To study governments, look at the following:

**Types** – Who rules and who participates.

- There are three types of governments:
  - Autocracy: Rule by one
  - Oligarchy: Rule by few
  - Democracy: Rule by all
    - Forms: Direct and Representative
    - Methods: Parliamentary and Presidential

**Systems** – How the power is distributed.

- Unitary
  - All decisions and power held at a central level
- Federal
  - Decisions and power split between national and state (or province) governments
Democracy

• “Democracy” literally means “rule by the people.”

• In a democracy, the people govern – by voting.

• Two METHODS of Democracy
  • Direct Democracy
  • Representative Democracy
Direct Democracy

• Description
  • The power of gov’t is controlled directly by the people
  • Everyone votes on every issue

Example
New England Town Meetings
Indirect Democracy- a.k.a. Republic

• A literal democracy is impossible in a political system containing more than a few people

• All modern “democracies” are really republics.
  • In a republic, representatives for the people make and enforce laws.
Representative Democracy

• **Description**
  • The people elect representatives who then make decisions for them

• **Example**
  • The United States
Oligarchy

• **Description**
  
  • When a family or small group of people control all of gov’ts power
    • The group gets their power from either military, wealth or social status.
    • Elections may be held but offer only one candidate.

• **Examples**
  
  • China and The old Soviet Union
    • Only one party (communist) allowed
    • Run by council of 13-24 politburo members
Autocracy

- Government in which the power to govern is held by one person.
- Generally the power to rule is inherited or by military force.
- There are three types of Autocracy.
  - Dictatorships
  - Absolute Monarchies
  - Constitutional Monarchies
Dictatorship

- A dictatorship consists of rule by one person or a group of people
- Very few dictators admit they are dictators and almost always claim to be leaders of democracies
Dictatorship

• Description
  • A leader takes control over the gov’t and has total power
  • Few admit they are dictators and almost always claim to be leaders of democracies

• Example
  • Cuba (Castro) & North Korea (Kim Jong Il)
Monarchy

• A monarchy consists of rule by a king or queen or “emperor”
  • May be Absolute or Constitutional (Limited)

• There are no large monarchies today
  • The United Kingdom, which has a queen, is really a republic because the queen has virtually no political power
Absolute Monarchy

- **Description**
  - When the King/Queen has total power over the gov’t

- **Example**
  - Louis XIV in France during the 1700s
**Constitutional Monarchy**

- **Description**
  - The King/Queen is limited by law and shares power with elected officials

- **Example**
  - Present day England
Anarchy: is not a type of government

- Description
  - No gov’t and no laws
  - Total disorder
- Example
  - Usually comes from gov’t failure, overthrown
Aristocracy

• An aristocracy is really not a form of government; rather, it is the name of a select few, such as the strong, the wise, or “contributing” citizens, who have co-opted the right to rule. Generally, landowners/barons made up the early aristocratic circles.

• Very often synonymous with the nobility
Feudalism

• The Medieval European political system based upon a systems of rights and obligations between the lords, vassals, and fiefs (serfs).
Theocracy

- **Description**
  - Type of Oligarchy. Rule by religious leaders

- **Example**
  - The Vatican & Iran
Fascism

- Authoritarian nationalist political ideology. Often driven by militarism and belief in national superiority.
- Single party state
- Civil rights are repressed
- No criticism of the government is allowed
Plutocracy

- Usually, rule by a power elite, aka- the wealthy.
Communism

- Characterized by single-party rule
- Classless
- Elimination of private property
- More of an economic system than a political system
“Democratic Republic”

• Often a nation calling itself a “democratic republic” is neither democratic nor a republic, but rather a dictatorship
  • Communist dictatorships have been especially prone to use this term
    • “The Democratic Republic of Vietnam”
    • “The People’s Republic of China”
    • “Democratic People’s Republic of Korea”