

Name: _____

Date: _____

Types of Governments: Who Makes the Rules?

Governments help organize a country, create laws, and make important decisions. Around the world, different types of governments are used to rule and lead people. Some give lots of power to citizens, while others give nearly all the power to one person or a small group. Let's explore eight different systems: direct democracy, constitutional monarchy, absolute monarchy, republic, dictatorship, oligarchy, theocracy, and anarchy.



Direct Democracy

In a **direct democracy**, all citizens take part in making decisions. Instead of electing leaders to make laws for them, people vote directly on important issues. Everyone's voice matters equally. This kind of government works best in smaller communities, where it's possible for all citizens to meet and vote. Citizens enjoy full rights and freedoms, including the right to speak, protest, and share their opinions. The biggest strength of direct democracy is that it gives people full control over decisions. However, it can be slow and difficult to manage in large countries with millions of people. **Ancient Athens** is a famous example of direct democracy, and some small towns or local communities today still use this system for decisions.

Constitutional Monarchy

A **constitutional monarchy** is a system where a king or queen is the official head of state, but their powers are limited by a constitution. The real decisions are made by elected officials, such as a prime minister and parliament. In this system, the monarch mostly has ceremonial duties, while laws are passed by elected representatives. People in a constitutional monarchy enjoy many freedoms, similar to a democracy, and can vote in elections. This system blends tradition with modern democratic rule. It provides stable leadership and a strong connection to a country's history, but critics argue that having a royal family that isn't elected may still feel unfair. **Canada, the United Kingdom, and Sweden** are all constitutional monarchies.

Absolute Monarchy

An **absolute monarchy** is very different. In this system, a king or queen has total control over the country. They make the laws, enforce them, and often rule for life. The people do not vote for their leaders, and power is passed down through family generations. In an absolute monarchy, citizens may have few or no rights. The monarch decides what is allowed and can punish people who speak out. While this type of government can lead to quick decisions and long-term stability, it often limits freedom and can lead to unfair treatment. **Saudi Arabia** is one of the best-known modern examples of an absolute monarchy.

Republic

A **republic** is a government where the people choose their leaders through elections. These leaders, often called representatives, are responsible for making decisions and passing laws. A president is usually the head of state, not a king or queen. In a republic, power comes from the people, and everyone is meant to be equal under the law. Citizens usually have strong rights and freedoms, such as freedom of speech and religion. Republics allow for peaceful changes in leadership through elections. However, not all republics work perfectly. Sometimes leaders become corrupt, or unfair laws are passed. Still, republics aim to balance power and give people a voice. Countries like the **United States**, **France**, and **India** are republics.

Dictatorship

In a **dictatorship**, one person has complete control over the government. This leader, called a dictator, usually gains power by force or fear and stays in charge for a long time. The people do not get to vote in fair elections, and anyone who speaks out can be punished. In a dictatorship, there are very few rights for citizens. The government often controls the media, limits free speech, and uses the police or military to keep control. While dictatorships can act quickly in emergencies, they are often unfair and can lead to abuse of power. People living in a dictatorship may feel scared to share their opinions. Modern examples include **North Korea** and **Belarus**.

Oligarchy

An oligarchy is ruled by a small group of powerful people. These leaders might be wealthy businesspeople, military officials, or members of the same political party. In an oligarchy, regular citizens don't have much say in government decisions. The group in power often makes choices that benefit themselves instead of the whole population. Although decisions can be made quickly in an oligarchy, it usually creates unfair systems where only a few have control. **Ancient Sparta** was an oligarchy led by military leaders, and some people believe modern **Russia** and **China** show signs of oligarchic systems today.

Theocracy

In a theocracy, religious leaders run the government, and laws are based on religious beliefs. Leaders are usually chosen by a council or group within the religion, not through public elections. In some theocracies, everyone must follow the same religion, and people who believe differently may have fewer rights. A theocracy can unite people who share strong beliefs, but it often limits personal freedom and makes life difficult for those who follow different religions. For example, **Iran** is a theocracy that bases its laws on Islamic beliefs. **Vatican City** is another example, where the Pope serves as both the religious and political leader.

Anarchy

Anarchy is not a government system at all; it's the absence of government. In a state of anarchy, there are no leaders, no laws, and no formal rules. Everyone is free to do what they want, but there's also no system in place to protect people or solve problems. Anarchy can happen temporarily during revolutions, wars, or after a government collapses. While some people believe anarchy means total freedom, it can also be dangerous and chaotic. Without police, courts, or laws, conflict and violence can increase. One peaceful example is **Freetown Christiania**, a small community in **Copenhagen, Denmark**, where people live with very few formal rules. On the other hand, **Somalia** experienced harmful anarchy during the 1990s when its government collapsed.

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Types of Governments: Who Makes the Rules

1. What are some strengths of a constitutional monarchy? What are some weaknesses?

2. Which system of government do you think is most fair? Why?

3. How would your daily life change under a different system?

3. Choose three systems of government and describe who benefits under each system? How do they benefit?

Government Cards

Government Card – Constitutional Monarchy

Objective

Make the longest paper chain possible using the supplies given to you by your teacher (one piece of paper, one pair of scissors, one glue stick).

Rules

- The oldest person in your group is your monarch. The monarch must approve all decisions.
- As a group, elect two representatives among the remaining players to make decisions on the group's behalf. The monarch may not cast a vote.
- Your two elected representatives must work together to create a plan to make the longest paper chain possible. Some decisions you may need to consider are:
 - Who will do the cutting?
 - Who will do the gluing?
 - What size (width and length) will your links be?
- The elected representatives will present their plan to the monarch for approval. If approved, the monarch must bring the plan to your teacher to get the supplies.

Government Card - Republic

Objective

Make the longest paper chain possible using the supplies given to you by your teacher (one piece of paper, one pair of scissors, one glue stick).

Rules

- As a group, elect two representatives to make decisions on the group's behalf.
- Your two elected representatives must work together to create a plan to make the longest paper chain possible. Some decisions you may need to consider are:
 - Who will do the cutting?
 - Who will do the gluing?
 - What size (width and length) will your links be?
- The elected representatives must bring the plan to the teacher in order to get your supplies.

Government Cards

Government Card - Anarchy

Objective

Make the longest paper chain possible using the supplies given to you by your teacher (one piece of paper, one pair of scissors, one glue stick).

Rules

- Nobody in your group is allowed to speak.
- Bring this card to your teacher to get your supplies.

Government Card - Dictatorship

Objective

Make the longest paper chain possible using the supplies given to you by your teacher (one piece of paper, one pair of scissors, one glue stick).

Rules

- The person in your group who has had the most recent birthday is the dictator.
- The dictator has full control over every aspect of how decisions will be made and who will do each job.
- The dictator must bring this card to your teacher to get your supplies.

Government Card - Direct Democracy

Objective

Make the longest paper chain possible using the supplies given to you by your teacher (one piece of paper, one pair of scissors, one glue stick).

Rules

- Each member of your group must agree to all decisions.
- As a group, decide on a plan to use the supplies to create the longest paper chain possible.
- Some decisions you may need to consider are:
 - Who will do the cutting?
 - Who will do the gluing?
 - What size (width and length) will your links be?
- Decide on your plan, then all group members must bring the plan to your teacher to get the supplies.

Coup Cards

Government Card – Constitutional Monarchy

Objective

Be the first group to make a paper chain with exactly 100 links.

Rules

- The oldest person in your group is your monarch. The monarch must approve all decisions.
- As a group, elect two representatives among the remaining players to make decisions on the group's behalf. The monarch may not cast a vote.
- Your two elected representatives must work together to decide on a plan to change your chain from the longest to the first with exactly 100 links.
- You may request up to one more piece of paper, up to one more pair of scissors, and up to one more glue stick.
- The elected representatives will present their plan to the monarch for approval. If approved, the monarch must bring the plan to your teacher to get the new supplies (if requested).

Government Card - Republic

Objective

Be the first group to make a paper chain with exactly 100 links.

Rules

- As a group, elect two representatives to make decisions on the group's behalf.
- Your two elected representatives must work together to decide on a plan to change your chain from the longest to the first with exactly 100 links.
- You may request up to one more piece of paper, up to one more pair of scissors, and up to one more glue stick.
- The elected representatives must bring the plan to your teacher to get the new supplies (if requested).

Coup Cards

Government Card - Anarchy

Objective

Be the first group to make a paper chain with exactly 100 links.

Rules

- Nobody in your group is allowed to speak.
- You may request up to one more piece of paper, up to one more pair of scissors, and up to one more glue stick.
- If you would like more supplies to help you in your challenge, bring this card to your teacher with your request.

Government Card - Dictatorship

Objective

Be the first group to make a paper chain with exactly 100 links.

Rules

- The person in your group who has had the most recent birthday is the dictator.
- The dictator has full control over every aspect of how decisions will be made and who will do each job.
- You may request up to one more piece of paper, up to one more pair of scissors, and up to one more glue stick.
- If you would like more supplies to help you in your challenge, the dictator may bring this card to your teacher with your request.

Government Card - Direct Democracy

Objective

Be the first group to make a paper chain with exactly 100 links.

Rules

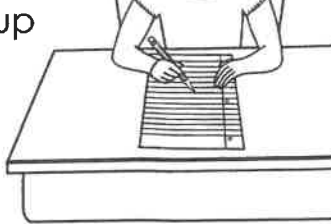
- Each member of your group must agree to all decisions.
- As a group, decide on a plan to change your chain from the longest to the first with exactly 100 links.
- You may request up to one more piece of paper, up to one more pair of scissors, and up to one more glue stick.
- Decide on a new plan, then all group members must bring the plan to your teacher to get the supplies (if requested).

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Government Game Reflection

Write a paragraph reflecting on the government game. You do not need to answer every question below, but use these to guide your reflection.

- How did your government system(s) affect the way your group made decisions?
 - Did everyone get a say, or did one person make all the decisions?
 - What did you notice about who had power in your group?
 - Who made the final decision and how was that decided?
 - Was your government system fair to everyone in your group? Why or why not?
 - Which government system felt easiest to work with? Why?
 - Which system was the most challenging to work under? What made it hard?
 - Did your group's performance change when the government system changed mid-game? Why or why not?
 - How do you think these government styles affect real people in real countries?
 - What did you learn about leadership and cooperation by playing the game?
 - If you could change one rule about the government system you played under, what would it be and why?
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- A simple line drawing of a person's hands and arms. The person is sitting at a desk, holding a pen in their right hand and writing on a notepad. The notepad has horizontal lines. The desk is represented by a simple horizontal line.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. On the right edge, there are two faint circular marks, possibly from hole punches. The paper appears to be part of a notebook or a set of loose-leaf papers.