



Introduction

For millennia, human beings have organized themselves into social structures of increasing complexity and sophistication. From the loosely organized city-states of the Fertile Crescent to the superpowers and supra-national governments of the twenty-first century, the *Gale Encyclopedia of World History: Governments* traces the development of systems of government through the ages. In nine chronological chapters spanning the period from 4,000 BC to the present day, the *Gale Encyclopedia of World History: Governments* tells the stories of 270 governments spanning every major government type in world history.

Structure of Entries

Each entry includes the following subsections:

Type of Government: A brief description of the dominant form of governance practiced by the entry's subject, ranging from the unilateral control of absolute hereditary monarchies and dictatorships to popular democratic and parliamentary rule.

Background: A detailed description of the major historical trends, social transformations, events, and influences leading to the formation of the government.

Government Structure: A detailed description of the government's organization and function during the dominant period represented in the entry (for historical governments), or in the present day (for existing governments). This section describes how leaders are selected, the division of authority across the various branches of government, and the hierarchies and decision-making processes within those branches.

Political Parties and Factions: A description of factions—including castes, dynastic families, religious or ethnic groups, and formal political parties—that influenced the government's operation or development.

Major Events: A description of historical crises and developments, particularly those requiring government intervention or altering the way in which the government conducted its business.

Aftermath (for historical governments) or **Twenty-First Century** (for existing governments). For historical governments, the Aftermath section recounts the government's decline and legacy, emphasizing how the government influenced societies that followed. For existing governments, the Twenty-First Century section outlines current issues that may affect the government's future.

Organization of This Volume

In addition to the individual government entries, each chapter contains an introduction providing a historical overview of the period covered. The chapter structure of the *Gale Encyclopedia of World History: Governments* is designed to be compatible with the National Council for Social Studies High School World History Curriculum Standards, covering the same historical eras and exploring key themes as they relate to the development of governments throughout history. Within each chapter, entries are organized chronologically by the date the government was established.

Criteria for Inclusion in This Volume

The 270 entries in the *Gale Encyclopedia of World History: Governments* were selected for their importance in world history, the uniqueness of their form of government, their recognition by international bodies, or their current status as independent states. Because this is a historical encyclopedia, many distinct governments from different time periods are included, even if they occupied the same or overlapping geographical areas. For example, modern Italy is distinct from the Roman Empire and from the city-states of Venice and Florence, each of which receives its own entry; similarly, Nazi Germany is addressed separately from modern Germany. All 192 current member states of the United Nations are included, along with several other areas of special sovereignty, such as Hong Kong, Macao, Palestine, Somaliland, Taiwan, and Vatican City, as well as international governmental bodies such as the United Nations and the European Union. Historical civilizations without a unifying government structure have been excluded.

The editors hope that this volume helps the reader achieve a greater understanding of the historical forces and influences that have molded the governments of the present, and perhaps the future.