**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