

UNIT 1

Democratic System

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- recognize citizens' human and democratic rights and freedoms.
- understand the similarity and difference between democratic rights and human rights.
- know the nature and essence of the democratic system.
- explain the diversity among nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia.

1.1 The Meaning of the Democratic System

In your grade five civics education, you have studied about the origin of the word democracy. Do you remember the definition of democracy? What does it mean? What about the democratic system?

The speech of Ato Orkaydo

Ato Orkaydo is the director of Lante primary school. The school is located 20 km away from Arbaminch, on the main road to Addis Ababa. Ato Orkaydo made a speech a week after the beginning of the first semester. The speech is as follows:

“Dear students, I would like to say happy new academic year for all of us. I hope we will be successful in achieving good results in this academic year. Next to this, I will tell you things that we will do in this year. This is the aim of today’s meeting.

1. There will be one sanitation day per month. Accordingly, grade 6 students are assigned to

clean the toilet, grade 5 students to clean offices and classrooms and grades 1–4 students to clean the whole campus. This program will be done every Saturday in order to not disturb the regular classes.

2. I have assigned the following students to guide and co-ordinate the activities. Student Lalise for grade 6, Lungo for grade 5, and student Gelbo for grades 1–4.”

Students were listening his speech, staring at him, and were very surprised. When he finished his speech, they began murmuring. Ato Orkaydo asked, “What is it?” “Is there a problem?” When Sarote raised her hand, she was allowed to speak. “Sir, how could you, alone assign these leaders without our discussion? We should not be guided and administered by the will of only one person. Last year in our civics and ethical education lessons, we learnt that such a decision is not democratic. In a democratic system, anything should be discussed and all responsible people should share their ideas before making a decision. Therefore, it is not fair to be decided by you alone without all the students’ discussion. What if students might have other activities and responsibilities on Saturdays and Sundays?” While she made her speech, students expressed their support by clapping their hands.

With a great smile of satisfaction, Ato Orkaydo asked the students to listen to him quietly. His ways of response surprised the students because they expected that Sarote’s speech might disappoint him. On the contrary, Ato Orkaydo told the students that

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he was very satisfied with what Sarote had said and appreciated all the students, particularly Sarote. He said, "This is what the school wanted. Now I have understood how much the students have benefited from civics education." Ato Orkaydo added, "Now I am satisfied that you have learned about democracy, the democratic system, keep it up". Ato Orkaydo finished his speech.

Activity 1

Discuss the following questions:

1. What did you learn from the passage about democracy and the democratic system?
2. Discuss how the building of the democratic system is reflected in the meeting?
3. Do you think that the closing speech of Ato Orkaydo is necessary and right? Why? Why not?
4. Were the two decisions of Ato Orkaydo necessary from the viewpoint of building a democratic system? Why? Discuss.

Democracy means that power and authority belongs to the people. It is a system established by the interests of the people. In a democratic system, the people elect those who govern them. Elected leaders administer people. The people also have the right to remove those leaders in the case of wrong actions.

The democratic system is a system that assures peace and development. It is also a system established through active community participation and gives priority to the well-being of the people. In a democratic system, people lead their lives, solve their problems, and make decisions through discussion and share ideas with each other. The democratic system is a system of government in which the supreme political power is decided by the people. They express this through their elected representatives. It is a system that enables people to remove those officials from power if they commit crime.

Activity 2

Discuss the following question:

1. What does it mean, when we say a democratic system is a system that would be established through active participation of the community and gives priority to the public interest?

1.1.1 The Necessity of the Democratic System

- Why is the democratic system essential and useful?

Our country is a country with diversified nations, nationalities and peoples unlike other countries in the world. So, having a democratic system in Ethiopia is essential. This is because:

1. It helps to ensure and respect the right for equality and interest of all nations, nationalities and peoples. It brings the democratic system, which is free from bias and partiality. It also builds a system that treats all people equally. Nowadays, Ethiopia is building a democratic system; the languages, history and cultures of nations, nationalities and peoples, have got recognition and respect. The right to develop one's own language is an indication of equality among nations, nationalities and peoples of the country.
2. The other reason that the democratic system is essential to Ethiopia is that it enables different nations, nationalities and peoples to tolerate their differences in religion, views, etc.

Group Work

- Discuss in group about the importance of democratic system for Ethiopia.

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1.1.2 Manifestation of Democratic System

- Is there any democratic practice in your class? Give examples.
- What does “accepting difference in ideas” mean?

Suppose you have a disagreement of ideas with one of your classmates and if you were asked about the type of relationship you have with him, what would be your response?

Activity 3

Copy the following table on your exercise book if you agree tick (✓) under the column “I am happy” and if you disagree tick (✓) under the column “I am not happy.”

	I am happy	I am not happy
If you are assigned to be a class monitor		
If you are assigned to do a group task together		
If you are assigned to clean your classroom together		
If you are assigned to sit at a desk		
If you are the member of a club and you are assigned to be a chairperson		

There are a number of ways in which the democratic system could be expressed:

(a) Presence of Public Participation

In a democratic system, citizens participate in different issues. Participation here means that people elect their candidates. It also involves participating in community meetings, being a member of civic associations, participating in discussion, and evaluating different rules and regulations of government and recommending suggestions for their practicality and improvement.

(b) Respecting Public Equality

In a democratic system, public equality will be respected. Any human being has equal rights regardless of ethnicity, religion, and gender.

In a democratic system, people not only have the right of equality, but also these rights should be expressed in many practical ways. People have equal right to participate in elections in order to elect and to be elected.

Equality here also refers to the right for equal treatment before the law.

(c) Having a Culture of Tolerance

Accepting the idea of difference means respecting the belief of people regarding the existence of differences in race, language, religion, colour as well as in ideas. This also includes the idea of accepting and respecting differences as natural.

Tolerance means the willingness, or ability to accept any kind of difference whether we believe or not, and willingness to respect the idea of others. It is peaceful culture of narrowing differences and solving differences through discussion and dialogue. If it is not possible to solve the difference through discussion, accepting the difference as it is and developing a culture of tolerance is important for the peaceful co-existence of a nation.

People living in a democratic system believe that the differences that exist in religion, language, nation, nationalities and other social identities are natural.

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They accept their differences as a natural and useful phenomenon. So, people living in a democratic system may have differences. However, they live together through the principle of tolerance. Living together by tolerating their differences is one of the basic principles of democracy.

Activity 4

Answer the following questions:

1. List two manifestations of the democratic system.
2. What does living together with tolerance mean?
3. What does it mean when one says that accepting and tolerating differences in ideas is to be considered as a principle of a democratic system?

1.2 Human and Democratic Rights

1.2.1 Similarity and Difference between Human and Democratic Rights

- Mention at least three examples of human rights.
- List at least three examples of democratic rights.

Human rights are rights that originate from the very nature of humanity. Some common examples of human rights are the right to live, the right to get security, and freedom.

Democratic rights are rights in which all men and women are entitled because of their membership of the state. Democratic rights are those rights that enable citizens to participate in any affairs of their country. Some of the known democratic rights are the right to express one's ideas, to form associations, participate in peaceful demonstrations, to elect their representatives and to be elected.

Their similarity is that both are essential and basic rights. The difference is their source or origin.

Thus, human rights are rights enshrined in human beings and because of human nature (being human) they need to respect endowments of nature.

If you want your rights to be respected, you must respect the rights of others.

Activity 5

Copy the following table in your exercise book and put a tick "(✓)" under human rights or democratic rights against each statement in the following table.

No.	Items	Human rights	Democratic rights
1	The right to physical security		
2	The right to organize association		
3	The right to join meetings		
4	The right to join any religion		
5	The right to elect and to be elected		
6	The right to live		

Student Shemsu and Teacher Agensa

Shemsu is a grade six student. One morning he made the following speech to school children.

"The school leadership is going from bad to worse, particularly the director is committing thefts and other crimes. He was found selling the school property with the storekeeper. He used the money contributed by the school children for his personal use. For this reason we should raise our voice in order to remove him from his position."

Unexpectedly, Teacher Agensa the co-ordinator of the shift arrived. "What is it?", he asked. "I am making speech" Shemsu responded. "What kind of

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speech?” Teacher Agensa asked. Shemsu responded, “Whatever, it does not concern you. I have the democratic right to say whatever I want to.”

Teacher Agensa was disappointed by his response. He punished Shemsu ruthlessly and locked him in.

Activity 6

Answer the following questions according to the passage:

1. Was Shemsu’s speech good or bad? Why?
2. Was Ato Agensa’s punishment necessarily good or bad? Why?
3. Both Shemsu and Agensa violated rights. Which rights were violated?
4. What would you advise Shemsu and Agensa concerning human rights?

1.2.2 The Importance of Respecting Human and Democratic Rights



Picture 1.1. Uses of human and democratic rights

- What is the message transmitted by the above pictures?
- Based on the pictures, list the uses of human and democratic rights.

The ambition of all men and women is to live in the world free from any form of evil, oppression, problem or fear. Their best wish is to see the world prosperous, peaceful, and with equality for all.

In order to eradicate discrimination and oppression, it is important to avoid violence, forcefully and by other means, so that human rights and democratic rights are respected. Respecting human and democratic rights means realizing people’s wishes like peace, justice and equality.

It might be difficult to correct misbehaving officials who violate human and democratic rights in a peaceful way.

Human and democratic rights are essential:

- to live peacefully.
- to accomplish tasks peacefully.
- to create a society free from oppression.

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Activity 7

Answer the following question:

1. Why do you think that human rights and democratic rights are considered essential and basic rights?

(Answer the above question based on your relations with your friends, classmates, school community, and teachers with other workers).

1.3 The Differences Observed Among Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia



Picture 1.2. Nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia

- What do you understand from picture 1.2?
- Ethiopia is a museum of many languages, nations, nationalities and people. What does this mean?
- List down the differences among nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia.
- What is the importance of respecting different nations, nationalities, and peoples' rights and religion in your class?

Ethiopia is a country in which more than 80 nations, nationalities and peoples live together peacefully. These nations, nationalities and peoples have their own identity. Every nation has its own language, religion and other cultural values that they are proud of.

Because of these diverse cultures, Ethiopia is said to be a museum of nations, nationalities and

peoples. This is source of values for citizens. So, we have to preserve these great values of our country. In order to preserve this gift of nature, we should avoid hatred and conflicts by respecting each other.

To avoid clashes and conflicts we should develop and practice the culture of tolerance in our daily life. The nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia have recognized the existence of unity with difference. Based on their own will and interest, they have established a federal system. This has enabled them to work together, maintaining peace, security and economic advancement.

The Ethiopian Federal Democratic System recognizes the rights of nations, nationalities and people of the country. There are differences in unity. However, the system enables citizens to resolve their conflicts and misunderstandings in a peaceful way through negotiation and discussion.

Activity 8

Answer the following questions:

1. What are the differences that exist among nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia?
2. What would be expected from the nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia to resolve conflicts when they arise due to their differences? What should be done if conflicts arise?

1.4 Foreign Relations

1.4.1 The Relationship of Ethiopia with its Neighbouring Countries



Picture 1.3. Ethiopia and its neighbours

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Based on picture 1.3, answer the following questions:

- By copying the map in your exercise book write the name of neighbouring countries of Ethiopia.
- What are the principles on which the relationship between Ethiopia and its neighbours is based?

One of the issues in the foreign policy of Ethiopia is creating mutual economic relations and co-operation with neighbouring and other African countries. The relations of Ethiopia with its neighbouring countries is based on the principle of good neighbours, brotherhood and living together in peace. The relationship between its neighbouring countries (Djibouti, Sudan and Kenya) is showing progress and development.

For instance, regarding infrastructure, there is direct telephone line connection with Sudan. Currently, a road is being constructed in order to connect these two countries. For many years they lived as neighbours, but they did not have a road that connects them. The road that connects Gondor, Matama, and Galabat-Gaderfe is a good example of this.

After the construction of this road, the trade relationship between these countries is strengthening all the time. The relationship between the people living in these areas and security is also going the right way. So, the relationship with Sudan is contributing a lot towards the development of peace and the democratic system in both countries.

Similarly, there is a strong relationship with Djibouti. Both countries are benefiting from this. Currently, Djibouti port has become a route for foreign trade. This has created good people-to-people, political and security relations. This is widening and strengthening from all the time.

Activity 9

Discuss the following question:

1. The foreign relations of Ethiopia with its neighbouring countries is based on strengthening the neighbourhood. What does this mean? Explain using examples.

1.4.2 Basis of Ethiopian Foreign Relation



Picture 1.4. Basis of Ethiopian foreign relation

- What does picture 1.4 indicate?
 - (i) If possible, try to mention the basis of foreign relation of Ethiopia.
 - (ii) What do you understand about the basis of foreign relation of Ethiopia from the picture?

The foreign relation of Ethiopia are based on development and building a democratic system. It has been taken into account that good foreign relations help to accelerate development and free people

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from poverty and backwardness. To Ethiopians, the very basic issue is eradicating poverty, disease and backwardness. The foreign relations policy also has the mission of securing the national interest.

Therefore, the foreign policy of Ethiopia does not have any other mission other than securing our national interest. The very basic and essential issue is bringing sustainable development that makes people the beneficiaries.

In general, the public interest is to bring democracy and good governance. “Therefore, foreign policy has the interests of the people” means the policy

accelerates development and enables the democratic culture to be deep rooted.

The beginning and the end of public interest are development and democracy. The same is true of our country’s foreign relations.

Activity 10

Discuss the following question:

1. Why do you think that the foreign relations of Ethiopia are based on development and building a democratic system?

Summary

The democratic system is a system established by the interests of people through election; the elected leaders govern peoples.

It is a system, which enables different nations, nationalities and peoples, and religious groups to live together through co-operation, tolerance and love. There are various ways in which the democratic system is expressed. Among the various ways, some are presence of public participation, realization of public equality and having the culture of tolerance.

Human and democratic rights have similarities and differences. They are similar since both are basic rights. Their difference is that the human rights are rights to be ensured because human beings obtained them naturally. On the other hand, democratic rights are those rights obtained from the democratic system.

Human and democratic rights are essential rights to all human beings. Because, these rights enable people to live peacefully and to accomplish their work comfortably by avoiding unfair treatment or oppression.

Ethiopia is a country where more than 80 nations, nationalities and peoples live together. Each nation, nationalities and peoples have their own language, religion and other cultural identities.

Ethiopia is a country where nations, nationalities and peoples live together in peace and show great respect to each other. That is why Ethiopia is named as a museum of nations and nationalities.

The nations, nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia recognize their difference in unity. Based upon their interest they have established a federal system.

Besides, in order to realize and establish a country with sustainable peace and stability, and an economically developed democratic system, they are working together by supporting each other.

The foreign policy of Ethiopia is based upon development and building a democratic system. In a country like Ethiopia, ensuring sustainable development is essential. The basic necessity of Ethiopian people is eradicating poverty, disease and backwardness.

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Key Words

Federalism:	A form of state which is established by the agreement of autonomous regional states
Democratic:	The supreme power and authority of government rest up on the people or by the elected representatives of the people
Nation, Nationalities and People:	Those people who have wider common characteristics and reflect similar culture, customs, common history, spiritual, psychological ties and live together in the same territory

Unit Review Exercises

Do these review exercises in your exercise book.

I. Write "True" if the statement is correct and write "False" if the statement is incorrect

1. Our foreign relations have a mission of supporting the national interest.
2. The democratic system enables nation, nationalities and peoples to establish a system that is free from unfair treatment and establish a democratic system.
3. The similarity between human and democratic rights is that both are obtained from the nature of human beings.
4. A democratic system is a system by which people are governed by elected officials.
5. Accepting the idea of difference does not mean only believing in the difference, but also respecting others ideas even if there are differences.

II. Match words or phrases under column 'A' with correct items of column 'B'

- | A | B |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Freedom of speech, right to demonstration | (A) Human rights |
| 2. Right to life, and security | (B) Principles of foreign affairs |
| 3. Good neighbourhood and friendship | (C) Democratic rights |
| 4. Development and building a democratic system | (D) Basis for foreign relation |
| | (E) Nation, nationalities and peoples |

III. Copy the following questions on your exercise book and fill the correct answer on the space provided

1. A country with differences in language, religion and other cultural manifestations, which enables us to live with mutual understanding, tolerance and love is known as _____ .
2. The foreign relation policy of Ethiopia is based on _____ and _____ .

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IV. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

1. Which of the following is the basic feature of a democratic system?
(a) Tolerance (b) Equality (c) Public participation (d) All of the above.
2. How do people participate in a democratic system?
(a) Through election (to elect and to be elected) (b) Through local community meetings
(c) By being member of different civic associations (d) All of the above.
3. What does it mean, when we say that foreign policy protects the national interest?
(a) A policy that enables us to bring an accelerated development to our country
(b) A policy that enables the democratic system to be deep rooted
(c) The policy that enables people to benefit directly from the system
(d) All of the above.

V. Give short answers for the following questions

1. What do we mean by accepting difference and living together with tolerance? What is its use? Explain using examples.

2. Why is a democratic system essential to countries like Ethiopia? Explain using examples.
