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## DEMOCRACY

A **democracy** (a word from the [Greek language](#), *demokratia* meaning *rule by the people*) is a kind of [government](#). A democracy is a system where people are able to decide how their country or [community](#) should be run.

The most common type of democracy is **representative democracy**, where people elect their leaders (normally by *holding an [election](#)*) who decide the [laws](#). Elections are usually held every few years. When they happen, whoever gets the most votes will end up with the most power, until the next election.

An important part of representative democracy is political parties. Politicians belong to a political party, an organisation of politicians with similar ideas on what to do. Therefore, in elections, people do not just vote for a single person, but for political parties.

To become a stable democracy, a state usually undergoes a process of [democratic consolidation](#).

### Kinds of democracy

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There are two kinds of democracy: Direct and indirect.

In direct democracies, everyone has the right to make laws together. One modern example of direct democracy is a [referendum](#), which is the [name](#) for the kind of way to pass a law where everyone in the community votes on it. Direct democracies are not usually used to run countries, because it is hard to get millions of people to get together all the time to make laws and other decisions. There is not enough time.

In an indirect, or representative democracy, people choose representatives to make laws for them. These people can be mayors, councilmen, members of Parliament, or other government officials. This is a much more common kind of democracy. Large communities like cities and countries use this method, but it may not be needed for a small group.

### History

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#### Ancient origins

This kind of government was developed long ago by the ancient [Greeks](#) in the city of [Athens](#). They had everyone who was a [citizen](#) ([slaves](#), [women](#), foreigners, and children could not vote) got together in one area. The Assembly would talk about what kinds of laws they wanted and voted on them. The Council would suggest the laws. In the Assembly, the participants are only the citizens. In the Council, they would pick them by draws (lot). The participants in the Council would change every [year](#) and the amount of people in the Council is at the most 500. The Greek citizens would pick a leader by writing the name of their favorite [candidate](#) on a piece of [stone](#) or [wood](#). The person with the most votes became the [leader](#).

## **Middle Ages**

In the Middle Ages, there were many systems in which there were elections, although only a few people could join in at this time. The [Parliament of England](#) began from the [Magna Carta](#), a document which showed that the King's power was limited, and protected certain rights of the people. The first elected parliament was De Montfort's Parliament in England in 1265.

However, only a few people could actually join in. Parliament was chosen by only a few percent of the people (in 1780, less than 3% of people joined in). The ruler also had the power to call parliaments. After a long time, the power of Parliament began to grow. After the [Glorious Revolution](#) in 1688, the English Bill of Rights made Parliament more powerful. Later, the ruler became a [symbol](#) instead of having real power.

### EXERCISES

- 1.- What 's democracy meaning?
- 2.- How many types of democracy are there?
- 3.- What is a referéndum?
- 4.-Where was democracy born?
- 5.- What was Carta Magna?