



COMPOSITION BOOK

Democracy 101

Kimberly Andreassen - Grade 5



COMPOSITION

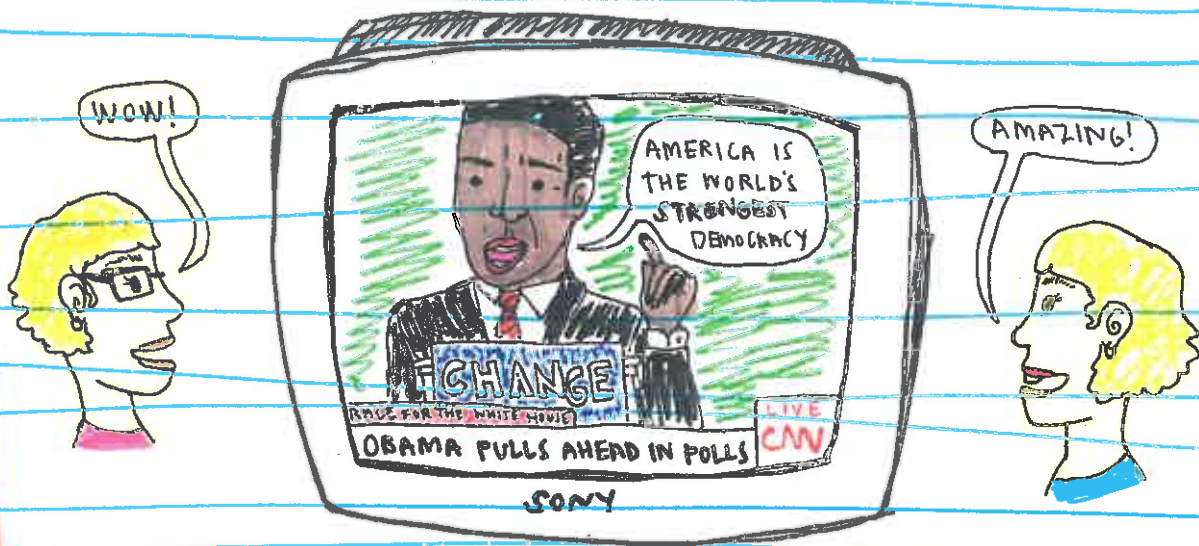
SCHEDULE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
TIME								
SATURDAY								
FRIDAY								
THURSDAY								
WEDNESDAY								
TUESDAY								
MONDAY								
SUNDAY								

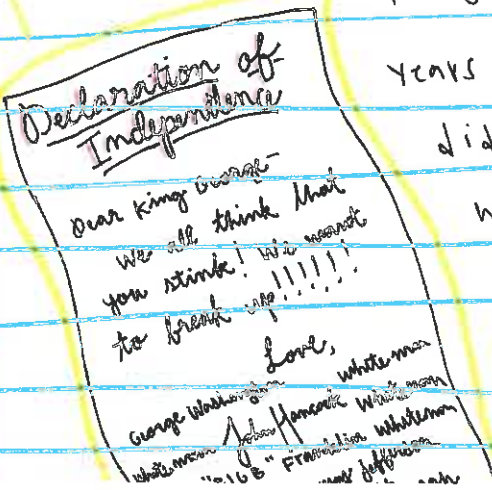
"OK CLASS, get out your notebooks - today we're going to learn all about democracy! Democracy is what makes America so great - democracy gives everyone a voice!"

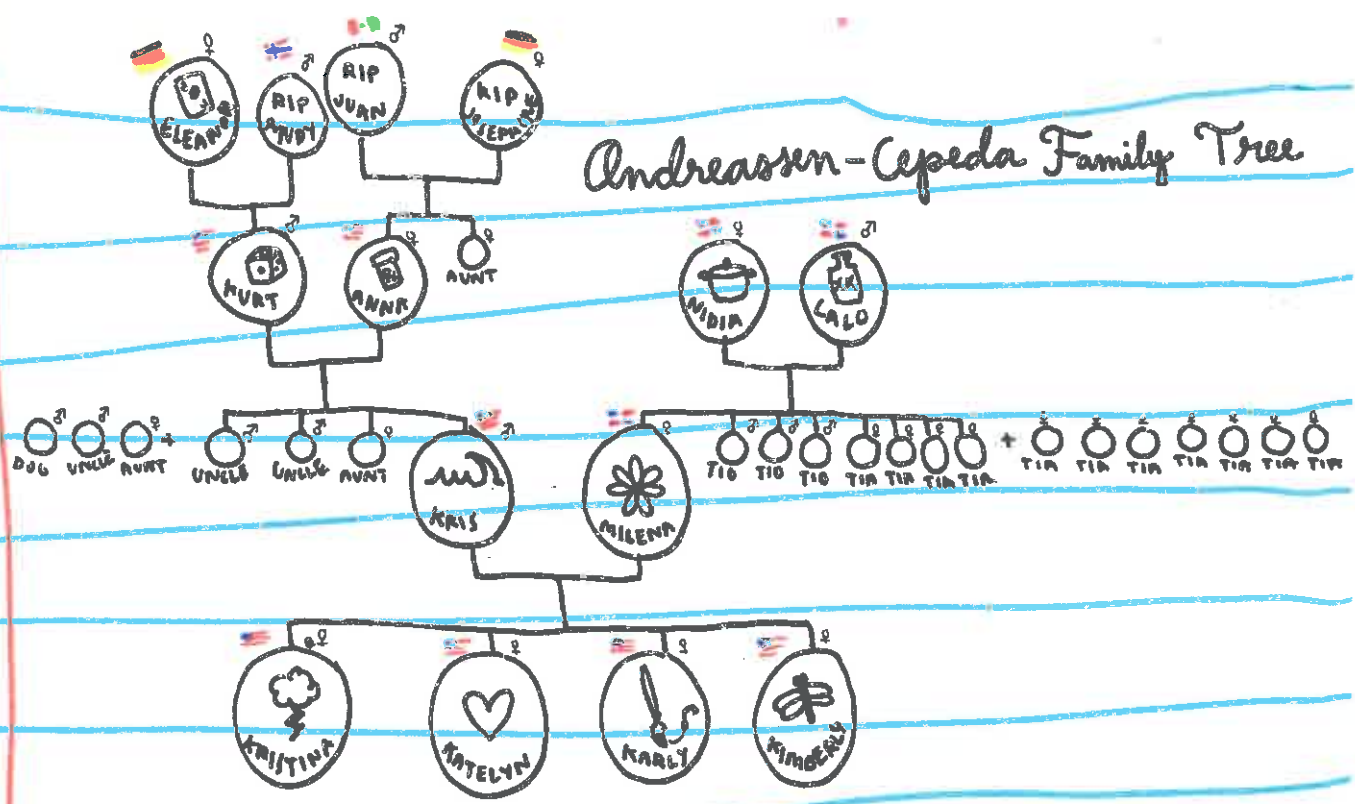
- my fifth grade teacher (probably)

I. We started our unit on democracy around the same time that we had our first lessons in cursive. It was 2008 - and every day on the news I saw Barack Obama racing John McCain for the presidency.



My twin & I were transfixed - 8 out of 10 of the first years of our lives were spent under the uninterrupted rule of George W. Bush. My fifth grade teacher told that democracy was for brave people who weren't afraid. She told the class about our founding fathers - brave men who wanted the country that they loved to be free. They started a war against the king of England & against all odds they won! For a few years this story really worked for me - I didn't really bother to think about or question what my teacher had said to me. When I began to think more critically & compare my personal & history & experience with what my teacher told me in 2008 I started running in to problems.





Andreassen-Cepeda Family Tree

II. I have a big & complicated family with a big & complicated ~~history~~ history. My dad's mom's dad (Great Grandpa Juan) moved to New York from what is now ^{the state of} TEXAS, but what used to be Mexico until they lost the war. The democratic United States seized his country, made him a citizen, & drafted him to fight in their wars. That's pretty different from the democracy my fifth grade teacher told me about. My dad's mom's mom (Great Grandma Josephine) moved to New York from what was, & still is, Germany. Her brother (Uncle Wolfgang) was beat up by nazis at a political rally. His fears about the changes his country was going were confirmed & so he convinced his

family to flee to live in the non-fascist, ^(at the time) very democratic ^(as advertised) United States of America. Brave people fight - towards flee.

brave
 /brāv/
 adjective
 1. ready to face and endure danger or pain; showing courage.

*g-ety-downress-3-koonc
 courageous - valiant
 unhesitatingly - unflinching
 gallant - gallant - daring - valiant*

III My mom's mom & dad moved themselves & all of their kids to New York from the Dominican Republic. In the 80's my mom's oldest sister kept trying to join the socialist party at a time when young revolutionaries kept getting killed. My grandmother (Mama Nidia) pressured my grandfather (Papa Lalo) to sell all of his lands & negocios to move to the United States of America. They left the dangerous (& democratic) Dominican Republic behind & came to the democratic (& dangerous) United States with little else but fear & hope.

IV My mom & dad moved themselves & all of their kids to North Carolina from New York when New York got too expensive. I ~~don't~~ remember not remembering what my parents looked like when I was little because of how much they worked. One time I got lost at a festival in our town & I couldn't be found for what felt like hours because I couldn't tell the police man what my parents looked like! I think that when my parents found me the police man only let them take me because they used my twin sister as an ID. This whole ordeal could have been avoided if my parents didn't have to work so late to pay taxes to our democratic government.



V Sometimes when my sisters ^{& I} were with my dad he'd get stopped by police or nosy people & they'd ask him if he had kidnapped us. Sometimes when my sisters & I were with our mom she'd get stopped by rich people or nosy people & they'd ask her if she was our nanny. I think this is because my family doesn't look like a lot of other families since my type of family was outlawed by our democratic government!! (Miscegnation, baby!!!) (I also racism!!!!!!!)

"So class - what can you all tell me about democracy based on what we've learned in class today?"

- My fifth grade teacher
(Pre)

VI

I no longer think of democracy as a bold thing that brave people to do for the greater good - democracy is a lot more complicated than my fifth grade teacher would have you believe. Democracy is a hole to stick your head in. Democracy is unfair & sometimes unjust. Democracy hope & trust & a child's naivety. Democracy is expensive. Democracy is pay to play. And at the end of the day - democracy (for my family & me) is the best option.



