Third 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 the concept of self-government and how it allows people to make decisions in their communities.
- Explain that Tocqueville observed the importance of local government and how it helps people become responsible citizens.
- Describe the role of religion in American society and how it helps shape the values and decisions of the people.
- Understand the concept of democracy and why it is important for people to have a say in how their country is run.
- Recognize the significance of the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights in ensuring that people's freedoms and rights are protected.
- Analyze how Tocqueville's observations about American society and government helped him understand how freedom and religion can work together.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Reflect on the role of good values and self-control in maintaining a fair and peaceful society.
- Recognize the importance of working together, voting, and participating in local government as a way to ensure a strong, fair, and free country.



Key Terms

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

02 **citizens:** members of a community who have rights and responsibilities.

03 **criminal justice system:** the group of laws, courts, and leaders that help keep people safe and make sure rules are followed.

04 **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.

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

06 **equality:** when everyone is treated the same, no matter their background or who they are.

07 **Federalist Papers:** a collection of essays written by James Madison and Alexander Hamilton that defended the Constitution, explained how the new government would work under it, and how the new government would protect people's rights.

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

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

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

11 **majority:** the larger group of people who agree on something or share the same beliefs.

12 **minority:** the smaller group that has different ideas or beliefs from the majority.

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

Key Terms

14 **moral:** describing ideas about what is right and wrong.

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

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

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

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

19 **self-control:** stopping to think before you act, and acting only when it is the right thing to do.

20 **self-government:** a type of government where people in a community, state, or country get to make their own rules and choose their own leaders instead of being controlled by a king or ruler.

21 **self-improvement:** working to become better at something, like learning new skills, being kinder, or making good choices.

22 **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 📷🔑✏

Okay, Little Patriots! Today, on our journey to learn more about the founding of our country, we are going to have someone join us. We are going to make a lot of observations, just like he did, and later we will combine our observations into a book! So, get your notebook and pencil ready to go. [Give students a few minutes to get a notebook or paper and a writing utensil]. An **observation** is something you notice by looking, listening, or paying close attention. It's the information you gather about the world around you. For example, if you see that the sky is cloudy, hear birds singing, or feel that the air is cold, those are all observations. Today, we are going to learn about a visitor from another country who traveled across the United States in 1831. He made a lot of observations about how Americans lived, worked, and governed themselves. **[Reference Tocqueville Image]** His name was Alexis de Tocqueville, and he wrote a book called *Democracy in America* to share what he learned. We will do something similar! As we learn about Tocqueville's journey, you will write your own observations in your notebook, and at the end, we will combine them to create our own book about how America works! Let's get started!

ASK Students

What do you think it would be like to travel across the country and make observations about how people live and work, just like Tocqueville did? What kinds of things would you pay particular attention to?

TELL Students 📷🔑

Before we begin, let's take a moment to review what we have learned so far. We've been studying our Founding Fathers—the brave leaders who helped create the United States. They wrote important documents that shaped our country and its government. Two of the most important documents they wrote are the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. The **Declaration of Independence** was written to tell Great Britain that the colonies were free and were going to make their own decisions. It explains that all people have natural rights, which means rights that everyone is born with. These rights include life, liberty (freedom), and the pursuit of happiness. The Founding Fathers believed that these rights came from God, not from a king or government. The Declaration of Independence was adopted, or accepted, on July 4, 1776, which is why we celebrate Independence Day every year on the Fourth of July! **[Reference Fourth of July Image]**

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)
The ideas in the Declaration of Independence helped the United States grow strong and free, which is likely one reason why someone like Alexis de Tocqueville wanted to observe and learn about how things worked so well here.

ASK Students
What are some of the rights mentioned in the Declaration of Independence? Why are they important for people in the United States?

TELL Students
After the Revolutionary War, the Founding Fathers knew they needed to create a strong plan for how the new country would be run. They wanted to make sure that the United States would have fair rules and leaders who would protect the rights of all citizens. That's why they wrote the United States Constitution in 1787. The **United States Constitution** is a set of rules that created our government. It explains how laws are made, who is in charge, and how power is shared so that no one person or group has too much control. One important part of the Constitution is the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights protects important natural rights like freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and ensures that the government treats you fairly. These freedoms help make sure everyone has a voice and can make their own choices. The Constitution is still the highest law in the United States today, and it continues to guide our country. In your notebook, write about why the Constitution and Bill of Rights are important. Here are some questions to help guide your writing:

ASK Students
What do you think would happen if there were no rules or laws to protect people's rights? Why is it important that everyone has the freedom to speak, believe what they want, and vote? How do you think the Constitution helps our country?

TELL Students
We have learned about the Founding Fathers and the important choices they made to build our country. But today, we are going to learn about someone who was not one of the Founding Fathers and was not from America.

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

Instead, he was a visitor from another country who was curious about what made America special. Have you ever been on a field trip to learn something new? Maybe you've visited a museum, a farm, or a science center to explore and discover new things. **[Reference Field Trip Image]** Just like you take field trips to learn, Alexis de Tocqueville took a trip across the United States in 1831 and learned how Americans lived and how their government worked.

Tocqueville was from France, which was a country that was much older than the United States. Tocqueville was fascinated by America, a young country that had just won its independence from Britain. He wanted to understand why America was so successful in creating a new kind of government and society. During his journey, he made many observations, meaning he paid close attention to everything he saw and learned. He was interested in how the people made decisions, how their government worked, and how they lived their daily lives. Later, he wrote a book called *Democracy in America* in which he shared his thoughts and observations about what he had discovered. **[Reference *Democracy in Action* Image]** As we learn about Tocqueville and his observations, remember to write down your own thoughts in your notebook! Let's get started!

ASK Students

What do you notice about what Tocqueville learned? What surprises you about what he saw in America, especially considering how young the country was compared to his home country of France?

TELL Students 🔑

During his visit to America, Alexis de Tocqueville paid close attention to how the government worked. A **government** is a group of leaders who make decisions and create rules for a community, state, or country. Their job is to keep people safe, ensure that everyone is treated fairly, and help everything run smoothly. The government is responsible for important things like building and fixing roads, running the police force, and making sure parks and public places are clean and safe. It also creates laws that people must follow to ensure the country remains safe and fair for everyone. One important type of government is called a **democracy**. In a democracy, the people have the power to make decisions about how the country is run. They do this by voting to choose their leaders and decide on important laws.

Introduction

TELL Students (continued)

The United States is a democracy, which means that the **citizens**, or people in the country who take responsibility for it, get to help make decisions about their government. This gives everyone a chance to have their voice heard, ensuring that the government works to protect everyone's rights and freedoms. Tocqueville was fascinated by this system because it gave people power in ways that were different from what he had seen in his home country of France.

ASK Students

Why do you think it's important for people in a democracy to help make decisions about their government?

TELL Students 📷🔑

In 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville traveled to the United States for 10 months with his friend Gustave de Beaumont. They were officially sent by the French government to study the American criminal justice system. The **criminal justice system** includes the laws, courts, and leaders that work to keep people safe and make sure rules are followed. However, Tocqueville also took this opportunity to learn more about how democracy worked in the United States. At the time, France was having a difficult time changing from a **monarchy**, where the king had all the power, to a democracy, where the people choose their leaders and have a say in how their country is run. **[Reference Monarchy Image]** Tocqueville wanted to understand how freedom and fairness worked together in America. He was interested in how the government made sure no leader had too much power and how American society remained stable, while France had experienced many problems and struggles during and after the French Revolution. Throughout his trip, Tocqueville wrote down many observations, things he noticed, about American life, government, and communities. His notes later became the foundation for his famous book *Democracy in America*, which remains one of the most important books about how the United States was created and how democracy works.

ASK Students

What do you think Tocqueville learned about how democracy works in the United States during his visit? How was this different from what was happening in France at the time?

Introduction

TELL Students

Today, we are going to explore what Alexis de Tocqueville learned about America and why his ideas about democracy, religious freedom, and self-government are still important today! **Self-government** means that the people in a town, state, or country create their own rules and choose their leaders, rather than being controlled by a king or one person. In self-government, people work together to make decisions, pass laws, and help their communities grow. This is a key part of democracy, which is a type of government where citizens have the power to influence how their country is run. Citizens do this by voting and sharing their ideas. The United States was built on the idea of self-government so that the people, not a king, would have the power to make choices about their future. This idea helped make America unique, and it is still a vital part of our country today! Now, take a few minutes to write down an observation in your notebook about what self-government means and discuss this with your neighbor. [Give students three minutes to discuss their observations and then discuss as a class.]

ASK Students

What does self-government mean? Why is it important?

TELL Students

Alexis de Tocqueville was very interested in learning how democracy worked in America, so he paid close attention to how local governments functioned in towns and cities. He observed that when people lived near each other, they naturally formed communities where they made rules and worked together. He believed that **local government**, where the people in a town help make decisions, was very important because it gave people a voice and helped keep the country strong and free. Tocqueville compared local government to a school. **[Reference Local Government Image]** Just as schools teach students important subjects like reading and math, local governments teach people how to make fair decisions and work together. He noticed that when people attended town meetings, voted for local leaders, and helped solve problems in their communities, they were learning how to be responsible citizens. Because local government is so close to people's daily lives, it helps them understand and protect their freedoms. Tocqueville believed that no country could be truly free unless it had strong local governments where people could participate and make their own choices. Now, take a moment to think about what we've learned. Write an observation in your notebook about what Tocqueville saw and how local government helps protect our freedom. Here are some questions to help you with your observation:

Introduction

ASK Students
Why is local government important? How does local government help people learn to make fair decisions? How does the local government give people a voice in their community?

TELL Students 📷
Tocqueville observed that local government has always been an important part of American life. When the colonists came to America, the king of England gave them special rules called Royal Charters. **[Reference Royal Charters Image]** These rules allowed the colonists to set up their own local governments to make decisions for their towns. Because England was far away, it was hard for the king to control everything, so the colonists had to learn how to govern themselves. When Tocqueville visited America, he studied small towns and saw how strong their local governments were. He noticed that when people worked together to manage their towns, they felt more connected to their communities and helped make them better places to live. The people learned how to make fair decisions and take care of important things like roads, schools, and safety.

ASK Students
Why do you think local government was important for the colonists when they came to America? How did it help them take care of their towns?

TELL Students 📷🔑✏
Tocqueville noticed that being responsible was essential to keeping a community strong. Being **responsible** means doing what is necessary, making good decisions, and helping others when needed. For example, you show responsibility when you complete your homework on time, help your classmates, or clean up after yourself. Responsibility also means thinking about how your actions affect the people around you. **[Reference Responsibility Image]** It's about making choices that are kind, fair, and helpful to others. When people are responsible, it helps the whole community run smoothly and stay strong. Now, take a moment to write an observation in your journal. Think about these questions to guide you:

ASK Students
What does being responsible mean to you? Can you think of a time when you made a responsible choice at school or at home? How do your actions affect the people around you?

Introduction

TELL Students

At the local level, people have the opportunity to improve their own lives while also helping their communities. Tocqueville saw that when people work to improve themselves, they also make their communities better. **Self-improvement** means becoming better at something, like learning new skills, being kinder, or making wiser choices. Tocqueville believed that helping others and improving yourself go together—when people do good things for their community, they also grow as individuals. He also realized that local government is important because it helps people make fair decisions and take care of their towns. When local governments work well, they make the entire country stronger. Now, take a moment to write an observation in your notebook about what you just learned. Think about these questions:

ASK Students

How do you think self-improvement can help your community? Can you think of a way to help your community while also improving yourself? Why do you think local government is important for a community?

TELL Students

Tocqueville discovered that when people help their community, they are also helping themselves. He saw that when people worked to make their town a better place, they became responsible citizens. Remember, a citizen is someone who is part of a community and has both rights and responsibilities. Citizens follow rules, are kind to others, and work together to solve problems in their local government. Tocqueville believed that local government was very important because it keeps the community fair and safe. He thought that being involved in local government helps people 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. You can use these questions to guide your thoughts:

- What are some things a good citizen does to help their community?
- How can working together in a town help everyone?
- Why do you think local government is important for keeping people safe and making fair decisions?

Write down your thoughts, and we'll talk about them after the cartoon!

Introduction

WATCH

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

Lesson

TELL Students

Let's discuss the observations you made while watching the cartoon. Alexis de Tocqueville had quite an exciting journey, didn't he? His trip across America was like going on a big field trip! He learned about the country and how its government worked, especially in smaller towns and cities. While many people focus on big national or world issues, Tocqueville realized that local government has the greatest impact on people's everyday lives. Local governments take care of important things like schools, roads, neighborhood safety, clean water, and emergency services. They make sure everything in the community runs smoothly. Tocqueville observed that in America, people worked together in their towns to take care of important needs. He saw that schools, churches, and roads were better maintained than in other places. Today, there are about 3,144 counties, over 13,000 school districts, and more than 16,500 towns across the United States. **[Reference U.S. Map Image]** This shows how important local government is for keeping communities strong and free. Think about how the local government helps you every day and how people in your community work together to make decisions.

ASK Students

Why do you think local government is so important for helping people in their communities, and how do you think it helps make a country strong and free? [Give students three minutes to discuss with a neighbor and then discuss as a class.]

TELL Students

Local leaders play a big role in taking care of important things in our community, like schools, parks, roads, and fire stations. They make sure our schools have teachers, our parks are clean and safe, and our roads are well-maintained so people can travel safely. Local leaders also ensure that we have police officers and firefighters to protect us and help in emergencies. Through local government, we learn how freedom works and how to make decisions that are fair to everyone. Since local government is part of our daily lives, we can be a part of it by learning the rules, voting when we grow up, and working together to improve our communities. Without local government, a country cannot stay strong and free because the local government helps ensure people take care of each other and that everyone is treated fairly. Now, take a moment to write an observation in your notebook. Think about the following questions:

Lesson

ASK Students

How do local leaders help our community stay safe and strong? Why is it important for people to work together in local government? How do you think local government helps protect people's rights and freedoms? What can you do to help your community, just like local leaders do?

TELL Students

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 all 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! Now, take a moment to write an observation in your notebook about what Tocqueville saw during his visit to the United States. Think about the following questions:

ASK Students

What did Tocqueville notice about how towns and cities work together? How do you think local governments help people become good citizens? Why do you think it's important for people to be involved in their community?

TELL Students

Tocqueville learned many fascinating things during his journey across America. One of the most important things he noticed was how deeply religion influenced the lives of the American people. **Religion** is a set of beliefs about God and how we should live our lives. It often involves worship, prayer, and learning how to be kind and good. Tocqueville observed that many Americans had strong faith, and their beliefs helped guide them in making wise and moral choices. **Moral** describes ideas about what is right and wrong, and how people should behave to be good and kind. For example, being honest, helping others, and being fair are all considered moral behaviors because they show respect for others and help make the world a better place.
[Reference Moral Behaviors Images]

Lesson

ASK Students

What do you think Tocqueville learned about how religion helped people make good choices? How do you think being moral, like being honest and fair, can help people live together peacefully in a community?

TELL Students 🔑

Tocqueville came from Europe, where religion and government often didn't work well together. However, when he visited America, he observed that Christianity and democracy were able to work together in a positive way. **Christianity** is a religion based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. Many Americans at this time practiced Christianity, and many Americans believed that their faith helped guide them in making wise decisions. They felt that their faith encouraged them to be honest, treat others with kindness, and show respect. Tocqueville noticed that this strong sense of faith helped make American communities stronger, more peaceful, and fairer. Now, take a moment to write down an observation in your notebook. As you think about what Tocqueville saw, reflect on these questions:

ASK Students

How did Tocqueville see Christianity and democracy working together in America? In what ways did Americans' faith help them make better choices and be kind to others? How do you think faith can help a community become stronger and more peaceful?

TELL Students 📷🔑

Tocqueville visited America during a time called the **Second Great Awakening**, which was when many Americans became more interested in their faith and began attending church more often. **[Reference Second Great Awakening Image]** During this period, Christianity became very important in shaping the values of the people. Tocqueville noticed something unique about America compared to Europe. In Europe, religion and freedom often didn't work well together, but in America, they worked together in a way that helped people make good decisions. Religion helped Americans understand the true meaning of freedom and encouraged them to treat others with kindness, respect, and fairness. Even though religion wasn't part of the government, Tocqueville believed it played an important role in protecting the freedoms Americans enjoyed. As we think about Tocqueville's observations, consider the following questions:

Lesson

ASK Students

How did the Second Great Awakening change the way people in America thought about their faith? Why did Tocqueville believe that religion helped protect freedom in America? How do you think religion might help people make good choices and live peacefully in their communities?

TELL Students

Tocqueville's discovery about religion in America was very important to him because of the different perspective he had from his home country, France. In France, many people believed that organized religion, especially the Catholic church, was a problem for democracy. During the French Revolution, those who wanted freedom from the king also attacked the church, making it difficult for people who wanted both freedom and religion. However, Tocqueville noticed something different in America. During the Second Great Awakening, many Christians began to believe that all people should be treated equally, or with equality. **Equality** means that everyone, no matter their background, should be treated the same. Tocqueville saw that in the United States, Christianity did not conflict with freedom. Instead, it supported democracy and the freedoms Americans enjoyed. He believed that the ideas of freedom and equality worked together well in America. Christianity helped people understand that everyone should be treated equally, and in the United States, people from all backgrounds could come together to support the idea that all people are free and equal. Tocqueville's ideas help us understand how religion and freedom can work together, and why this was important in building a strong country. Take a moment to write your thoughts and observations in your notebook. Consider these questions:

ASK Students

How do you think Christianity helped support democracy in America? What does equality mean? Why do you think Tocqueville believed that religion and freedom could work together in America?

TELL Students

Tocqueville learned many important lessons on his field trip across America! One key observation he made was that religious leaders encouraged people to follow the laws, treat each other with kindness, and help their communities. Unlike in some other countries where people believed religion and freedom couldn't coexist, Tocqueville saw that in America, faith actually helped protect freedom. Tocqueville also learned that Christianity teaches that everyone is equal and should have the same rights.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

He thought this idea was very important because, in the past, countries like Rome and Greece did not treat all people equally. He believed that Jesus Christ helped people understand that everyone should be treated fairly, regardless of their background. Tocqueville saw that because of religion, Americans valued freedom, fairness, and respect for one another, which made the country stronger. Now, take a moment to write down your thoughts in your notebook. Consider these questions:

ASK Students

How do you think religion helped support freedom in America? Why is equality important for a country to be fair and strong? What did you observe about how religion and freedom work together in the United States?

TELL Students

During his journey across America, Tocqueville observed an important aspect of democracy. While he saw that democracy worked well in many ways, he also recognized a challenge. There was a chance that the larger group of people, called the majority, could make all the decisions. The **majority** is the bigger group that agrees on something, while the **minority** is the smaller group that does not agree with the majority. Tocqueville worried that if the majority always made the rules, the smaller group, or minority, might not have their ideas heard or their rights protected. Tocqueville learned that the Founding Fathers, like George Washington, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton, thought about this issue when they created the United States government. **[Reference Washington, Madison, Hamilton Images]** They wanted to make sure everyone's voice was heard, not just the majority. Tocqueville also read the **Federalist Papers**, writings from Madison and Hamilton, which explained how the government should work. One important idea was that if the majority had too much power, the smaller group, or minority, could lose their freedoms. Tocqueville saw that America's democracy was strong, but it was important that everyone, regardless of the size of their group, had a say in shaping the country's future. Now, take a moment to write your thoughts in your journal. Consider these questions:

ASK Students

How does the government in the United States make sure that everyone, even the smaller group, has a voice?

Lesson

ASK Students (continued)
What did Tocqueville learn about how the government helps balance the power between the majority and minority?

TELL Students
During his trip across America, Tocqueville noticed something very interesting. He saw that, except for the injustice of slavery, the majority of people in America did not always take away the rights of the smaller group, called the minority. This was very different from his home country, France, where the group in power took away the rights and freedoms of the people who were not in power. Tocqueville wanted to understand why America was different. He realized that it wasn't just the government that kept things fair, but also the way people lived and the choices they made. He called this **"habits of the heart."** This means how people naturally acted and made decisions based on their beliefs. Tocqueville observed that many Americans had strong values and followed the teachings of Christianity. These beliefs helped them act fairly, be kind, and show respect for others. Even though the laws allowed people to make choices, their faith taught them to do what was right and to avoid harming others. Tocqueville also learned that self-control was important for people to live peacefully and protect each other's rights. **Self-control** means thinking carefully before you act, and only acting when it is right to do so. It helps you make better choices instead of acting too quickly. For example, if you want to talk while your teacher is speaking, self-control helps you wait your turn. If you feel angry, self-control helps you take a deep breath and stay calm instead of yelling.

ASK Students
How do you think faith helped people in America make good decisions? What role does self-control play in helping people make fair choices and protect each other's rights? Can you think of a time when self-control helped you make a good decision? How did it help you?

TELL Students
When Tocqueville traveled across America, he noticed something important about how people lived and worked together. He observed that while the American government did not have many rules to stop the majority (the larger group) from having too much power, the values held by the American people helped keep things fair.

Lesson

TELL Students (continued)

Religion, according to Tocqueville, was highly valued by the American people, who chose to live and behave according to moral principles. The Founding Fathers, the leaders who helped create the United States, also believed that religion was important for a strong country. **[Reference Founding Fathers Image]** They made sure that no one would be forced to follow a certain religion, but they believed that religious values could help people make wise and fair decisions. Tocqueville saw that in America, religion and democracy worked together in a way that helped people stay free, make good choices, and treat each other with respect. Think about these questions as you write your observations in your notebook:

ASK Students

How do you think religion helped people make fair decisions in America? Why do you think the Founding Fathers valued religion, even though they wanted religious freedom? How do you think religion and democracy work together to help people stay free and respectful?

TELL Students

Tocqueville also learned that one of the greatest strengths of the United States was self-government. Remember, self-government means that people can make their own rules and decisions in their towns and cities. Tocqueville saw that people went to town meetings, voted on important issues, and worked together to help their community. By doing these things, they learned how to be responsible and became better leaders as they grew up. Tocqueville also noticed that the beliefs and values held by the people helped them make good choices and kept the country strong. He saw that in America, faith and democracy worked together. Many people relied on their faith to help them be kind, fair, and make good decisions. Because of this, people worked together, and everyone could share their ideas. Tocqueville believed this was one reason why democracy worked so well in the United States.

ASK Students

What is self-government, and why is it important? How did Tocqueville see people in America working together to help their communities? Why did Tocqueville think faith and democracy worked well together?

Lesson

TELL Students 📷

Alexis de Tocqueville learned many important lessons during his trip across America! He observed that people in towns and cities worked together to solve problems and make decisions for their communities. This helped them learn how to be responsible, take care of their neighbors, and be active participants in their government. By helping with local government, people understood how democracy functioned and why it was important to have fair leaders who listened to the people. Tocqueville also saw that when people in small towns were involved in their local government, it made the entire country stronger. He noticed that faith, especially Christianity, helped people make good choices and treat others with fairness and respect. This helped maintain balance in the government and prevented any one group from gaining too much power. He believed that when people followed strong values and worked together, their communities and the country as a whole would succeed. Tocqueville's ideas are still very important today! Self-government, core values, and working together are the keys to keeping our country strong. Today, people continue to vote, attend town meetings, and help make decisions for their schools, neighborhoods, and cities. Just like in Tocqueville's time, Americans take responsibility for their communities and work together to solve problems. **[Reference American Flag Image]** His trip taught him that democracy only works when people stay involved, and this lesson is just as important today as it was during his journey across America.



My Own Democracy in Action

Objective

Third-grade students will create a booklet based on their own observations about what Alexis de Tocqueville learned about the United States during his trip. They will use their own ideas and insights to create a fun and informative book that mirrors Tocqueville's work.

Materials Needed

- Blank notebook pages (or printed pages to create a booklet)
- Pencils, crayons, or markers
- Ruler (optional, for making neat lines)
- Glue or stapler (to bind the pages together)
- Scissors (optional, for cutting out any images or designs)
- Stickers or illustrations related to government, religion, or democracy (optional)

1. Review of Observations

Begin by reviewing the observations students have made throughout the unit on Tocqueville's journey. Recap the major points about democracy, self-government, religion, and the role of local communities in America. Talk about how these observations relate to the book Tocqueville wrote, Democracy in America.

2. Plan the Booklet

Ask students to imagine they are writing their own version of Tocqueville's observations. They will organize their booklet into sections that reflect what Tocqueville learned:

- **Cover Page:** Title the booklet "What Tocqueville Learned About America" (or something similar). They can draw an illustration that represents the journey or America.
- **Page 1:** Introduce Tocqueville and his purpose for traveling to America. What did he want to learn?
- **Page 2:** Describe self-government and what Tocqueville saw in American towns. Include observations about how people made decisions and helped each other.
- **Page 3:** Explain the importance of religion in America and how it helped people make good choices and treat others with respect.
- **Page 4:** Talk about democracy and how Americans worked together to protect everyone's rights. Discuss the role of voting and participating in decisions.



- **Page 5:** Reflect on local government and how it allowed communities to stay strong and free.
- **Page 6:** End the booklet with Tocqueville's overall impression of America and what made it special, especially in comparison to Europe.

3. Create the Booklet

- Have students fold their pages in half to create a booklet.
- On each page, students will write a brief explanation of what they've learned. They should incorporate their observations and ideas from the previous lessons.
- Students can draw pictures, add borders, or use stickers to illustrate the key points on each page. Encourage them to be creative!

4. Final Touches

- Once the pages are complete, have students assemble their booklet by either stapling or gluing the pages together.
- If time allows, they can decorate the cover with colorful drawings that relate to Tocqueville's observations or America's democracy.

5. Sharing

- After students finish their booklets, allow them to share their observations with the class. They can read a page aloud from their booklet and explain what they learned about Tocqueville's journey.

Prompts for Writing in Each Section

- **Page 1 (Introduction):** "Tocqueville came from France to learn about America. Why do you think he was interested in learning about how our country works?"
- **Page 2 (Self-Government):** "What do you think Tocqueville noticed about how people in small towns worked together to make decisions? Why is self-government important?"
- **Page 3 (Religion):** "How did religion in America help people make good decisions? Why do you think it was so important for communities?"
- **Page 4 (Democracy):** "How do people in a democracy make decisions? Why do you think democracy is important for protecting people's rights?"



- **Page 5 (Local Government):** "Why is it important for communities to have local governments? How do local governments help people work together?"
- **Page 6 (Conclusion):** "What do you think Tocqueville learned about America that made it special compared to his home country? Why did he think the country worked so well?"

Assessment

The students will be assessed on:

- How well they explain or define the concepts of self-government, democracy, religion, and local government in their own words.
- The creativity of their booklet (including illustrations and organization).
- Their ability to connect each concept to Tocqueville's observations of America and incorporate them into their booklet.

This activity allows students to reflect on and organize their learning into a creative format that not only reinforces the lesson but also provides a chance for them to express what they've learned in a personal way.

Multiple Choice Assessment

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Directions: Carefully read each question and answer set. Circle the correct answer.

1. What is self-government?
   A) A government where one person makes all the decisions
   B) A government where people choose their leaders and make decisions together
   C) A government where a king makes the rules
   D) A government where there are no rules

2. Why did Alexis de Tocqueville visit America in 1831?
   A) To help the American people write the Constitution
   B) To learn about the American criminal justice system
   C) To make laws for the United States
   D) To study the weather in America

3. What did Tocqueville notice about how religion and democracy worked together in America?
   A) Religion had no impact on democracy
   B) Religion and democracy worked well together to help people make good choices
   C) Religion made democracy weaker
   D) Religion stopped people from making decisions

4. Which of the following was a key part of the United States Constitution?
   A) It explained how laws were made and how power was shared
   B) It made sure that people didn't have any rights
   C) It said that only the king could make decisions
   D) It gave all power to one person

5. What is democracy?
   A) A government where the people have no say in decisions
   B) A government where citizens vote to choose leaders and make laws
   C) A government where only the king makes all the decisions
   D) A government where there are no laws or rules

Multiple Choice Assessment

6. What did Tocqueville learn about local governments in America?
   A) They made decisions for only a few people
   B) They didn't have any impact on people's lives
   C) They helped people make decisions and work together to improve their communities
   D) They were only responsible for making national laws

7. What is the Bill of Rights?
   A) A set of laws to control people's behavior
   B) An important part of the Constitution that protects freedom of speech, religion, and other freedoms
   C) A law that makes people follow one religion
   D) A list of rules to punish people

8. What did Tocqueville see about how people worked together in towns?
   A) People didn't work together at all
   B) People helped make decisions for their community and worked to solve problems together
   C) People only helped themselves and ignored others
   D) People only followed what the king said

9. Why did Tocqueville think religion was important in America?
   A) Because it helped people understand freedom and made them act kindly
   B) Because it made everyone follow the same rules
   C) Because it stopped people from making decisions
   D) Because it made people believe only in one religion

10. Why is it important for people to participate in local government?
    A) Because it helps keep the country strong and fair by allowing everyone to have a voice
    B) Because it makes people follow one person's rules
    C) Because it stops people from voting for their leaders
    D) Because it only benefits the king

Answer Key: Multiple Choice Assessment

1. What is self-government?
   B) A government where people choose their leaders and make decisions together

2. Why did Alexis de Tocqueville visit America in 1831?
   B) To learn about the American criminal justice system

3. What did Tocqueville notice about how religion and democracy worked together in America?
   B) Religion and democracy worked well together to help people make good choices

4. Which of the following was a key part of the United States Constitution?
   A) It explained how laws were made and how power was shared

5. What is democracy?
   B) A government where citizens vote to choose leaders and make laws

6. What did Tocqueville learn about local governments in America?
   C) They helped people make decisions and work together to improve their communities

7. What is the Bill of Rights?
   B) An important part of the Constitution that protects freedom of speech, religion, and other freedoms

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   A) Because it helped people understand freedom and made them act kindly

10. Why is it important for people to participate in local government?
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Resources

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Images

Alexis de Tocqueville



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Fourth of July



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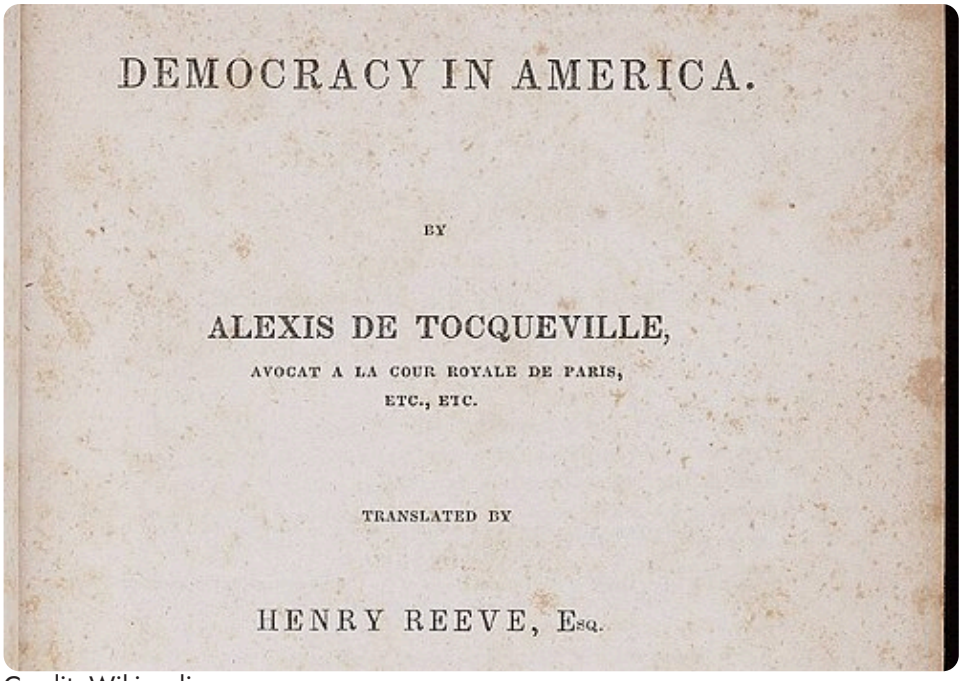
Images

Field



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Democracy in America



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Images

Monarchy



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Local Government



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Royal Charters



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Responsibility



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U.S. Map



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Moral Behaviors



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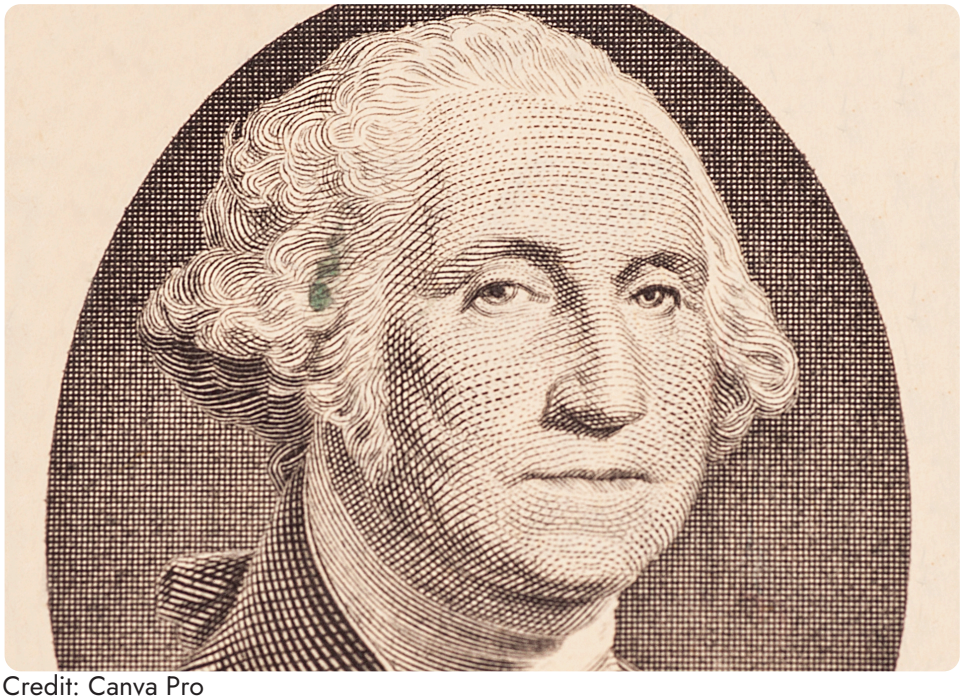
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Second Great Awakening



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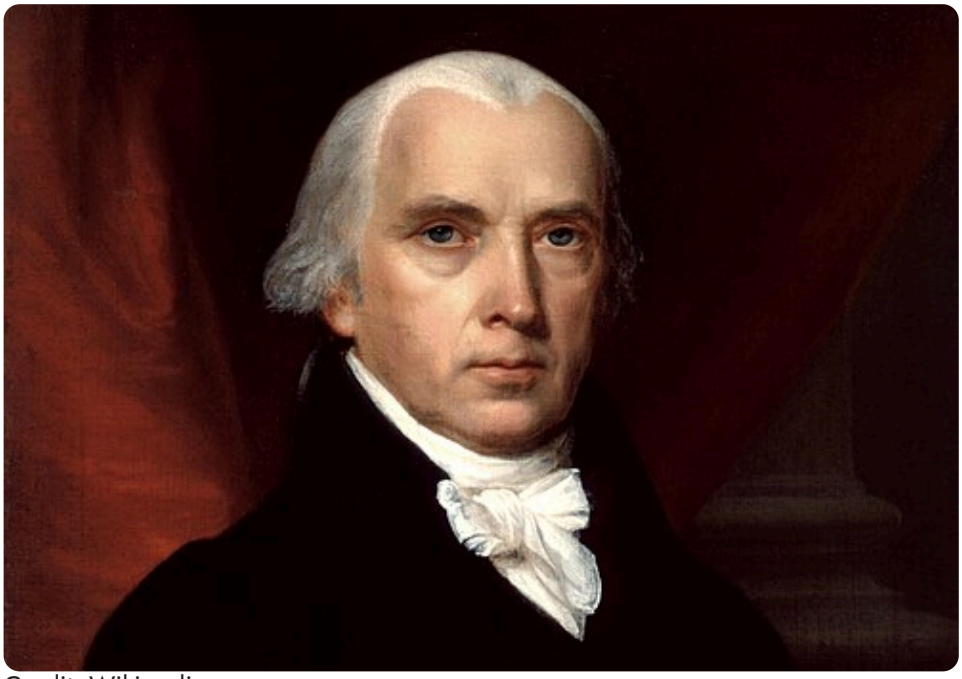
George Washington



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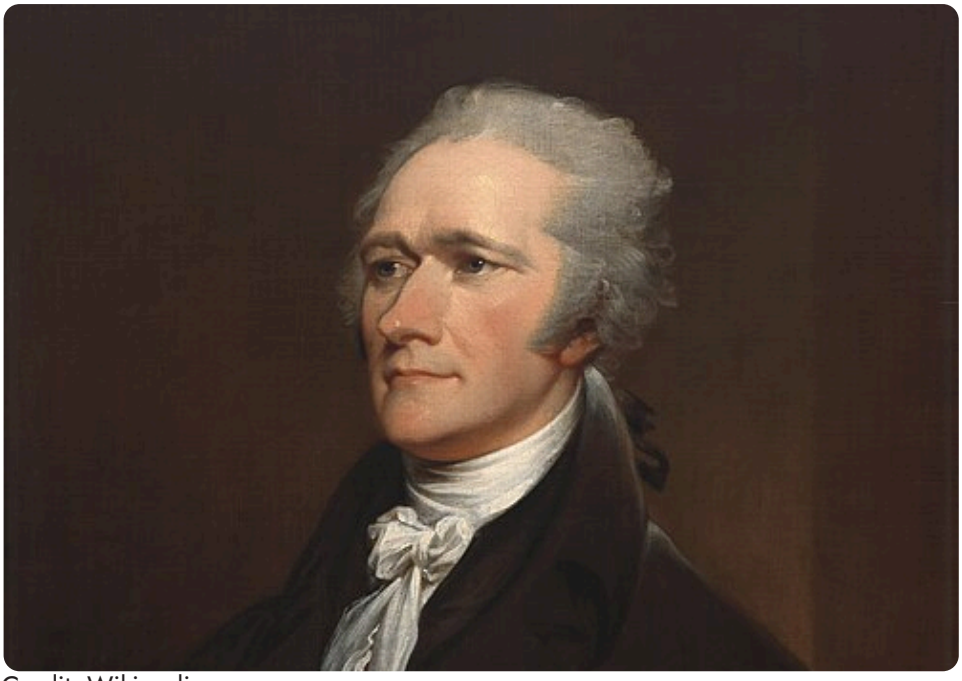
Images

James Madison



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Alexander Hamilton



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Founding Fathers



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American Flag



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Notes