

## Government Vocabulary List

**Government:** The institution through which a society makes and enforces its public policies

**Democracy:** Government by the people

**Republic:** A form of government in which the people select representatives to govern them and make laws.

**Theocracy:** A government ruled by or subject to religious authority.

**Dictatorship:** A form of government in which the leader has absolute power and authority.

**Oligarchy:** A government ruled by a few powerful people

**Autocracy:** A system of government in which the power to rule is in the hands of a single individual

**Monarchy:** A government ruled by a king or queen

**Monarch:** A king or queen

**Totalitarianism:** A political system in which the government has total control over the lives of individual citizens.

**Communism:** An economic system in which the central government directs all major economic decisions

**Citizen:** A person with certain rights and responsibilities in his or her country or community

**Vote:** To make an official choice for or against someone or something

**Dictator:** A ruler who has complete power over a country

**Figurehead:** A person who appears to rule even though real power rests with someone else

**Unitary Government:** A way of organizing a nation so that all power resides in the central government.

**Federal Government:** Powers are divided between a central government and several local governments

**Confederate Government:** A form of government in which several states join together for a common purpose

**Parliament:** (in the UK) the highest legislature, consisting of the sovereign, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons.

**House of Lords:** Upper house of Parliament, for nobles and bishops

**House of Commons:** The first legislative body of Parliament whose members are elected

**Prime Minister:** The leader of the majority party in Parliament who leads the cabinet today

**Checks and Balances:** Used to keep the government from getting too powerful in one branch

**Executive Branch:** Branch of government that enforces the laws

**Legislative Branch:** Branch of government that makes the laws

**Judicial Branch:** Branch of government that decides if laws are carried out fairly.

**President:** Head of the Executive Branch

**Vice President:** President of the Senate and second in command behind the president

**Bicameral:** A legislature consisting of two parts, or houses

**Congress:** The legislature of the United States government

**House of Representatives:** The lower legislative house of the United States Congress

**United States Senate:** The higher legislative house of the United States Congress

**Supreme Court:** The highest court in the United States

**Veto:** A constitutional right to reject a decision or proposal made by a law-making body.

**The Constitution:** States how each branch of government can check one another and citizen rights.

**Bill of Rights:** The first ten amendments to the Constitution

**Amendment:** A change to the Constitution