



The U.S. & The World: SS.7.CG.3.1
Forms of Government
VIDEO #1 SCRIPT



Forms of Government Video #1: Republic, Direct Democracy, and Oligarchy

1. A form of government refers to the way in which a government is structured. Let's pretend we want to start a new country and we need to establish a government. Which form should I choose? Maybe you can help me.
 2. Let's review what each form of government offers, then you can help me make a decision. By learning about each form of government, we will be able to:
 - ✓ identify and apply our understanding of various forms of government
 - ✓ identify examples of forms of government through real life scenarios
 3. But...before we jump into our decision, let's find out what we need to consider when choosing an appropriate form of government for our new country.
 4. No matter what form of government we choose, it is important to understand the three basic powers of all governments:
 - the power to make the laws, known as the legislative power
 - the power to enforce the laws, known as the executive power
 - and the power interpret laws, known as the judicial power
- Forms of government are different based on how they organized these three government powers.
5. Let's begin with a republic. A republic, which can also be in the form of representative democracy, is a form of government in which the people elect representatives to make laws for them.
 6. Whoa!! Hold on there! I know what you're thinking – “As a citizen, don't I get to have all the power in a democracy?”
 7. That's correct. But because we are so large, we are in a republic. In our republic, or representative democracy, adult citizens vote for people to represent their interests in government because we can't all make decisions about everything. The government's power is limited by a constitution. But is republic the only form of a democratic-type government?
 8. There is also a form of democratic government called direct democracy.

9. In this form of government, citizens propose laws and then vote to pass those laws. A direct democracy represents decisions made by citizens and not by representatives. Therefore, the citizens are the legislative body, or the group that makes the laws.

10. Switzerland is an example of a direct democracy. In this country, citizens vote directly on laws made by local officials. Even our own state, Florida, has an amendment process which reflects a direct democracy approach by having people decide whether or not to amend the state constitution.

11. Direct democracy looks pretty good if we are a small country with a small population! Let's put it on the short list.

12. Let's check in: Can you define the two forms of government related to democracy?

13. ANSWER TO QUESTION

14. Great! Let's move on. Now, let's look at forms of government where the people might have less say in government. Let's begin with the rule of the few.

15. Oligarchy...isn't that a fun word to say? An oligarchy is a form of government in which a small group of elite people (usually wealthy people) have total control and power. The people who rule in an oligarchy may be elected, born into their positions, or have a certain amount of money or land in order to "buy into" the group.

16. An example from the past would be ancient Sparta, where less than 15% of the people were citizens, and only a few of those were allowed to make decisions. Another example is England in the year 1215. During this time a small group of wealthy, powerful men forced the king to share power with them. Would it maybe just be easier to have one ruler? We'll explore that thought in our next video. Hmm. Maybe we should consider some other forms of government.

17. So, do you think you can identify the different forms of government if you looked at a scenario? Let's find out! After each description appears, try to identify which type of government is being described.

18. Example 1: In the United States, citizens elect representatives to federal, state and local government positions. These representatives make decisions for the people. Which form of government is being described?

19. ANSWER TO SCENARIO

20. Example 2: In Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, many of the most important decisions are made by a small group of very wealthy people. Which form of government is being described?

21. ANSWER TO SCENARIO

22. Example 3: Some Native American tribes organize themselves by having all male adult members of the tribe vote to make changes to the laws. Which form of government is being described?

23. ANSWER TO SCENARIO

24. Now, these aren't the only forms of government we need to choose from. If you haven't watched the video on monarchy, autocracy, and theocracy, be sure to watch that one before we decide on our new government.