

The Rise of Democratic Ideas

From Ancient Greece to modern East Timor, governments have struggled over issues of power, fairness, balance, and representation.



Scene at the Signing of the Constitution, Howard Chandler Christy.



Origins of Democracy



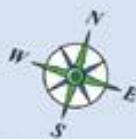




Origins of Democracy



ATLANTIC OCEAN



Section 1

The Legacy of Ancient Greece and Rome

The Greeks develop democracy, and the Romans add representative government.

Athens Builds a Limited Democracy

Greek City-States

- Greeks establish city-states in fertile valleys near coasts
 - each has own type of **government** or system for controlling society
- **Monarchy** is rule by a king or monarch
- **Aristocracy** is rule by small group of noble, land-owning families
- **Oligarchy** is rule by a few powerful people (nobles, merchants)
- **Democracy** is rule by the people

Athens Builds a Limited Democracy

Building Democracy

- Athens emerges as largest, most powerful city-state
- Three elected nobles rule each year, then join council of advisers
- Around 600 B.C., economic crisis forces citizens into slavery

Reforms of Solon [Visual]

- 594 B.C. Solon outlaws debt slavery, cancels debts, avoids civil war
- Creates four citizen classes based on wealth, also Council of 400
- Free adult males (1/10 of population) are citizens



 *Solon Justifying His Laws to the Athenians* (1699), Noël Coypel.

Athens Builds a Limited Democracy

Cleisthenes Enacts More Reforms

- Cleisthenes considered founder of democracy in Athens
- Reorganizes assembly to balance power of rich, poor
- Allows all citizens to submit laws, increasing power of assembly
- Creates Council of 500 to propose laws, counsel the assembly
- Still, only 1/5 of Athenian residents are citizens

Greek Democracy Changes

Pericles Strengthens Democracy

- Greek city-states fight, defeat Persian invaders, 490–479 B.C.
- Pericles leads Athens 461–429 B.C.
- Increases number of paid public officials, pays jurors *[Visual]*
 - enables poorer citizens to participate in government
- **Direct democracy**—citizens rule, make laws themselves
- War weakens Athens, Sparta; Macedonia invades Greece, ends democracy

INTERACTIVE

SOMETHING IN COMMON *across cultures*

Making Legal Judgments

The rule of law is an essential feature of democracy. In a democracy, everyone, from the most powerful government official to the poorest citizen, must obey the law. While legal systems have existed in some form in most societies, only in democracies are laws made and enforced by the people themselves or by their representatives. For much of history, the law has often been nothing more than the wishes of an absolute ruler or a ruling elite and has been arbitrarily executed by them. In ancient Athens, however, nearly 2,500 years ago, citizens were first given the right to administer justice—by serving on juries.

Click the countries on the map to learn more.



Connect to History
Comparing and Contrasting What is similar and what is different among the ways legal judgments are made in the examples?
[SEE OUR BUILDER HANDBOOK](#)

Connect to Today
Researching Read about the trial system in the United States today. Then write two paragraphs exploring which example on these pages is the forerunner of the U.S. system.

a closer look
ATHEMAN LAW
Click on tab to learn more

🔍 Something In Common Across Cultures—Making Legal Judgments

Greek Democracy Changes

Greek Philosophers Use Reason

- Greek thinkers base their philosophy on assumptions
 - universe is orderly, subject to absolute, unchanging laws
 - people can understand laws through logic, reason
- Three principal philosophers: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle

Legacy of Greece

- Greeks use reason, intelligence to discover natural laws
- Develop 3 branches of government: legislative, executive, judicial

Rome Develops a Republic

From Kingdom to Republic

- Romans gain control of Italian peninsula between 1000–500 B.C.
- From about 600 B.C., kings rule Rome
- Aristocrats set up **republic**—government by elected leaders—509 B.C.
- Only free-born males have citizenship with voting rights
- Patricians—aristocratic landowners—have most power
- Plebeians—farmers, artisans—can vote, can't hold powerful positions

Twelve Tables


- Plebeians force written law code; Twelve Tables displayed publicly
 - all citizens gain legal protection, fair administration of laws

Rome Develops a Republic

Republican Government

- Two consuls elected yearly; command army, direct government
- **Senate**—all patricians; controls foreign, financial policies *[Visual]*
- Plebeians included in two assemblies; dictator permitted in crisis
- Roman expansion creates problems; 27 B.C. emperor takes over



 *Cicero Denouncing Catiline Before the Senate* (about 1888), Cesare Maccari.

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Roman Law

The Roman Empire and the Law

- Roman law applies to entire empire; protects citizens, property
 - all citizens have right to equal treatment under law
 - person considered innocent until proven guilty
 - burden of proof rests with accuser, not accused
 - unreasonable, grossly unfair laws could be set aside

Roman Law

A Written Legal Code

- In A.D. 528, Justinian has laws since previous code compiled
 - *The Code* has nearly 5,000 laws; *The Digest* summarizes legal opinions
 - *The Institutes* a legal textbook; *The Novellae* is post-534 laws

Legacy of Rome

- Rome gives the world the idea of a republic *[Visual]*
- Greatest legacy is a written code fairly, equally applied to all
- Rome preserves, passes on Greek democratic tradition



Model of ancient Rome.



Section 2

Judeo-Christian Tradition

Judaism and Christianity taught individual worth, ethical values, and the need to fight injustice.

Judaism

Created in God's Image

- **Judaism**—monotheistic religion of the Hebrews (later, the Jews)
- Hebrew Bible says humans created in God's image, gives them dignity
- Hebrew God gives people moral freedom, responsibility for choices

Jewish Law Teaches Morality

- Bible says God gave Moses **Ten Commandments**, other laws *[Visual]*
 - focus on morality, ethics, religious behavior
- Prophets stress social conscience: oppose injustice, assist needy



Moses



Christianity

The Teachings of Christianity

- Jesus stresses love for God, neighbors, enemies, selves
- Teaches God will end evil in world, establish eternal kingdom
 - those who repent their sins can get life after death there
- Called Jesus Christ, from Christos—Greek for “messiah” or “savior”
- **Christianity**—religion founded by Jesus

Christianity

The Spread of Christianity

- Paul preaches around eastern Mediterranean; welcomes all converts
- Stresses equality of all people—belief central to democracy

Rome Spreads Judeo-Christian Ideas

- Jews exiled from homeland in A.D. 70 after rebelling against Romans
- Flee to many parts of world; share beliefs in justice, human dignity
- At first, Romans persecute Christians
 - by 380 Christianity official religion of empire

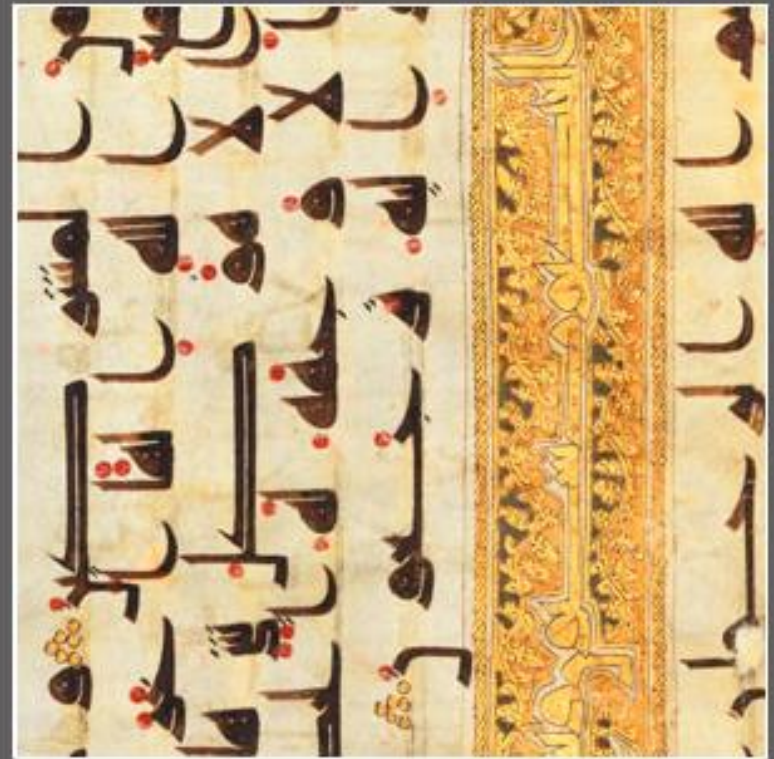
Islam

The Teachings of Muhammad

- **Islam**—monotheistic religion based on the teachings of Muhammad
- Stresses dignity, brotherhood of people, tolerance of other groups
- Holy book called Qur'an; followers called Muslims *[Visual]*

The Legacy of Monotheistic Religions

- Ideas that emerge are crucial to shaping of democratic outlook
 - duty of individual, community to combat oppression
 - worth of the individual; equality of people before God



Decorated page from a manuscript of the Qur'an (about A.D. 900).

Renaissance and Reformation

Christianity in the Middle Ages

- **Roman Catholic Church**—most powerful institution in Europe
- Influences religious, social, political life
- Church's authoritarian structure demands unquestioned obedience

Renaissance and Reformation

Renaissance Revives Classical Ideas

- **Renaissance**—movement stressing classical culture
 - starts in 1300s in Italy; helped by development of printing press *[Visual]*
- Rejects medieval view that life is only preparation for afterlife
- Renewed interest in human potential, earthly achievements
- Role of government questioned; individualism prized
- Explorers venture into uncharted territory, build huge empires



Illustration of the Renaissance printer Johann Gutenberg in his workshop.



Renaissance and Reformation

The Reformation Challenges Church Power

- **Reformation**—religious reform movement of 16th century
- Protestants speak against power, abuses of Catholic Church
- Tell people to read Bible, make own religious judgments

Legacy of the Renaissance and Reformation

- Renaissance, Reformation promote democracy
 - challenge authority of pope, rulers; stress value of individual
 - promote reading of Bible that leads to reading about other ideas

Section 3

Democracy Develops in England

England begins to develop democratic institutions that limit the power of the monarchy.

Reforms in Medieval England

The Norman Conquest Brings Changes

- William of Normandy conquers England, begins centralizing government
 - sets off decline of feudalism, development of democracy

Juries and Common Law

- Henry II replaces trial by combat, ordeal with jury trials
 - royal judge presides, hears 12 men's testimony about case
- **Common law** reflects customs, principles established over time
 - became basis of legal system in United States

Reforms in Medieval England

The Magna Carta

- **Magna Carta**—nobles force king to guarantee political, legal rights
 - king must govern according to law, get taxes approved
 - **due process of law**—right to have law work in known, orderly ways
- **Parliament**, England's legislature, becomes public voice

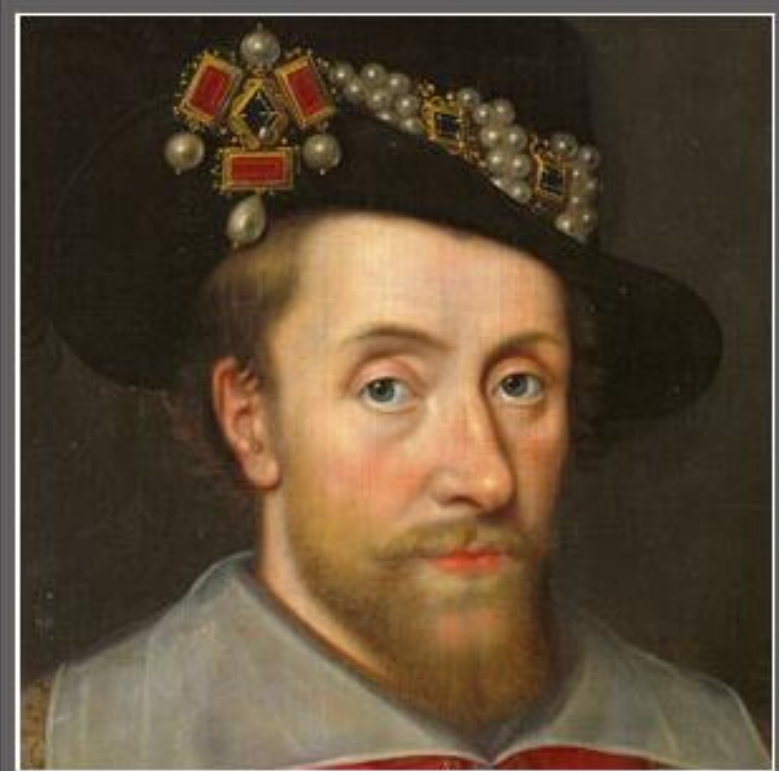
Model Parliament

- Edward I calls knights, burgesses, nobles to "Model Parliament"
- Knights, burgesses in House of Commons by mid-1300s; nobles in Lords

Parliament Grows Stronger

Conflict With the Monarch

- Commons gains power; Parliament votes on taxes, laws, advises king
- **Divine right**—claim that king's power comes from God, is absolute
- James I claims divine right, clashes with Parliament *[Visual]*
 - Puritans battle James over Anglican Church doctrines, ceremonies
 - James uses Star Chamber, ignores parliamentary courts, common law
 - Parliament refuses additional funds for debt, court, war expenses



Portrait of King James I of England.

Parliament Grows Stronger

Parliament Overthrows the King

- Parliament gives Charles I funds, gets Petition of Right, which ends
 - taxing without Parliament's consent
 - imprisoning citizens illegally; housing troops in homes
 - maintaining military government in peacetime
- 1642 English Civil War breaks out
- Antiroyalists under Puritan Oliver Cromwell win; Charles executed

Establishment of Constitutional Monarchy

The Restoration

- Cromwell's Commonwealth unsuccessful; establishes Protectorate
- 1660 Parliament restores monarchy, invites Charles II to take throne
- Parliament retains powers, expands rights, such as habeas corpus

Glorious Revolution

- Protestants afraid James II wants Catholicism as official religion
- **Glorious Revolution**—Parliament offers throne to William, Mary
 - creates **constitutional monarchy**—king's powers limited by laws

Establishment of Constitutional Monarchy

English Bill of Rights

- **Bill of rights** is formal summary of people's rights, liberties
- 1689, William, Mary accept bill of rights from Parliament
 - king can't suspend laws, raise peacetime army without Parliament
 - people are free from excessive bail, cruel and unusual punishment
 - Parliament must be called frequently

England's Legacy

- Glorious Revolution, bill of rights set example for American colonies

Section 4

The Enlightenment and Democratic Revolutions

Enlightenment ideas help bring about the American and French revolutions.

Enlightenment Thinkers and Ideas

The Enlightenment

- **Enlightenment**—intellectual movement of the 17th, 18th centuries
 - applies principles of reason, methods of science to examine society
- Scientific Revolution of 16th, 17th centuries spurs Enlightenment
 - teaches reliance on rational thought, not traditional beliefs

Enlightenment Thinkers and Ideas

Voltaire and Rousseau

- Voltaire argues for tolerance, freedom of religion, free speech *[Visual]*
 - frequent critic of French government, Christianity
- Rousseau says social contract is agreement among free individuals
 - legitimate government comes from consent of the people

Montesquieu

- Montesquieu believes people in power try to increase own power
 - **separation of powers** into legislative, executive, judicial branches



Portrait of the French author Voltaire as a young man.

The Beginnings of Democracy in America

Americans Protest British Policies

- Colonists help Britain defeat France in French and Indian War
- Extra soldiers needed to protect new territories
- Britain wants colonies to help pay for war, new soldiers
 - passes series of tax measures
- Colonists protest taxation without representation, closing of frontier

The Beginnings of Democracy in America

Americans Win Independence

- Colonists issue Declaration of Independence, influenced by Locke
- Win war against Britain; set up weak confederation of states

Enlightenment Ideas Shape the Constitution

- Framers use Enlightenment ideas to create strong, stable government
- **Representative government**—elected representatives make laws
- **Federal system** divides powers between federal, state governments
- Includes separation of powers with checks and balances

The French Revolution

Causes of the Revolution

- Absolute monarchy of Louis XIV leaves massive debt, growing unrest
- Middle class, some nobles favor Enlightenment ideas, U.S. model
- Peasants restless after poor harvests, think rulers unconcerned

Early Reforms of the Revolution

- Louis XVI calls Estates-General to raise taxes; commoners leave
- National Assembly: Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen
- Drafts constitution with limited monarchy; reforms Church, courts

The French Revolution

Democratic Reforms Undone

- King, nobles, many Catholics reject new Legislative Assembly
- European monarchs fear spread of democracy, go to war with France
- Reign of Terror—radicals kill people thought to oppose revolution
- Napoleon Bonaparte takes control, established dictatorship
- French Revolution shows democracy more than freedom, representation
 - also rule of law, civil protections, tolerance, assent to majority vote

The Struggle for Democracy Continues

The United Nations Promotes Democracy

- **United Nations** works for peace, betterment of humanity
 - in General Assembly, member nations have equal representation
- UN's authority comes from member nations
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights sets worldwide standard

New Movements Toward Democracy *[Visual]*

- Many nations struggle toward more democratic government
 - since 1990s, 15 former Soviet republics, South Africa, East Timor



Pro-democracy demonstrator.

Thanks!