

Exercise 7.7. – How does government affect your life?

Educational objectives	<p>The students understand that government affects our lives in almost every aspect imaginable (<i>tua res agitur</i>). The world we live in is man-made and it is up to us what we do with it.</p> <p>Deliberate political decision making is necessary because of our ever-increasing dependence on one another, from local to global level.</p> <p>Democracy can best take into account competing interests and integrate them into a satisfactory compromise – provided all groups have been given a hearing.</p>
Resources	None.

Procedure

1. The students should realise to what extent their lives are affected by government. The following questions are suggested to help them; they could be answered in class or in small groups which would then present their results in the plenary setting.
2.
 - Tell the story of a recent day in your life – where you went, what you wore, saw, ate, said, learned and did. List whether each thing that you mentioned was affected by government, including national, regional and/or local government.
 - Assume that your government is a democracy where all citizens are given an equal opportunity to participate without their human rights being violated. Which of the items in your daily life that you listed as being affected by government do you think would have to change? Explain why you think they should change.
3. The students will probably raise the question as to how people can participate in democratic government. The teacher should offer some information, either through a lecture or based on a textbook or worksheets.

The result could be as follows: many people believe that the greatest opportunity to participate in government is offered in a free and open democracy. This type of government means that the people themselves gain power and govern usually through the rule of the majority. Some countries are democracies in name only and people are not really allowed to participate. In a democratic system, citizens can choose between different ways of participating and some may even decide not to participate at all.

Democracy can best take into account differing and competing interests and search for satisfactory solutions – provided all sides have articulated their points of view. Special attention must be paid to weaker groups, who are not in a position to exercise pressure and whose interests therefore tend to be ignored (problem of exclusion).