

# Basic Concepts of Democracy

## Foundations

**Worth of the Individual:** each individual is a separate and distinct being.

Sometimes the welfare of one or few is subordinated to the interest of the many.  
Example: paying taxes.

**Equality of all Persons:**

All men are created equal.

All are entitled to equal opportunity and equality before the law.

Journey for equality is not over.

**Majority Rule, Minority Rights:**

Majority of the people will be right more often than they will be wrong.

Majority will not always arrive at the best decision though.

Democratic system does not look for right or best answers rather it looks for satisfactory solutions to problems

Never ending process to find answers.

Unchecked a majority can destroy its opposition.

Minority must have rights and be heard.

**Necessity of Compromise:**

Public decision making must be a matter of give and take.

**Compromise** is the process of blending and adjusting competing views and interests.

How can a large group of people make a fair decision without compromise?

**Individual freedom:**

each individual must be as free to do as he or she pleases as far as the freedom of all will allow.

## Democracy and the Free Enterprise System

**Free Enterprise system:**

America's economic system where there's private ownership of goods and capital.

**How the System works:**

Decisions are not made by the government but by the market.

Relies on individual freedom

**Law of Supply and Demand:**

When goods are plentiful, prices drop. When goods are scarce, prices rise.

**Gov and the Free enterprise system:**

Government plays a role in the economy through regulation and promotion which makes the system a **mixed economy**.

Examples of government involvement: food and drug laws, anti trust laws, building codes.

Most Americans believe that a well regulated free enterprise system- one of free choice, individual initiative - is the best guarantee of a better life for everyone.

## Democracy and the Internet

Democracy demands that the people be widely informed about the government.

People can check political candidates websites.

But there is a lot of false information that floats around online.

**Online voting:**

Some experiments done during elections on a very small scale.

Hard to guarantee integrity of online voting.

Likelihood of online voting in the near future is extremely low.