Who Holds Power?

Compare past and present governments across three regions

7.C.2 "Compare and contrast historical and contemporary governments in Africa, Asia, and the Southwest Pacific."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline who held power in the past in each paragraph, and circle who holds power today. Put a star beside one detail that shows a similarity between two regions.

From Chiefs to Elected Leaders

1. Imagine a dispute over a market road in the Asante kingdom of West Africa, in land now part of Ghana. From the 1700s into the 1800s, the Asantehene, or king, governed with a council of chiefs. The king's office stayed within a royal family, while chiefs helped choose the next king. People could bring concerns to local chiefs, but they did not vote for a national government. Today, Ghana's voters elect a president and members of Parliament. Chiefs still hold traditional roles, but elected officials make national laws.

2. In East Asia, Japan's Tokugawa shoguns ruled from 1603 to 1868 through military leaders called daimyo. The shogun's position usually passed within the Tokugawa family, and ordinary people could not elect national leaders. Some villagers sent petitions to officials when policies harmed them, but officials did not have to grant their requests. Today, voters elect members of Japan's legislature, the Diet, which chooses the prime minister. Japan still has an emperor, but the emperor does not govern. Unlike the shogun, the prime minister depends on the support of elected lawmakers.

3. In the Southwest Pacific, communities in the islands now called Fiji once relied on hereditary chiefs and councils to settle local disputes and organize shared work. Chiefs heard concerns from families, but families did not choose chiefs through public elections. Fiji is now a republic with an elected Parliament. Voters choose lawmakers, and Parliament chooses a prime minister to lead the government. Chiefs remain important in some communities, though Parliament, not chiefs, makes national laws. Like Ghana and Japan, Fiji uses elections today, but its prime minister is chosen by lawmakers, not by a direct public vote.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the way a king was chosen in the Asante kingdom differ from the way Ghana chooses its president today?

2. Compare how Japan's shogun and its prime minister gain power. What political role does Japan's emperor have today?

3. What do Ghana and Fiji have in common today, and how does each choose its head of government?

4. Compare the work of Fiji's chiefs and councils in the past with the work of its Parliament today. What role do chiefs still have?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence news brief about a proposed road plan. Compare how people could raise concerns in the Asante kingdom with how they could influence Fiji's government today, and explain one difference in how leaders gain power.

ANSWER KEY

Who Holds Power?

GRADE 7 · 7.C.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline who held power in the past in each paragraph, and circle who holds power today. Put a star beside one detail that shows a similarity between two regions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the way a king was chosen in the Asante kingdom differ from the way Ghana chooses its president today?	**The king came from a royal family and was chosen with the help of chiefs. Ghana's voters elect its president.**
2	Compare how Japan's shogun and its prime minister gain power. What political role does Japan's emperor have today?	**The shogun's position usually passed within the Tokugawa family, while the elected Diet chooses today's prime minister. The emperor does not govern.**
3	What do Ghana and Fiji have in common today, and how does each choose its head of government?	**Both use elections. Ghana's voters elect its president, while Fiji's voters elect lawmakers who choose the prime minister.**
4	Compare the work of Fiji's chiefs and councils in the past with the work of its Parliament today. What role do chiefs still have?	**Chiefs and councils settled local disputes and organized shared work. Today, Parliament makes national laws, while chiefs remain important in some communities.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In the Asante kingdom, people could tell local chiefs their concerns about a road plan. The king governed with chiefs, and the king's office stayed within a royal family. In Fiji today, voters could choose lawmakers who support a road plan. Unlike the Asante king, Fiji's prime minister is chosen by elected lawmakers.

Accept responses that distinguish local chiefly authority from national elected government. For the news brief, look for a historically supported way to raise concerns in each setting and an accurate comparison of how leaders gain power.