

Forms of Government



CLASSIC FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

	CHARACTERISTICS
Monarchy Example: Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ruled by a monarch, usually a king or a queen, who belongs to a royal family• Power is inherited• Absolute monarchs have unlimited power
Constitutional Monarchy Example: United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on the idea that there are limits to the rightful power of a government over its citizens• Power of the monarch is limited by law; the real power lies in another branch of government• May coexist with other forms of government, such as representative democracy
Dictatorship Example: North Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single dictator or a small group holds absolute authority and makes all decisions• Violence and force used to maintain rule
Authoritarian Regimes Example: North Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dictator holds ultimate authority• Government tightly controls all aspects of life—political, social, and economic• No formal or informal limits on government

FORM	CHARACTERISTICS
Oligarchy/ Aristocracy Example: ancient Greece (Sparta)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small group of powerful people make most government decisions for their own benefit• Membership in the ruling group may be based on wealth, family, or military power
Theocracy Example: Iran	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rulers claim to represent and be directed by a set of religious ideas• Laws are rooted in a particular religion or religious doctrine• Government power is unlimited
Direct Democracy Example: ancient Greece (Athens)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government by the people; citizens are the ultimate source of government authority• Citizens come together to discuss and pass laws and select leaders• Works best in small communities
Republic/ Representative Democracy Example: ancient Rome, United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government by the people; citizens are the ultimate source of government authority• Indirect form of democracy; citizens elect representatives to make government decisions on their behalf• Representatives elected for set terms





The Roman Republic

In 509 BC the Romans established a new form of government—the republic. The essence of the Roman Republic was the Senate, a body of 300 members who advised elected officials, controlled public finances, reviewed proposed laws, and handled all foreign relations.





POWER IN THREE SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENT

● Central government ■ States and regions ⇄ Flow of power



Unitary

Power is concentrated in the central government. Regional governments carry out decisions made by the central government.

Examples: United Kingdom, Japan



Federal

National, state, and regional governments share power. All levels have the power to make their own laws, elect officials, and create agencies.

Examples: United States, India



Confederal

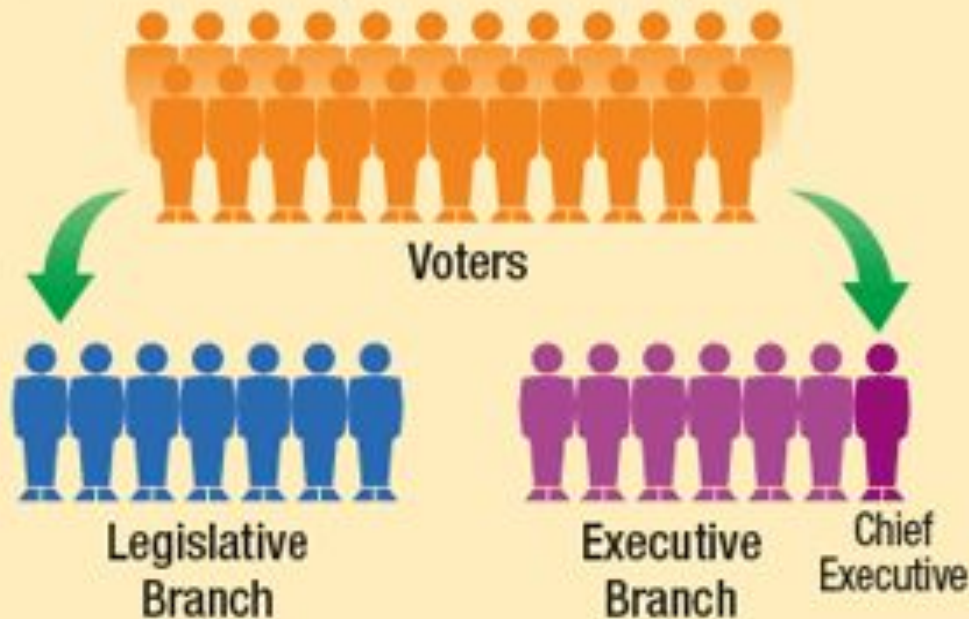
Independent states join together in a *confederation* and delegate limited powers to a central government. The central government only has powers given to it by the states.

Examples: United States under the Articles of Confederation, European Union

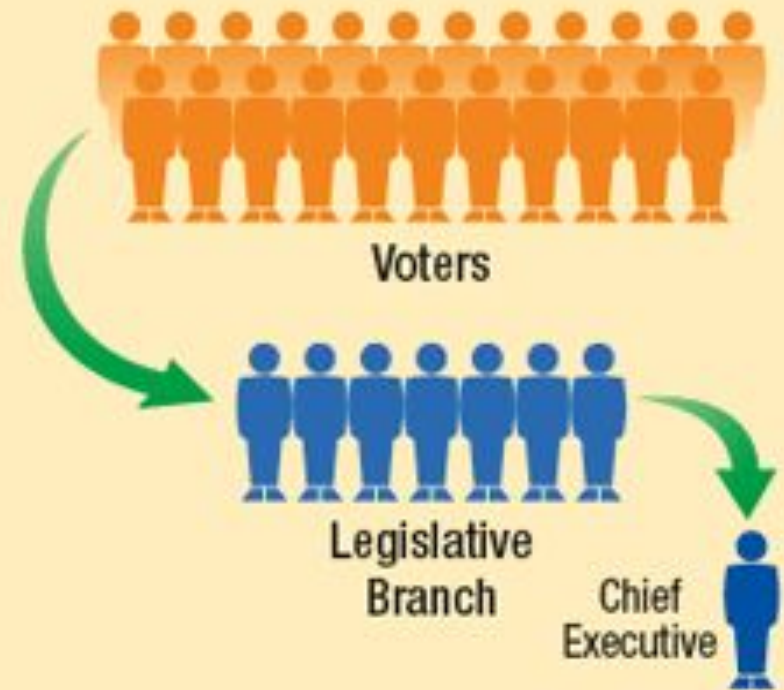


Presidential and Parliamentary Governments

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.





Presidential and Parliamentary Systems

Many of the world's presidential systems have been modeled on the U.S. system, while the world's parliamentary systems have taken the British system as a model. In July 2007, President George Bush welcomed a newly elected British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, on his first official visit to the United States.



Presidential

ADVANTAGES

- President is elected by the people for a fixed term and cannot be dismissed
- Separation of powers prevents abuses of authority
- Independent of other branches of government
- President is able to make decisions quickly and independently

DISADVANTAGES

- Difficult to remove an unsuitable president from office
- Separation of powers may lead to gridlock
- Branches of government may have different agendas
- Presidents may become too strong
- Many presidential systems have become authoritarian

Parliamentary

ADVANTAGES

- The legislative and executive branches are often united in purpose
- Prime minister directly accountable to parliament
- Easier to pass legislation

DISADVANTAGES

- Few checks and balances
- Prime minister selected by the legislative branch, not by the people
- Prime minister lacks independence

