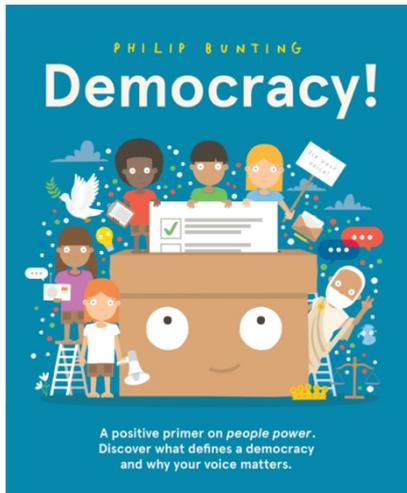


# Teacher's Notes



## *Democracy!*

**Written and illustrated by Philip Bunting**

**Teacher's Notes by Bec Kavanagh**

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### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

#### **RECOMMENDED FOR**

4+ aged readers (grades 1-2)

#### **KEY CURRICULUM AREAS**

- Learning areas: English; Humanities and Social Sciences (Civics and Citizenship)
- General capabilities:
  - ACELA1446
  - ACELA1453
  - ACELA1460
  - ACELA1461

### **THEMES**

- Community
- Protesting & petitions
- The history and process of democracy
- People power
- Speaking up & getting your voice heard

### **SYNOPSIS**

What does it mean to live in a democratic society?

Who has the right to vote?

How can I change things in my community?

In *Democracy*, Philip Bunting provides a straightforward, simple introduction to concepts of democracy, including its function, its history, and what it means in our own lives.

Bunting explores the way that democracy operates in Australia, and then empowers young readers to think about its relevance to their lives (even before they can vote). This is a book that celebrates community and individual action as one of the founding principles of a democratic society.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

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Philip Bunting is an author and illustrator, with a soft spot for creating picture books for sleep-deprived, time-poor, raisin-encrusted parents (and their children).

Philip's work deliberately encourages playful interaction between the reader and child, allowing his books to create a platform for genuine intergenerational engagement and fun. He believes that the more fun the child has during their early reading experiences, the more likely they will be to return to books, improve their emergent literacy skills, and later find joy in reading and learning.

Philip's books have been translated into multiple languages and published in over 25 countries around the world. Since his first book was published in 2017, Philip has received multiple accolades, including Honours from the Children's Book Council of Australia, and making the list for the Kate Greenaway Medal in 2018. Philip grew up in the England's Lake District and now lives with his young family in the hills behind Noosa.

## THEMES

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In his acknowledgements, Philip Bunting writes 'I think the true meaning of democracy lies in actions, rather than words'. *Democracy* provides a good general introduction to the history and current practice of democracy but, importantly, makes these themes accessible by looking at democratic actions on an individual scale. After reading, students will be able to confidently explore themes of community and individual action within the larger context of democracy.

## WRITING STYLE

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As a writer of both fiction and non-fiction picture books, Philip Bunting's books are a good opportunity to examine some of the differences between the two genres. Consider the following questions:

- What is the difference between fact and fiction?
- How do you know if you can trust information?
- Look at the way the text is laid out in the book, and make a list of some of the other similarities and differences between fiction and non-fiction stories.

## COMPREHENSION

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- What is it called when everyone has a fair and equal say in how their community is run?
- What happens in an ideal democracy?
- What are some of the ways that democracy has adapted to suit the needs of the people?
- What did life look like in Athens before democracy? Who was in charge?
- Is every country in the world run as a democracy?
- What is the role of governments in a democracy? Who elects them?
- What is the difference between national, state and local governments?



- Why do you think it's important to have your voice heard? What are some of the ways you can make change in your local communities?
- Look at the tips on good conversation. List three that you feel confident in already and three that you'd like to work on.
- What are some of the ways to stay safe online? Why is knowing how to stay safe online so important?
- Discuss some examples of small democratic acts that you can start to implement in your own life. Are there any democracies that you already participate in?

## WRITING EXERCISE

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One way that we can get involved in democracy (even before we're old enough to vote!) is by telling our elected officials what we want. Find out who the representatives are in your local government. Think about something you'd like to change in your local community and write a letter (individually or as a class) clearly describing what you would like changed, and how it would benefit the community.

What are some of the other ways we can make changes in our community if the government doesn't act on our behalf?

## ILLUSTRATION STYLE

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Bunting's illustrations are simple and engaging and provide readers with a fun, visual way to understand the concepts in the text. For example, he shows the process of ideal democracy as a seed growing into a flower, relying on the care and support of community to grow.

Discuss **visual metaphors** as a group.

- What is a visual metaphor?
- What is the difference between a literal explanation of something and a metaphor?
- Why do you think the writer has chosen to illustrate democracy using a visual metaphor?

We could summarise our understanding of democracy using the metaphor provided in the book and say: democracy **is like** a flower **because** as it grows it takes on new ideas to suit the needs of the world around it.

Can you summarise another idea in the book in this way?

\_\_\_\_\_ **is like** \_\_\_\_\_ **because** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

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1. Draw a flow chart to show how government works. Start with the top – the government –and work your way down through the election process to all the people the government is supposed to represent.
2. Choose one of the other systems of government listed in the book and debate the pros and cons of living underneath this type of system.
3. What might be different about this book if it was a fiction story? Discuss the following elements of a story – character, plot, setting – and choose a part of the book to turn into fiction. Who would your story be about? What elements would you keep and what would you change or embellish? Where and when would the story take place?
4. Follow the steps in the book to make your own protest sign. What are you passionate about? What message do you want people to carry home with them thanks to your sign? How can you make your sign stand out in a crowd?

## RELATED READING

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*Me, Microbes & I* by Philip Bunting

*Who Am I?* by Philip Bunting

*The Gentle Genius of Trees* by Philip Bunting

*Grace for President* by Kelly DiPucchio

*Sofia Valdez, Future Prez* by Andrea Beaty & David Roberts

