

Different Forms of Government

What is government, and what role does it play in our lives?

A government is a body that determines the way in which a country, state, county, township, city, or village is run. Laws and policies are made at each of these levels regarding everything connected to the daily life of a community, and all citizens are expected to abide by the laws and policies set.



Democracy

The word democracy comes from the ancient Greek words meaning *people* and *rule of the government*. It is a system of government of a country whose leaders have been elected by the people, therefore the power is with the people.

A **parliamentary democracy** is when the elected representatives meet in parliament to make laws.

There are many types of democracies, but all have the main feature of the people being able to decide who will lead and represent their interests. This happens through the process of free and fair elections so the people can give their opinions about issues occurring in their communities.

Monarchy

A monarchy is a form of government led by an individual who holds the position for life, having inherited the position, and who passes it on to a relative, usually a son or daughter.

In the past, all monarchs held great power and made all the decisions and laws of the country. This is known as **absolute monarchy**. Today, most monarchs act as head of state, filling a ceremonial role with little or no power regarding the actual governing of the country.

A **constitutional monarchy** is a country which has a written constitution that sets out the rules for how the country will be governed and the rights and responsibilities of its people and has a monarch as head of state.

Republic

A republic is a country where the head of government is an elected or chosen president. Sometimes the president is also the head of state. Presidents are usually elected for a specific length of time, called a **term of office**. In some countries, a president may only serve for a few terms.

A republic may or may not be democratic. In a **democratic republic**, the people choose their leaders through elections, although in countries where a president is in a ceremonial role, it may be by government appointment rather than by election. In some undemocratic republics the leaders are chosen by a small number of people and may stay in office for a long time, sometimes without ever being elected, or re-elected. In some cases, there may be elections, but these may be conducted in corrupt ways, or electors are not given a free choice of who to vote for.

In a **totalitarian** society the government holds absolute control over all areas of the lives of its people.

A set of beliefs is imposed on its people, who must conform or face unpleasant consequences. This form of government came into existence during the the 1920s when the **fascist** governments of Italy and Nazi Germany came into power.



Fascism

Fascism is a form of government usually headed by a dictator. It involves total government control of **political, economic, cultural, religious**, and social activities. Some industries may be owned by individuals, but under government control. This form of government involves extreme **patriotism**, warlike policies and extreme **discrimination** against **minority** groups.

Dictatorship

In a dictatorship, one person, called a Dictator, has **absolute power**.

This differs from totalitarianism in that it is less controlling and not marked by a rigid set of beliefs. Sometimes a country run by a dictatorship may be called a **republic**. Such republics have only one political party and the dictator makes most government policies and decisions.

To remain in power, dictators must continue to use force or threats and suppress the peoples' freedom.

Communism

Communism is an economic system in which there is little or no private ownership of anything. Property is held by the community rather than by individuals. All economic activity is controlled by the government, including what food crops are grown, what goods are manufactured, and to whom they are sold – and at what prices. Also, limited personal freedom of individuals is allowed, including where they can travel and how they spend their money.

Oligarchy

An oligarchy is a form of government in which only a few wealthy people hold power. A republic may be an oligarchy if just a few people have the right to vote.

In most oligarchies, the power of the leadership is supported by the wealthy and the military.

Anarchy

The word **anarchy** comes from the ancient Greek meaning 'absence of leader', or without rulers. In an **anarchical society** there is a state of **lawlessness** or political disorder because there is no governmental authority.

TASK 1:

Investigate the different types of governments that exist in countries around the world. Explain how each one fits into the definition of the information above, and provide examples of how the rule of law, or lack of in some cases, can impact the day to day activities and living conditions of the citizens that live under their government's rule.

TASK 2:

Class activity – Create a foldable for the types of governments below and make sure to include each on a separate page in your foldable:

- *The definition of each form of government on their own page.*
- *Include TASK 1 information.*
- *The Pro's and Con's of that particular government.*
- *Countries that have had or still have that particular form of government.*

democracy
 monarchy
 constitutional monarchy
 term of office
 totalitarian
 political
 cultural
 patriotism
 minority
 absolute power.
 communism
 anarchical society

parliamentary democracy
absolute monarchy
republic
democratic republic
fascist
economic
religious
discrimination
dictatorship
republic
oligarchy
lawlessness



TASK 3:

Social media has heavily impacted how societies communicate around the world. Citizens have access to a multitude of platforms to discover, inform, and express their views and opinions about life experiences. Communication technologies can be accessed in the most remote places and the hardware (equipment) is becoming more sophisticated in design and capabilities.

1. While democratic countries embrace social media, non-democratic rulers and governments find this phenomenon challenging. Investigate the causes and effects of social media throughout societies where citizens do not live under democratic rule, and their governments reject principles for the rule of law.
2. What events have happened in the world recently where the people have been mobilized through social media platforms? Explain the government's reaction to the peoples' actions.

If this action is current, describe what you think the outcome for the people might be. Give reasons why you believe this is so.