



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](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

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 by brainstorming why people create governments, comparing and contrasting monarchies and democracies and debating as a class which philosopher was right about the amount of power a government should have.

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 tweet from the perspective of each philosopher using the [Tweet Up](#) strategy.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: World History (9th through 12th grade))

WH.2.7: Analyze the impact of the Enlightenment on modern government and economic institutions, including the theories of Hobbes, Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Adam Smith.

Attachments

- [Debate-Team-Carousel-State-of-Our-Nature - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Debate-Team-Carousel-State-of-Our-Nature - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Debate-Team-Carousel-State-of-Our-Nature.docx](#)
- [Debate-Team-Carousel-State-of-Our-Nature.pdf](#)
- [T-Chart-State-of-our-Nature - Spanish.docx](#)
- [T-Chart-State-of-our-Nature - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [T-Chart-State-of-our-Nature.docx](#)
- [T-Chart-State-of-our-Nature.pdf](#)
- [The-Philosophies-of-Thomas-Hobbes-and-John-Locke - Spanish.docx](#)
- [The-Philosophies-of-Thomas-Hobbes-and-John-Locke - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [The-Philosophies-of-Thomas-Hobbes-and-John-Locke.docx](#)
- [The-Philosophies-of-Thomas-Hobbes-and-John-Locke.pdf](#)
- [Tweet-Up-State-of-our-Nature - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Tweet-Up-State-of-our-Nature - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Tweet-Up-State-of-our-Nature.docx](#)
- [Tweet-Up-State-of-our-Nature.pdf](#)
- [What-is-the-State-of-Our-Nature-Lesson-Slides.pptx](#)

Materials

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

10 minutes

Engage

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

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 [first video](#) about monarchies. Show **slide 8**. Play the [second video](#) about democracies.

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.

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 *Leviathan*.

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 handout, **The Philosophies of John Locke and Thomas Hobbes**, one for 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 and use this time to clarify or correct any misconceptions students have about Hobbes and Locke.

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 that supports the response in the first box.
- **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 the attached **Tweet Up** handout to each student or have students use a sticky note.

Show **slide 14**. Introduce students to the [Tweet Up](#) strategy. Ask students to create two tweets, one from the perspective of Hobbes and one from the perspective of Locke. Instruct students to create a tweet that does not exceed 140 characters including spaces. Have students include at least one hashtag in their tweet.

Sample Student Responses

A leader with all of the power and control can keep people the safest. #lifeisnastyandshort

Leaders should protect people's rights and govern in the people's best interest. #lifelibertyproperty

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). Debate Team Carousel. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/110>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). POMS. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/101>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). T-Chart. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/86>
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Tweet Up. Strategies. <https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/130>
- 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_Locke
- Wikipedia. (n.d.). Thomas Hobbes. [Digital Image]. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Hobbes