

ACTIVITY

Staging the Compelling Question

Overview

About This Activity

Students use their lived experiences to reflect on the complexities of democracy and freedom through a Four Corners activity.

Compelling Question

How can we make real the ideals of democracy and freedom?

Preparing to Teach

A Note to Teachers

Before teaching this lesson, please review the following information to help guide your preparation process.

Four Corners Activity

The [Four Corners](#) activity is included in today's lesson. Before instruction, prepare by posting signage in four different areas of your classroom that say "Strongly Agree," "Strongly Disagree," "Agree," and "Disagree."

If this is your class's first time completing this activity, it may be helpful to practice first with a low-stakes question like "_____ has the best fast food" or "_____ is the best Marvel/DC superhero."

Procedure

Activity 1: Four Corners Discussion of Democracy and Freedom

Begin class by explaining that this inquiry will invite students to explore the question, "How can we make real the ideals of democracy and freedom?" Tell students that in order to explore the compelling question, they will first need to define what freedom and democracy mean in their own lives.

Teaching Note: If using this inquiry as a throughline for your US history class, you may also explain that the compelling question will be the lens through which you will be viewing the content of this course.

Prepare your students for a [Four Corners](#) activity. Explain that you will project a series of questions on the board. For each question, students will need to move to the area of the classroom that signifies whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement. Once they've identified their feelings about the statement, they should discuss with one or two people standing near them. If time permits, you can have them share their answers with the whole class.

Project the following questions on the board or on big paper:

- My freedom to do or say something ends when my actions or words hurt someone.
- Freedoms can be given or taken away if decided by a popular vote.
- Freedoms can be taken away by someone or by the government as a punishment.
- When others lose freedoms, my freedom is jeopardized.
- People under 18 should have just as many freedoms as adults have.
- If someone in my community is not free, then no one is truly free.
- We cannot have freedom without democracy.