

# Critical Thinking Skills Activity

**networks**

## Human Geography

### Compare and Contrast

#### Learning the Skill

Comparing and contrasting is a critical thinking skill that helps readers form a deeper understanding of a text. When readers compare and contrast, they analyze the text to determine how ideas, facts, actions, outcomes, and other concepts are alike and different.

#### Practicing the Skill

**Directions:** Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow.

Throughout their histories, countries can and do change their forms of government. One way a government may change form is through political action. This was done in Great Britain in the late 1600s. The country's elected leaders in parliament forced the king to give up his absolute rule and accept a constitution that guaranteed that elected representatives would hold some powers. This form of government is called a constitutional monarchy. Since that time, democracy has been strengthened and expanded in Great Britain through orderly reforms.

A change of government may occur through violent revolution. This happened in France from 1789 to 1799. The French Revolution was an extended period of political action, armed conflict, and popular rebellion that ended the monarchy that had ruled the country for 1,000 years. King Louis XVI and his queen, Marie Antoinette, were executed, and various groups struggled for power until a general named Napoleon Bonaparte seized control in 1799. Napoleon declared himself emperor and ruled as a dictator for ten years before he was overthrown. For the next 50 years, France's form of government continued to shift between democracy, dictatorship, and monarchy, until the French people were able to do away with absolute rulers for good. The country's stable democratic government has endured to the present.

Sometimes countries simply swap one absolute ruler for another. In 1969, for example, the north African country of Libya was ruled by King Idris. A young military officer named Moammar Gadhafi staged a coup in which the elderly king was stripped of his power. Gadhafi ruled the country as a ruthless and often cruel dictator for more than 40 years. But Gadhafi's dictatorship came to an end in 2011. The Libyan people grew tired of Gadhafi's repressive rule and staged an armed revolution. Gadhafi was forced out of power and died in the fighting. In 2012, Libya took the first steps toward setting up a democracy by holding free elections.

# Critical Thinking Skills Activity *cont.*



## Human Geography

1. What does this passage compare and contrast?

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2. What is one main difference between the establishment of democracy in France versus the establishment of democracy in Great Britain?

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3. What is one similarity between Great Britain, France, and Libya?

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### Applying the Skill

**Directions:** Reread the passage, and then write a short paragraph that compares and contrasts the French Revolution to the changes of government in Libya since 1969.