

What Is the State of Our Nature?

The Philosophies of John Locke and Thomas Hobbes

Laura Halstied, Matthew McDonald, Ryan Rahhal
Published by *K20 Center*

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License

Grade Level	10th Grade	**Time Frame**	90 Minutes
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	1-2 Periods
Course	World History		

Essential Question

How much authority should a government have?

Summary

In this lesson, students analyze the political ideas of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Students begin by brainstorming the reasons why people create governments. Next, students compare and contrast monarchical and democratic governments. To extend their learning, students will debate as a class to determine which philosopher they agree with most regarding the role or power of government and to better understand the perspective of each philosopher.

Snapshot

Engage

Students discuss the need for governments and how they function in a society.

Explore

Students watch videos about democracy and absolute monarchy and create a T-Chart outlining the differences between the two forms of government.

Explain

Students read an article about John Locke and Thomas Hobbes and develop a one-sentence summary of each using the POMS strategy.

Extend

Students debate the merits of Locke and Hobbes in groups using the Debate Team Carousel strategy, culminating in a class discussion about students' opinions.

Evaluate

Students create short summaries from the perspective of each philosopher using the Six-Word Memoirs strategy.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

CLR402: Draw logical conclusions in somewhat challenging passages
IDT402: Identify a clear central idea or theme in somewhat challenging passages or their paragraphs

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Writing (6-12)

L&C 401: A score in this range indicates that the writer is able to: -Make adequate word choices that convey the argument with clarity -Make stylistic choices, including voice, tone, and diction, that are appropriate for the given writing purpose and topic

Oklahoma Academic Standards SOCIAL STUDIES (Modern World History)

MWH.C.3.3.B: Describe the contributions of major Enlightenment thinkers (e.g., Locke, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau), contrasting the views of Thomas Hobbes regarding the divine right theory.

Attachments

- Debate Team Carousel—What is the State of Our Nature - Spanish.docx
- Debate Team Carousel—What is the State of Our Nature - Spanish.pdf
- Debate Team Carousel—What is the State of Our Nature.docx
- Debate Team Carousel—What is the State of Our Nature.pdf
- Lesson Slides—What is the State of Our Nature.pptx
- T-Chart—What is the State of Our Nature - Spanish.docx
- T-Chart—What is the State of Our Nature - Spanish.pdf
- T-Chart—What is the State of Our Nature.docx
- T-Chart—What is the State of Our Nature.pdf
- The Philosophies of Hobbes and Locke—What is the State of Our Nature - Spanish.docx
- The Philosophies of Hobbes and Locke—What is the State of Our Nature - Spanish.pdf
- The Philosophies of Hobbes and Locke—What is the State of Our Nature.docx
- The Philosophies of Hobbes and Locke—What is the State of Our Nature.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- T-Chart handout (attached, one per student)
- The Philosophies of Hobbes and Locke handout (attached, one per student)
- Debate Team Carousel handout (attached, one per student)
- Sticky notes (two per student)

10 minutes

Engage

Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to guide the lesson. Review the essential question and lesson objectives on **slides 3–4**.

Show **slide 5**. Ask students to think about the question, "Why do people create governments?" Have students talk about the question with a partner, then ask for volunteers to share their thoughts. Have a class discussion about why governments are needed for a society to function.

Teacher's Note: Sample Student Responses

Governments are created to keep people safe, provide a defense against intruders, tax citizens to pay for things like roads and education, and make and enforce laws.

15 minutes

Explore

Pass out the attached **T-Chart handout**, one for each student. Show **slide 6** and announce to students that they will watch two videos about different types of governments. As they watch the videos, have students complete each side of the T-Chart.

Show **slide 7**. Play the *All Hail the King! What is a Monarchy?* video. Show **slide 8**. Play the *This is What Democracy Looks Like* video.

After students watch the videos, show **slide 9**. Ask them to share their T-Chart with a partner to compare the information they included. Ask students to share their T-Charts with the class.

When all groups have shared their T-Charts, have students discuss the major differences between monarchies and democracies.

Ask volunteers to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of monarchies and democracies.

Teacher's Note: Sample Student Responses

In monarchies, people do not choose their leaders and do not participate in government. In democracies, people are expected to vote and play a part in government. A benefit of democracy is that people have a say in who their leader is. One drawback is that not everyone chooses to participate. A benefit of a monarchy is that the leader can make quick decisions for a country, but a drawback is that the people may not agree with the person in charge.

30 minutes

Explain

Introduce students to two philosophers who wrote about the best type of government for a society.

Show **slide 10** to introduce Thomas Hobbes, who lived from 1588–1679 in England. He wrote many books, but his most famous is *Leviathan*, which is about his ideas on government. Hobbes wrote *Leviathan* during the English Civil War, which heavily influenced the work.

Show **slide 11** to introduce John Locke, also an Englishman, who lived from 1632–1704. He also wrote many books, including *Two Treatises of Government*, a text that was influential in the formation of many governments.

Pass out the attached **The Philosophies of Hobbes and Locke** handout to each student. Have students read the handout in pairs and answer the guiding questions located in the second column of the handout. After students have completed this, show **slide 12**. Have students use the POMS: Point of Most Significance strategy to develop a one-sentence summary of the most important part of the handout.

Ask students to share their Point of Most Significance. Use this time to clarify or correct any misconceptions students have about Hobbes and Locke.

Teacher's Note: Sample Student Responses

Hobbes thought people needed one ruler with all of the power, but Locke thought a ruler's power should be limited.

Hobbes believed that people should give up their rights to one person for protection, but Locke believed that people should share power with a leader.

20 minutes

Extend

Introduce students to the Debate Team Carousel strategy. Arrange students into groups of four and pass out the attached **Debate Team Carousel** handout, one for each student.

Show **slide 13** and read the question to students. Explain to the class how the Carousel works:

- Ask students to write a response to the question in the first box with their reasoning.
- **Pass #1:** Once each student has written their response, have them pass their papers to the student on their right.
- Instruct the second student to read the response in the first box and add a sentence to the second box that supports the first response.
- **Pass #2:** Have students pass their papers to the student on their right a second time.
- Instruct students to read the responses in the first two boxes and add a sentence that opposes the response.
- **Pass #3:** Have students pass their papers once more.
- Instruct students to read the responses, and in the last box to add their own opinion supported with their reasoning.
- **Pass #4.** Have students pass the papers back to the owner, who should read the responses left by group members.

Ask volunteers to share some of the arguments that were written down. As the whole class to discuss their opinions on the theories of Hobbes and Locke. Invite them to answer the question: *Who was right about how much power a government should have?*

15 minutes

Evaluate

For the final activity, pass out two sticky notes.

Show **slide 14.** Introduce students to the Six-Word Memoirs strategy. Ask students to use sticky notes and create two memoirs, one from the perspective of Hobbes and one from the perspective of Locke. Instruct students to create memoirs that do not exceed six words.

Teacher's Note: Sample Student Summaries

Thomas Hobbes: “Life without government: nasty, brutish, short.”

John Locke: “Natural rights: life, liberty, property.”

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). Debate team carousel. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/110
- K20 Center. (n.d.). POMS: Point of most significance. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/101
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Six-word memoirs. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/75
- K20 Center. (n.d.). T-chart. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/86
- PBS Learning Media. (n.d.). *All Hail the King! What is a Monarchy?* |[Video]. Politics on Point. PBS. https://oeta.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/all-hail-the-king-what-is-a-monarchy-video/wviz-politics-on-point/.
- PBS Learning Media. (n.d.). *This is What Democracy Looks Like.* [Video]. Politics on Point. PBS. https://oeta.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/this-is-what-democracy-looks-like-video/wviz-politics-on-point/
- Public Domain Pictures (n.d.) *Public institution building*. [Graphic image]. https://publicdomainpictures.net/en/view-image.php?image=13466&picture=government-building
- Wikipedia. (n.d.). John Locke. [Digital Image]. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Lockeia
- Wikipedia. (n.d.) Thomas Hobbes. [Digital Image]. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Hobbesedia