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| **Federal State** | **Unitary State** |
| In a federal government, power is split between a central government authority and its constituent states. Usually, an overriding law of the land, known as a constitution, allocates duties, rights, and privileges to each level of government. The constitution usually defines how power is shared between national, state, and local governments. The United States is considered the first modern federation.   -Allows much authority -Goes along with a multi national state -Power is diffused -Gives more power to local territories/ provinces to make rules/laws -The U.S. has a federal government -Students of federal governments will note that within a basic federal political system, there are two or more levels of government that exist within an established territory and govern through common institutions with overlapping or shared powers as prescribed by a constitution. | In a unitary government the power is held by one central authority. This type of government system works best in nation-states where few cultural differences exist within the state and a strong sense of national pride and unity is prevalent. Since the power is centralized in a unitary system, there must be efficient communication throughout the country, therefore smaller states tend to have unitary government systems.  -Central government possesses most of the authority -Uniformly applied -Tends to be dictatorship/totalitarianism -France is a unitary government but is democratic -Power is centrally concentrated -Little to no provincial authority -Major decisions are made by the central government -Tends to go along with nation-state -A unitary state is a country whose three organs of state are governed as one single unit. -In a unitary state, any sub-governmental units can be created or abolished, and have their powers varied, by the central government. -A unitary state can broaden and narrow the functions of such devolved governments without formal agreement from the affected bodies. |