

American Government

CHAPTER 1

Principles of Government



SECTION 1 Government and the State

SECTION 2 Forms of Government

SECTION 3 Basic Concepts of Democracy

Government and the State

- How is government defined?
- What are the basic powers that every government holds?
- What are the four defining characteristics of the state?
- How have we attempted to explain the origin of the state?
- What is the purpose of government in the United States and other countries?



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What Is Government?

Government is the institution through which a society makes and enforces its public policies.



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The State can be defined as having these four characteristics:

- **POPULATION** – A state must have people, the number of which does not directly relate to its existence.





2. TERRITORY – A state must be comprised of land - territory with known and recognized boundaries.



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3. SOVEREIGNTY – Every state is sovereign. It has supreme and absolute power with in its own territory and decides its own foreign and domestic policies.



4. GOVERNMENT – Every state has a government – that is, it is politically organized.



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The Force Theory

- **The force theory states that one person or a small group took control of an area and forced all within it to submit to that person's or group's rule.**



The Evolutionary Theory

- **The evolutionary theory argues that the state evolved naturally out of the early family.**



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The Divine Right Theory

- The theory of divine right holds that God created the state and that God gives those of royal birth a “divine right” to rule.





The Social Contract Theory

- **The social contract theory argues that the state arose out of a voluntary act of free people.**



The Purpose of Government

The main purposes of government are described in the Preamble of the Constitution of the United States:

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”



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Section 1 Review

1. A government is

(a) the institution through which a society makes and enforces its public policies.

(b) a collection of people.

(c) always democratic.

(d) the organization representing farms and industries.



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2. A state has the following four characteristics:

(a) population, territory, sovereignty, and government.

(b) sovereignty, a perfect union, welfare, and territory.

(c) people, places, force, and divine right.

(d) justice, defense, liberty, and domestic tranquility.



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Classifying Governments

Governments can be classified by three different standards:

- (1) Who can participate in the governing process.**
- (2) The geographic distribution of the governmental power within the state.**
- (3) The relationship between the legislative (lawmaking) and the executive (law-executing) branches of the government.**



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Democracy



- In a democracy, supreme political authority rests with the people.
- A direct democracy exists where the will of the people is translated into law directly by the people themselves.



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Democracy

- In an indirect democracy, a small group of persons, chosen by the people to act as their representatives, expresses the popular will.



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Classification by Who Can Participate (continued)



Dictatorship



- A dictatorship exists where those who rule cannot be held responsible to the will of the people.
- An **autocracy** is a government in which a single person holds unlimited political power.



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Dictatorship

- An **oligarchy** is a government in which the power to rule is held by a small, usually self-appointed elite.



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Unitary Government

- A **unitary government** has all powers held by a single, central agency.



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Confederate Government

- A **confederation** is an alliance of independent states.



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Classification by Geographic Distribution of Power (continued)

Federal Government

- A **federal government** is one in which the powers of government are divided between a central government and several local governments.
- An authority superior to both the central and local governments makes this **division of power** on a geographic basis.



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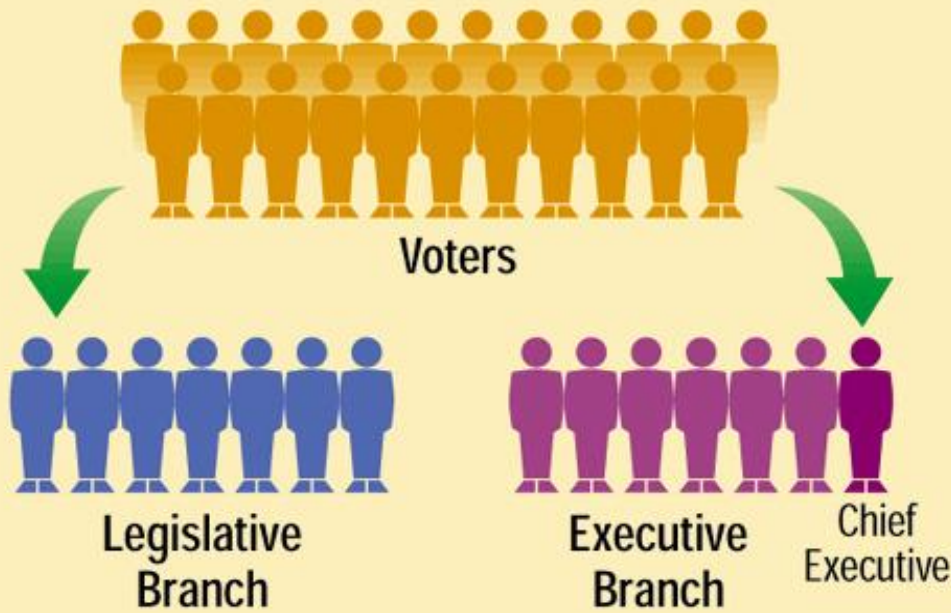
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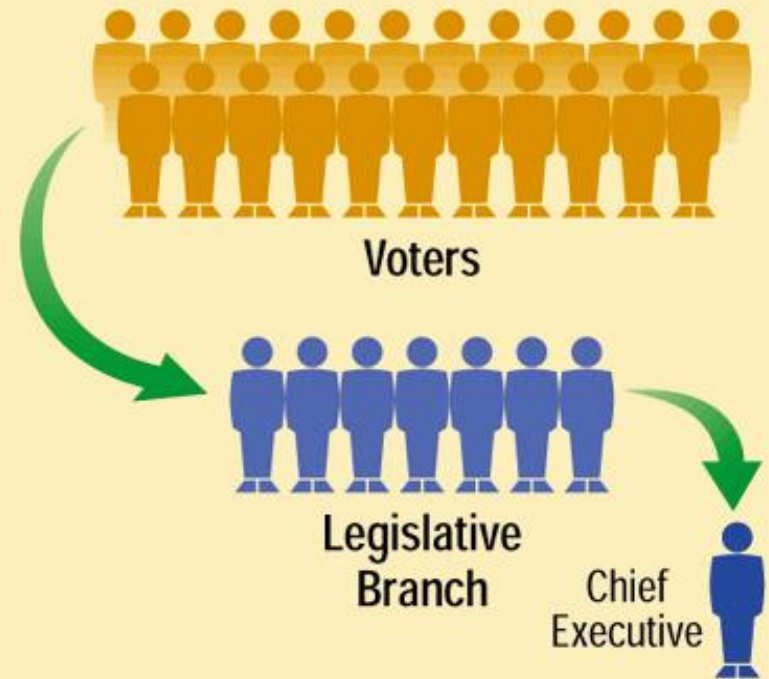
Classification by the Relationship Between Legislative and Executive Branches

Presidential and Parliamentary Governments

The Presidential Relationship Voters elect the Legislature and the Chief Executive who is part of the Executive Branch. The legislature and executive are independent and coequal.



The Parliamentary Relationship Voters elect the Legislature. The Chief Executive is drawn from the Legislature.










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Forms of Government

Forms of Government

Country	Where is the power?		What is the relationship between the legislative and executive branches?		Who can participate?	
	Unitary	Federal	Parliamentary	Presidential	Democracy	Dictatorship
 Botswana	✓		✓		✓	
 Brazil		✓		✓	✓	
 Costa Rica	✓		✓		✓	
 Cuba	✓		✓			✓
 France	✓			✓	✓	
 India		✓	✓		✓	
 Syria	✓			✓		✓
 United States		✓		✓	✓	



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Section 2 Review

1. In a democracy,
 - (a) independent states form an alliance.
 - (b) supreme political authority rests with the people.
 - (c) those who rule cannot be held responsible to the will of the people.
 - (d) the rule by a few, select individuals regulates the will of the people.



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Section 2 Review

2. The United States government has the following characteristics:

(a) confederate, parliamentary, and dictatorship.

(b) unitary, presidential, and democracy.

(c) federal, presidential, and democracy.

(d) unitary, parliamentary, and dictatorship.



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Foundations

The American concept of democracy rests on these basic notions:

- (1) A recognition of the fundamental worth and dignity of every person;**
- (2) A respect for the equality of all persons;**
- (3) A faith in majority rule and an insistence upon minority rights;**



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Foundations (continued) ²⁹

**The American concept of democracy
rests on these basic notions:**

- (4) An acceptance of the necessity of compromise; and**
- (5) An insistence upon the widest possible degree of individual freedom.**



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Democracy and the Free Enterprise System

- The **free enterprise system** is an economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of capital goods; investments that are determined by private decision rather than by state control; and determined in a free market.



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Democracy and the Free Enterprise System (continued)

- Decisions in a free enterprise system are determined by the **law of supply and demand**.
- An economy in which private enterprise exists in combination with a considerable amount of government regulation and promotion is called a **mixed economy**.



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- **Democracy demands that the people be widely informed about their government.**
- **Theoretically, the Internet makes knowledgeable participation in democratic process easier than ever before.**



- However, all data on the World Wide Web is not necessarily true, and the long-term effects of the Internet on democracy has yet to be determined.



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Section 3 Review

1. All of the following are basic notions found in the American concept of democracy EXCEPT
 - (a) a recognition of of the fundamental worth and dignity of every person.
 - (b) a respect for the equality of all persons.
 - (c) the rule of government by a single individual.
 - (d) an acceptance of the necessity of compromise.



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Section 3 Review

- 2. In a free enterprise system, the means of capital are owned**
- (a) by private and corporate entities.**
 - (b) by government agencies.**
 - (c) by only the agricultural sector.**
 - (d) equally by the collective citizenry.**



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