

LINKS ACROSS THE WORLD

Quebec In Quebec, a province in Canada, many people are descendants of French settlers. So, they speak both French and English. Some residents want Quebec to become a separate nation. This has led to much political debate. Canada is a democracy, so residents of Quebec could vote on the issue. For now, Quebec has decided to remain part of Canada, but the argument continues.

In **communism**, the government owns all basic and non-basic industries. It provides all goods and services that people need. It also decides what is produced, how much workers will be paid, and how much everything will cost. Today, only a few of the world's nations practice communism. They include Cuba, China, and North Korea.

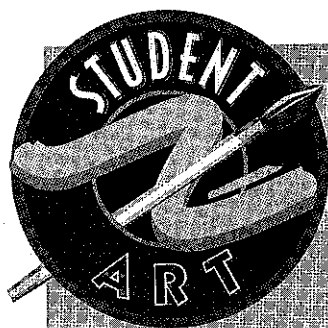
Hardly any nation has a "pure" economic system. For example, the United States has a capitalistic economy. However, state, local, and federal governments provide educational services, build and repair roads, and regulate product safety. In communist countries, you will find some private businesses such as small farms and special stores.

Political Systems

Small groups of people can work together to solve problems that affect them all. But that is impossible in complex cultures. Still, they also have to resolve conflicts between individuals and social groups. People also need protection from other countries and cultural groups. Communities need laws, leaders, and organizations that make decisions. **Government** is the system that sets up and enforces a society's laws and institutions. Some governments are controlled by a few people. Others are controlled by many.

READ ACTIVELY

Ask Questions What would you like to find out about different kinds of government?



Olga Loceva

Age 14

Russia

Under communism, traditional Russian arts and crafts, such as lacquer painting of boxes and vases as shown here, were discouraged. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, many Russians have begun to practice these arts once again. What traditions do you value? How would you feel if the government banned those traditions?

Lacquer Painting



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Direct Democracy The earliest governments were probably simple. People lived in small groups and practiced **direct democracy**. That means everyone participated in running the day-to-day affairs of the group. Chiefs or elders decided what was right or what to do. Decisions were based upon the culture's customs and beliefs. Today, government plays much the same role for complex cultures.

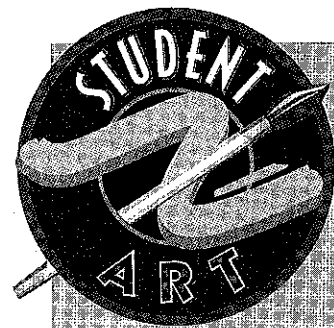
Monarchy Until about 100 years ago, one of the most common forms of government was a **monarchy**. In this system, a king or queen rules the government. The ruler inherits the throne by birth. Monarchies still exist today. Sweden, Denmark, Great Britain, Spain, and Swaziland are examples. But the rulers of these countries do not have the power their ancestors did. Instead, they are constitutional monarchs. Their countries have **constitutions**, or sets of laws that define and often limit the government's power. In a constitutional monarchy, the king or queen is often only a symbol of the country.

Representative Democracy A constitutional monarchy usually is a **representative democracy**. That means citizens elect representatives to run the country's affairs. Democracy comes from the Greek word *demos*, which means "common people." In a representative democracy, the people indirectly hold power to govern and rule. They elect representatives, who create laws. If the people do not like what a representative does, they can refuse to re-elect that person. They can also work to change laws they do not like. This system ensures that power is shared. The United States, Canada, and Israel are examples of representative democracies.

Dictatorship "If I ruled the world. . . ." Have you ever said or heard those words? It's fun to think about. You could give away free ice cream. You could give 12-year-olds the right to vote. Maybe you could end war and poverty.



▲ In Great Britain's constitutional monarchy, the monarch has little authority. The real power is wielded by Parliament, an elected body like our Congress.



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Ask Questions What would you like to find out about different kinds of government?



◀ Josef Stalin was one of the world's cruelest dictators. He ruled the former Soviet Union from 1929 until 1953. He controlled every aspect of Soviet life and jailed or executed anybody who opposed him.

Of course, no one person rules the world. There are some countries, though, where one person rules. A government leader who has almost total power over an entire country is called a **dictator**.

Dictators decide what happens in their countries. They make the laws. They decide if there will be elections. When dictators take over, they often make promises that sound good. They may promise to end crime or to make a country strong. Sometimes they keep their promises. More often, they do not. Either way, people lose the right to make their own decisions.

SECTION 3 REVIEW

- 1. Define** (a) economy, (b) producer, (c) goods, (d) services, (e) consumer, (f) capitalism, (g) socialism, (h) communism, (i) government, (j) direct democracy, (k) monarchy, (l) constitution, (m) representative democracy, (n) dictator.
- 2. Describe** the three main types of economic systems.

- 3. Which** form of government gives power to make decisions to the greatest number of people—a monarchy, a democracy, or a dictatorship?

Critical Thinking

4. Drawing Conclusions

You hear on the news an announcement from the newly elected leader of a foreign country. The announcement states that the country's representatives will not meet. It also says that no elections will be held until further notice. What kind of a government does this country have? How do you know?

Activity

- 5. Writing to Learn** You are working on a project to increase voting in your community. A statewide election is approaching. On behalf of your project, write a letter to a newspaper. In it, describe two reasons why people who are eligible to vote should do so.