

Power With Limits

Compare how different governments control leaders' power.

6.9.A "describe and compare examples of limited and unlimited governments such as constitutional (limited) and totalitarian (unlimited);"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that show how constitutional governments limit leaders. Circle two details that show how North Korea's government has unlimited power, then write 1 beside a sentence that directly compares the two types.

Who Limits Government Power?

- ① Governments organize a country, but they do not all place the same limits on leaders. In a limited government, laws set boundaries on government power. A constitution is a basic plan that explains powers and rights. In the United States, the Constitution divides power among three branches. Courts can decide whether laws follow the Constitution, and elections allow citizens to choose many leaders. These limits do not make every decision easy, but they help prevent one person or group from controlling everything.
- ② The government of Germany also works under a constitution, called the Basic Law. Voters elect representatives, and the government must follow written rights and laws. Germany's Federal Constitutional Court can review government actions. Different institutions share authority, so officials must follow rules and can be challenged. Limited governments may use different systems, yet they share a key feature: leaders cannot legally use power without boundaries. Citizens have protected rights and lawful ways to influence or question government decisions.
- ③ An unlimited government gives leaders power with few or no effective legal limits. Totalitarian governments are an extreme form. They seek to control political life and often many parts of private life, such as media, schools, jobs, and public speech. In North Korea, the ruling Workers' Party and its leader hold dominant power. Independent political opposition is not permitted, and news media are controlled by the state. Unlike constitutional governments, people cannot freely replace national leaders through competitive elections or use independent courts to protect political rights.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What are two ways the United States Constitution limits government power?

2 What feature do the limited governments of the United States and Germany share?

3 According to the passage, name two ways the North Korean government controls political life or public information.

4 How is replacing national leaders different in a constitutional government and in North Korea?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Invent two towns. In 5 or 6 sentences, describe one town with a limited government and one town with an unlimited government. Include at least one rule or institution in each town, then explain why the governments are different.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show how constitutional governments limit leaders. Circle two details that show how North Korea's government has unlimited power, then write 1 beside a sentence that directly compares the two types. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What are two ways the United States Constitution limits government power?	It divides power among three branches, and courts can decide whether laws follow the Constitution. Elections also allow citizens to choose many leaders.
2	What feature do the limited governments of the United States and Germany share?	Both place legal boundaries on leaders' power. Their officials must follow laws, and their power is shared or checked by other institutions.
3	According to the passage, name two ways the North Korean government controls political life or public information.	Independent political opposition is not permitted, and news media are controlled by the state. It also seeks to control areas such as schools, jobs, and public speech.
4	How is replacing national leaders different in a constitutional government and in North Korea?	In constitutional governments, people can choose many leaders through elections. In North Korea, people cannot freely replace national leaders through competitive elections.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In Harbor Town, the mayor must follow a town charter. Residents elect council members, and a court can stop rules that break the charter. This is a limited government because other groups can check the mayor. In Stone Town, the ruler appoints all officials and bans public criticism. No independent court can challenge the ruler. Stone Town has an unlimited government because the ruler faces no effective limits.

Accept equivalent details from the passage that accurately distinguish legal limits, shared power, protected rights, controlled opposition, and controlled media. For the open response, accept original examples if the student clearly describes and compares one limited and one unlimited government.