Who Holds Power?

Compare how governments choose leaders and make laws.

6-9.WG.4.1 "Identify the major forms of government in regions throughout the world and compare them with the government of the United States."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each form of government named in the passage, circle words that show who gains or holds power, and number three differences from the United States.

A Law in Different Governments

1 Suppose a country must decide who can make a law about clean drinking water. In the United States, a federal presidential republic, voters elect members of Congress, which makes national laws. Voters also choose electors who select the president, who can sign or veto bills passed by Congress. The president does not serve as a member of Congress. Power is also shared with state governments. This system separates the national lawmaking branch from the president and gives voters a role in choosing both.

2 Across the Atlantic, the United Kingdom is a parliamentary democracy and a constitutional monarchy. Voters elect members of the House of Commons. The prime minister is normally the leader of the party that can command support in the Commons, rather than a leader elected separately from Parliament. Parliament passes laws, and the monarch's role in governing is largely ceremonial. Unlike the United States, the United Kingdom does not separate its top political leader from its national legislature in the same way. Both countries use elections to give people a voice.

3 Other regions show different ways to hold power. In Saudi Arabia, an absolute monarchy, the king inherits the throne and holds the chief governing authority. The king appoints members of an advisory council; citizens do not elect a national lawmaking body like the U.S. Congress. In China, a one-party state, the Communist Party of China controls top leadership and major policy choices. China has a national legislature, but voters do not choose among competing parties for national leadership as U.S. voters do. These differences concern both who leads and how power is gained.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the United Kingdom's parliamentary democracy choose its top political leader differently from the U.S. presidential republic?

2. How does a monarch's governing power in Saudi Arabia's absolute monarchy compare with a president's power in the United States?

3. What choice about national leadership do U.S. voters have that voters in China's one-party state do not have?

4. How does the relationship between the top political leader and the national legislature differ in the United Kingdom and the United States?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a new country considering a national law to protect forests. In four sentences, choose a form of government from the passage, explain who would decide on the law and how the top leader would gain power, then compare both points with the United States.

ANSWER KEY

Who Holds Power?

GRADES 6-9 · 6-9.WG.4.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each form of government named in the passage, circle words that show who gains or holds power, and number three differences from the United States. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the United Kingdom's parliamentary democracy choose its top political leader differently from the U.S. presidential republic?	**The U.K. prime minister normally leads the party that can command support in the elected House of Commons. U.S. voters choose electors who select a president separately from Congress.**
2	How does a monarch's governing power in Saudi Arabia's absolute monarchy compare with a president's power in the United States?	**Saudi Arabia's king holds the chief governing authority. The U.S. president shares national power with Congress, which makes laws.**
3	What choice about national leadership do U.S. voters have that voters in China's one-party state do not have?	**U.S. voters can choose among competing parties for national leadership; voters in China cannot.**
4	How does the relationship between the top political leader and the national legislature differ in the United Kingdom and the United States?	**The U.K. prime minister normally leads a party with support in the House of Commons. The U.S. president serves separately from Congress and is not one of its members.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My new country uses an absolute monarchy like Saudi Arabia. Its king inherits the throne and would decide whether to make a national law protecting forests. In the United States, voters help choose the president through electors instead of inheriting a ruler. Congress makes national laws there, while the president can sign or veto bills passed by Congress.

Accept comparisons that accurately use the passage's descriptions of leadership and lawmaking. For Part 3, the imagined law may concern any specific forest protection, but the response must give four sentences and compare both requested points with the United States.