

# **DEMOCRACY**

**WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?**



**Resign!**

**Hear! Hear!**

**I agree!**

**Rubbish!**



# WHO RULES BRITAIN?



The Queen?



The Government?



The Police?



The Army?

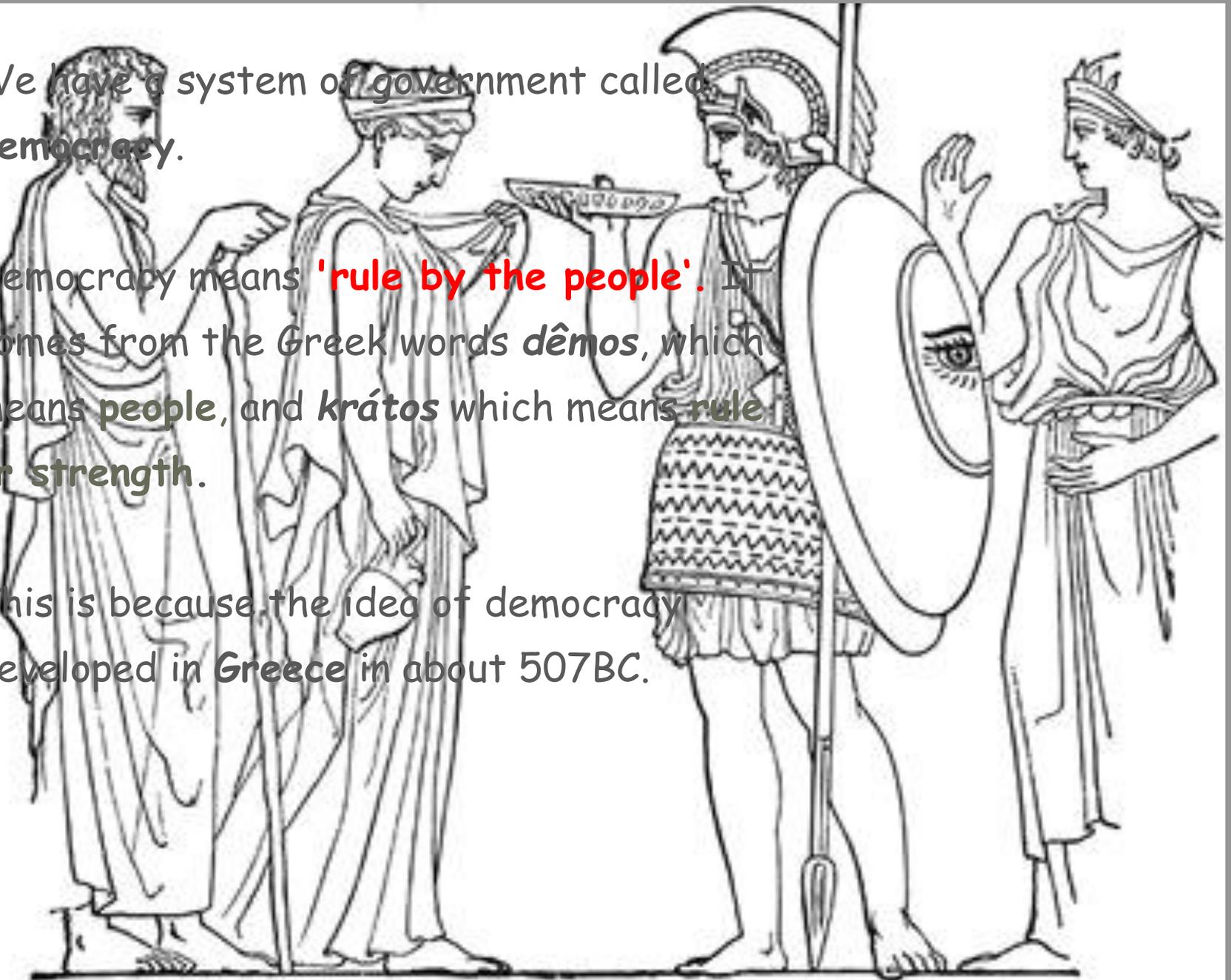


The People?

We have a system of government called **democracy**.

Democracy means **'rule by the people'**. It comes from the Greek words *dêmos*, which means **people**, and *krátos* which means **rule or strength**.

This is because the idea of democracy developed in **Greece** in about 507BC.



# HOW CAN EVERYBODY RULE?



It would be chaos!

We hold an election to choose someone to represent us.



Most candidates who 'stand' for election belong to a political party.

Together people who belong to the party agree on the changes they will make if they are elected. These are called **policies**.

**Can you name the three main political parties and their leaders?**



# Main Political Party Leaders



**SNP** 



**Jeremy Corbyn**



**Theresa May**



**Nicola Sturgeon**



Every citizen should listen to the views of the different parties and candidates, and then make his or her own decision on whom to support.

People must be 18 or over in order to take part in an election.

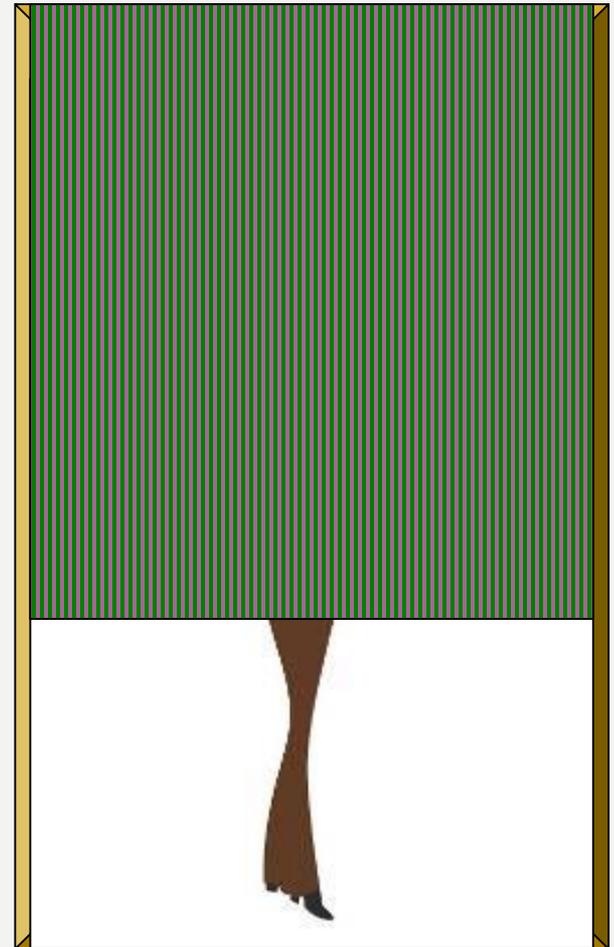
Do you think this is the right age for young people to be able to vote? Why?

If not, at what age do you think people should be allowed to vote?

Each person (voter) votes ('casts a ballot') for the candidate of his or her choice. S/he does this by putting a cross beside the person's name on the ballot paper.

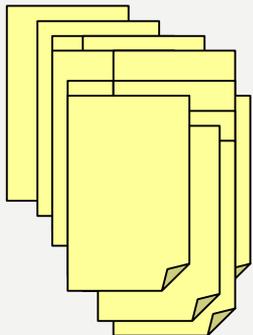
People cast their ballots in a booth so that no one can see who they are voting for. This called 'secret ballot'.

**Why do you think this is necessary?**

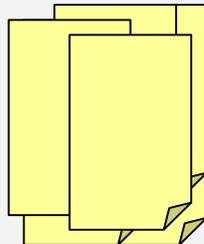


At the end of the Election Day the votes are added up and the candidate with the highest number of votes (the **majority**) is declared the winner.

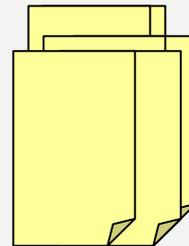
1st



2nd



3rd



# 3 ELECTIONS FOR 3 GOVERNMENTS!

In our democracy we are given the opportunity to elect representatives in three governments:



Central Government

Local Government



European Parliament

Their job is to talk for us, and fight for the things we want changed or kept as they are.

The person we elect for our **central government** is called a **Member of Parliament** (or **M.P.** for short).





Elections to the House of Commons must take place at least every five years. The exact timing is decided by the leader of the biggest party, the **Prime Minister**.

**What is the name  
of our current  
Prime Minister?**



Proposals for new laws, or proposals to change an existing law are called bills.

Bills are discussed and amended in the House of Commons, and the House of Lords.



When the bill is agreed, the Queen is asked to give her approval (known as Royal Assent). Once Royal Assent is given, a bill becomes an Act of Parliament and is law.



**Central government** is responsible for the welfare of all citizens and protects the most vulnerable in our society.



It looks after national matters, such as health, defence, foreign policy and the environment.



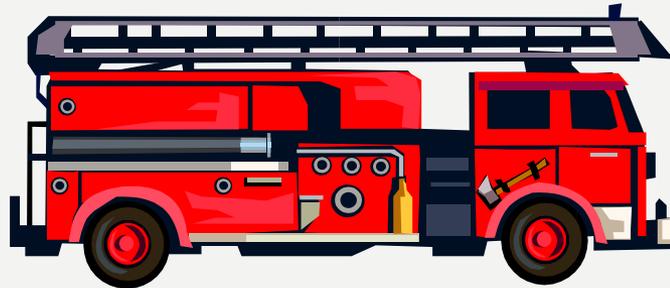
Every four years people are asked to vote for **local government** representatives called **councillors**.

Many councils elect a mayor, who chairs (keeps order) in full meetings of the council.



**Local government** (your council) is responsible for:

- Roads and Transport
- Education
- Housing
- Policing
- The Fire Service
- Waste Disposal/Street Cleaning



999



Every citizen is also entitled to vote, and stand as a candidate, for their representative in the **European parliament** every five years.

The 785 members of the **European Parliament** (MEPs) represent more than 490 million people in the 27 European member countries.





Because the **European parliament** represents so many people and countries, it is an important voice in world politics.

It works for the peace and the safety of its citizens, and protects their human rights.





It makes laws which help European citizens find work, and buy and sell their goods.

It encourages the development of the poorest regions, and tackles important environmental issues.

Elected representatives in all forms of government should listen to the people and respond to their needs and suggestions.



## In our democracy, every citizen has certain basic rights:

- No one can tell you what you must think, believe, and say or not say.
- Everyone is free to choose their own religion and to worship and practice their religion as they want to.
- Every individual has the right to enjoy their own culture, along with other members of their group, even if their group is a minority.
- You can read, listen to and watch all kinds of news and opinion in the newspapers, on the radio, and on television.
- You have the right to join organisations, including trade unions.
- You are free to travel around the country, and to go abroad if you want to.
- You have the right to gather with other people, and to protest about what the government is doing.

**However, everyone must exercise these rights peacefully, with respect for the law and for the rights of others.**

# OUR DEMOCRACY IS A SYSTEM OF RULE BY LAWS, NOT BY INDIVIDUALS.

The rule of law protects the rights of citizens, maintains order, and limits the power of government.

- All citizens are equal under the law. No one may be discriminated against on the basis of their race, religion, ethnic group, or gender. No one is above the law, not even the Queen or the Prime Minister.

No one can be arrested or imprisoned without reason.

- If you are arrested, you have the right to know the charges against you, and to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Anyone charged with a crime has the right to a fair, speedy, and public trial by an impartial court independent of government. No minister, or political party can tell a judge how to decide a case.

- Torture and cruel treatment are absolutely forbidden.

People in office cannot use their power to make themselves rich. The courts punish people who are corrupt.

**Rubbish!**

People are free to criticise all their elected leaders and representatives, and to look closely at how they govern.

**Hold election  
now!**

Elected leaders and representatives hold power only temporarily.

**The minister  
must go!**

**Out! Out!  
Out!**

# HOW CAN CHILDREN TAKE PART IN OUR DEMOCRACY?

- Stand as a candidate and vote in your school council election.
- Campaign for causes you care about
- Lobby your councillor and/or MP about local and national issues.
- Find out about your rights and responsibilities.
- Learn to see the difference between choices that affect you personally and those that affect others.
- Improve your skills: for example public speaking.
- Keep informed. Watch and read the news regularly.

# SCHOOL COUNCIL CHECK LIST

- All pupils in the school are involved in the school council
- It is pupil-led
- The staff and the children believe that it plays an important role.
- It deals with significant issues
- It makes a difference