Name_____   Date_____

Types of Government

Reading and Discussion

There are several different types of government, but before examining them, it is important to understand what is meant by **government**.

A **government** is a ruling power in a political society. It has the authority to make laws, resolve disputes, and issue administrative decisions. In other words, a government is responsible for providing order and stability to a nation, state, or country. Some of the most common types of government are:

- **democracy**
- **monarchy**
- **totalitarian**
- **theocracy**
- **aristocracy**
- **dictatorship**

Democracy means "rule by the people." In this type of government, power is held by the people, using a free electoral system. The United States of America is a democracy. The people rule by electing others to represent them in government.

A **monarchy** is a system by which a nation is ruled by a king or queen. Power is passed down through the ruling family. The ruling family may be referred to as the Royal Family, and the next king or queen is usually a child of the current king or queen. Jordan is an example of a country that operates as a monarchy.

In a **totalitarian** government, the nation is ruled by one political party. People are typically forced to do what the government tells them to do.

Theocracy is a form of government controlled by people who base the nation's laws on religious ideas. Sometimes, the rulers are said to act as agents for a particular deity.

An **aristocracy** is ruled by the aristocrats who are usually educated, wealthy people. Many monarchies have been ruled by aristocrats. While a monarchy is ruled by the king or queen, an aristocracy can be ruled by any collection of aristocrats.

A **dictatorship** is a system under which a single, unelected leader uses force or coercion to keep control. In a military dictatorship, the army is in control of the nation. Typically, little attention is paid to individuals, personal freedoms, or public opinion.

When discussing types of governments, another important term to consider is **anarchy**. Anarchy is a chaotic situation where there is no government. This can happen after a revolution or a civil war, usually because the previous government failed, and rival groups are trying to replace it.

Activities

Activity A: Match the type of government with the correct definitions.

_____ 1. Democracy   a. rule by one political party;

_____ 2. Totalitarian   b. there is no government;

_____ 3. Aristocracy   c. power is held by the people;

_____ 4. Anarchy   d. rule by a king or queen;

_____ 5. Dictatorship   e. rule under laws based on religious ideas;

_____ 6. Theocracy   f. rule by aristocrats;

_____ 7. Monarchy   g. rule of a single, unelected leader by force.

Activity B: Fill in the blanks.

1. A government has the authority to make _____, resolve

   _____, and issue _____.

2. The United States has this type of government: _____.

3. When the army is in control of a nation, this is called: _____.

Activity C: True or False.

_____ 1. A government is responsible for providing order and stability to a nation, state, or country.

_____ 2. Jordan is an example of a dictatorship.

_____ 13. In some theocracies, rulers are said to act as direct agents for a deity.

Answer Key

Activity A

__c__ 1. Democracy

__a__ 2. Totalitarian

__f__ 3. Aristocracy

__b__ 4. Anarchy

__g__ 5. Dictatorship

__e__ 6. Theocracy

__d__ 7. Monarchy

a. rule by one political party;

b. there is no government;

c. power is held by the people;

d. rule by a king or queen;

e. rule under laws based on religious ideas;

f. rule by aristocrats

g. rule of a single unelected leader by force.

Activity B

1. A government has the authority to make ___laws_____, resolve _disputes_, and issue _administrative decisions__.

2. The United States has this type of government: _democracy_.

3. When the army is in control of a nation, this is called: _military dictatorship_.

Activity C

_T___ 11. A government is responsible for providing order and stability to a nation, state, or country.

_F___ 12. Jordan is an example of a dictatorship.

_T___ 13. In some theocracies, rulers are said to act as direct agents for a deity.