Who Has a Voice?

Compare citizen power and rights in two governments.

7.C.6.3 "Compare the role of the citizen in modern representative governments to authoritarian systems (e.g., United Kingdom to Russia; India to Saudi Arabia; South Africa to China; United States of America to Iran)..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways citizens can influence laws, circle two limits on citizens' power or rights, and number each mark 1 for the United States or 2 for Iran. Use your marks to compare the two systems.

A Voice on Water Safety

1. Imagine a town facing unsafe drinking water. In the United States, citizens can ask elected members of Congress to propose a law, speak at public meetings, and organize to support a plan. Citizens elect representatives to Congress, who debate and vote on federal laws. They also vote for president, but the president does not make laws alone. In Iran, people also vote for a president and members of parliament. Iranian lawmakers can propose laws and vote on them, and citizens can raise concerns about public problems.

2. Yet a ballot does not always give citizens the same choices. In Iran, the Guardian Council screens candidates for president and parliament, limiting who can run. It also reviews laws passed by parliament and can reject those it finds inconsistent with the constitution or Islamic law. Iran's supreme leader has broad power over major policies and is chosen by the Assembly of Experts, not by a direct public vote. In the United States, candidates do not need approval from a council like Iran's Guardian Council to run for Congress.

3. The U.S. Bill of Rights protects speech, religion, peaceful assembly, petition, and due process. People can challenge officials in court if those rights are violated, although rights have legal limits. Iran's constitution lists some rights, but authorities restrict criticism and religious practice, especially for some minority groups. Authorities have detained protesters and denied some defendants fair trials. Such actions make it risky to organize for change. Comparing the systems means looking beyond elections to who may run, how laws are checked, and whether people can speak without fear.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. People vote for lawmakers in both countries. How does the Guardian Council make voters' choices in Iran different from voters' choices for Congress in the United States?

2. How can lawmakers in each country act on a water safety concern, and what extra review can stop a law in Iran?

3. Compare the risks of speaking against a government policy in the two countries. Use one detail about rights or government actions for each country.

4. How do citizens take part in choosing the U.S. president and Iran's supreme leader differently?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A city plans to limit public meetings about water safety. In four sentences, compare how a citizen in the United States and a citizen in Iran could try to change the policy. Include one detail about choosing officials or making laws and one civil liberty or risk in each system.

ANSWER KEY

Who Has a Voice?

GRADE 7 · 7.C.6.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways citizens can influence laws, circle two limits on citizens' power or rights, and number each mark 1 for the United States or 2 for Iran. Use your marks to compare the two systems. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	People vote for lawmakers in both countries. How does the Guardian Council make voters' choices in Iran different from voters' choices for Congress in the United States?	**The Guardian Council screens candidates for Iran's parliament, limiting who can run. U.S. congressional candidates do not need approval from a council like it.**
2	How can lawmakers in each country act on a water safety concern, and what extra review can stop a law in Iran?	**Members of Congress and Iran's parliament can propose laws and vote on them. Iran's Guardian Council can reject a law passed by parliament.**
3	Compare the risks of speaking against a government policy in the two countries. Use one detail about rights or government actions for each country.	**The U.S. Bill of Rights protects speech and petition, and people can challenge rights violations in court. Iranian authorities restrict criticism and have detained protesters.**
4	How do citizens take part in choosing the U.S. president and Iran's supreme leader differently?	**U.S. citizens vote in presidential elections. Iran's supreme leader is chosen by the Assembly of Experts, not by a direct public vote.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In the United States, a citizen could ask an elected member of Congress to propose a law protecting public meetings about water safety. The Bill of Rights protects peaceful assembly and petition, so the citizen could organize a meeting or challenge an unlawful restriction in court. In Iran, a citizen could raise concerns about the ban, while members of parliament could propose a change to the law. Iranian authorities have detained protesters, so organizing a meeting to criticize the ban could put that citizen at risk.

Accept comparisons that distinguish voting from the ability to choose candidates, influence laws, or safely challenge officials. For the open task, accept other passage-supported actions and risks if the response addresses both countries and all requested details.