

# Chapter 1: Principles of Government

Section 1  
Lecture Notes

# AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

PEARSON

# ► Objectives

1. Define government and the basic powers every government holds.
2. Describe the four defining characteristics of a state.
3. Identify four theories that attempt to explain the origin of the state.
4. Understand the purpose of government in the United States and other countries.

# ▶ Key Terms

- **government:** the institution through which a society makes and enforces public policies
- **public policies:** all the things a government decides to do
- **legislative power:** the power to make laws
- **executive power:** the power to enforce and administer laws
- **judicial power:** the power to interpret laws
- **dictatorship:** a government in which all power rests with an individual or small group

## ▶ Key Terms, cont.

- **democracy:** a government in which supreme authority rests with the people
- **state:** a body of people, living in a defined territory, with a government that can make and enforce law without the consent of any higher authority
- **sovereign:** to have supreme and absolute power within a territory
- **divine right:** the theory that governments gain their authority from the will of God

- What is government and what is its purpose?
  - Government is the institution that allows a society to make and enforce public policies
  - Every government has three basic types of power. These include the **legislative power** to make laws, the **executive power** to enforce laws, and the **judicial power** to interpret laws and settle disputes.

# ▶ Basic Types of Government

- In a **dictatorship**, all powers are held by one person or group.
- In a **democracy**, authority lies with the people.
- The U.S. government gives executive power to the President, legislative power to Congress, and judicial power to the Supreme Court.

# ▶ The State

- States are the main unit of government in the world today.
  - There are more than 200 states, varying greatly in size, population, and power.
  - A state is not strictly the same thing as a nation (which refers to large groups of people) or a country (which refers to a particular region).
- Every state has four basic characteristics: **population, territory, sovereignty, and a government.**

# ► Population and Territory

- Every state has a **population**, whether large or small, diverse or homogeneous.
  - China (right) has a large population that is reflected in its landscape.
- A state must have **territory**, land with known and recognized boundaries.





# ► Sovereignty and Government

- Every state has **sovereignty**, the absolute power within its own territory to decide domestic and foreign policies.
- Each state has a **government**, a political organization to make and enforce its policies.



## ► Origins of the State

- Many theories have been developed to explain the origins of the state.
- These include the **force theory, the evolutionary theory, the divine right theory,** and the **social contract theory.**

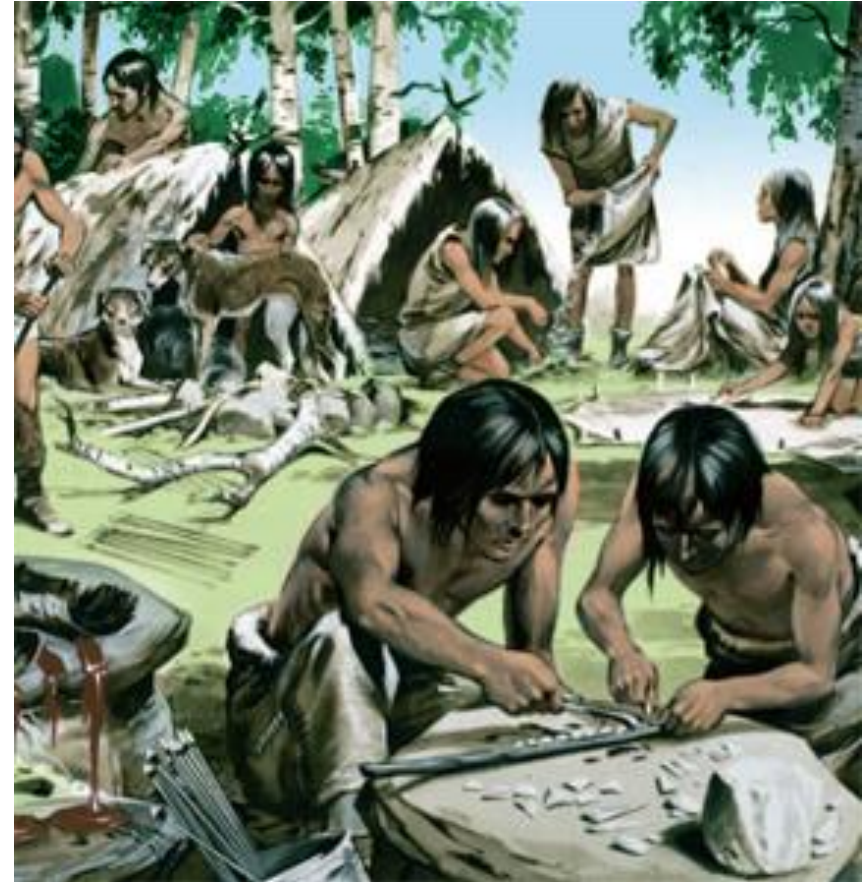
# ► The Force Theory

- The *force theory* holds that an individual or group claims control over a territory and forces the population to submit.
- The state then becomes sovereign and those in control form a government.



# ▶ Evolutionary Theory

- The *evolutionary theory* says that a population formed out of primitive families.
- The heads of these families became the government.
- When these families settled in one territory and claimed it as their own, they became a sovereign state.



# ▶ Divine Right Theory

- The *divine right theory* holds that God created the state, making it sovereign.
- The government is made up of those chosen by God to rule a certain territory. The population must obey their ruler.



# ► Social Contract Theory

- Checkpoint: What is the Social Contract Theory?
  - The *social contract theory* was developed by philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean Jacques Rousseau and has had the greatest influence on United States government.
  - This theory holds that the people chose to give the state enough power to promote the well-being of everyone and that all political power comes from the will of the people.



# ► Social Contract Theory, cont.

- Social contract theory holds that the people can withhold power from an unjust government.
- In the political cartoon, what types of government might restrict people from “having it as good as this”?



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# ▶ Purpose of Government

- The Preamble to the U.S. Constitution sets forth the basic purposes of America's government.
  - It forms “a more perfect Union” by uniting the state governments and the American people.
  - It establishes justice by attempting to create and administer laws in a fair, reasonable, and impartial fashion.



## ► Purpose of Government, cont.

- Government offers domestic tranquility, or peace at home, by providing law and order.
- Government provides for the nation's defense by maintaining armed forces and safeguarding national security.

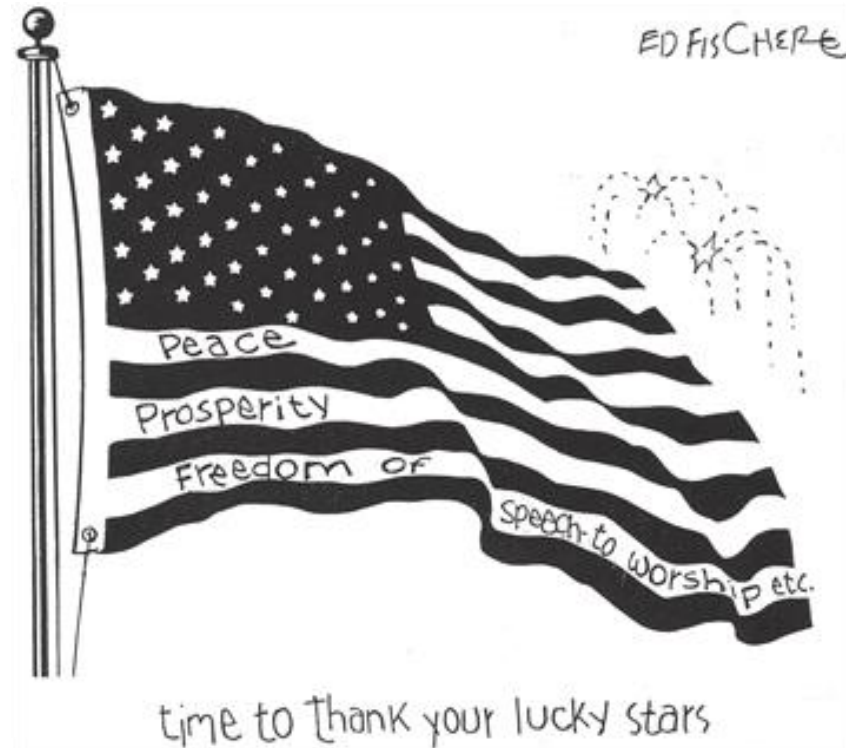


## ▶ Purpose of Government, cont.

- The U.S. government promotes the general welfare of citizens by providing services, such as public education, that benefit all or most people.
- The government helps secure the blessings of liberty by guaranteeing many individual rights and liberties.
  - These freedoms are not absolute—you are not free to violate the liberties of others.

## ► Purpose of Government, cont.

- Each generation must strive for patriotism by learning and protecting these freedoms.
  - What does the phrase “thank your lucky stars” in the political cartoon at right refer to?



# ▶ Review

- Now that you have learned about what government is and what its purpose is, go back and answer the Chapter Essential Question.
  - Is government necessary?

Chapter 1: Principles of Government

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# ► Objectives

1. Classify governments according to three sets of characteristics.
2. Define systems of government based on who can participate.
3. Identify different ways that power can be distributed, geographically, within a state.
4. Describe a government by the distribution of power between the executive and legislative branch.

## ▶ Key Terms

- **autocracy:** government in which a single person holds all political power
- **oligarchy:** government in which a small, usually self-appointed group has the sole power to rule
- **unitary government:** a government in which all power belongs to one central agency
- **federal government:** a government in which power is divided between one central and several local governments

## ▶ Key Terms, cont.

- **division of powers:** the split of power between central and local governments
- **confederation:** an alliance of independent states
- **presidential government:** a government with separate executive and legislative branches
- **parliamentary government:** a government in which the executive branch is part of the legislative branch and subject to its control



# ► Introduction

- What are some forms of government in the world today?
  - Democracies and dictatorships are classified according to who can participate in government.
  - Unitary, federal, and confederation-style governments are classified based on how power is divided geographically.
  - Presidential and parliamentary governments are defined by the relationship between the executive and legislative branches.

# ▶ Direct Democracy

- In a direct or **pure democracy**, the people pass laws by discussing and voting on them in meetings, such as town meetings.
- This system works only in small communities.



# ▶ Indirect Democracy

- In an indirect or **representative democracy**, the people elect agents who make and carry out the laws.
- These representatives rule with the consent of the governed and can be removed by the people at election time.



# ▶ Example Democracies

- The United Kingdom is a **constitutional monarchy**.
- Most power lies with the Parliament, which is elected by the people.
- The queen is the head of state, while the head of government is the Prime Minister, who is the head of the leading party in Parliament.



## ▶ Example Democracies, cont.

- The United States is a **constitution-based federal republic**.
- The President and members of Congress are chosen by the people.
- The President is both Chief of State and Head of Government.



# ▶ Dictatorships

- Checkpoint: What is the difference between an oligarchy and an autocracy?
  - In an **autocracy**, one person holds total political power, while in an **oligarchy** a small elite group shares political power.
  - Both are forms of dictatorships, holding absolute and unchallenged authority over the people, who have no say in government.

# ▶ Example Dictatorships

- Some dictatorships are like that of China, where people can vote only for candidates from one political party and the legislature does whatever the dictatorship says.
- Other dictatorships are like the one in Myanmar, where the military rules and there are no elections.



# ▶ Unitary Government

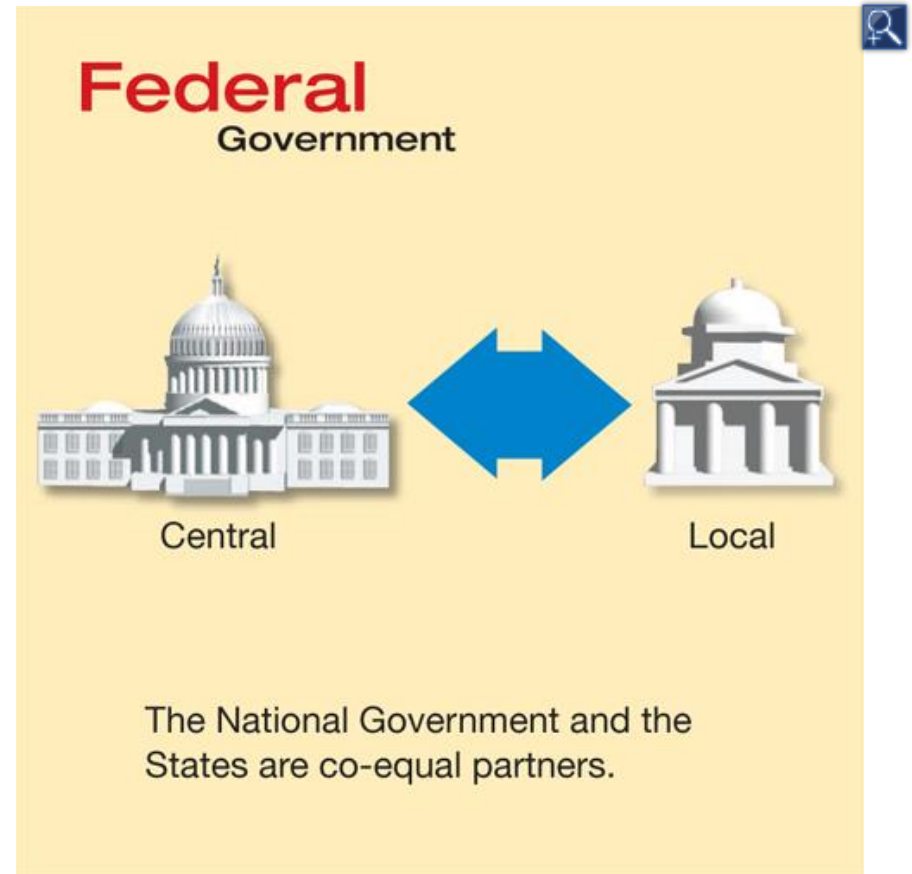
- In a unitary model, all power belongs to the central government, which may grant some powers to local governments.
- The powers of the central government may be limited or unlimited.
- Most governments in the world are unitary in form.





# ▶ Federal Government

- In the federal model, power is divided between a central government and several local governments, usually according to a constitution.
- The U.S. and some 25 other states have federal forms of government.



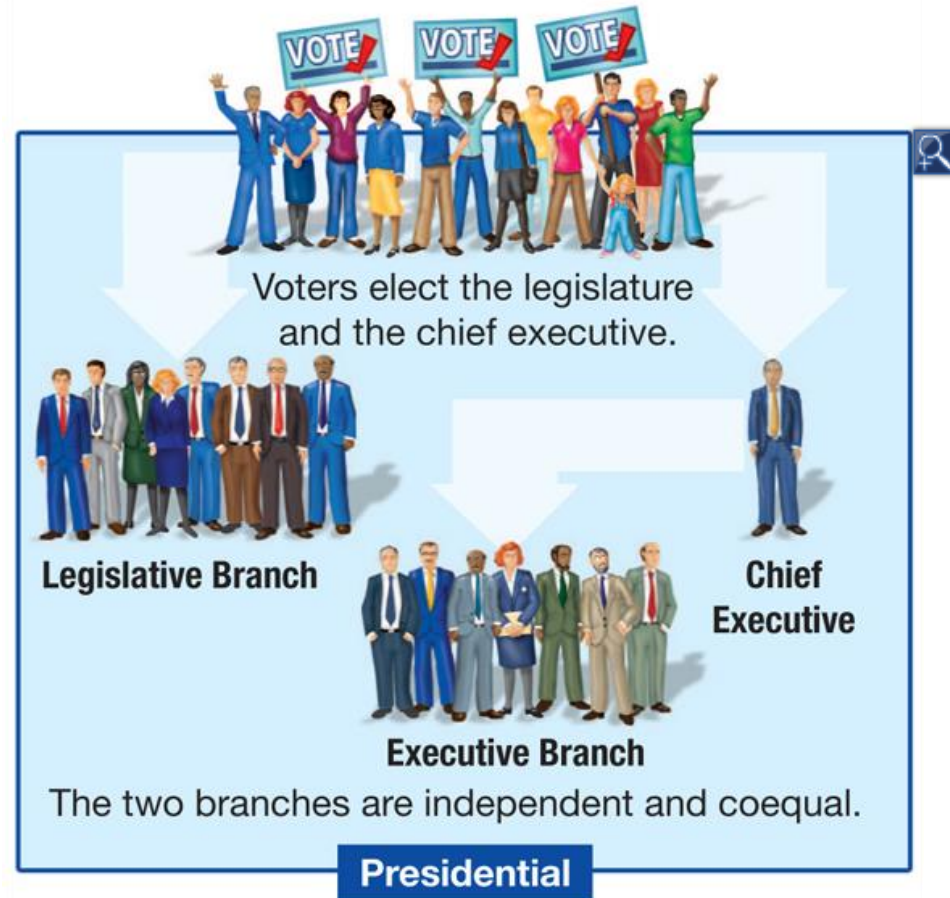
# ► Confederate Government

- A confederation is an alliance of independent governments that grant limited powers, usually involving defense or foreign affairs, to a central government.
- The European Union is similar to a confederation.



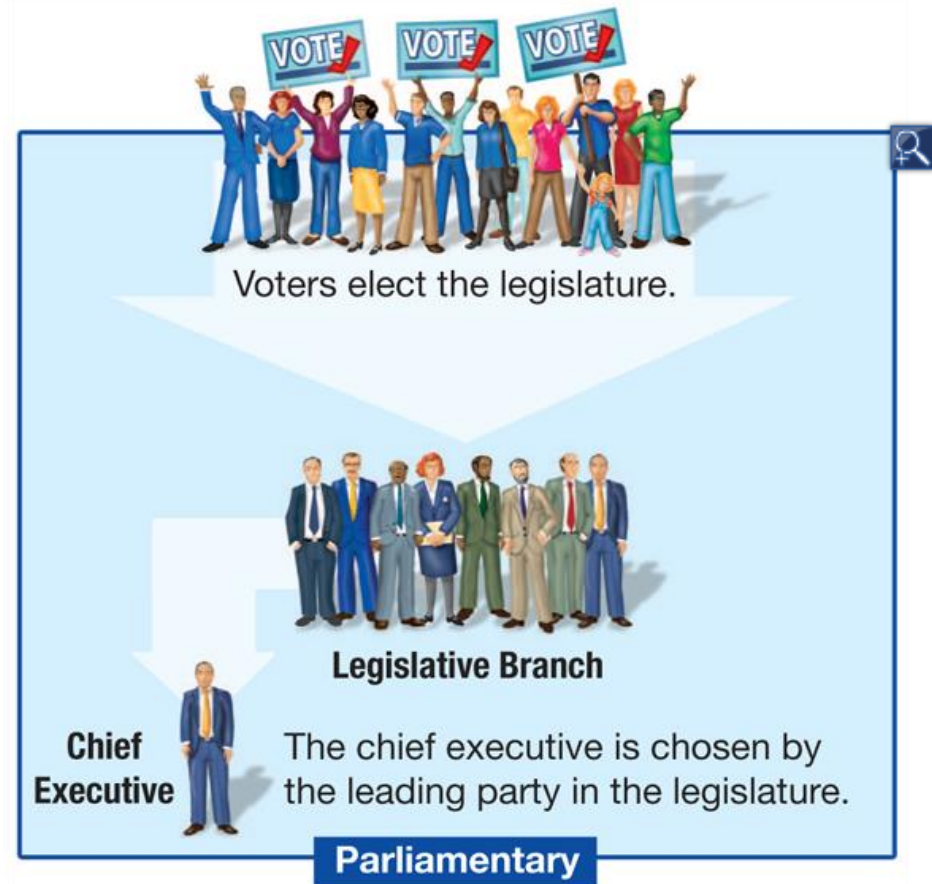
# ▶ Presidential Government

- A presidential government divides executive and legislative power between two branches.
- The details of this separation of powers are spelled out in a constitution.



# ▶ Parliamentary Government

- In a parliamentary government, the legislature chooses the executive, which is part of the legislature and under its control.
- A majority of world governments use the parliamentary system, which lacks some checks and balances but promotes cooperation between the executive and legislative branches.



## ▶ Parliamentary Government, cont.

- The prime minister is the head of the leading party in Parliament and chooses cabinet members from the Parliament.
- If the Parliament loses confidence in the Prime Minister and cabinet, elections are held to form a new government.



# ▶ Review

- Now that you have learned about some of the forms of government in the world today, go back and answer the Chapter Essential Question.
  - Is government necessary?

Chapter 1: Principles of Government

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# ► Objectives

1. Understand the foundations of democracy.
2. Analyze the connections between democracy and the free enterprise system.



# ▶ Key Terms

- **majority rule:** the principle that the will of the majority controls the actions of government
- **compromise:** the process of blending and adjusting competing views and interests
- **citizen:** one who holds certain rights and responsibilities within a state
- **free enterprise system:** an economic system characterized by the private ownership of capital goods, private investment, and a competitive marketplace that determines success or failure

- What are the basic concepts of democracy?
  - Recognition of the fundamental worth and dignity of every person
  - Respect for the equality of all persons
  - Faith in majority rule and an insistence upon minority rights
  - Acceptance of the necessity of compromise
  - Insistence upon the widest possible degree of individual freedom

# ▶ Worth of the Individual

- Democracy is based on a belief in the dignity and worth of every individual.
- Individuals can be forced to do things that serve the good of the many, like paying taxes.
- Respect for individuals means that serving the many should not be a case of simply benefiting the majority over the minority, but of trying to meet the needs of *all* individuals in society.

# ► Equality of All Persons

- Checkpoint: To what are citizens entitled under the democratic concept of equality?
  - All citizens are entitled to equality of opportunity and equality before the law.
  - This means that no person should be held back based on gender, race, color, or religion.



## ► Equality of All Persons, cont.

- Every person must be free to develop as fully as they wish. Achieving this goal of equality is an ongoing process.
- For example, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court ruled that segregated schools were unequal.



## ► Majority Rules, Minority Rights

- Democracy holds that the majority will be right more often than it is wrong and will be right more often than any small group.
- The majority will not always make the best decisions or even the right decisions, but in a democracy their choices can be improved or changed over time.
- The majority must respect the rights of minorities and listen to their viewpoint.

# ▶ Necessity of Compromise

- Compromise is a key part of the democratic process.
  - In a society made of many equal individuals with different opinions and interests, public decisions require compromises.
  - Most public issues can be addressed in several ways.
  - Determining which way best meets the needs of the public also requires compromise.

## ► Necessity of Compromise, cont.

- Compromise is a way of reaching majority agreement. Not all compromises are good or necessary.
  - Who do the chefs represent in this cartoon?





# ▶ Individual Freedom

- Democracy cannot allow complete individual freedom, which would lead to anarchy and lawlessness.
- Democracy does require that each individual be as free as possible without interfering with the freedom of others.
- Democratic government works constantly to find the balance between individual freedom and government authority.

# ► Citizenship

- Every democratic citizen has duties that they *must* obey.
- Each citizen also has responsibilities that they *should* fulfill to improve the quality of their government and community.



# ► Citizenship Overview

<b>Duties</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Serving on a jury</li><li>• Serving as a witness</li><li>• Attending school</li><li>• Paying taxes</li><li>• Obeying local, state, and national laws</li><li>• Draft registration</li><li>• Respecting the rights of others</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Voting</li><li>• Volunteering</li><li>• Participating in civic life</li><li>• Understanding the workings of our government</li></ul>

# ▶ How Free Enterprise Works

- Free enterprise, also called capitalism, is an economic system based on private ownership, individual initiative, profit, and competition.
- Individuals, not the government, decide what to make, how to make it, at what price to sell it, and whether to buy it.
  - Greater demand tends to increase prices, while lower demand tends to decrease them.

# ▶ Government and Free Enterprise

- Both democracy and free enterprise are based on the idea of individual freedom.
- U.S. government involvement in the economy is aimed at protecting both the public and private enterprise.
- The government regulates many economic activities to encourage competition and protect public welfare.
- The government also offers many essential services, such as public education and transportation.

## ▶ Review

- Now that you have learned about the basic concepts of democracy, go back and answer the Chapter Essential Question.
  - Is government necessary?