



*The U.S. & The World: SS.7.CG.3.1*  
**Forms of Government**  
**VIDEO #2 SCRIPT**



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## **Forms of Government Video #2: Monarchy, Autocracy, and Theocracy**

1. So we want to form a new country and have to decide on a form of government, right? Well don't forget, a form of government refers to a way that a government is structured.
  2. In video one, you learned about direct democracy, a republic or representative democracy, and oligarchy. In this video, you will learn about the other forms: monarchy, autocracy, and theocracy. First, let's review what each form of government offers, then you can help me make a decision.
  3. Remember, 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.
    - ✓ We will also begin to explain how our own constitutional republic does the best job protecting our freedom and liberty
  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 consider a few more forms of government.
  6. Let's start with monarchy. In this form of government there is just one ruler.
  7. A monarchy is a form of government in which power is usually inherited by an individual from a noble, or upper class, family. Power in a monarchy, then, is held by a single person whose right to rule is based on birth. Lucky them! And they get to hold that position for life, unless they die or are overthrown. Plus they get a fancy title like king or queen or sometimes even emperor. But their power may range from limited to absolute. What do we mean by that? Let's take a look at two different types of monarchies.
  8. There are actually two types of monarchies we should know about. A constitutional monarchy and an absolute monarchy. In a constitutional monarchy, monarchs generally are symbols of national unity, while real power is held by elected officials who follow a constitution.
  9. King Charles III of Great Britain, for example, is a constitutional, or limited, monarch; he has much less power than his ancestors did because more power is in the hands of the people.

10. Years ago some countries had absolute monarchies. An absolute monarchy is a form of government where one person has unlimited power. This person gained power because they were born into a royal family. In these monarchies the king or queen had total power over the government and its citizens. Most of the leaders who started World War I were the few remaining absolute monarchs of Europe.

11. Another form of government where one person has unlimited power is a dictatorship. However, in a dictatorship, a military or other political leader may gain power, such as through violence. We call a government where one person holds absolute power an autocracy.

12. Both an absolute monarchy and a dictatorship are similar in that they are autocracies. These two types of autocracies are different because absolute monarchs come to power because of the family in which they are born while dictators come to power due to a military or some other type of political action. Autocracies can also be what is known as totalitarian when they try to control the lives of the people in every way. Nazi Germany under Hitler is an example of a totalitarian autocracy.

13. Our final form of government is a theocracy. A theocracy, at its core, is a government that is supposed to be under the direction of God. Generally, this is a form of government where religious leaders are in charge. An example would be early Puritan Massachusetts, where Christian pastors and preachers primarily dictated decisions as leaders of the church. Ancient Israel before the rule of Saul was ruled by Jewish religious judges. In the present day, Iran is known as a theocratic republic, where Islamic religious leaders can override the decisions of elected leaders. Afghanistan under the Taliban is also a very extreme Islamic theocracy.

14. Let's check in: Can you define monarchy, autocracy, and theocracy?

15. ANSWER TO QUESTION

16. So, let's look at a couple of examples of some of the forms of government we learned about in this video.

17. Example 1: In some South American countries in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, a military leader would sometimes take all power through a military revolt against the government. In France during the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Louis XIV declared he had all of the power in the country because it was his right as king. What form of government is being described?

18. ANSWER TO SCENARIO

19. Example 2: In Japan, the symbol of the state is the emperor, who performs some duties under Japan's constitution. The emperor's family has had this position for more than 1000 years. What form of government is being described?

20. ANSWER TO SCENARIO

21. Example 3: A country overthrows its corrupt government and rewrites its laws to reflect a religious holy book. Only leaders of the religion can make decisions. What form of government is being described?

## 22. ANSWER TO SCENARIO

23. So we have learned about multiple different forms of government. But in the United States, have we already chosen the BEST one? We have a constitutional republic, and our form of government best helps safeguard liberty, freedom, and our rights in a representative government. What distinguishes us from these other forms of government and authoritarian and totalitarian nations? It is our principles, in our Founding documents like the Declaration, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, that ensure our freedoms, and you'll learn about them in our next video.
24. Be sure to watch the final video in the module to learn how our principles work in our constitutional republic!