

# Government Vocabulary

## Types of Governments

**Anarchy** - a condition of lawlessness or political disorder brought about by the absence of governmental authority.

**Authoritarian** - a form of government in which state authority is imposed onto many aspects of citizens' lives.

**Communist** - a system of government in which the state plans and controls the economy and a single - often authoritarian - party holds power; the elimination of private ownership of property or capital while claiming to make progress toward a higher social order in which all goods are equally shared by the people (i.e., a classless society).

**Democracy** - a form of government in which the supreme power is retained by the people, but which is usually exercised indirectly through a system of representation and delegated authority periodically renewed.

**Democratic republic** - a state in which the supreme power rests in the body of citizens entitled to vote for officers and representatives responsible to them.

**Dictatorship** - a form of government in which a ruler or small clique have absolute power (not restricted by a constitution or laws).

**Federal republic** - a state in which the powers of the central government are restricted and in which the component parts (states, colonies, or provinces) retain a degree of self-government; ultimate sovereign power rests with the voters who chose their governmental representatives.

**Islamic republic** - a particular form of government adopted by some Muslim states; although such a state is, in theory, a theocracy, it remains a republic, but its laws are required to be compatible with the laws of Islam.

**Monarchy** - a government in which the supreme power is lodged in the hands of a monarch who reigns over a state or territory, usually for life and by hereditary right; the monarch may be either a sole absolute ruler or a sovereign - such as a king, queen, or prince - with constitutionally limited authority.

**Parliamentary democracy** - a political system in which the legislature (parliament) selects the government - a prime minister, premier, or chancellor along with the cabinet ministers - according to party strength as expressed in elections; by this system, the government acquires a dual responsibility: to the people as well as to the parliament.

**Representative Government**-Type of government where the people vote for leaders to speak and stand up for their ideas.

**Republic** - a representative democracy in which the people's elected deputies (representatives), not the people themselves, vote on legislation.

**Theocracy** - a form of government in which a Deity is recognized as the supreme civil ruler, but the Deity's laws are interpreted by ecclesiastical authorities (bishops, mullahs, etc.); a government subject to religious authority.

**Totalitarian** - a government that seeks to subordinate the individual to the state by controlling not only all political and economic matters, but also the attitudes, values, and beliefs of its population.

## Other Government Terms