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Guide to Terms

The following is a guide to some of the terms you will find in this unit. Many countries have governments that are combinations of multiple forms.

absolute monarchy: a form of government where the monarch rules unhindered, i.e., without any laws, constitution, or legally organized opposition

anarchy: a condition of lawlessness or political disorder brought about by the absence of governmental authority

authoritarian: a form of government in which state authority is imposed onto many aspects of citizens' lives

commonwealth: a nation, state, or other political entity founded on law and united by a compact of the people for the common good

communist: a system of government in which the state plans and controls the economy and a single—often authoritarian—party holds power; state controls are imposed with the elimination of private ownership of property or capital while claiming to make progress toward a higher social order in which all goods are equally shared by the people (i.e., a classless society)

Confederacy (confederation): a union by compact or treaty between states, provinces, or territories, that creates a central government with limited powers; the constituent entities retain supreme authority over all matters except those delegated to the central government

constitutional: a government by or operating under an authoritative document (constitution) that sets forth the system of fundamental laws and principles that determines the nature, functions, and limits of that government

constitutional democracy: a form of government in which the sovereign power of the people is spelled out in a governing constitution

constitutional monarchy: a system of government in which a monarch is guided by a constitution whereby his/her rights, duties, and responsibilities are spelled out in written law or by custom

democracy: a form of government in which the supreme power is retained by the people, but which is usually exercised indirectly through a system of representation and delegated authority periodically renewed

democratic republic: a state in which the supreme power rests in the body of citizens entitled to vote for officers and representatives responsible to them

dictatorship: a form of government in which a ruler or small clique wield absolute power (not restricted by a constitution or laws)

ecclesiastical: a government administrated by a church

emirate: similar to a monarchy or sultanate, but a government in which the supreme power is in the hands of an emir/amir (the ruler of a Muslim state); the emir/amir may be an absolute overlord or a sovereign with constitutionally limited authority

federal (federation): a form of government in which sovereign power is formally divided—usually by means of a constitution—between a central authority and a number of constituent regions (states, colonies, or provinces) so that each region retains some management of its internal affairs; differs from a confederacy in that the central government exerts influence directly upon both individuals as well as upon the regional units

federal republic: a state in which the powers of the central government are restricted and in which the component parts (states, colonies, or provinces) retain a degree of self-government; ultimate sovereign power rests with the voters who choose their governmental representatives

Islamic republic: a particular form of government adopted by some Muslim states; although such a state is, in theory, a theocracy, it remains a republic, but its laws are required to be compatible with the laws of Islam

Maoism: the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism developed in China by Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung)

Marxism: the political, economic, and social principles espoused by 19th century economist Karl Marx; he viewed the struggle of workers as a progression of historical forces that would proceed from a class struggle of the proletariat (workers) exploited by capitalists (business owners), to a socialist “dictatorship of the proletariat,” to, finally, a classless society—Communism

Marxism-Leninism: an expanded form of communism developed by Lenin from doctrines of Karl Marx; Lenin saw imperialism as the final stage of capitalism and shifted the focus of workers’ struggle from developed to underdeveloped countries

monarchy: a government in which the supreme power is lodged in the hands of a monarch who reigns over a state or territory, usually for life and by hereditary right; the monarch may be either a sole absolute ruler or a sovereign—such as a king, queen, or prince—with constitutionally limited authority

oligarchy: a government in which control is exercised by a small group of individuals whose authority generally is based on wealth or power

parliamentary democracy: a political system in which the legislature (parliament) selects the government—a prime minister, premier, or chancellor along with the cabinet ministers—according to party strength as expressed in elections; by this system, the government acquires a dual responsibility: to the people as well as to the parliament

parliamentary government (cabinet-parliamentary government): a government in which members of an executive branch (the cabinet and its leader—a prime minister, premier, or chancellor) are nominated to their positions by a legislature or parliament, and are directly responsible to it; this type of government can be dissolved at will by the parliament (legislature) by means of a no confidence vote or the leader of the cabinet may dissolve the parliament if it can no longer function

parliamentary monarchy: a state headed by a monarch who is not actively involved in policy formation or implementation (i.e., the exercise of sovereign powers by a monarch in a ceremonial capacity); true governmental leadership is carried out by a cabinet and its head—a prime minister, premier, or chancellor—who are drawn from a legislature (parliament)

presidential: a system of government where the executive branch exists separately from a legislature (to which it is generally not accountable)

republic: a representative democracy in which the people's elected deputies (representatives), not the people themselves, vote on legislation

socialism: a government in which the means of planning, producing, and distributing goods is controlled by a central government that theoretically seeks a more just and equitable distribution of property and labor; in actuality, most socialist governments have ended up being no more than dictatorships over workers by a ruling elite

sultanate: similar to a monarchy, but a government in which the supreme power is in the hands of a sultan (the head of a Muslim state); the sultan may be an absolute ruler or a sovereign with constitutionally limited authority

theocracy: a form of government in which a deity is recognized as the supreme civil ruler, but the deity's laws are interpreted by ecclesiastical authorities (bishops, mullahs, etc.); a government subject to religious authority

totalitarian: a government that seeks to subordinate the individual to the state by controlling not only all political and economic matters, but also the attitudes, values, and beliefs of its population

Africa

Country	Capital	Type of Government	Chief of State
Algeria	Algiers	presidential republic	president
Angola	Luanda	presidential republic	president
Benin	Porto-Novo	presidential republic	president
Botswana	Gaborone	parliamentary republic	president
Burkina Faso	Ouagadougou	presidential republic	president
Burundi	Bujumbura	presidential republic	president
Cabo Verde (Cape Verde)	Praia	parliamentary republic	president
Cameroon	Yaoundé	presidential republic	president
Central African Republic	Bangui	presidential republic	president
Chad	N'Djamena	presidential republic	president
Comoros	Moroni	federal presidential republic	president
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	Kinshasa	semi-presidential republic	president
Congo, Republic of the	Brazzaville	presidential republic	president
Cote D'Ivoire	Yamoussoukro	presidential republic	president
Djibouti	Djibouti	presidential republic	president
Egypt	Cairo	presidential republic	president



Africa

Country	Capital	Type of Government	Chief of State
Equatorial Guinea	Malabo	presidential republic	president
Eritrea	Asmara	presidential republic	president
Eswatini (Swaziland)	Mbabane	absolute monarchy	king
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa	federal parliamentary republic	president
Gabon	Libreville	presidential republic	president
Gambia	Banjul	presidential republic	president
Ghana	Accra	presidential republic	president
Guinea	Conakry	presidential republic	president
Guinea-Bissau	Bissau	semi-presidential republic	president
Kenya	Nairobi	presidential republic	president
Lesotho	Maseru	parliamentary constitutional monarchy	king
Liberia	Monrovia	presidential republic	president
Libya	Tripoli	in transition	N/A
Madagascar	Antananarivo	semi-presidential republic	president
Malawi	Lilongwe	presidential republic	president
Mali	Bamako	semi-presidential republic	president



Africa

Country	Capital	Type of Government	Chief of State
Mauritania	Nouakchott	presidential republic	president
Mauritius	Port Louis	parliamentary republic	president
Morocco	Rabat	parliamentary constitutional monarchy	king
Mozambique	Maputo	presidential republic	president
Namibia	Windhoek	presidential republic	president
Niger	Niamey	semi-presidential republic	president
Nigeria	Abuja	federal presidential republic	president
Rwanda	Kigali	presidential republic	president
Sao Tome and Principe	Sao Tome	semi-presidential republic	president
Senegal	Dakar	presidential republic	president
Seychelles	Victoria	presidential republic	president
Sierra Leone	Freetown	presidential republic	president
Somalia	Mogadishu	federal parliamentary republic	president
South Africa	Cape Town, Pretoria, and Bloemfontein	parliamentary republic	president
Sudan	Khartoum	presidential republic	president
Sudan, South	Juba	presidential republic	president



Africa

Country	Capital	Type of Government	Chief of State
Tanzania	Dodoma	presidential republic	president
Togo	Lomé	presidential republic	president
Tunisia	Tunis	parliamentary republic	president
Uganda	Kampala	presidential republic	president
Zambia	Lusaka	presidential republic	president
Zimbabwe	Harare	presidential republic	president



Asia

Country	Capital	Type of Government	Chief of State
Afghanistan	Kabul	presidential Islamic republic	N/A
Armenia	Yerevan	parliamentary democracy	president
Azerbaijan	Baku	presidential republic	president
Bahrain	Manama	constitutional monarchy	king
Bangladesh	Dhaka	parliamentary republic	president
Bhutan	Thimphu	constitutional monarchy	king
Brunei	Bandar Seri Begawan	absolute monarchy or sultanate	sultan and prime minister
Cambodia	Phnom Penh	parliamentary constitutional monarchy	king
China	Beijing	communist party-led state	president
Georgia	Tbilisi	semi-presidential republic	president
India	New Delhi	federal parliamentary republic	president
Indonesia	Jakarta	presidential republic	president
Iran	Tehran	theocratic republic	supreme leader
Iraq	Baghdad	federal parliamentary republic	president



Asia

Country	Capital	Type of Government	Chief of State
Israel	Jerusalem	parliamentary democracy	president
Japan	Tokyo	parliamentary constitutional monarchy	emperor
Jordan	Amman	parliamentary constitutional monarchy	king
Kazakhstan	Nur-Sultan	presidential republic	president
Korea, North	Pyongyang	dictatorship, single-party state	Supreme People's Assembly President
Korea, South	Seoul	presidential republic	president
Kuwait	Kuwait City	constitutional monarchy (emirate)	amir
Kyrgyzstan	Bishkek	parliamentary republic	president
Laos	Vientiane	communist state	president
Lebanon	Beirut	parliamentary republic	president
Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur	federal parliamentary constitutional monarchy	king sultan
Maldives	Male	presidential republic	president
Mongolia	Ulaanbaatar	semi-presidential republic	president
Myanmar (Burma)	Naypyidaw	parliamentary republic	president



Asia

Country	Capital	Type of Government	Chief of State
Nepal	Kathmandu	federal parliamentary republic	president
Oman	Muscat	absolute monarchy	sultan and prime minister
Pakistan	Islamabad	federal parliamentary republic	president
Philippines	Manila	presidential republic	president
Qatar	Doha	absolute monarchy	amir
Russia	Moscow	semi-presidential federation	president
Saudi Arabia	Riyadh	absolute monarchy	king and prime minister
Singapore	Singapore	parliamentary republic	president
Sri Lanka	Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte	presidential republic	president
Syria	Damascus	presidential republic; highly authoritarian regime	president
Taiwan	Taipei	semi-presidential republic	president
Tajikistan	Dushanbe	presidential republic	president
Thailand	Bangkok	constitutional monarchy	king
Timor-Leste	Dili	semi-presidential republic	president



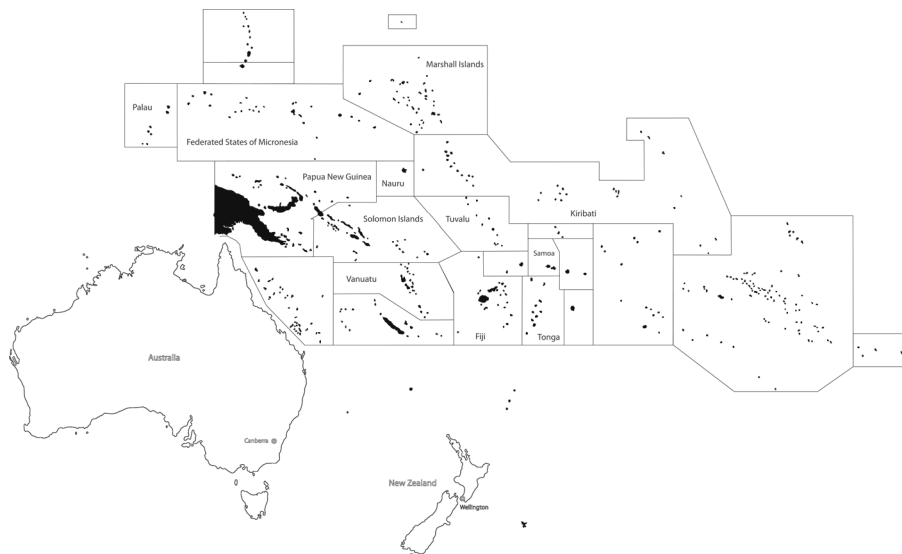
Asia

Country	Capital	Type of Government	Chief of State
Turkey	Ankara	presidential republic	president
Turkmenistan	Ashgabat	presidential republic; authoritarian	president
United Arab Emirates	Abu Dhabi	federation of monarchies	president
Uzbekistan	Tashkent	presidential republic; highly authoritarian	president
Vietnam	Hanoi	communist state	president
Yemen	Sanaa	in transition	president



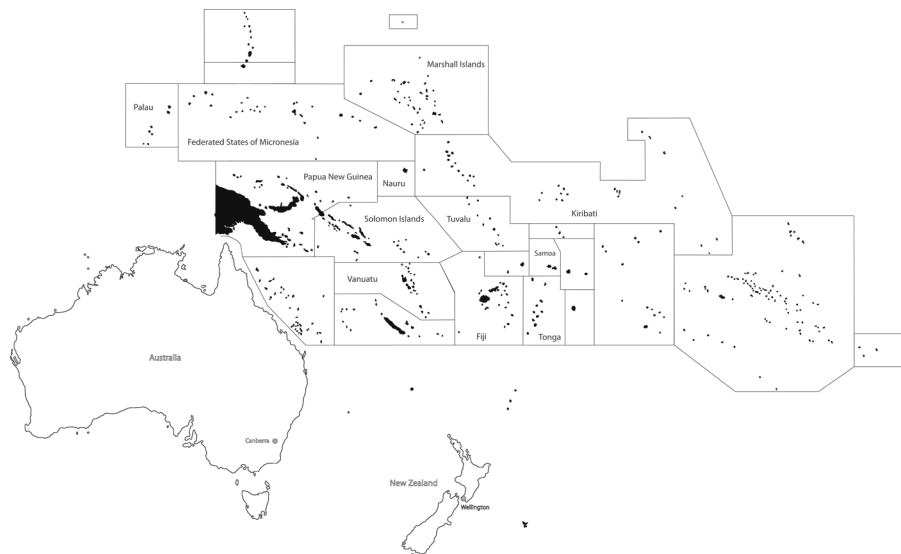
Australia and Oceania

Country	Capital	Type of Government	Chief of State
Australia	Canberra	federal parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen
Federated States of Micronesia	Palikir	federal republic in free association with the US	president
Fiji	Suva	parliamentary republic	president
Kiribati	Tarawa	presidential republic	president
Marshall Islands	Majuro	mixed presidential-parliamentary system in free association with the US	president
Nauru	(None)	parliamentary republic	president
New Zealand	Wellington	parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen
Palau	Melekeok	presidential republic in free association with the US	president



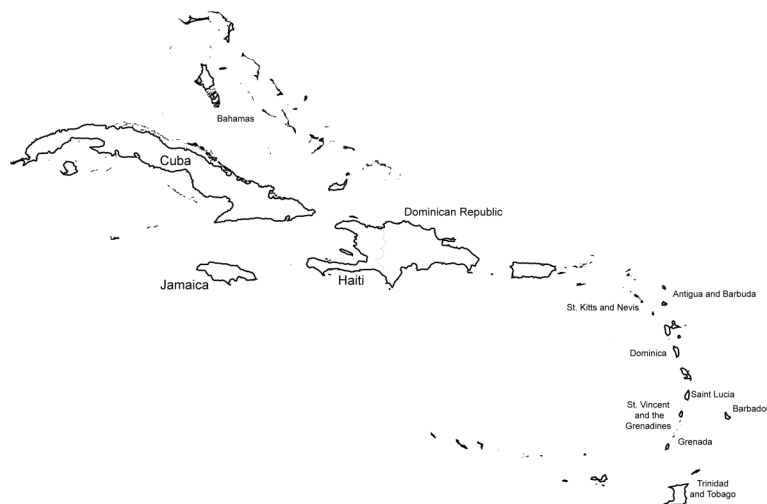
Australia and Oceania

Country	Capital	Type of Government	Chief of State
Papua New Guinea	Port Moresby	parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen
Samoa	Apia	parliamentary republic	chief of state
Solomon Islands	Honiara	parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen
Tonga	Nuku'alofa	constitutional monarchy	king
Tuvalu	Funafuti	parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen
Vanuatu	Port-Vila	parliamentary republic	president



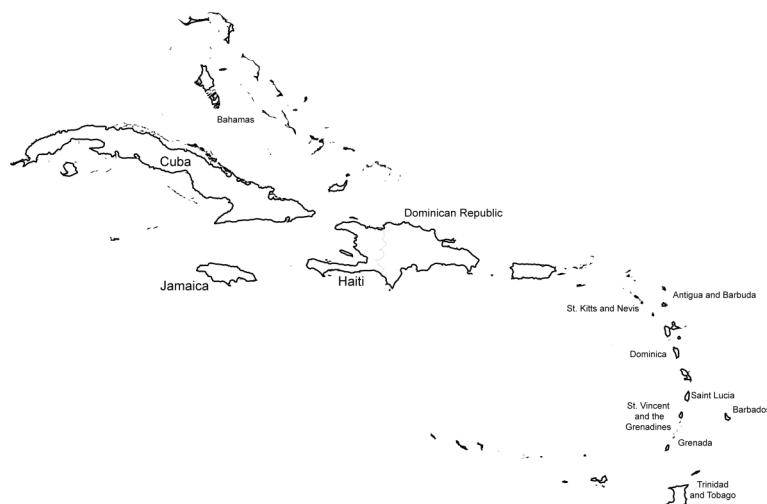
Caribbean

Country	Capital	Type of Government	Chief of State
Antigua and Barbuda	Saint John's	parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen
Bahamas	Nassau	parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen
Barbados	Bridgetown	parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen
Cuba	Havana	communist state	president
Dominica	Roseau	parliamentary republic	president
Dominican Republic	Santo Domingo	presidential republic	president
Grenada	Saint George's	parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen



Caribbean

Country	Capital	Type of Government	Chief of State
Haiti	Port-au-Prince	semi-presidential republic	president
Jamaica	Kingston	parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Basseterre	federal parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen
Saint Lucia	Castries	parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Kingstown	parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen
Trinidad and Tobago	Port-of-Spain	parliamentary republic	president



Central America

Country	Capital	Type of Government	Chief of State
Belize	Belmopan	parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen
Costa Rica	San Jose	presidential republic	president
El Salvador	San Salvador	presidential republic	president
Guatemala	Guatemala City	presidential republic	president
Honduras	Tegucigalpa	presidential republic	president
Nicaragua	Managua	presidential republic	president
Panama	Panama City	presidential republic	president



Europe

Country	Capital	Type of Government	Chief of State
Albania	Tiranë	parliamentary republic	president
Andorra	Andorra la Vella	parliamentary democracy	co-princes
Austria	Vienna	federal parliamentary republic	president
Belarus	Minsk	presidential republic in name, although in fact a dictatorship	president
Belgium	Brussels	federal parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy	king
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Sarajevo	parliamentary republic	chairman of the presidency
Bulgaria	Sofia	parliamentary republic	president
Croatia	Zagreb	parliamentary republic	president
Cyprus	Nicosia	presidential republic	president
Czech Republic (Czechia)	Prague	parliamentary republic	president
Denmark	Copenhagen	parliamentary constitutional monarchy	queen
England	London	parliamentary constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen
Estonia	Tallinn	parliamentary republic	president



Europe

Country	Capital	Type of Government	Chief of State
Finland	Helsinki	parliamentary republic	president
France	Paris	semi-presidential republic	president
Germany	Berlin	federal parliamentary republic	president
Greece	Athens	parliamentary republic	president
Hungary	Budapest	parliamentary republic	president
Iceland	Reykjavik	unitary parliamentary republic	president
Ireland	Dublin	parliamentary republic	president
Italy	Rome	parliamentary republic	president
Kosovo	Priština	parliamentary republic	president
Latvia	Riga	parliamentary republic	president
Liechtenstein	Vaduz	constitutional monarchy	prince
Lithuania	Vilnius	semi-presidential republic	president
Luxembourg	Luxembourg	constitutional monarchy	grand duke
Malta	Valletta	parliamentary republic	president
Moldova	Chisinau	parliamentary republic	president
Monaco	Monaco	constitutional monarchy	prince



Europe

Country	Capital	Type of Government	Chief of State
Montenegro	Podgorica	parliamentary republic	president
Netherlands	Amsterdam	parliamentary constitutional monarchy	king
North Macedonia (Macedonia)	Skopje	parliamentary republic	president
Northern Ireland	Belfast	parliamentary constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen
Norway	Oslo	parliamentary constitutional monarchy	king
Poland	Warsaw	parliamentary republic	president
Portugal	Lisbon	semi-presidential republic	president
Romania	Bucharest	semi-presidential republic	president
San Marino	San Marino	parliamentary republic	co-chiefs of state
Scotland	Edinburgh	parliamentary constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen
Serbia	Belgrade	parliamentary republic	president
Slovakia	Bratislava	parliamentary republic	president
Slovenia	Ljubljana	parliamentary republic	president



Europe

Country	Capital	Type of Government	Chief of State
Spain	Madrid	parliamentary constitutional monarchy	king
Sweden	Stockholm	parliamentary constitutional monarchy	king
Switzerland	Bern	federal republic (formally a confederation)	president
Ukraine	Kiev	semi-presidential republic	president
Vatican City	(none)	ecclesiastical elective monarchy; self-described as an "absolute monarchy"	pope
Wales	Cardiff	parliamentary constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen



North and South America

Country	Capital	Type of Government	Chief of State
Canada	Ottawa	federal parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm	queen
Mexico	Mexico City	federal presidential republic	president
United States	Washington, D.C.	constitutional federal republic	president
Argentina	Buenos Aires	presidential republic	president
Bolivia	La Paz and Sucre	presidential republic	president
Brazil	Brasilia	federal presidential republic	president
Chile	Santiago	presidential republic	president
Colombia	Bogotá	presidential republic	president
Ecuador	Quito	presidential republic	president
Guyana	Georgetown	parliamentary republic	president
Paraguay	Asunción	presidential republic	president
Peru	Lima	presidential republic	president
Suriname	Paramaribo	presidential republic	president
Uruguay	Montevideo	presidential republic	president
Venezuela	Caracas	federal presidential republic	president

