

Types of Government

Governments today can be categorized as being one of two forms: authoritarian or democratic. These forms can be generally distinguished by the number of people who have access to power, and the extent to which individual rights are respected.

AUTOCRATIC

→ a single ruler or small group make all the decisions. Individual rights and freedoms are limited

→ leaders self-appointed

→ leaders cannot usually be replaced

→ citizens cannot question or speak out against leaders. Obedience is expected

→ leader has support of the military

→ quick decisions (no debate), organized, stable, and controlled

Examples

1) **Monarchy** - king, queen run with small group of advisors; power is inherited and passed down the royal family line

2) **Dictatorship / Totalitarian** - extreme form; system in which leader/party has total control over nearly every aspect of people's public and private lives
eg. Hitler (Germany)

3) **Theocracy** – rule by a few religious individuals. Religious beliefs and documents will greatly influence how the government runs the country

4) **Aristocracy** – a form of government ruled by the privileged class (birth, wealth, class)

DEMOCRATIC

→ controlled by the people. people have numerous rights and freedoms

→ leaders are elected by citizens

→ leaders terms is limited

→ citizens can question and speak out

→ government is answerable to the people

→ decision making takes time (debates and peoples interests are considered)

Examples

1) **Constitutional Monarchy** - the power of the monarch is limited by constitution
eg. Canada, Britain

2) **Parliamentary** - leader=prime minister; people vote; elected member of legislature
eg. Canada

3) **Republic** - leader=president; elected separately
eg. United States