consists in the absolute sovereignty of the majority”

Forms of democracy (this is not an exhaustive list, just a sample):

- Representative democracy
- Socialist democracy
- Direct democracy
- Anarchist democracy
- Liberal democracy
- Tribal democracy
- Consensus democracy

A list of democratic countries around the world (again, not an exhaustive list):

- The USA
- Cuba
- Holland
- Poland
- South Africa
- Jordan
- Italy
- Iran
- The Navajo Nation