

Foundations of Government

1) Exploring How a Gov't affects You:

Government is a system in which leaders use power to make and enforce laws that affect the people under its control. People create governments for many reasons. An effective government allows citizens to plan for the future, get an education, raise a family, and live orderly lives. Governments provide leadership, order, security, and defense. They also provide public services, economic help, and economic security. To fulfill these purposes, gov'ts make rules that everyone must follow—and they have the authority to punish those who do not follow them. Think about how the government affects your daily life—from the time you wake up until the time you go to sleep. For example, the water you brushed your teeth with is purified according to standards required by the gov't.

Directions: List FIVE examples of gov't involvement in your life and then categorize them according to the purposes of government listed above.

2) According to Lincoln:

Abraham Lincoln said the purpose of government is to provide people with what they need but cannot provide for themselves individually.

Directions: Do you agree or disagree with Lincoln's view of the proper role of government? Explain your answer.

3) Systems of Government:

All governments reflect their society's history and culture. All societies must organize their Gov'ts to carry out important functions. Political scientists classify governments according to how democratic they are and how power is divided between the larger society (like a country) and its smaller parts (like cities, counties, states, or provinces). Unitary System

A **Unitary system** of government gives all key powers to the central government. This does not mean that only one level of gov't exists. It means the powers that states, or local gov'ts that have given to them by the central government. Japan, France, and Bolivia are examples of present-day unitary gov'ts. Centralized power can be an advantage. However, there is less power given to local governments, which can be a disadvantage.

When the United States first became independent from Great Britain, it formed a confederacy. A **Confederate system** is a loose union of independent and sovereign states. The new nation had many struggles under their constitution, which was called the Articles of Confederation. As a result, the early leaders decided to create a new form of government that gave more power to the national government. The Constitution gave the national government limited and specific powers. All other powers were left to the states. Today, few countries are confederacies. The Asian nation called the Federated States of Micronesia is one example. It has a very weak central government and four independent states that have the most authority, especially over their budgets. This weak central power was a disadvantage of this system. An advantage was the power it gave to the states.

A **Federal system** of government divides the powers of government between the national and state or provincial government. Each level of government has sovereignty in some areas. The United States developed a federal system when it wrote its Constitution. Many nations are run using a federal system, including Brazil. On a smaller scale, individual states in the United States may have their own structure of gov't. Some states are unitary and make almost all important decisions for the whole state. In other states, power is shared with cities or counties. For example, Maryland gives its counties much more authority to make their own decisions than most states.

Directions: Create a graphic organizer to list, describe and give the advantages and disadvantages for the 3 different systems of governments.

System of Government	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
----------------------	-------------	------------	---------------

4) **Major Types of Government:**

Over the centuries, people have organized or classified their governments in many different ways. One way is based on how power and benefits are assigned. Who governs? Who or what gives the gov't its power? Who benefits from government? Imagine a line with one end labeled authoritarian and the other end labeled democratic. Governments that give people economic, social, and political freedoms are democratic. A **Democracy** is a system of government in which rule is by the people, either directly or through representatives. In fact, the democratic system depends on citizen participation. Participation is more than just a right—it is a duty. Citizen participation may take many forms. Some of these forms include becoming informed, debating issues, voting in elections, attending community meetings, membership in private volunteer groups, or serving in the military. Participation also includes paying taxes, serving on a jury, running for office, and even protesting. Effective citizen participation builds a stronger democracy. Governments that control all aspects of citizens' economic, political, and social lives are authoritarian.

In countries with **Authoritarian gov'ts**, the leadership controls every part of citizens' economic and social lives. These are sometimes referred to as totalitarian states because the government has total control. Adolf Hitler in Nazi Germany and Joseph Stalin in Soviet Russia tried to control every aspect of civilian life, not just government institutions (such as schools, courts, and public services). Power was in the hands of one or a few people, and citizens were not allowed to oppose the government. Sometimes, authoritarian governments appear to have democratic features. For example, they may hold elections. However, if only one candidate runs for office, or opponents of the current leaders are kept from running, the elections are not honest. Some authoritarian leaders have even been elected in a democratic election, but once they took office they seized power and took total control.

In authoritarian nations, there are few, if any, political freedoms. Citizens are often denied the freedom of speech and the freedom of assembly (the right of citizens to gather). The media—like newspapers, tv stations, and radio stations—are typically owned and controlled by the gov't. There are few restrictions on the power of government, so it is difficult to contain corruption. Authoritarian governments use ruthless force or the threat of force to maintain order. Often, people in minority groups are oppressed. For example, from 1947 through 1989, Romania had a brutal authoritarian government. Many hardships were caused by a bad economy. Food and electricity were rationed. The government had a secret police force that made neighbors and families spy on each other. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of citizens were tortured or killed by their government for political, economic, or unknown reasons. Minority groups such as the Roma and ethnic Hungarians were treated even worse than others. In 1989 protesters rose up and executed their dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu. This began a slow but steady move toward democracy.

Authoritarian governments can differ according to how many people have power. In a **Dictatorship**, power is in the hands of one person. The dictator has total control. Romania's Ceausescu and Cambodia's Pol Pot were dictators. An authoritarian government that gives power to a few people or one political party is called an **Oligarchy**. Oligarchs get their power from their wealth, social position, military power, or a combination of these factors. Examples include Vietnam and the Soviet Union under communism.

Monarchy is another form of government in which one person has great power. A king, queen, or emperor inherits the throne and heads the state. This form of government started in ancient times when rulers were considered sacred or chosen by a god. Monarchs who maintained power through intimidation or military force are sometimes known as autocrats. Some monarchies are not authoritarian. In some cases, a monarch's power has been limited by tradition or law. All countries' governments can be classified as somewhere between democratic and authoritarian.

Directions: If the United States became an Authoritarian type gov't, Explain 4 things in our lives that would change or be different. Also, How are Dictatorships different from Oligarchies?

5) People create governments for many reasons. Governments provide leadership, order, security, and defense. They also provide public services, economic help, and economic security.

Directions: Write a persuasive paragraph to convince a friend or relative why government is necessary. Think about: Do you believe governments exist to carry out God's will or the Peoples will? Do you believe governments exist to provide security and order for their people? What can or do governments provide their citizens? Explain your ideas thoroughly!!!!!!!