

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Governments of the Middle East**

**SS7CG5 The student will explain the structures of the national governments of Southwest Asia (Middle East).**

a. Compare the parliamentary democracy of the State of Israel, the monarchy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the theocracy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, distinguishing the form of leadership and the role of the citizen in terms of voting rights and personal freedoms.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Government Type</b>	<b>Is the government based on religion?</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>How is the leader chosen?</b>	<b>Voting Rights</b>	<b>Personal Freedoms</b>
<b>The State of Israel</b>						
<b>The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia</b>						
<b>The Islamic Republic of Iran</b>						

# Governments of Southwest Asia (Middle East)

**Directions:** Read the standard and then the article. As you read, fill in the appropriate information in your Middle East Governments graphic organizer.

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a. Compare the parliamentary democracy of the State of Israel, the monarchy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the theocracy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, distinguishing the forms of leadership, and the role of the citizen in terms of voting rights and personal freedoms.

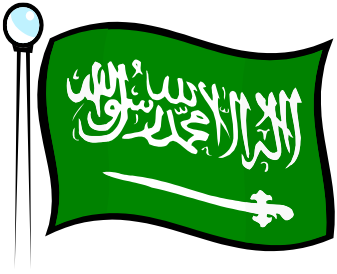


## Israel

Israel is a parliamentary democracy. This is a type of government in which the people elect representatives from different political parties. The representatives then choose the Prime Minister from the majority political party.

In Israel, the Prime Minister is the leader of the country and the head of the government. The legislative branch is known as the Knesset. The people of Israel elect representatives to the Knesset. The members of the Knesset then choose the Prime Minister. The members of the Knesset are elected for four year terms which is the same for the Prime Minister. Governmental power is held by the one central government.

The citizens of Israel can vote at the age of 18. This is a universal right meaning that all citizens can vote despite their religion, race, ethnicity, or gender. The citizens of Israel also enjoy many personal freedoms. These freedoms include the freedom of speech, freedom of press, and freedom of religion. Even though Israel is a Jewish nation, most Israelis are secular meaning they do not feel the country's laws should be based on religious beliefs.

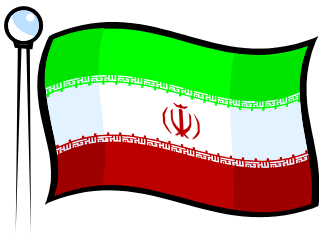


## Saudi Arabia

The government of Saudi Arabia is a hereditary monarchy which means the king (or leader) inherits the leadership role. There is a newly established council whose responsibilities include selecting a successor from the Saudi royal family. The king is the leader of the government and is also the religious official in Saudi Arabia. There is no legislative branch in Saudi Arabia and the power is held by the one central government.

The men of Saudi Arabia can vote at the age of 21 but there are no elections held in the country. Even though they can vote, the king is not chosen by the people and the king rules for life. The current royal family in Saudi Arabia has ruled since the 1920s.

Many of Saudi Arabia's laws are based on laws found in the Quran, the holy book of Islam. The king and his advisors make the laws based on Islamic laws. The citizens of Saudi Arabia have few personal freedoms. They are not allowed to speak out against their government, and have limited human rights. There is a group of religious police called the Mutaween who roam the streets to make sure that Saudi Arabians follow strict codes of behavior and dress outlined by Islamic law.



## Iran

Iran is a theocracy. A theocracy is a type of government where the religious leader is also the political leader. The highest governmental official of Iran is known as the Supreme Leader. The Supreme Leader rules for life and is chosen by the Assembly of Experts, not the citizens. Since Iran is a theocracy, it means that all government matters are seen through the eyes of the primary religion in Iran, Islam.

Iran also has president and legislative branch who are chosen by the citizens. The president is not as powerful as the Supreme Leader and must answer to the Supreme Leader. The legislative branch is known as the National Assembly. Members of the legislative branch serve four year terms and so does the president.

Citizens (men and women) over the age of 18 can vote in elections. Iran's citizens do not have many personal freedoms. They do have the freedom of press as long as it is not damaging to the principles of Islam. Women have fewer rights than men.