

Strengthening Democracy in Africa
High School – World Geography
Middle School – African History; Civics/Government

Elaborated Lesson Focus

This lesson is designed to allow students to examine political developments occurring across Africa today and how The Carter Center is supporting the growth of democracy there.

Georgia Performance Standards

High School

SSWG4 The student will describe the interaction of physical and human systems that have shaped contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa.

Middle School

SS7H3 The student will describe major developments in Africa since independence.

SS7CG1 The student will demonstrate an understanding of the modern governments of Africa.

** Additional performance standards may apply.*

Enduring Understanding / Essential Questions:

Following the end of colonial rule, many African countries have had to establish and strengthen autonomous political institutions. The Carter Center strives to support this process in Africa, particularly the development of democratic governments and inclusive societies.

Many of The Carter Center's programs seek to help people have a meaningful voice in how they are governed. Election observations, promotion of the rule of law, and efforts to expand citizen participation in governance and teach effective practices of democracy all support this goal.

1. In which African nations has The Carter Center been involved?
2. Fully describe and explain three specific examples of Carter Center efforts to support democracy in Africa.
3. How do international election observers strengthen democracy?
4. Why have African countries invited The Carter Center to bring its experts and programs into their nations?
5. Why is a peaceful resolution to conflict important for democracy? Where has the Carter Center supported this goal?

Performance Tasks:

Students will provide short written responses to the questions listed above. A student worksheet and answer key are included.

Procedure:

- 1 Students will begin this activity by viewing the video “Waging Peace” at <http://cartercenter.com/news/multimedia/GeneralTopics/WagingPeace2006.html>. After viewing this video as a class, students will identify the mission of The Carter Center and describe the various kinds of programs in which it is involved.

The instructor should ensure students have a sound understanding of democracy and discuss the concept if necessary.

- 2 After class dialogue and discussion, students will use the Carter Center website (http://cartercenter.org/countries/activities_democracy.html) to locate African nations where The Carter Center has worked.

Students will learn more about the Center’s democracy initiatives at: <http://cartercenter.org/peace/democracy/index.html>
(Students should pay special attention to election monitoring activities.)

Additional video and photo resources about some specific African nations – including Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Zambia – can be found on the Carter Center multimedia page: <http://cartercenter.com/news/multimedia/PeacePrograms/DemocracyinActionGhanas2008Elections.html>.

- 3 After students have visited the Carter Center site, used the interactive map, viewed selected videos and photos, and examined democracy program information, students will be ready to complete the short-answer worksheet provided.

Students may use the Carter Center website to complete their responses. Any questions not answered during the class period should be done for homework.

Strengthening Democracy in Africa
Student Worksheet

Name _____
Class _____

INSTRUCTIONS: After viewing the Carter Center website, please answer the following questions using complete sentences and correct English grammar.

1. In which African nations has The Carter Center been involved? (List at least 6)
2. Describe three specific examples of how Carter Center efforts have tried to support democracy in Africa.
3. Why is a peaceful resolution to conflict important for democracy? Name one country where The Carter Center supported this goal.
4. How do election observers strengthen democracy? Please explain.
5. Why have African countries invited The Carter Center to bring its experts and programs into their nations? Please explain.

Strengthening Democracy in Africa

Teacher Key

1. In which African nations has The Carter Center been involved? (List at least 6)

<i>Benin</i>	<i>Eritrea</i>	<i>Mozambique</i>	<i>Tanzania</i>
<i>Burkina Faso</i>	<i>Ethiopia</i>	<i>Niger</i>	<i>Togo</i>
<i>Burundi</i>	<i>Ghana</i>	<i>Nigeria</i>	<i>Uganda</i>
<i>Cameroon</i>	<i>Guinea</i>	<i>Rwanda</i>	<i>Zambia</i>
<i>Chad</i>	<i>Kenya</i>	<i>Senegal</i>	
<i>Cote d'Ivoire</i>	<i>Liberia</i>	<i>Sierra Leone</i>	
<i>Democratic Republic of Congo</i>	<i>Malawi</i>	<i>Somalia</i>	
	<i>Mali</i>	<i>South Africa</i>	
	<i>Mauritania</i>	<i>Sudan</i>	

2. Describe three specific examples of how Carter Center efforts have tried to strengthen democracy in Africa.

Numerous possible answers.

Examples should include election observations, promoting rule of law, disseminating models, lessons, and best practices for democratic governance, and supporting dialogue in areas of conflict.

3. Why is a peaceful resolution to conflict important for democracy? Name one country where The Carter Center supported this goal.

Only once a country is stable and peaceful can democracy truly advance.

Resolution of conflict is the first step in improving respect for human rights, reforming the administration of justice, and strengthening nongovernmental organizations and other civic organizations.

Examples of countries in which The Carter Center participated in peacemaking include, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, and Liberia.

4. How do election observers strengthen democracy? Please explain.

Impartial election observers can strengthen an electoral process by providing an independent assessment of election preparations, capabilities, and fairness. Observers offer assurance to all sides that fraud will be detected. Their presence also increases voters' confidence that they can safely and secretly cast their ballots and that vote tabulation will be conducted without tampering. Besides presenting a way that all citizens can participate in the political life of their nation, elections call for those elected to respond to the will of the people.

5. Why have some African countries invited The Carter Center to bring its experts and programs into their nations? Please explain.

The Carter Center has an international reputation as an experienced and neutral organization, committed to supporting countries that are transitioning to democracy. Governments often choose to invite The Carter Center to observe elections or participate in other activities in order to improve effectiveness of their democratic systems and gain legitimacy.