

## ADVANTAGES OF A CONSTITUTIONAL REPUBLIC

**SS.7.CG.3.1** Analyze the advantages of the United States’ constitutional republic over other forms of government in safeguarding liberty, freedom and a representative government.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Essential Teacher Content Background Information</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Lesson Summary</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Suggested Student Activity Sequence &amp; Pace</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Civics Content Vocabulary</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Additional Resources, Answer Keys, and Sources</b>	<b>12</b>

### 2023 BENCHMARK UPDATES

- Updated from SS.7.C.3.1
  - Changed from, “~~Compare different forms of government (direct democracy, representative democracy, socialism, communism, monarchy, oligarchy, autocracy).~~” to “Analyze the advantages of the United States’ constitutional republic over other forms of government in safeguarding liberty, freedom and a representative government.”
- Depth of Knowledge Changes within Benchmark
  - Changed from, “Compare” to “Analyze”
- Benchmark Clarification Changes
  - Changed from “Students will apply their understanding of the definitions of the various forms of government.” to “Students will apply their understanding of various forms of government (e.g., republic, democracy, monarchy, oligarchy, theocracy, autocracy).”
  - Addition of “Students will explain how the application of checks and balances, consent of the governed, democracy, due process of law, federalism, individual rights, limited government, representative government, republicanism, rule of law and separation of powers distinguishes the United States’ constitutional republic from authoritarian and totalitarian nations.”
- Vocabulary Changes
  - Removal of “direct democracy”, “representative democracy”, “socialism”, “communism”
  - Addition of “republic”, “democracy”, “theocracy”, “constitutional republic”

# Essential Teacher Content Background Information

[Teacher Content Notes Not Appropriate For Student Use]

This section addresses the following topics:

1. Forms of Government Explained
2. Comparing Forms of Government Chart
3. Distinguishing the United States' Form of Government From Other Countries

## 1. Forms of Government Explained

There are multiple factors that contribute to how we understand governments. One approach is to consider the form of government, also known as the structure. All governments, no matter their structure (or form), enjoy three powers: the power to create laws (legislative), the power to enforce laws (executive), and the power to interpret the meaning of laws (judicial). It is in the organization of those powers where one can distinguish among systems of government. For example, some systems of government concentrate all of three powers in one place, whereas other systems of government distribute power among individual states or subgovernments. Government forms, by contrast, are the organizational structures that focus on how a government functions.

In the United States, for example, the U.S. Constitution begins with 'We the People,' which speaks to the notion that the U.S. is a democracy. However, as the U.S. Constitution outlines a system of representation through which the people rule, it is known as a republic or a representative democracy. Lastly, the fact that governmental power is limited by the existence of a constitution that protects the rights of citizens makes our form of government most closely aligned to the term 'constitutional republic'.

Several factors impact the form of government that a nation will adopt; these include, but are not limited to, the nation's history, culture, values, beliefs, political participation, geography, location, international relations, domestic concerns, and past practices. Two countries may share the same system of government while they differ as to their form of government. For example, Iran and the United Kingdom are classified as having a unitary system of government, but Iran's form of government is a theocracy, while the United Kingdom's form of government is a monarchy.

## 2. Comparing Forms of Government Chart

Below is a brief chart on various forms of government with a small number of example countries listed for each. Data is current as of 2023. It is important to note that when labeling a country based on its form of government, most do not fit neatly inside one box. Countries often combine and alter elements of multiple forms of government. The label may also vary from how a country describes itself compared to how an outsider looking in may describe it.

Form of Government	Explanation	Example(s)
Republic	A republic is a form of government in which the people elect representatives to make policies and laws for them; sometimes called a representative democracy or indirect democracy	The United States, France, India, Germany  Roots in Ancient Rome

Democracy	<p>Democracy is a form of government in which political power is held by the people.</p> <p>There are two types of democracies: direct and indirect. <i>Direct democracy</i> is when the power to govern is directly in the hands of the people rather than elected representatives. <i>Indirect democracies</i> have people elect representatives to make policies and laws for them. An indirect democracy can also be called a representative democracy.</p> <p>Elements of a democracy (both direct or indirect) can often overlap with republics and monarchies.</p>	<p>Direct Democracy: Switzerland</p> <p>Indirect Democracy: India, France, United States</p> <p>Florida's constitutional amendment process is an example of direct democracy in a component of a government</p> <p>Roots in Ancient Greece</p>
Monarchy	<p>In a monarchy, power is held by a single person whose right to rule is based on birth (that person is born into a family of kings and queens) and who has the power to remain in office for life.</p> <p>The power of a monarch may vary; there are <i>absolute monarchies</i> (a type of autocracy) and <i>constitutional monarchies</i>, where the monarch is strongly limited by a constitution that outlines a rule of law.</p>	<p>Constitutional Monarchy: Spain; Britain</p> <p>Absolute Monarchy: Brunei</p>
Oligarchy	<p>Oligarchy means the rule of the few, and those few are generally the rich in the society. People who rule in oligarchies may be elected, born into their positions, or may have a certain amount of money or land which entitles them to be a part of the ruling group.</p> <p>Oligarchies are often controlled by a few powerful families whose children are raised and taught to inherit the power of the oligarchy, often at some sort of expense to those who are governed.</p>	<p>Russian Federation</p>
Theocracy	<p>A form of government in which religious authorities rule in the name of a god or deity.</p>	<p>Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Vatican City</p>

Autocracy	<p>A form of government in which unlimited power is concentrated in one individual or small group.</p> <p>One form of an autocracy is a dictatorship where an individual has absolute control over a country, often achieving it and keeping it through violent means. Another form of autocracy is an absolute monarchy where a person becomes the sole leader of a country by being born into a family of rulers.</p>	Cuba, Venezuela, Syria, North Korea
-----------	---	-------------------------------------

### 3. Distinguishing the United States' Form of Government From Other Countries

Comparing forms and systems of government enables one to clarify the advantages and disadvantages of each. The manner in which the powers of government are distributed within the systems and how those powers of government are organizationally structured as the form helps to determine the role citizens play in the election of government leaders and whether or not the system of government utilized is capable of balancing interests and guarding against authoritarianism. To make that determination, one can evaluate a country's application of the following:

- A. checks and balances
- B. consent of the governed
- C. democratic practices
- D. due process of law
- E. federalism
- F. individual rights
- G. limited government
- H. representative government
- I. republicanism
- J. rule of law
- K. separation of powers

## Lesson Summary

ESSENTIAL QUESTION		
How do other forms of government compare to the United States' constitutional republic?		
BENCHMARK		
<b>SS.7.CG.3.1</b> Analyze the advantages of the United States' constitutional republic over other forms of government in safeguarding liberty, freedom and a representative government.		
CIVICS EOC REPORTING CATEGORY		
N/A		
OVERVIEW		
In this lesson, students will identify forms of government and compare them to the United States' constitutional republic, specifically in regards to representing the people and the government's ability to safeguard liberty and freedom.		
BENCHMARK CLARIFICATIONS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will apply their understanding of various forms of government (e.g., republic, democracy, monarchy, oligarchy, theocracy, autocracy).</li> <li>Students will identify different forms of government based on their political philosophy or organizational structure.</li> <li>Students will analyze scenarios describing various forms of government.</li> <li>Students will explain how the application of checks and balances, consent of the governed, democracy, due process of law, federalism, individual rights, limited government, representative government, republicanism, rule of law and separation of powers distinguishes the United States' constitutional republic from authoritarian and totalitarian nations.</li> </ul>		
BENCHMARK CONTENT LIMITS		
N/A		
CIVICS CONTENT VOCABULARY		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>absolute monarchy, anarchy, authoritarian, autocracy, checks and balances, consent of the governed, constitutional monarchy, constitutional republic, democracy, dictatorship, direct democracy, due process of law, federalism, form of government, indirect democracy, individual rights, limited government, monarchy, oligarchy, representative government, republic, republicanism, rule of law, separation of powers, theocracy, totalitarian</li> </ul>		
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES		
Collaborative learning	Defining terms in context	Scenario-based inquiry
MATERIALS		

- Sticky notes or Index cards
- Forms of Government Gallery Walk Placards
- Anarchy Definition slide
- Forms of Government Graphic Organizer
- Forms of Government Scenarios slides
- United States' Constitutional Republic Infographic
- Authoritarian and Totalitarian Definitions slide

### **B.E.S.T. STANDARDS**

- ELA.7.R.2.1- Explain how individual text sections and/or features convey a purpose in texts.
- ELA.7.R.3.2- Paraphrase content from grade-level texts.
- ELA.V.1.3- Apply knowledge of context clues, figurative language, word relationships, reference materials, and/or background knowledge to determine the connotative and denotative meaning of words and phrases, appropriate to grade level.
- ELA.K12.EE.1.1- Cite evidence to explain and justify reasoning.

## Suggested Student Activity Sequence & Pace

DAY	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE
DAY 1	<p><b>Planning Note:</b> In order to most effectively teach this lesson, students should be familiar with the following terms prior to teaching the content below: checks and balances, consent of the governed, democracy, due process of law, federalism, individual rights, limited government, representative government, republicanism, rule of law, and separation of powers. Additionally, prior to the lesson, print out and hang up the “Forms of Government Gallery Walk Placards” throughout the room.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To begin this lesson, project the “Anarchy Definition” slide.</li> <li>Ask students: What would a country look like with anarchy? Why do you think countries choose to have some form of government?</li> <li>Have students brainstorm a response, either in a notebook or on looseleaf paper.</li> <li>While students write their responses, circulate the room to monitor for engagement.</li> <li>Take a small number of responses. While responses may vary, explain to students that people form governments to create an organized and safe society, ensure protection, protect rights, and help provide public goods and services.</li> <li>Explain to students that in this lesson, they will be examining different forms of government and evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of each.</li> <li>Distribute a “Forms of Government Graphic Organizer” to each student.</li> <li>Place students into six numbered small groups, either randomly or in whatever way best suits your classroom management.</li> </ol> <p><b>Teacher Note:</b> Depending on your class size and management, you may wish to make two of each gallery station so that you can have smaller group sizes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have each group begin at the “Forms of Government Gallery Walk Placard” that corresponds to their group number (i.e. #1. Autocracy; #2. Monarchy; #3. Oligarchy; #4. Republic; #5. Democracy; #6. Theocracy).</li> <li>Explain to students that at each station, their group will read the information on that placard, then use the information to define that form of government in their own words. They should also note any defining characteristics. This information needs to be placed in the appropriate column of their graphic organizer. The last column (Why not this one?) should be left blank for now.</li> </ol> <p><b>Teacher Note:</b> It is recommended you set a timer for each gallery walk station rotation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As groups complete their first placard, circulate among the stations to monitor for engagement and understanding.</li> <li>After groups have completed their first placard, check for understanding by soliciting for any clarifying questions groups may have about the activity directions/tasks.</li> <li>Continue the activity by having groups rotate to the next station and continue to read and complete the ‘Definition/Defining Characteristics’ column on their graphic organizer.</li> <li>Continue to rotate until each group has completed every gallery walk station and has filled in all necessary boxes of their organizer.</li> </ol> <p><b>Teacher Note:</b> It is recommended that you continue to set a timer for each rotation and that you continually circulate to monitor and check in with each group.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have groups return to their seats.</li> <li>Finish the lesson by calling on each group to explain the form of government from their original station. As each group explains, allow other students to modify their responses based on their growing understanding.</li> </ol> <p><b>Teacher Note:</b> Use the sample answers provided below and the Essential Teacher Content Background Information to help address misconceptions and guide discussion.</p>

DAY 2

1. Begin the class period by having students take out their “Forms of Government Graphic Organizer” from the previous day.
2. Explain to students that you are going to complete a quick check for understanding by asking students to apply what they learned yesterday to a few historical scenarios.
3. Project the “Forms of Government Scenarios” slides on the board.
4. Begin by having a student read scenario #1, or reading it to the class.
5. Ask for responses as to which form of government they think this reflects.  
**Teacher Note:** Answers are in the speaker notes of the slides. For each scenario, you may have students raise hands and call on individuals, you could engage students in a class vote, you could have them move around the room, engage in a stand up/sit down activity etc.
6. Continue with scenarios 2-6.
7. After ensuring students have a firm definitional and applicational understanding of the forms of government, place students in pairs.
8. Ask students: Of the forms of government listed on the graphic organizer, which one best describes the United States? (Republic; Constitutional Republic specifically)
9. Project the “United States’ Constitutional Republic Infographic”.  
**Teacher Note:** You could turn this into a poster for your classroom, share it digitally, or provide individual copies for your students.
10. Review the infographic with students, explaining that with the opportunity to create any form of government they wanted, the Framers settled on a constitutional republic. One of the reasons for this choice was that they felt it was the best form of government to achieve our goals: safeguarding liberty, freedom, and representative government. To accomplish that, the Framers ensured that all of the principles listed on the infographic were in place. Review those principles with students.
11. Using this information, instruct students to work in pairs to complete the second blank column of their graphic organizer (Why Not This One?) to examine what elements of the other forms of government did not align with our goals.  
**Teacher Note:** For the ‘Democracy’ box, students should just be evaluating why direct democracy did not work for us.
12. As groups work, circulate to monitor for engagement and understanding.
13. Bring the class back together.
14. Review the ‘Why Not This One?’ column of the graphic organizer, calling on different pairs to share what they wrote. Correct any misconceptions, add missing information, and allow students to adjust and/or add to their organizers as you review.  
**Teacher Note:** Use the sample answer key provided below to guide discussion.
15. Project the “Authoritarian and Totalitarian Definition” slide.
16. Ask students: What are some of the defining characteristics of these two types of government regimes?
17. Review the definitions with students, explaining that these are the two most extreme and defective forms of government.
18. Return to the projection of the “United States’ Constitutional Republic Infographic”.
19. Ask students: Would any of these principles be found in an authoritarian or totalitarian government? (No)
20. Direct student attention to the spectrum line at the bottom of their graphic organizer.
21. Have them write ‘U.S. Constitutional Republic’ on one end of the spectrum, and ‘Authoritarian/Totalitarian’ on the other end.
22. Explain to students that the more a nation’s government is missing the principles from the infographic, the closer that government is trending towards authoritarian/totalitarian.



- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p>23. Understanding this, instruct students to place the remaining five forms of government (autocracy, monarchy, oligarchy, democracy, and theocracy) on the spectrum based on their ability to include the infographic principles.</p> <p>24. Engage students in a discussion regarding where they placed them and why. Allow students to make changes if desired.</p> <p><b>Teacher Note:</b> You may want to make one on the board to interact with during discussion. While there is no 100% correct answer in terms of exact placement, democracy and constitutional monarchy should trend towards republic while absolute monarchy, oligarchy, theocracy, and autocracy should be closer to authoritarian/totalitarian.</p> <p>25. Conclude class by having students complete an exit ticket on a sticky note or index card in which they answer the following question: <i>What are some advantages of the United States' constitutional republic over other forms of government in safeguarding liberty, freedom and a representative government.</i></p> |
|--|---|

## Civics Content Vocabulary

Word/Term	Definition
<b>absolute monarchy</b>	a form of monarchy with no limits on the monarch's power
<b>anarchy</b>	the absence of any form of government
<b>authoritarian</b>	a form of government that forces strict obedience to authority, especially that of the government, at the expense of personal freedom
<b>autocracy</b>	a form of government in which unlimited power is concentrated in one individual or small group
<b>checks and balances</b>	a principle that allows each branch of government to limit the power of the other branches
<b>consent of the governed</b>	the idea that government gains its power/authority from the people
<b>constitutional monarchy</b>	a form of monarchy where the monarch serves in only a limited or symbolic role, restricted by a written set of laws
<b>constitutional republic</b>	a form of government in which there is democratic voting, but governmental power is limited by the existence of a constitution that protects the rights of citizens
<b>democracy</b>	a form of government in which political power is held by the people
<b>dictatorship</b>	a form of autocracy where an individual has absolute control over a country, often achieving it and keeping it through violent means
<b>direct democracy</b>	a form of democracy in which the power to govern is directly in the hands of the people rather than elected representatives
<b>due process of law</b>	the idea that people accused of a crime still have individual rights, that the process of weighing their accused crimes must take place fairly, following an established standard, before they can lose either their life or freedom
<b>federalism</b>	a system of government in which power is divided and shared between national, state, and local governments
<b>form of government</b>	the way a government is structured and operates
<b>indirect democracy</b>	a form of democracy in which the people elect representatives to make policies and laws for them; sometimes called a republic or representative democracy
<b>individual rights</b>	rights guaranteed or belonging to a person
<b>limited government</b>	a government that has been limited in power by a constitution, or written agreement

<b>monarchy</b>	a form of government headed by a king or queen who inherits the position, rules for life, and holds power that can range anywhere between limited to absolute
<b>oligarchy</b>	a form of government in which a small group or class of people have total control and power
<b>representative government</b>	a type of government that allows people to vote and elect government officials to represent their beliefs and make decisions on their behalf
<b>republic</b>	a form of government in which the people elect representatives to make policies and laws for them; sometimes called a representative democracy or indirect democracy
<b>republicanism</b>	the political belief that the best form of government is one where citizens choose their representatives and leaders and actively participate in civic life for the common good of the nation/community
<b>rule of law</b>	the idea that those who govern must also follow the same laws as everyone; no one is above the law
<b>separation of powers</b>	a principle that sets up three branches with their own distinct powers and responsibilities
<b>theocracy</b>	a form of government in which religious authorities rule in the name of a god or deity
<b>totalitarian</b>	a form of government in which power is centralized with one individual or group and requires complete subservience to the state

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
<a href="#">Civics 360 Resources</a>  Florida Department of Education's Civic Literacy Reading List <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>N/A</li></ul>



ANSWER KEYS
Sample Answers: Forms of Government Graphic Organizer Written Response Rubric Sample

SOURCES
N/A