

Types of Governments notes, continued:

The Greek city-states were all independent. Due to geography (mountainous terrain), overland communication was difficult. Sea travel was easier, but trade with other city-states was less common than might be imagined—there was not much reason to trade with a city-state that had the same products that your city-state had. (Because the land was pretty similar, each city-state probably had similar products available to trade.) You'd be more likely to trade with another "country" such as Anatolia, Phoenicia, or Egypt. Thus, city-states would not communicate with each other that much by sea, either. Some, of course. And they shared the same language. But there was lots of room for the city-states to develop independently.

Monarchy

- ◆ King/queen
- ◆ Absolute power
- ◆ Hereditary
- ◆ "divine right" is assumed ("the god(s) want me in power")

[image of a crown]

Aristocracy:

- ◆ Another name for upper class or nobility
- ◆ People who were descended from 'high-born' ancestors (born to wealth)

[image of a crown leading to a dollar sign, showing a wealthy person who had gotten power from the monarch, either by birth (distant relative) or by doing something for the monarch]

Oligarchy:

- ◆ Similar to aristocracy: A small group controls the government
- ◆ Difference: Aristocrats rule because of their inherited high social class; oligarchs rule because of acquired wealth or land ownership

[image...]

Tyrants: "illegitimate rule"

"illegitimate rule" means that the person came to power "illegally"

We can also say that he or she came to power in an unconventional, non-standard, or non-traditional way; that is, he or she was...

... not a monarch (king or queen or a direct descendant of the royal family)

... not an aristocrat (born into a wealthy family, part of the nobility, indirect royalty)

... not an oligarch (wealthy or land-owning family)

... not a religious person (such as someone who would be part of a theocracy)

... not elected

Origin: Less advantaged people not part of the monarchy, aristocracy, or oligarchy. They often came to resent being shut out of power and rebelled, seeking the support of like-minded people.

Because they came to power in a way other than the usual, legal, recognized way (see above), their ascendancy or coming to power is considered “illegal” or “illegitimate”.

- ◆ A relatively wealthy person who took power, through the support of the poor, in an illegal way.
- ◆ Absolute power without being of royal birth
- ◆ Promised reforms (changes) to the poor who supported him (e.g., building projects that gave jobs to the poor, enacted laws that canceled debt that poor people owed)
- ◆ Often started out with reforms but the reforms were not sustained; tyrants never lasted long
- ◆ Tyrants had a huge role in the development of rule by the people (the concept behind democracy): Showed that if the common people united behind a leader, they could overthrow the current leadership and gain the power to make changes.
- ◆ Somewhere along the line, a tyrant was probably very bad and the negative connotation of a tyrant (abusive, mean, oppressive, self-centered, dictatorial) stuck

Democracy:

- ◆ The citizens make political decisions
- ◆ In Greece: Direct democracy—all citizens were required to meet to decide on laws
- ◆ In Greece: Limited democracy—free adult males with Athenian parents (~ 12% of the population (1 person in 8))

Types of democracy:

Direct – all citizens vote on everything

Limited – there are limits as to who can be considered a citizen

Indirect – citizens vote for **representatives** who do the actual voting on laws (also known as a **republic**). All democracies today are indirect democracies.

	Similarities	Differences
Athenian Democracy	Citizens form the basis of the government; government receives its right to govern (make laws, maintain order) by the consent of the people	Direct Limited
American Democracy		Indirect (use of representatives) Minimally limited