CIVIC EDUCATION

**WEEK ONE**

**Democracy** is a system of government where the people have the power to choose their leaders and participate in decision-making. In a democracy, leaders are elected by the people through free and fair elections. In **layman’s term** it can be defined as the government of **the people** by **the people** and for **the people.**

The word **“democracy”** comes from two Greek words: **“Demos”** – meaning **people** **“Kratos”** – meaning **to rule** So, **democracy** means **“rule by the people.”**

**Types of Democracy 1. Direct Democracy** – People make decisions directly (used in small communities). **2. Indirect or Representative Democracy** – People elect representatives who make decisions on their behalf (used in large countries like Nigeria

**Democratic Institutions and Their Functions Democratic institutions** are organizations or bodies that help in running a democratic government. They ensure that democracy is practiced and that citizens’ rights are protected.

**Main Democratic Institutions in Nigeria and Their Functions: A. The Executive This is the branch of government that enforces laws.**

* **At the federal level**: President, Vice President, Ministers
* **At the state level**: Governor, Deputy Governor, Commissioners
* **At the local level**: Chairman and Councilors **Functions:**
  1. Enforces and implements laws
  2. Appoints government officials
  3. Prepares the national budget

**B. The Legislature This is the law-making arm of government. Federal**: National Assembly (Senate and House of Representatives) **State**: State House of Assembly **Functions: 1.** Makes laws for the country **2.** Approves the national budget **3.** Checks the activities of the executive

**C. The Judiciary This is the branch of government that interprets the law and settles disputes.**

* Includes: Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Courts, Magistrate Courts **Functions:** 1. Interprets the laws 2. Protects the rights of citizens 3. Ensures justice and fairness

**D. The Electoral Commission (INEC) Independent National Electoral Commission Functions: 1.** Organizes and conducts elections**. 2.** Registers political parties and voters **3.** Declares election results **4.** Ensures free and fair elections

**E. Political Parties** These are groups of people with similar ideas and beliefs who seek to gain political power. **Functions:**

* Educate voters
* Present candidates for elections
* Help form government when they win elections

**F. The Mass Media** These include radio, TV, newspapers, and the internet. **Functions:**

* Educate and inform citizens about government activities
* Promote transparency and accountability
* Provide a platform for public opinion

**WEEK TWO**

**Features of Democracy**

* Free and fair elections
* Rule of law (everyone is equal under the law)
* Separation of powers
* Protection of fundamental human rights
* Freedom of speech and the press
* Multi-party system

**WEEK THREE**

**PILLARS OF DEMOCRACY**

The **pillars of democracy** are the important elements or values that support and strengthen democratic governance. Without these pillars, democracy cannot stand strong or function properly.

### ****1. The People****

* The **people** are the most important part of any democracy.
* In a democratic government, power comes from the people.
* Citizens show their power by:
  + **Voting in elections**
  + **Participating in governance**
  + **Expressing opinions**
  + **Holding leaders accountable**
* Without the participation of the people, democracy cannot function

### ****2. Democratic Institutions****

* **Democratic institutions are the organizations that support the functioning of a democratic government.**
* They help to ensure that the principles of democracy are followed.

### ****3. Rule of Law****

* **Rule of law means that the law is supreme and applies equally to all people—leaders and citizens alike.**
* It ensures that:
  + No one is above the law.
  + Everyone is treated fairly and justly.
  + Laws are applied consistently.

**4. Majority Rule and Minority Rights**   
Majority rule means that decisions are made based on the will of the majority, while minority rights ensure that the views and rights of those not in the majority are still protected.

* **Respect for the majority’s decision:** The choice of the majority is accepted in making policies and laws.
* **Protection of minorities:** Laws and practices must safeguard the rights of minorities (ethnic, religious, political, etc.).

**3. Transparent Electoral Processes**  
A transparent electoral process is one in which elections are conducted openly, fairly, and honestly, allowing voters to choose their representatives freely.

* **Free and fair elections:** All eligible citizens can vote without fear or intimidation, and votes are counted accurately.
* **Independent electoral body:** A neutral institution oversees the electoral process.
* **Public access to information:** Voters are informed about candidates, parties, and voting procedures.

**WEEK FOUR**

1. **Promotes Freedom and Human Rights**
2. **Ensures Participation in Government**
3. **Guarantees Rule of Law**
4. **Encourages Good Governance**
5. **Promotes Equality and Justice**
6. **Brings About Peace and Stability**

## **Arms of Government**

### ****Definition**** The **arms of government** are the three main divisions of power in a democratic system. They are: 1. **The Executive 2. The Legislature 3. The Judiciary**

### ****1. The Executive Arm** Importance: a.** Implements policies and programs. b. Maintains law and order. c. Manages day-to-day affairs of the country.

### ****2. The Legislative Arm** Importance: a.** Makes new laws and amends old ones. b. Checks the activities of the executive through oversight. c. Approves the national budget.

### ****3. The Judiciary Arm** Importance: a.** Ensures justice and fairness. b. Punishes lawbreakers. c. Protects the rights of citizens.

**WEEK FIVE**

**1. Meaning of Election** An **election** is the process by which people choose their leaders by voting. It is done in a peaceful and organized way. Elections are a major part of **democracy**. In Nigeria, elections are conducted by the **Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).**

**2. Meaning of a Voter** A **voter** is a person who is qualified and registered to vote in an election.A voter must be: **a.** A citizen of the country. **b.** At least **18 years old**. **c.** Registered with the electoral body (e.g., INEC in Nigeria). **d.** Of sound mind and not in prison.

**3.Meaning of Voting Voting** is the act of choosing a leader or deciding on an issue during an election. **a.** It is done by marking a ballot paper or using electronic voting machines, depending on the system. **b.** Voting is a right and duty of every qualified citizen.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF A VOTER**

1. Register to Vote 2. Vote Wisely 3. Obey Election Rules 4. Avoid Electoral Malpractices 5. Stay Informed 6. Report Wrongdoing