

# Democracy or Not?

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A dictionary definition of democracy:

Our group definition of democracy:

*For each of the societies described below, decide as a group whether or not the society is a democracy. Then, decide whether or not the people in ancient Athens would have seen each society as a democracy. All members of your group should be prepared to share and defend your conclusions, stating which characteristics of democracy are present or absent in each society.*



**Society #1:** 50 people are shipwrecked on an island. They agree to create a set of rules that they will all decide upon together, and which they will all follow.

**Society #2:** 50 people are shipwrecked on an island. They all agree to choose the five most fair and intelligent members to be the leaders and to make all the decisions for the group.

**Society #3:** 50 people are shipwrecked on an island. Five of them own all the tools, water containers, matches, and clothing. The group decides to let these five people make all decisions, because everyone needs these items in order to survive.

**Society #4:** 50 people are shipwrecked on an island. Only one person has a weapon. She announces that she will be the ruler, and that everyone must obey her or she will use the weapon to enforce obedience.

**Society #5:** 500 people are shipwrecked on an island. Together they decide that everyone over the age of 13 can vote to elect leaders to pass laws and make decisions.

**Society #6:** 500 people are shipwrecked on an island. They decide that all blue-eyed men between the ages of 16 and 35 will have an equal vote in passing laws and making all group decisions.