

SOCIAL STUDIES · GRADES 5–6

# Democracy vs Dictatorship

Two ways a country can be run

## Side-by-side comparison

	Democracy	Dictatorship
Leadership	Voted in by the people. Limited terms.	One person or party. No real challenge.
Elections	Free and fair, regular, secret ballot.	Often none — or rigged.
Freedom of speech	Protected — even unpopular views.	Restricted. Critics may be punished.
Free press	Independent. Holds power to account.	Controlled by the state.
Courts	Independent of government.	Often controlled by leader.
Citizens' role	Vote, debate, organize, protest.	Obey. Limited public dissent.

## Discussion

1. Why do you think democracies have ELECTIONS at regular intervals?
2. What is the role of the press in keeping a democracy healthy?
3. Can a country be PARTLY democratic? Give an example of what that might look like.
4. Which system would you rather live under? Use evidence to explain why.

