

Unit 1: Political regimes and ideologies

1. Lead-in: Politics and political science

Think ahead:

-What is politics?

-What is political science?

-What is an ideology? Why are they important?

-Can you name some regimes or political ideologies you already know?

Have a look at the following pictures: what comes into your mind?





Complete the following table.

REGIMES AND NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH POWER

Type of Regime	Number of People Who Hold Power	Examples
Monarchy		
		Cuba, North Korea, Nazi Germany
	A few (usually a small ruling class)	

		South Africa (->20 th century)
		United States

Match the words in the left column with their correct definitions.

1. Anarchism	a. Right-wing political system where the principal means of production and distribution are in private hands.
2. Capitalism	b. Government ruled by a single person with absolute control over the resources of the state.
3. Communism	c. Society without government, laws, police or other authority.
4. Dictatorship	d. Extreme left-wing ideology based on the revolutionary socialist teachings of Marx. Collective ownership and a planned economy. All citizens should work to their capability and receive according to their needs.
5. Conservatism	e. Left-wing political system where the principal means of production, distribution and exchange are in common ownership.
6. Liberalism	f. Representative government, free-speech, abolition of class privilege and state protection of the individual.
7. Socialism	g. A system of government in which virtually all power is held by a small number of wealthy people who shape policies to benefit themselves.
8. Oligarchy	h. Governmental system where the existing institutions are maintained, emphasizing free-enterprise and minimal governmental intervention.

From *Quick Reference*, "Politics and Law: Political Ideologies"

2. Reading: Skimming and scanning

Read the following questions carefully and answer them as quickly as possible. Do not worry if you don't understand every word of the text.

SKIMMING

Skimming a text before you read it will make the text easier to understand. Skimming means looking quickly over a text to get an idea of what it is about and how it is organized. You should not read every word but rather focus on the headings, the introduction or the first sentence of each paragraph.

-What is the article about?

-Why is democracy a failure in Africa?

-According to the author, what would be the solution?

-What is the problem with the money linked to the business between Africa and other countries?

-What is democracy? How many types of democracies exist? Explain.

Read the text again and decide whether the following statements are (1) true or (2) false/not relevant. Justify your answer.

- 1) Kenya was put on the “Failed State List” because of its weak economy.
- 2) Africans refuse the concept of democracy.
- 3) The notion of tribal leadership is important and has to be taken into account in the African democratic system.
- 4) Africa was freed from colonialism in 1850.
- 5) America and Europe are Africa’s only trading partners.
- 6) Africa uses the money it gets from the trade to build schools and provide its children with a better education.

DEMOCRACY FAILS AFRICA

Adapted from A. Akbar Muhammad (Feb. 2008 – *Final Call*)

1. Kenya is one of the countries in Africa challenged by its attempt to govern its people under a western-style democracy. Although Kenya has a strong economy, the botched elections that took place in 2007 put this beautiful country on the “Failed State List” with other African nations using western style democracy to elect their leaders. There are other countries in Africa who want to believe that this system of democracy is working although it is clear that their country stands on the brink of being classified also as a failed state.

2. The elections that took place on December 27, 2007 have kept Kenya in the spotlight of world news daily because of the violence that has spread outside of the capital, Nairobi. World leaders, in their effort to help bring an end to the violence that is destroying the country, have traveled to Kenya, called the leaders of both parties, and asked former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to try to negotiate a peace settlement.

3. Africans, as most people of the world, long for democracy where the masses are free to choose their leaders without a trail of death and destruction before and after elections.

Africa needs a form of government that speaks to its culture and traditions. In many areas of Africa, the influence and importance of tribal leadership cannot be dismissed. Any system of democracy that is developed must take into consideration the reality of tribalism. Africa cannot follow the European or American style of democracy.

4. The Europeans developed this democracy from Greek influences and have had hundreds of years to improve upon this system of government, contrary to the nations of Africa who have only enjoyed freedom from their colonial masters over the last 50-plus years.

Africa needs a think tank comprised of “the best minds” that can develop a form of democracy that speaks uniquely to the African experience, considering what’s in the best interest of the country, considering tribalism and inclusive of advice from traditional elders.

5. America is the number one trading partner with Africa and Europe is not far behind. However, they no longer have an exclusive on Africa’s natural resources. The new scramble for Africa now includes China. The wealth that Africa is receiving from the sale of oil and other natural resources to the East and West should be used to further develop its infrastructure, improve education, strengthen the economy and create jobs so young people of Africa will not feel the need to flee the continent looking for greener pastures in the West.

All across Africa, African leaders seeking to be elected are spending hundreds of millions of dollars to fund these multi-party elections patterned after western style democracy, a path that Africa should not and must not follow. In America, the cost of the current 2008 presidential elections will exceed \$2 billion.

6. Kenya brings home the reality that trying to adopt the colonial master's system of government for the people of Africa is a miserable failure.

Fill in the gaps with the following words.

settlement (§2) – think tank (§4) – botched (§1) – education (§5) – former (§2) – flee (§5)

- The _____ course book had some errors but the current version also has some problems.
- This school mainly deals with the _____ of children with reading difficulties.
- My grandfather was forced to _____ the country in 1941 because of the war.
- The two police officers clearly _____ the investigation.
- The lawyers haven't been able to reach a _____ in the case.
- If the politicians aren't able to find a solution to the financial crisis, they will need a _____ of experts to solve the problems.

3. Listening and note-taking

NOTE-TAKING

When you take notes, it is important NOT TO write down everything. You should only write down the **main points** and important details or examples. You should also try to **shorten** words.

Listen to the excerpt about the different types of regimes and answer the following questions.

-Draw the first political spectrum dealt with in the excerpt. Why is it quite confusing?

-Draw a more accurate political spectrum implying the government's degree of power.

-Name five basic forms of government and place them on the second spectrum.

-What can you say about monarchy, oligarchy and anarchism?

4. Language: Providing definitions

* Express the class to which the term to be defined belongs and then state the specific features and the main difference(s) between the term and the other members of the class.

e.g.: government: the group of people who are responsible for controlling a country or a state.

* You can also introduce your definition with: **(can) be defined as, be called, be termed, be known as, ...**

e.g.: freedom can be defined as the right to do or say what you want without anyone stopping you.

* Definitions for adjectives are often introduced by **relating to, pertaining to, connected with, ...**

e.g.: political: connected with the state, government or public affairs.

Define the following words:

-Monarchy:

-Election:

- (Political) Party:

-Economic:

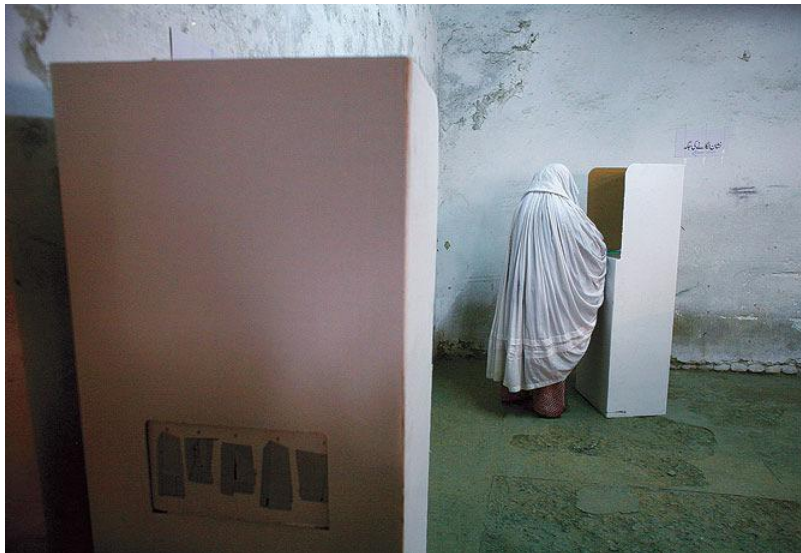
-Tax:

5. Reading

Read the text.

ASIA'S DITHERING DEMOCRACIES

Adapted from Hannah Beech (Jan. 2009 - *Time*)



1. They called themselves the people's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), but their aims were hardly democratic. -- **Gap 1** -- their 192-day protest campaign, the PAD paralyzed Thailand, blockading the capital's two airports for eight days and besieging the Prime Minister's office complex for months. By the time the opposition alliance withdrew, a democratically elected government had been disbanded by the country's courts and political street violence **had claimed** several lives. And should future polls bring back politicians linked with Thailand's ousted rulers? "The PAD will return," vowed alliance leader Sondhi Limthongkul, who earlier in the siege told his thousands of supporters to "shed your blood if it is necessary."

2. Thailand was once celebrated as a democratic oasis in a region awash with authoritarianism. Today, the Southeast Asian nation is reeling from its worst political crisis since a democracy movement toppled a military regime in 2002. A new government has been formed — the fourth in 2008 — but its Prime Minister, Abhisit Vejjajiva, was forced to delay his inaugural policy address because of protests by supporters of the previous administration. Hovering in the background is the PAD, which draws its ranks from the very middle class and élite that supported the 1992 democracy movement, and has as its ultimate aim a so-called "New Politics," whose fuzzy, oft-shifting aims have included the undemocratic step of appointing parliamentarians. "We're looking at a dead end politically," says Thitinan Pongsudhirak, a political scientist at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. "It's hard to understand how democracy in Thailand has come to this."

3. That same point can be made today about many Asian nations. After the shackles of colonialism were overthrown, largely after World War II, the 21st century was supposed to herald the ascent of democracy in Asia. -- **Gap 2** -- parts of the region — from Burma and North Korea to Laos, Vietnam and China — are still governed by diktat, the past couple of decades have created a region that to all outward appearances is largely democratic. Over the past 10 years, some 20 Asian countries have held elections, and many have undergone peaceful transitions in government.

4. **-- Gap 3 --** throughout 2008, many Asians **appeared** to progressively lose their faith in democratic politics. In Thailand and South Korea, the streets have been convulsed by mass protests, despite elections that ushered in popular leaders in the past two years. Pakistan and East Timor are rapidly veering toward the status of failed states. Malaysia suffers from a paucity of good governance, proof that simply holding polls doesn't ensure a healthy democracy. Postelection riots shook Mongolia, while Bangladesh is trying to exorcise two years of military-backed rule with a strong voter turnout in its Dec. 29 polls that ushered the secular Awami League back to office. The Philippines, which staged the region's first People Power movement back in 1986, recently endured a state of emergency. Taiwan, where presidential elections 11 years ago **marked** the first time ever a Chinese society directly chose its leader, is turning against a new President in record time.

5. Even in India, the terror attacks in Mumbai uncovered a deep well of anger against the democratically elected government for its failure to carry out a fundamental function: protect citizens from harm. And Japan, the region's oldest democracy? In recent years the country has cycled through Prime Ministers nearly as quickly as fashion fads.

6. In many ways, the challenges of Asian democracy are a reflection of its youth. Democracy in the West evolved over centuries — and, even then, its proponents understood its limitations, as Winston Churchill did when he postulated that "democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms." Asia, for the most part, **has raced** through the democratization process in just a couple of decades. **-- Gap 4 --** much of the continent considers itself democratic, only five of the 25 Asian nations polled in the 2008 survey of political and civil rights by the U.S.-based NGO Freedom House were deemed truly "free" — begging the question: Given the events of the past year, are Asia and democracy compatible?

7. Growing pains may be forgiven in emerging democracies. But if the current political instabilities are allowed to metastasize, Asian nations could tire of the notion of democracy altogether because it's considered too messy, ineffectual or corrupt. In South Korea, Mongolia, Taiwan, Thailand and the Philippines, a study by the governance-tracking Asian Barometer Project found that more citizens believed that the nations' recent democratic transitions **had brought** no improvement to their lives than those who saw positive changes. With time softening the memories of autocratic rule, nostalgia for overthrown dictators is spreading. Some are even calling for a resurgence of so-called "Asian values," a mix of paternalistic discipline and market economics that fell into disregard after the 1997 financial meltdown proved that crony capitalism thrived in the absence of democratic checks and balances. In Thailand, **-- Gap 5 --** in many parts of Asia, members of the educated élite bristle at the notion that Western-style democracy is a one-size-fits-all political system. "You can't expect us to have a European- or American-style democracy here," says PAD member Visitchai Kemajitpan. "We should have our own Oriental democracy."

8. Such sentiments weren't so controversial when regional growth rates marched upward with metronomic precision. But as Asia faces a global financial crisis, flexible and responsive leadership is all the more crucial. While the spectre of economic mayhem catalyzed one of the most dynamic presidential campaigns in recent U.S. history, it **has done** little to spur Asia's

democracies into action. Japan's parliament is unable to decide on an economic-reform package, while Malaysia and Thailand engage in partisan politics that has little to do with how to shield these export-led economies from a slowdown in the West. Indeed, Asian governance is failing in democracy's most basic undertaking: to represent the will of the people. Back when the region was poor and ravaged by war, Asia's citizens made an unspoken pact with their leaders, that economic progress could predate political reform. But, today, most Asians are fed and clothed, and a middle class flourishes. Where, then, is the accountability, transparency and justice Asians crave?

Do the following exercises.

1) Fill in the gaps in the text with the following words.

1. during 2. though 3. yet 4. as 5. while

GAP 1	GAP 2	GAP 3	GAP 4	GAP 5

2) Choose a correct synonym or explanation for each word.

1. to thrive (§7) v.	1) to expand, to grow	2) to fear	3) to fight, to struggle
2. undertaking (§8) n.	1) a will	2) a promise, an agreement	3) a wish
3. to spur (§8) v.	1) to encourage	2) to decrease	3) to ratify
4. turnout (§4) n.	1) the number of people who don't vote in a particular election	2) the number of people who don't know what to vote	3) the number of people who vote in a particular election
5. poll (§4) n.	1) survey	2) news	3) note

3) Vocabulary: Fill in the gaps.

to crave (v.) / survey (n.) / to thrive (v.) / riot (n.) / to topple (v.) / leadership (n.) / to usher (v.) / to tire (v.) / to bristle (v.) / slowdown (n.) / to shield (v.) / to withdraw (v.)

- Two prison guards were killed when a _____ broke out in the jail.
- A recent _____ showed only 25% of those questioned were in favour of the new policy.
- The party _____ under his _____.
- Many young children _____ attention.

5. Government troops were forced to _____.

6. The rebels plotted to _____ the President.

4) True or false? Justify your answer.

1. Asian countries have their own Oriental democracy based on European and American democracies.
2. The Western-style democracy is a unique model which fits every country.
3. The idea of dictatorship is starting to reappear as time erases the bad memories linked to that regime.
4. Asian nations are enthusiastic about democracy because they think it is actually a well-organized and efficient system.

4) Comment on the following topics.

- What's the problem in Thailand? What happened? Describe the political situation now and then.

- Describe the political evolution of (some of) the Asian countries from WWII until now.

- Give some examples of what is happening now in these Asian countries.

6. Grammar: Past tenses

PRESENT PERFECT		
Present perfect simple	*Finished action that has an influence on the present *Action that is still going on *Action that has ended recently	I've played two games of tennis today.
Present perfect continuous	*Putting emphasis on the course or duration *Action that has recently ended or is still going on *Action that began in the past and continues in the present (esp. with sit, lie, stand, work, learn, study, wait, live, etc)	I've been playing tennis all day.
SIMPLE PAST	*Action completed at a particular time in the past and now over !! irregular forms	I went to Paris last year.
PAST CONTINUOUS	*A continuous state or a repeated action in the past *Interrupted action in the past	We were having lunch when the phone rang.
PAST PERFECT	*Action taking place before a certain time in the past	The party had begun before we arrived.

Have another look at the text “Asia’s dithering democracy”. Identify the past forms **in bold** and try to explain the use of each tense.

Fill in the gaps with the correct tense.

Once again, John _____ (remember) where he _____ (lay) his umbrella. The same thing _____ (happen) to him the week before. He _____ (leave) his mistress’ flat and it _____ (rain) heavily outside. He _____ (ask) Jenny if she _____ (see) his umbrella somewhere but she _____. He _____ most certainly _____ (lose) or _____ (drop) it on his way to Jenny’s. Unfortunately, he _____ (have) no choice but to go out and drive home as his wife _____ (expect) him to be back at 6. Indeed they were going to catch a flight to Montego Bay at 10 p.m. where John _____ (find) a job as a foreman.

John _____ (run) quickly to his car and when he _____ (arrive) home a fishy smell _____ (fill) all the ground floor. His wife, Sally, _____ (cook) seafood all afternoon as to give them a foretaste of the Caribbean. Sally _____ (welcome) him wholeheartedly and _____ (be) sorry he _____ (be) all wet. She _____ in fact _____ (borrow) his umbrella in the morning to go to the supermarket. John _____ (think): "I _____ (get) wet but at least I _____ (get) caught."

Complete the sentences.

1. It _____ (be) years since we last _____ (see) the Jones.
2. She _____ (give up) her studies at the age of 16, which _____ (surprise) me much at that time.
3. I _____ (drink) four glasses of vodka already.
4. While the police _____ (search) the house, the burglars _____ (hide) in the attic.
5. We _____ (wait) for you for ages, where _____ (be)?
6. It was at night and everybody _____ (sleep).
7. He _____ (date) her for almost a month, but then he _____ (have) a change of heart and _____ (dump) her.
8. I am all sweaty because I _____ (dig) holes in the garden to plant a few bushes.

7. Writing: Argumentative essay

BASIC RULES OF WRITING

* When you write a text, you should always bear in mind that...

1. You need to divide your text into **paragraphs**.
2. **One paragraph = one main idea** => When you want to develop a new idea, you must start a new paragraph.
3. A good paragraph starts with a **topic sentence** that summarizes the content of the whole paragraph. A topic sentence is a general statement that tells your reader what you are going to discuss in the paragraph.
4. **Linking words** are useful to organize your ideas within a paragraph, but also to express logical links between different paragraphs.
5. One does NOT usually use abbreviated forms in written language, e.g. ~~It's~~ got...
=> It has got
6. Written language is **more formal** than spoken language.

* Basic structure:

Introduction : Usually one paragraph

Body : Can be more than one paragraph

Each paragraph usually starts with a topic sentence

Conclusion : Usually one paragraph

Write a 200-word essay on one of the following sentences:

- 1) Is the war to promote democracy around the world a good thing?
- 2) "Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich by promising to protect each from the other" (Oscar Ameringer)
- 3) "Politics is war without bloodshed, while war is politics with bloodshed." (Mao Zedong)
- 4) "Politicians are the same all over. They promise to build a bridge even where there is no river." (Nikita Khrushchev)

