



## ***Democratization in the Arab World***

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies

**Keywords:** Government, authoritarian, democracy, democratization

**Teaching Standards:** See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

### **Synopsis:**

Democratization is something that has occurred in waves throughout mankind's history. These waves have often occurred as a way of combatting authoritarian governments that were in power in most countries around the world. Democratization has not been in easy in most places. Countries and their citizens have had to fight for the right to choose their own government and government officials. These waves have brought about war and bloodshed, the violent overthrowing of rulers, and civil unrest. My unit, *Democratization in the Arab World*, will give students a better understanding of how people in the Middle East and North Africa have been fighting for the same types of rights and freedoms that we take for granted here in the United States. It is easy for students to believe that life in other areas of the globe is the same as the life they are accustomed to here. Therefore, it would be important and impactful for students to understand that there are still people in the world who are fighting for the basic rights that they get to enjoy as a citizen of this country. It would also give students a better appreciation for the revolutions that brought about an end to absolute monarchies during the eighteenth century. My overall goal for this unit would be for students to be able to make connections between past and current events, as well as helping them to build a better understanding of the natural reaction of people who live under authoritarian rule.

*I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 125 students in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies.*

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# Democratization in the Arab World

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## Introduction

As a Social Studies teacher, my job is not only to teach important historical events, people, and time periods, but also to teach students about important current events. Often we focus on more recent events to help show students the connections between the past and the present. Other events are meant to show students that there are other people around the world whose lives are very different from their own. By showing students events where people are fighting for their freedom, it will help them make connections to previous events that have shaped the world in which they live. Therefore, it will give them a better appreciation for the opportunities and lifestyle that they get to enjoy on a daily basis.

Working for Bailey Middle School I am fortunate to have many resources available that allow me to further student learning in my classroom. Bailey was an A rated school based on test scores from the 2016-2017 school year, and for the fourth year in a row we have earned the title of Exceeding Growth. While we are a school in which over 80% of our 7<sup>th</sup> graders are reading on or above grade level, we are always trying to push those numbers even higher. Therefore, while it is my job to teach my students history, it is also important that I continue to push literacy as well.

Bailey has a very large population for a middle school with 1,616 students enrolled. The school is located in an affluent area, where we have a strong parent population that attributes to the school's success each year. Our free and reduced lunch population at Bailey is about 24% which is much lower than the district average of about 51%. The make-up of our student population is as follows: 77% Caucasian, 8% Hispanic, 10% African American, 2% Asia, and 3% is a combination of two or more races[1].

My school is also unique in the fact that it is a part of our district's One-to-One initiative. The plan is to provide each student within the school access to a Chromebook laptop while in class. This gives teachers the ability to make their lessons more interactive and enjoyable for the students. By having Chromebooks in the classroom I have been able to utilize more of the education programs that are available to educators. By making our lessons and activities digital students tend to be more engaged in the content being presented and will also take more away from the lesson as well. This is just one of the many resources that Bailey provides to help teachers reach their students in the classroom.

Despite Bailey's consistent success compared to state standards in test grades and growth, we are always looking for ways to improve. For the third year, we have included in our schedule a thirty-minute period, known as Bronco Block, for both enrichment and remediation. Students work on digital lessons through Compass Learning and IXL in both reading and math during this time. Students are also given D.E.A.R time, as a way to help enforce their reading abilities. This is also an opportunity for teachers to pull aside students who are struggling to help

them get caught up or better understand content being covered. The goal of Bronco Block is to give teachers time they do not have in class to concentrate on the students who are struggling, while at the same time helping to enrich the students who are already performing at a high level.

Bailey's mission is not to just help students recognize and achieve their academic goals; we also realize that we are grooming the future leaders of our society. Therefore, it is important that students recognize the qualities of effective and influential leaders. At Bailey we have adopted the "Leader in Me" program which is meant to teach students how to develop the qualities that will make them effective leaders of the next generation. The program centers around the idea of the 7 Habits of highly effective teens, which include being proactive, beginning with the end in mind, putting first things first, thinking win-win, seeking first to understand then to be understood, synergizing, and sharpening the saw. The idea is to embed these habits in our students now so that they will be highly effective individuals once they move on from their educational experience. It is a great program that we are continuing to grow into the culture of the school.

Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools has also implemented Instructional Leadership Teams (ILT) for all schools in the district. As a member of that team at Bailey, we are helping teachers focus on incorporating literacy into their daily instructions through the process of close reading and text dependent questions. With the new school year, ILT teams have a new focus in their respective schools. This year the focus will be on effective writing practices. Not only are we giving teachers the resources needed to incorporate effective literacy strategies and helping them foster an environment in which student to student interactions and discussions are encouraged and practiced on a daily basis, but we will also be training them on how to incorporate effective writing assignments into their instruction. The Instructional Leadership Team at Bailey works very hard to give teachers the training and resources needed to help them embed literacy in their planning and instruction.

## Rationale

Through our course of study we will cover many important events in World History, and for most of the students it is their first exposure to these topics. Our 7th grade curriculum covers over five hundred years of history, in which we study some of the major historical shifts that have helped to shape our modern society. Part of curriculum covers the wave of democratization that occurred during the 18th century. Classes learn about the major events and ideas that surround both the American and French Revolution. Students learn the link between what these revolutions were fighting for and the beliefs of the Enlightenment philosophers.

While students do a good job understanding these events and the links between them, they tend to think of it as events that happened a really long time ago, and that have no connection to our current society. However, and most students fail to understand this, there are still parts of the world that want or are fighting for the same types of rights and freedoms that we enjoy in the United States. The purpose of this unit would be to show students that there are people in the world who are fighting for the same rights and freedoms that those in the American and French Revolutions were fighting for as well. Part of our curriculum is to bring in current events, and teaching about the Arab Spring will not only show students the connection to the

events of the Age of Revolutions, but it would also give them insight into events that are occurring around the world. Because this unit covers more recent events in history I will be able to utilize newspaper articles, videos, and images to give students a clear understanding of the events as they unfolded.

This unit would be covered toward the end of the year when we are covering other more recent events in world history. It would first give students an overview of the Arab Spring and the positive and negative effects of this event. Students would then learn about countries that were impacted by the Arab Spring. During the study of these countries, students will be exposed to examples in which democratization was successful, and other where it was not so successful.

## **Content**

The Arab Spring represents “the demand of the masses under authoritarian regimes for honor, dignity, liberty, good governance, and accountability of rulers.”[2] It was a movement for democratization that occurred in the Middle East and North Africa in late 2010. It started in Tunisia and eventually spread to other, neighboring countries. The events that unfolded in Tunisia eventually spread to five other countries. The message in the participating nations inspired some observers to call the Arab Spring the fourth wave of democratization in modern history.

A wave of democratization is a “group of transitions from nondemocratic to democratic regimes that occur within a specified period of time and that significantly outnumber transitions in the opposite directions during that period of time.”[3] While some democratic transitions are fairly smooth, others take the form of severe social uprisings that ultimately led to protests, violence, the toppling of regimes, and even civil war. During previous waves of democratization, transitions to democracy have occurred in different ways. Some transitions have occurred through force and others saw peaceful transfers of power from authoritarian to democracy. In studying previous historical waves of democratization Samuel Huntington concluded that there are three different types of processes involved in democratization, which he called transformation, replacement, and transplacement. Huntington concluded,

Transformation occurred when the elites in power took the lead in bringing about democracy. Replacement occurred when opposition groups took the lead in bringing about democracy, and the authoritarian regime collapsed or was overthrown. Transplacement occurred when democratization resulted largely from joint actions by the government and opposition groups.[4]

These same processes that were observed in previous attempts at democratization around the world, can also be found in the Arab Spring. The fall of authoritarian leaders during the Arab Spring is unique to each country. It is easy to categorize them into one of the processes that Huntington mentions. In doing so, it also helps to explain why many of the countries failed to accomplish the smooth transition to democracy that they had been hoping for.

The Arab Spring is a unique case of attempted democratization, and one in which the effects are still being determined. It was also a movement that caught many of those on the

outside by complete and total surprise. These countries are in a region where authoritarian regimes were strongly entrenched, and, it was believed, were going to remain that way for a very long time. The regimes that were in participating countries had existed for decades and had the military and police backing that allowed them to hold on to their power. However, there was resentment and anger boiling below the surface amongst the masses. The façade of strength and stability portrayed by these regimes was masking the problems that were apparent to those that were residing in these countries. Over time, these factors would eventually bring about demands for change. These demands brought about the Arab Spring, which also brought an end to these long lasting authoritarian regimes.

## Causes of the Arab Spring: Long-term Structural Factors

### *Economic Change*

The direct connection between economic development and democratization within a country is a product of the industrialized age. As countries' economies became dependent on industry and the mass production of goods, the distribution of wealth that developed helped to create a positive connection between wealth and democratization. Economic development "provided the basis for democracy; crises produced by either rapid growth or economic recession weakened authoritarianism." [5] Increased economic growth or economic downturn within a country both could lead to democratization. Countries that witness a recession or sluggish economic improvement could demand change in the form of democracy. In addition, within countries that experience rapid growth, where civilians gain both wealth and power, demands for an end to authoritarian rule could also arise. Needless to say, democratization relies heavily on the economic status, or strength within a country.

It is important to understand just how much economic development and opportunity played a part in bringing about the Arab Spring. It was the educated youth in these countries who would act as the movement's foot soldiers. The cause of these uprisings in the Arab world was brought about by the rapid increase in the number of educated, urban youths who were upset with the weak economic growth and poor job opportunities in these areas. [6] The Arab Spring was a youth movement, in which these individuals wanted their voices to be heard and they wanted real change brought to their country and its people. These individuals were just starting their lives and looking to build career paths and families of their own. They wanted to ensure that they had the opportunity to build the type of life that would provide security and success. By banding together and rising up against the establishment, they were showing their leaders, and the rest of the world, that the old order in the Arab world was crumbling and it was paving the way for new governments and economic growth.

### *New Communications Technologies*

Another important factor in the rise and spread of the Arab Spring was technology. More recent waves of democratization have been fueled by improved communications through technology. When one thinks of the American and French Revolutions, which occurred in the eighteenth century, it is easy to understand that slow communication helped to slow the process during this wave of democratization. One of the hardest aspects in organizing resistance against the British

empire was communication. Given the technological restrictions of the time, it took time for American colonist to organize their efforts against the British crown. However, this was not the case in later movements for democratization. According to Samuel Huntington:

Demonstration effects were much more important to the third wave than in the first two waves of democratization or, very probably, in any other political waves in the twentieth century. The reason is the tremendous expansion in global communications and transportation that occurred in the decades after World War II and particularly the blanketing of the world by television and communications satellites in the 1970s.[7]

Increased communication through technology has helped to give legitimacy to calls for democratization. Instead of simply hearing of protests through word of mouth or newspaper articles written days later, citizens around the world were witnessing these events in real time. Images and videos of people struggling to bring an end to oppression only helped to fuel support for the movements, and continued to foster the growth of these movements to end authoritarianism and bring about democratization.

This was even more evident in analyzing how those involved with the Arab Spring organized and planned their protests. Even though the devices and platforms were different from those used in the third wave of democratization, the effect was still the same. During the protests of the Arab Spring, mobile phones and social media played a major role in helping these movements grow and expand. As Abushouk explains,

Social media formed another dimension in the modernization process that provided a space for activists to talk, organize rallies against their authoritarian regimes, and call for the democratization of their political system.[8]

Just as Martin Luther had the printing press to help spread his criticism of the Catholic Church during his sixteenth century movement that brought about the decline in power of this institution, those in the Arab Spring had social media to help spread their ideas and demands, and to organize their movement. Technology also played a major role in the sense that it helped bring attention to government reaction to these protesters. Videos and images were posted on social media showing the extreme and harsh measures some of these regimes resorted to in order to end the protests. The images not only helped to bring international support in some cases, but it also fueled the anger that was already present amongst the protesters.

### *Social Inequality*

Lastly, social inequality was also a driving factor behind the eruption of the Arab Spring movement. This helped to strengthen the trust in democracy within those social groups that felt they were being unfairly treated and misrepresented in the government. Many of the democratic reformers within in these Arab countries openly shared their disapproval over the decisions and corruption within the dictatorial regimes that controlled their countries. Corruption and dictatorship had actually helped to further the divide between social groups within Arab countries. This divide led them to call for the end to the authoritarian governments currently in place, and to replace them more a more democratic form of government where their voices

would be heard. Therefore, the Arab Spring was a result of many different factors and even though the outcomes, overall, were not what many had hoped it has paved the way for change in a part of the world that had been resistant for so long.

Case Studies: Short-term factors/catalysts in individual countries

### *Tunisia*

The Arab Spring began in Tunisia on December 17, 2010, when a 26-year-old street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, had his vegetable cart seized by a policewoman.[9] Often times, history is sparked by small events and unexpected individuals. The Arab Spring is the perfect example of this because an event that has such historical implications could not have started in a more obscure way. After having his vegetable cart confiscated, and the police refusing to give it back, hence affecting his livelihood, Bouazizi took his own life.

This incident is essentially the spark of the Tunisian Revolution, which ultimately brought to light the oppression and harsh treatment of citizens in Tunisia. The Tunisian Revolution would be a catalyst for similar uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East. As demonstrations and riots erupted throughout Tunisia the police and security forces in the country took serious measures, such as police brutality, curfews, and attempts to cut off all communication, against the protesters.[10] A violent government reaction to protesters is a common characteristic in authoritarian regimes. Often, in order to maintain power, they must use strong police tactics.

The police reaction in Tunisia was meant to suppress the demonstrations, to use whatever means necessary to silence the people. However, those leading the revolution, namely young university students, had a powerful weapon on their side, technology. Images of the protests and the brutal actions by the police and security forces in response to the protests were posted and circulated on social media platforms, such as Facebook. This gave legitimacy to the movement and it brought international attention to the crisis that was unfolding within the country. It was also the spark needed for people in other countries that were willing to fight for the same type of change that those in Tunisia were seeking. The struggle that was occurring in Tunisia inspired other nations under the oppressive thumb of an authoritarian regime to rise up and demand change.

In Tunisia, as protests grew and spread throughout the country, there needed to be some type of response from the government besides adding to the violence. Abushouk explains,

To restrain the rage of the youth protesters, and to maintain security and order in the country, President Ben Ali promised he would create 300,000 jobs in the next two years, albeit ironically shortly thereafter issuing a decision to close down schools and universities and branding the protesters as “terrorists.”[11]

The actions of the President were not what the crowds of protesters were looking for. On one hand, the creation of jobs would have helped to solve the economic problems within in the country. However, closing down the schools and universities was essentially an attempt to

silence the youth that had risen up against the government. In attempting to try to solve the problem and bring an end to all the protesting, all Ben Ali had essentially done was cause further clashes between the protesters and police forces in the country. Under continuing pressure, Ben Ali continued to try to appease the protesters by removing key officials from his administration and promising for future elections, which would bring an end to his regime. However, these promises did little to quell the movement in his country, and he was forced to flee to Saudi Arabia along with his family on January 14, 2011, ending his authoritarian rule in the country. In the end, writes Abushouk,

Bouazizi was portrayed as a champion who had galvanized the frustrations of the region's youth against their dictatorial regimes into mass demonstrations, revolt, and revolution, all of which became known collectively as the "Arab Spring." [12]

Ben Ali's attempt to slow democratization in Tunisia is something that most authoritarian rulers attempt to do, but usually fail. Ultimately, he thought that if he could appease the protestors in his nation, then he would be able maintain control over his country. However, as history has shown us in similar movements and events, simply trying to implement partial democratization will only cause the voices and actions of the oppressed to grow stronger. As Huntington explains,

Personal dictators in countries that transitioned to democracy as well as those that did not usually tried to remain in office as long as they could. This often created tensions between a narrowly based political system and an increasingly complex and modern economy and society. [13]

Personal dictators often try to resist against the changes demanded by their people. As seen in Tunisia, Ben Ali tried to enact minor reforms to satisfy the demands of the people, without fully democratizing his country and giving up his power. However, this had the reverse effect and his reforms were not enough for the people, and the violence continued. In the end, it ultimately led to Ben Ali having to relinquish his power and flee the country in order for the chaos to cease.

The Tunisian Revolution has been marked by a rather peaceful transition of power, but that does not mean the peace is permanent. There have been many positive changes that have been brought about by this revolution within the country. In December 2014, the country held its first free elections since the toppling of the Ben Ali regime. However, it brought to power Beji Caid Essebsi, who many feel is a return to Ben Ali's regime due to his many years serving under the former leader. Tunisia also has had seven prime ministers in the last six years, showing instability within the government and the political parties that are running the country.

Despite some political infighting and instability, the people of Tunisia are enjoying more freedoms than before the Arab Spring uprisings began in 2011. The media has particularly enjoyed more freedom under the new political climate than it had under the Ben Ali regime. The influence of the media was realized during the Arab Spring, when social media played a major role in spreading the demands and goals of the protesters. Lastly, the biggest threat to stability within Tunisia is the growing influence of ultra-conservative Islamist groups. There is a growing number of Islamic militants who have carried out attacks that have led to a number of casualties



therefore threatening the stability of the Tunisian democracy. Tunisia still remains the only true successful transition to democracy that came out of the Arab Spring uprising, but even their success seems to be fragile.

### *The Snowballing Effect of Tunisia's Example*

The success of the Tunisian Revolution was the catalyst for movements in other nations. Tunisia served as an example, or model, for successful democratization in an area of the world in which authoritarian regimes remained popular. Images, videos, and social media provided a blueprint for other nations who wished to see their country make the transition to democracy. Huntington calls this dynamic "snowballing:"

Successful democratization occurs in one country and this encourages democratization in other countries, either because they seem to face similar problems, or because successful democratization elsewhere suggests that democratization might be a cure for their problems whatever those problems are, or because that country that has democratized is powerful and/or is viewed as a political and cultural model.[14]

Tunisia showed three things to the people of other nations under authoritarian rule. First, it showed that democratization could be accomplished. Second, it showed how to successfully achieve democratization. Finally, it provided later demonstrators with the blueprint needed to attempt their own democratization. It helped to point out the dangers and difficulties that were associated with the transition from authoritarianism to democracy.

### *Egypt*

Egypt was the next country to be influenced by the events that occurred in Tunisia. Protests began on January 25, 2011 against the "poverty, unemployment, and corruption" perpetuated by the regime of President Hosni Mubarak and his lieutenants.[15] The protests in Egypt lasted for eighteen days and occurred in many of the major cities within the country. Just as in Tunisia, social media helped these activists coordinate their protests throughout the country. There are many groups that helped to lead the movement against Mubarak's regime. The most influential group was the Muslim Brotherhood, the Egyptian Movement for Change, or Kefaya, which was "established in 2004 with a goal of changing the political situation in Egypt." [16] The group also showed disapproval of Mubarak's reelection in 2010 and of the news that he would transfer power to his son once his term had ended. Another influential group during the revolution was the April 6 Youth Movement, which was founded in 2008 in support of a group of workers who were planning to strike.[17] They used social media platforms as a way of voicing the workers' complaint and their demands, as well as helping to mobilize the strike. It was at this strike that a young Egyptian man, Khaled Said, was beaten to death by Egyptian security forces, and images were spread via the internet. This event was symbolic of the growing anger and sparked later demonstrations against the government.

The protests of January 2011 led the government to take desperate measures in trying to quell the protesters' activity. The government banned all public gatherings and used security forces to disband a number of peaceful protests. They also instituted a curfew and cut off all communication (including the internet) as way of trying to quell the protests.[18] This was

unsuccessful and the protests continued to grow and spread to other cities, as people continued to gather and form in mosques across the country. Under the pressure of the protests occurring in his country Mubarak appointed the first Vice President in thirty years and dismissed his cabinet, but he planned to remain in power for the remainder of his term. Just as in Tunisia, these reforms did little to end the public unrest going on in Egypt. Protests continued calling for Mubarak to step down from power. On February 11, 2011, Mubarak stepped down as leader of Egypt and handed power to a military council tasked with developing a constitution and holding elections for a new leader.

Although Egypt's pro-democracy groups were able to end Mubarak's regime, they were not able to install a democracy. Huntington warns that overthrowing an authoritarian regime is easier than creating a democratic one. He writes,

Before the fall, opposition groups are united by their desire to bring about the fall. After the fall, divisions appear among them and they struggle over the distribution of power and the nature of the new regime that must be established.[19]

Despite the successful overthrow of Mubarak and successful elections, which brought to power Mohamed Morsi, internal conflicts eventually led to the military overthrowing Morsi's regime. Egypt is still dealing with internal conflicts and uprisings that has led the government to return to a more authoritarian nature as a way of bringing order to the country and its government.

### *Libya*

The next major country that was impacted by the spreading of the Arab Spring was Libya, where the dictator Muammar al-Gaddafi had ruled the country with an iron fist for over forty years. As the Arab Spring was gaining momentum, al-Gaddafi tried to make certain reforms that he hoped would help to prevent any types of uprising from occurring in his own country, therefore threatening his power. Despite lowering food prices, dismissing military officer defectors, and releasing several Islamist prisoners, al-Gaddafi was unable to prevent major protests against his dictatorial regime from erupting in Benghazi on February 17, 2011.[20] The people of Libya were upset with the corruption within al-Gaddafi's government and the widespread unemployment among Libyan youth in the country.

The protesters grew in number and strength and within one day controlled most of the Libyan city of Benghazi. Gaddafi publicly denounced the protesters and sent the military in to put down the uprising, but the military forces were repelled. By the end of February al-Gaddafi had lost control over key cities in Libya, and the growing military confrontations between forces loyal to al-Gaddafi and those loyal to the uprising had Libya on the road to civil war.[21] Gaddafi refused to step down from power despite the ongoing civil war in his country, and the growing pressure from international forces, such as NATO and the United Nations. By August 2011 the revolutionary forces had made their way to the capital city of Tripoli. Gaddafi and his forces fled the city and were on the run for the next several months. Finally, on October 20, 2011 al-Gaddafi was captured and killed by revolutionary forces in the city of Sirte. In some cases, authoritarian leaders tend to suffer an unpleasant fate, and Libya is the best example of this. Al-Gaddafi had publically said he planned to die a martyr, and it was this dictatorial arrogance that

complicated and pro-longed the regime change process in Libya, which did not occur until its leader was captured and killed.[22]

Despite the successful overthrow of the Gaddafi regime, and eventual democratic elections being held in the country, Libya is still dealing with many issues that stemmed from this uprising. Again, Huntington's observation of the third wave of democratizations anticipates this outcome:

The former opposition groups come to power and the conflict then often enters a new phase as groups in the new government struggle among themselves over the nature of the regime they should institute, Replacement, in short, involves three distinct phases: the struggle to produce the fall, the fall, and the struggle after the fall.[23]

Currently, Libya is dealing with the struggle after the fall. Opposing groups within the government are all vying for power. Due to this power struggle within the government, Libya has plunged into another civil war, which is currently still being fought within their country. Therefore, despite the successful overthrow of the forty-two year old Gaddafi regime, Libya is still dealing with many problems that other countries that experience democratization had to solve as well.

### *Yemen*

Another important country in the Arab Spring was Yemen, where pro-democratic reformers began voicing their displeasure with the authoritarian regime that was in place at the time. They were upset over attempts to change the Yemeni constitution, unemployment and poverty, and corruption within the government. The leader of the country at the time was Ali Abdullah Saleh, who like al-Gaddafi in Libya tried to make changes that he hoped would stop the protests occurring in other countries in the region from spilling over into his own country. In hoping to appease the reformers within the country Saleh had promised to step down at the end of his term, and not to turn over power to his son. Opposition groups felt that these were empty promises by a desperate leader and continued their "pressure on Saleh to step down in favor of early presidential and parliamentary elections." [24]

Protests in Yemen against the Saleh's regime began in February 2011. Large numbers of protesters gathered in different cities across the country voicing their displeasure with the current regime and called for Saleh to step down from power. During these nearly daily protests security forces and militia loyal to the government clashed with opposition forces bringing violence to this already tense situation unfolding within the country. In an attempt to end the chaos, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, which includes Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, intervened between the opposing sides and were successful in drafting a plan for a smooth transition of power.[25] However, Saleh refused to accept the terms of the proposal and was later severely injured after a rocket attack on the presidential compound, in an assassination attempt. Saleh was taken to Saudi Arabia for treatment and it is during this time that the protesters were able to organize and plan for a peaceful transmission of power despite Saleh's continued promise to return and resume his reign.

Finally, on November 22, 2011, after returning to Yemen, Saleh signed the original proposal for power transfer to his Vice President, Abdrabuh Mansur Madi, in exchange for immunity. As part of the agreement, presidential elections were held and Madi, the only candidate, became the new president of the country. However, just like in Libya, the new regime had its troubles and was eventually overthrown, and Yemen is currently in the midst of a civil war in which multiple tribal groups are vying for power and representation within the government. This civil war has also pulled many outside forces into the conflict as well, including one of the countries which helped to mediate the end of the Saleh regime, Saudi Arabia. Its involvement in the war was due to the involvement of Iran, which was not involved in the previous mediating process, in backing the Houthi rebels fighting in the civil war. Saudi Arabia has also implemented a blockade of important land, sea, and air routes into Yemen, therefore slowing the supply of food that is entering the country. This is causing a severe humanitarian crisis within the countries, with millions of people on the verge of famine. The situation in Yemen is currently at a critical point; the intention to bring about positive change within the country has led to conflict and death.

### *Syria*

Perhaps the country that has been affected, and even devastated, the most by the events of the Arab Spring is Syria. Citizens within the country have called for current president Bashar al-Assad to step down and relinquish his power and control within the country. Sunni Muslims have also called for more rights and representation within the country's government. The events that have unfolded in Syria over the last few years have many wondering if the violence and unrest will ever come to an end. The conflict in Syria began with protests on January 26, 2011 and escalated into an organized uprising on March 15. The events in Syria have become the bloodiest conflict of the Arab Spring, with military and opposition forces experiencing hundreds of thousands of casualties since the beginning of the protests, violence, and army involvement.[26] The civil war that has grown out of the protests of the Arab Spring in Syria has become a large and complicated conflict that involves assistance from many foreign countries and seems to have no end in sight.

The people of Syria have been under a dictatorship, one party system, since the 1960's. However, there had been hopes for reforms at the turn of the century when Bashar al-Assad became the next president of the country. There were hopes that al-Assad, who is married to a British educated Sunni Muslim, would bring about increased representation for certain groups within Syria. During the early stages of his rule al-Assad allowed for the release of political prisoners, and allowed open debate during his "Damascus Spring." However, just like in other countries of the Arab Spring al-Assad's regime failed to appease the growing discontent within his country. Due to his failure to bring about the reforms that his people were looking for, the country slipped into cycles of escalating protests and repression by military forces. The false promises of the al-Assad regime fueled the protests within in his country. This poor performance has caused his regime to loss legitimacy within its borders, and has helped to give the people reason to continue to call for change.

All of these factors caused the situation in Syria to eventually boil over on January 26, 2011 when a man was publically beaten and arrested by a police officer in Damascus. A band of

protestors came together calling for the release of the man. On March 6, fifteen young boys were arrested for posting graffiti slogans against the government and President al-Assad. Rising unrest eventually led to the organization of thousands of protestors across five major cities in Syria, which led to arrests and a number of casualties. This did not discourage protestors as they continued to organize and assemble in cities across the country. Protests were mostly peaceful, with those involved calling for al-Assad to step down as the president of the country. These protests led to an eventual reaction from the government of al-Assad. By the end of July, Syrian tanks and military forces were being used to end protests in the cities of Syria. The government has used harsh tactics to try to regain control within the country, often committing atrocities that have left thousands of their own civilians dead.

Protests by citizens and the violent reaction to them by the Syrian government caused a civil war to break out across the country. Opposition forces have come to be represented by many different groups or factions since the outbreak of violence in 2012. Rebel forces “are split between the Turkey-based Syrian National Council, the Damascus-based National Council of Coordination, and the Syrian Free Army ... [which] is made up of professionally trained defecting soldiers from the government army.”[27] Rebel forces did have early successes and gained control over certain cities and territories within Syria, but they have been unable to defeat the Assad regime.

The war raging in Syria has also pulled in many outside forces as well. Just as in Yemen, countries like Iran and Russia have backed the al-Assad government and have provided many resources to help insure that the regime remains in control. The United States and a number of its NATO allies have supported the rebel groups that are trying to bring down al-Assad’s regime. The events that have unfolded in Syria have made it the bloodiest and most complicated outcome from the Arab Spring, and it seems that a solution to the problem may not come for a very long time.

### Challenges of Democratization

Democratization is tough and it takes resolve and time to allow it to happen. Take for example, the United States, whose very existence is directly related to democracy and everything that it stands for, still struggles to perfect its model of democracy. As Huntington points out, the US has no choice but to persist in that struggle:

The United States is the premier democratic country of the modern world, and its identity as a nation is inseparable from its commitment to liberal and democratic values. Other nations may fundamentally change their political systems and continue their existence as nations. The United States does not have that option. Hence Americans have a special interest in the development of a global environment congenial to democracy.[28]

Despite being the most successful democracy in the modern world, it was not an easy transition to democracy for the United States. In fact, the history of the United States has been nothing more than an experiment in creating a model of democracy. The United States had two chances to formulate the perfect democracy, after the American Revolution and the Civil War, and it is still struggling to achieve it. Therefore, no one should expect that countries located in an area of

the globe where authoritarian rule has been the norm, would be able to reverse that in a matter of days, months, or even years.

One could argue that the Arab Spring was a failed attempt at democratization in the countries that were involved. Many have resorted back to authoritarian regimes or have slipped into civil wars in which rebel forces are fighting to end authoritarian regimes in their countries. However, historically, democratization has not been something that just happens instantaneously. As Huntington put it, "History is messy and political changes do not sort themselves into neat historical boxes." [29] In addition, one aspect that these different waves of democratization have shown is that with any type of radical change there always will be issues or challenges that must be faced. The Arab spring faced many of the same challenges that movements before them had encountered, but they will also face challenges that are unique to the situations within their countries. These challenges would ultimately tip the scale either in favor, or in opposition, of democratization in these nations.

Those who have studied the Arab Spring and tried to determine its impact and outcome have identified three major obstacles for democratization:

- the absence of a cultural prerequisite for democracy,
- the challenges of tribal and Islamic values that have fostered a culture of submission to authority, and
- the conflict between secularists and Islamists. [30]

Simply put, whether or not the Arab Spring will be successful in bringing complete

democratization rests on in the historical and cultural factors within specific countries.

Historically, democracy has not been popular or effective in this area of the world. The people are used to authoritarian governments with harsh rulers. This plays right in with popular religious beliefs in the area as well. Islam, the major religion in the Arab world, has a belief system that some believe plays perfectly into the goal of authoritarianism. The term Islam translates to submission. So a region where the major religion encourages its subjects to submit to authority and a history of strong, oppressive rulers have caused for the results of the Arab Spring to be less than desirable. However, others would argue that Islam is completely compatible with democracy. Islam does stress the sovereignty of God, but it does not stress the sovereignty of one man. According to Islam, all men are equal before God therefore having one supreme leader contradicts that belief, and it supports the ideals of democracy. Therefore, perhaps Islam, which many believe to be a hindrance to democracy, could actually help foster it.

The results of the Arab Spring have been disappointing to those studying it, but the success of the Tunisian Revolution should provide a glimmer of hope that this movement will eventually lead to the successful democratization of the Arab world. Changes within in this region, such as a growing number of educated youth demanding more freedoms and opportunities, has sparked a movement that could bring about drastic change in an area of the world that many thought it would never come. However, as we have learned from previous waves of democratization, this process takes time. Change does not occur instantly, and drastic change often comes through continued determination. The power struggles and civil wars that have broken out in other countries involved in this movement could eventually result in democratization, but unfortunately the countries may continue to struggle and sacrifice for the unforeseeable future.

## **Teaching Strategies:**

### Socratic Seminars

During this unit, students will be analyzing and comparing different points of view, as it relates to the Arab Spring. Allowing students to have open conversations and debate opposing points of view, will help them internalize the information being presented to them. This will also help them formulate their own views or opinion. This will allow them to make a connection to society today, as well as draw on personal experiences or examples.

### Group Work

Group collaboration is always key to student understanding of topics. A large part of this unit will involve students working together to complete tasks each day. It is through collaboration and discussion with their peers that students will be able to answer the challenging questions that this topic will pose for them.

### Think. Pair. Share.

With this strategy, students will have a chance to first reflect on questions presented to them on their own. From there they will then discuss this opinion with a partner and this will cause them to consider different points of view and perhaps even revise their own opinion. After sharing with a partner, students will then come together as a class to discuss their views and opinion. This strategy should lead to some healthy discussion on these topics as an entire class. Students will have the ability to share their view and defend it.

### S.O.A.P.S

During this unit students will be looking at some primary sources to give them a better understanding of the Arab Spring. This strategy gives students a guide on how to analyze and break down these texts for a better understanding of the topic being presented. This strategy directs their analysis and helps them pull out the important information, therefore giving them a better understanding of the topic.

## **Classroom Activities:**

This unit will last for seven consecutive days. It will mostly be researched-based in which groups of students will be gathering information about an assigned country that was involved in the Arab Spring. Groups will then use that information to complete a final assessment in which they apply all of the information that they have gathered about their country. The teacher will act mostly as a facilitator in this unit, providing students with basic information and helping to guide their research on a daily basis. Due to the uncertainty involved in allowing students to research freely on their own, providing students with a list of resources or websites to access for information will provide them with accurate and credible information needed for their assignments.

The first lesson of this unit will be an introduction to the Arab Spring. When starting a new unit, it is common to try to assess the information or knowledge that students already have on the topic. In order to assess previous knowledge about the Arab Spring students will be asked to work with their groups to complete a card sorting activity. Groups will be given cards with different terms on them. These terms will be places, people, and vocabulary terms, such as protests and civil war, associated with the Arab Spring. Students will be asked to sort these cards based on how they relate to each other. This will give the teacher a better understanding of what students may already know or understand about the Arab Spring and the events that occurred in different countries around the world because of it. After completing the card sorting activity students will then complete some guided notes about the Arab Spring. As the teacher is reviewing important information about the Arab Spring and the countries involved, students will be completing their guided notes to give them a better understanding of the topic. These notes will be a way to give students a better understanding as to what the event was, the countries that were involved, and what those involved were trying to accomplish. The teacher will also use these notes as a way to introduce the process of democratization. The teacher will review what it is and what could bring about demands for democratization within a country. Since the Arab Spring occurred quite recently, students will analyze some primary sources, such as newspaper articles or reports, written about the events of the Arab Spring.

The second lesson of this unit will be the first research day. Student groups will be assigned one of the following countries involved in the Arab Spring, Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, Libya, or Yemen. Groups should be made up of only four or five students, and countries can be assigned to multiple groups in order to keep group numbers manageable. This lesson will start with the teacher leading a mini-lesson to support and guide student research of their assigned countries. The teacher will lead the class in a discussion about the characteristics of history and culture. They will be looking at the description and importance of each of those terms. Classes will also discuss why it is important to consider, and understand, a country's history and culture when examining events or the structure of a country today. This will be an introduction into what students will focus their research on for their assigned country for this lesson. Groups will be given time to research the history and culture of their country. Groups will present the information that they find through their creation of a mind map. As groups are presenting the information they found, the rest of the students will be completing a graphic organizer that they will keep in their notebook. Each day students will be adding information to this graphic organizer, and it will be their source of information on the different countries that participated in the Arab Spring. It will also help them organize their information for when they begin putting together the final assessment project for this unit.

The third day of this lesson will also act as a research day for students. Students are expected to compile a lot of information on this day, so this lesson could span two days if needed. The lesson will start with the teacher leading a mini lesson in which classes will discuss different ways in which people could demand change or bring about democratization. The teacher will guide students in a discussion about acceptable and effective ways of protesting or bring attention to a cause. This will lead students into the focus of the second day of research. Their research for this day will be focused on the events that occurred in their assigned country during the Arab Spring. Groups' research should focus on learning the causes of protests, from specific events to government actions that upset the civilians. Students will also research and



identify opposition groups that rose up against the governments in these countries, and how they influenced protests. They will also identify how these groups organized their protests and their methods for making sure that their voices were heard. In all of these countries, the government response varied, and students will be expected to research and understand the government's response to protests in their countries. Did the government respond violently? Did it bring about change? Students should also identify the final outcomes of these protests in their countries. Did the government change? Did the dictator step down and give up power? Did the country slip into civil war?

After gathering all of this information, groups are expected to construct an infographic to organize and present the information they have found to the rest of their class. Presentation of this infographic could be done in different ways. Groups could simply present the infographic to the rest of the class, and explain the information that they have provided in it or classes could perform a gallery walk. Groups will display their infographics on the walls of the classroom. Groups will travel together to review the information presented on the infographics. While reviewing this information students will be expected to continue filling out their graphic organizer, adding the information about each country and the events that occurred there during the Arab Spring. This will bring classes to their final day of research.

The fourth lesson in this unit will be the conclusion of the research done by the groups about their assigned countries. This last day of research will focus on what countries involved in the Arab Spring are like today. This lesson will start with a discussion or brainstorming about what would happen in a country where democratization fails. The teacher will lead the class in a discussion about the consequences of a failed attempt to overthrow a government or leader. This will lead students into their final area of research for this lesson. Groups will be focusing their research on what their country looks like today. Groups will gather information about the type of government that exists in their country today. They will also look at the economic status of the country. Lastly, and most importantly, groups will review the outcomes of the Arab Spring in their assigned country. In many cases, dictators stepped down and relinquished their power. However, violent civil wars have broken out in the struggle for power in these countries. Students will present the information they have found about their country through a PowerPoint. As groups are presenting this information to the class, the rest of the students will be adding this last piece of information to their graphic organizer.

The fifth and sixth day of this unit will be where groups are completing the culminating activity for this unit. For the culminating activity, groups will use all of the information they have researched from previous days to put together a protest movement meant to bring about democratization in their assigned country. Groups will be told to consider the following questions when putting together their movements:

1. How does the history or culture of their country affect democratization?
2. What mistakes were made during the Arab Spring that must be corrected during their movement?
3. What problems exist in the country today that could inspire and support another attempt for democratization in their country?

By considering these questions while completing their culminating activity, students will be applying all of the information they put together during the previous research days of the unit.

Not only will they be considering the history of their country and how it affects democratization, but they will also make connections to problems or issues in the country today that would bring further calls for democratization in their countries. Groups will be expected to answer those questions through their creation of posters, speeches, slogans, and social media ads calling for a resurgence in democratization within their country. Students will be graded on both accuracy of information, as well as their creativity in gathering followers for their movement. Social media played an important role in organizing the protests of the Arab Spring, so students will be expected to utilize this tool in creating their own movements.

The last day of this unit will be a presentation day. Depending on time and number of groups involved, this could also be extended to another day if needed. After groups have presented their movements to the rest of the class, the teacher will lead the class in a discussion about what they have learned about the Arab Spring and democratization. Classes will discuss the factors that exist in a country that helps bring about the process of democratization. Students should make the connection between these factors and the causes of the Arab Spring in those countries that were involved. Classes will then discuss if they believe calls for democratization will continue in places affected by the Arab Spring. The teacher should guide students to realizing that democratization takes time. It is not something that comes instantly, and the purpose of this discussion will be for students to understand that the outcomes of the Arab Spring are not easily identified. Over time, these outcomes could change as pressure continues to mount on authoritarian governments.

## **Appendix 1: Implementing Teaching Standards**

Working as a teacher in North Carolina means that we follow two sets of standards when putting together our instructional lessons. I follow the North Carolina Essential Learning Standard for 7<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies, as well as the Common Core Standards in all of my instructional practices. Standards that will be followed during this unit are provided below.

The North Carolina teaching standards that implemented in this unit are as follows:

- Use historical thinking to analyze various modern societies
- Understand the development of government in modern societies and regions.
- Understand how cultural values influence relationships between individuals, groups, and political entities in modern societies and regions.

The common core standards implemented in this unit are as follows:

- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

## Student Resources

Since this unit involves students performing their own research on countries involved in the Arab Spring it is important for the teacher to provide students with certain credible websites to help them find information. Below are some resources that students could use to help them complete the activities and research included in this unit.

Blight, Garry, Sheila Pulham, and Paul Torpey. "Arab Spring: An Interactive Timeline of Middle East Protests." The Guardian. March 22, 2011.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/interactive/2011/mar/22/middle-east-protest-interactive-timeline>.

This resource is an interactive timeline that students can use to learn more about the Arab Spring protests. Students can click on events of the Arab Spring and it will give them an article to read about that specific event.

"Arab Uprisings." BBC News. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-12813859>.

This resource provides students with important information about the countries involved in the Arab uprisings. It provides them with profiles, complete with videos, articles, and timelines, about specific countries that were involved.

"Instructional Content Platform." Newsela. <http://newsela.com/>.

This website will provide students with articles that contain information about the Arab Spring. These articles are intended for students, so they relay the information in a way that is easy for them to understand.

"Contact CIA." Central Intelligence Agency. April 01, 2016.  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>.

This resource will provide students with updated information about their assigned country. It includes information about demographics, religious groups, governmental set up and leadership, and economic performance.

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- [3] Huntington, Samuel P. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1998, 15.
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- [5] Huntington, Samuel P. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1998, 59.
- [6] Abushouk, Ahmed Ibrahim. "The Arab Spring: A Fourth Wave of Democratization?" *Digest of Middle East Studies* 25, no. 1 (02, 2016): 52-69. doi:10.1111/dome.12080, 60.
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## **Annotated Bibliography:**

Abushouk, Ahmed Ibrahim. "The Arab Spring: A Fourth Wave of Democratization?" *Digest of Middle East Studies* 25, no. 1 (02, 2016): 52-69. doi:10.1111/dome.12080.

This journal article gives information on the overall causes and effects of the Arab Spring. It talks about the different areas of the globe that were affected by the protests of this movement that swept across the areas of the world.

"ACCOUNTABILITY AND TESTING RESULTS." *Accountability Services*. Accessed October 21, 2017. <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/>.

This site gives people information on the testing and ranking results for schools in North Carolina.

Aras, Bülent, and Richard Falk. "Five Years after the Arab Spring: A Critical Evaluation." *Third World Quarterly* 37, no. 12 (09, 2016): 2252-258. doi:10.1080/01436597.2016.1224087.

This journal article provides a strong analysis of the Arab Spring and its outcomes. It also closely examines the effects that this movement had in those countries that were involved.

Bhardwaj, Maya. "Development of Conflict in Arab Spring Libya and Syria: From Revolution to Civil War." *Washington University International Review* 1, no. 1 (2012): 76-97.

This source has much information about the events of the Arab Spring in Syria that has brought about a civil war that is still being fought today.

Huntington, Samuel P. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1998.

This book analyzes the characteristics of democratization through a study of the Third Wave of democracy that occurred in the twentieth century.