

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Per: \_\_\_\_\_ Log #: \_\_\_\_\_

## Government Notes

### What is Government?

Government is the system that sets up and enforces a society's laws and institutions. Its main purposes are to protect citizens and provide services. Some governments are controlled by a few people, some are controlled by many.

### Types of Government:

- ⊕ Unless a country is in a state of chaos or anarchy, it is most likely run by a government.
- ⊕ All governments are run a little bit differently and have different rights, laws, and consequences.
- ⊕ However, all governments have some things in common. Due to certain similarities, we can put all governments into one of four categories.

### Different Types

- ⊕ The types of government are:

A) Democracy

B) Dictatorship

C) Monarchy

D) Theocracy

However, there are other types of government that are often a combination of the types above.

### Types of Democracy

- ⊕ Comes from a Greek word meaning "demos" = people "kratos" meaning= power
- ⊕ Democracy = Rule by the people.
- ⊕ Two types of democracy.
  - ⊕ Direct Democracy – citizens rule directly.
  - ⊕ Representative Democracy-citizens rule through representatives

## Direct Democracy

### What is a Direct Democracy?

- ✦ A direct democracy is a government in which all citizens have equal power in decision making.
- ✦ All citizens have the right to vote on every single issue.
- ✦ The government is controlled by everyone equally.

### Direct Democracy Strengths:

- ✦ Every citizen has equal power in matters of government. Every citizen is involved in the decision making.
- ✦ Since all citizens are involved in decision making, there is a broad base of support and loyalty from the people.
- ✦ Individual liberties are protected by all.

### Direct Democracy Weaknesses:

- ✦ A direct democracy only works when a small number of people are involved. The ability to gather citizens in one place is necessary, so that everyone can debate and discuss. This makes a direct democracy difficult for very populous countries.
- ✦ Decision making involving all citizens is time consuming. All citizens give in-put, debate, discuss, etc. And therefore, it takes a lot of time to make laws or decisions.

### Current Direct Democracies:

- ✦ Switzerland is the strongest example of a modern direct democracy. In the past 120 years, more than 240 laws have been put before the people for a vote.
- ✦ With the invention of better technology, such as the internet, more and more people believe that a direct democracy could be possible in the United States, even though we have such a large population.

## Representative Democracy

### What is a Representative Democracy?

- ⊕ A representative democracy is a government in which people elect representatives who hold the decision making power, and who are limited in their power by a constitution.

### Representative Democracy Strengths:

- ⊕ Citizens are involved in decision making through their representatives, lobbying, and voting.
- ⊕ Representatives are aware their job depends on meeting the needs of their constituents.
- ⊕ Most if not all elements of the population are represented.
- ⊕ Generally, reps are educated, more-capable citizens who can devote the time needed to solve complex problems.

### Representative Democracy Weaknesses:

- ⊕ Decision making is time consuming.
- ⊕ Desire of representatives to please everyone may cripple the system.
- ⊕ Representatives may not always agree with those they represent.
- ⊕ Lack of involved citizenry may allow special interest groups to influence or dominate representatives.

### Current Representative Democracies:

- ⊕ The United States
- ⊕ Mexico
- ⊕ Germany
- ⊕ Belgium
- ⊕ South Africa
- ⊕ The Philippines

## Absolute Monarchy

### Types of Monarchies:

- ⊕ A monarchy is a government that is ruled by one head of state (called a king, or chief, or emperor, or pharaoh), who usually reigns for life, and then passes down this reign to his/her offspring.
- ⊕ There are two types of Monarchies:
  - ⊕ Absolute Monarchy
  - ⊕ Constitutional Monarchy

### What is an Absolute Monarchy?

- ⊕ An absolute monarchy is one in which the government is completely controlled by the head of state, usually a king or chief. It is often considered a dictatorship because one person has absolute power.

### Absolute Monarchy – Strengths & Weaknesses

- ⊕ The strengths and weaknesses of an absolute monarchy are very similar to a dictatorship, because the head of state (a king, queen, chief, etc.) has total and absolute control. Usually this absolute power is abused.

### Current Absolute Monarchies:

- ⊕ Brunei
- ⊕ Oman
- ⊕ Qatar
- ⊕ Saudi Arabia
- ⊕ United Arab Emirates

## Constitutional Monarchy

### What is a Constitutional Monarchy?

- ⊕ A constitutional monarchy is one in which the Head of State (usually a King) has very limited powers, which are upheld by a constitution, and which is supported by representatives in a parliament, who are voted upon by the people.
- ⊕ The Prime Minister, voted on by the people, is the Head of Government.

### Constitutional Monarchy – Strengths:

- ⊕ People are united under one head of state, such as a king or queen or chief. However, the liberties of the people are still kept safe under a constitution and representatives who are voted upon by the people.
- ⊕ Citizens are involved in decision making, indirectly, by voting for their representatives or by lobbying.
- ⊕ Representatives are aware that keeping their job hinges upon pleasing their constituency.
- ⊕ Reps are usually more educated, and good at problem solving and decision making.

### Constitutional Monarchy – Weaknesses:

- ⊕ Decision making takes more time, as reps. must debate and discuss issues.
- ⊕ Representatives might not always agree with their constituency.
- ⊕ If citizens are not involved, special interest groups can influence decision making.
- ⊕ Even though powers are limited to the monarch, they can make bad decisions or abuse these powers.

### Famous Constitutional Monarchies:

- ⊕ Queen Elizabeth II – Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, etc. (currently in power)
- ⊕ Emperor Akihito – Japan (currently in power)
- ⊕ Napoleon Bonaparte – France (although he had wide powers and often abused the powers he did not have.)

## Dictatorship

### What is a Dictatorship?

- ⊕ A dictatorship is a type of government where only one person rules. The ruler has total control and is often tyrannical in his/her rule.
- ⊕ Often times dictators take over a country in what is called a “coup d’etat” (overthrow of the previous government).

### Dictatorship – Strengths

- ⊕ The positives of a dictatorship is that people may be united in their loyalty to a dictator since there is not competition for trust and affection.
- ⊕ In an emergency, a dictator can move quickly and take action. No time is lost in debate, discussion, or voting.

### Dictatorship – Weaknesses

- ⊕ People are given little or no individual liberty. Civil rights are trampled on by dictators.
- ⊕ A dictator’s policies suit his/her own needs. Needs of the people are usually neglected.
- ⊕ Decision making can be flawed, wrong, dangerous, and not supported by the people.
- ⊕ Research has found that more people have been killed under a dictatorship than any other type of government.

### Famous Dictators:

- ⊕ Saddam Hussein – Iraq
- ⊕ Fidel Castro - Cuba (currently in power)
- ⊕ Kim Jung Un - N. Korea (currently in power)
- ⊕ Adolf Hitler - Germany/Europe
- ⊕ Genghis Khan – Mongolia
- ⊕ Pol Pot - Cambodia

## Theocracy

### What is a theocracy?

- ✦ The word theocracy comes from the Greek word theokratia meaning “Rule by God”.
- ✦ In theocracy, religious leaders rule the country. They are seen as having divine power and retain authority through religious beliefs.

### Theocracy Strengths:

- ✦ A shared religion brings about unity
- ✦ It's easier to control the citizens since the ruler is believed to be given their power by god.
- ✦ Everyone has the same religious background (no discrimination)
- ✦ The laws are clear and defined

### Theocracy Weaknesses:

- ✦ No freedom of religion (and often no free speech as well)
- ✦ Neglects individual needs
- ✦ Can be too controlling
- ✦ Hard to make changes
- ✦ Since one religion is proclaimed to be official, other religions are typically discouraged or even persecuted.

### Current Theocracies

- ✦ Iran
- ✦ Pakistan
- ✦ Saudi Arabia\*
- ✦ Vatican City