

An Analysis of the Gezi Park Protests

Description: This lesson allows students to explore the causes and impacts of the Gezi Park protests that occurred in Turkey in 2013. Students will be encouraged to make connections between the rights of Turks to petition the Government and those of Americans. Finally, students will be challenged to identify issues they would like to change in their country, state, or community and will create a plan to accomplish these changes.

Subject: American Government

Grade level: 11 & 12

Topic: Civic Participation & Public Policy Change

Objective: Students will...

- Examine the reasons for the protests that began in Gezi Park in 2013 and spread throughout Turkey.
- Define the means used by those dissatisfied with the Turkish government to create change.
- Analyze the effectiveness of public protest as a means of creating public policy change.

Content Standard: Ohio New Learning Standards 1 & 3

1. Opportunities for civic engagement with the structures of government are made possible through political and public policy processes.

3. Issues can be analyzed through the critical use of information from public records, surveys, research data and policy positions of advocacy groups.

Procedure:

- Day 1 & 2: After a brief description of the 2013 Gezi Park protests by the teacher, students will work in pairs to answer the questions below. Students will use the internet to locate news articles and other credible sources about the protests. Responses will be collected at the end of the project.
 - When and where did the protests begin?
 - Describe the individuals who were protesting. How old were they? What occupations did they have? Where were they from?
 - What issue sparked the protests? Is this the same issue that caused the protests to spread? If not, what were the reasons for unrest spreading across Turkey?
 - Describe the methods used by protesters. How did they go about communicating their concerns?
 - Were the protests successful? Were any lasting changes created as a result of the protests? Why or why not?
- Day 3-5: In pairs, students will complete the following tasks.
 - Pick 1 issue, social, economic, political, etc., that you would like to change in your community, state, or country. Describe the specific steps that the government could take to fix this issue. Next, on a large poster board, create an action plan to create this change. Use the rubric below to guide your work.

- Present poster to the class. Presentations should be 3-5 minutes in length and must involve all members of the group.

Assessment:

- Students will write an essay that addresses the following prompt:
 - Compare and contrast the Gezi Protests with the issues that your classmates were concerned with. What similarities and differences did you see between the issues that your classmates are concerned with and those that motivated the Turkish protests?
 - Finally, describe one or two issues that you would be willing to risk your life over. Why are these so important to you?

Poster Rubric

Posters should...

- State the specific changes that the group is seeking and the policy changes that government should make.
- Describe which level(s) of government should be involved and the specific processes that will be used to create change.
- Include title and group members' names
- Include at least 3 quality visuals (charts, graphs, photos, etc.)
- Include 3 open ended discussion questions for the class (cannot easily be answered with a "yes" or "no")
- Involve all members of the group (everyone must contribute)

Grading Criteria:

- Addresses research questions: _____/15 pts.
- Contains all required elements: _____/15 pts.
- Quality/professionalism: _____/15 pts.
- Individual contribution grade: _____/15 pts.
- Total: _____/60 pts.