



GOVERNMENT



Standard: SS6CG1 – Compare and contrast various forms of government

Element: a. Explain citizen participation in autocratic and democratic governments. [i.e., the role of citizens in choosing the leaders of Mexico (presidential democracy), Cuba (autocratic), and Brazil (presidential democracy)].

Autocratic Governments

The amount of power governments has and the amount of participation allowed by its citizens, can be classified as either an **autocratic** system or **democratic** system.

In an **autocratic government**, the citizens are not permitted any say in the decisions of their countries government.

The word autocracy comes from the Greek words autos (meaning “**self**”) and Kratos (meaning “**power**”).



Autocratic Governments

The people in such a country have **no ability** to participate in the selection of the ruler or in the creation of laws.

Next in line for power are usually through **bloodlines**.

Autocratic governments do not allow the citizens to **vote**.



Autocratic Governments

Pro

One benefit from this type of government is that decisions for a country can be made **quickly**.

Con

The needs of the people may be ignored or unheard. The leader may make **poor** or **selfish** decisions that work **against** the well-being of the people.

Democratic Government

Form of government that puts the power of the government in the **citizens** of the country.

The word democracy comes from the Greek words demos (meaning **people**) and Kratos (meaning "**power**").

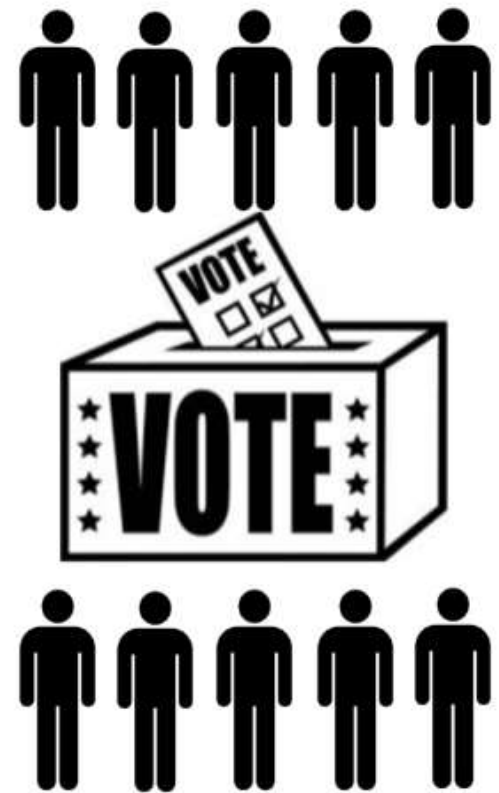


Democratic Government

The people in such a country have **total** ability to participate in the selection of the ruler or in the creation of laws.

The people **vote** what they want.

Power in **numbers**.



Democratic Government

Pro

All citizens are involved in the **decision-making** process of the government, and all groups in the country are represented.

Con

Often **slow** to make decisions since people must discuss and vote on issues.

Mexico and Brazil Government

Mexico and **Brazil** are both similar because they are both **democracies**.

Mexico and Brazil both hold elections at the **local** and **national** levels.

Brazilians and Mexicans elect **legislators** to represent their interests and pass laws.

Both countries have more than one political **party** to choose from when voting.



Mexico and Brazil Government

Both countries' citizens also elect an **executive leader** (**president**) to enforce these laws and lead their respective nations.

In Mexico, a president may serve **one six-year** term in office; in Brazil, the president may serve up to **two four-year** terms.



Mexico and Brazil Government

Voting ages differ in each country. Voting is **permitted** for those **18** years of age and older in Mexico.

In **Brazil**, voting is permitted as early as age 16; however, all Brazilians ages **18 – 70** are **REQUIRED** to vote.

Those who do not vote are **fined** and even **imprisoned** for multiple offenses.



Cuba Government

Cuba is an example of an **autocracy**.

Cubans aged 16 and older vote for legislators to represent them; however, the vote is essentially **meaningless** because there is only one political party to choose from.

The **Cuban Communist Party** (PCC.) is the only political party allowed in Cuba.



Cuba Government

Cuba has **no** real **diversity** of political views or real representatives with the people's best interest in mind.

The nation's president is **not** directly elected by the Cuban people, but rather appointed by the nation's **only political party**.

Once the Cuban Communist Party picks the president, he or she may stand for an **unlimited** number of terms in office.

There is only one political view in autocracies.

Cuba Government

The nation's current **president, Raul Castro**, was handpicked by his brother, the infamous **Fidel Castro**.

A Castro has ruled the island in some way, shape or form since the 1959 **Cuban Revolution**.



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Element: b. Describe the two predominant forms of democratic governments: parliamentary and presidential.

Parliamentary Government

Democracies may be classified as either **parliamentary** or **presidential**.

In a **parliamentary democracy**, the citizens elect members of the nation's legislature (typically referred to as its parliament).

Parliament then elects the nation's chief executive (typically called a **prime minister**.)

In a parliamentary democracy, the citizens vote for someone who will then vote for the head of state.

Parliamentary Government

This prime minister (head of government) is selected from among the members of the nation's leading **political party** (i.e; those who won the most seats in parliament.)

Cuba's government exercises a **parliamentary system** not **parliamentary democracy**.

**Parliamentary System IS NOT the same thing as
Parliamentary Democracy.**

Parliamentary Government

Cuba's government is considered a **parliamentary system** and not a **parliamentary democracy** because only members of the **Communist party** are permitted to run for political office.

One could say they were a democracy if the **people** voted and elected officials **directly**.

While the citizens have the right to vote, they can only vote for members of the same political party.

In Cuba there is only one political party.

Parliamentary Government

In a presidential democracy, the **citizens** have the power to elect both the nation's **legislators** and its **chief executive** (president).

The head of government (or state) in a presidential democracy is held accountable to the **VOTERS** who put him/her in power.



If the voters are not pleased with how the head of government is performing, they can vote someone else in their place.