# Characteristics of a State

**State:**

A political unit with the *power to make and enforce laws* over a group of people *living within a clearly defined territory*.

## 4 Characteristics:

- **Population**—Must have people; number does not matter.
- **Territory**—Must have *clearly defined and recognized borders*.
- **Government**—*Issues and enforces rules* for the people living within its territory; government must be recognized from within and by other nations in the international community.
- **Sovereignty**—Must have supreme power to *act within its territory* and to *control its external affairs*.
What Is Government?

Government:
is made up of the formal institutions and processes through which decisions are made for a group of people.

Three main components:

People: elected officials & public servants who carry out gov. business

Power: Legislative to make laws; Executive to carry out laws; Judicial to interpret laws

Policy: Decision made by government in pursuit of a goal; can be a law, a gov. program, or a set of gov. actions