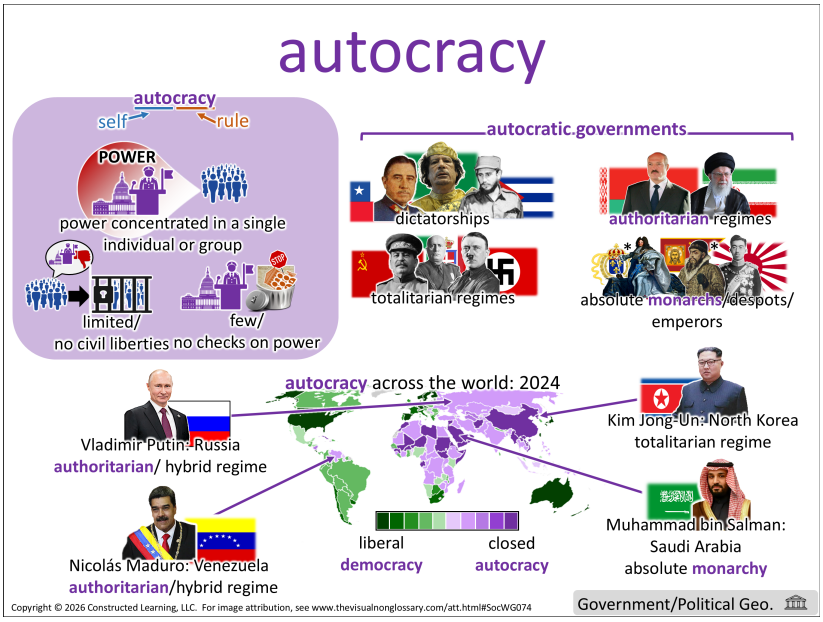
The Visual Non-Glossary™

One Ruler, All the Power

The purpose for reading is to compare different types of autocratic governments to democracies so we can understand how unchecked power can lead to oppression.

Look Out For:

- Words that describe how autocracy works
- Differences between autocracy and democracy
- Examples of autocratic leaders in history and today
- Ways autocratic governments keep power
- What happens when power is not limited



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Autocracy is a kind of government where one person or a small group has all the power. The word comes from Greek: *"auto"* means self and *"cracy"* means rule. This means the leader rules alone, without anyone else helping to make decisions. Many systems like **dictatorships**, **absolute monarchies**, **authoritarian** states, and **totalitarian regimes** are types of **autocracy** because the leaders don't have to follow rules or share power.

In a **democracy**, people vote for leaders, and those leaders follow laws. In an **autocracy**, the top leader decides everything. People often can't vote or speak freely, and there are no courts or laws to stop the leader.

Throughout history, some of the most harmful governments have been **autocracies**. Leaders like Adolf Hitler in Germany, Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union, Benito Mussolini in Italy, and Mao Zedong in **Communist** China used fear, violence, and lies to stay in power. Today, **autocracies** still exist. In Saudi Arabia, the royal family makes all government decisions without letting people vote. In Russia,

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President Vladimir Putin has made laws to keep power and stop people from speaking out. These governments take away freedoms and stay in control by keeping people afraid or loyal.

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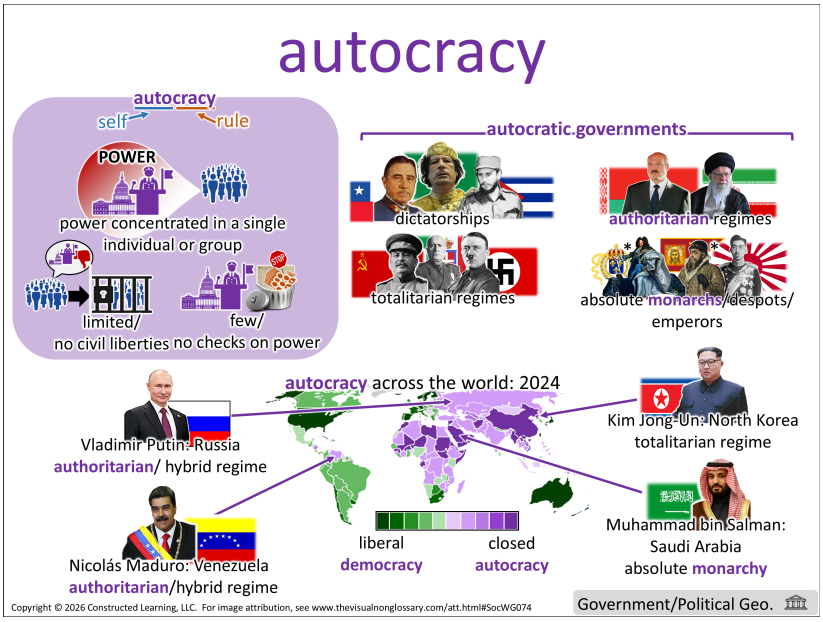
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Power Without Limits: Understanding Autocracy

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Autocracy is a type of government in which all political power is concentrated in the hands of one person or a small group. The word itself comes from Greek roots: *"auto"* meaning self, and *"cracy"* meaning rule—together, they describe a system of rule that operates entirely on its own, without checks from outside forces. **Autocracy** is not a specific form like monarchy or **dictatorship**, but a broad category that includes any government where leaders are not held accountable by laws, elections, or independent institutions. **Dictatorships**, **absolute monarchies**, **authoritarian** states, and **totalitarian regimes** all fall under the umbrella of **autocracy** when power is exercised without limits or public participation.

Unlike a **democracy**, where power is distributed among elected representatives and restrained by laws and institutions, an **autocracy** places full control in the hands of those at the top. This often leads to censorship, restricted civil liberties, and the removal of political opponents. There are no independent courts, free elections, or press freedoms to challenge or question those in charge.

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Throughout history, some of the most destructive and oppressive governments have been **autocracies**. Leaders like Adolf Hitler in Nazi Germany, Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union, Benito Mussolini in Fascist Italy, and Mao Zedong in **Communist** China used violence, propaganda, and fear to consolidate their power. Today, **autocratic** governments still exist. In Saudi Arabia, the ruling **monarch** controls nearly all aspects of government without elected input. In Russia, President Vladimir Putin has weakened democratic institutions and used state power to silence opponents and extend his rule. These regimes limit freedoms, rewrite laws, and maintain control through fear or loyalty.

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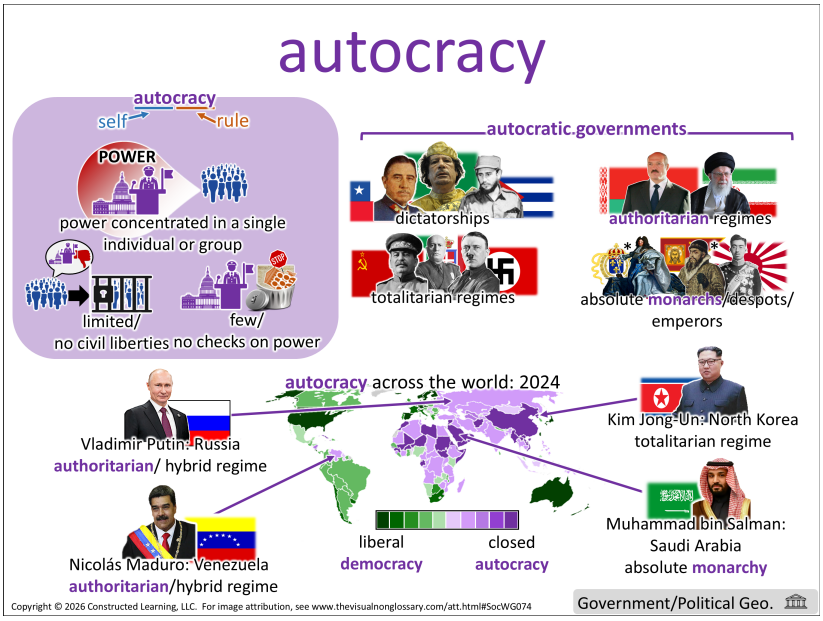
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Autocracy is a form of government defined by the concentration of power in a single individual or a small ruling group. Its name comes from Greek: "auto" meaning self, and "cracy" meaning rule—highlighting the system's independence from external checks. As a political category, autocracy encompasses dictatorships, absolute monarchies, authoritarian states, and totalitarian regimes, all of which share the absence of institutional limits on leadership.

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In contrast to a **democracy**, where power is distributed among branches of government and leaders are chosen through free elections, an **autocracy** removes citizen influence and eliminates safeguards like independent courts and press

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freedoms. The result is a system where authority is unchecked and dissent is often silenced.

Throughout history, some of the most destructive and repressive governments have been **autocracies**. Leaders like Adolf Hitler in Nazi Germany, Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union, Benito Mussolini in Fascist Italy, and Mao Zedong in **Communist** China maintained power through propaganda, censorship, and fear. Today, **autocracy** persists in various forms. In Saudi Arabia, the royal **monarch** governs without elected representation. In Russia, President Vladimir Putin has undermined democratic systems, silenced critics, and extended his rule. These regimes restrict freedoms, manipulate laws, and retain control through intimidation or loyalty.

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