SOCIAL STUDIES NOTES

FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

Who Rules?



Government is an organization with power to rule over a community. When a country does not have a government in place this is called **anarchy**. There are many forms of government around the world, and four of them are **Democracy**, **Monarchy**, **Dictatorship**, and **Republic**.

Democracy

- Has free elections and freedom of speech
- Freedom of Speech means that people may criticise a government without fear of punishment
- Power is shared among a number of bodies
  For example, cabinet leaders are responsible for specific government ministries and judges are responsible for administering the law.
- There are usually several **political parties** in a democratic country.
- The Bahamas is a democracy.

Dictatorship

- The OPPOSITE of a democracy.
- Country is ruled by one person, or a very small **clique**.
- The leader is called a dictator, and holds power over the people by force
- The leader is backed by the army.
- There is NO FREEDOM OF SPEECH OR MOVEMENT, and NO FREE ELECTIONS.
- Examples of dictatorships are: Cuba, China, and North Korea.

Monarchy

- Has a sovereign or monarch as leader (a king or a queen, an emperor or an empress)
- Power to rule is **inherited** which means it has been handed down through the royal or imperial family.
- Examples of monarchies are Thailand, United Kingdom, and Denmark.

Republic

- The leader (or head of state) is the President, who may or may not be elected by the people.
- The position of President is not inherited.
- Examples of republics are: South Africa, France, and The United States of America

Some countries may have a combination of the various forms of government.

Constitutional Monarchy

- A combination of a democracy and a monarchy.
- This democracy recognises a monarch as its ultimate head.
- This monarch usually has no real power within that country, and has a representative that carries out duties on his/her behalf.
- Examples of constitutional monarchies are: The Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica and Denmark.

There is no ideal form of government. Certainly, some forms are better than others, but all governments change with the time because conditions are constantly changing. What may be good for one country or community may not work for another.

Our Glossary

Anarchy- *a state of society without government or law*
Clique – *group that sets themselves apart from others*
Constitutional monarchy –*two types of government in one - a democracy, but with a monarch as Head of State*
Democracy – *when the government is elected by the people; government for the people & by the people*
Dictatorship - *The country is ruled by one person, or a very small group*
Inherits – *To receive something passed down from someone (mainly parents & grandparents)*
Monarchy – *A country ruled by a king or queen that inherited their position*
Political parties – *Groups that run in an election in order to form a government*
Republic - *the leader (or head of state) is the President who may or may not be elected by the people*

LIVEWORKSHEETS