

Parliamentary and Presidential Forms of Government

In Europe, there are two main types of democratic governments: parliamentary government and presidential government. The parliamentary system is common in Europe. Presidential democracies are common in the Americas. Europe's president democracies are often organized differently than the United States model. However, both styles allow for citizens to elect lawmakers and the leader is the head of the military and runs the government.

In a **parliamentary democracy**, citizens elect the parliament. Parliament then selects the Prime Minister. He/she is the head of the parliament and the law making body. The Prime Minister can dissolve (break up) parliament at any time. Sometimes the Prime Minister is called a Chancellor, like in Germany. In a parliamentary democracy, there may also be a head of state with little power. This is often a king or queen, even a president.

In a **presidential democracy**, citizens have the right to vote directly for the leader, or the President. The President is head of state and chief executive. The President and the legislature are completely separate. The legislature is the lawmaking body, not the President. Both the legislature and the president serve a fixed amount of time.

Directions: Answer the following questions.

1. Legislature is to parliament as a president is to _____.
2. Who has the most government power in the parliamentary system?
3. Which type of government has the most freedom? Explain your thinking.
4. Which type of democracy do you think is the best?
5. Explain your answer for number 4.

Enrichment - You are assigned a partner to work with. His/her name is _____. You will be the expert on _____ democracy. Your task is to compare and contrast the two different forms of democracies. You will need to have 4 differences for each and 2 similarities.

Parliamentary
Democracy

Presidential
Democracy

