

**Lesson 2****Focus Question #2****What is the structure of Germany's government?**

- What governmental bodies make up the German government?
- How do the political institutions in Germany compare to those in the United States?
- Why did Germany borrow political practices from other countries to more effectively govern the country after the Second World War?

**Background Information**

The German Federal Government consists of the Chancellor and her or his cabinet ministers. The Basic Law invests the Chancellor with central executive authority. For that reason, some observers refer to the German political system as a "Chancellor Democracy". The Chancellor's authority emanates from the provisions of the Basic Law and from her or his status as leader of the party or coalition of parties holding a majority of seats in the Bundestag. Every four years, after national elections and the seating of the newly elected Bundestag members, the Federal President nominates a Chancellor candidate to that parliamentary body. The Chancellor is elected by majority vote in the Bundestag.

**Essential Content** ⚡

German Political Institutions:

- ⚡ **Bundestag**
  - Elected by the people every four years
  - Elects the Chancellor
  - Any member may propose legislation
- ⚡ **Bundesrat**
  - Second chamber of the Parliament
  - Represents the federal states
  - Consent is required for constitutional amendments
  - Consent is required for legislation affecting the states
- ⚡ **The Bundesregierung**
  - The "cabinet" – Federal Chancellor and the Federal Ministers
  - Chancellor presides over the Federal Cabinet
  - The ministers manage their departments independently
- ⚡ **The Bundespräsident**
  - Head of state
  - Represents Germany in international affairs
  - Has limited powers as defined in the Basic Law
- ⚡ **The Basic Law**