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.

Key Features of Democracy

Let's understand democracy through 4 core features:

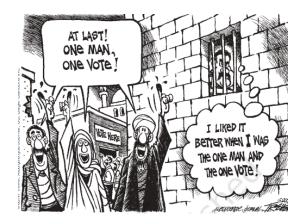
1. Major Decisions by Elected Leaders

- 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.
- 同 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.

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.

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.

E 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

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.
- 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.

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

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

同 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.

Activity Thought Starters:

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