

Lesson 3

Types of Government

Resources Required:
library or Internet access

Words, Terms and People		✓✓✓✓
monarchy	a single person rules the government	
oligarchy	a small group rules the government	
democracy	government by the people directly	
socialism	People have rights, such as the right to vote, but government mostly controls the economy	
communism	The government has total control over the economy	
republic	Citizens elect (vote for) leaders to represent them and write laws	
anarchy	A type of government where there are no rules	

Objective

This lesson will look at the main types of government systems.

Monarchy

A **monarchy** occurs when a single person known as a king, queen, emperor, czar, or shah rules the government. Usually in a monarchy, power is inherited (passed down through the family). Although other people may be part of the government, one person holds most of the power. There is more than one type of monarchy. An *absolute* monarch has total control over the people. There are few absolute monarchs left in the world.



A **constitutional monarch** shares power with an elected legislature and is only a ceremonial leader. A modern example is Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain. The British monarch is a symbolic head of state, but she does not run the government. Instead, the government is run by a Prime Minister and elected representatives in Parliament.

A **dictatorship** is a lot like a monarchy. In a dictatorship, a single person also has total control over the people and usually took power by force, using their army. Since the people don't have any power, the government doesn't really have to listen to them. One example is Kim Jung Un in North Korea.



Oligarchy

An **oligarchy** is when a small group rules the government. Most everyone else in the country has no say in running the government. The small group can be in power for a number of reasons, such as military strength, wealth, or religious or social position. In the modern world, most communist governments are oligarchies. In China, for example, leaders of the Communist Party and the military control all aspects of the government.



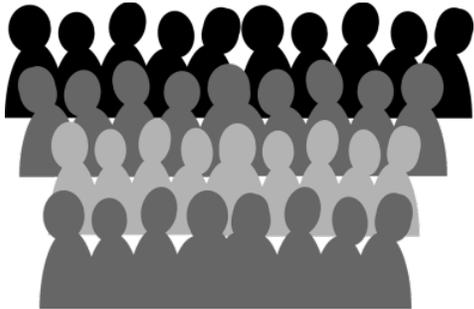
Sometimes dictatorships or oligarchies say that they represent the people. They might even hold elections or have a separate group of lawmakers that have been elected by the people. However, such governments do not truly represent the people. Usually, the government tightly controls elections and only allows one candidate or political party to run for office. Usually, these elected lawmakers obey the dictator or oligarchy that is already in power. In most cases, dictatorships and oligarchies work hard to keep anyone from criticizing or opposing them.

Anarchy

Anarchy means having no government at all. Many people who believe in anarchy as a form of government believe that the strong should be able to take advantage of the weak. Some believe that all people are naturally good and will just be kind and considerate of others if given the chance. In countries that have fallen into anarchy in the past, such as Russia, Albania, and Somalia, gang leaders took over local control and carried out much violence. Given the chance, most people have proven that some amount of order and rules are necessary in order to keep people safe.



Democracy



A **democracy** is when all the people rule the government. In Ancient Greece, the Greek people all voted on each and every law that was passed. Imagine how long it would take to count over 300,000,000 votes in the U.S. every time a law was being voted on!

Today, no country has a government that is a direct democracy. Instead, today's democracies are usually representative, also known as a republic.

Republic

A **republic** is when the people elect representatives to make laws and run the government for them. If the people don't like what the government is doing, they can elect different officials by voting for someone else in the next election. This is how voters hold power over government, and make sure their leaders listen to them.



Have you noticed that some countries call themselves democracies, but they don't really allow the people to rule the government? For example, the Communist Party that rules in North Korea is called the "Democratic People's Republic of Korea." Yet the North Korean government is a dictatorship, not a democracy. The people don't have a say in their government, and they are completely ruled by their dictator.

The United States has a blend of a democracy and a republic. In the United States, we elect leaders to represent us and make laws for us (such as the U.S. Congress and the U.S. President), but we can also vote on some laws as individuals. Usually the laws we get to vote on directly are state or local (town, village, county) laws.

In order to truly represent the people, governments must do more than just use the word *democratic*. They should have the following characteristics:

➤ **Individual Liberty (freedom) within limits**

Complete freedom with no rules would be chaos and would most likely lead to violence, so the government tries to balance freedom with keeping order. Even so, a democratic or republican government gives people as much freedom as possible to develop their own talents and make their own choices, while still having rules in place to keep everyone as safe as possible

➤ **Free Elections**

Democracies and republics hold fair, free, and open elections. This gives people a chance to choose leaders and give their opinions.

➤ **Majority Rule**

Since the people rule in a democracy and in a republic, the government is responsible to represent what most people want (the majority). The U.S. government also tries to protect the rights of people who aren't in the majority (minorities).

➤ **Political Parties**

Political parties are important in a democracy and in a republic. During elections, these parties allow voters to choose from two or more candidates, whose views of government can be similar or very different. After an election, the political party that doesn't have a majority in government can share openly about disagreements with what the members of the other party in the government are doing. In this way, all voices are likely to be heard and not silenced.

➤ **Popular Consent**

This is the idea that government must draw its powers from the consent of the governed. The governed (people in the U.S.) show that they consent (agree) to putting their leaders in power by voting for them. Voting is powerful!

Throughout history, democracies and republics were uncommon. In order to succeed, they must have certain qualities. Since the people influence government, they need to be participating. People have to be willing to vote in elections, serve on juries, and hold government office. People can't make good decisions about government if they don't know about the issues and current events. Therefore, education is the key to a successful democracy. People also need to know their rights and responsibilities as citizens of a democracy, so that they can vote for leaders who will protect their rights once they are elected.

Analysis

1. Match the definition with the vocabulary word. Write the number of the correct answer on the line.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| _____ A. republic | 1. government ruler is part of a royal family that has ruled the state for generations |
| _____ B. dictatorship | 2. government controlled by the people directly |
| _____ C. monarchy | 3. a small group runs the government |
| _____ D. oligarchy | 4. people elect leaders to represent them in the government |
| _____ E. democracy | 5. a single person or small group with a single leader has total control |
| _____ F. anarchy | 6. No government at all, usually violent and chaotic |

2. In the table on the next page, decide if each word refers to an economic system or a form of government. Place a check in the correct column. If the system applies to both the government and the economy, then check both columns.

	Economic system	Gov. system		Economic system	Gov. system
a. monarchy			f. command economy		
b. dictatorship			g. mixed-market		
c. capitalism			h. democracy		
d. oligarchy			i. communism		
e. socialism			j. republic		

3. Research three countries online. If you do not have Internet access, use your school or public library. You may choose any countries you would like. In the space below, explain what indicators you see that would make these countries seem like a democracy or republic. A good source for this could be the CIA website <https://www.cia.gov/index.html> in the World Fact Book section.

Country	Indicators
a.	
b.	
c.	



End of Lesson 3