

◆ What is Democracy?

📖 **Definition** (Simple): Democracy is a form of government in which the rulers are elected by the people.

📖 Origin of the Word:

- "Demo" = people
- "Kratia" = rule (from Greek)
 - So, Democracy means "rule by the people"

But — Just holding elections is not enough to call a country democratic. So we need more detailed features to truly define democracy.

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◆ Key Features of Democracy

Let's understand democracy through 4 core features:

1. Major Decisions by Elected Leaders

📖 Example: Pakistan (under General Musharraf)

- Elected Parliament existed, but the army and Musharraf took final decisions.
 - ✅ True democracy = only elected representatives have the power to make final decisions.

📖 **Rule 1: In a democracy, the final decision-making power must rest with those elected by the people.**

2. Free and Fair Electoral Competition

📖 Example 1: China

- Elections are held, but only Communist Party or approved members can contest → No real choice.

📖 Example 2: Mexico (before 2000)

- Same party (PRI) kept winning using unfair means like pressure on voters and media bias.

✅ True democracy = People must have a real choice and the ruling party must be able to lose.

📖 **Rule 2: Democracy must be based on free and fair elections where those in power have a real chance of losing.**

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3. One Person, One Vote, One Value



Examples of violation:


- Saudi Arabia (till 2015): No vote for women
- Fiji: Indigenous Fijians' vote had more value than others
- Estonia: Some minorities couldn't vote easily

✓ All citizens must have equal voting rights.

 **Rule 3: Every adult citizen must have one vote, and each vote must have equal value.**

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4. Rule of Law and Respect for Rights

 Example: **Zimbabwe** (under Robert Mugabe)

- Elections were held, but opposition was harassed, media was controlled, and judiciary was weakened.
- ✓ Democracy needs:
 - Respect for citizens' rights
 - Rule of law
 - Independent judiciary
 - Freedom of expression and opposition

 **Rule 4: A democratic government must follow the constitution and respect citizens' rights.**

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 **Summary: A democracy is a government where:**





- ✓ Rulers are elected by people
- ✓ Elections are free and fair
- ✓ Each citizen has one vote, one value
- ✓ Government works under constitutional limits and respects rights

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◆ Why Democracy? (Arguments in Favour)

1. ✓ **More Accountable Government**
 - Democracy requires leaders to answer to the people.

 Example: No famine in democratic India like in China during 1958–61 because India's press and opposition could raise voices.

1.  **Better Decision-Making**
 - Based on consultation and discussion → Less chance of bad decisions.
2.  **Peaceful Method to Resolve Conflicts**
 - Diverse groups in India coexist peacefully through democratic process.
3.  **Dignity and Equality of Citizens**
 - Everyone gets equal respect, including poor and less educated.
4.  **Allows Correction of Mistakes**
 - Leaders can be voted out, public can protest, and mistakes can be discussed and fixed.

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◆ Arguments Against Democracy (With Counterpoints)

Criticism:


- Instability due to changing leaders
- Delays in decisions
- Corruption due to competition
- Leaders may not know people's needs
- Ordinary people can make wrong decisions

Response:

- These issues can exist in any form of government
- At least democracy gives power to people and allows correction

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◆ Broader Meaning of Democracy

 **Democracy is not just about government — it's a way of life.**

 Examples:

- Democratic family = Everyone's opinion matters
- Democratic classroom = Students can question teachers
- Democratic party = Decisions not taken by just one leader

 **Broader Definition: Democracy is a method of decision-making where everyone affected has equal say.**

Even though no country is a perfect democracy, it must keep trying to meet this ideal.

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Activity Thought Starters:

- Can your school/classroom be democratic?
- Think about your family — do all members get equal say?

