



**GOVERNMENT**

# GERMANY'S MULTI-PARTY SYSTEM

How can we foster a more democratic society?

High  
School

<p><b>C3 Framework Indicator</b></p>	<p>D1.1 9-12, D2.Civ.1 9-12., D2.Civ.3 9-12., D2.His.1 9-12., D3.1 9-12, D3.3 9-12., D4.1 9-12., D4.2 9-12.</p>	
<p><b>Staging the Compelling Question</b></p>	<p>How can we foster a more democratic society?</p>	
<p><b>Supporting Question 1</b></p>	<p><b>Supporting Question 2</b></p>	<p><b>Supporting Question 3</b></p>
<p>What is a multi-party government? Case study: Germany</p>	<p>What are the characteristics of a coalition government?</p>	<p>What are the political beliefs of each of the major political parties in Germany?</p>
<p><b>Formative Performance Task</b></p>	<p><b>Formative Performance Task</b></p>	<p><b>Formative Performance Task</b></p>
<p>Students create posters that describe the pros/cons of Multi-Party systems</p>	<p>Using a Socratic Seminar style, students evaluate whether a coalition government is more or less democratic</p>	<p>Students collaborate to present Germany's major political party platforms and explore all seven key parties through peer presentations.</p>
<p><b>Featured Sources</b></p>	<p><b>Featured Sources</b></p>	<p><b>Featured Sources</b></p>
<p>Source A: "The German Political System" (Expatrio)</p>	<p><b>Source A:</b> "What are coalitions?" (Civics SA), <b>Source B:</b> "Pros and Cons of Coalition Governments" (The Week), <b>Source C:</b> "Understanding Coalition Governments and Their Implications - MK Party" (MK Party), <b>Source D:</b> "Coalition Government: Is It Better to Work Together" (Oxbridge Applications)</p>	<p>Source A: Germany's Political Parties – What You Need to Know   DW   (Rina Goldenberg)</p>
<p><b>Summative Performance Task</b></p>	<p><b>Argument:</b> 500-600 word essay evaluating methods of creating a more democratic society</p> <p><b>Extension:</b> Presentation to inform students of the importance of being politically involved.</p>	
<p><b>Taking Informed Action:</b> Using your voice to make change</p>	<p><b>Understand:</b> Understand the different political systems and evaluate the US' political system.</p> <p><b>Assess:</b> Students assess the democratic level of the United States and evaluate how different groups continue to be denied rights guaranteed in a democracy.</p> <p><b>Act:</b> Students use what they learned in order to lobby local politicians to advocate for the ideologies of ALL people rather than falling in line with 1 of the 2 political parties' ideologies.</p>	

# Germany's Multi-Party System

Target Grade Level: 12

Target Course: Government/Economics

## Compelling Question

How can we foster a more democratic society?

## Inquiry Overview

Students will explore how various societies attempt to practice the essential elements of democracy by recognizing the existence of a multi-party system in Germany, the conditions and characteristics of coalition governments, and the evaluation of a two-party system of the United States.

## Teacher Background Information

This lesson should be taught in conjunction with a unit on political parties in the United States in government class. In addition, students should be familiar with democracies characteristics.

### 1. Understanding of Democratic Principles:

- Familiarity with the foundational elements of democracy, including participation, representation, accountability, and the rule of law.
- Knowledge of various forms of democracy, such as direct and representative democracy.

### 2. Multi-Party vs. Two-Party Systems:

- An understanding of the characteristics and functions of multi-party systems, particularly how they operate in countries like Germany.
- Knowledge of the structure and implications of a two-party system, with a focus on the United States.

### 3. Coalition Governments:

- Awareness of how coalition governments are formed, the dynamics involved, and the challenges they may face.
- Ability to explain the process of coalition-building and its significance in a multi-party context.

### 4. Comparative Political Systems:

- Familiarity with the comparative approach to studying political systems, enabling students to analyze differences and similarities between multi-party and two-party systems.
- Understanding the roles and functions of various political parties within these systems.

## Suggested Time Frame

Five, 60-minute class periods

## Concept List

- Multi-Party System:
- Coalition Governments:
- Proportional Representation:
- Political Party Platforms:
- Minority Governments:
- Electoral Systems:
- Voter Turnout Trends:
- Political Polarization:

## Instructional Resources

- Student Chromebook
- Internet
- Projector
- Laptop
- Poster Paper
- Markers
- Reading Materials
- Handout 1
- Handout 2
- Handout 3

## NCSS Thematic Strands

- Global Connections
- Power, Authority, and Governance

## Outcomes for Student Learning

- Students will be able to define and explain key concepts related to democracy, including multi-party systems, two-party systems, and coalition governments.
- Students will understand the differences between the electoral systems in the United States and other countries, particularly those with multi-party systems.
- Students will analyze the advantages and disadvantages of multi-party and two-party systems, considering their impact on voter representation and political stability.
- Students will evaluate real-world examples of coalition governments and their effectiveness in achieving policy goals.
- Students will formulate and investigate questions related to the effectiveness of different democratic systems in addressing contemporary political challenges.
- Students will be encouraged to engage in discussions about current events and political issues, fostering a sense of responsibility for informed participation in democratic processes.

## Germany-Related Learning Goals

- Students will be able to describe the structure of the German political system, including the roles of the Bundestag (Federal Diet) and Bundesrat (Federal Council).
- Students will compare and contrast Germany's multi-party system with the U.S. two-party system, identifying the key political parties in Germany, such as the CDU/CSU, SPD, Greens, and FDP.
- Students will analyze how the presence of multiple parties influences voter choice and representation in Germany.
- Students will explain the concept of coalition governments in Germany and how they are formed.
- Students will learn about the German electoral system, including the use of proportional representation and how it affects party representation in the Bundestag.
- Students will analyze the implications of Germany's electoral system for voter turnout and political engagement compared to the U.S. system.
- Students will be able to identify and discuss current political events and issues in Germany, connecting them to the broader themes of democracy and governance.

## Compelling Question

**How can we foster a more democratic society?**

## Introductory Activity

- Students will participate in a silent gallery walk activity. 3 posters will be around the classroom with three questions:
  - 1) What makes a country democratic?
  - 2) What makes a country non-democratic?
  - 3) What are some of the characteristics that every government should have?
- Next, we will have students read out the posters. Teacher will lead a classroom discussion on what was written. Students will have the opportunity to voice their opinions.
- Finally, at the end, students will take a piece of paper and write down how they believe the United States has characteristics of a democratic government, an un-democratic government, and characteristics of what they believe a government should have. They will share those with their elbow partners.

## Supporting Question 1

### What is a multi-party government? Case study: Germany

#### Formative Performance Task 1

**Warm-Up:** Students will be instructed to answer the question on a Schoology discussion board. “What is the political party system in the United States? What are some of the characteristics of each of the political parties?” Students will be instructed to respond to 2 classmates. This should take about 10-15 minutes.

**Debrief:** Teacher will address the answers that students put in the discussion board. Teacher will instruct students to explain their responses.

**Introducing the CQ and SQ #1:** Teacher will do an introduction into the compelling question for the week. Teacher will point to the anticipatory activity as a need for an answer to the question “How can we foster a more democratic society?”. Teachers will inform students that each day we will be answering a supporting question that will allow us answer the compelling question at the end of the week. Teacher will now introduce the supporting question. Teacher informs students that we will look at some of the characteristics of another one of the world’s biggest democracies, Germany. We will inform them that Germany, unlike the US, is a multi-party government. By the end of today, students will be able to answer the question: What is a multi-party system? By looking at Germany as an example of one.

**Jigsaw Activity Pt. #1:** Students will now be split into 5 groups. (This can be done by numbering then 1-5, or if they are in 5 groups already, then they can begin the assignment). Each group will be given a section of the reading for which they have to become experts for. They will then share that information with their peers.

Students will be given 15-20 minutes to read, annotate, and provide a summary of their assigned section. This should be done in collaboration with their assigned groups.

**Pt. #2:** Students will now be split into heterogenous groups with individuals now sharing the information they got. At this point, in order, students will be sharing out their information and explaining the various aspects of German government. This should take about 10-15 minutes.

**Performance Task:** Students now will be tasked with contributing to a pro’s/con’s poster paper on multi-party systems. Students will first have a discussion with the heterogenous groups about some of the potential difficulties of the multi-party system. After, they will also have a discussion on some of the potential pros of the multi-party system. Each group will be expected to collaborate and contribute 1 pro and 1 con. This should take about 10 minutes.

**Exit Ticket:** Each student will answer the supporting question: “What is a multi-party government?” on an index card and submit it on their way out. This should be 5 minutes.

#### Resources

The Characteristics of Germany’s Multi Party System (Handout 1)

“German Political System.” Expatrío, [www.expatrio.com/about-germany/german-political-system](http://www.expatrio.com/about-germany/german-political-system). Accessed 26 Dec. 2024.

### What are the characteristics of a coalition government?

#### ► Formative Performance Task 2

**Warm-Up:** Students are asked to work with their elbow partners to figure out a single issue that both Republicans and Democrats would be willing to work together with and create legislation (at this point, students should have studied the political ideologies of each party). Students are told to prepare to share out and provide evidence from the internet (students should have access to a Chromebook). This should take about 10 minutes.

**Debrief:** While students are completing the warm-up, teacher should be walking around. Teacher then selects those elbow partners that had different ideas to share out. This encourages discussion but also allows the class to see the limited options that both political parties are willing to compromise on.

**Introducing SQ and Extending Prior Knowledge:** Students are then introduced to the supporting question for the day. Students are told that different governments around the world such as Germany have coalition governments. Today, they will be tasked with finding out what a coalition government is as well as investigating some pros and cons of coalition governments.

Teacher then projects “What are Coalitions” (link provided below) on YouTube. While the video is playing, students are tasked with writing 5 notes that help them understand what a coalition government is. Additionally, teacher should be stopping the video at key points in order to explain parts of the video more in depth (teacher should watch short 6-minute video before showing it to class). After the video ends, teacher holds a discussion on what a coalition government is and how it differs from the two party, winner take all system we have in the United States. Students should be able to make comparisons, but if not, teacher should guide them towards those comparisons.

**Performance Task #2:** Students are now informed that they will be splitting the class in half. Half of the class is going to argue the pros of coalition governments and the other half will argue the cons of coalition governments. They will be introduced to 3 sources that they can begin their research with but are not limited to those 3 sources (at this point students should know how to properly site a source). Students will be writing their notes on the handout that you share with them (Handout 2). Students are encouraged to work with their immediate neighbors but are free to move around and work with anyone from their side. Students are given 20 minutes to prepare their arguments. Teacher walks around and assists with any questions students might have.

After 20 minutes, students are brought together to begin their Socratic Seminar. You can decide who goes first or flip a coin. Students are reminded of Seminar norms (1 voice, 1 turn, respectful discourse, no interruptions, evidence is king). You set your timer for 15 minutes. During this time, students have an academic discussion on some of the pros and cons of coalition governments while teacher prompts with questions or prompts students when/if conversations begins to die down.

**Exit Ticket:** Students are now asked to reflect on the Socratic Seminar. They are encouraged to abandon their original positions and reflect on whether or not they believe a coalition government encourages more or less democracy and whether or not this system would work in the United States. Students are given 10 minutes to write their response and turn it in before class ends.

## ► Resources

Civics Academy SA. "What Are Coalitions?" YouTube, 10 Aug. 2023, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=n\\_jiDpO-YWY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_jiDpO-YWY). Accessed 18 Oct. 2024.

The Week Staff. "Pros and Cons of Coalition Governments." Theweek, 17 May 2023, <https://theweek.com/news/politics/960884/pros-and-cons-of-coalition-governments>.

"Understanding Coalition Governments and Their Implications - MK Party." MK Party, 4 June 2024, <https://mkparty.org.za/understanding-coalition-governments-and-their-implications/>.

"Coalition Government: Is It Better to Work Together?" Oxbridge Applications, <https://oxbridgeapplications.com/blog/coalition-government-better-work-together/>.

### Supporting Question 3

## What are the political beliefs of each of the major political parties in Germany?

### ► Formative Performance Task 3

**Warm-Up:** Teacher introduces students to the warm-up question: To what extent do you believe that the two major political parties in the United States cover your ALL your beliefs? In other words, do you share the beliefs of both political parties? Students write their personal response first and then share out with their elbow partners. 10 minutes

**Debrief:** Teacher debriefs conversation with students. Students might steer the conversation, but if not, teacher should describe the lack of political diversity in the United States forces people to alienate themselves with 1 of the 2 major political parties, even if they don't necessarily agree with all of their political agenda.

**Introducing SQ and extending prior knowledge:** Students are then told that today they will be investigating the different political beliefs of each of the major political parties in Germany.

**Introducing SQ:** Teacher tells students that by the end of today, they will know the political platform of each of the major political parties of Germany. This will help us in our search for the answer to the compelling question the next two days.

**Formative Performance Task:** Students are split into 7 different groups. Each of the groups represents each one of the 7 major political parties of Germany. Their task will be to create a (brief) 2-3 slide presentation that describes the history and platform of the political party that they were assigned. Students will be introduced to the featured source but will not be limited to it for information. Students will need to provide source slide if they use additional sources. This will take 20 minutes.

After 20 minutes, students will present their findings to their peers. Peers will be writing the information on Handout 3. Each group will have 5 minutes to present for a total of 35 minutes. Students may finish before 5 minutes based on the length of the presentation. During presentation, teacher corrects any information that might be incorrect or adds context to information that is not spoken about in depth.

## Supporting Question 3 continued

**Exit Ticket:** After presentations are finished, teacher poses the following question to students: Compared to the US' two-party system, how well do you believe Germany represents the diversity of ideals through their political system? Do you believe that that the US would benefit from a system like this? Would it make the country more or less democratic? Why? After a brief individual reflection, teacher guides students through a discussion. 10 minutes.

### Resources

Goldenberg, Rina. "Germany's Political Parties – What You Need to Know | DW | 05.10.2021." DW.COM, 5 Oct. 2021, <https://www.dw.com/en/spd-green-party-fdp-cdu-left-party-afd/a-38085900>.

## Summative Performance Task

<b>Essay / Presentation</b>	Students will write a 500-600 word essay answer the following question: Based on everything we learned about this week (multi-party governments, coalitions, and the beliefs of Germany's political parties), how the US foster a more democratic society? In other words, how can we represent the needs of all of our citizens.
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## Taking Informed Action

<b>Understand</b>	<i>Students will be able to use their knowledge of the week in order to form what they believe is a more democratic society using the characteristics of the prior performance tasks.</i>
<b>Assess</b>	<i>Students will assess how "democratic" the United States currently is and how various individuals' needs and beliefs continue to be ignored. Students can research how the youth are forced to deal with the results of a political election.</i>
<b>Act</b>	<i>Students could begin to make their peers more politically aware by beginning voting registration campaigns (since this is aimed at 12<sup>th</sup> grade). Additionally, students can begin to campaign local political parties to support causes that are meaningful to their age groups.</i>

## Modifications for Differentiation

Aspiring proficient English learners are common in schools throughout the United States. Rather than an essay, students will be given an option on creating a presentation that includes photos of how we are able to create a more democratic society using the information from the week.



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