

GCSE Citizenship Knowledge Planner

Theme 3: Politics and Participation



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Theme 3: Politics and Participation. The Concept of Democracy

Key Words:

Democracy: A system of government by the entire population or a majority of eligible citizens, usually through elected representatives.

Liberal Democracy: a system of government based on representative democracy and linked to freedoms and rights for citizens. USA, UK and EU follow this type of democracy.

Direct Democracy: a system of government where all citizens take part in decision making. A modern example of this is the use of referendums.

Representative Democracy: A system of government where citizens are elected to represent others in an assembly. A UK example would be an MP or a councillor.

Types of Government

Monarchy – government by a family who have inherited the title of monarch.

Dictatorship – rule by an individual or group with no democratic aspects, total control by one person or group.

Communist – government by one party; choice limited to officially approved candidates (China).

One Party State - A state where only one political party exists and runs the country and is often associated with communist forms of government, e.g. Vietnam and Cuba.

Oligarchy – government by a privileged few – normally self-appointed.

Anarchy – a state without any form of government/control. There could be a total breakdown of in society e.g. during Civil War. The country is often divided into Warlords.

Theocracy – Where the religious leaders run the country e.g. Iran

What does democracy mean? A system of government by the entire population or a majority of eligible citizens, usually through elected representatives.

It includes the following aspects:

- Regular and fair elections
- An electoral system where there is a secret ballot and where the results reflect the views of the people. The results are also accountable.
- There are regular elections which makes the Government accountable.
- Any citizen can stand for election.
- Candidates can campaign equally without any fear of intimidation or bribery.
- The media can freely report on the work of Government.
- The judiciary is separate from government and citizens can use the legal process to hold government to account.

The Values underpinning democracy

- **Rights** - These are our legal, social and ethical entitlements and all citizens enjoy them equally. This structures how government operates, the law and morality of society e.g. Human Rights, children's rights.
- **Responsibilities** - the state or fact of having to do something. We have duties as citizens of a society. E.g. pay taxes, obey the law, be called for jury service, conscription during war, These are not optional and underpinned by the law.
- **Freedoms** - the ability to act, speak or think as one wants. E.g. freedom of choice, freedom of the press, freedom of movement.
- **The Rule of Law** - everyone must obey the law not matter who they are e.g. gender, class, wealth, religion.
- **Equality** - This is how society treats its members. There should be equal treatment for all. There is legislation protecting different groups e.g. Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986; Race Relations Act 1965, 1968, 1976, 2000; Sexual Offences Act 2003, Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013; Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005.

These now fall under the name of **The Equality Act 2010** which is

Theme 3: Politics and Participation. The Institutions of the British Constitution

Keywords:
Devolution: a process where power is shared between different bodies. IN the UK there are separate elected bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
Devolved Bodies: National assemblies, parliaments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
Government: The individuals who run the state. In the UK we refer to 'central government', which is made up of the political parties that won the general election. The prime minister leads the government and appoints ministers.
Parliament: elected representatives who meet and debate and pass new laws. In the UK it is made up of: the House of Commons, House of Lords and the Monarch (Queen).
Political Literacy: have the political knowledge and understanding to take part in the political process e.g. to vote.

House of Commons: 650 Members of Parliament (MPs) – elected by people at a general election. The party which has the majority of MPs forms the government. MPs represent the electorate for a given area e.g. **constituency**.
House of Lords: Made up of appointed Life Peers (who have areas they are experts in e.g. Lord Sugar advises on business matters), and Hereditary Peers (families have held the titles and pass it down).
Monarch: Most of his/her powers has been given to the Prime Minister and other ministers, but does sign off all laws passed by Parliament – Royal Assent' and must agree if the Prime Minister wishes to call a general election.

Role of Parliament
 The major function of Parliament is to pass laws (legislation). There are 3 major types of laws:
 1. Those proposed by the Government (**Public Bills**).
 2. Those proposed by Individual MPs (**Private Member's Bills**).
 3. Those proposed on behalf of organisations e.g. Local government (**Private Bills**).
Government Bills (proposals for new laws) account for *most* of the laws passed.
 Parliament also holds the government to account for its actions – MPs of any party can call for debates on topical issues,. Committees of MPs and Lords can **scrutinise** (**examine/analyse**) proposed legislation in detail.

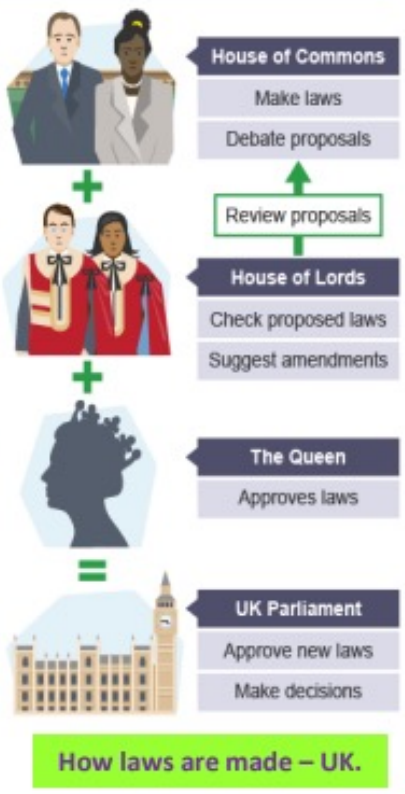
Political Party – group of people who share the political ideas and work together to achieve power at local or national level e.g. The Labour Party or the Conservative Party.

- The Cabinet** – senior members of the Government who hold ministerial jobs.
1. The law limits the number of ministers in the Cabinet.
 2. Ministers receive more money than MPs.
 3. The most senior ministers are the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Home Secretary and the Foreign Secretary.
 4. Cabinet meets regularly at 10 Downing Street.
 5. The Prime Minister chairs Cabinet meetings.
 6. The Prime Minister decides who is in the Cabinet and can sack them at any time.

The Opposition
 – all parties not in government – who are 'in opposition' to the Government.
 The largest opposition party = Her Majesty's Official Opposition'.

UK – currently Conservative Party form the Government, the Labour Party are the Official Opposition

General Elections – held every 5 years!



Theme 3: Politics and Participation. The Institutions of the British Constitution

Key Words:

Prime Minister: the Head of Government. The monarch is the Head of State (In the USA, the President holds both posts). The Prime Minister is the leader of the largest party in the House of Commons and is an elected MP.

Legislature: a body normally elected that decides upon the laws that apply to a state. In the UK, Parliament is the legislature (in the USA, Congress is the legislature).

Civil Service: employees of the state who administer our public policy.

Political Parties: a group of people who share a common ideology and political beliefs and wishes to win elections in order to carry out their ideas.

The institutions of the British Constitution:

- The Power of government - government which is a body that makes, proposes and carries out the policy and laws.
- The Prime Minister and Cabinet
- The sovereignty of Parliament - Only Parliament can make and change laws.
- The roles of the legislature - Another name for Parliament which can make laws. This can be done through the House of Commons or House of Lords.
- The Opposition - the 'official opposition' is the name given to the largest party in the Commons not in power. The opposition are MPs representing parties not in government.
- Political Parties
- The Monarch
- Citizens
- The Judiciary
- The Police
- The Civil Service: The Civil Service is based upon three core principles:
 1. Impartiality - Civil Service serves the Crown and not a specific government.
 2. Anonymity - They should not be identified or associated with specific policies.
 3. Permanence - the stay in post when a government leaves office. They serve whichever government is in power.

The UK Constitution is described as being **unwritten and uncodified**.

	Comment	Advantages	Disadvantages
Unwritten	There is no single written document that is called the British Constitution. There are constitutional laws and conventions.	This makes changing aspects of constitutional law easy, no different than any other type of law.	Gives power to the government of the day to make any changes it wishes. Other countries like the USA have formal written documents and have laid out ways to make changes that involve each state.
Uncodified	There is a range of documents containing aspects of constitutional arrangements. They are not linked or identified as being constitutional.	It enables changes to be made easily, for example lowering the voting age can be looked at in isolation from, say, changing the parliamentary boundaries.	It enables changes to be made piecemeal that could undermine existing constitutional rights when taken together.

Theme 3: Politics and Participation. Local and devolved government

Key Words:

Tiers: another term for levels of government.

Ultra vires: acting beyond your legal power or authority.

Central Government: term used to describe the government of the UK.

Devolved government: name given to the bodies created under the policy of devolution, such as the Scottish Parliament.

Devolved Powers: decisions now being made by the devolved bodies e.g. Welsh Assembly.

Reserved Powers: still taken by the UK Parliament on behalf of all parts of the UK e.g. defence and foreign policy.

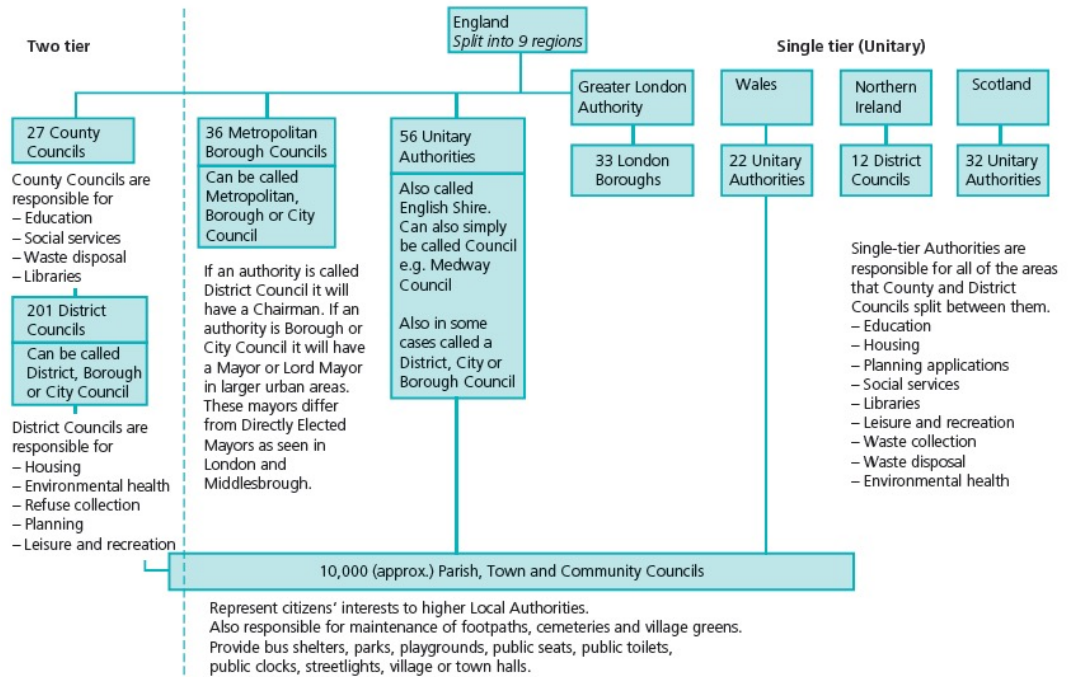
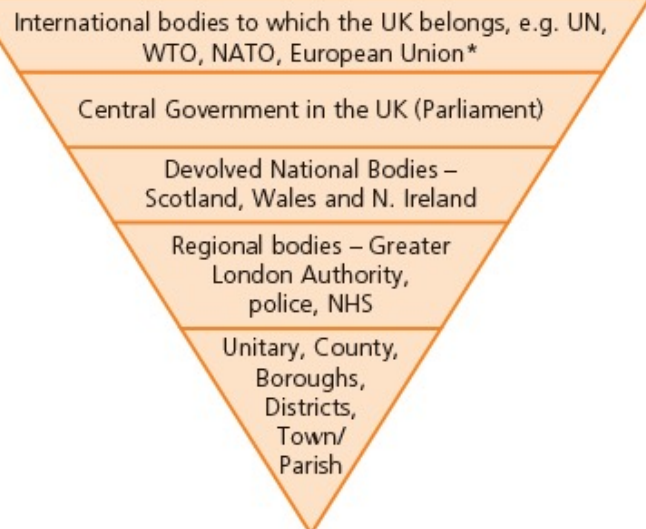


Figure 6.2 The structure of local authorities in the UK

Table 6.1 What is local government responsible for?

	Unitary authorities	County councils	District councils	Metropolitan districts	London boroughs	Greater London Authority
Education	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Highways	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Transport planning	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Passenger transport	✓	✓				✓
Social care	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Housing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Libraries	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Leisure and recreation	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Environmental health	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Waste collection	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Waste disposal	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Planning applications	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Strategic planning	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Local tax collection	✓		✓	✓	✓	

Tiers of local government.



Theme 3: Politics and Participation. Local and devolved government

How councils operate

Table 6.2 How the councils operate

Way they operate	Comment
Full council	The full council is made up of all elected councillors. The full council debates and decides upon policy based on reports from the various committees.
Committees	Councillors on committees monitor the council's performance and decision-making process and hold it to account for its actions. In councils without a cabinet, these committees have more power as they vote and decide upon council policy.
Cabinet	Like central government where the Prime Minister appoints members of the cabinet who are then responsible for departments (e.g. education), the same concept has been introduced into local government. The party or group that has a majority on the council appoints a leader of the council who works with a small group of councillors who are responsible for a service area. Since 2011, the government has allowed local councils to move back to the old committee system where groups of councillors are responsible for a particular service.
Leader or directly elected mayor	Traditionally most councils had a mayor as the ceremonial head of the council, normally serving for one year. The party or group with the majority of seats on the council ran the council, appointing one of their members to chair each of the committees, and each party had a group leader on the council. Now councils formally have a leader of the council: the leader of the largest group of councillors or a directly elected mayor who appoints their own cabinet. Many councils still keep the role of a ceremonial mayor. The councillors who accept these more important roles or who are directly elected mayors receive a much higher level of payment than ordinary councillors.

Roles and accountability of local councillors

Table 6.3 Roles and accountability of local councillors

Roles of local councillor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In many ways local councillors are local versions of your MP. ● They represent the interests of the local community they are elected to serve. ● They represent their political party on the council if they stood under a party label. ● They campaign for the best interests of the whole council area. ● They make representations to other bodies on behalf of their community and the council. ● They hold surgeries in their local areas and deal with issues and problems raised by their constituents. ● They serve on community bodies and represent the council on outside bodies. ● They attend civic and community functions. ● They serve on council committees. ● They help decide on council policy including the level of council tax and its spending plans. ● They hold the council to account for its actions through the ballot box as they face their electorate when they stand for re-election.
Accountability of local councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The local media report on the work of local councillors. ● Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 requires councils to produce a Code of Conduct for members, to publish the code and indicate the sanctions for members who breach the code. ● Their political party holds them to account for their work as a councillor and can deselect them. ● The financial expenses claimed from the council by councillors are published.

What is devolution?

The transfer of law-making powers and/or funding from central government (in London) to other regional bodies in the UK.

Where?

- Scottish parliament
- Welsh, Northern Ireland, or London assemblies
- regions with an elected mayor
- councils.

Local councils are the most basic form of devolution. They have control over spending on things like education and bin collection in their area.

Next come the various mayoral regions such as in London or Greater Manchester. They may have various extra powers such as over policing or housing.

The Scottish parliament is the most powerful devolved administration. It has power to change income tax rates, along with powers over health and education budgets like the Welsh and Northern Ireland assemblies.

Powers least likely to be devolved are those related to defence and international relations

HOW DOES ENGLISH DEVOLUTION WORK?

Devolution involves transferring powers over specific policy areas from central government to local government or regional areas.

Following devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which created regional parliaments or assemblies in 1998, these areas have had control over a range of policy areas. However, England has not had the same, with MPs from the devolved areas still being able to vote on "English" issues.

In order to allow more decisions in England to be made regionally, devolution deals have been struck with large cities or urban areas.

Devolution has been agreed with 12 areas, including Greater Manchester, West Midlands, and Cornwall. Deals are under negotiation with other regions.

The London Assembly was created in 2000, in a first attempt to devolve powers to local government in England.

The devolved powers can make decisions on areas such as agriculture, education, health and social care, housing and local government

Theme 3: Politics and Participation. How powers are organised

Key Words:

Local Elections: elections held for councillors to local councils, held on a fixed date in May after the fixed term of office has expired.

Lords Spiritual: the 26 bishops of the Church of England who are members of the House of Lords.

Voter Turnout: the percentage of voters who actually vote against the total number who are registered to vote.

Voter Apathy: a lack of interest by citizens in the electoral and political process.

Electoral Commission: a government-established body that monitors and oversees all UK elections and referendums.

Who can stand for election?

- Must be at least 18 years old.
- British Citizen, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or the Republic of Ireland.
- You cannot stand for more than one constituency.

You cannot stand for election if you are:

A Civil Servant; police; in the armed forces; a government nominated director of a commercial company; a judge; peer in the House of Lords (including bishops known as the Lords Spiritual).

Candidate Selection:

This varies between political parties. The usual method is as follows:

- Local party will advertise in party journal for people to apply.
- They have to be on a list approved by the National party.
- Local party workers will then draw up a short list after interviewing potential candidates.
- A 'returning officer' (a member of another local branch) will oversee the procedure for the party.
- The potential candidates are invited to attend a meeting of party members.
- They send a leaflet to all party members asking for their vote.

Who can vote in elections?

- A British Citizen or a member of the EU or Commonwealth living in the UK.
- Anyone 18 and over can register to vote.
- Not suffering any legal incapacity to vote.

Who cannot vote in elections?

- Members of the House of Lords.
- People in prison
- Anyone found guilty in the last 5 years of illegal practices in connection with an election.
- Been detained under certain sections of the Mental Health Act.

In Scotland the voting age for local and Scottish Parliament elections is 16.

Theme 3: Politics and Participation. How powers are organised

Keywords:

Participation: to take part in something.

Apathy: lack of interest, enthusiasm, or concern e.g.

Voter Apathy is a lack of interest in voting, not casting your vote.

How can citizens participate in a democracy:

There are other ways to participate in a democracy other than voting – you can get involved in campaigning for a local or national pressure group to bring about change for example.

Participation may be quite limited, such as making a donation, or more active, such as:

1. Taking part in a campaign.
2. Raising funds.
3. Raising awareness.
4. Collecting names on a petition.
5. Lobbying or writing letters.
6. Meeting those you wish to convince/influence to help you make a change/improvement.
7. Taking part in direct action/protests.
8. Joining a political party.
9. Standing for election.

Barriers to participation:

Language, access to education, poor housing, employment/unemployment, state of health, disability.

Voter Apathy – so what?

There is concern about the lack of citizen involvement in political process.

1. Membership of political parties is in decline – particularly amongst young people.
2. Young people often don't vote in elections.
3. If young people don't become engaged what is the future of democracy?
4. A 'healthy' democratic can be judged on the degree to which citizens are involved in society.
5. Number of people who vote in elections has declined since WWII.
6. Political parties have difficulty raising funds.
7. This can all mean small groups or individuals have too much influence on the political process.

Young People & Participation

Citizenship Education – introduced as a curriculum subject in 2003.

Many young people are involved in political protests via a range of groups and organisations.

A large number of young people do voluntary work and raise money for people in need.

Young people often interested in 'single issues' e.g. University fees.

Responses to Voter Apathy?

Make it easier to get a postal vote or consider use of on-line voting (concerns over fraud here).

Having voting over several days – including a Saturday when people have more time to vote.

Education about importance of voting and also policies of different parties.

Changing the voting system e.g. Proportional Representation.

Theme 3: Politics and Participation. How powers are organised



Figure 5.2 Voter turnout in national elections

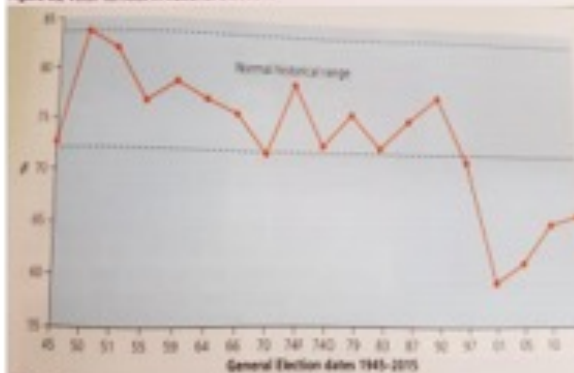


Figure 5.1 Participation in the democratic process in the UK

Barriers to participation in the democratic process:

People who do not participate give a range of reasons such as:

1. Lack of interest or Apathy
2. A belief that their participation will not make a difference
3. A lack of faith in politicians and the political process
4. A lack of information or understanding about how to participate
5. The issues are not important to them
6. They lead busy lives.

Some attempts have been made to make voting and registering easier, including making Citizenship compulsory in schools. Other suggestions include;

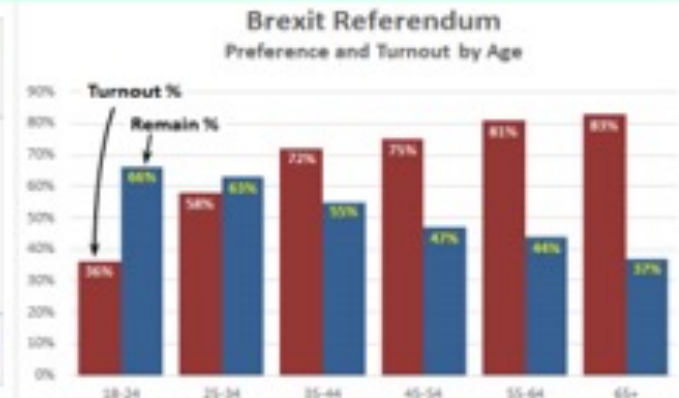
1. Compulsory voting
2. Lowering the voting age to 16
3. Allowing online voting. Allowing weekend voting
4. Changing polling hours
5. Opening polling stations in different locations
6. Encouraging postal voting or telephone voting.

It has been seen that young people will vote on issues they feel are relevant to them. 109,000 16-17 year olds registered to vote for the Scottish referendum, making the final turnout 84%

Voting Age Debate:

The twentieth century held many debates on who could vote and at what age.

- 1918 women over 30 years old and men over 21 could vote.
- 1928 women over 21 years old could vote
- 1970 women over 18 years old could vote.
- 2014 Scottish Referendum 16 and 17 year olds could vote. (Scotland only).



Theme 3: Politics and Participation. How powers are organised

Membership of UK political parties:

As of July 2016:

- Labour has 515,000 members
- Scottish National Party 120,000
- Liberal Democrats 76,000
- Green Party (England and Wales) 55,500
- UKIP 39,000
- Plaid Cymru (Wales) 8,300
- Conservative Party had 149,800 members – this was as of December 2013 (latest published figure)

The SNP is now the UK's second largest political party, but overall party membership in the UK remains tiny when compared to other countries in Europe. Several parties in the EU have more members than Labour, the Conservatives and the Lib Dems combined.

Figure 1: Membership of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat* party 1928-2013
Membership, millions



* Including predecessor parties.

Full data on membership levels 1928-2013 and on data sources available within Appendix Table 1.

Reasons FOR Lowering the Voting Age to 16.

Scotland's positive experience of including 16- and 17-year-olds in the 2014 independence referendum led to the lowering of the voting age for local and Holyrood elections.

Young people should have a say in matters that directly affect them, such as tuition fees.

After the Scottish Referendum a study by the University of Edinburgh during the referendum found that some teenagers were initially doubtful of their own abilities to make the right decision, but that this led them to actively seek out information to help inform their judgement.

Lowering the limit will encourage civic-mindedness at an earlier age and establish an interest in the political system, which will be continued throughout a person's life.

Reasons AGAINST Lowering the Voting Age to 16.

16-year-olds haven't yet entered the world of home ownership, employment, tax or pensions but these economic issues are often at the forefront of election campaigns. They are not relevant to 16 year olds.

Lack of experience in the matters above prevents young people from making a considered judgement at the ballot box.

18- to 24-year-olds have the lowest turnout of any age group in elections, reflecting an apparent lack of interest in politics so why would a 16 year old be any better?

Teenagers who do want to cast their votes would be impressionable and easily influenced by radical politics, or would not fully think things through and would blindly vote for the same party as their parents.

Electoral Reform Society: The Electoral Reform Society is a founding member of the Votes at 16 coalition. Votes at 16 are not just supported by the SNP, Labour, Liberal Democrats and the Greens – but also by the leader of the Scottish Conservatives, Ruth Davidson

Theme 3: Politics and Participation. Government spending

Key Words:

Command Economy: a national economy where all elements of the economic system are controlled by the government.

Market Economy: a national economy where most of the economy is run by the private sector and the state owns and runs limited elements.

Mixed Economy: a national economy that has elements run and owned by the state and others run by the private sector.

Budget: an annual statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the House of Commons about the taxation and spending policy for the forthcoming year.

Nationalised: where the state owns and runs a part of the economy.

Real Government spending: the change in the amount government spends after taking account of inflation.

Manifesto: a document provided by a political party at the time of an election outlining the policies it would like to introduce.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP): the value of all the goods and services created in a country, normally measured on an annual basis.

Government Spending:

The Government spends its money on things such as:

Paying interest on its debts,,
Public order and safety,
Housing and Environment,
Industry, Agriculture and Employment,
Defence,
Education,
Transport,
Social Services
Health

Government Income:

Council Tax
Business Rates
VAT
Corporation Tax
Income Tax
National Insurance
Excise Duty (e.g. Tax on alcohol, cigarettes)

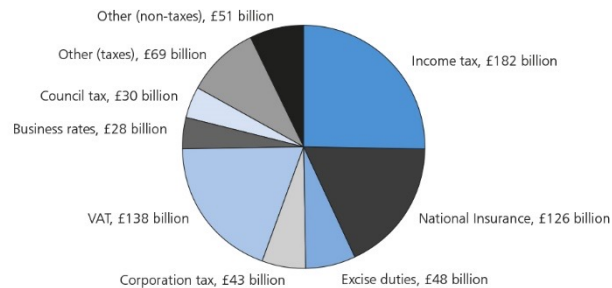
Impact of Government Spending/Cuts:

Ways in which governments raise and spend money have a huge impact on citizens e.g. Raising university fees, raising the rate of VAT, introducing a 'bedroom tax', cutting certain benefits can mean some people have less income.

If more money is being spent the Government has to decide whether to raise taxes or increase the money it borrows (public debt).

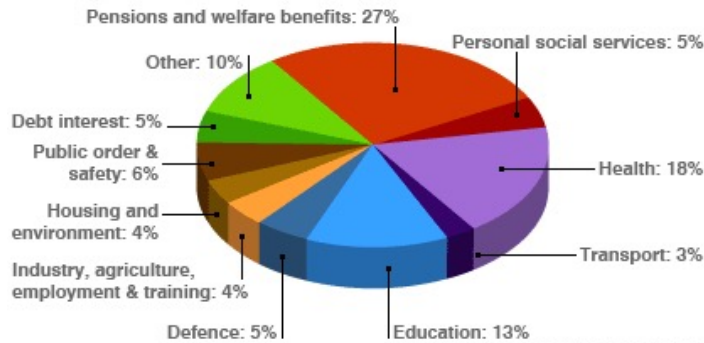
In 2008 the UK economy went into **recession** - there was a FALL in the number of things Britain made or sold, like food, cinema tickets and cars. That meant that for the first time in years, our economy was shrinking instead of growing. This led to a period of **austerity** - government measures to reduce public spending.

Chart 2: Public sector receipts 2016-17



Source: Office for Budget Responsibility, 2016-17 forecast. Figures may not sum due to rounding. Other (taxes) includes capital taxes, stamp duties, vehicle excise duties and other smaller tax receipts. Other (non-taxes) includes interest and dividends, gross operating surplus and other smaller non-tax receipts.

UK GOVERNMENT SPENDING



SOURCE: HM Treasury

Government can increase public spending by raising money the following ways:

1. Increase tax.
2. Borrow money (from World Bank)

Areas potentially needing more money:
Welfare; education; health; the elderly;

Theme 3: Politics and Participation. Where does Political Power reside?

Key Words:

Constituencies: a named geographical area consisting on average of about 65,000 voters which elects a single MP to the UK Parliament.

First Past the Post: an election system based upon the candidate with the highest number of votes cast being elected.

Proportional: a system of voting whereby the number of people elected relates to the number (percentage) of votes cast.

Supplementary voting: a voting system used in the UK where voters have a second vote which is used in the election process if no candidate gets 50 percent of the first choice votes.

UK Voting Systems:

First Past the Post –(FPTP) - used for electing MPs in a General Election in the UK and for electing local councillors in local council elections in England & Wales.

Example, for the General Election the country is divided into constituencies (General Election) and each one elects an MP. Each person registered to vote gets one vote and casts their vote by placing a single X on their ballot paper against the candidate of their choice. The candidate with the most votes wins.

Single Transferable Vote (STV) – used in Northern Ireland to elect Members of the European Parliament, Members of the Northern Ireland Assembly and local councillors & since 2007 in Scotland to elect local councillors. Voters place candidates in rank order i.e. 1,2,3,4 and so on (1 being your first choice), each electoral are elects several people so political parties have several candidates, a candidate is given a specific number of votes they need to be elected (*quota*), if they have more than the required number of votes required their extra votes are allocated to the second choices on ballot papers, after all the extra votes are used up the candidates with the smallest total of votes are eliminated and their votes get redistributed.

Additional Member System (AMS) – used for Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and Greater London Authority. Each elector has 2 votes, the first vote uses the FPTP system, the second vote is for a party list of candidates, each body using this system has a certain amount of members elected by FPTP and certain number chosen from the list.

Party List System: used to elect Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in England, Scotland and Wales with each country split into regions which elect several MEPs.

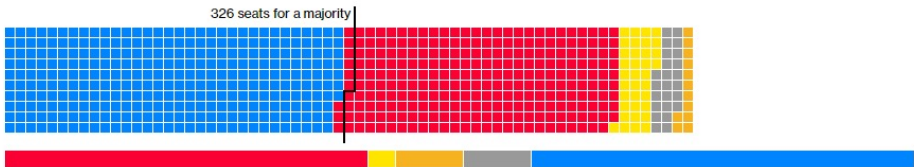
Supplementary Vote System (SV) – used to elect directly elected mayors including the Mayor of London.

Some people want the voting system changed in the UK from First Past the Post because the number of seats won does not reflect the number of votes (see the table on the right for the results of the 2017 election)

2017 National Results

Conservative lead by 55 seats | 650 of 650 seats declared

Labour 262 seats (+32) 12,874,284 votes (40.0%)	SNP 35 seats (-19) 977,568 votes (3.0%)	Liberal Democrat 12 seats (+3) 2,371,762 votes (7.4%)	Other parties 24 seats (-3) 2,339,678 votes (7.3%)	Conservative 317 seats (-13) 13,632,932 votes (42.3%)
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Theme 3: Politics and Participation. Where does Political Power reside?

"democracy"
/dɪˈmɒkrəsi/
noun:

a system of government by the entire population or a majority of eligible citizens, usually through elected representatives

Single Transferable Vote (STV)

STV is a form of Proportional Representation, and aims to ensure that as little votes as possible get wasted.

Voters rank candidates on the ballot paper in order of preference - their favourite as number 1, second favourite as number 2, etc. They do not have to rank every single one.

Candidates need a set amount of votes in order to be elected. This means that if someone's first-choice candidate does not meet this requirement and will not get elected, their votes gets moved to their second choice.

In the end, rather than just sending one MP, constituencies are able to send a 'team' of MPs that best represents the spread of votes in that area.

STV is used to elect the Northern Ireland Assembly, in Scottish local elections and in most elections in the Republic of Ireland.

First Past the Post

www.simplepolitics.co.uk

"First Past the Post" is the electoral system used to elect the UK Parliament.

The UK is split into 650 constituencies - in each one voters put a cross in the box next to their preferred candidate

The candidate with the most votes becomes the MP for that constituency.

The party with the overall majority of seats becomes the party of government.

First Past the Post is supposed to give clear majorities, although this has recently been challenged by the 2010 General Election - where no party had an overall majority.



This is the constituency map from the 2015 General Election. The Conservative party had a 12 seat majority over Labour, but other parties - such as the SNP, Liberal Democrats, Plaid Cymru, Green and UKIP - also won seats.

Sources: bbc.co.uk, parliament.uk, Electoral Reform Society.

The Alternative Vote System (AV)

AV is one of the most common majority systems - it is not Proportional Representation.

AV is a preferential voting system - voters put a "1" but their first choice candidate, a "2" by their second choice, etc.

In 2011, a referendum was held to change the electoral system in the UK to AV - but only 32% voted in favour.

If one of the candidates immediately wins an overall majority - over 50% of the votes - then they are automatically elected. However, this is not always the case!

Ballot Paper

Candidate A 4
Candidate B 2
Candidate C 1
Candidate D 5
Candidate E 3

If no-one gets a majority, the candidate with the fewest first-choice votes is eliminated, and their votes move to the second preference. This process continues until one candidate has the majority of votes.

www.simplepolitics.co.uk

Theme 3: Politics and Participation. Where does Political Power reside?

FPTP **AV** **AMS** **STV** **Full PR**

Some people believe the advantages are:

<p>Produces 'strong' government through majorities</p> <p>Retains strong link between constituency and MP</p> <p>Easy to understand</p>	<p>Produces 'strong' government through majorities</p> <p>Retains strong constituency link and ensures 50% support of the elected candidate</p>	<p>Can produce 'strong' majority government</p> <p>Retains constituency link</p> <p>Gives more voice to minor parties</p>	<p>Far fewer votes wasted</p> <p>Retains constituency link</p> <p>Gives voice to minor parties</p>	<p>Very few votes wasted</p> <p>Easy to understand</p> <p>Gives full voice to minor parties (but this could mean for extremists, too)</p>
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Some people believe the disadvantages are:

<p>A lot of wasted votes</p> <p>Makes it hard for new parties to emerge and is often not representative of the public vote</p>	<p>Can produce results that are even less representative</p> <p>Requires knowledge of all parties</p>	<p>Can create ultra-safe seats</p> <p>Creates two-tier representatives</p> <p>Can mean very minor party in government</p>	<p>Difficult to understand</p> <p>Leads to large constituencies</p> <p>Hard to produce a 'strong' majority government</p>	<p>No constituency link and creates ultra-safe seats</p> <p>Likely to produce coalitions with lots of post-election deals needed</p>
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We don't know for certain but the 2015 could have looked like

<p>Con 331 Lab 232 LD 8, SNP 56 UKIP 1, Gr 1 Plaid 3, DUP 8 UUP 2, Sinn Fein 4</p>	<p>Con 337 Lab 227 LD 9, SNP 54 UKIP 1, Gr 1 Plaid 3, DUP 8 UUP 2, Sinn Fein 4</p>	<p>Dependent on proportion of constituency to list seats</p>	<p>Con 276 Lab 236 LD 26, SNP 34 UKIP 54, Gr 3 Plaid 4, DUP 5 UUP 3, Sinn Fein 4</p>	<p>Con 242 Lab 208 LD 47, SNP 30 UKIP 80, Gr 20 Plaid 4, DUP 5 UUP 3, Sinn Fein 3</p>
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Theme 3: Politics and Participation. The Political Parties in the UK.

Key Words:

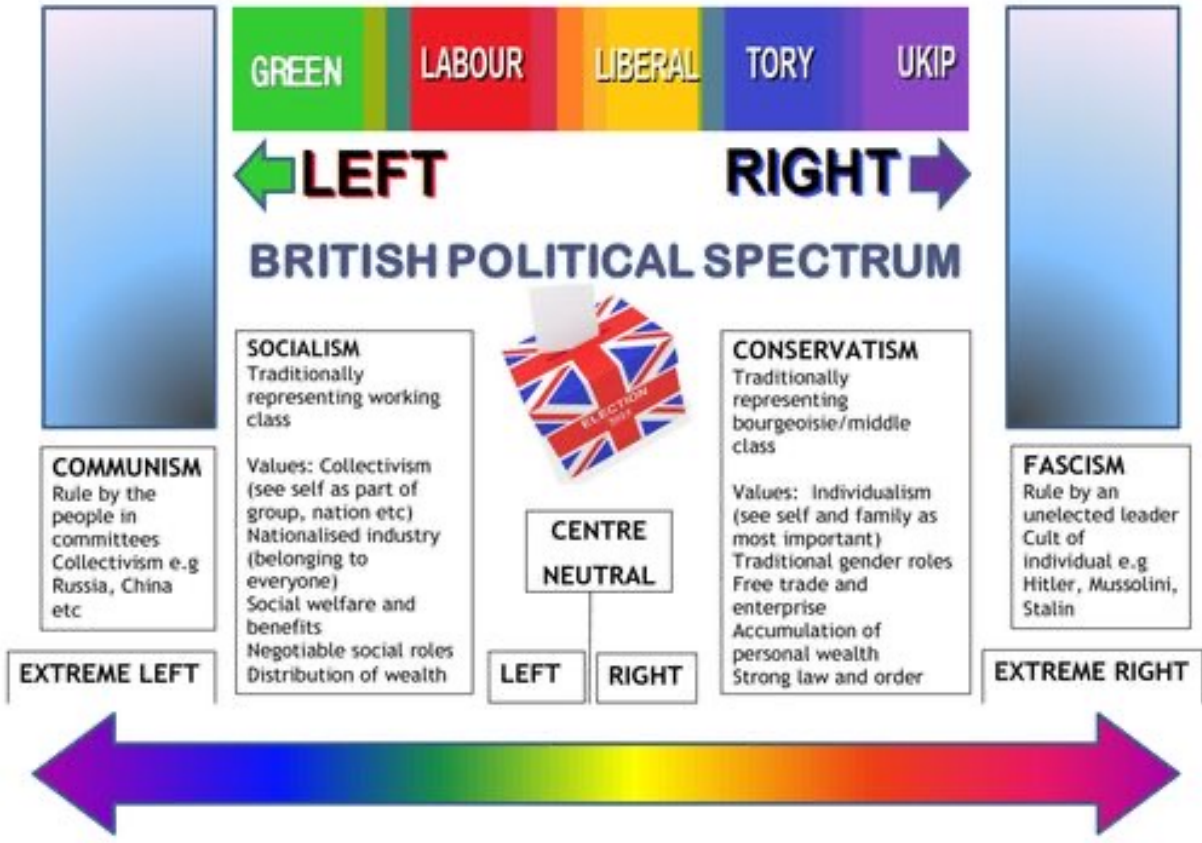
Two Party System: a political system that is dominated by two political parties, each of which may at some time form a government.

New Right: a view of conservatism (linked to Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s) that limiting the impact of the state on business and lowering taxation and what services the state provided was the best means of increasing national wealth and allowed for personal empowerment and increased social mobility.

Individual Liberty: the concept that in a modern democracy people have the freedom to make their own choices and decisions.

Tolerance: a concept based upon the idea that in a modern society people show understanding of others with differing views and opinions.

Political Ideology - This is the different ideas and policies that political parties have and the values that help a political party decide on any political issue. Traditionally political parties have been labelled as being to the right, left or centre.



Theme 3: Politics and Participation. The Political Parties in the UK.

Policy area	Conservatives	Labour	Liberal Democrats
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase the overall schools budget in England by £4bn by 2022 ● No school will have its budget cut as a result of the new funding formula ● End the ban on new selective schools ● Introduce T-Levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Abolish university tuition fees and reintroduce maintenance grants ● 30 hours of free childcare for two-year-olds in England ● End the public sector pay cap for teachers ● Restrict primary class sizes to 30 and introduce free school meals for primary school children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Spend £7bn extra on education, increasing school budgets and the Pupil Premium ● Oppose grammar schools ● End the 1% cap on teachers' pay rises ● Reinstatement maintenance grants for the poorest students
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● £8bn increase to NHS England budget compared to current level by 2022-23 ● Include value of family home in means test for people receiving social care at home ● Cost of care to be capped and people guaranteed to keep £100,000 of assets once care bill paid ● Allow deferral of care bills until after death to ensure no one is forced to sell family home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commit to more than £30bn in extra funding for the NHS in England over the next five years ● Reverse privatisation and return health services into public control ● Guarantee access to NHS treatment within 18 weeks and A&E within four hours ● Lay the foundations of a National Care service and put an extra £8bn into social care over the next five years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Add 1p onto each rate of income tax and ring-fence the money for NHS and social care ● Ensure mental health care waiting time standards match those in physical health care ● Ensure that there are more nurses on hospital wards and in the community ● Introduce a Welsh NHS whistle-blowing hotline
Immigration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduce net migration to tens of thousands ● Double the Immigration Skills Charge on companies employing migrant workers ● Increase minimum earnings threshold for family visa sponsorship ● Toughen requirements for student visas and rules allowing them to stay and work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Freedom of movement will end when Britain leaves the European Union ● Reinstatement the Migrant Impact fund in areas where immigration has placed a strain on public services ● Take students out of immigration numbers ● Recruit 500 more border guards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support the principle of freedom of movement between the UK and EU ● Allow high-skilled immigration to support key sectors of the economy ● Remove students from official migration statistics ● Welcome 50,000 Syrian refugees over five years and re-establish the 'Dubs' child refugee scheme

Examples of how the Manifestos differ between the different Political Parties.

Theme 3: Politics and Participation. How Parliament works.

Key Words:

Scrutinise: examine and inspect closely and thoroughly the work of government.

Private Members Bill: a bill, a draft for law, that is proposed by an MP.

Public Bills: bills proposed by government ministers.

Private Bills: bills promoted by organisations e.g. local authorities or private companies.

Hybrid Bills: these mix the characteristics of public and private bills. These would affect the general public as well as specific groups and individuals e.g. the construction of the HS2 rail line.

NDPBs: non-departmental public bodies, formerly quangos.

Quangos: quasi autonomous non-government organisations. These are bodies that work with the government, sometimes carrying out services on behalf of the government and funded by government.

The Civil Service and its employees play an important role in British life by making sure that the Government policy is carried out. Although it serves the Government of the day, it is politically independent by which it ensures the functioning of the system, stability and security.

Ways in which Parliament can hold the government to account?

- **Questions** - MPs can ask ministers and the Prime Minister questions; Prime Ministers Questions (PMQs) - these are questions answered by the PM every Wednesday. The Leaders of the Opposition get first opportunity to ask questions then the back bench MPs can.
- **Work of committees** - Committees work for Parliament and draft laws. Select committees investigate the work of each government department. These committees can demand answers to questions. Backbench Business Committees can select motions for debate such as e-petitions that have had over 100,000 signatures.
- **Debates**- MPs can also take part in Parliamentary debates. They can allow MPs and Lords to discuss government policy, propose new laws and current issues. At the end of the debate a vote is taken.

The Legislative Process (How laws are made)

In order to become a law, an idea must be set out in writing. It then goes through various parliamentary stages before it is signed into law by the monarch. These stages are shown in Figure 7.3.

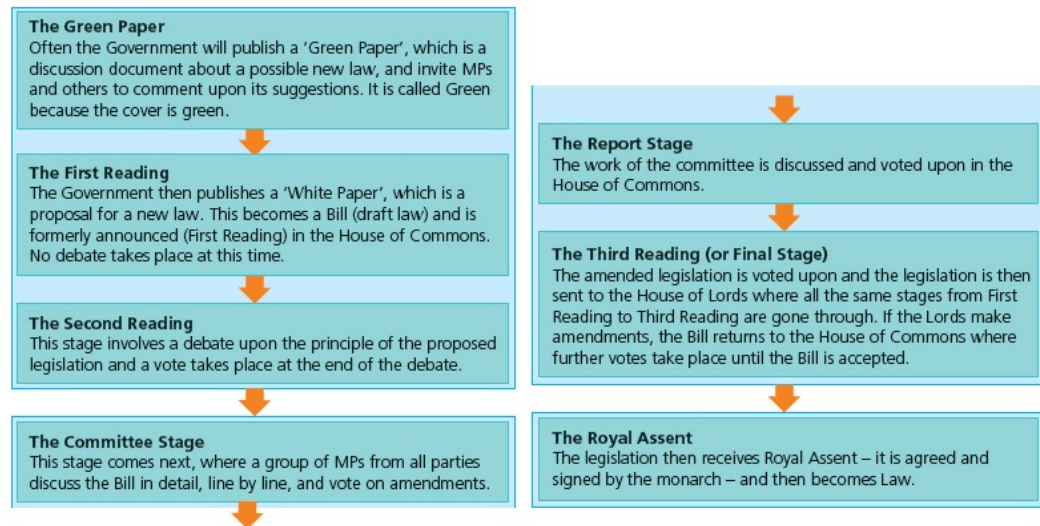


Figure 7.3 How laws are made by Parliament

Theme 3: Politics and Participation. How Parliament works.

What is the role of an MP?



<p>MPs are elected by their constituents at general elections and by-elections to represent interests and concerns in the House of Commons.</p>	<p>MPs split their time between working in Parliament and their constituency.</p>	<p>There are 650 MPs in the UK - one for each constituency. They usually represent a party, but can be independent.</p>
<p>In Parliament: MPs raise constituency issues with the Government. They attend debates and vote on new laws. They are usually also members of committees.</p>	<p>In their Constituency: MPs hold "surgeries" where they can discuss matters with constituents. They attend local events and engage with the community. They may campaign for local elections and referendums.</p>	



How an MP may vote

With conscience	With constituents	With the whip
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MPs are representatives and not delegates so should vote according to their beliefs 2. The whips may ask an MP to vote against a position they've always held or campaigned on 3. If the MP believes the position that they are asked to take will cause such harm to the country. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In a referendum, a decision was made by constituents so an MP should vote according to the wishes of the people that they represent 2. To maintain popularity in constituency and to keep the job! 3. If the position they are asked to take has a negative impact on their constituency e.g. HS2 bill 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To show loyalty to party - after all MPs are usually elected because they belong to a particular party rather than because of who they are. 2. To vote with the party in the hope of a future promotion. 3. To avoid the collapse of a party- there needs to be unity to get bills passed.

Powers of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Prime Ministers have certain constitutional powers.

Although there is Cabinet government in the UK, the Prime Minister's power is assured through 'primus inter pares': first among equals.

How well they use these powers depends on their personality and political style.

The Prime Minister does not have the constitutional authority a US President has. The Prime Minister is not directly elected by the voters. A governing party can replace the Prime Minister without consulting the voters, as Labour did when it elected Gordon Brown to replace Tony Blair in 2007.

Most MPs seek promotion. The PM can use this ambition to ensure loyalty. Sometimes a Prime Minister will appoint rivals into the Cabinet. Prime Ministers can use the protocol of 'collective responsibility' to silence Cabinet critics. Once a cabinet meeting, chaired by the Prime Minister makes a decision, all cabinet Ministers must support it, whether they agree with it or not. If they speak out in public, they must resign. Examples of ministers who spoke out against the war in Iraq were Clare Short and the late Robin Cook.

The Prime Minister can re-shuffle Cabinet Ministers to different Cabinet posts. He has the power of appointment of junior ministers, senior civil servants, bishops and judges.

Special advisers

Prime ministers, and other ministers, often appoint special advisers.

They are an additional resource for the Minister, providing assistance from a standpoint that is more politically committed and politically aware than would be available to them from the Civil Service.

Some are critical of how much special advisers are consulted compared to Cabinet colleagues.

Theme 3: Politics and Participation. How Parliament works.

Ceremonial Roles and key parliamentary roles

Parliamentary role	Commentary
The Speaker	<p>The Speaker of the House of Commons is elected to the post by their fellow MPs. They chair debates in the Commons Chamber. The Speaker is the chief officer and has the highest authority in the Commons. The Speaker interprets the rules of the House. They can bar members, decide who speaks and can call ministers to the House to make statements.</p> <p>There are three Deputy Speakers who can also chair sittings of the House. They are also elected by their fellow MPs. They are known as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● the Chairman of Ways and Means● the First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means● the Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means. <p>Once elected, these MPs withdraw from any active political role.</p> <p>The Lord Speaker is elected by members of the House of Lords. Politically impartial, they are responsible for chairing the debates in the Lords chamber and offering advice on procedure.</p>
Whips	<p>Whips are MPs or Members of the House of Lords appointed by each party in Parliament to help organise parliamentary business and to ensure that their party's MPs turn out and vote according to the party's wishes.</p> <p>Every week, whips send out a notice (called 'The Whip') to their MPs and Lords detailing parliamentary business for the week and giving instructions on how to vote.</p>
Frontbench MPs	<p>Frontbenchers sit on the front green benches nearest to the Speaker in the House of Commons. On the government side this is where ministers sit, and on the opposition benches is where the shadow ministers representing the official opposition party sit.</p>
Backbench MPs	<p>A backbencher is an ordinary MP who holds no government or opposition post so therefore sits behind the front bench on the backbenches.</p>
Black Rod	<p>Black Rod is a senior officer in the House of Lords. They are responsible for its security. Black Rod is also the Secretary to the Lord Great Chamberlain and is responsible for and participates in the major ceremonial events at the Palace of Westminster, for example during the State Opening of Parliament.</p>

Theme 3: Politics and Participation. How do others govern themselves?

Theme 3: Politics and Participation

Chapter 14: How do others govern themselves?

Key question

- How do others govern themselves?

Electoral systems and processes used in European parliamentary elections

Key content

- Electoral systems and processes used in European parliamentary elections.
- The impact of these systems on the composition of political parties representing citizens.

UK votes to Leave in 2016

As a result of the EU referendum in June 2016 the UK will cease to be a member of the EU after they have concluded negotiations with the EU. The earliest this could be is 2018 but that assumes

When elections were first held in the UK to the European Parliament, MEPs were elected using first past the post (FPTP) in England, Scotland and Wales. In Northern Ireland, the single transferrable vote (STV) system was used to ensure that by using a proportional system, the minority Nationalist community would gain one of the three seats. The European Parliamentary Elections Act of 1999 changed the voting system from FPTP to a **closed party list system**. The country is split into twelve regions, with varying numbers of MEPs according to the population for each region. The closed list system allowed voters to use the single X system against a name of a party. The party has a list of candidates it has placed in number order. The number of votes achieved by the party is then converted into MEPs elected. If a party wins two seats, candidate numbers 1 and 2 from its list are elected. The voter has no say in this system about whom they elect, only the party they support. It is the party that decides which candidates are top or bottom of their list.

that all the negotiation are concluded swiftly. Until that time the UK will continue to send MEP to the EU parliament but once the negotiations are concluded the UK will have no members of the EU parliament (MEPs).

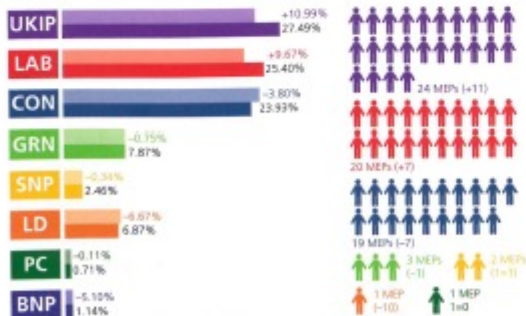


Figure 14.1 The results of the 2014 European Parliament elections in the UK

Unlike General Elections, the turnout for European Parliamentary elections has always been low (see Table 14.1), about the same level of turnout as for local elections in the UK. The countries with the highest average turnouts are Belgium with 90 per cent and Luxembourg with 80 per cent. The country with the lowest turnout was Slovakia in 2014 with 13 per cent. Unlike other elections in the UK, the voter is not electing anyone to be in power or to govern them by being a member of a government party.

Table 14.1 The turnout for European Parliamentary elections

ELECTION YEAR	PERCENTAGE TURNOUT (%)
1979	32.34
1984	32.57
1989	36.37
1994	36.43
1999	24.0
2004	38.52
2009	34.7
2014	35.6

In the European Parliament, MEPs sit in **transnational groups**, that is, MEPs from at least seven member countries and having at least fifteen MEPs as members. The Parliament sits in a horseshoe design by party group. The UK Conservative MEPs sit in the ECR group, Labour MEPs sit in the S&D group, the Greens in the Green/EFA group, UKIP in the EFD group and the Lib Dem MEP sits in the ALDE group.

Unlike other parliaments, the European Parliament meets in two places, Brussels in Belgium and Strasbourg in France. The European Parliament discusses and votes upon European legislation and directives and confirms the appointment of the European Commission and drafts the budget, but there is no government or opposition as in other parliaments.

The outcome of European Parliamentary elections is often very difficult to interpret in regard to domestic UK politics. It is often seen as a way of punishing the party in power in the UK. Also it is an opportunity to use your vote as a protest against the major parties. As no government is formed as a result of these elections, single-issue parties like UKIP and the Greens do well. Also using a proportional system based upon a region list enables parties who cannot win under the FPTP system to get candidates elected.

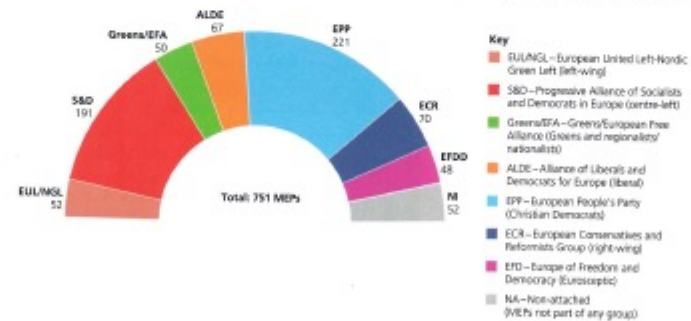


Figure 14.2 Groups in European Parliament

Discussion point

Why do you think so few people vote in elections to the European Parliament?

Key terms

Closed party list system – the electoral system used in England, Scotland and Wales to elect MEPs.

Transnational groupings – a political grouping in the European Parliament made up of MEPs from several countries.

Theme 3: Politics and Participation: Bringing about political change (Active Citizenship)

Key Words:

Lobbying: a campaigning method whereby traditionally members of the public spoke to their MP in the central lobby at the House of Commons to enlist their support for their cause.

House of Commons: the first chamber of Parliament made up currently of 650 elected members. The government is formed based on the composition of this chamber. It is a legislative chamber that also holds the government to account.

E-petitions: a means whereby petitioning can take place online. The government has introduced its own system and many campaign groups have set up their own systems to gather support.

Human Rights: these are basic rights and freedoms to which all people are entitled. Since the end of the Second World War, these rights have been written into a large number of international charters.

E-petitions are an easy way to have concerns heard by Government and Parliament. E-petitions enable members of the public to petition the House of Commons and press for action from the government. E-petitions have to ask for a specific action from the government or the House of Commons and should be about something which the Government or the House of Commons is responsible for. A petition will need to be supported by at least six people before it is published on the petitions site for other people to sign. An e-petition will stay open on the e-petitions website for six months. If the Petitions Committee decides that a petition should be debated in the main House of Commons Chamber, it would take that request to the Backbench Business Committee. The Petitions Committee will take the threshold of 100,000 signatures as a starting point when it considers which petitions should be debated.

But sometimes the Committee might not put forward a petition for debate if it's got over 100,000 signatures - for example, if the same subject has recently been debated or if a debate is going to happen soon. If that's the case, we'll tell you how you can find out more about parliamentary debates on the issue raised by your petition.



Theme 3: Politics and Participation: Bringing about political change (Active Citizenship)

Groups providing a voice and support for different groups in society.

Body	An example in helping provide a voice for different groups in society
Public institutions	<p>The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is a government-funded quango, which was established by law. Parliament gave the Commission the job of challenging discrimination and protecting human rights in the UK. The Commission's work covers the whole of the UK (see www.equalityhumanrights.com).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Human rights: Promotes understanding of the importance of human rights through teaching, research and public awareness and educational programmes. ● Equality and diversity: Promotes understanding, encourages good practice and promotes equality of opportunity; assistance to victims of discrimination; and works towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination and harassment.
Public services	<p>An ombudsman is a person who has been appointed to look into complaints about companies and organisations. Ombudsmen are independent, free of charge and impartial; that is, they don't take sides with either the person who is complaining or the organisation being complained about.</p> <p>Using an ombudsman is a way of trying to resolve a complaint without going to court. In most cases, the organisation must be complained to first, before making a complaint to the ombudsman. There are a vast number of ombudsmen who cover the public and private sector. The following are examples of public-sector ombudsmen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (www.ombudsman.org.uk) investigates complaints about government departments and some other public bodies; they can also look into complaints about NHS hospitals or community health services. ● The Local Government Ombudsman (www.lgo.org.uk) investigates complaints about local councils and some other local organisations.
Interest and pressure groups	<p>Examples of interest groups include the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), Amnesty International, Shelter, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the Electoral Reform Society (described here):</p> <p><i>'The Society has thousands of members across the country, an elected council of 15 members and a staff team based in London, Edinburgh and Cardiff. It is an independent campaigning organisation working to champion the rights of voters and to build a better democracy.'</i></p> <p>Source: www.electoral-reform.org.uk/campaigns</p>

Trade unions	<p>The typical activities of a trade union include providing assistance and services to their members, collectively bargaining for better pay and conditions for all workers, working to improve the quality of public services, political campaigning and industrial action. Nearly 7 million people in the UK belong to a trade union. Union members include nurses, school meals staff, hospital cleaners, professional footballers, shop assistants, teaching assistants, bus drivers, engineers and apprentices.</p> <p>One of the major unions in the UK is UNISON. It has more than 1.3 million members and activists, making it one of Europe's largest unions. More than 70% of its members are women (see www.unison.org.uk/about/what-we-do/about-trade-unions).</p>
Charities and voluntary groups	<p>Citizens Advice is a charity whose work involves a large number of volunteers. It receives funding from the government, among other bodies. In most towns and cities of the UK there are Citizens Advice offices. Many people turn to them to seek help and advice on everyday issues such as housing, benefits entitlements, poverty, legal matters and consumer issues. Citizens Advice works with some of the most disadvantaged in society. Research shows that their clients are five times more likely to live in poverty than the average member of the UK population. Citizens Advice also provides educational services to the general public, and campaigns on social issues (see www.citizensadvice.org.uk).</p>

Websites

- Break the Bag Habit: www.breakthebaghabit.org.uk
- Stop the War Coalition: www.stopwar.org.uk/index.php/about
- Volunteer Match: www.volunteermatch.org
- NCV0: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk>
- UK government: www.gov.uk/volunteering
- Equality and Human Rights Commission: www.equalityhumanrights.com
- Citizens Advice: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us
- Greenpeace UK: www.greenpeace.org.uk
- Age UK: www.ageuk.org.uk
- The Women's Institute: www.thewi.org.uk

Theme 3: Politics and Participation: Practice Exam Questions

1. How does a monarchy differ from a theocracy? (4)
2. Evaluate whether it is important to have a 'free press'? (8)
3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of an unwritten constitution (6)
4. Examine why the three principles of impartiality, anonymity, and permanence important in regard to the civil service in the UK? (8)
5. How does a county council differ from a district council? (2)
6. How does the Budget differ from the Autumn Statement? (2)
7. Justify the creation of more unitary councils (8)
8. Evaluate whether welfare spending is a political issue in the UK (8)
9. Examine why low voter turn out is an issue (8)
10. 'devolution will lead to the break-up of the United Kingdom.' to what extent can this statement be justified? (8)
11. Suggest two possible ways in which voter turn out can be improved (2)
12. Make a case for all local councils having a directly elected mayor (8)
13. What is a coalition government? (2)
14. Outline how three different election systems operate in the UK (6)
15. Justify the following view 'the UK has a presidential government rather than a prime ministerial government' (8)
16. Explain why the House of Commons is more important than the House of Lords (4)
17. Discuss why departmental select committees are important (6)
18. Examine the view that there is no real ideological basis any more to the major Westminster political parties (8)
19. Describe and explain the key principles that govern the way the UK civil service operates (6)
20. Consider reasons why so few people vote in the UK for elections to the European Parliament (4)
21. Explain how the European parliament differs from the UK Parliament (4)
22. Examine the ways that the UK system of government could become more democratic (8)
23. Consider why some countries are described as being semi-democratic (8)

Advice on Answering Exam Questions.

AO1 (1-2marks)	AO2 (4 -6marks)	AO3 (8 marks) (12 marks = AO2 and AO3)
<p>Define Specify meaning.</p>	<p>Compare Identify similarities and/or differences.</p>	<p>Analyse Separate information into components and identify their characteristics.</p>
<p>Explain Set out purposes or reasons.</p>	<p>Consider Review and respond to given information.</p>	<p>Evaluate Judge from available evidence.</p>
<p>Identify Name or otherwise characterize.</p>	<p>Describe Set out characteristics.</p>	<p>Examine Consider carefully and provide a detailed account of the indicated topic.</p>
<p>Name Identify using a recognised technical term.</p>	<p>Discuss Present key points about different ideas or strengths and weaknesses of an idea.</p>	<p>Justify Support a case with evidence.</p>