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dictionary

of the
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Language



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ar·is·toc·ra·cy  (ăŕ'ĭ-stŏk rə-sē)

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n. pl. **ar·is·toc·ra·cies**

1. A hereditary ruling class; nobility.
2.
 - a. Government by a ruling class.
 - b. A state or country having this form of government.
3.
 - a. Government by the citizens deemed to be best qualified to lead.
 - b. A state having such a government.
4. A group or class considered superior to others.

[Late Latin *aristocratia*, government by the best, from Greek *aristokratiā* : *aristos*, best; see **ar-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#) + *-kratiā*, -cracy.]

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Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

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The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

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