

# CHV20 Unit 1: Citizenship and Government

## Activity 2: Leadership Styles

---

### Overview

This activity examines democratic, authoritarian and laissez-faire leadership styles. You will identify the differences that exist among these styles and the strengths and weaknesses to which are associated.

### Lesson

In this activity, we will focus on three main leadership styles: Autocratic, Democratic, and Laissez-Faire. Each style has its strengths and weaknesses:

- **The "authoritarian" or "autocratic" leader** is a boss who rules absolutely. Others may be asked to discuss their ideas or to offer their opinions, but in the end the authoritarian leader does whatever he/she wants. Though others may react strongly to this dictatorial style, the authoritarian leader holds firm to his/her approach. In an authoritarian society, a great deal of activity is invested in reinforcing the power position that the authoritarian leader has assumed.
- **The "democratic" leader** encourages the members of his or her group to discuss matters in an environment that stresses sharing ideas and respecting opinions. In terms of decision-making, votes are taken when consensus cannot be reached through discussion. Value is placed upon the opinions of others and the rights of individuals to disagree.
- **The "laissez-faire" leader** basically "leaves alone" the task of making decisions for the group, believing instead that the group is best qualified to make decisions for itself. He/she refuses to accept a leadership role and accordingly abdicates assisting with task setting or decision-making.

### Leadership Styles

Style	Characteristics	Effective When...	Ineffective When...
<b>Autocratic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tells others what to do</li><li>• Limits discussion on ideas and new ways of doing things</li><li>• Group does not experience feeling of teamwork</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Time is limited</li><li>• Individuals/Groups lack skill and knowledge</li><li>• Group does not know each other</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing a strong sense of team is goal</li><li>• Members have some degree of skill or knowledge</li><li>• Group wants an element of spontaneity in their work</li></ul>
<b>Democratic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Involves group members in planning and carrying out activities</li><li>• Asks before tells</li><li>• Promotes the sense of teamwork</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Time is available</li><li>• Group is motivated</li><li>• Some degree of skill or knowledge among members of group</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Group is unmotivated</li><li>• Members have no skill or knowledge</li><li>• High degree of conflict is present</li></ul>
<b>Laissez-Faire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gives little or no attention to group/individuals</li><li>• Opinion is offered only when requested</li><li>• One person does not seem to be in charge</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High degree of skill and motivation</li><li>• Sense of team exists</li><li>• Routine is familiar to participants</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low sense of team/interdependence</li><li>• Members have low degree of skill or knowledge</li><li>• Group expects to be told what to do</li></ul>

## Assignment

1. **After reading over the background information, consider each of the six scenarios listed below. For each scenario, state which of the three leadership choices (i.e. Autocratic, Democratic, or Laissez-Faire) would be the best and give a reasons for your choice.**
  - a) You find yourself in a group in class that has to write and put together a dramatic presentation that will be filmed on video. There are people of all types of abilities in the group and most seem pretty keen on doing the project.
  - b) You are a camp counselor assigned to a group of rookie campers. You will be competing against other cabins in a scavenger hunt held in half an hour. The other cabins have older and more experienced kids, but your group would like to show them up.
  - c) You find yourself in a group doing an assignment that nobody wants to do, including yourself. Unfortunately, this assignment will decide whether you and only a few others pass the course.
  - d) A committee is planning the annual Christmas party for employees and their families. Last year was one of the better parties and all of the people who are working this year had a job on last year's committee.
  - e) You have thirty minutes left to decorate your house for your best friend's surprise birthday party. Other friends have started decorating, but they keep asking you what to do.
2. **For this activity, identify whether these scenarios are more likely to describe the response of a democratic or an authoritarian system of government. Be sure to provide a reason for your answer.**
  - a) You and your friends are students at university. You have decided to organize a protest calling for the release of prisoners of conscience, arrested the year before for criticizing the government's policies. During the peaceful public protest, the government sends in the army with tanks to break up the demonstration and arrest your group.
  - b) People are upset by what they see as favoritism to one religious group by the country's leader. They circulate a petition demanding that the government treat all religions equally.
  - c) You learn that there is an election. You arrive at the polling station and are told that you can vote in secret, or vote out in the open. Police are standing around. You decide to vote out in the open. You go to cast your vote and notice that there is only one name on the ballot.
  - d) The government leader has been calling the local police department to have charges dropped against a friend's son. Under pressure from the people, the government leader decides to resign.
  - e) A group of students complain that they are not allowed to gather together after curfew. They protest before the city hall. All of them are arrested and jailed after being hit with clubs by members of the army.