Who Decides Taxes?

Compare power and public voice across governments.

6.C.1 "Compare and contrast major forms of governments in Europe and the Americas throughout history."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline a detail in each paragraph about who could make or approve tax decisions. Circle a detail about who could or could not have a say.

A Tax, Three Governments

1. In 1700, a tax collector in France could tell a farmer that the king's government had ordered a new tax. France was an absolute monarchy under Louis XIV: the king held wide power to make decisions and chose officials to carry them out. A representative assembly called the Estates-General existed, but Louis XIV never called it to meet. Farmers could complain, yet they could not vote the king out. Across the Atlantic, Spain's king also ruled colonies through appointed officials, so many colonists had little say in colonial laws.

2. In Britain, the ruler was also a monarch, but the system worked differently after the 1689 English Bill of Rights. Parliament had to approve taxes, and monarchs could not suspend laws on their own. Members of the House of Commons were elected, although only a small part of the population could vote. This constitutional monarchy divided power between a monarch and Parliament. A British shopkeeper might still have no vote, but a new tax could not simply come from the monarch's order. Parliament could challenge that order.

3. Under the United States Constitution, which took effect in 1789, the country remained a republic rather than a monarchy. Voters chose representatives in Congress, which could pass federal tax laws; the president was not a king and could not make those laws alone. Still, voting rules in many states shut out women and many men, and enslaved people could not vote. Compared with France under Louis XIV, both Britain and the United States gave elected lawmakers a role in taxes. Yet having elected lawmakers did not mean everyone could help choose them.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How were France under Louis XIV and Spain's colonies alike in who held power? How much say did many ordinary people have?

2. How did the monarch's power over taxes differ in France and Britain?

3. What role did elected lawmakers share in Britain and the United States? What was one difference between the two governments?

4. How did limits on voting in Britain and the United States affect who had a say, even though both had elected lawmakers?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A town council in 1790 wants a new tax, but residents fear losing their say. In four sentences, compare two government forms from the passage, name one similarity and one difference, and recommend a tax rule for the town based on your comparison.

ANSWER KEY

Who Decides Taxes?

GRADE 6 · 6.C.1

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline a detail in each paragraph about who could make or approve tax decisions. Circle a detail about who could or could not have a say. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How were France under Louis XIV and Spain's colonies alike in who held power? How much say did many ordinary people have?	**Both were ruled by kings who used appointed officials. French farmers could not vote the king out, and many Spanish colonists had little say in colonial laws.**
2	How did the monarch's power over taxes differ in France and Britain?	**Louis XIV's government could order a tax without calling the Estates-General. In Britain, Parliament had to approve taxes.**
3	What role did elected lawmakers share in Britain and the United States? What was one difference between the two governments?	**Elected lawmakers had a role in taxes in both. Britain had a monarch, while the United States was a republic with a president.**
4	How did limits on voting in Britain and the United States affect who had a say, even though both had elected lawmakers?	**Only a small part of Britain's population could vote. In the United States, voting rules shut out women and many men in many states, and enslaved people could not vote.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

France's absolute monarchy and Britain's constitutional monarchy both had monarchs. In France, Louis XIV could direct officials without asking an elected lawmaking body, but in Britain Parliament had to approve taxes. Our town should require an elected council to approve any new tax instead of letting one leader decide. All adult residents should be able to vote for the council so more people have a say than they did in Britain.

Accept any comparison supported by the passage. For Part 3, the proposed tax rule should connect clearly to the comparison, not just name a preferred government.