Who Holds Power?

Compare how five political systems organize authority and participation.

6-9.WH.4.2 "Analyze the various political systems that shaped civilizations throughout the world, including the City-State, Monarchy, Republic, Nation-State, or Democracy."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail about how each of the five political systems is organized, then circle two details that show who holds power or who is left out.

Different Ways to Govern

1. Imagine traveling between two ancient cities. In Sumer, Ur and nearby cities each controlled surrounding fields and made their own rules. Each city had its own ruler, so a dispute over water could become a fight between neighbors. This pattern is called a city-state: a city and its nearby land govern themselves. Farther west, ancient Egypt brought many towns along the Nile under one pharaoh. This monarchy placed authority in one ruler, who could direct work across a much larger area, including projects to manage the river.

2. Who got a say in government? In Athens during the 400s BCE, male citizens voted directly on major decisions in an assembly. Women, enslaved people, and foreigners could not vote. This was a democracy, but it did not include everyone. In the Roman Republic, male citizens elected officials to make many decisions, while the Senate, dominated by wealthy families, held great influence. Rome had no single king. Both systems gave some citizens a voice, yet Athens relied more on direct votes, and Rome relied more on elected leaders.

3. Today, Japan is a nation-state: its government rules a defined territory, and many residents share a Japanese national identity. That identity does not mean everyone has the same background. Japan also has an emperor, but elected lawmakers and a prime minister govern under a constitution. Citizens vote for representatives, unlike male citizens in ancient Athens, who voted directly on major decisions. A nation-state describes a link between government, territory, and national identity, not who gets to vote. That is why one country can also have democratic elections and a monarch.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the size of the area governed affect what leaders could do in Sumerian city-states and ancient Egypt?

2. How did eligible citizens take part in decisions differently in Athens and the Roman Republic? Name one limit on participation in either system.

3. Both ancient Egypt and modern Japan have a monarch. How does the passage show that a monarch's governing power can differ?

4. How does the passage describe a nation-state differently from a city-state?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Invent a community deciding whether to build a bridge. In four sentences, name two political systems from the passage that it could combine, describe how it would make the decision, and explain one benefit and one limit of that combination.

ANSWER KEY

Who Holds Power?

GRADES 6-9 · 6-9.WH.4.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail about how each of the five political systems is organized, then circle two details that show who holds power or who is left out. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the size of the area governed affect what leaders could do in Sumerian city-states and ancient Egypt?	**Each Sumerian city-state governed its city and nearby fields, so neighboring cities could fight over water. Egypt's pharaoh ruled many towns and could direct projects across a larger area.**
2	How did eligible citizens take part in decisions differently in Athens and the Roman Republic? Name one limit on participation in either system.	**Male citizens in Athens voted directly on major decisions, while male citizens in Rome elected officials. In Athens, women, enslaved people, and foreigners could not vote.**
3	Both ancient Egypt and modern Japan have a monarch. How does the passage show that a monarch's governing power can differ?	**Egypt's pharaoh held authority and directed work across the kingdom. Japan has an emperor, but elected lawmakers and a prime minister govern under a constitution.**
4	How does the passage describe a nation-state differently from a city-state?	**A city-state is a self-governing city and its nearby land. A nation-state links a government and defined territory with a national identity shared by many residents.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My river city and its nearby villages form an independent city-state and a republic. Residents elect council members, who vote on whether to build a bridge. This system lets residents choose people to weigh the cost of the bridge. However, council members might favor the city and ignore the villages.

Accept other evidence-based comparisons in Part 2. For Part 3, accept any plausible invented community that correctly combines two systems and explains a benefit and a limit.