

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: State of Balance: A 7th Grade Comparative Systems Quiz

Evaluate how power shifts from central hubs to local borders, moving beyond simple definitions into the mechanics of global stability.

1. In Switzerland's system of direct democracy, citizens frequently vote on specific laws via referendums. This contrasts with most representative democracies primarily because:

Answer: C) Power is shifted from elected officials directly to the electorate for key decisions.

Direct democracy allows citizens to participate in decision-making personally rather than relying solely on intermediaries, creating a unique power dynamic between the people and the state.

2. While many nations use a federal system, Japan operates under a ____ system, where the central government in Tokyo holds the majority of authority and can create or dissolve local administrative boundaries.

Answer: B) Unitary

In a unitary system, subnational units like prefectures or provinces only exercise powers that the central government chooses to delegate to them.

3. True or False: In a Constitutional Monarchy like Norway, the reigning King or Queen typically serves as the Head of State with significant daily political power, independent of the Prime Minister.

Answer: B) False

In modern constitutional monarchies, the monarch's role is largely ceremonial or symbolic, while the Prime Minister and Parliament handle actual governance.

4. The European Union (EU) is often described as a 'confederation.' Which characteristic most defines this type of system relative to a federal system?

Answer: A) Member states retain their sovereignty and can choose to leave the union.

Confederations are voluntary associations of independent states that delegate specific powers to a central authority while maintaining their own ultimate sovereignty.

5. In Mexico's government, the President serves as both the Head of State and the Head of Government. This structure is a hallmark of which system?

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Answer: C) Presidential System

A presidential system typically keeps the executive branch separate from the legislature, with one person filling both ceremonial and administrative leadership roles.

6. True or False: An 'Illiberal Democracy' is a system where elections take place, but citizens are often cut off from knowledge about the activities of those who exercise real power due to a lack of civil liberties.

Answer: A) True

Illiberal democracies maintain the outward appearance of democracy (like voting) but lack the protections for speech, press, and assembly that make a democracy 'liberal'.

7. In the nation of Iran, the Supreme Leader holds ultimate authority over political and religious life, illustrating a _____ where religious law significantly influences or dictates government policy.

Answer: B) Theocracy

A theocracy is a form of government in which a deity is officially recognized as the civil ruler and official policy is governed by religious officials.

8. Comparing the systems of Australia and Vietnam, which of the following is the most significant difference in their political pluralism?

Answer: A) Australia allows multiple political parties to compete; Vietnam is a one-party state.

Political pluralism refers to the existence of multiple parties and interests. Australia's multi-party democracy contrasts with Vietnam's single-party socialist republic.

9. The process of _____ occurs when a central government, such as the one in Spain, grants specific powers to autonomous regions like Catalonia or the Basque Country to manage their own affairs.

Answer: B) Devolution

Devolution is the statutory delegation of powers from the central government of a sovereign state to govern at a subnational level, such as a regional or local level.

10. Which scenario best describes a 'Coalition Government' often found in the parliamentary systems of countries like Israel or Italy?

Answer: C) Multiple political parties cooperate to form a majority in parliament to lead the country.

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In many parliamentary systems, no single party wins an absolute majority, requiring different parties to negotiate and form a coalition to govern together.