**Government:** Government is the institutions, people, and processes by which a nation-state or political unit is ruled and its public policy created and administered.

**Nation-State:** A Nation-State is a political unit with a defined territory, organized under a government and having the authority to make and enforce the law

**Characteristics of a Nation-State:**

1. **Territory**
* The land that the people of that country occupy.
* The amount of land varies from country to country.
	+ Example: Russia and Bahrain
		- Russia has a huge amount of land
			* 6,592,800 sq mi
		- Bahrain is a rather small island located in the Persian Gulf.
			* 290 sq mi
1. **Population**
	* the people who inhabit a territory or state
	* Population also varies greatly from country to country
		+ Example: Russia’s population 141,927,297 (2010 estimate) and Bahrain’s population 807,000 (2008 estimate)
2. **Sovereignty**
* The principle that the state exercises absolute power over its territory, system of government, and population.
1. **Government**
	* Made up of people who have the authority and power to rule.
	* Each nation-state has a national government
	* Part of being a country is having your government recognized internationally by other governments.
	* The form of government will vary from country to country
		+ From Monarchy, to Dictatorship, to Democracies.

**Sovereignty:** The principle that the state exercises absolute power over its territory, system of government, and population.

* The authority of a nation-state to rule itself.
* All governments have the right to rule themselves and make decisions without outside interference.
	+ This however is better said than done. Often governments can have their decisions influenced by other nations.
		- By international aid and other forms of funding from other countries.

Purposes of Government:

1. **Protection**
	* Governments have organized throughout history to defend themselves from outside forces.
		+ E.g. animals, other people, natural disasters, etc.
	* People have the right to rule themselves and make the decisions in order to protect themselves from outside forces.
		+ Once again this is the whole idea of sovereignty
2. **Maintenance of Public Order**
	* Protecting citizens
	* Today, governments pass laws in order to help ensure order within a country
		+ To help promote a sense of justice
3. **Resolution of social conflicts**
	* Conflicts between groups are unavoidable in human societies
		+ Just look at you and your friends as an example
	* Many times the issue is the one group feels unjustly treated by another group and traditionally these conflicts often lead to war
	* So in order to prevent wars, people turned to their governments (whether by a decree by a King or by democratic elections) to settle these issues
4. **Responsibility for a stable economy**
	* This is an extension on what governments did traditionally
	* Government’s influence in the economy has changed greatly over time.
		+ Ex. The U.S. in the late 19th century 🡪 lassiez-faire, the government was expected to leave the economy alone. The idea being that the market would correct itself.
		+ Ex. France 🡪 is very active in its economy, owning many of the major industries.
	* Other countries are will also regulate business, and monitor currency in order to stabilize their economy.
5. **Provision of public service**
	* This is an extension on what governments did traditionally
	* Today governments are expected to provide a wide array of services for its citizens.
		+ From transportation to benefits for the poor and elderly to the health care act that was passed by President Obama.
	* The U.S. Government’s role in its citizen’s everyday lives has continued to grow in recent decades.
		+ From FDR to LBJ’s Great Society program