

Political Systems

Name: _____

<p>Autocracy In an autocracy, all power is held by one person. That person can do anything they want. Any decision the autocrat (the ruler) makes has the power of law and to resist those decisions is illegal. The ruler can have many titles: emperor, dictator, tyrant, etc. Some monarchies are examples of autocracy, though most are not. For something to be true autocracy, no one other than the ruler has any power over government. However, many governments where one person is extremely powerful are called autocracies, even if that power is not actually 100% in the hands of one person.</p> <p>Autocracies are relatively common in ancient times and also in the early modern era. The City-State of Sparta, the Roman Empire, Han Dynasty China, Imperial Japan, 17th century France, Nazi Germany, and present-day North Korea are all examples of Autocracy.</p>	<p>How does this system work?</p> <hr/> <p>How much power do people who are not in the government have?</p>
<p>Oligarchy In an oligarchy, a small group holds all the power. They may be in that position because of their wealth, nobility, military position, religious status, corporate status, or a combination of any. Typically, oligarchies are very tyrannical with the “oligarchs” attempting to keep their power secure against the rest of the society. Power generally stays within families in an oligarchy and shake-ups in who holds power typically only occur during a revolt.</p> <p>Oligarchies have been common throughout human history. In ancient times, many societies were ruled by groups of noble families. Feudal societies are often also examples of oligarchies, with the landed lords ruling over peasants. Finally, in modern times, many states become oligarchies when the military takes over, as the result of a revolution, or because of government corruption allowing wealthy individuals to dominate politics.</p>	<p>How does this system work?</p> <hr/> <p>How much power do people who are not in the government have?</p>
<p>Representative Democracy In a representative democracy, the people elect officials to represent them in a congress or parliament. In a representative democracy, the people do not often have a say in a particular government decision. Instead, the people must select representatives that they believe will make the decisions the voter desires.</p>	<p>How does this system work?</p>

<p>Most European and Asian countries in the modern world are representative democracies or have some element of representative democracy. The United States, United Kingdom, Japan, and Germany are all currently representative democracies.</p>	<p>How much power do people who are not in the government have?</p>
<p>Direct Democracy In a direct democracy, the power is in the hands of the people. All decisions of the government, or at least most, are sent to the people to be decided upon. Generally each citizen is required to cast their vote for any decision. Because of this, direct democracies can be quite slow to come to decisions as gathering and counting votes takes considerable time.</p> <p>Direct democracies are very uncommon in the modern world, though many governments include some elements of direct democracies (ever seen the signs that read “Vote Yes on R-9203?”). Only a few direct democracies are known to have existed. Ancient Athens is the most prominent example. Modern Switzerland also has many traits similar to a direct democracy and some of its cantons (kind of like a state/province) are true direct democracies.</p>	<p>How does this system work?</p> <p>How much power do people who are not in the government have?</p>
<p>Anarchy In an anarchy, no one has to listen to any decision unless they have entered into a contract to do so. Each person is sovereign over themselves. Anarchy can be defined as a lack of a traditional government. No one can make decisions for the entire country. Instead, people are free to do as they may.</p> <p>It is difficult to discuss the nature of anarchies because there are very, very few examples in history. Most are short lived and the most common are ones that arise when an old system of government has fallen (the French Revolution is one such example).</p> <p>Freetown Christiania in Denmark is an example of a limited anarchy that exists under another state. Perhaps the only true anarchy in history is the “Free Territory” which existed from 1918-1921 in what is now the Ukraine.</p>	<p>How does this system work?</p> <p>How much power do people who are not in the government have?</p>