

Name _____

DIRECTIONS: The passage below is from *Democracy in America* by Alexis de Tocqueville. Read the passage, paying special attention to the underlined words. If needed, use a dictionary for help.

I admit that, in a democratic State thus constituted, society will not be stationary; but the impulses of the social body may be regulated and directed forwards; if there be less splendor than in the halls of an aristocracy, the contrast of misery will be less frequent also; the pleasures of enjoyment may be less excessive, but those of comfort will be more general; the sciences may be less perfectly cultivated, but ignorance will be less common; the impetuosity of the feelings will be repressed, and the habits of the nation softened; there will be more vices and fewer crimes. In the absence of enthusiasm and of an ardent faith, great sacrifices may be obtained from the members of a commonwealth by an appeal to their understandings and their experience; each individual will feel the same necessity for uniting with his fellow-

citizens to protect his own weakness; and as he knows that if they are to assist he must co-operate, he will readily perceive that his personal interest is identified with the interest of the community. The nation, taken as a whole, will be less brilliant, less glorious, and perhaps less strong; but the majority of the citizens will enjoy a greater degree of prosperity, and the people will remain quiet, not because it despairs of amelioration, but because it is conscious of the advantages of its condition. If all the consequences of this state of things were not good or useful, society would at least have appropriated all such as were useful and good; and having once and for ever renounced the social advantages of aristocracy, mankind would enter into possession of all the benefits which democracy can afford.

DIRECTIONS: Fill in the meaning of each word on the next page. Use a dictionary to help you if needed. Consider the connotation of the words that de Tocqueville uses to describe the people in a democracy, compared to the words he uses to describe an aristocratic society. Do you think that de Tocqueville is pro-democracy? Explain.

Name _____

WORD

MEANING

splendor

misery

excessive

general

cultivated

ignorance

impetuosity

repressed

vices

ardent

prosperity

amelioration

ANSWERS

de Tocqueville uses more bland, neutral and negative words to describe the advantages of democracy.

WORD	MEANING
splendor	<u>magnificent in appearance</u>
misery	<u>profound unhappiness</u>
excessive	<u>more than is needed</u>
general	<u>not specific</u>
cultivated	<u>grown or designed in a specific way on purpose</u>
ignorance	<u>the state of not knowing</u>
impetuosity	<u>characterized by rash action or emotion</u>
repressed	<u>restrained or inhibited</u>
vices	<u>immoral or wicked behavior</u>
ardent	<u>enthusiastic or passionate</u>
prosperity	<u>a state of success or wealth</u>
amelioration	<u>the act of making something better; improvement</u>