

# Democracy Countries 2019

What is a democracy? A democracy is a form of government where the citizens of the nation have the power to vote. There are several different types of democracies. A representative democracy is a system where citizens choose government representatives among their citizens. A direct democracy is when the citizens form a governing body and vote directly on issues. A constitutional democracy limits the powers of government through the nation's constitution.

Political scientist Larry Diamond put it best when he said that a democracy must contain four critical elements. These elements are:

- A system of elections used to choose and replace the government
- Protection of human rights of all people
- Active participation of citizens in politics and civics
- All laws apply equally to all citizens

True democracy, also known as direct democracy or pure democracy, is a form of democracy in which people decide on policy initiatives directly. True democracies are often synonymous with full democracies.

Full democracies are nations where basic political freedoms and civil liberties are both respected and reinforced by the political culture. Full democracies have valid systems of checks and balances, an adequately functioning government, an independent and authoritative judiciary, and a media free from infringement.

## *Constitutional Republic vs. Democratic Republic*

Both a constitutional republic and a democratic republic are forms of government where the power rests with the people and is exercised through representative government, and the government has an elected head of state.

In a constitutional republic, the government is limited by the laws established in its formal constitution. The government is run by elected officials who are voted on by the population and those officials must adhere to the rules of government in the constitution.

A democratic republic runs the government how a republic does and bases its government on democratic ideals. To best explain this, the [United States](#) can be used as an example. The United States has free and fair elections and citizen participation in government. Additionally, the U.S. protects the human rights of its citizens and honors the rule of law. These four things make the United States a democracy. The fact that the United States has elected government officials and an elected head of government who make laws in accordance to the people's will.

The United States, like other large governments, is completely described by a single term and is a hybrid of multiple terms. The United States is both a constitutional democracy and a democratic republic.

### *The Democracy Index*

The Democracy Index is an index compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit. The index measures the states of democracy in 167 based on 60 indicator groups in five different categories: electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government, political participation, political culture, and civil liberties. Each country was given a score between 0 and 10 in each of the five categories, which was then averaged for an overall score. Overall scores between 8.01 and 10 are considered to be full democracies, which there are 20 of in the world. There are ten countries with scores of 9.0 or higher. These are the most democratic nations in the world.

The most democratic nations in the world are:

1. [Norway](#) (9.87)
2. [Iceland](#) (9.58)
3. [Sweden](#) (9.39)
4. [New Zealand](#) (9.26)
5. [Denmark](#) (9.22)
6. [Ireland](#) (9.15)
7. [Canada](#) (9.15)
8. [Finland](#) (9.14)
9. [Australia](#) (9.09)
10. [Switzerland](#) (9.03)

**Germany      8.68**

**United Kingdom   8.53**

**United States    7.96**

**Russia            2.94**