Fifth Grade

DISCOVER AMERICA

Teacher Guide



Democracy, Faith, and Freedom: Tocqueville's American Journey

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Key Themes

- American Exceptionalism
- Democracy and Self-Governance
- Local Government as a Foundation for Liberty
- Religious Freedom
- The Importance of Civic Virtue and Engagement
- The Role of Religion in a Free Society



Core Values

- Community
- Faith
- Liberty
- Life

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Understand Alexis de Tocqueville's observations about the importance of local government in America, particularly how it contributes to the strength and freedom of the country.
- Identify the key principles outlined in Tocqueville's book *Democracy in America*, particularly his views on the relationship between religion and democracy.
- Describe how the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights protect citizens' rights and why these documents are important for the protection of freedom.
- Recognize the role of local government in promoting fairness, safety, and community involvement, as observed by Tocqueville during his visit to the United States.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Reflect on the Founding Fathers' belief that religion was necessary for a successful government and explain how this belief influenced the shaping of American democracy.
- Examine the concept of "the balance of power" in American government, as observed by Tocqueville, and why it is important for ensuring fairness and preventing abuses of power.
- Compare and contrast Tocqueville's observations of American democracy with the events in France during the French Revolution, particularly regarding religion and government.
- Analyze how the principles of responsibility, self-governance, and political engagement contribute to the success of a democratic society, using examples from Tocqueville's observations.



Key Terms

01 **analogy:** when you compare two things that are different but have something in common to help explain an idea.

02 **balance of power:** refers to how power is shared between different branches of government so that no one branch or person has too much control.

03 **Christianity:** a religion based on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

04 **constitutional republic:** a system in which the people elect leaders who make decisions on their behalf, but those leaders must follow a set of rules laid out in the document that set up the government (in the United States, the "document" is our Constitution).

05 **Declaration of Independence:** a very important document that was created by the Founding Fathers to tell Great Britain that the colonies were free and were going to govern themselves.

06 **democracy:** a type of government where the people help make decisions by voting for their leaders and laws.

07 **egalitarian:** in this context, a place where people are treated equally.

08 **equality:** when people are treated the same, regardless of their background or who they are.

09 **government:** a group of leaders who help make rules and decisions for a community, state, or country.

10 **"habits of the heart":** the way people naturally behave and treat one another.

11 **local government:** the group of leaders in a town or city who help make rules and decisions for the community.

Key Terms

12 **monarchy:** a type of government where a single person, like a king or queen, has the power to make all the decisions.

13 **moral foundation:** a set of values that guide actions.

14 **observation:** something you notice by looking, listening, or paying close attention.

15 **religion:** a system of beliefs about God and the world, which often includes worship, prayer, and teachings about how to live a good life.

16 **responsibility:** taking care of things that need to be done and making good choices.

17 **restraint:** the ability to hold back from doing something wrong.

18 **Second Great Awakening:** a time of religious revival that took place from the late 1700s to the early 1800s.

19 **United States Constitution:** the set of rules that created our country's government. It was written in 1787 by the Founding Fathers to make sure that the government would be fair and protect the rights of the people.

Introduction

TELL Students 📷🔑

Alright, patriots! We're going to start with a fun challenge. I'm going to give you a word, and you need to tell me what the opposite of that word is. Are you ready? Let's see how sharp your minds are! What's the opposite of *narrow*? (Wide) What's the opposite of *tall*? (Short) What's the opposite of *soft*? (Hard) What's the opposite of *day*? (Night) What's the opposite of *truth*? (Lie) What's the opposite of *read*? (Write) Wait a second—what do we call the person who writes? (An author!) That's right! An author is someone who writes books, stories, or poems. Today, we're going to take on a similar role as authors. We'll be making observations, just like one special author did, to understand the world around us. And at the end of this lesson, we'll put our observations together to create our very own book! So, grab your notebook or journal and a pencil, because we're going to explore how we can document and interpret the world around us, just like authors do when they write about the ideas and events they observe. We'll begin by learning about Alexis de Tocqueville, a visitor from France who traveled across America in 1831. **[Reference Tocqueville Image]** He made fascinating observations about how Americans lived, worked, and governed themselves, which he later shared in his book *Democracy in America*. An **observation** is something you notice by looking, listening, or paying close attention. It's the information you gather about the world around you. As we dive into Tocqueville's journey, you'll have the chance to make your own observations, and by the end, we'll combine them to create our very own book about how America works! Let's get started!

ASK Students ✏

What do you think we can learn from Tocqueville's observations? Write your thoughts in your notebook!

TELL Students 📷🔑

Before we dive in, let's take a moment to revisit some important concepts we've studied. We've been learning about our Founding Fathers—the courageous leaders who played a crucial role in creating the United States. These leaders not only fought for independence but also wrote foundational documents that continue to shape our country and its government. Two of the most important documents are the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. However, before the Declaration of Independence was written, another key figure, Thomas Paine, helped spark a revolution of thought. **[Reference Thomas Paine Image]**

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

Remember from our earlier lesson that Paine's *Common Sense* was a pamphlet that introduced ideas about independence and the rights of individuals. He boldly argued that it was time for the colonies to break away from British rule and establish their own government. Paine's writing helped inspire many to believe that independence was not just a possibility, but a necessity. He argued that the government should be based on the consent of the governed and that all people have natural rights. This way of thinking was a revolutionary shift in how people viewed power and freedom. The **Declaration of Independence** built on these ideas, formally declaring that the colonies were free from Britain's rule. Many events and ideas led to this change in mindset, including the growing frustration with how the British were governing. The Declaration of Independence was adopted, or accepted, on July 4, 1776, marking the beginning of a new nation founded on freedom. As we explore Alexis de Tocqueville's observations about America, think about how Paine's ideas helped fuel a revolution of thought, and compare them to Tocqueville's views on democracy. Both men were deeply interested in how people governed themselves, but each approached it from a different perspective. Paine's work encouraged independence, while Tocqueville focused on how democracy worked in practice. Reflect on how both of their writings shaped America's journey and how they connect to the ideas we still value today.

ASK Students

How did Thomas Paine's ideas in *Common Sense* help spark a revolution of thought in America? Compare these ideas with what Alexis de Tocqueville observed about America. How do both thinkers view the role of the people in government?

TELL Students

After the Revolutionary War, the Founding Fathers recognized that they needed to better unite the 13 states into a real country. To do that, they needed a strong and clear plan to guide how the country's government would function, including ways to make sure one law governed all thirteen states the same. They wanted to make sure the United States had fair laws and leaders who would protect the rights of all. That's why they wrote the United States Constitution in 1787. The **United States Constitution** is a set of rules that forms the foundation of our government. It outlines how laws are made, who holds power, and how that power is shared to prevent any one person or group from becoming too powerful.

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

A key part of the Constitution is the Bill of Rights, which protects essential natural rights, such as freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the right to fair treatment by the courts. These freedoms ensure that everyone can express their ideas, practice their beliefs, and make their own choices about how best to live. The Constitution is still the highest law in the United States today, continuing to guide our country and help it remain fair and free for everyone. Remember in our previous lesson, we learned about freedom of religion and freedom of speech—two important rights protected by the Bill of Rights. In your notebook, write about why you think the Constitution and the Bill of Rights are important.

ASK Students

Think about how the Bill of Rights allows you to speak freely and believe what you choose. How do these freedoms help protect you and others in your community?

TELL Students 📷

Have you ever gone on a field trip to learn something new, like visiting a museum, a farm, or a science center? Just like those field trips help you explore and discover new things, Alexis de Tocqueville took his own trip across the United States in 1831 and learned how Americans lived and how their government worked. We've already studied the Founding Fathers and the important decisions they made to help establish our country. Today, though, our focus is on Alexis de Tocqueville. While he wasn't one of the Founding Fathers, his observations are still extremely important. **[Reference Tocqueville Image]** Tocqueville was from France, a country in Europe that had been around for centuries, while America was a young country that had just won its independence from Britain; in relation to Europe, America was a newborn! Tocqueville wanted to understand why America was so successful in creating a new kind of government and society, even though it was still in its early stages. During his journey, Tocqueville made many observations —he carefully watched and listened to everything around him. He wanted to learn how people made decisions, how the government operated, and how Americans lived their daily lives. Later, he wrote a book called *Democracy in America*, where he shared his thoughts and findings.

Introduction

ASK Students

Why do you think Alexis de Tocqueville was so interested in learning about America's government? How do you think his observations helped him understand what made America successful, even though it was still a young country?

TELL Students

During his visit to America, Alexis de Tocqueville closely observed how the government operated. A **government** is a group of leaders who make decisions and create rules for a community, state, or country. Their job is to protect people's rights, and that includes keeping them and their property safe, and treating them fairly. To do this, they also create laws that people must follow to help keep the people safe and to treat them fairly. One important type of government is a democracy. We have a democracy in the United States today. In a **democracy**, the people have the power to make decisions about how their country is run. They do this by voting to choose their leaders and deciding on important laws. This system allows the people to have a say in how things are done. However, the United States is also a constitutional republic. In a **constitutional republic**, the people elect leaders who make decisions on their behalf, but those leaders must follow a set of rules laid out in the Constitution. This helps protect everyone's rights. Tocqueville found America's system fascinating because it gave people more power and participation in their government than he had seen in his home country of France. This combination of democracy and a constitutional republic made America unique in how it balanced the power of the people with the protections outlined in the Constitution.

ASK Students

How does the combination of democracy and a constitutional republic in the United States help protect the rights of all citizens? Why do you think this system is important for ensuring fairness and freedom? Take some time to write your thoughts in your journal!

TELL Students

Let's dive back into Tocqueville's journey! In 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville traveled across the United States for 10 months. He and his companion, Gustave de Beaumont, were sent by the French government to study America's criminal justice system. However, Tocqueville used this opportunity to explore more about the country's unique government and society.

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

He was especially interested in how democracy worked in the United States because, at that time, France was struggling to transition from a **monarchy**, where the king held all the power, to a democracy after the French Revolution. Tocqueville wanted to understand how **equality** (treating everyone fairly and equally) and liberty (freedom) worked together in the United States. He was curious about how America's government protected people's rights and prevented the abuse of power, something that had gone wrong in France before, during, and after its revolution, leading to chaos and instability. The observations Tocqueville made during his trip formed the basis of his famous book *Democracy in America*. This book remains one of the most important works ever written about the political and social life of the United States, as it offers unique insights into the workings of American democracy.

ASK Students

Take a moment to think about these questions and write your thoughts in your journal: Why do you think Tocqueville was so interested in how democracy worked in the United States, especially considering what was happening in France at the time? How do you think Tocqueville's observations about equality and liberty in America might have been influenced by the problems France faced after the revolution? What do you think Tocqueville learned about how America's government protected people's rights and prevented the abuse of power? How do you think the ideas Tocqueville wrote about in *Democracy in America* are still relevant today?

TELL Students

When Tocqueville wrote about societies, he said people had "two conflicting passions": the desire "to be led" (to have a leader or ruler) and the "wish to remain free." He admired the United States because it satisfied both of these desires. Tocqueville saw the U.S. as an **"egalitarian"** country, meaning it was a place where people were treated equally. He also noticed that the government worked to protect people's freedoms while avoiding too much control by any one powerful leader. Tocqueville believed this balance was made possible by two main factors: local town hall governments, where people had direct control over their communities, and the role of religion in American society, which helped support democratic values. **Local government** refers to the group of leaders in a town or city who help make rules and decisions for the community.

Introduction

ASK Students

Why do you think Tocqueville found the balance between being led and remaining free in the United States so important? How did local governments and religion help maintain that balance? Take some time to reflect and write your thoughts in your journal!

TELL Students

Tocqueville believed that towns, or "villages," naturally form when people live close to each other. He argued that these towns are essential because they make a nation stronger and help protect freedom. Tocqueville said local meetings teach people about liberty, just like schools teach about subjects like math or reading. **[Reference School Image]** Local government, Tocqueville thought, is like a classroom for freedom—it helps us understand how our government works and how to use our rights responsibly. Since local governments are so close to our daily lives, they make it easier for us to participate and help make decisions. Tocqueville believed that a country couldn't truly be free without strong local governments because they play a key role in teaching us about fairness, responsibility, and how to protect our freedoms.

ASK Students

Think about the analogy of local government being like a school. An **analogy** is when you compare two things that are different but have something in common to help explain an idea. In this case, Tocqueville compares local government to a school because both help people learn important lessons—local government teaches how to make fair decisions and work together, just like school teaches subjects like math and reading. What does this comparison teach you about the role of local government in helping people learn how to be responsible citizens and protect their freedoms? Write your thoughts in your journal!

TELL Students

America has always been a country that values small, local communities. When the colonists arrived in America, they were given special rules by England called Royal Charters. **[Reference Royal Charters Image]** These rules allowed them to set up their own local governments to make decisions for their colonies and towns. Since England was far away, it was difficult for the king and leaders to govern the colonies closely. Because of this, local government became a crucial part of life in the United States.

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

In every community, the people are the source of power. This means that the citizens, the people who live in the community, have the most influence over decisions. Tocqueville believed that local governments were essential for the success of America's democracy because they allowed people to directly participate in decision-making. This involvement helped ensure that everyone's voice could be heard and that communities could work together to make fair decisions.

ASK Students

After learning about the importance of local government in America, take a moment to reflect on these questions and write your observations in your notebook: Why do you think local governments became so important in early America? What role do citizens play in local government, and why is their involvement so important for a community's success? How do you think Tocqueville's belief in the importance of local governments connects to the way America functions today? What are some ways you think local government helps people make fair decisions and work together?

TELL Students

By participating in town meetings and local government, citizens learned self-governance, developed a love for liberty and order, and understood the balance of power. The **balance of power** refers to how power is shared between different branches of government so that no one branch or person has too much control. **[Reference Balance of Power Image]** This system helps ensure fairness and prevents any single person or group from gaining too much power. Tocqueville saw the balance of power as a key part of protecting liberty and ensuring fair treatment for everyone. Tocqueville used the townships in New England as an example of how local government works in America. He observed that when citizens were involved in local decisions, it strengthened their sense of loyalty to their community and ensured the safety and well-being of the town. By participating in these decisions, citizens understood their rights and responsibilities and became more responsible members of a democratic society.

ASK Students

After thinking about Tocqueville's views on local government and the balance of power, take a moment to reflect on these questions and write your thoughts in your notebook: What does "balance of power" mean?

Introduction

ASK Students (continued)

How do you think local governments help ensure that power is shared fairly and no one has too much control? Why do you think it's important for citizens to be involved in their local government, based on Tocqueville's observations? How does participating in local government help citizens understand their rights and responsibilities? What role do you think local governments play in strengthening a sense of community and protecting people's well-being? Take your time to think about these questions and write your responses!

TELL Students

Tocqueville observed that responsibility is an important factor in maintaining a strong and healthy community. Being **responsible** means not only taking care of your own tasks, like completing homework or helping a friend, but also thinking about how your actions affect others. It involves making decisions that are thoughtful, fair, and kind. Responsibility helps keep everything running smoothly and ensures the well-being of the whole community.

ASK Students

Take a moment to reflect on how responsibility contributes to a successful society. Write your thoughts in your journal, and consider these questions to guide your writing: How does being responsible help keep a community strong and healthy? What are some examples of responsible actions in your own life? Why do you think responsibility is important for the success of a society?

TELL Students

At the local level, people had the chance to improve their own lives while also helping their community. Tocqueville believed that personal growth and helping others went hand in hand. He believed that the act of helping others benefits the helper just as much as the one receiving support. This idea shows that when individuals help others, they are also improving their own lives and becoming better citizens. In Tocqueville's view, local government in towns and cities was the foundation for a strong state and federal government. He also saw how local governments, along with the Royal Charters (special rules given to the colonists by England), played a role in shaping the American Revolution. He argued that the American Revolution was different from the French Revolution because it was not driven by a vague desire for independence. Instead, it came from a clear and well-thought-out desire for freedom. This difference helped Tocqueville understand how local government contributed to the strength of the nation and its fight for freedom.

Introduction

ASK Students

After thinking about Tocqueville's views on local government and its role in personal growth and the American Revolution, take a moment to reflect on these questions and write your thoughts in your journal: What do you think Tocqueville meant when he said that helping others is just as important for the person making the sacrifice as it is for the person benefiting from it? How does this idea relate to being a responsible citizen? Can you think of ways local governments have helped your community? Tocqueville argued that the American Revolution was driven by a well-thought-out desire for freedom. Why do you think Tocqueville viewed local government as the foundation for a strong national government? Take your time to think about these questions and write your reflections in your journal!

TELL Students

Tocqueville learned that when people work to improve their community, they are also improving themselves. He saw that by helping make their town a better place, people became responsible citizens. Remember, a citizen is someone who belongs to a community and has both rights and responsibilities. Citizens follow rules, treat others with respect, and work together to solve problems. Tocqueville believed that local government, made up of leaders who make decisions for a town, was very important because it helps keep the community fair and safe. He also thought that by getting involved in local government, people could learn responsibility and protect their freedoms. Now, let's watch a Star Spangled Adventures cartoon to learn more about Tocqueville's journey. As you watch, think about what you see and hear. Write an observation in your notebook about what makes a good citizen and why local government is important. Use these questions to guide your thinking:

1. What are some actions a good citizen takes to help their community?
2. How does working together in a town help everyone?
3. Why is local government important for keeping people safe and making fair decisions?

Take some notes, and we'll discuss them after the video!

Introduction

WATCH

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon Ep. 41:
Alexis de Tocqueville/Reflections on American Democracy



Lesson

TELL Students

Let's talk about what you observed in the cartoon! Alexis de Tocqueville had an exciting journey across America, didn't he? His trip was like an exploration to learn about how the country worked, especially in smaller towns and cities. While many people focus on national and global issues, Tocqueville realized that local government has a huge impact on people's everyday lives. Tocqueville saw that local governments take care of important things like schools, roads, neighborhood safety, clean water, and emergency services. These systems make sure everything in the community runs smoothly. He also observed that in America, people worked together to take care of their towns, and because of this, things were better maintained than in other places. Three key ideas Tocqueville observed were local government, religion, and the balance of power. We'll dive deeper into each of these themes as we explore how they make America unique. Tocqueville believed local governments were crucial for keeping communities strong and free. Local governments are in charge of things like creating laws, maintaining safety, and making sure the community has what it needs to thrive. In fact, there are about 3,144 counties, over 13,000 school districts, and more than 16,500 towns in the United States, showing just how important local government is.

ASK Students

Even though national and global issues get a lot of attention, local governments have the biggest impact on daily life. They shape how well a community functions and make sure people are treated fairly. So, think about this: how do you think local governments help keep communities safe and fair? We'll explore that more as we continue learning about Tocqueville's observations! [Give students three minutes to discuss with a neighbor and then discuss as a class.]

TELL Students

Let's think about local leaders for a moment. Local leaders, like the mayor and city council members, play a very important role in our community. They are responsible for things like schools, parks, roads, and fire stations. They make sure schools have teachers, parks are clean and safe, and roads are in good condition so people can travel easily. Local leaders also ensure that we have police officers and firefighters to protect us and help in emergencies. **[Reference First Responders Image]** Through local government, we learn how freedom works and how to make decisions that are fair for everyone.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

Because local government is involved in our everyday lives, we can also get involved by learning the rules, voting when we grow up, and working together to make our communities better. Without local government, a country cannot stay strong and free because it ensures that people take care of each other and that everyone is treated fairly. Now, take a moment to think about what we've learned. Write an observation in your notebook using these questions to guide your thinking:

ASK Students

What are some responsibilities of local leaders in your community? How does local government help ensure fairness and safety for everyone? Why do you think it's important for citizens to be involved in local government? What did Tocqueville observe about local government?

TELL Students

Please read the following passage to learn more. [Print and distribute fifth grade student text.]
During his trip across America, Tocqueville was amazed by how well local governments worked. He saw that towns and cities had schools, well-maintained roads, and churches where people could gather to worship. He also noticed that the people in each town worked together to make important decisions. This teamwork helped them learn how to be responsible and good citizens. Being a good citizen means helping others, following rules, and making thoughtful, fair choices. Today, we still have thousands of towns and schools across the United States, each managed by local governments. This shows how important it is for people to work together to make decisions and take care of their communities. Local governments help make America strong and free!

ASK Students

What did Tocqueville notice about how people in towns worked together? How do you think local governments help people become good citizens? Why is it important for local governments to take care of things like schools and roads?

TELL Students 🔑

Now that we've talked about what Tocqueville observed about local government, let's move on to the next theme: religion. As mentioned earlier, religion was another part of the United States that fascinated Tocqueville.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

Religion is a system of beliefs about God and the world, and it often includes worship, prayer, and teachings about how to live a good life. Tocqueville wrote, "The religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention." Tocqueville noticed that in America, religion wasn't just something people kept to themselves or practiced in private. Instead, it was an important part of the country's values and beliefs. Religion shaped how people thought about fairness, helping others, and freedom. It was connected to the heart of American life and helped define the country's identity—meaning what made America different and special.

ASK Students

How do you think religion helped shape America's values and identity, according to Tocqueville? Write your thoughts in your journal.

TELL Students

It is important to remember that Tocqueville visited during the **Second Great Awakening**—a period of intense religious revival that took place from the late 18th to the early 19th century. **[Reference Second Great Awakening Image]** By emphasizing morality, humility, and compassion, this movement led to a significant increase in church membership and a stronger influence of Christianity on American culture. **Christianity** is a religion based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. Tocqueville saw that, unlike in Europe, where the practice of religion often conflicted with political freedom, in America, Christianity and democracy worked together smoothly. He believed that religion provided a **moral foundation** (a set of values that guide actions) that supported the democratic government. Tocqueville also referred to the First Great Awakening, which helped shape many of the ideas that were later included in the founding of America.

ASK Students

Why do you think Tocqueville believed that religion helped support democracy in America? How do you think the Second Great Awakening influenced the way people thought about freedom and self-government? Write your thoughts in your journal!

TELL Students

Tocqueville said that in America, religion didn't control the government, but it was still very important in shaping the way people thought about politics.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

He believed that religion helps protect freedom. This idea was important to Tocqueville because in his home country of France, many people believed that religion, especially Christianity, was a threat to democracy. In France, and much of Europe, the church and government were intertwined, so what happened in the church mattered for the government, and what happened in the government mattered for the church. In France, the monarch ruled by divine right, the belief that the king was chosen and appointed by God to rule. The French Revolution rejected that. And the French people who wanted freedom from the monarchy also attacked Christianity. For example, in 1793, the French celebrated the Festival of Reason, which they considered to be the opposite of faith. They placed a statue of the "Goddess of Reason" on the altar of a church. **[Reference Goddess of Reason Image]** The French government even created a new calendar that removed Christian holidays and eliminated Sundays, all as a way to reduce the influence of the church. Tocqueville, whose Christian parents were jailed during the French Revolution, was very interested in how religion worked in America and how it helped support freedom.

ASK Students

Why do you think Tocqueville thought religion was important in protecting freedom, even though it didn't directly control the government in America? Write your thoughts in your journal!

TELL Students

Tocqueville argued that in the United States, all Christians were united under the idea of equality. He observed that the clergy of different Christian groups spoke the same language and their opinions were in harmony with the laws. He believed that in America, "the spirit of Religion and the spirit of Liberty" were "admirably incorporated and combined." Tocqueville didn't just reject the idea that Christianity was against freedom; he went further, claiming that the "equality of conditions is more complete in the Christian countries." It is interesting that Tocqueville admired the essential relationship between religion and equality in America. As a Frenchman, Tocqueville survived a radical government during the French Revolution. **[Reference French Revolution Image]** At the time, the French rejected the church and its theology in favor of the philosophy and culture of Ancient Rome. Tocqueville believed that the thinkers of ancient Rome and Greece never fully understood the idea that all people are equal and have the same right to freedom. For the people of France, the rejection of religion in the name of equality, reason, and the rights of man left behind a void that was quickly filled with injustice, bedlam, and oppression.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

The paradox of Tocqueville's France was the result of tyrannical rule by simple majority. He was determined to figure out what made America different.

ASK Students

Why do you think the French leaders during the revolution wanted to separate religion from government? How is this different from what Tocqueville observed in America? Write your thoughts in your journal!

TELL Students

To understand Tocqueville's concerns, we need to look at one of his biggest worries about democracy in the United States. Tocqueville was afraid that the majority of people in the country could take away the freedoms of the minority. The Founding Fathers had this same fear. In Federalist No. 51, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton wrote, "If a majority be united by a common interest, the rights of the minority will be insecure." Tocqueville agreed that unlimited power can be dangerous, and he worried that the majority's power in the United States might be too strong. In the U.S., when someone is wronged or treated unfairly, who can they turn to for help? Tocqueville noticed that the majority holds the power in many areas:

- Public opinion (what most people think) is controlled by the majority.
- The legislature (the people who make laws) represents the majority.
- The executive branch (the president and government officials) is chosen by the majority.
- The military (public troops) is under the command of the majority.
- The decision of the jury (the group of people who decide court cases) is made up of the majority.

ASK Students

Tocqueville was concerned that the majority of people in the United States might have too much power, and that this could take away the freedoms of the minority. He noticed that in many areas, like public opinion, the government, and the military, the majority holds the power. Why do you think Tocqueville was worried about the majority having so much power in the United States? How do you think this could affect the freedoms of the minority? Write your thoughts in your journal!

Lesson

TELL Students

Tocqueville concluded that there was nothing in the American political system that could stop the majority from being too powerful. However, what fascinated him was that, unlike in European countries like France, the majority in the United States did not always oppress the minority. Why was that? Tocqueville believed that it wasn't so much the government that prevented this, but the "**habits of the heart**"—the way people think and act based on their values. One of the most important habits Tocqueville noticed among Americans was **restraint**, or the ability to hold back from doing something wrong, which he traced back to Christianity. He was on to something! Throughout the Bible, characters such as Joseph, King David, and Jesus all practice restraint and exemplify self-control. Tocqueville observed that in the United States religion was very strong. He was correct when he wrote that faith influenced people's decisions.

ASK Students

Why do you think Tocqueville believed that the "habits of the heart," like restraint, helped prevent the majority from oppressing the minority?

TELL Students

Please read the following passage to learn more.

In simple terms, Tocqueville said that when Americans believe in God, they understand that not everything is allowed or good, even if the laws say so. He wrote, "Thus whilst the law permits the Americans to do what they please, religion prevents them from conceiving, and forbids them to commit, what is rash or unjust." Tocqueville saw that the American system of government didn't have strong rules to stop the majority from becoming too powerful. Instead, the values of the people, especially their religious beliefs, were the most important safeguard against this. He said, "In America religion is the road to knowledge, and the observance of the divine laws leads man to civil freedom."

ASK Students

Tocqueville believed that while the laws in America allow people to do many things, religion helps guide people to make good choices and avoid doing things that are wrong or unfair. He thought that religion played an important role in protecting freedom by teaching values like responsibility and fairness. Why do you think Tocqueville believed that religion was so important in protecting freedom in America? Write your thoughts in your journal!

Lesson

TELL Students

The Founding Fathers thought religion was important, too. They set up a government that was independent from religious authority (meaning the government didn't control religion, and religion didn't control government), but they believed that the country needed a religious foundation to work well. In his Farewell Address, President George Washington said, "religion and morality are indispensable supports," meaning that religion helps people act morally, and this helps the country be successful. He also said that morality (knowing what is right and wrong) relies on religion: "Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle." John Adams noted that, since America did not have a strong government that could completely control the people, "Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." Because the Founding Fathers believed religion was necessary for a good government, they made sure people could choose their religion freely. Tocqueville noticed that in America, religion "never instructs the Americans more fully in the art of being free than when it says nothing of freedom." What Tocqueville meant is that religion helped teach Americans to be free, but it didn't have to directly tell them how to do it. Let's watch an exciting Learn More with Liberty to discover the history behind Tocqueville's mission across the Atlantic!

WATCH

Learn More with Liberty: Tocqueville's America: What Makes the U.S. Different from Other Countries?



ASK Students

The Founding Fathers believed that religion was important for a successful government because it helped people understand what is right and wrong. President George Washington even said that religion and morality were necessary for the country to do well. Tocqueville noticed that in America, religion taught people how to be free without directly telling them what to do. Why do you think the Founding Fathers thought religion was important for a good government? How do you think religion helped people make good choices in America? Write your thoughts in your journal!

Lesson

TELL Students

Tocqueville's observations teach us a lot about what makes America great. He saw that the strength of the country comes from the people's involvement in their communities and their shared values. Americans don't just rely on the government to solve problems; they take responsibility and work together to make their communities better. Feeling responsible for the community helps democracy thrive. Tocqueville also noticed that religion played a key role in teaching people right from wrong, which helped protect freedom. As you think about these ideas, remember that each of you has the power to make a difference in your community. Just like Tocqueville learned by observing, you can also learn more about what makes America great by staying involved, asking questions, and finding ways to help others. Keep thinking about how your actions today can shape the future!



Symbols of American Values: Tocqueville's Observations

Objective

Fifth-grade students will analyze their notes on Alexis de Tocqueville's observations about America and create a symbol representing the American value they believe was most important to him. They will then present their symbols and explanations to the class.

Materials Needed

- Paper and colored markers/pens
- Notebook or journal with notes on Tocqueville's observations (from today's lesson)
- Chart with key American values Tocqueville observed (local government, religious freedom, balance of power, responsibility, equality, etc.)

Instructions

1. Review Notes: Begin by reviewing the notes you have taken on Alexis de Tocqueville's observations. Consider the key themes and values that he mentioned in *Democracy in America*, such as:
   - Local government
   - Religious freedom
   - The balance of power
   - Responsibility and self-governance
   - Equality and liberty
2. Choose Your Key Value: Reflect on which value you think was the most important to Tocqueville. For example:
   - Did he admire how Americans practiced self-governance through local government?
   - Did he believe that religion helped protect freedom and shape the American character?
   - Did he think that the balance of power in government helped prevent abuses of authority? Choose one value that stood out to you most.
3. Create Your Symbol: Now, think about how you can represent this important American value with a symbol. You might want to:
   - Draw a scale to represent the balance of power
   - Create an image of a community or building to symbolize local government
   - Draw an open book or a cross to represent the influence of religion
   - Use a hand to symbolize responsibility and participation



Symbols of American Values: Tocqueville's Observations

4. Be creative and design a symbol that reflects your chosen value. You can use shapes, colors, or objects that best convey the idea to you.
5. Describe Your Symbol: After finishing your symbol, write a short explanation (3-5 sentences) about why you believe this value was most important to Tocqueville. Think about:
    - What did Tocqueville observe about this value in America?
    - Why do you think he considered it important for the country?
    - How does this value help America function as a democracy?
6. Present Your Symbol to the Class: Each student will present their symbol to the class. As you present, be sure to explain why you chose that specific value and how your symbol represents it. You can read your explanation or share it with the class in your own words.

Reflection Questions (for the class to consider after the activity):

- What do you think is the most important value that keeps America strong and free?
- How do we see these values in our country today?
- How can we participate in our community to live out these values?

This activity helps students think deeply about Tocqueville's observations, reinforces important American values, and allows them to connect these ideas to their own lives.

Symbols of American Values Grading Rubric

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Proficient (3)	Basic (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Symbol Creativity and Relevance	The symbol is highly creative, visually appealing, and strongly represents the American value chosen. It is clear and easy to understand.	The symbol is creative and relevant, with some visual appeal. It represents the chosen value, though with minor clarity issues.	The symbol is somewhat creative but lacks clear representation of the chosen value. It may be hard to understand.	The symbol lacks creativity and does not clearly represent the chosen value. It is difficult to understand.
Explanation of the Symbol	The explanation is clear, thoughtful, and well-developed, showing a strong understanding of the chosen value and its importance to Tocqueville.	The explanation is clear, with some thoughtfulness, showing a good understanding of the value and its importance.	The explanation is somewhat unclear or underdeveloped. The connection between the symbol and the value is weak.	The explanation is unclear or incomplete, with little or no connection to Tocqueville's views.
Connection to Tocqueville's Observations	Strongly connects the chosen value to Tocqueville's observations, providing specific examples or insights.	Provides a connection to Tocqueville's observations, but the explanation could be more specific or detailed.	Makes a vague or general connection to Tocqueville's observations. Lacks specific examples or insights.	Fails to connect the symbol to Tocqueville's observations or provides an incorrect interpretation.
Presentation	Presentation is confident and clear. The student explains the symbol and their reasoning in an engaging way.	Presentation is clear and understandable. The student explains the symbol, though with some hesitation.	Presentation is somewhat unclear or hesitant. Some difficulty explaining the symbol and reasoning.	Presentation is unclear, disorganized, or difficult to follow.
Effort and Engagement	The student shows great effort and engagement with the activity. The symbol and explanation reflect a high level of care and thought.	The student shows good effort and engagement. The work reflects a solid level of care.	The student shows some effort, but the work feels rushed or lacks full engagement.	The student shows minimal effort or engagement in the activity.

Symbols of American Values Grading Rubric

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Total Score: _____/20

Grading Scale:

- 16-20 Points: Excellent - Demonstrates a deep understanding of Tocqueville's observations, with strong creativity and effort.
- 11-15 Points: Good - Shows a solid understanding of the topic with some room for improvement in creativity and explanation.
- 6-10 Points: Satisfactory - The assignment meets basic expectations, but lacks depth or clear understanding of Tocqueville's observations.
- 1-5 Points: Needs Improvement - The assignment is unclear or incomplete, with minimal effort or understanding of the topic.

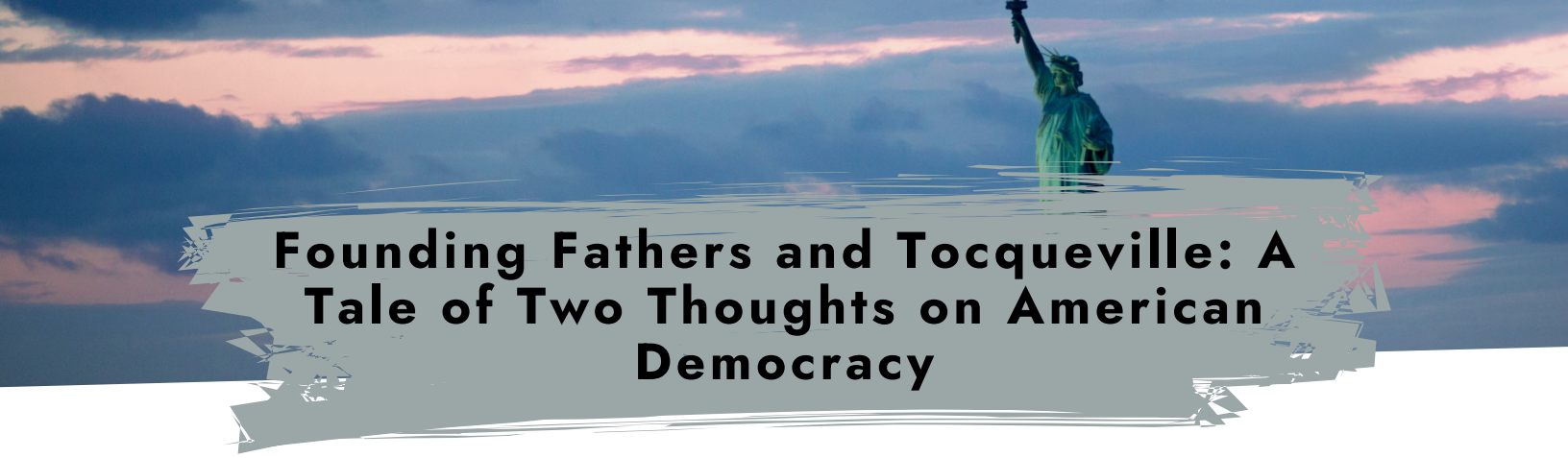
Teacher Recommendations:

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Founding Fathers and Tocqueville: A Tale of Two Thoughts on American Democracy

Objective

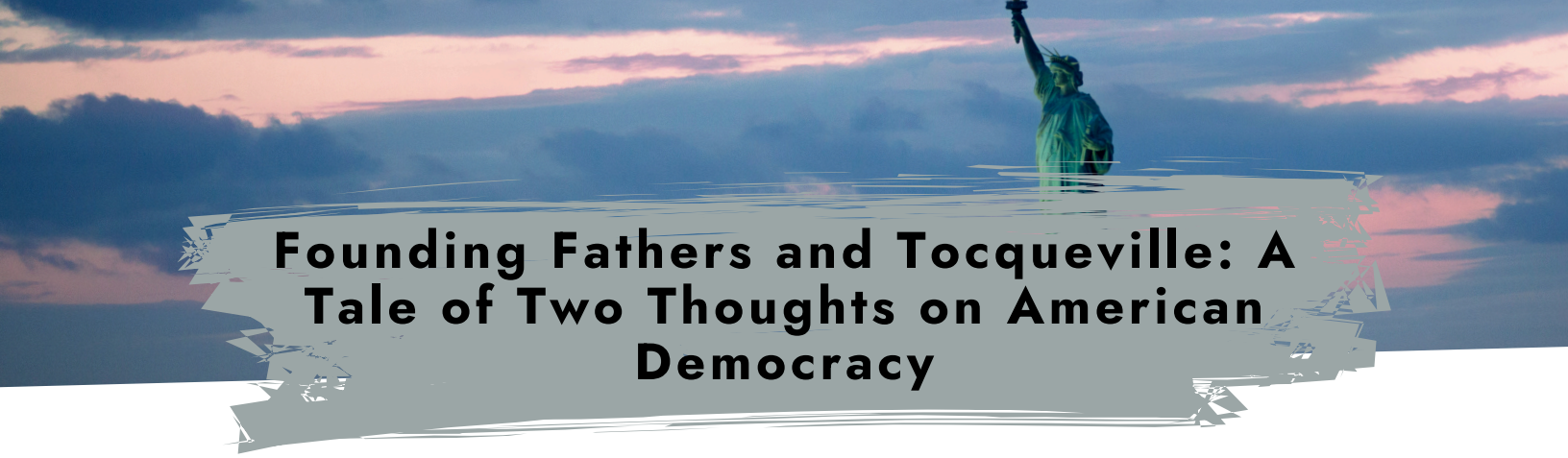
Fifth-grade students will work in groups to compare the beliefs of Alexis de Tocqueville with one of the Founding Fathers regarding American government. Through a role-play debate, students will practice their understanding of Tocqueville's observations and how these compare to the beliefs of the Founding Fathers.

Materials

- Research materials on Alexis de Tocqueville and various Founding Fathers (e.g., George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, or Alexander Hamilton)
- Chart paper and markers
- A list of interview questions (provided below)
- Notebook or paper for notes
- A timer

Instructions

1. Divide into Groups:
   - Divide the class into groups of 3-4 students. Each group will be assigned a different Founding Father to focus on (e.g., George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, or Alexander Hamilton).
2. Role Assignment:
   - Tocqueville: One student will take on the role of Alexis de Tocqueville. This student will explain Tocqueville's views on American democracy, local government, religion, and the balance of power.
   - Founding Father: One student will take on the role of the selected Founding Father. This student will explain the Founding Father's beliefs about government, liberty, and democracy.
   - Interviewer: One student will be the interviewer. This student will ask questions that encourage both the Founding Father and Tocqueville to compare their ideas and beliefs.
3. Preparation:
   - Before the role-play, each group will research the beliefs of their assigned Founding Father and Alexis de Tocqueville. They should look for key ideas about democracy, government, freedom, religion, and equality.
   - The interviewer should come up with at least 5-7 questions that compare the Founding Father's ideas to Tocqueville's views.

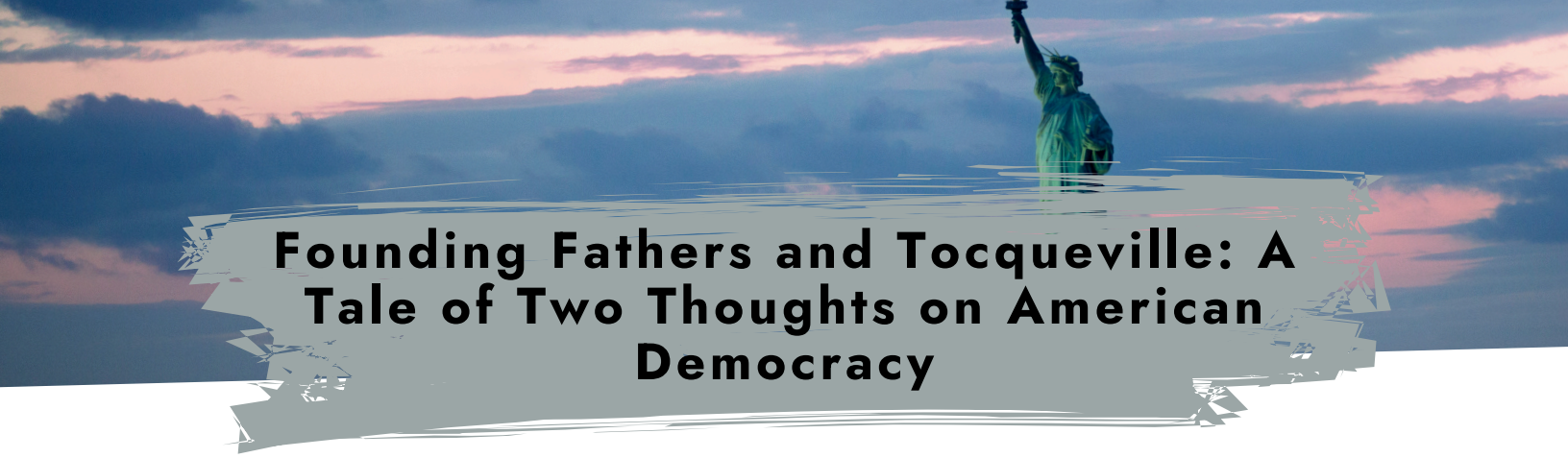


Founding Fathers and Tocqueville: A Tale of Two Thoughts on American Democracy

4. Debate:
    - The interviewer will ask questions that compare Tocqueville's observations with the Founding Fathers' beliefs. Here are a few example questions the interviewer might ask:
        - "Tocqueville, you observed that Americans were very involved in local government. How do you think this compares to the Founding Fathers' views on local control?"
        - "What role do you both believe religion should play in government? Tocqueville, you mentioned Christianity had an important influence on American democracy. How does that compare to the Founding Fathers' idea?"
        - "Tocqueville, you talked about the balance of power in the American government. How does that align with what this Founding Father thought about power?"
        - "Both of you are concerned with protecting freedom. How did the Founding Fathers' beliefs about freedom influence the Constitution, and how does your view of liberty in America compare, Tocqueville?"
5. Debrief and Presentation:
    - After the role-play, each group will present their findings to the class. The interview group should share the key points from the debate and explain how the beliefs of the Founding Father and Tocqueville are similar or different.
    - The other students should take notes during the presentation.
6. Reflection:
    - After all groups have presented, ask students to reflect on the following questions in their notebooks:
        - "What did you learn about the balance of power and liberty in America?"
        - "What similarities and differences did you notice between Tocqueville's observations and the beliefs of the Founding Fathers?"
        - "How did the Founding Fathers' ideas help shape the government we have today?"

Assessment

- The groups will be assessed based on their research and ability to compare and contrast Tocqueville's ideas with the Founding Fathers' beliefs.
- Students will be graded on their participation in the role-play, the clarity of their arguments, and how well they respond to the interview questions.
- A grading rubric (provided below) will be used to assess creativity, clarity, and understanding of the material.



Founding Fathers and Tocqueville: A Tale of Two Thoughts on American Democracy

Additional Sample Questions for the Interviewer

1. "Tocqueville, you mentioned that Americans take responsibility for their communities. How does that compare to the Founding Fathers' views on citizen participation in government?"
2. "In your opinion, what role does religion play in shaping a strong government, and how does this compare to what this Founding Father believed?"
3. "Tocqueville, you believe local governments help protect freedom. Do you think the Founding Fathers agreed with this? Why or why not?"
4. "The Founding Fathers' views on liberty were influential in shaping the Constitution. How do you think these views align with your observations about liberty in America?"

This activity will allow students to actively engage in the material, explore the similarities and differences between Tocqueville's observations and the Founding Fathers' ideas, and practice critical thinking and public speaking.

A Tale of Two Thoughts on American Democracy Grading Rubric

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Proficient (3)	Basic (2)	Needs Improvement (1)
Knowledge of Tocqueville's Views	Demonstrates a deep understanding of Tocqueville's observations and compares them accurately to the chosen Founding Father's views.	Demonstrates a good understanding of Tocqueville's views with clear comparisons to the Founding Fathers' ideas.	Demonstrates basic understanding of Tocqueville's views with some comparisons to the Founding Fathers' beliefs.	Shows limited understanding of Tocqueville's views and struggles to make comparisons with the Founding Fathers' beliefs.
Character Roleplay and Engagement	Fully embodies the role of Tocqueville, the Founding Father, or the interviewer, providing insightful responses and asking thoughtful questions.	Effectively embodies the role of Tocqueville, the Founding Father, or the interviewer with clear and relevant responses and questions.	Somewhat engages with the role but may struggle to stay in character or ask relevant questions.	Struggles to embody the role or lacks engagement, with few or irrelevant responses/questions.
Collaboration and Teamwork	Excellent collaboration; each group member contributes equally and listens respectfully to others.	Good collaboration; all group members contribute, though some may contribute more than others.	Fair collaboration; one or two members dominate, and others contribute less.	Poor collaboration; uneven participation, with some members contributing very little or not at all.
Clarity and Organization of Ideas	Ideas are presented in a clear, organized manner with smooth transitions between roles. The discussion flows logically.	Ideas are organized and clear with some minor transitions needed between roles.	Ideas are somewhat clear but may lack organization or contain confusing transitions.	Ideas are unclear or disorganized, making it difficult to follow the discussion.
Creativity and Critical Thinking	Demonstrates exceptional creativity in comparing Tocqueville's views with the Founding Fathers' beliefs, offering original insights.	Demonstrates creativity in comparing views, providing thoughtful analysis and insights.	Some creativity in comparing views, but analysis lacks depth or originality.	Lacks creativity or critical thinking; responses are surface-level or repetitive.
Presentation and Communication	Delivers responses and questions with confidence and clarity, engaging the audience effectively.	Delivers responses and questions clearly and confidently, though with some minor hesitations.	Responses and questions are understandable, but delivery lacks confidence or clarity.	Responses and questions are unclear or delivered with little confidence.
Overall Effort and Completion	All parts of the activity are fully completed with outstanding effort and detail.	All parts of the activity are completed with good effort and sufficient detail.	Some parts of the activity are completed, but more effort and detail are needed.	Activity is incomplete or lacking effort and detail.

A Tale of Two Thoughts on American Democracy Grading Rubric

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Total Score: _____/28

Grading Scale:

- 24-28 points: Excellent understanding and participation.
- 18-23 points: Good understanding and participation.
- 12-17 points: Needs improvement.
- Below 12 points: Requires significant improvement in understanding and participation.

Teacher Recommendations:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Student Text

Please read the following paragraphs to learn more.

During his trip across America, Tocqueville was amazed by how well local governments worked. He saw that towns and cities had schools, well-maintained roads, and churches where people could gather to worship. He also noticed that the people in each town worked together to make important decisions. This teamwork helped them learn how to be responsible and good citizens. Being a good citizen means helping others, following rules, and making thoughtful, fair choices. Today, we still have thousands of towns and schools across the United States, each managed by local governments. This shows how important it is for people to work together to make decisions and take care of their communities. Local governments help make America strong and free!

In simple terms, Tocqueville said that when Americans believe in God, they understand that not everything is allowed or good, even if the laws say so. He wrote, "Thus whilst the law permits the Americans to do what they please, religion prevents them from conceiving, and forbids them to commit, what is rash or unjust." Tocqueville saw that the American system of government didn't have strong rules to stop the majority from becoming too powerful. Instead, the values of the people, especially their religious beliefs, were the most important safeguard against this. He said, "In America religion is the road to knowledge, and the observance of the divine laws leads man to civil freedom."

Resources

- Tocqueville, Alexis de. "Vol. II, Book IV, Chapter VI: What Sort Of Despotism Democratic Nations Have To Fear" in ***Democracy in America***. https://www.gutenberg.org/files/816/816-h/816-h.htm#link2HCH0073.
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- https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/Washingtons_Farewell_Address.pdf.

Images

Alexis de Tocqueville



Credit: Wikipedia

Thomas Paine



Credit: Wikipedia

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School



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Royal Charters



Credit: Wikipedia

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Balance of Power



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First Responders



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Images

Second Great Awakening



Credit: Wikipedia

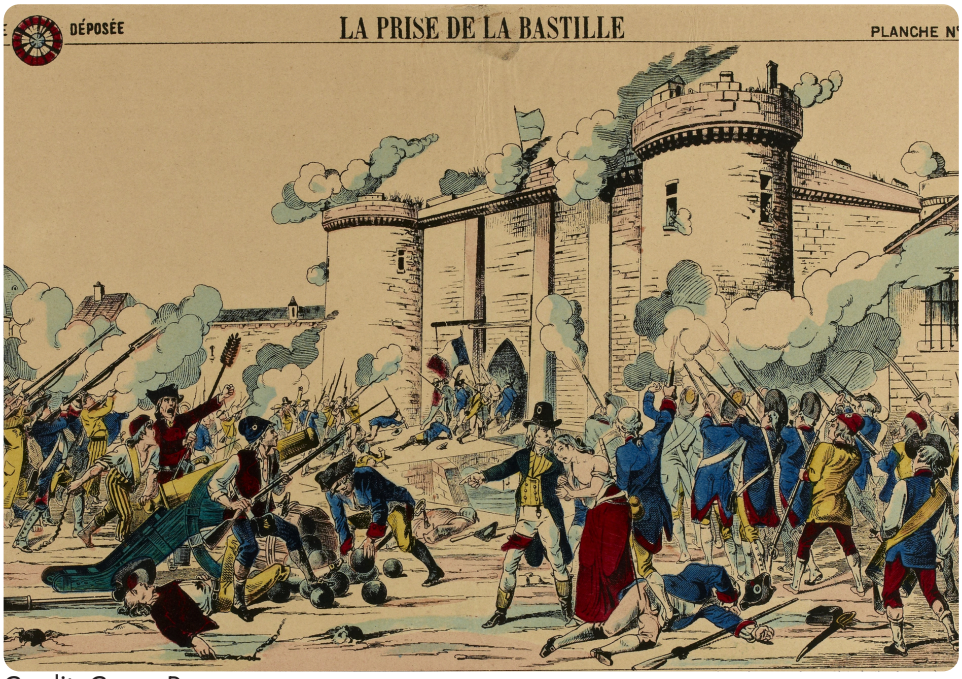
Goddess of Reason



Credit: Wikipedia

Images

French Revolution



Credit: Canva Pro

Notes