

Deciding about Democracy

COUNTRY A

The people of country A (Apple) have a Prime Minister rather than a president as their national leader. The people vote for their representatives in the legislature, but they do not vote for the Prime Minister. The elected representatives in the legislature choose the Prime Minister. If they lose confidence in the leader the majority in the legislature chooses a new Prime Minister. Apple has an unwritten constitution based on many important documents in their history. Some of their laws are also based on custom. Individuals and groups are free to criticize the government. They are free to worship as they please, move freely within the country, change jobs, and travel.

COUNTRY B

The country of Berry has a written constitution that is 25 years old. It says that citizens have the right to freedom of speech and religion. Although these rights are in the constitution, the people of Berry are not allowed to criticize the government. People who disagree with the government are arrested. They disappear for many years, sometimes forever. There are elections in Berry, but candidates may belong to only one political party. Many people of Berry are afraid of their government. They do not feel safe.

COUNTRY C

Carrot is a country with a president and legislature elected by the people. The president appoints the governors of Carrot's sixty states. Military leaders (who are not elected) have a great deal of power in Carrot. They decide which candidates can run in an election. They have shut down newspapers that criticize the government. In the old days, a military dictator ruled Carrot. Five years ago, the military gave power to a president and a legislature. If the military leaders do not like the government's actions, they can try to take over the government again.

COUNTRY D

The country of Dill has some citizens who are very wealthy. They have the right to vote for president and their representatives. They hold important positions in business, government, and education. They can travel freely and choose their place of worship, their jobs, and schools for their children. Many of their children go to college in other countries. Most people in Dill are poor and have little education. They are not allowed to vote and must live in the area assigned to them by the government. There is no constitution that protects the rights of all the people of Dill.

COUNTRY E

Egg is a country where there are many elections. In every part of the nation, leaders, legislators, and judges are elected to office. If the people of Egg do not like what their government is doing, they can wait for the next election and vote for a new political party or a new candidate. Sometimes the people of Egg don't wait for the next election. They sign a petition to recall the government official and remove him or her from office. These procedures are written in their constitution. People often discuss and debate government actions. Sometimes citizens take government officials to court and win their cases. Politics is an important part of the daily lives of the people of Egg.

IS THIS A DEMOCRACY?

Use your part of the reading *Deciding about Democracy* to help complete the following chart.

| Characteristic | A - Apple | B - Berry | C - Carrot | D - Dill | E - Egg |
|--|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Peaceful change of leaders | | | | | |
| Basic political freedom | | | | | |
| Protection of life, liberty, and property | | | | | |
| Regular elections, majority rule | | | | | |
| Elected representative | | | | | |
| Free and open press | | | | | |
| Courts - equality before the law; rule of laws not men | | | | | |
| Constitutional limits to government | | | | | |
| Conclusion: | | | | | |
| Is this country a democracy? (yes - no) | | | | | |