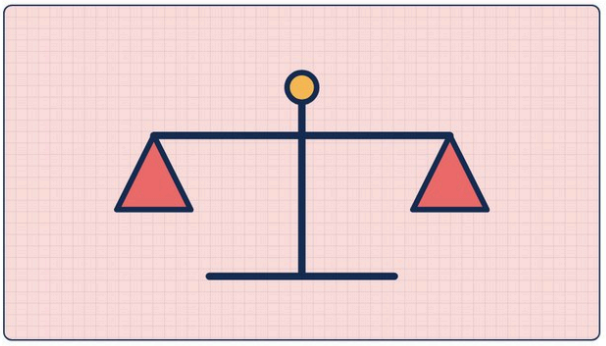
CBSE Class 10 Social Science · Democratic Politics, Chapter 1

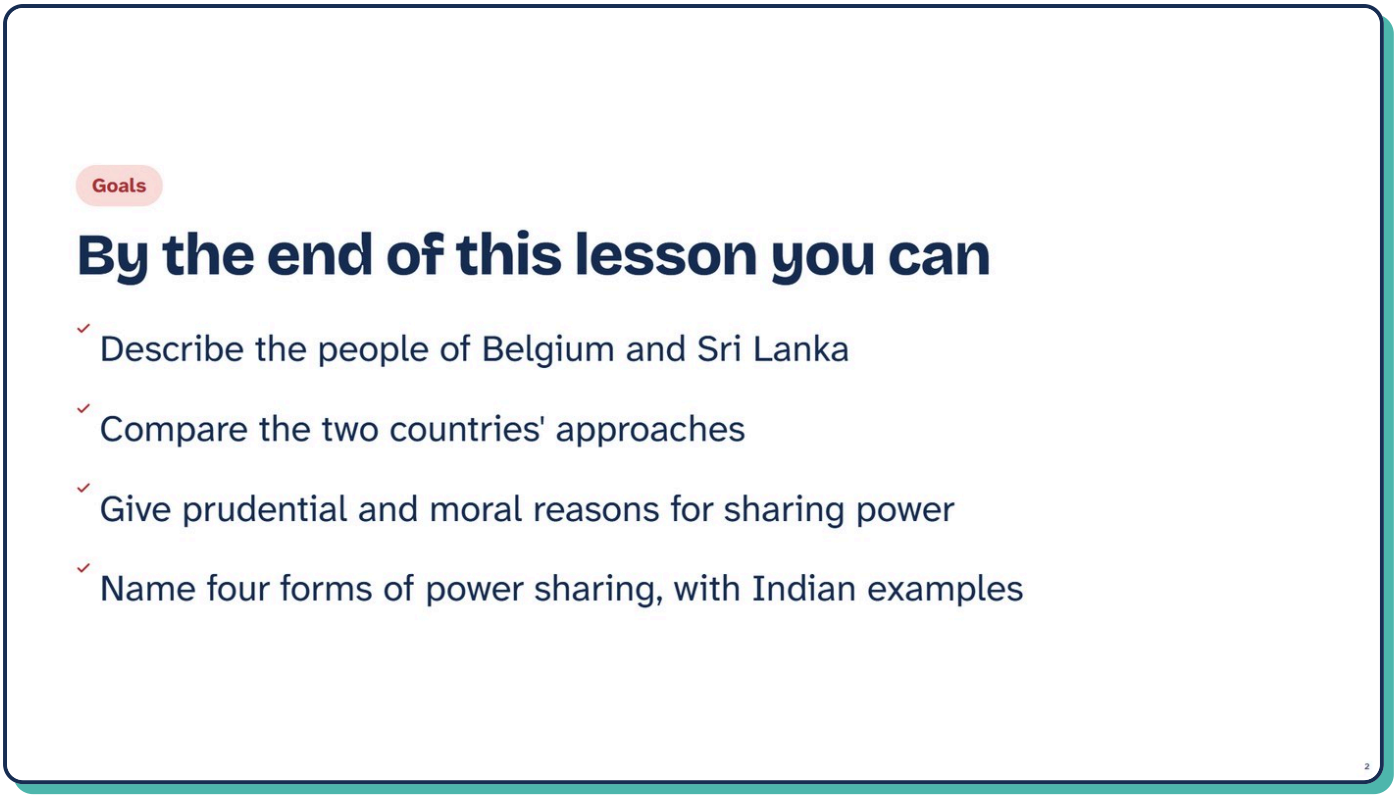
Power Sharing



Power Sharing

Teacher notes

Open with a classroom situation: if the class monitor alone decided everything, from seating to sports teams, how would others feel? Let students answer, then explain that countries face the same question on a much larger scale. Today we look at two countries that answered it very differently.



By the end of this lesson you can

Teacher notes

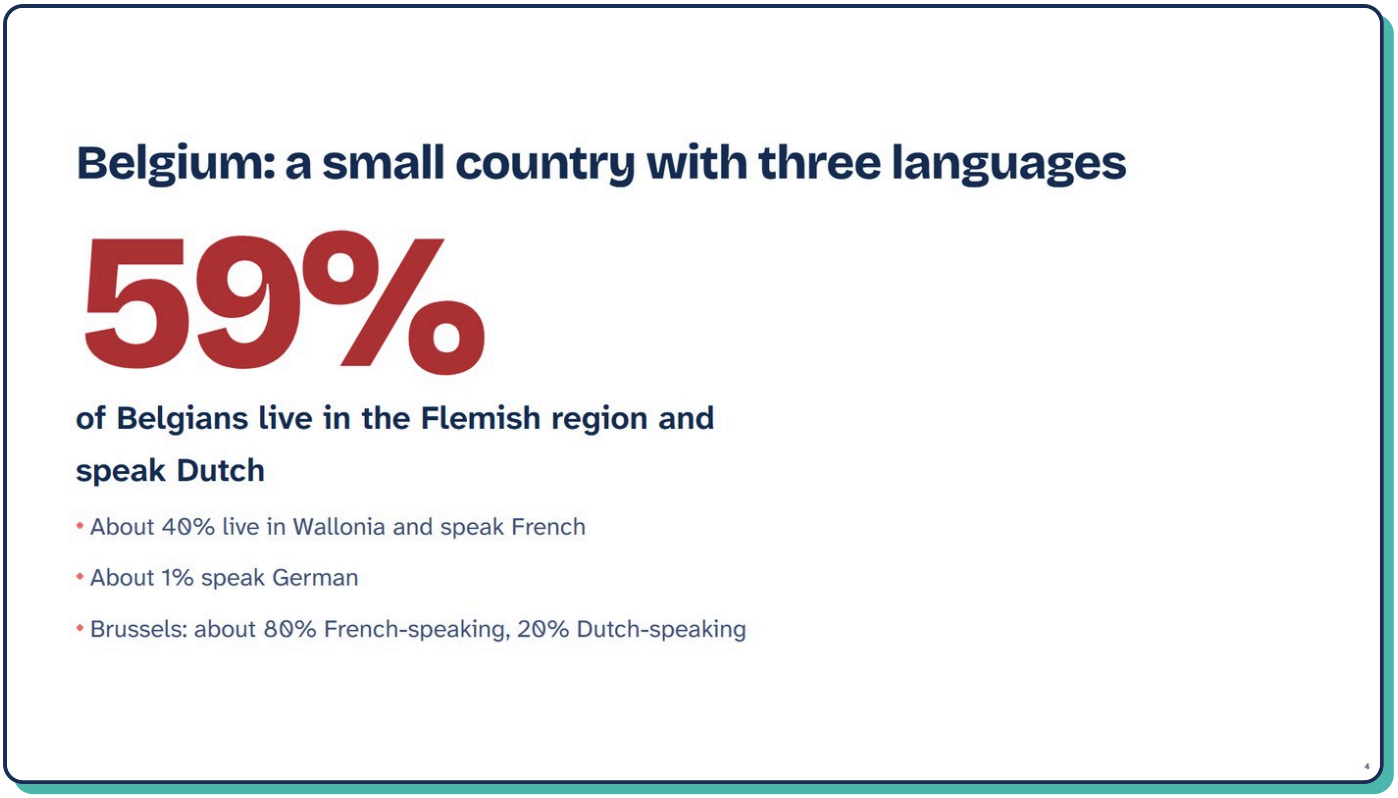
Tell students that the two case studies are the core of the chapter and are often asked about in exams. Ask them to note one key difference between the countries as they go.



What is power sharing?

Teacher notes

Link to what students learnt in Class 9: in a democracy, power is shared among the legislature, executive and judiciary. Ask: why might it be risky if one group held all the power, even if it was the majority?



Belgium: a small country with three languages

Teacher notes

These are the figures used in the NCERT textbook. The key point is that the Dutch-speakers were a majority in the country but a minority in the capital, Brussels. Ask students why this made the situation tricky for both communities.

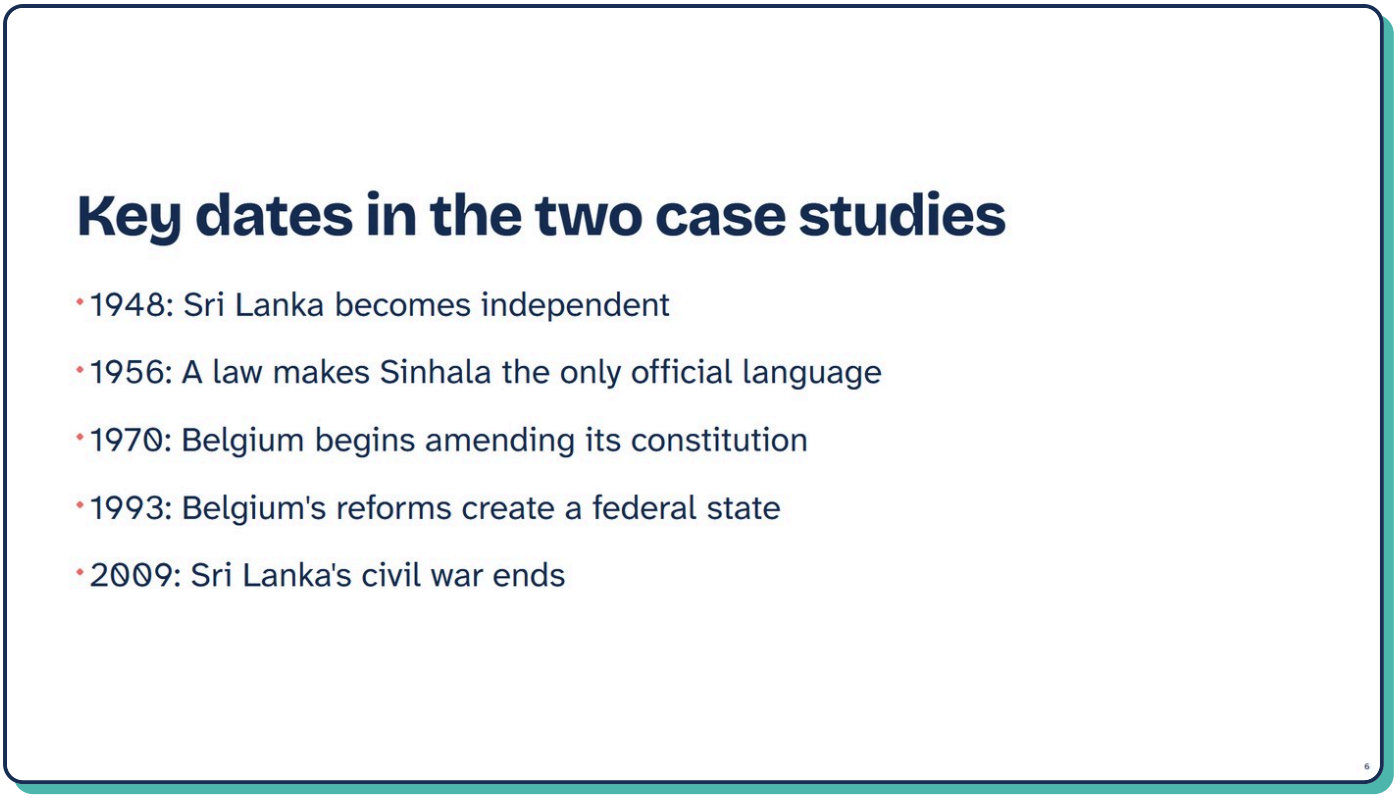


Sri Lanka: an island of diverse communities

Teacher notes

Point out Sri Lanka on a map, just off the coast of Tamil Nadu. Compare the size of the majority here, about three quarters, with Belgium's 59%. Ask: in which country could a majority more easily ignore a minority?

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Key dates in the two case studies

Teacher notes

Belgium amended its constitution four times between 1970 and 1993. Keep the dates simple and let students see the two stories side by side. Ask what happened in Sri Lanka during the years Belgium was working out its arrangement.

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Sri Lanka: rule by the majority

Teacher notes

The textbook calls these measures majoritarianism: the belief that the majority community should rule in whatever way it wants, disregarding minority wishes. Stay with the facts in the textbook and avoid blaming any community as a whole. Ask: how might a Tamil-speaking student have felt about the language law?

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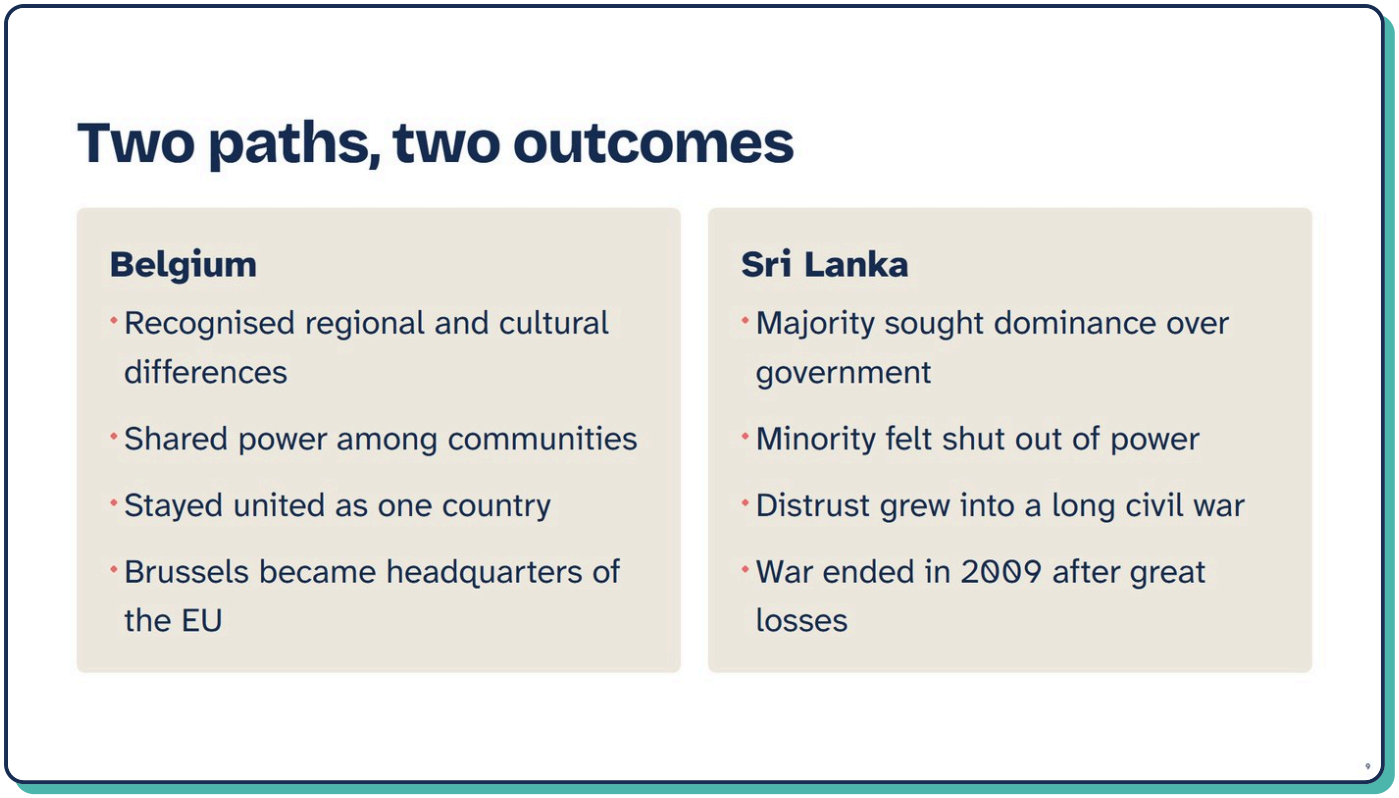


Belgium: accommodating every community

Teacher notes

The community government is elected by people of one language community, Dutch, French or German-speaking, wherever they live. Explain that each side accepted give-and-take: the French-speakers accepted equal representation in Brussels because the Dutch-speakers accepted it at the centre. Ask students whether they think this arrangement is fair.

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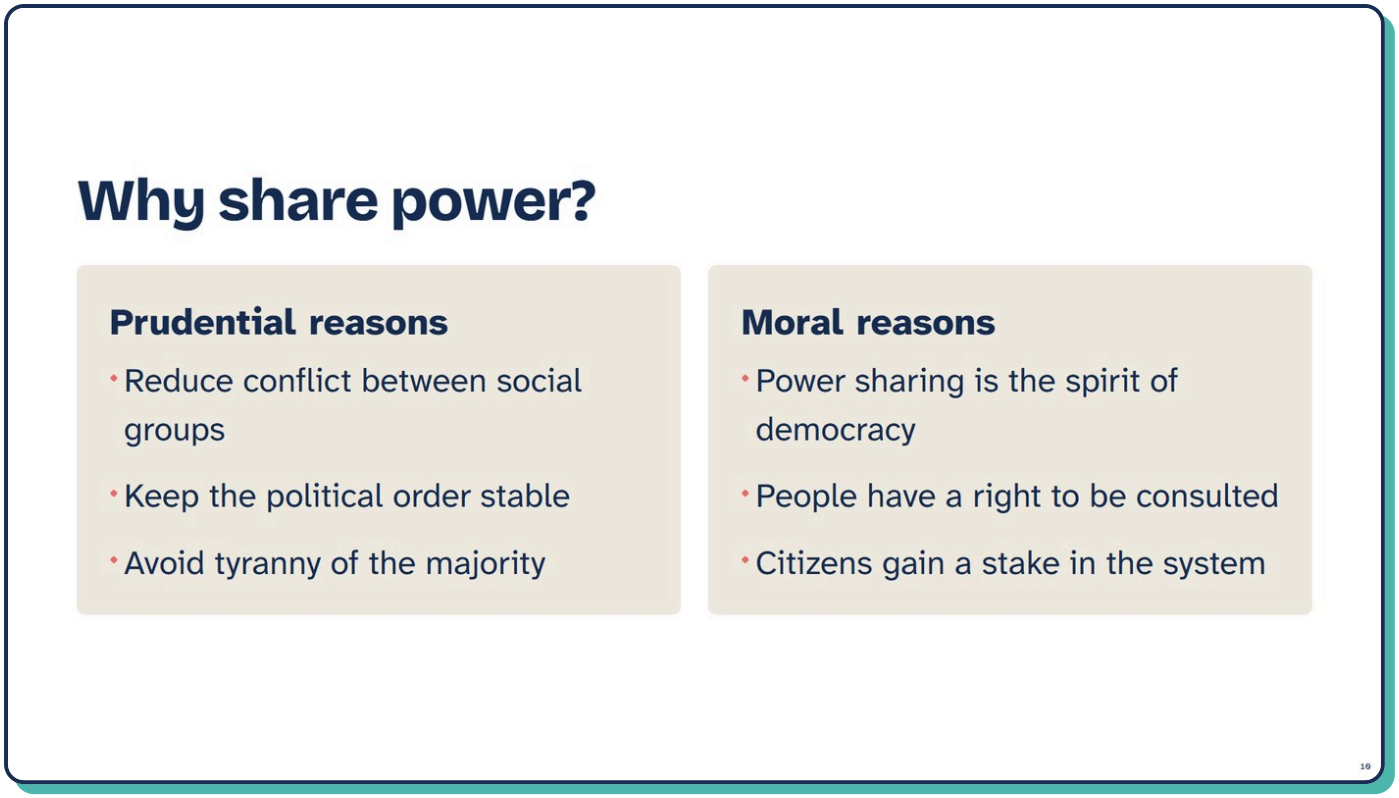


Two paths, two outcomes

Teacher notes

The lesson the textbook draws is that majoritarian policies can undermine a country's unity, while accommodation can strengthen it. Ask students to sum up the difference in one sentence. A common misconception is that power sharing weakens a country; Belgium shows it can hold a country together.

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Why share power?

Teacher notes

Prudential means based on careful calculation of gains and losses, so these reasons focus on better outcomes. Moral reasons value power sharing for its own sake. Ask students to classify this statement: 'sharing power keeps the country peaceful' (prudential).

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Form 1: Among organs of government

Teacher notes

The organs sit at the same level of government, which is why this is called horizontal. Ask students to name the three organs in India: Parliament, the Union executive led by the Prime Minister, and the judiciary led by the Supreme Court.

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Form 2: Among levels of government

Teacher notes

Belgium chose to share power this way; Sri Lanka refused to do so, according to the textbook. The next chapter, Federalism, covers this form in detail. Ask students to name their local government body: a panchayat or a municipality.

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Form 3: Among social groups

Teacher notes

Students met reserved constituencies in Class 9. Explain that such arrangements aim to give minority and weaker groups a voice in government. Ask why a group that is always outvoted might lose trust in the system.

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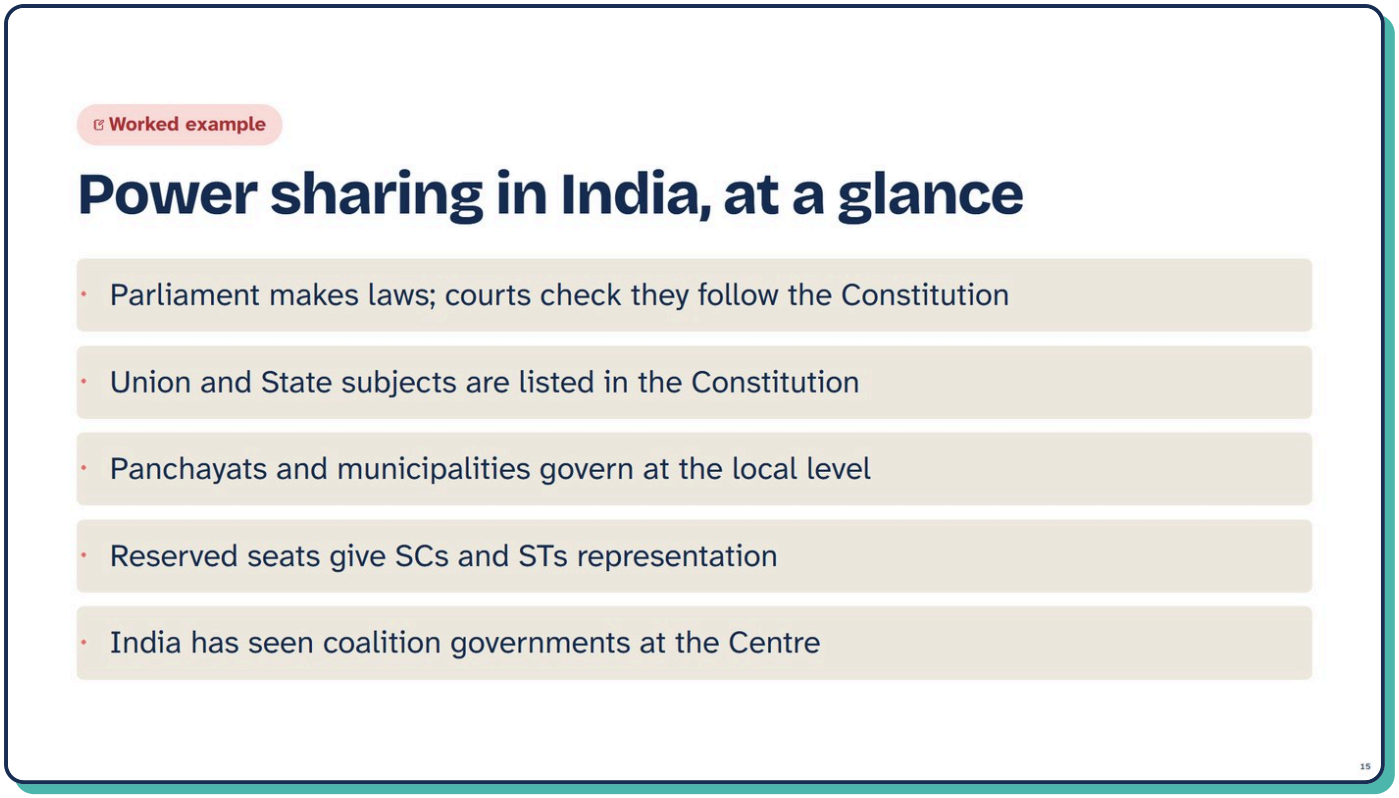


Form 4: Parties, pressure groups, movements

Teacher notes

Keep this neutral: the point is how competition and alliances share power, not which party is better. A coalition government is formed when two or more parties come together. Ask students for an example of a group, such as a farmers' association, that tries to influence government decisions.

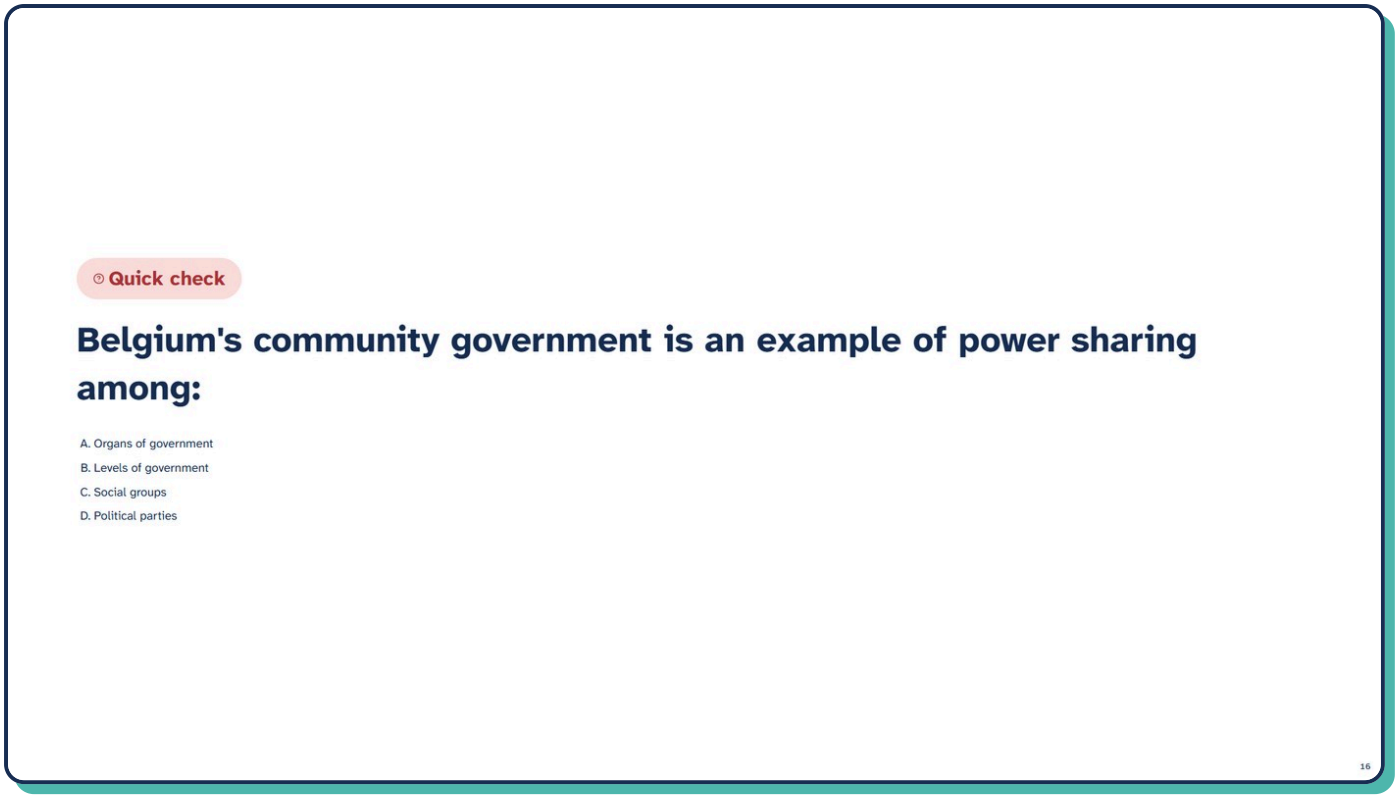
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Power sharing in India, at a glance

Teacher notes

Ask students to match each bullet to one of the four forms of power sharing. Answers: horizontal, vertical, vertical, social groups, and parties. This makes a good pair activity before the quick check.



Quick check

Teacher notes

Answer: C, social groups, because the community government is elected by people of one language community. Some students pick levels of government; remind them that the community government is defined by language, not territory.



Key takeaways

Teacher notes

Ask each student to write one sentence comparing Belgium and Sri Lanka as an exit ticket. Then move to the five-question quiz. Homework: find one example of each form of power sharing in a newspaper or news website.

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