

Parliamentary and Presidential Democracies

How Governments Determine Citizen Participation

Remember: Autocratic, oligarchic, and democratic governments determine citizen participation in different ways.

How Governments Determine Citizen Participation

Remember: In a democratic form of government, the supreme power is held by the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation. (It usually involves periodically held free elections.)

Remember! There are two main types of democracies:

- parliamentary
- presidential

POWERS OF A GOVERNMENT

Every government has and exercises three basic kinds of power:

- legislative power – makes laws and frames public policies
- executive power – executes, enforces, and administers laws
- judicial power – interprets laws and settles disputes that arise within society

Who holds the power in the democratic government?

Ask: What is the relationship between the legislative and executive branches?

parliamentary government – the executive branch is elected from the legislative branch (Great Britain)

presidential government – the executive and legislative branches are separate, independent of one another, and equal (USA)

Parliamentary Democracy

- a democratic form of government in which the people vote for those who represent the political party they feel best represents their views of how the government should operate

In a Parliamentary Democracy

- Parliament, the legislature the people elect, makes and enforces the laws of the country.
- The leader is often called a prime minister (or premier), and the prime minister is a member of parliament.
- The prime minister is usually chosen by the political party that wins a majority of representatives (or seats) in the parliament. (In some parliaments there are so many political parties represented that none hold a majority. Parliament members must decide among themselves whom to elect as prime minister.)

In a Parliamentary Democracy

The prime minister is the **head of the government**.

- The prime minister leads the executive branch of the government and must answer directly to the parliament for the actions taken and the policies recommended.
- In many parliamentary democracies, a head of state like a queen, king, or president is the **head of state** but is basically a ceremonial leader.

In a Parliamentary Democracy

- A prime minister holds power for the term of office set by a country's constitution.
- A prime minister leads the work done by the parliament, and the Prime Minister is helped by his **cabinet**, a group of advisors.
- A prime minister may be voted out of office before his or her term runs out if the party he or she leads begins to lose power. (New elections may be held before the prime minister's term of office is over.)

Presidential Democracy

(Sometimes called Congressional)

- **a democratic form of government in which a president is chosen to be the leader**
- **The executive branch exists separately from the legislature (to which it is generally not accountable).**

In a Presidential Democracy

- A president, or chief executive, is chosen separately from the legislature.
- A president is in a separate branch of the government.
- The legislature passes the laws, and the president sees that the laws are enforced.
- The president holds power separately from the legislature, but the president does not have the power to dismiss the legislature or force them to make specific laws.

In a Presidential Democracy

- The president is the official head of government.
- The legislature does not have the power to dismiss the president, except in severe cases. (Example: when the president has broken a law)
- The president is both the **head of state** and the **head of the government**.

Interesting Comparisons:

In parliamentary democracies, party members in parliaments almost always vote strictly along party lines.

In presidential democracies, legislators are free to vote their consciences with fewer repercussions from their party.

In parliamentary democracies, members of the legislature can call for *cloture*, or an end to debate so voting can begin.

In presidential democracies, legislatures may use a *filibuster*, or the right to prolong speeches to delay action by the legislature.