Forms of Government

Number Who Participate –

1. **Autocracy** 🡪 Rule By One
   * + Auto = Self.
     + Literally translated it means “rule by oneself”
   * **Monarchy**
     + Government in which the ruler’s power is hereditary.
     + One gains power in a monarchy through inheritance.
     + Their rule evolved during the Middle Ages in absolutism
       - Absolutism - a form of government in which monarchs had no restraints on their power.
     + This form of government gave way to democratic forms of government.
     + Even though their power was gone, the titles still remain. Modern monarchs (like Queen Elizabeth) are ceremonial or constitutional and they do not have much power in the government.
   * **Dictatorship**
     + A form of government in which an absolute ruler controls the power, often through fear or force, and ignores the will of the people.
     + No political opposition is allowed.
     + Have many controls over the citizens.
     + They seize and keep power by force
2. Rule By A Few 🡪 **Oligarchy**
   * **Aristocracy**
     + Greek meaning “most virtuous, noblest or finest”
       - Elites
     + Some aristocracies were determined by social position or wealth.
     + The Greek Philosopher Pluto believed in Philosopher Kings or rule by the highly educated scholars.
     + Example: Dukes, Lords, etc.
   * **Theocracy**
     + The power to rule lies in the hands of a religious group.
     + Today, Theocracies rarely exist in their true form.
     + In some countries religious groups still have a powerful influence over the government.
     + Example: Iran
       - Iranian Revolution 1978. The Shah fled the country and the Ayatollah Khomeini returned from exile to Tehran. December 1979 the country approved a theocratic constitution
   * **Political Parties**
     + Control by a political party.
       - Ex. USSR, China
     + The political party gained complete control over the government/country.
     + Examples: The Soviet Union or USSR and China when they were under the control of the communist party.
3. **Rule By Many**
   * **Democracy** - A system of government by the people, exercised either directly or through elected representatives.
     + **Direct Democracy**
       - A democratic system of government in which all citizens participate in politics and decision-making.
       - This form of government isn’t very easy or practical at a national level.
       - It is used in some small New England towns today, they will still gather once or twice a year to vote directly on major issues and expenditures of the town.
         * Example: New England Town Meetings, Ancient Greece
     + **Representative Democracy**
       - A democratic system of government in which policies are made by officials accountable to the people who elect them.
       - Criticism – Representatives eventually become elites, and they often make decisions.
       - Making this more like a government of the few rather than a government of the many.
       - Others will argue that those individuals were elected to represent a group of people and that those people (the ones who voted for them) respect their judgment.