

Are These The Greatest Ever Quotes About Democracy?

Learn some essential 'reported speech' verbs (B2) and advanced level vocabulary (C1) as 12 of humanity's greatest minds share their views on democracy.



1. Vocabulary | Match these 10 words to their correct definitions.

1. Oppressor (noun)	A. To break into small fragments or pieces.
2. Painkiller (noun)	B. To fall below a normal or desirable state, especially functionally or morally; deteriorate.
3. Degenerate (verb)	C. Someone who treats people in an unfair and cruel way and prevents them from having opportunities and freedom.
4. Despotism (noun)	D. To strike with strong force.
5. Aggravate (verb)	E. A medicine used to relieve pain.
6. Tyranny (noun)	F. Make more severe or intense, especially in law.
7. Con-game (noun)	G. To appease, or, to pacify.
8. Placate (verb)	H. A trick in which the victim is defrauded after his or her trust has been won.
9. Bludgeon (verb)	I. Unjust or oppressive governmental power.
10. Crumble (verb)	J. A government or political system in which the ruler exercises absolute power.

2. Listening | Fill each space with the missing word.

It's common to hear politicians talk about 'democracy'. But what exactly do they mean? Here are 13 thought-provoking interpretations from some of the world's finest statesmen, philosophers and intellectuals.

Definitions

Abraham Lincoln _____ that democracy is 'government of, by and for the people'. Oscar Wilde _____ that 'Democracy means simply the **bludgeoning** of the people by the people for the people'. Hans Herman-Hoppe _____ that 'Democracy has nothing to do with freedom. Democracy is a soft variant of communism, and rarely in the history of ideas has it been taken for anything else'. Winston Churchill _____ that 'democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.'

Analogies

Gore Vidal _____ that 'Democracy is supposed to give you the feeling of choice, like **Painkiller X** and **Painkiller Y**. But they're both just aspirin'. Jacques Fresco _____ that 'Democracy is a **con game**. It's a word invented to **placate** people to make them accept a given institution. All institutions sing, "We are free". The minute you hear "freedom" and "democracy", watch out... because in a truly free nation, no one has to tell you you're free'. Ambrose Bierce _____ that "Democracy is four wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for lunch".

History

John Adams _____ 'remember, democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide'. Aristotle _____ that Republics decline into democracies and democracies **degenerate** into **despotism**. Plato _____ that Dictatorship naturally arises out of democracy, and the most **aggravated** form of **tyranny** and slavery out of the most extreme liberty.

Consequences

James Russell Lowell _____ that 'Democracy gives every man the right to be his own **oppressor**'. Abbie Hoffman _____ that 'Democracy is not something you believe in or a place to hang your hat, but it's something you do. You participate. If you stop doing it, democracy **crumbles**'. Winston Churchill _____ that 'The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter'.

Love it or loathe it. Believe in it or doubt it. Strengthen it or weaken it. However we feel about democracy, we can't deny how impactful the idea has been for civilisation.



3. Which 4 reporting verbs are followed by an object pronoun ('us') ?

4. Reading Comprehension | Who thinks that democracy ...

Person	Interpretation
[a]	... is something we do rather than believe in and if we stop participating in it then the system fails.
[b]	... allows us to be abused by ourselves because we allow the people we choose to oppress us through law.
[c]	... means that people make rules to attack each other and themselves, for their own benefit.
[d]	... has many problems that make it really bad, but it's still better than any other system.
[e]	... is a system where all the citizens of a nation are its rule-enforcers, rule-makers, and beneficiaries.
[f]	... has always failed because people vote for policies that destroy the system.
[g]	... enables the potential abuse of a minority by the majority.
[h]	... offers a binary choice between the same, ineffective solutions to a problem.
[i]	... is a scam and we should be careful of people who talk a lot about popular notions of liberty and the popular voting system.
[j]	... has no connection to 'liberty' and is a gentle form of a radical left-wing ideology.
[k]	... is the wrong system for the typical citizen to participate in.
[l]	... is part of the transition from the sharing of power between an elected body of citizens to one ruler who exercises absolute power.
[m]	... evolves into a form of government where the ruler's power is unrestricted by law or political opponents.



Answers:

1. Vocabulary | 1C; 2E; 3B; 4J; 5F; 6I; 7H; 8G; 9D; 10A.

2. Listening | (1) stated; (2) responded; (3) claimed; (4) advised us; (5) argued; (6) warned us; (7) quipped; (8) informed us; (9) asserted; (10) declared; (11) told us; (12) announced; (13) commented.

3. tell; inform; warn; advise

4. 4. [a] Abbie Hoffman; [b] James Russel Lowe; [c] Oscar Wilde; [d] Winston Churchill; [e] Abraham Lincoln; [f] John Adams; [g] Ambrose Bierce; [h] Gore Vidal; [i] Jaque Fresco; [j] Hans Herman-Hoppe; [k] Winston Churchill; [l] Aristotle; [m] Plato.

