

Democracy versus Autocracy Comparison

Comparison Element	Democracy	Autocracy
Meaning of Term	From Greek - Demos means "people" and Kratos means "power" or "authority".	From Greek - Auto means "self" and Kratos means "power" or "authority".
Government	The power and strength of the government are given to it by the people.	One person or group holds all the power, without the participation, or sometimes even the consent, of the people.
Freedoms & Rights	Identified in country's constitution and created by laws.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determined by person or group in power ▪ Often severely restrictive to suppress opponents. ▪ Vary based on religion, sex, status etc. ▪ Books, magazines censored by government ▪ Ability to express one's point of view, to assemble etc. often limited.
Examples	United States Iraq England Poland Italy	Cuba - dictatorship run by a single individual Denmark - monarchy run by a King Iran - dictatorship run by religious group China - dictatorship run by Communist party Venezuela - dictatorship run by a single individual
Constitution	Document that describes how a government is organized and the basic laws of the country. Usually requires a large majority of the people to change.	Similar but can be easily changed or simply ignored by those in power to suit their needs.
How Leaders Come to Power	Elected (by voting) by the people to hold office for a specific length of time.	Sometimes by force - one group overthrows another group. Sometimes leadership is "inherited" as in case of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ governments headed by king or queen and their sons or daughters become king or queen ▪ dictatorship where dictator picks his successor - often a family member.