Who Decides?

Compare government power and citizen influence

6.P.2.1.B "Compare the powers and responsibilities of the United States of America's government to other forms of government, including the roles and rights of citizens."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details about who makes or checks government decisions, and circle details about how people can influence those decisions or face limits on their choices.

A Flood Wall Decision

1. A coastal town needs a new flood wall before the next big storm. In the United States, town and state leaders can plan the project and ask for federal help. Congress decides whether to provide federal money through a law, and executive agencies carry out that law. Courts can review whether officials followed the Constitution and other laws. Eligible adults can vote for representatives, while people of any age can speak out about the plan or send a petition. Officials cannot simply ignore constitutional protections because a storm is coming.

2. In an absolute monarchy, a monarch has final authority over major national choices. The monarch might order money for a flood wall and appoint officials to oversee it without seeking approval from an elected national legislature. Local advisers may offer ideas, but the monarch can reject them. People may ask the monarch for help, yet a national vote does not give them the same power to replace the ruler that U.S. voters have over elected leaders. The monarch's powers still depend on that country's laws and customs.

3. In a one-party state, one political party controls the national government. Imagine that its leaders choose which flood projects receive money. An assembly may vote on the budget, but the ruling party controls who can run for important offices. Citizens may cast ballots, yet they cannot freely choose among competing parties for national power. Rules about speech and protest differ by country, so do not assume every one-party state treats citizens alike. Unlike this system, U.S. voters can choose candidates from competing parties and challenge leaders through elections.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Who could approve national money for the flood wall in the United States, and who could order it in the absolute monarchy?

2. How can people in the United States influence leaders in ways that people in the absolute monarchy may not be able to?

3. How does choosing national leaders in the United States differ from choosing them in the one-party state described?

4. Compare the role of U.S. courts with the role of the ruling party in the flood wall decisions described.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Your town plans to turn an empty lot into a public garden, but you want a playground. Write a short note to a friend comparing how you could seek a change in the United States and in one other government from the passage; explain who could decide and one limit on public influence in the other government.

ANSWER KEY

Who Decides?

GRADE 6 · 6.P.2.1.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details about who makes or checks government decisions, and circle details about how people can influence those decisions or face limits on their choices. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Who could approve national money for the flood wall in the United States, and who could order it in the absolute monarchy?	**In the United States, Congress could provide federal money through a law. In the absolute monarchy, the monarch could order the money.**
2	How can people in the United States influence leaders in ways that people in the absolute monarchy may not be able to?	**Eligible U.S. adults can vote to replace elected representatives. People in the absolute monarchy may ask the monarch for help, but a national vote does not give them the same power to replace the ruler.**
3	How does choosing national leaders in the United States differ from choosing them in the one-party state described?	**U.S. voters can choose candidates from competing parties. In the one-party state described, the ruling party controls who can run for important offices, so voters cannot freely choose among competing parties for national power.**
4	Compare the role of U.S. courts with the role of the ruling party in the flood wall decisions described.	**U.S. courts can review whether officials followed the Constitution and other laws. In the one-party state described, the ruling party chooses which flood projects receive money.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would speak out about the plan and ask local leaders to choose a playground instead of a garden. I could also send them a petition. In an absolute monarchy, if the project needed a national decision, the monarch could approve the garden without an elected national legislature. People might ask for a playground, but they could not vote to replace the monarch as U.S. voters can replace elected leaders.

Accept other accurate comparisons supported by the passage. For Part 3, the student should apply those differences to the new project rather than simply repeat the flood wall example.