Citizen Participation in Government

Autocracy, Oligarchy, & Democracy
What is Citizen Participation?

In each country, the people have different rights to participate in the government.

• In some countries, any citizen can run for office or vote in elections.
• In other countries, there are restrictions placed on who can run for office and who can vote.
• There are also countries where NO citizen can vote and there are no elections.
Types of Government are based on two key questions:

1. Who governs the country?
2. What is the citizen participation like?

The way a country answers these questions determines its government type:

Autocracy  Oligarchy  Democracy
Autocratic Governments:

• Have a single ruler with unlimited power.
• Citizens cannot participate in the selection of the ruler or vote on the country’s laws.

• One benefit – decisions for the country can be made quickly.
  • However…the needs of the citizens may be ignored.
  • The leader may make poor or selfish decisions that hurt the citizens.
Generally the power to rule the country is inherited (kings/queens) or is taken by military force.

There are two main types of autocracies:

**Dictatorship**
- The leader uses force to control the citizens.
- Example: Hitler

**Absolute Monarchy**
- The monarch has absolute power (no constitution) over the citizens.
Autocracies of the World:

- Current autocracies (including both monarchies and republics)
Oligarchic Governments:

• The country is ruled by a small group of people.
  • The group gets their power from either religion, military force, or wealth & resources.

• The citizens do not select the members of this group or vote on the country’s laws.
The citizens hold the power of the government.

Citizens have the opportunity to participate in the government:
- All citizens have the opportunity to be a leader.
- All citizens have the opportunity to vote for leaders & laws.
This Polity Data Series Map tries to measure a country’s true democracy in government. The countries in the lightest pink have the highest democracy score. The darker the color, the lower the score.
Democratic Governments:

There are two forms of democratic governments:

Presidentia l  Parliamentary

Both are designed to represent and protect the rights of the citizens.
The citizens vote directly for the leader of the country.

Citizens also vote for members of the legislature, but separately from the leader.

• The leader of the country does not make the laws. The legislature does this.

• Example: US, Russia, Mexico
The citizens vote for members of the legislature, not directly for the leader.

The legislature then chooses the country’s leader among its members.

• The leader is part of the legislature, so he/she has a hand in making laws.

• Examples: United Kingdom, Canada, & Australia
Autocracy
Oligarchy
Democracy
Dictator
Citizen

Presidential Democracy

Parliamentary Democracy

Legislature
Oligarchy

Autocracy

Democracy

Not Sure
I have a single ruler with absolute power.
In my country, the people are in charge because they can vote.
I can be a dictatorship or an absolute monarchy.
I have a small group of people ruling my country.
The citizens have no participation in my government.
I can be presidential or parliamentary.
Let’s Review

1. What are the two types of Autocratic governments?
2. Who rules the country in an Oligarchy?
3. Compare and contrast Autocracy vs. Democracy.
4. What are the two types of Democratic governments?
5. How is the leader chosen in a Parliamentary democracy?
6. Do the citizens get to choose the leader in a Parliamentary democracy?
7. How is the leader chosen in a Presidential democracy?
• Choose the type of government that you would like to represent in your cartoon: Autocracy, Oligarchy, or Democracy.

• Create a comic strip that represents the leadership of the government and the citizen participation (who votes) in the government.

• *Your characters & countries may be fictional, but you need to make sure that your cartoon includes realistic information about how your government type actually works.
• Create a mascot that will represent your group’s vocabulary word. *Can be a real OR made up thing!

• Draw & color your mascot on the paper provided.

• Be sure to give your mascot a creative name.

• Write down at least 3 reasons why/how your mascot represents your group’s vocabulary word.
Create a **simile** for each of the vocabulary words. A simile is a comparison of two things or ideas using like or as. It is not enough just to write the simile, you must explain it too.

Which type of government do you prefer to live under? Write a paragraph explaining your position.

Create facial expressions for each of the vocabulary words to summarize how a person would feel living under that government. (You only need to draw the heads.)

Create an acrostic poem for each of the vocabulary words.

Create a crossword puzzle using the vocabulary words.

Create a “Who Am I?” riddle for each of the vocabulary words. Each riddle should have a minimum of 3 lines.

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