

Voices and Power

Compare how citizens can influence different governments.

SS7CG1.a "Explain the role of citizen participation in autocratic and democratic governments."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each action citizens can take, then write D or A in the margin to show whether the passage connects it to democracy or autocracy. This will help you compare how participation affects government power.

Participation and Government

- ① Citizen participation means the ways people take part in public decisions and community life. Its role changes with the type of government. In a democracy, citizens can usually choose leaders in regular elections, join political parties, speak about issues, and ask officials to respond. These actions can shape laws and hold leaders accountable. In an autocracy, power is concentrated in one leader or a small group. Leaders may allow limited participation, but citizens have fewer safe ways to influence government choices.
- ② Botswana is a democratic country in southern Africa. It has held regular multiparty national elections since independence in 1966. Adult citizens vote to select representatives, while candidates and parties campaign for support. After elections, citizens can continue participating by following public issues, contacting representatives, joining civic groups, or sharing views peacefully. Courts, news organizations, and opposition parties can also question government decisions. These forms of participation do not guarantee that every citizen gets the result wanted, but they give people channels to influence leaders and demand explanations.
- ③ Eritrea, in the Horn of Africa, is widely described as an autocratic state. The government has not held national elections since the country became independent in 1993, and the People's Front for Democracy and Justice is the only legal political party. Citizens may take part in local community efforts or state-organized activities, yet they cannot freely choose national leaders through competitive elections. Independent criticism and protest can bring serious consequences. As a result, participation has a limited role in checking national power or changing national policy.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How does voting give citizens a different role in Botswana than in Eritrea?

2 Name two ways Botswana citizens can participate after an election. How can one of those actions influence leaders?

3 Why does citizen participation have a limited role in checking national power in Eritrea?

4 According to the passage, how can opposition parties, news organizations, and courts affect government decisions in a democracy?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine two countries, one democratic and one autocratic. Write four sentences that compare citizen participation in the two countries. Include one action citizens can take in the democracy, how it can influence leaders, one restriction in the autocracy, and the effect of that restriction.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each action citizens can take, then write D or A in the margin to show whether the passage connects it to democracy or autocracy. This will help you compare how participation affects government power. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does voting give citizens a different role in Botswana than in Eritrea?	In Botswana, citizens vote in regular multiparty elections to choose representatives. In Eritrea, citizens cannot freely choose national leaders through competitive elections.
2	Name two ways Botswana citizens can participate after an election. How can one of those actions influence leaders?	Answers may include following public issues, contacting representatives, joining civic groups, or sharing views peacefully. For example, contacting representatives lets citizens share concerns and ask leaders to respond.
3	Why does citizen participation have a limited role in checking national power in Eritrea?	Eritrea has not held national elections since 1993, has only one legal political party, and restricts independent criticism and protest. Citizens therefore have few safe ways to influence national policy or hold leaders accountable.
4	According to the passage, how can opposition parties, news organizations, and courts affect government decisions in a democracy?	They can question government decisions. This helps citizens demand explanations and can hold leaders accountable.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In the democracy of Luma, citizens vote in competitive elections and contact their representatives about clean water. These actions can pressure leaders to explain decisions and respond to needs. In the autocracy of Naro, only one party can run for national office, and protests are punished. Citizens there have far fewer safe ways to change national policies or hold leaders accountable.

Accept equivalent comparisons that accurately show broader, safer participation in a democracy and restricted participation in an autocracy. For Question 2, accept any two participation actions named in the Botswana paragraph and a reasonable passage-based explanation of influence.