

## Thoughts on Government: Advanced ESL Classes

Principles and Examples	Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Underlying principles and values</b></li> </ul> <p>Examples:</p> <p>The United States government believes in democracy and free election of government officials.</p> <p>Some smaller governments believe in the importance of the village unit over a central government.</p> <p>Other governments place a higher value on security and safety than on individual freedoms.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why do people have a government?</li> <li>What should a government do for people?</li> <li>What should be the powers of a government?</li> <li>What should a government not do?</li> <li>What are our rights as individuals?</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The population's acceptance of the principles and values</b></li> </ul> <p>The underlying principles and values have to be part of the belief system of most of the population.</p> <p>Those who disagree have to have faith that the possibility of change is built into the system.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can you think of a situation when the population might not accept the principles and values of a government?</li> <li>In that case, what might happen?</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>A formal and transparent organizational structure</b></li> </ul> <p>The government must be governed by specific and constant laws.</p> <p>The residents of the country should feel confident that laws are carefully drawn and cannot be overturned easily by the decisions of a few.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the government choose people in positions of power?</li> <li>How are people chosen to be in the armed forces?</li> <li>How does the government take care of the basic needs of the people, or does it?</li> <li>What are the smaller structures of government such as towns and what are the larger national structures? How do they relate to each other?</li> <li>What kinds of power do the police and the courts have? How do they carry out their duties?</li> </ol>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Trust by the population in each other and those who develop and carry out the organizational structure</b></li> </ul> <p>The population has to trust in the good intentions of the government and the people in it.</p> <p>They cannot be divided into antagonist groups.</p> <p>They also have to trust that, if elected officials become corrupt, there is a mechanism to remove them.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is the whole country unified or does one group have power?</li> <li>2. What happens if someone in the government is corrupt?</li> <li>3. How does the government change? Does the population have any control over the change process?</li> </ol>
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Discuss students' opinions.

Bring up a natural disaster such as a hurricane or a massive forest fire. Ask the class to think what happens if these statements are representative of the country. Then consider what happens if they are not.

Students may bring up specific situations either in their home countries or in the United States where the government has had to respond to a natural disaster or crucial political situation.

Bring the discussion to the development of a Constitution -- the difficulties in developing one and how a successful Constitution answers these questions leading to a calm, cohesive, and effective government.