

Governments in Ancient Greece

Ancient Greeks had many forms of government. People still use Greek words to describe governments today, but the meaning of these words has changed over time. **Read the table below to learn how. Then answer the questions on the next page.**



	Ancient	Modern
MONARCHY	In ancient Greece, a monarchy was a government ruled by a single person. This person was called the monarch , or king. The monarch made laws, acted as a judge, led the military, and even conducted religious ceremonies. Not just anyone could become a monarch in ancient Greece; they had to be born into a royal family. When a monarch died, someone else in the royal family would inherit power. This person was usually the closest male relative.	In the modern world, some monarchies still exist. But the monarchs in these governments have less power; they are symbols of government, not rulers. However, monarchs still usually pass down their position to the closest male relative within a royal family, just like in ancient Greece.
TYRANNY	In ancient Greece, a tyranny was another form of government controlled by a single person. A tyrant gained power illegally by force instead of inheriting it within a royal family. Even though they gained power by force, not all Greek tyrants abused their power; some gave land to the poor and were very popular. Even though these rulers did not misuse their authority, they were still considered tyrants by the ancient Greeks.	In the modern world, the word tyranny is used differently. Today, tyranny describes any cruel or oppressive government.
DEMOCRACY	In ancient Greece, a democracy was a government where citizens shared collective power. All male citizens had a voice in deciding the laws. These men could debate and vote in public meetings called assemblies . Greek democracy excluded female citizens; women could not even attend an assembly, much less vote.	In the modern world, democracy works differently. In most modern democracies, citizens vote to elect representatives, and representatives then vote to decide the laws. In addition, voting rights aren't typically limited to men.
OLIGARCHY	In ancient Greece, an oligarchy was a government controlled by a small group of wealthy people. Members of this small group of rulers were called oligarchs . Like democracies, oligarchies usually held votes to make decisions. But in an oligarchy, wealthy people controlled the voting. Either they were the only people allowed to vote, or their votes counted for more.	In the modern world, the word oligarchy is used more broadly to mean any power structure where rich people control a government or have too much power. Wealthy people are sometimes called oligarchs because of the influence their money brings. But unlike in ancient Greece, no government today directly restricts voting rights to only the rich.

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Answer the questions.

MONARCHY	<p>1. In ancient Greece, how did a monarch gain power?</p>	<p>2. How is being a monarch today different from being a monarch in ancient Greece?</p>
TYRANNY	<p>3. In ancient Greece, how was a tyranny different from a monarchy?</p>	<p>4. How was the Greek meaning of tyranny different from the modern meaning?</p>
DEMOCRACY	<p>5. In ancient Greece, how did a democracy make its laws?</p>	<p>6. How were democracies in ancient Greece different from democracies today?</p>
OLIGARCHY	<p>7. Who ruled in ancient Greek oligarchies?</p>	<p>8. How was the Greek meaning of oligarchy different from the modern meaning?</p>