

FORMS OF GOVERNMENT: WHAT'S THE SCORE?



#3467

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Grade Levels: 7-11

35 minutes

DESCRIPTION

What are some forms of government? Game show format presents five political systems: absolute monarchy, representative democracy, communism, socialism, and fascism. Each system then comments on its power, law and order, liberty and personal freedoms, social contracts, and major strength and weakness. Anarchy bursts in frequently to explain itself. Develops knowledge of the basic principles of these philosophies of governing.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Civics

- Standard: Understands the sources, purposes, and functions of law, and the importance of the rule of law for the protection of individual rights and the common good
 - Benchmark: Understands the possible consequences of the absence of a rule of law (e.g., anarchy, arbitrary and capricious rule, absence of predictability, disregard for established and fair procedures) (See Instructional Goals #2)
- Standard: Understands the relationships among liberalism, republicanism, and American constitutional democracy
 - Benchmark: Understands that the term "democracy" is derived from the Greek word for "rule by the people," and that the central focus of democracy is the idea that the people are the source of authority for government (See Instructional Goal #2)
- Standard: Understands the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited governments
 - Benchmark: Knows the general characteristics of unlimited government (e.g., a dictatorship in which there are no effective controls over the powers of its rulers; the rulers cannot be easily removed from office by peaceful, legal means) (See Instructional Goals #1 and #2)
 - Benchmark: Understands how limited government helps to protect personal rights (e.g., to choose friends, to practice the religion of one's choice), political rights (e.g., to express opinions, to vote), and economic rights (e.g., to own property, to choose the kind of work one pleases) (See Instructional Goals #1 and #2)
- Standard: Understands ideas about civic life, politics, and government
 - Benchmark: Understands competing ideas about the purposes government should serve (e.g., whether government should protect individual rights, promote the common good, provide economic security, mold the character of citizens, promote a particular religion) (See Instructional Goals #1 and #3)
 - Benchmark: Understands the nature of political authority (e.g., characteristics such as legitimacy, stability, limitations) (See Instructional Goals #1, #2 and #3)
 - Benchmark: Understands the sources of political authority (e.g., consent of the governed, birth, knowledge) and its functions (e.g., create and enforce laws) (See Instructional Goals #1, #2 and #3)
 - Benchmark: Understands some of the major competing ideas about the purposes of politics and government (e.g., achieving a religious vision, glorifying the state, enhancing economic prosperity, providing for a nation's security), and knows examples of past and present governments that serve these purposes (See Instructional Goals #1, #2 and #3)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To compare governments that are ruled by many and ruled by few.
2. To examine the positive and negative aspects of absolute monarchy, representative democracy, communism, socialism, fascism, and anarchy.
3. To depict distribution of power, creation and enforcement of laws, personal freedom and the social contract in different forms of government.
4. To present historic and modern examples of different forms of government.

VOCABULARY

1. absolute
2. uprising
3. revolution
4. legislature
5. motto
6. party
7. central economic control
8. benign monarch
9. personal initiative
10. dictator

BEFORE SHOWING

1. Describe the form of government of the United States.
2. Create the game chart on individual pieces of paper.
 - a. On the right side of the chart use the following labels: absolute monarchy, representative democracy, communism, socialism, and fascism.
 - b. On the top of the chart use the following labels: power, law and order, liberty and personal freedom, social contract, and pix and nix.
 - c. Explain the use of a Likkert scale for making choices.

DURING SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.
2. Pause at the appropriate time to complete ranking the components of different governmental forms.
3. Pause after the rules of the game are discussed.
 - a. Review the rules of the game.
 - b. Define a government.
 - c. Categorize the five governments playing the game as either ruled by many or ruled by few.
 - d. List historical and modern examples of each form of government.
 - e. Discuss absolute monarchs.
 - (1) How do monarchs receive power?
 - (2) How long do monarchs rule?
 - (3) What role do uprisings and revolutions play in monarchies?
 - f. Discuss representative democracy.
 - (1) How does representative democracy differ from direct democracy?

- (2) Who has the power in a representative democracy?
 - (3) How have democracies come to power?
- g. Discuss communism.
 - (1) What is the communist motto?
 - (2) How do communists come to power?
 - (3) What are elections like in a communist government?
- h. Discuss socialism.
 - (1) What kind of socialism is discussed in the video?
 - (2) What are the similarities between socialism and representative democracy?
- i. Discuss fascism.
 - (1) What are the similarities between communism and fascism?
 - (2) What role does patriotism play in fascism?
 - (3) How do fascists seize power?
- j. Discuss anarchy.
 - (1) Why do political scientists see the theory of anarchy as relevant to a discussion on the forms of government?
 - (2) What is the difference between referring to anarchy as “law-free” instead of “lawless”?
- 4. Pause after the discussion regarding power.
 - a. In each form of government, who has power?
 - b. In each form of government, how is the power obtained?
 - c. How does power change hands in a monarchy?
 - d. Whom does a representative democracy represent?
 - e. What is the *Communist party*?
 - f. How does the Communist party differ from political parties in the United States?
 - g. How is the distribution of power similar in socialism and representative democracy? Fascism and communism? Fascism and a monarchy?
 - h. What is the anarchist’s view of government?
- 5. Discuss law and order.
 - a. Who creates and enforces the law in each form of government?
 - b. What are the similarities between representative democracy, communism, socialism, and fascism?
 - c. What are the differences between democracy or socialism and communism; between communism and fascism?
 - d. Which forms of government have the strictest enforcement of justice? Which have the least strict?
- 6. Discuss liberty and personal freedom.
 - a. Why do monarchs and fascists not value equality?
 - b. What are the differences between communist and democratic beliefs about equality? Democratic and socialist beliefs?
 - c. Who are the elite in democratic and communist societies?
 - d. Why are there no very rich people in socialist societies?
- 7. Discuss social contract in each form of government.
 - a. What do the citizens do for the government?
 - b. Which forms of government expect citizens to give their all to the government?
 - c. What does the government do for the citizens?
 - d. Which forms of government offer the most efficiency? Which offer the most stability?

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. Discuss the positive and negative aspects of absolute monarchy.
 - a. Why is a monarchy efficient?
 - b. What could happen as the result of no redress of grievance?
2. Discuss the strongest and weakest points of representative democracy.
 - a. Why is democracy slow-moving?
 - b. Why is poverty an issue in democracies?
 - c. Why may Americans be selfish and self-serving?
 - d. Why do Americans place such a high value on personal freedom?
3. Discuss the best and worst arguments regarding communism.
 - a. Why does communism appeal to societies where there is drastic inequality of wealth?
 - b. What value does speed have in communist governments?
 - c. Why does communism result in a loss of personal initiative?
4. Discuss the appeals and downsides of socialism.
 - a. How do socialist governments provide the greatest measure of security of the forms of government described?
 - b. Why do socialist governments result in reduced opportunities for great wealth?
5. Discuss the pros and cons of fascism.
 - a. Why are the people under a dictatorship often willing to accept loss of choice?
 - b. What are the benefits of pride and unity to a country?
6. Discuss personal preferences regarding the best form of government.
 - a. What benefits determine a person's choice of government?
 - b. What costs most influence a person's choice of government?
 - c. What role does personal experience play in a person's choice of government?

Applications and Activities

1. Collect and display news articles discussing forms of government. Categorize articles by the country or continent to which each refers.
2. Research current and historical monarchies. Give examples of uprisings and revolutions that dethroned monarchies.
3. Compare an absolute monarchy with a constitutional monarchy, such as Great Britain and Norway. Debate under which kind of monarchy it would be preferable to live.
4. Investigate current and historic democracies.
5. Debate if and how the United States should consider moving towards a pure democracy.
6. Research communism.
 - a. How did this form of government emerge in the 20th century?
 - b. What are current and historical examples of communist governments? How did they come to power?
 - c. What are the similarities and differences between communist governments in the Soviet Union, China, North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba and eastern Europe?
 - d. What was the Iron Curtain?
 - e. How was the Berlin Wall a symbol of communism? What effect did the destruction of the wall have on communism and other forms of government around the world?
 - f. Why did the French Revolution not lead to communism?
 - g. Why might some Americans be drawn to communism?

7. Research socialism.
 - a. Consider how socialist theory is used by communist, representative democracy, and socialist governments.
 - b. Debate if the United States is a socialist nation.
 - (1) Determine what government programs are socialists. Consider unemployment, Social Security, health care, and welfare.
 - (2) Determine what would be the benefits and detriments to becoming a socialist country.
 - c. Determine if socialism truly eliminates the very rich upper class.
8. Investigate fascism.
 - a. Compare Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler.
 - b. Determine how fascist leaders in Spain, Portugal, Romania, and Hungary came to rule.
 - c. Imagine political, economic and social events that might lead America into fascism.
9. Investigate anarchy.
 - a. Play an unfamiliar board game without looking at the directions or rules.
 - b. Assemble a multipiece item without directions.
 - c. List the pros and cons of anarchy.
10. Survey the local community regarding which form of government compares to a family, the classroom, a school, and the workplace. Debate which government type is ideal in each setting.
11. Match the following mottoes to their form of government.
 - a. From each according to abilities, to each according to need.
 - b. Our wish is your command.
 - c. By the people and for the people.
 - d. Equality by providing a safety net for the underprivileged, sick, or weak.
 - e. All for the good of the state.
 - f. Each man is a law unto himself.
12. Research other forms of government shown on the game. Consider: a republic, federalism, parliaments, oligarchy, autocracy, despotism (dictatorship), and theocracy.
13. Investigate market, command, and mixed economies. Categorize each form of government by kind of economy.
14. Create a continuum of forms of government with one extreme being limited government and the other extreme being unlimited government. Justify placement on the continuum.
15. Play the “Forms of Government” game.
 - a. Consider using the same or different forms of government used on the video.
 - b. Consider using the same or different categories and questions.
 - c. Produce a video of the game.
16. Research political science. Consider both the training needed to become a political scientist and the job market. Identify prominent political scientists.

RELATED RESOURCES

Captioned Media Program

- Assignment: China #3105
- Breaking the Colonial Ties: Declaration of Independence #3014
- Economics #3456
- Freedoms #1973
- Kurdistan: The Promised Country #3262

- Western Europe: Government and Economics #3316

World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and “kid-safe” sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- THE BRITISH MONARCHY <http://www.royal.gov.uk/>

The official Web site that includes information on the current constitutional monarchy in this nation through the ages including times of absolute monarch rule and other various forms of government. Additional information included on coronation and succession to the throne.

- THE ROYAL COURT OF SWEDEN <http://www.royalcourt.se/eng/>

Another site on a current constitutional monarchy that used to be an absolute monarchy. Includes detailed information regarding current and historic monarchy, government organization, and economy.

- THE HISTORY CHANNEL <http://www.historychannel.com/>

This fully searchable reference site has information related to forms of government using the search terms: monarch, socialism, communism, democracy, and fascism. Also see related people and places accessible from the search pages.

- MR. DOWLING’S ELECTRONIC PASSPORT <http://www.mrdowling.com/>

A comprehension site for geography and history facts and fascination. Scroll down to Russia and communism where you can find information from the czars through communism and to the new democratic reforms. Other areas of the world covered include ancient societies, Europe, Africa, China, South America, Mexico, and Canada. Click the homework button for printable worksheets on nearly every topic.



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