World History & Geography II Inquiry (240-270 Minutes)

How Do Dictators Achieve and Maintain Power?

Supporting Questions - These are used to structure and develop the inquiry

1. What political, social, and economic challenges support the rise of dictators (Interwar Nazi Germany is used as a case study)?

2. How do totalitarian states operate?

3. Where do dictatorial governments exist today and how do they function?

Designed by Jeff Vande Sande & Craig Perrier
**VA SOL Content Standard**

| WHII.10: The student will apply social science skills to understand World War I and its worldwide impact. |
| WHII.11: The student will apply social science skills to understand World War II and its worldwide impact. |
| WHII.12: The student will apply social science skills to understand the conflicts during the second half of the twentieth century. |
| WHII.14: The student will apply social science skills to understand the global changes during the early twenty-first century |

**VA SOL Skills Standard 1**

1a – Using Information Sources, 1c – Interpreting Information, 1e – Comparing & Contrasting, 1f – Determine Cause/Effect, 1g – Making Connections 1j – Using Content Vocabulary

**Portrait of a Graduate Correlations**

- Communicator
- Collaborator
- Creative and Critical Thinker
- Ethical and Global Citizen

**Introducing the Question**

HOOK: Students will analyze images of historical and contemporary dictators and complete a “brain-dump” activity in which they list what they know about these leaders and their governments, and the concept of dictatorship in general.

**Supporting Questions - These are Used to Structure and Develop the Inquiry**

- **Supporting Question 1**
  What political, social, and economic challenges support the rise of dictators? (Interwar Nazi Germany is used as a case-study).

- **Supporting Question 2**
  How do totalitarian states operate?

- **Supporting Question 3**
  Where do dictatorial regimes exist today and how do they function?

**Formative Performance Task**

- Students will complete an Iceberg Diagram in which they will evaluate the underlying causes behind Adolf Hitler’s seizure of power.

- Students will complete a Characteristics of Totalitarian Governments Evidence Chart in which they will find examples of how Nazi Germany operated as a totalitarian state.

- Students will engage in a Two Minute Interview activity in which they will learn about contemporary dictatorships and evaluate what common characteristics and conditions allow these regimes to function.

**Featured Sources**

- **A. WWII In Colour Video Clip**
- **B. Uncertainty in Interwar Germany Handout (Parts 1-4)**
- **C. Iceberg Diagram Handout**

- **A. F.D.R. quote**
- **B. Interwar European dictatorships map**
- **C. Characteristics of Totalitarian States graphic organizer**
- **D. Students will find additional sources**

- **A. “World’s Enduring Dictators” Article**
- **B. Students will find additional sources**
ARGUMENT: How do dictatorships achieve and maintain power? Create an argument with a claim and specific evidence in a 1-2 page essay.

EXTENSION: Students will respond to this prompt in a one-two page paper with a claim and specific evidence gathered from the previous days’ lessons.

Students can collaborate with a government class to edit and extend their papers and then share these with their English classes with then begin reading 1984 (or a similar text) later in the semester.

EXPLORE THIS BLOG POST FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TAKING INFORMED ACTION

Taking Informed Action: UN Sustainable Development Goals

Guide students to the UN Sustainable Development Goals website and explore goal #16. Discuss the goal 16 targets with students as articulated on the UN SDG website.

Student Generated Questions (This is done throughout the inquiry)

It is important to have students involved in the inquiry process; because of this, ask students to share questions and curiosities they have regarding the compelling question. These questions can be recorded during the inquiry process. Below are some suggested prompts to ask students.

- What questions came up during class?
- What are you wondering about?
- What information do you (still) need to answer the compelling question?
- How can you further your understanding of this topic?
- Where can you access additional sources or information on this topic?
- Who could be an additional resource for your inquiry?

Record student questions in a “parking lot” (on a poster, white board, google doc) so that the class can readily access them. Throughout the inquiry, return to these questions and, if possible, weave them into your instruction and formative assessment. By intentionally soliciting and then addressing/using students’ questions, you develop their ability to ask questions, plan for future steps, and think about their thinking (metacognition).

NOTE: It is possible to use these students’ questions as the supporting questions for the inquiry. If you do, you may need to make adjustments to your teaching and the resources identified for this inquiry.
Optional Background Resources

1. Hannah Arendt, *On Totalitarianism*. Several easy to find quotes available online that would be good for in-depth analysis of totalitarianism in the 20th century.


General Types of Supports

**Graphic Organizers** – Over a dozen free styles you can customize and download.

**53 Ways to Check for Understanding** -- A collection of formative assessments.

**Document Analysis Tools** from the National Archives and Library of Congress.

**Sensory Support**
- Real life objects
- Manipulatives
- Pictures & Photographs
- Illustrations, diagrams, and drawings

**Graphic Supports**
- Charts
- Graphic organizers
- Tables
- Graphs
- Slotted outlines

**Interactive Support**
- Explicit modeling
- Think alouds
- Pairs/partners
- Triads or small groups
- Cooperative learning
- Shared reading

**Linguistic Supports**
- Sentence frames
- Word walls
- Pre-teach vocabulary within context of text or learning task
- Read aloud
- Leveled texts
- Use of home language

**Behavior Supports**
- Clear behavior expectations
- Explicit routines and procedures
- Student self-regulation strategies
- Coping and stress relief strategies
INSTRUCTIONS/PROCESS FOR INTRODUCING THE COMPELLING QUESTION:

This hook is meant to get students thinking about what characteristics define a dictatorial form of government. To begin this class discussion students will be presented with images of contemporary and historical rulers (kings/dictators/presidents) who preside over an authoritarian form of government. The examples were chosen to be historical and contemporary figures that students will be familiar with so that they can use background knowledge to build a foundational understanding of the similarities between the images, the rulers, and their governments. Once students have analyzed the collage independently and listed any commonalities between the images or the leaders themselves, the teacher will lead the students in a “brain-dump” activity in which a class list will be generated from the student responses to image collage. The teacher can answer questions about any of the dictators that the students raise and this may be a good opportunity for connections if students are able to identify any of the contemporary dictators and are able to bring in any outside information concerning relevant current events.

The teacher can also ask students is dictators control all aspects of their country’s society, then what does that tell us about these images or photographs? Who gets to take, and also release these photographs? If the dictators are controlling the media, then what do these images tell us about how they want their people and the international community to view or interpret them? How does this help us consider our compelling question?

Once the “brain-dump” activity is complete, the teacher will introduce the compelling question of “how do dictators achieve and maintain power?” The teacher can also record the impressions of the image collage and results of the class discussion as a list of ideas for students to refer back to as they attempt to answer the compelling and supporting questions over the next several activities.


Louis XIV: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_XIV_of_France

Castro: https://www.pinterest.com/pin/519813981975158436/


Mussolini: http://www.gettyimages.co.uk/photos/benito-mussolini-speech?excludenudity=true&sort=mostpopular&mediatype=photography&phrase=benito%20mussolini%20speech

Stalin: https://blog.richmond.edu/psyc449/2010/12/02/joseph-stalin-rise-fall-repeat/

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Supporting Question 1 (80 Minutes)

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<thead>
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| Featured Source(s) | **Featured Source A**: Uncertainty in Interwar Germany Handout  
**Featured Source B**: WWII In Colour, “The Gathering Storm.”  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjTgMbKZcbM (0:50 – 10:34)  
**Featured Source C**: Iceberg Diagram Handout |

Process and Formative Performance Task

This lesson will take place after students have studied the First World War, Russian Revolution, Treaty of Versailles, and begun their start of a unit on the interwar era. The compelling question is designed to help students understand how extremist dictators were able to seize power in Europe and start the continent on the path towards WWII. Students will begin with studying the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party in interwar Germany as a case study. Finally, the formative performance task asks students to complete an iceberg diagram that will help students conceptualize the underlying causes that led to Adolf Hitler’s seizure of power and the start of the Nazi dictatorship.

1. Pass out copies of Supporting Document A – uncertainty in Interwar Germany Handout. Instruct students to work independently to interpret the sources and answer the accompanying questions. When all students are finished the teacher should lead the class in a discussion of the sources and the student responses.

2. After the source analysis and subsequent class discussion, show students the ten minute video clip from WWII in Colour. This video begins with an introduction to interwar Germany and continues through the crises of the Treaty of Versailles, hyperinflation, the Great Depression, the burning of the Reichstag, and Hitler’s soaring popularity as a man of action capable of fixing Germany’s many social, political, and economic problems. The video combined with the source analysis and handout should provide a differentiated approach to understanding the appeal of the Nazi party in interwar Germany.

3. Following the source analysis and video, have students complete an iceberg diagram that lists the underlying causes that led to the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party which culminated with Hitler’s proclaiming himself Fuhrer in 1933. Once students have completed the chart independently, lead a class discussion sharing student responses as a formative assessment of student understanding.
Featured Sources

FEATURED SOURCE A (PARTS 1-4): Uncertainty in Interwar Germany Handout (compiled by author)

Part 1:

Clauses from the Treaty of Versailles (1919):

80. Germany will respect the independence of Austria.

81. Germany recognizes the complete independence of Czechoslovakia.

87. Germany recognizes the complete independence of Poland.

119. Germany surrenders all her rights and titles over her overseas countries.

159. The German military forces shall be demobilized and reduced not to exceed 100,000 men.

181. The German navy must not exceed 6 battleships, 6 light cruisers, 12 destroyers, and 12 torpedo boats. No submarines are to be included.

198. The Armed Forces of Germany must not include any military or naval air forces.

231. Germany and her Allies accept the responsibility for causing all the loss and damage to the Allied Powers.

233. Germany will pay for all damages done to the civilian population and property of the Allied Governments. [The figure was later set at $33 billion].

428. To guarantee the execution of the Treaty, the German territory situated to the west of the Rhine River will be occupied by Allied troops for fifteen years.

431. The occupation forces will be withdrawn as soon as Germany complies with the Treaty.

With the person sitting next to you, evaluate the Treaty of Versailles. What potential problems might arise because of these clauses included in the Treaty and the actions forced upon Germany?

Part 2:

What did these boys do with their German Marks?

What happened to the value of the German Mark during the interwar years? What caused this problem? What inferences can you make about how this would affect the German economy and individual German workers?
Part 3:

(1) **Eric Ludendorff, My War Memories, 1914-1918 (1920)**

The proud German Army, after victoriously resisting an enemy superior in numbers for four years, performing feats unprecedented in history, and keeping our foes from our frontiers, disappeared in a moment. Our victorious fleet was handed over to the enemy. The authorities at home, who had not fought against the enemy, could not hurry fast enough to pardon deserters and other military criminals, including among these many of their own number, themselves and their nearest friends.

They and the Soldiers' Councils worked with zeal, determination and purpose to destroy the whole military structure. Such was the gratitude of the new homeland to the German soldiers who had bled and died for it in millions. The destruction of Germany's power to defend herself - the work of Germans - was the most tragic crime the world has witnessed. A tidal wave had broken over Germany, not by the force of nature, but through the weakness of the Government, represented by the Chancellor, and the paralysis of a leaderless people.

Who was Eric Ludendorff?

What does Ludendorff believe caused Germany to lose WWI?

How does Ludendorff feel about the political leadership in Germany at the end of WWI and during the immediate interwar period?

Do you think Ludendorff's views were shared by other Germans? What problems could this create for the interwar Weimar Republic?
Part 4:

A power struggle in postwar Germany erupted on January 5th, 1919.

Defeated in the First World War, humiliated, desperately short of food and assailed by the influenza epidemic that swept Europe, Germany was in a critical state. The Kaiser abdicated as emperor and on November 8th, 1918, a socialist republic was reluctantly proclaimed in Berlin by the moderate Social Democrat leader Friedrich Ebert, who confided to a friend that he ‘hated it like sin’, but proceeded to form a government. Meanwhile there had been a naval mutiny at Kiel and the Baltic and North Sea ports were falling under the control of councils of sailors, soldiers and workers on the Russian model.
The situation was to the liking of the Marxist leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, who believed that the revolution in Russia would inevitably spread to Germany and across Europe. Liebknecht, whose ambition was to be the German Lenin, was a left-wing lawyer, who in 1914 had been the only member of the Reichstag to vote against German involvement in the war. At the end of that year, with Rosa Luxemburg and others, he founded what became the Spartacist League, named after the gladiator Spartacus, leader of the slave rebellion that threatened the Roman government in the first century BC. The group’s pamphlets were quickly declared illegal and Liebknecht was sent to the eastern front where he refused to fight and spent his time burying dead soldiers. He was soon allowed back to Berlin, where he was sentenced to prison for treason after a Spartacist demonstration in the city in 1916.

Rosa Luxemburg, the daughter of a Polish Jewish family, was active in Polish left-wing politics from her teens but spent most of her adult life in Germany, where she was imprisoned several times for opposing the war and campaigning for a general strike. In Spartacist publications she called herself Junius, after Lucius Junius Brutus, founder of the Roman Republic around 500 BC. Like Liebknecht, she was sent to prison for treason in 1916. She did not share his approval of the Bolsheviks, but called for a dictatorship of the proletariat. She and Liebknecht were both released from prison in 1918 and started the Red Flag (Rote Fahne) newspaper. At the end of the year a conference of the Spartacist League, socialists and communists founded the Communist Party of Germany, with Liebknecht and Luxemburg as the leaders.

This was almost immediately followed by an uprising in Berlin against Ebert’s regime, with encouragement from Soviet Russia. Luxemburg initially opposed it, but joined in after it began and it was supported by the Red Flag. The Berlin police chief, a radical sympathiser who had just been dismissed, supplied weapons to protesters who erected barricades in the streets and seized the offices of an anti-Spartacist socialist newspaper. Calls for a general strike brought thousands of demonstrators into the centre of the city, but the Revolution Committee, which was supposed to be leading the uprising, could not agree what to do next. Some wanted to continue with the armed insurgency, others started discussions with Ebert. Attempts to get army regiments in Berlin to join the revolt failed.
By January 11th, Liebknecht and Luxemburg had lost all control of events and Liebknecht could only say, fatalistically: ‘Ultimately one should accept history as it develops.’ The attempt at a left-wing revolution was put down by force on Ebert’s orders by the army and the Freikorps volunteer militias, which had been formed from soldiers home from the war and which the army had been quietly training. Equipped with artillery, machine guns and grenades, they retook the police headquarters, the war ministry and other buildings the revolutionaries had captured, and shot hundreds of the demonstrators, including many who surrendered. The government summarily disbanded the workers’ and soldiers’ councils.

http://www.historytoday.com/richard-cavendish/spartacist-uprising-berlin

Based upon the article excerpt, how would you describe the political situation in Germany during the interwar years? What groups or issues might ordinary Germans view as threats to their country, and where might they look for solutions or protection?

**FEATURED SOURCE B:** *WWII In Colour: “The Gathering Storm.”*
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjTgMbZcbM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjTgMbZcbM) (0:50 – 10:34)

**FEATURED SOURCE C:** Iceberg Diagram: [https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/iceberg-diagrams](https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/iceberg-diagrams)
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**Additional Support/Scaffolds/Extensions**

Teachers can substitute these video clips for others of their choice.

The source analysis can be completed as a group, initially modeled by the teacher, or can be done independently.

The iceberg diagram can be partially filled in by the teacher, done together as a class, or done independently and turned in for a grade.

Students can also read the article “How a dictator comes to power in a democracy” from Forbes magazine that examines Hitler’s rise to power in Germany. [https://www.forbes.com/sites/jimpowell/2013/02/05/how-dictators-come-to-power-in-a-democracy/2/#c7b310967a55](https://www.forbes.com/sites/jimpowell/2013/02/05/how-dictators-come-to-power-in-a-democracy/2/#c7b310967a55)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Supporting Question 2 (90 Minutes)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting Question</strong></td>
<td>How do totalitarian states function?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formative Performance Task</strong></td>
<td>Characteristics of Totalitarian Governments Evidence Chart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Featured Source(s)** | **Featured Source A:** FDR quote on the rise of interwar dictatorships  
**Featured Source B:** European interwar dictatorships map  
**Featured Source C:** Characteristics of Totalitarian States Graphic Organizer  
**Featured Source D:** Students will find additional sources. |
Process and Formative Performance Task

The formative performance task in this lesson asks students to find examples of how Nazi Germany functioned as a totalitarian state. The characteristics of a totalitarian state are established by the graphic organizer that students will be given by the teacher.

Process:
1. Begin class by giving students a copy of the FDR quote on the rise of dictatorships during the interwar period. Have students respond to the quote independently as a warm-up, then share their thoughts and reactions with the class. Once students have completed this task, display the interwar dictatorships map of Europe and explain that although Nazi Germany is our case study for analyzing how a dictator achieves and maintains power, that most of Europe was struggling with the same destabilizing conditions during the interwar period. This resulted in many countries turning towards authoritarian governments. Ask students to extend their thinking as to why dictatorships and authoritarian governments appeared as solutions.

2. Pass out copies of the Characteristics of Totalitarian States graphic organizer. Explain that Nazi Germany, like Stalinist Russia (which students will have learned about previous to this lesson), are examples of what is called a totalitarian government, or a government that seeks to exercise total control over all aspects of its subjects public and private lives. Read through the graphic organizer with the students and ask them to think of examples from Stalinist Russia that prove that it was a totalitarian state. This should make the concept of totalitarianism easier to understand, and also provide students with the opportunity to connect recently learned material to a new idea. With this foundational knowledge established students will be ready to work on their formative assessment for the remainder of the period.

3. For the Characteristics of Totalitarian Governments Evidence Chart students will need to work on a computer, in a computer lab, or on their phones. Explain to students that Characteristics of Totalitarian States graphic organize, they will search the internet for examples to put in their Evidence charts that illustrate how Nazi Germany operated as a totalitarian state. Students should be reminded that they can look for evidence from both primary and secondary sources. Encourage students to include a combination of images, quotes, statistics, charts, or other forms of data to prove their point. Finally, once all the students have finished their charts ask them to share their research with a partner. Once everyone has shared with a partner, the teacher can lead a class discussion of what was discovered.

Featured Sources:

FEATURED SOURCE A: Fireside Chat from 1938 (http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=15628)

“Democracy has disappeared in several great nations, not because the people of those nations dislike democracy, but because they have grown tired of unemployment and insecurity, of seeing their children hungry they sat helpless in the face of government confusion and government weakness...Finally in desperation, they chose to sacrifice liberty in the hope of getting something to eat.”

-U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1938)

According to the quote, why did President Roosevelt think so many people gave up on democracy?
FEATURED SOURCE B: Interwar European Dictatorships Map

http://pages.uoregon.edu/mccole/HIST303Spring2012/lecturenotes/week3class1.html

FEATURED SOURCE C: CHARACTERISTICS OF TOTALITARIAN GOVERNMENTS GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

FEATURED SOURCE D: CHARACTERISTICS OF TOTALITARIAN GOVERNMENTS EVIDENCE CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dates in Power</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Control of Individuals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods of Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of Modern Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dictatorship and One-Party Rule</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dynamic Leader</td>
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Additional Support/Scaffolds/Options

Ask students to research a dictatorship other than Nazi Germany on the interwar dictatorships map of Europe, and then compare the rise of that dictatorship with the rise of Hitler.

Have students add a second or third column to their chart and include Fascist Italy or Stalinist Russia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting Question 3 (90 Minutes)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Question</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formative Performance Task</td>
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<td>Featured Source(s)</td>
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Formative Performance Task and Instructional Approach

The formative performance task in this lesson is a Two Minute Interview activity. Students will be able to share what they researched about their assigned dictator and regime, and during the debrief students will be able to make connections as to what social, political, and economic conditions allow dictatorial regimes to exist and function today.

Process:
1. Begin class by asking students if dictatorships exist today and see what examples they can identify. Have a brief discussion with students about any contemporary connections they can make with current events. This can be the day’s warm-up.

2. Pass out copies of the “World’s Enduring Dictators” article. Read the article together as a class. Remind students that the article was written in 2012, and that some of the information may have changed in the past five years. Ask for student comments and questions. Was any of this information a surprise? Where do they notice that most dictatorial governments still exist? Thoughts as to why this may be?

3. Have students number off based upon the list of dictators. Using their phones, have students research their assigned dictator and answer the supporting question of, “where do dictatorial regimes exist today and how do they function.” Students should take notes on a sheet of loose-leaf paper and consider the following questions:
   - When did the dictator come to power? How long have they ruled?
   - Is the regime popular? Who supports the dictator?
- If the regime is unpopular, how does the dictator maintain power?
- What are some of the dictator’s main policies? How do they run the government & economy?
- What international governments support the dictatorships?
- What is the international communities’ opinion of the regime?
- How does the dictatorship function and hold onto power?

4. Once students complete research on their assigned dictator begin the two minute interview activity. The directions below are borrowed and modified from the Facing History and Ourselves website:

**Rationale**

In an activity using the Two-Minute Interview strategy, students gather evidence and ideas by asking questions to a rotating partner. Use this strategy to stimulate students’ thinking as they investigate an essential question or search for evidence in response to an essay prompt. By requiring students to practice active listening and reading, this strategy helps students develop essential skills for learning new information. You can also use this strategy as a way to have students share their work with peers.

**Procedure**

**Two-Minute Interviews**

- Divide the class in half randomly. Place chairs in two long rows so that students will sit facing each other.
- Tell students that they will have two minutes to interview each other. One row of students will ask the questions, listen carefully, and take notes. The other row will answer.
- After two minutes, have one row of students move down so that everyone has a new partner to share evidence or ideas with. Continue this activity until you feel that students have gathered enough evidence or shared enough ideas to generate a full-class discussion.

**Teacher’s role:**

As the students share their ideas, take notes. Pay particular attention to the following:

- Patterns of insight, understanding, or strong historical reasoning
- Patterns of confusion, historical inaccuracies, facile connections, or thinking that indicates students are making overly simplified comparisons between past and present

The goal is for students to share text-based evidence effectively and accurately. The following categories can guide you, the teacher, as you listen to your students’ discussion. Listen for:

- Factual and interpretive accuracy: offering evidence that is correct and interpretations that are plausible
- Persuasiveness of evidence: including evidence that is relevant and strong in terms of helping to prove the claim
As students debrief, weave in feedback. Affirm their insights. Highlight strong historical reasoning and text-based arguments. Choose one or two misconceptions about the content to address. Point out areas where students may want to reevaluate the ways they are connecting past and present.

**Debrief**

After this strategy, you will want to debrief in a class discussion and/or a journal reflection. Prompts for journal writing include:

- How might you respond to the prompt or essential question now: “Where do dictatorships exist today, and how do they function?”
- What did you learn today? How does this information relate to the prompt or essential question?
- What else do you want to know?

**Featured Sources:**

**FEATURED SOURCE A**

*By Joshua Norman CBS NEWS April 23, 2012*

**The World’s Enduring Dictators**

Relatively few had ever heard of Tunisia’s Zine El Abidine Ben Ali until earlier this year, yet he had held dictatorial power for 24 years --since Ronald Reagan was president -- when his countrymen finally rose up and deposed him from office.

After Tunisia, the "Arab Spring" spread east to Egypt, and the 30-year reign of Hosni Mubarak came to an unplanned end. When Mubarak stepped aside, it seemed like freedom was on the march, sure to ignite a firestorm of cries for liberty and the right to representative governments in even the most repressed states.

However, the march stalled on the doorsteps of places like Syria, Yemen and Bahrain, where dictatorial rulers are desperately doing everything they can, mostly violently, to prevent being overthrown.

Of the many places the world community could have directly intervened, somehow Libya was chosen. After more than six months, an international military coalition-backed group of rebels *successfully deposed* 42-year dictator Muammar Qaddafi.
Since it is easy to say that many of the world's leaders are at least as bad as Qaddafi, and many even worse, this begs the question: What makes a dictator stand out enough for the world to do something about? What makes one of them "the worst"?

**Feature page: The world's enduring dictators**

Is it length of rule? If that were the case, the Sultan of Brunei Hassanal Bolkiah is the worst, having been in power since Oct. 5, 1967.

Is it a willingness to use violence? There are many cruel despots in the world, but only Sudan's Omar Bashir, in power since 1989, actually has an international arrest warrant outstanding against him for war crimes committed in Darfur. As many as 400,000 people, mostly civilians, have perished in that conflict.

Is it a need for total control? Again, there are lots of eligible "world's worst" candidates here, but the Dear Leader in North Korea, Kim Jong-Il, has written the book on exhaustive control and fostering a cult of personality during his two decades of rule. To say he is anything less than a god in his country is to invite imprisonment, torture, death, or worse.

No matter how you cut your logic, Qaddafi simply fell in the middle of a thick pack of despots and dictators who dominate the political and economic landscape of their countries, mostly to the detriment of the majority.

CBS News has run a series of articles looking at the world leaders who make up that pack of dictatorial rulers, focusing on their length of rule, their most despotic acts and their country's outlook for change. The installments in the series appeared one dictator at a time, in order of length of rule, although keep in mind that length of rule is not a definite indicator of the despotism of the ruler.

There will surely be some names missing which others think belong here. The series attempts to stick closely to the strict definitions of "dictator" (an individual ruler who rules unrestrained by law) and "despot" (a violent, oppressive dictator.) For a more complete explanation of the missing names on this list, see the editor's note below, accompanied by a secondary list of those who almost made the cut.

A final note: Even with many benefits of the doubt given, this is still an incredibly long list of people (30 for now) who neatly fit the definition of a "dictator" in the year 2011.

Information for this report taken from wire and news stories, the CIA World Factbook, and NGO reports.
Hassanal Bolkiah, Brunei
Qaboos bin Said, Oman
Ali Abdallah Saleh, Yemen
Jose Eduardo dos Santos, Angola
Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe
Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, Equatorial Guinea
Paul Biya, Cameroon
Yoweri Museveni, Uganda
Blaise Campaore, Burkina Faso
Mswati III, Swaziland
Sayyid Ali Khamenei, Iran
Omar Bashir, Sudan
Idriss Deby, Chad
Nursultan A. Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan
Islam Karimov, Uzbekistan
Emomali Rahmon, Tajikistan
Than Shwe, Myanmar (Burma)
Isaias Afwerki, Eritrea
Kim Jong-Il, North Korea
Yahya Jammeh, The Gambia
Aleksander Lukashenko, Belarus
Hamad bin Khalifa Al Than, Qatar
Meles Zenawi, Ethiopia
Abdullah II, Jordan
Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Algeria
Ismail Omar Guelleh, Djibouti
Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, Bahrain
Mohammed VI, Morocco
Bashar Assad, Syria
Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz, Saudi Arabia

Editor's note:

Rulers and regimes teetering on the edge of absolute control were given the benefit of the doubt and left off the main list until they definitively prove their dictatorial bona fides. This idea was also applied to authoritarian rulers who have only been in office a few years, like Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov of Turkmenistan; as well as longtime rulers who may just be the product of an authoritarian system, like Hun Sen of Cambodia.

Totalitarian regimes (where absolute power is centralized within a party or group) are not mentioned. Take China's President Hu Jintao for example, who may be in charge of an oft-oppressive government, but could never behave as Qaddafi or Bashir have without consent from other party leaders.

Additionally, while someone like Venezuela's Hugo Chavez might be an international irritant who, in the words of Human Rights Watch, has "systematically undermined
freedom of expression and the ability of human rights groups to promote basic rights," he is still an elected official bound by the laws of his country - for now, having recently succeeded in getting term limits removed.

After much debate, the Castro brothers, Raul and Fidel, were left off the list because of the tremendous uncertainty about the present and future of politics in Cuba, as well as the seeming onset of some democratic reforms there.

Borderline suspects who almost made the cut, with their length of rule -

Hun Sen, Cambodia - 13 years  
Pakalitha Mosisili, Lesotho - 13 years  
Hugo Chavez, Venezuela - 12 years  
Frank Bainimarama, Fiji - 11 years  
Paul Kagame, Rwanda - 11 years  
Abdoulaye Wade, Senegal - 11 years  
Mwai Kabika, Kenya - 9 years  
Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan - 8 years  
Raul Castro, Cuba - 5 years  
Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov, Turkmenistan - 5 years  
Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, Mauritania - 2 years


Student Generated Questions

It is important to have students involved in the inquiry process; because of this, ask students to share questions and curiosities they have regarding the compelling question. These questions can be recorded during the inquiry process. Below are some suggested prompts to ask students.

- What questions came up during class?  
- What are you wondering about?  
- What information do you (still) need to answer the compelling question?  
- How can you further your understanding of this topic?  
- Where can you access additional sources or information on this topic?  
- Who could be an additional resource for your inquiry?

Record student questions in a “parking lot” (on a poster, white board, google doc) so that the class can readily access them. Throughout the inquiry, return to these questions and, if possible, weave them into your instruction and formative assessment. By intentionally soliciting and then addressing/using students questions, you develop their ability to ask questions, plan for future steps, and think about their thinking (metacognition).

NOTE: It is possible to use these students’ questions as the supporting questions for the inquiry. If you do, you may need to make adjustments to your teaching and the resources identified for this inquiry.
### Additional Support/Scaffolds/Options

Choose either a class discussion or independent writing journal entry for the post-two minute interview debrief activity reflection.

Use current events news videos to supplement the warm-up class discussion and brainstorming activity.

Have students work as partners to research current dictators instead of independently. This will also decrease the number of research subjects and the teacher can choose those which have the most accessible online resources.

### Summative Performance Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summative Performance Task</th>
<th>ARGUMENT: How do dictators achieve and maintain power? Create an argument with a claim and specific evidence in a 1-2 page essay.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EXTENSION: Are dictatorships a viable form of government when considered alongside the UN SDG goal #16 for peace, justice, and strong institutions? Create an argument with a claim and specific evidence in a 1-2 page essay. See rubric in Appendix A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Description

In the Summative Performance Task, students construct an evidence-based argument responding to the compelling question “How do dictators achieve and maintain power?” Students will also be asked to extend their argument by considering if dictatorships are a viable form of government in today’s world when considered alongside the UN SDG goal for peace, justice, and strong institutions. It is important to note that students’ arguments could take a variety of forms. In some cases, teachers may have students complete a detailed outline that includes claims with evidentiary support. In other cases, teachers may want students to write a paper that formally presents and supports their arguments.
Taking Informed Action

Students can collaborate with a government class to edit and extend their papers and then share these peer-reviewed works with their English classes as they begin reading *1984* later in the semester.

EXPLORE THIS BLOG POST FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TAKING INFORMED ACTION

DESCRIPTION/NOTE TO TEACHER: Taking informed action can manifest itself in a variety of forms and in a range of venues: Students may express action through discussions, debates, surveys, video productions, and the like; these actions may take place in the classroom, in the school, in the local community, across the state, and around the world.

Taking Globally Informed Action

Directions:

1. Guide students to the UN Sustainable Development Goals website and explore goal #16. Discuss the goal 16 targets with students as articulated on the UN SDG website.
2. In groups, have students create a handout or poster informing people of the dangers posed to these targets for goal #16 by dictatorships and alerting people as to what the warning signs are of a growing authoritarian regime. Students should consider what institutions, freedoms, and rights and liberties need to be protected to ensure that a government is satisfying the target goals for peace, justice, and strong institutions.
3. Display these posters in the classroom, or possibly another part of the school.
4. Further extensions could include sending copies of the posters or handouts to the offices of the United Nations for display on their UN SDG website.

Taking Informed Action: UN Sustainable Development Goals

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) outline “a supremely ambitious and transformational vision” for humanity. These 17 goals, and their 169 targets, offer teachers and students an opportunity to frame their C3 Inquiry in a global context. By engaging classes with informed action that addresses the SDG, students nurture their global citizen competencies, disposition, and mindset.

Our decision to develop Informed Action tasks that are globally minded highlight both the benefits of social studies teaching and learning and addresses a gap in educational resources of this genre.

Ultimately, teachers who use a global scope better prepare students to navigate, understand, and act in a future that is increasingly complex and interconnected.

- Twitter: @GlobalGoalsUN
- Twitter: @SustDev
Appendix A:

Name: __________________________________________ Period: __________

### Rubric for Writing

| Claim | □ A - Includes strong claims that are complex, analytical and arguable.  
| □ B - Includes claims that are specific and arguable.  
| □ C - Includes attempted claims which might be general, do not include a "so what", do not answer all parts of the question, or do not match all topics discussed.  
| □ D - Includes attempted claims that do not answer the question or match the topics discussed in the paragraph.  
| □ F - Lacks claims. |

| Evidence | □ A - Richly supports the topic with specific evidence.  
| □ B - Supports the topic with specific evidence.  
| □ C - Supports the topic with adequate evidence that may not be specific and may include some minor inaccuracies.  
| □ D - Includes limited evidence that is not specific, is inaccurate, or does not answer the question.  
| □ F - Lacks evidence or contains evidence that does not answer the question. |

| Commentary | □ A - Includes strong analytical commentary for all pieces of evidence.  
| □ B - Includes some commentary for all pieces of evidence.  
| □ C - Includes limited commentary, may include additional irrelevant information, may repeat evidence as commentary.  
| □ D - Includes limited attempts at commentary that often does not explain how the evidence answers the question.  
| □ F - Includes no commentary often just a list of facts. |

| Addresses Topic | □ A - Includes in-depth answers to all parts of the question.  
| □ B - Includes general answers to all parts of the question.  
| □ C - Answers most of the question  
| □ D - Only answers part of the question.  
| □ F - Does not answer the question or complete the writing. |

| Organization | □ A - Demonstrates a clear plan of organization that flows logically between evidence and in-depth commentary  
| □ B - Demonstrates a clear plan of organization following the claim, evidence, commentary model. Includes some transitions.  
| □ C - Demonstrates a satisfactory plan of organization that doesn’t add or take away from the argument. May include a few transitions.  
| □ D - Demonstrates a general plan of organization but may lack focus or go off on tangents that distract from the argument.  
| □ F - Demonstrate a major weakness in organization that lacks focus. Confusing to follow. |

| Writing style | □ A - Though not without flaws, the writing shows stylistic maturity and an effective command of sentence structure and diction.  
| □ B - While not error free, the writing does not have mechanical or grammatical errors that seriously mar the writer's expression.  
| □ C - While the writing may lack clarity, it demonstrates basic control over sentence structure and word choice.  
| □ D - There are many grammatical errors in sentence structure and word choice. Serious spelling mistakes may distract the reader.  
| □ F - Writing contains serious distracting errors in grammar, mechanics, and or/spelling. |

Grade: /30