



Political Systems






What comes to mind when you hear the following terms?

- ★ **Communism**
- ★ **Democracy**
- ★ **Imperialism**
- ★ **Theocracy**
- ★ **Monarchy**
- ★ **Dictatorship**

If you are like me, then you probably had certain images flash before your mind's eye, or maybe you even felt certain emotions when you read a particular term. In this week's lesson, we will be learning more about these forms of governments, so hold on to your hats...you just may get some more images to add to your collection;-)

Here's the "image" of what is in store for us this week:

 <p>OBJECTIVES</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. to answer the question, "Why do we need government?"2. to define the term, <i>government</i>3. to identify the source for government's authority4. to list, define, and apply the two foundations for law5. to cite the purpose for civil government6. to identify the defining characteristics of a monarchy, theocracy, dictatorship, democracy, and constitutional republic7. to list examples of the various forms of government that are listed above8. to compare the characteristics of the USA government to those of Great Britain, Japan, and Mexico9. to define the characteristics of the Communist form of government
 <p>Resources</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The A Beka text, <i>American Government</i>, chapter 2, pages 15-37.2. The Magruder's text, chapter 22.2. This lesson
 <p>Assignments</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reading all of the assigned pages in this lesson and text2. Group discussions (2)3. Govt200.15 assignment

Just in case you want to complete this week's lesson in daily bite-size pieces, here is a suggested schedule for you:

Week 15	
Monday	Lesson pages 1-7
Tuesday	Lesson pages 8-11
Wednesday	Lesson pages 11-16
Thursday	Lesson pages 16-19
Friday	Lesson pages 20-23

Let's get on with it, shall we!?

Monday

I'm curious to know just what type of images jumped into your mind's eye when you read those 6 terms at the beginning of the lesson.



Group Discussion Time

Describe your thoughts or images of those 6 terms for the benefit of your fellow students in the week 15 Group Discussion conference.

Here are some of the images that came to my mind:

Communism



Democracy



Freedom

Imperialism

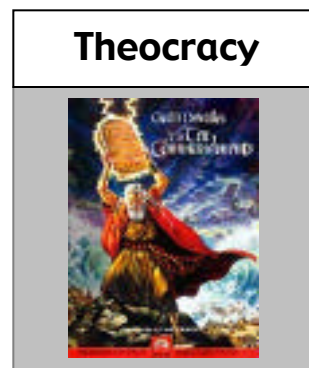


“The sun never sets on the British Empire”

Dictatorship



Theocracy



Monarchy

So did any of you have the same or similar images in your mind for those political systems?

Speaking of political systems, our lesson for this week is all about political systems. We'll be just scratching the surface of this huge topic, but I hope that you'll get interested in learning more about this "stuff" in your future academic careers. Our two textbooks will provide much of the information that we'll use this week, and each text presents a different "chunk" of it, with the exception of the topic of Communism; both texts present a subsection on this form of government (which is also a form of economics as we'll soon learn in week 16's lesson).

We will begin our week's lesson with the A Beka book, and then we'll move into the Magruder textbook. We'll conclude by doing a study on communism by referring to both textbooks.

We'll start our journey into our lesson by reading from the A Beka textbook. Please turn to chapter 2 which starts on page 15.

Section 1 – Foundations of Civil Government



Please read pages 16-19 before continuing with the lesson.

The questions that we need to answer from this section are as follows:

1. What is government?
2. Why do we need government?
3. How did the founders of the USA establish government for the new nation?

What is government?

Your text states that government is “the authority and power to control, to direct, and to rule the actions and affairs of others.” Ah, but one of you sharp intellectual types will certainly ask, “But by what or whose authority does a nation govern its people? Why should a nation have any authority over an individual?” Those are good questions, especially in this day when “individual rights” and interest in the occult’s “god-self” are influencing our culture and our own thinking. According to the God-breathed words found in the Bible,

...Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? (Genesis 18: 25B)

For the kingdom is the Lord’s: and he is the governor among the nations. (Psalm 22: 28)

The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof: the world, and they that dwell therein. (Psalm 24: 1)

God is the ultimate authority over all the earth, and from Him comes all authority for all things. Jesus said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28: 18b). So let there be no doubt that GOD has all authority in this universe, and it is from Him that governments have their authority to rule over its people. Government is God’s design for mankind; government is HIS idea. Now granted, His design was for a theocratic form of government where God Himself was the supreme ruler, and all His people obeyed his direct laws and followed His word as relayed to them by His chosen prophet. But now in our present form of government, God has established governments to restrain evil and protect the innocent. Is this just my opinion? Not quite. Let’s see what the Word tells us about his topic:

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. (Romans 13:1)

Hmmm...seems like God takes this government stuff pretty seriously! So we can safely define government as a human authority, sanctioned and ordained by God, for restricting evil and for promoting and protecting good.

In answering the question, “What is government?”, we touched on the issue of answering why we need government, which brings us to our second question for this section:

2. Why do we need government?

As we have discussed above, God has placed governments in power to control, direct, and rule the actions and affairs of people. The author of the text maintains that “God’s original purpose for government was to punish the evil and to reward the good.” Another one of our bright NorthStar students may be wondering, “OK, I know what government is why we need it, but how does a government actually govern?” Good question. I have two answers to that:

- A. by a written code of law
- B. by citizens who are willing to subject themselves to that written code of law. It is this part of the “equation” that is most difficult for mankind to fulfill. As our founders have said, good laws are no substitute for good men executing good laws.

Speaking of law, the author of your text identified two “earmarks” of any civilization:

- 1. a written code of law
- 2. an organized form of civil government

The written code of law, according to Sir William Blackstone, has two foundations:

- 1. revealed law
- 2. natural law

Be sure to know the difference between these two types of law, and know of examples of each.

That’s all for today! Tomorrow, we will cover section 2 from pages 19-26. See you in Tuesday’s lesson.

Tuesday

Section 2 –Forms of Government



Please read pages 19-26 before continuing with the lesson.

In today's lesson, we will summarize the following forms of government:

1. theocracy
2. monarchy
3. dictatorship
4. democracy
5. constitutional republic

*** Note: the following information will be quite abbreviated because the author of the text has provided a very nice summary of these 5 forms of government on page 26, and hence, there is no reason for me to duplicate his effort. Be sure to thoroughly review that information.

Theocracy



When I think of this form of government, I immediately think of the “Ten Commandments” movie, and in particular, two scenes:

1. God inscribing the ten commandments on the stone tablets by a fiery stylus, and
2. the Red Sea parting as the Jews walked through it

A theocracy is the perfect form of government but because it does rely on man's obedience, a theocracy has its weaknesses. The term theocracy comes from two Greek words: *theos* which means “god” and *kratia* which means “to rule”.

The text goes on to say that all forms of government fall into one of two categories : autocracy or democracy. For our study, we can make the following classifications:

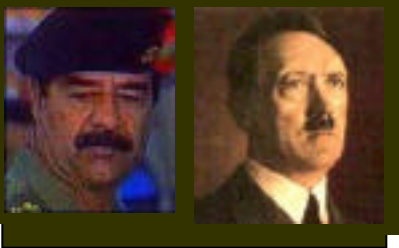
1. autocracy: theocracy, monarchy, and dictatorship
2. democracy: direct democracy, republican democracy, constitutional republic

Let's look at our second example of an autocracy, the monarchy.



The word, monarch, comes from two Greek words meaning "to rule alone". In your history books, you will find other words to describe this form of government: king, queen, emperor, caesar, czar, kaiser, shah, chiefs, and sultan...different terms which all describe the same approach to government. In a monarchy form of government, you may have an absolute or a constitutional monarchy. Be sure that you can cite examples of each of these two types of monarchies.

Dictatorship



After reading over what the text has to tell us about dictators, I find that I don't have anything that I need to add to this brief discussion of this form of government. Be sure to know examples of historical and recent dictators.

(we'll skip over page 22 and part of 23 since we will be covering socialism and fascism next week when we study about different forms of economic systems)

Let's turn our attention from forms of autocracies to the other end of the spectrum, that being democracies.

Democracy



With a democracy, we have some form of rule by the people. We've spent the last 14 weeks studying about our USA form of democracy, so we don't need to rehash old knowledge. BUT...I do want to draw your attention to the very interesting quote by Alexander Tyler on page 23. To fully understand this quote, you need to understand the word, *largesse*, so be sure to get a dictionary out and look up the definition of this word. This man's quote is

Quite timely for us. Does it not seem that we are in the stage where the voters have discovered that they can, by their votes, put into power leaders who will promise and give the most financial benefits to the "underprivileged", "disenfranchised", "minorities", etc.? In California, the governor supported a law that would not allow ILLEGAL immigrants access to public medical care, education, and other services that LEGAL citizens and residents paid for from their taxes...and the minority (Hispanic) population was up in arms against this proposed law! They wanted tax monies to be given to support services to people who were in this country ILLEGALLY, and they have united to vote in leaders who have promised to give services away for free to people who are in this country illegally. Notice that the state of California, as a whole, favors the democratic party which has, in its history, favored providing for numerous services and benefits to minority groups by "redistributing" the nation's wealth by high taxation and federal regulations. OK, there's my 2 cents' worth on that quote ;-)



Back to democracies...the text lists three forms of democracy:

1. direct democracy
2. republican democracy (representative democracy)
3. constitutional democracy

Be sure that you can distinguish one form of democracy from another. Be sure to read this information on pages 23-26.

To summarize today's lesson, please turn to page 26 in the A Beka text and review the "In Brief" chart which presents the characteristics of the forms of government that we have been learning about today.

Wednesday

Today and tomorrow's lesson will be from the Magruder's text, so please get that book out and turn to chapter 22 which begins on page 574.

In today's "session", we'll summarize the characteristics of the governments of Great Britain and Japan.

Section 1 – Great Britain



Please read pages 574-581 before continuing with the lesson. As you read, be sure to be watching for the information that will allow you to complete the following chart.



Just a suggestion: take a moment to draw this chart in your US Govt. journal, and then be sure to fill in the missing 8 items as you read through this first section from the text.

A Comparison of Governments of the USA and Great Britain		
	USA	Great Britain
Constitution	Written	1.
Monarch	None	2.
Government Powers	Separated	3.
Legislative Body	Bicameral Congress	4.
Executive	President (head of state and head of Government)	5.
Judiciary	Independent Supreme Court	6.
Elections	Regularly scheduled	7.
Parties	2 major parties (Republicans and Democrats)	8.

Let's hit the high points of what we have just read:

A. The Unwritten Constitution

1. The Law of the Constitution- these are the documents, having the force of law, which contribute to the British constitution:
 - a. Magna Carta
 - b. Petition of Right
 - c. Bill of Rights
 - d. Misc. court decisions and acts from Parliament from throughout history

2. The Conventions of the Constitution-these are the unwritten parts of the British constitution, for example, many of the customs and powers of Parliament.

3. Continuity and Change – The open-ended nature of the British constitution allows flexibility within the system.

B. The Monarchy

1. Kings and queens are hereditary rulers of Great Britain
2. They have become figureheads who serve as heads of state, but not heads of government.

C. Parliament

1. The House of Lords – the House of Lords consists of hundreds of members who hold hereditary seats and hundreds of others whom the queen has appointed for life.
 - a. This House holds little real power, except an ability to force the House of Commons to reflect on their actions more than normally might be the case.
 - b. Through members called law lords, this House acts as the final court of appeals in civil and criminal cases.
2. The House of Commons – this House holds the real power of government, being representative, popularly elected, responsible for the executive and legislative functions of government.
3. The Prime Minister – though appointed by the queen, the prime minister is responsible to the House of Commons, where he or she is also the leader of the majority party.
4. The Cabinet – these are executive officers (about 20 ministers) selected by the prime minister who make and carry out public policy

D. Calling Elections

1. Elections must occur at least once every five years, but on no fixed date.
2. They may result from the prime minister's decision as to the best time for elections or from a loss of confidence in the prime minister's ability to govern, as evidenced by the loss of a critical vote in the House of Commons. Hmm...doesn't this seem to be a bit odd? There is no fixed date for the election; the prime minister can decide when the election will occur, oh, give or take a year or two! Hey, that is how they do it in Canada, also. The Prime Minister may call an election ANYTIME during a five year period. This year, 2000, the

- Prime Minister called for an election which was only 3 years into the 5 year session because he, Jean Chretien, saw that the opposition party led by Stockwell Day, is gaining momentum against his Liberal Party, and Chretien wants the election to happen soon so that the opposition party does not gain more support prior to an election. Personally, I like our USA system where we have a fixed date every 4 years...no surprises!
3. Take note of the information at the bottom of page 579 which explains how the prime minister may be “ousted” from office...interesting.

E. The Party System

1. There are two main political parties in the UK: The Conservative party and the Labour party.
2. The Conservative party appeals to middle- and upper-class Britons who favor private economic initiatives and the traditions of the British class system
3. The Labour party appeals to working-class voters and favors government involvement in the economy and a socially equal society (socialism!) Pay attention to the phrase, “...advocating the redistribution of wealth through...massive public welfare programs.” (page 580) This is the ol’ Robin Hood mentality of robbing from the rich to pay the poor. This mentality works fine for legends and cartoons, but not so for national policy. Don’t believe me? Maybe hearing it from Abraham Lincoln would help:

You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong. You cannot help small men by tearing down big men. You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich. You cannot lift the wage earner by pulling down the wage-payer. You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than your income. You cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatreds. You cannot build character and courage by taking away a man's initiative and independence. You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.

--Abraham Lincoln

F. Local government

1. Great Britain has a unitary form of government...power is centralized at the national level
2. All local governments derive their authority from Parliament.

Well, that wraps up our oh-so-brief review of the major characteristics of the UK government system. Let's now turn our attention to the government system operating today in Japan.

Section 2 – Japan



Please read pages 581-585 before continuing with the lesson.



As you read pages 581-585, I suggest that you write down the following questions in your journal and then answer them as you read the text.

1. Which type of government did Japan have until 1868?
2. Which type of government did Japan have from 1868-1945?
3. Which event caused a dramatic change in Japanese politics from 1945-1952?
4. What unique feature did the new constitution have?
5. What is the House of Councilors and what kind of power does it have?
6. What is the House of Representatives and what kind of power does it have?

7. What is the National Diet?

8. What form of government does Japan have?

Once you have answered these questions, please move on to Thursday's lesson.

Thursday

We continue our comparisons of other nations' governments today as we turn our attention now to Mexico. Please have your Magruder's text open to page 586.

In today's "session", we'll summarize the basic characteristics of the government of Mexico.

Section 3 – Mexico



Please read pages 586-590 before continuing with the lesson.

As you read, I suggest that you fill in the missing 11 information items in the following chart:

	MEXICO	UNITED STATES
Early History	Gained independence from 1.	Gained independence from England
Three Branches of Government	2. 3. 4.	Executive, Legislative, Judicial
Presidential Term	May serve 5. 6. -year term(s)	May serve two four-year terms

Congress	Bicameral: 7. 8.	Bicameral: Senate House of Representative
Court System	9.	Independent system of State and federal courts
Political Parties	10. major party: the 11.	Two major parties: Democratic and Republican

Today's look at the Mexican government will be fast and brief. Here are the major points from the reading that I'd like for you to note:

1. be sure that you know the information from the above 11 items
2. In the Mexican Senate, there are 64 senators, two from each of the 31 Mexican states and two from the Federal District which includes Mexico City. Sound familiar?
3. Mexico nationalized (stole/took over/confiscated) all property and assets of USA oil companies in 1938. The text is most quiet on this subject. Hmm...I wonder why.
4. The Mexican government "borrowed heavily from foreign lenders in the 1970's, on the expectation that oil prices would remain at their then high-level prices". When the price of oil plummeted, so did their economy. What may we learn there? I propose that we can learn several things:

Stay out of debt:

The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender. (Proverbs 22: 7)

Do not presuppose on the future:

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and also do this or that." But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. (James 4: 13-17)

5. One more thing before we close our look at the Mexican government: Mexico is divided into 31 states and one Federal District. Each state has a governor and a unicameral legislature and state courts. Notice that each state has a UNI-lateral legislature, not a BI-cameral one.

Alrighty, now on to the main event...our look at Communism as a form of government.

Section 4 – The Russian Federation...



Please read pages 592-99 in the Magruder's text before continuing with the lesson.

Please know that our study for today and Friday will not be on the current government of the former USSR, but it will focus on the government system of Communism.

Let's start with page 592 in your Magruder's text.



If you have not already noticed after reading these pages from the Magruder's text, let me point out the **great omissions and simplified, exaggerated, and skimmed facts** by the author of the text:

1. the slaughter of Russian people at the hands of Lenin and Stalin as they sought to totally control all aspects of the people's lives in the atheistic and humanistic Communist government.
2. the human suffering that Communism has hurled onto the back of the people of the former USSR.
3. the economic failure of Communism (we'll learn about this factor in next week's lesson)
4. the absolute silence concerning former President Reagan and former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and their combined efforts to bring down the mighty USSR.
5. according to the author of this section on Communism, the USSR just kinda', all-of-a-sudden, collapsed because of the efforts of Mikhail Gorbachev as if he was the only factor in the total collapse of one of the world's mightiest military powers. I don't think so.

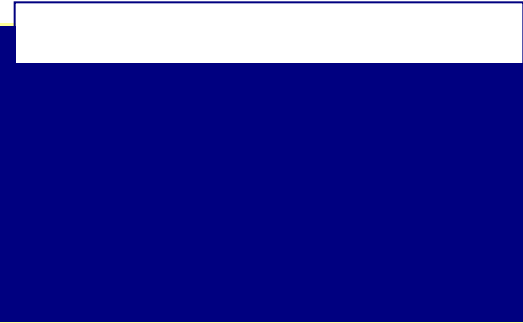
Let's remind ourselves of the brutality and the slaughter brought upon the Russian people at the hands of Lenin and Stalin:

According to Orlando Figes' research, (*A People's Tragedy: A History of the Russian Revolution*, 1997), there were 10 million deaths at the hands of Lenin's government from war, **terror**(assassination, torture, and murder), famine and disease. These deaths include

- * Famine (1921-22): 5 million
- * Jews killed in programs: 150,000

According to the following researchers, Stalin's regime (from 1924-1953) slaughtered the following numbers of people:

- * Dyadkin, I.G. (*Demograficheskaya statistika neyestestvennoy smertnosti v SSSR 1918-1956*): **56 to 62 million** "unnatural deaths" for the USSR overall (Lenin and Stalin), with **34 to 49 million under Stalin.**
- * Gold, John.: **50-60 million** deaths attributed to Lenin and Stalin's regimes.



The author does mention Stalin's "purges" in name only, and does say that Stalin led the USSR into the "cold war". But that is it concerning the Communists bloody history. I guess the author of the Magruder text just thought that

such atrocities were not important enough to mention in his/her summary of the former Soviet leaders and their regimes. I dunno...you make the call.



If you want to read the Communist Manifesto, click on the following URL: <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/cp-usa/manifesto.html> I think that you'll see that there is more to this story than meets the eye in this Magruder's coverage of the former USSR.

Before we leave this section, I want to highlight a short excerpt from the text from page 594:

- a stagnant economy plagued by widespread shortages of food, housing, and other consumer goods...

This is a "plug" for next week's lesson, but I want to introduce the reason for such a stagnant economy and shortages of products. That reason is this: Communism, and its side-kick Socialism, operate contrary to human nature and needs. More on this next week.

Alrighty then, that's it for today's look at Communism. In Friday's lesson, we'll revisit the topic of Communism from within the context of the A Beka textbook.

Friday

Onward with our study of Communism. Today, we will get a different view on Communism from the A Beka textbook.

Section 3 – Communism: The Ultimate Tyranny



Please read pages 27-33 from the A Beka textbook before continuing with the lesson.

Let's turn to page 28 in the A Beka text and begin here. I want to highlight the main points (at least as how I see them) so that I can leave time for you to complete today's assignment which covers our reading from today.

Point 1... note that the definition of communism is more of a "working, actual, or practical" definition of communism. In theory, communism seeks "equality and liberty for the people to deliver them from the oppression of the bourgeoisie." But this theoretical definition is not in practice ANYWHERE on this planet within any government system, much less in a communist system. What do you think of when you think of the governments of the former USSR, China, Vietnam, and Cambodia? Do you think of nice Utopian civilizations where everyone shares everything and does everything for the good of everyone? I doubt it.

"But hold on!" one of you may be saying. Does not the Bible give an example of a working model of communism? Well in Acts 2: 43-46, we do read how "...all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need."

But that is not a description of Communism. Why? I could tell you, but I'd rather us discuss it online this week.



Let's continue...

Point 2...Review the three differences between a dictator and Communism on page 29. Communist officials RULE everyone and everything!

Point 3...Note again the murders that the Communist government has committed against its own people as stated for us on pages 30 and 32.

Point 4...The leaders of Communism wish to rule the world and have active agendas and strategies of taking over the USA, not overtly by military campaign, but by ideologies taught in universities, propogated in politics, and even in taught in many liberal religious seminaries. Am I way out on this one? Hold on to your conclusions until we finish with next week's lesson.

Point 5...The greatest weapon against Communism is prayer and evangelism.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.
(Ephesians 6:12)

And on that note, I want to close this week's lesson. We've covered a lot of ground as we studied the governments of the UK, Japan, and Mexico, defined the characteristics of a democracy, monarchy, dictatorship, emperialism, theocracy, and communism. I hope that you've enjoyed the lesson. Get set for another round of comparisons and definitive characteristics as next week we will be dealing with other forms of economic systems.

Your assignment for this week follows ;-)



Assignments

Your assignment is to summarize the essay, “Communism: a System of Denials”, found in the A Beka text on pages 27-33. Here is what I need for you to do. There are 9 denials that Communism makes upon an individual. I need you to list all nine denials and underneath each one, you need to summarize what the author has stated concerning that particular denial. Do NOT turn this in to me at this time. You will include it in your **week 17 test** which will cover lessons 15, 16, & 17. The week 18 test will be the semester test and will cover the major lesson items from weeks 1-17.