
**Reader Abstract:** This reader selects excerpts from Democracy in America that relate to four major themes: the matter of equality and freedom, culture, social relations, and the tension between honor and ambition. The focus is on the people and culture in a democratic society.

**Session 1: Democratic Social State (42 pages)**


*Volume I, Part I*


**Session Abstract:** These readings help to establish the social context in which Tocqueville is writing his book, in particular the way that estates are divided in the United States in contrast to the tradition of primogeniture in Europe. These readings also highlight Tocqueville's perception of the cultural and religious differences among Anglo-Americans.

**Session 2: The Democratic Mind (44 pages)**

*Volume II, Part I*

* Chapter 11, “In What Spirit the Americans Cultivate the Arts,” pages 439-443.
* Chapter 12, “Why the Americans at the Same Time Raise Such Little and Such Great Monuments,” pages 443-444.
* Chapter 16, “How American Democracy Has Modified the English Language,” pages 452-458.
Session Abstract: The focus in this session is the way that the democratic culture of the United States affects the arts and humanities. Throughout the readings, Tocqueville compares the American approach to philosophy, literature, theater, and history to that of Europe.

Session 3: The Democratic Household (33 pages)

Volume II, Part III

- Chapter 1, “How Mores Become Milder as Conditions are Equalized,” pages 535-539.
- Chapter 13, “How Equality Naturally Divides the Americans into a Multitude of Particular Little Societies,” pages 577-578.

Session Abstract: In these readings, Tocqueville discusses the social relations he observes in the United States in contrast with those of Europe. In particular, he discusses the master/servant hierarchy, highlighting the distinction between a wage-laborer and a serf and their respective interactions with their employers or landlords. The other readings deal with the differences in the male-female division between the two cultures.

Session 4: The Democratic Honor and Ambition, and Democracy at War (37 pages)

Volume II, Part III

- Chapter 26, “Some Considerations on War in Democratic Societies,” pages 631-635.

Session Abstract: These readings deal with two culture themes, honor and ambition, and the differences between the United States and Europe in the way the democratic culture cultivates these two motivations for human behavior. The final few chapters relate to the influence democracy has on the military, as an extension of the themes of honor and ambition.