**Democracy**

* Democracy allows people to participate equally—either directly or through elected representatives—in the proposal, development, and creation of laws. It encompasses social, economic and cultural conditions that enable the free and equal practice of political self-determination.
* A democratic government contrasts to forms of government where power is either held by one, as in a monarchy, or where power is held by a small number of individuals, as in an oligarchy or aristocracy.
* Direct democracy is a form of democracy in which people vote on policy initiatives directly. This is different from a representative democracy, in which people vote for representatives who then vote on policy initiatives.
* Representative democracy is a variety of democracy founded on the principle of elected people representing a group of people. For example, three countries which use representative democracy are the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Pakistan and India etc.
* The concept of representative democracy arose largely from ideas and institutions that developed during the European Middle Ages, the Age of Enlightenment, and the American and French Revolutions.

**Key Terms**

* **Direct democracy**: Direct democracy is a form of democracy in which people vote on policy initiatives directly, as opposed to a representative democracy in which people vote for representatives who then vote on policy initiatives. Depending on the particular system in use, it might entail passing executive decisions, making laws, directly electing or dismissing officials and conducting trials. Two leading forms of direct democracy are participatory democracy and deliberative democracy.
* **Representative democracy**: Representative democracy is a variety of democracy founded on the principle of elected people representing a group of people.
* **Democracy**: A government under the direct or representative rule of the people of its jurisdiction.