Who Holds Power?

Compare how citizens participate and how laws limit leaders.

6.C.5 "Analyze why and how humans develop rules, laws, and governments, including the role of citizens in government. Compare systems of governments. Define and describe the characteristics of limited governments (constitutional republic..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one limit on government in each country, circle two ways citizens take part, and number two differences between the countries' governments.

Who Decides After a Storm?

1. After a storm, two neighbors want the same road cleared first. A rule for reporting blocked roads can help officials make a fair plan instead of letting the loudest person decide. Communities create governments to make and carry out such rules. But a government also needs limits: leaders might use an emergency to silence people who disagree. In a limited government, laws protect rights and set boundaries for leaders. Citizens help shape decisions by voting, speaking at meetings, and asking officials to explain their choices.

2. In the United States, citizens elect members of Congress, who make national laws. The president leads the executive branch, which carries out those laws. Both Congress and the president must follow the Constitution. For example, the First Amendment protects people's right to speak about government decisions, even when leaders dislike the criticism. Courts can review government actions under the Constitution. The United States is a constitutional republic: citizens choose representatives, and leaders' powers are limited by a written constitution. A flood plan must respect those limits.

3. In Canada, citizens elect members of the House of Commons, who debate and vote on national laws. The prime minister leads the government and must keep the confidence of the House. Canada's monarch is the head of state but does not direct the flood response. Canada is a constitutional monarchy: its constitution limits government power, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects freedoms such as expression. Unlike these limited governments, a dictatorship concentrates power in one ruler, and citizens may have little real say in decisions.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why might a community make a rule for reporting blocked roads instead of letting the loudest person decide?

2. How does each country's system limit leaders who dislike criticism?

3. Compare whom citizens elect to make national laws in the United States and Canada. How is each country's national government led?

4. How does citizens' influence in the two limited governments differ from their possible influence in a dictatorship?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Choose the United States or Canada. In four sentences, propose a fair rule for a new public problem, explain how a citizen could help shape it, name a right the government must protect, and explain what limits leaders as they carry out the rule.

ANSWER KEY

Who Holds Power?

GRADE 6 · 6.C.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one limit on government in each country, circle two ways citizens take part, and number two differences between the countries' governments. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why might a community make a rule for reporting blocked roads instead of letting the loudest person decide?	**The rule helps officials make a fair plan for clearing roads rather than favoring the loudest person.**
2	How does each country's system limit leaders who dislike criticism?	**In the United States, the First Amendment protects speech about government decisions. In Canada, the Charter protects freedom of expression.**
3	Compare whom citizens elect to make national laws in the United States and Canada. How is each country's national government led?	**U.S. citizens elect members of Congress, and the president leads the executive branch. Canadians elect members of the House of Commons, and the prime minister leads the government.**
4	How does citizens' influence in the two limited governments differ from their possible influence in a dictatorship?	**Citizens in the United States and Canada elect lawmakers and can speak about decisions. In a dictatorship, power is concentrated in one ruler, and citizens may have little real say.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In the United States, I would propose a rule requiring officials to post flood warnings at public buildings. Residents could speak at a town meeting and ask elected officials to change where warnings appear. The First Amendment protects residents who criticize the plan. Officials must follow the Constitution when they carry out the rule.

Accept other reasonable public rules and forms of citizen participation. The response should name a right and correctly connect the chosen country's leaders to constitutional limits.