

# Democracy through the AGES



## Athenian Democracy

Between 700 and 350 BCE the ancient Greeks had the first Democracy. In the ancient city of Athens, all citizens were supposed to take a role in their cities' affairs. However, the definition of "citizen" was males born in Athens. This excluded women and slaves. This is a picture of a potty training kit from ancient Greece. They had democracy and potty time!!!!



## Rome

In 509 BCE, Rome was declared a republic after the king was sent away. Rich families took over. These upper class people were called **patricians**. Although they numbered few, they ruled over the common people or **plebs**. The plebs rebelled and won more rights. Although they were not as active as the Athenians, they helped create a new democratic institution called the **Senate**. Although only patricians could be **Senators**, people had a say in this republic. Again only men could be a **civis**, or citizen of Rome. This is where we get the word citizen, city, and the title of this course, **CIVICS**.





## Monarchy


Throughout the middle ages most European countries had a monarchy. Simple put kings or Queens ruled in places such as France, England and Russia. Some of us remember childhood stories of Robin Hood fighting against the evil King John. Kings and Queen's felt that they owed their power directly from God. They felt

themselves the chosen ones and to question their authority was to question God. This is called the ***Devine Right of Kings***. However, in 1215, this all came to an end when a group of British nobility forced the king to give up his "divine right" and to create a ***Parliament***.



## Parliament

Parliament comes from the word ***Parler***. Many of us remember this from Pirates of the Caribbean. Elizabeth Swan asks Captain Barbossa for formal ***Parler*** or ***Parlez***. That is to talk to the captain.



Well, it's more of a guideline!

I asked for Parler!

**This text was written with the help of Alan Skeoch, *Civics: Participating in a Democratic Society* McGraw Hill, Toronto: 2000.**

## **Magna Carta**

In 1215, King John was forced to sign the Magna Carta. This document had certain provisions in it to safeguard the rights of citizens.

For example, **the King could not:**

- steal firewood from other lands
- force widows to remarry
- Force knights to pay money to excuse them from guarding the castle!
- Confiscate horses or carts
- Force villagers to build bridges over rivers

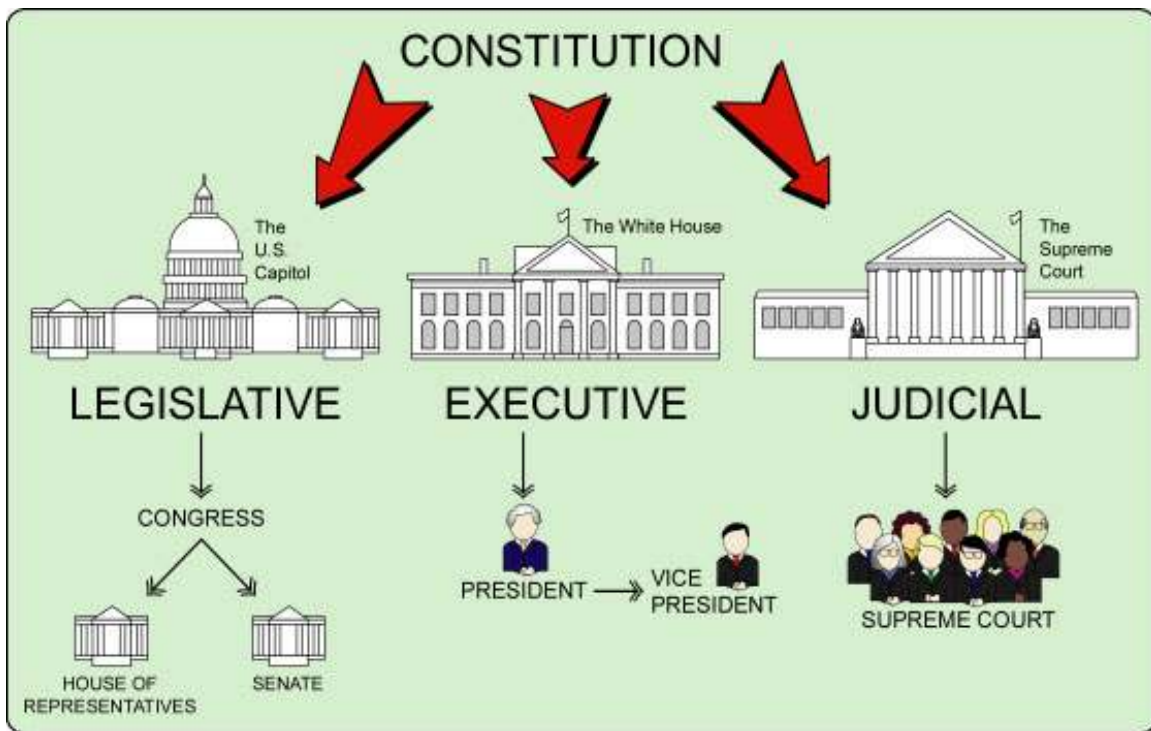


The Magna Carta is such an important document because it marks the beginning of our Parliamentary Democracy.



## Modern Democracies

It was not until the revolutions of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century that our modern democracies took shape. **The American Revolution in 1775 – 1781**, created the first true democracy. Americans could vote and the powers of the government were restricted so that no one branch could have too much power. If one branch did try to abuse its power than the other two could over ride it.



However, it must be noted that the US did not give women the vote until 1919. While creating its Constitution in 1787, the US made provisions for slaves. In order to count them for taxation and voting purposes it was deemed that an African American was worth 3/5's of a white person and of course, they could not vote.

## The French Revolution

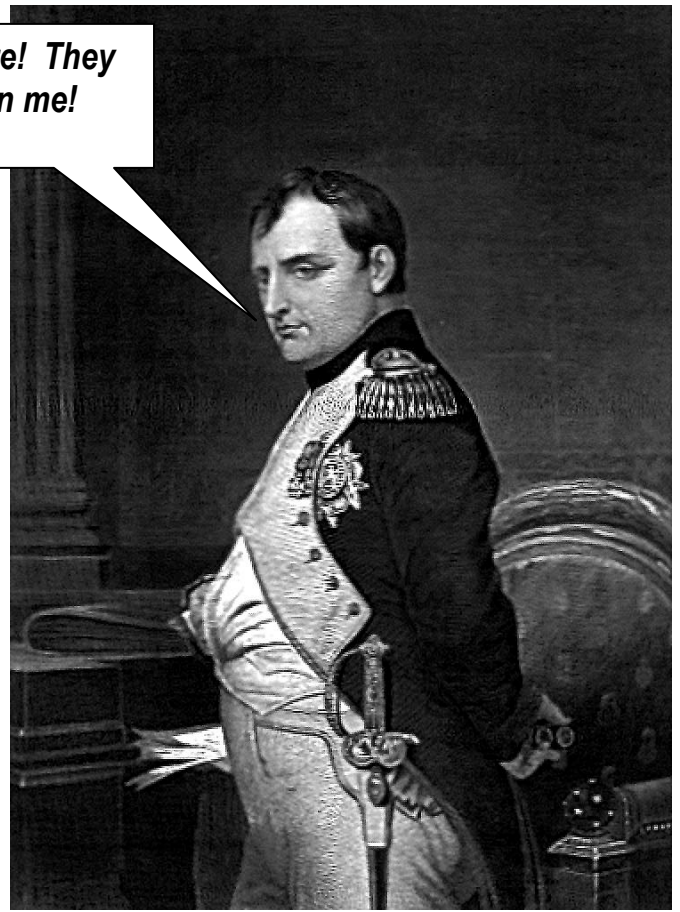
Like the American Revolution before it, the French Revolution of 1789 was rooted in the spirit of Democracy. However, those who championed liberty soon imitated the actions of absolute dictators in order to get their way. They used the guillotine to eliminate opposition. They left power in a military dictator, **Napoleon** who tried to use his new power to conquer Europe.



*I'm sorry, I didn't mean to take over Europe, Gosh!*



*Idiote! They mean me!*



## Modern Democracies










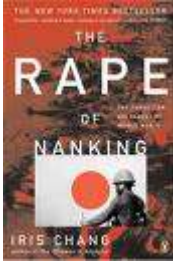
Although one would think that with these early revolutions for equality and the abolition of slavery in most western countries (Russia 1862 and the USA 1865) would have created a solid foundation for democracy by the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. **WRONG!**

The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the worst depravation and human rights abuses in human history.....

Three systems emerged from

- **War** (WWI)
- **Class struggle**(Industrialism)
- **Economic calamity**(the Great Depression)
- **Nationalism** (over zealous love of one's country)



Communism	Fascism	Militarism
<p><b>The Beginning:</b> In 1848 Karl Marx writes the Communist Manifesto outlining Communism.</p> 	<p><b>The Beginning:</b> After WWI, Benito Mussolini forms a fascist government in Italy. He uses brute force and his newly formed Black Shirts to keep order.</p> 	<p><b>The Beginning:</b> After a short lived period of Democracy, Japan moved in a militaristic and nationalistic direction in the 1930's. Frustrated by what they felt was unfair treatment by the west, Japan became more and more nationalistic and aggressive.</p>
<p><b>The Next Step:</b></p> <p>In 1917, because of the War and the state of the Russian economy, Vladimir I Lenin overthrows Tsar in Russia. Although Lenin adheres to Marx's teachings, he changes it to suit his purpose</p>  	<p><b>The Next Step:</b> In the 1920's a young ex army corporal and former homeless Austrian finds his voice and a following in the economically turbulent Germany. He spews racial hatred against the Jews and communists as well as promising to reverse the affects of the Versailles Treaty.</p>  	<p><b>The Next Step:</b> Emperor Hirohito of Japan led his country along with its Army toward a very nationalistic and militaristic society. Their goal: Domination of the Pacific.</p> 
<p><b>Tragic Results:</b> Through Purges and starvation and the Gulag, Stalin kills between 20 – 30 million Russians</p> 	<p><b>Tragic Results</b> With total power Hitler wages a war that Kills 55 million and exterminates 6 million Jews and 5 million enemies of the state.</p> 	<p><b>Tragic Results:</b> Japanese treatment of Koreans and the "Rape of Nanking" during WWII.</p> 



As the dust of WWII settled society woke up to what it had so long ignored: The rights of the human being. So much suffering had long been apart of living in the world. The modern world took steps to end the suffering and abuse of people.



In 1948, The United Nations created the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United Nations pledged that human beings have a right to live and work without abuse for governments. That all people, ***“are born free and equal, and that all have the right to life, liberty and the security of person.”***



Is it truly universal? No. Human rights abuses still ravage the world. Today in places like Darfur, people do enjoy the basic rights and freedoms enjoyed by Canadians. There are also 4 countries that are still communist. There are dictators who run their countries like the totalitarian regimes of the 30's.



On the left is Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. Bob Marley played his inauguration in 1978 because Mugabe was the new hope for Africa. He ended up being a ruthless dictator.

**Yet December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1948 was the first step  
toward recognizing Human Rights issues in  
the world.**

