

## SS1 Government – Week 2

### Topic: Government as an Academic Field of Study

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#### Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Explain what it means to study government as an academic discipline.
  2. Understand and justify the importance of studying government in modern society.
  3. Identify and describe the main subfields of government and what they entail.
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#### 1. Government as an Academic Discipline

Government is not only a system of ruling or administration but also a field of intellectual and academic inquiry. When studied in the classroom, it seeks to understand:

- How power and authority are acquired and used
- The roles of institutions such as the executive, legislature, and judiciary
- The relationship between citizens and the state
- How public policies are made, implemented, and evaluated
- How different systems of government work — e.g., democracy vs dictatorship

In higher institutions, the academic study of government is commonly referred to as **Political Science**.

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#### Key Areas Covered in the Academic Study of Government:

- Political theories and ideologies (e.g. capitalism, socialism, democracy)
- Government institutions and their inter-relationships
- Electoral processes and political participation
- Laws, constitution, and justice
- Public administration and civil service

- Global politics and international relations
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## 2. Why Study Government?

Studying government equips individuals with critical knowledge and practical understanding of how their country and the world at large operate politically.

### ◆ Reasons for Studying Government

Reason	Explanation
 <b>Civic Education</b>	It helps citizens understand their rights and responsibilities, fostering active participation in national development.
 <b>Democratic Participation</b>	Students learn how to vote, engage in political discourse, and demand accountability from leaders.
 <b>Promotion of Rule of Law</b>	Knowledge of government discourages lawlessness and promotes legal awareness.
 <b>Understanding Global Politics</b>	Helps individuals understand international affairs, diplomacy, and foreign policies.
 <b>Career Opportunities</b>	Opens doors to careers in law, politics, public administration, international relations, journalism, etc.
 <b>Patriotism and National Unity</b>	Encourages love for one's country and understanding of national values.
 <b>Policy Awareness</b>	Students learn how policies are made, why they matter, and how to influence them.
 <b>Conflict Resolution</b>	Teaches peaceful means of settling disputes — crucial in a diverse society.

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## 3. Subfields of Government

The academic study of government is divided into various **subfields** that allow scholars to specialize in different areas:

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### (i) Local Government Studies

- Deals with **grassroots governance** — where governance meets the people directly.
- Explores **local councils**, development areas, and municipal systems.
- Focuses on:
  - **Revenue generation at the local level**
  - **Community development planning**
  - **Provision of basic amenities**

 *Example:* The role of a Local Government Chairman in managing healthcare and education within a community.

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### (ii) Public Administration

- Focuses on the **implementation of government policies**.
- Involves the study of **ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs)**.
- Explores:
  - Bureaucracy and civil service structure
  - Budgeting and public financial management
  - Leadership and ethics in government

 *Example:* The Ministry of Education executing the Federal Government's free education policy.

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### (iii) International Relations

- Concerned with the **diplomatic, economic, and political relationships** among countries.
- Covers:
  - Foreign policy
  - Global governance institutions (e.g. UN, AU, ECOWAS)

- War and peace studies
- Globalization

 *Example:* Nigeria's peacekeeping role in West Africa through ECOWAS.

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### **(Optional) Other Subfields Studied at Advanced Levels**

Subfield	Focus
<b>Political Theory</b>	Political ideas like liberty, justice, and power
<b>Comparative Politics</b>	Comparing different systems of government
<b>Political Economy</b>	How politics and economics influence each other
<b>Public Law</b>	Legal frameworks guiding the operation of government

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### **Summary Points**

- Government is an important field of study that helps individuals understand power, politics, and governance.
- The study of government nurtures responsible citizenship, enhances political knowledge, and opens up multiple career pathways.
- The subfields of government include **Local Government**, **Public Administration**, and **International Relations**, among others.