



2016 specification
first exams in 2018

Politics and Participation Activity Pack

for GCSE AQA Paper 1 (Theme 3.4)

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Teacher's Introduction

This Citizenship GCSE AQA theme 3.4 Politics and participation activity pack has been created specifically to incorporate the changes made to the 2016 GCSE Citizenship specification. This activity pack covers five parts of this section of the specification.

3.4 Politics and participation

- **3.4.1 Where does political power reside in the UK and how is it controlled?**
- **3.4.2 What are the powers of local and devolved government and how can citizens participate?**
- **3.4.3 Where does political power reside: with the citizen, Parliament or government?**
- **3.4.4 How do others govern themselves?**
- **3.4.5 How can citizens try to bring about political change?**

This resource is intended as a varied activity pack to supplement classroom and individual learning of the specification for theme 3.4 Politics and participation. This will help develop students' knowledge, understanding, and study skills. In addition, it will aid final examination preparation and revision so that pupils can undertake GCSE Citizenship successfully.

The main focus, therefore, is to reinforce pupil knowledge and understanding of the five parts of theme 3.4, while providing the vocabulary and analytical skills to undertake more detailed and precise examination answers.

The following structured activities are comprehensive and varied, and include extension activities to challenge advanced, talented and gifted students. These activities can be used while teaching theme 3.4, to consolidate learning throughout the topic and as revision materials. I hope that these engaging and fun activities prove useful to both pupils and teachers alike. Teaching notes overleaf help you to fit them easily into any lesson, with suggested timings and answers for each activity.

May 2024

Simon Foster is an A Level Politics and Citizenship teacher and author.

Teacher's Notes

Sections 3.4.1 & 3.4.4 – 'Where does political power reside in the UK?' and 'How do others govern themselves?'

Activity 1	Aim	To differentiate between the different advantages and disadvantages of a communist system of government.
	Prior knowledge	What a referendum is.
	Timing	10–15 minutes
	Answers	None – this is a subjective activity with no right or wrong answer.
	Extension timing	15–20 minutes
Activity 2	Aim	The values underpinning democracy: rights, responsibilities, freedom.
	Prior knowledge	Ability to use the Internet to search for definitions.
	Timing	10 minutes
	Answers	1) D, 2) C, 3) J, 4) K, 5) B, 6) E, 7) F, 8) I, 9) L, 10) A, 11) G, 12) H.
	Extension timing	15–30 minutes
Activity 3	Aim	To understand the role of key figures.
	Prior knowledge	How to do a crossword, ability to use the Internet to search for definitions.
	Timing	30 minutes
	Answers	
	Extension activity	Students create their own crossword in groups, and then try it on others.
	Extension timing	30–60 minutes

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Activity 4	Aim	To understand what is meant by the phrase 'uncodified constitution'.
	Prior knowledge	What a constitution is.
	Timing	15–20 minutes
	Answers	This is a comparative exercise, so there are no right or wrong answers.
	Extension activity	Students should decide, in groups, whether on balance they prefer the current constitution, and give reasons for their views.
	Extension timing	15–20 minutes

Section 3.4.2 – What are the powers of local and devolved governments?

Activity 5	Aim	To understand the different levels of local government that exist in the UK.
	Prior knowledge	None
	Timing	15–20 minutes
	Answers	This is a subjective activity where students can agree or disagree with the bottom of the article. There are no right or wrong answers.
	Extension activity	Students should use the Internet to research what sort of local government exists in their area and give reasons whether they think the type is right for their local area. They should also discuss the level of local government cuts – between 2015 and 2017, local government budgets have shrunk by 77% (source – LGA).
	Extension timing	15–20 minutes
Activity 6	Aim	To understand how relations are changing between England, Scotland and Ireland.
	Prior knowledge	Basic geography of the UK.
	Timing	15–20 minutes
	Answers	This is a subjective activity, so there are no right or wrong answers. Students should research devolution in either Scotland, part of England or Wales and table with the advantages and disadvantages of this type of devolution. They should then present to the class.
	Extension timing	20–30 minutes
	Extension activity	Students should research the impact of the Brexit vote on the UK's relationship with the EU.
Activity 7	Aim	To understand what the different constituent parts of the UK are.
	Prior knowledge	Basic geography of the UK.
	Timing	30–45 minutes
	Answers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Scotland – all powers 2) Wales – primary legislative powers since 2011, secondary legislative powers since 1997 3) Northern Ireland – primary and secondary legislative powers since 1998 4) London – administrative powers since 1998 5) West Midlands 6) Manchester 7) Cornwall – administrative powers since 2016
	Extension activity	Students should spend 10 minutes researching each of the latest local government budgets for the West Midlands, Manchester and Cornwall – and note down the differences between the three.
	Extension timing	30 minutes

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Activity 8	Aim	To understand how candidates are selected to stand for a constituency, and the difference between positive action and positive discrimination.
	Prior knowledge	Awareness of the three main political parties – Conservatives, Labour and the fact a plurality of candidates stand to be one MP in one constituency.
	Timing	5–10 minutes
	Answers	<p>Suggest answers:</p> <p>No intervention Simply requires no action, but leaves the problem of under-representation and BAME groups.</p> <p>Positive action • Advantage – helps disadvantaged – still hasn't solved the problem of under-representation.</p> <p>Positive discrimination • Advantage – ensures more women are selected • Disadvantage – positive discrimination is a zero sum gain – so there is no guarantee a candidate selected will be elected.</p>
	Extension activity	As an extension activity, students can pretend that they are on a radio show and draw up questions to ask prospective candidates. They can then role-play the candidates.
	Extension timing	15–20 minutes to write questions, plus 15–30 minutes to role-play.
Activity 9	Aim	9 – Issues relating to voter turnout, voter apathy and suggestions for reform at elections.
	Prior knowledge	Understanding of voting rules.
	Timing	10–15 minutes
	Answers	Students work in pairs to decide which measures are effective or ineffective.
	Extension activity	Students explain their reasoning.
	Extension timing	15–20 minutes
Activity 10	Aim	To understand how government money is raised.
	Prior knowledge	Embedded numeracy – use of pie charts.
	Timing	15–20 minutes
	Answers	<p>1) Income tax at £182 billion</p> <p>2) Business rates at £28 billion</p> <p>3) £43 billion. The rest of the questions are subjective, and, there are no wrong answers.</p>
	Extension activity	Students should work in groups to produce their own revenue pie chart for other groups.
	Extension timing	15–20 minutes
Activity 11	Aim	To understand how the government spends money.
	Prior knowledge	How to read a pie chart, definition of expenditure, and welfare spending.
	Timing	30–45 minutes
	Answers	<p>The largest area of expenditure is health (36%). The largest area of welfare spending is housing allowances (20%). The smallest area is education (11%). Welfare spending includes housing allowances and child benefit allowance. Questions 4 and 5 are subjective, but students are encouraged to give reasons for their answers.</p> <p>Students should use the Internet to find out what the remainder of the budget includes: defence (2%) and international aid (1.7%). One website is http://www.ukpublicspending.co.uk/uk_budget_pie_chart</p>
	Extension activity	Students should use the Internet to find out what the remainder of the budget includes: defence (2%) and international aid (1.7%). One website is http://www.ukpublicspending.co.uk/uk_budget_pie_chart
	Extension timing	10–15 minutes

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Activity 12	Aim	To hold a debate on a relevant citizenship issue.
	Prior knowledge	Recognising that the chair has the power to control contribution
	Timing	45–60 minutes
	Answers	None
	Extension activity	Students should write an amendment to one of the motions about class.
	Extension timing	15 minutes

Section 3.4: Does political power reside: with the citizen or government?

Activity 13	Aim	To understand how the Westminster first past the post system works.
	Prior knowledge	The fact that MPs are elected to Parliament.
	Timing	15–20 minutes
	Answers	There are no correct answers. This is a subjective activity where students will be able to justify the points they have made, first in pairs, then as a class.
	Extension activity	Students are encouraged to use the Internet to research the current electoral system, then discuss and debate whether this Act should be brought forward.
	Extension timing	20–45 minutes
Activity 14	Aim	To examine the relative advantages and disadvantages of first past the post and proportional representation as an electoral system.
	Prior knowledge	To understand what is acceptable behaviour.
	Timing	30 minutes
	Answers	There are no correct answers. This is a subjective activity where students will be able to justify the points they have made, first in pairs, then as a class.
	Extension activity	Students are encouraged to use the Internet and textbooks to research the electoral system, used in countries such as Israel, and write a short report on the advantages and disadvantages of this electoral system.
	Extension timing	30–60 minutes
Activity 15	Aim	To understand the different roles the UK media can play.
	Prior knowledge	None
	Timing	20–30 minutes
	Answers	This is a subjective activity, so there are no wrong or right answers.
	Extension activity	Students should use the Internet to research the structure and function of the media, then discuss whether this needs reform.
	Extension timing	20–30 minutes
Activity 16	Aim	For students to understand the main policy aims of the major political parties in the UK.
	Prior knowledge	Some knowledge of the policies of the political parties in the UK. It is assumed that students are not expected to know the exact details, as they should be able to guess some/most of the main points.
	Timing	10–15 minutes, plus 10 minutes to go through as a class.
	Answers	Answers: Conservatives: 1, 4, Labour: 5, 8, Lib Dem 3, 11, Green 2, 6, 7, 9, 10.
	Extension activity	Students can then rank the policies they most agree with in order of priority, then discuss their answers in groups. There is also the option to hold a full class debate on the most important policies.
	Extension timing	5–10 minutes in pairs, plus 10–15 minutes to compare rankings. Suggested 30–45 minutes for the debate.

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Activity 17	Aim	To contrast the roles of the House of Commons and the House of Lords.
	Prior knowledge	Awareness that there are two chambers in Parliament.
	Timing	15 minutes
	Answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All elected chamber – Commons • Appointed chamber with 92 hereditary peers – Lords • More power of the two chambers – Commons • The whole of this chamber looks at legislation in detail • Contains 2 sub-committees – Lords • More than half laws start in this chamber – Commons • Chamber from which the PM is drawn – Commons • There is a large group of independents – Lords • People usually members for life – Lords • Known as the Lower Chamber – Commons • Known as the Upper Chamber – Lords <p>Leader of the Opposition is a member of this chamber – Commons</p>
	Extension activity	Students use textbooks and the Internet to research the role of redrafting and amending legislation.
	Extension timing	15–45 minutes
Activity 18	Aim	18 – The role of Members of Parliament (MPs); representing policy; scrutinising legislation.
	Prior knowledge	Understanding the job of an MP.
	Timing	20–25 minutes
	Answers	Students rank the importance of different MP responsibilities with other groups.
	Extension activity	Students decide on which they would vote as an MP.
	Extension timing	15–20 minutes
Activity 19	Aim	19 – Ceremonial roles including Black Rod; key parliamentary whips, front-bench and back-bench MPs.
	Prior knowledge	Ability to use the Internet to search for different roles.
	Timing	20–25 minutes
	Answers	1) B, 2) H, 3) J, 4) F, 5) D, 6) E, 7) C, 8) G, 9) A, 10) I
	Extension activity	Explain the role of the Opposition.
	Extension timing	15–20 minutes
Activity 20	Aim	To understand how a bill becomes law.
	Prior knowledge	Understanding what a law is.
	Timing	15 minutes
	Answers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A green paper is only for consultation, whereas a white paper is for Parliament 2) The Commons 3) The Committee Stage in the Lords 4) When a bill goes back and forth between the Lords and Commons 5) No, she only has influence, as her role is now ceremonial
	Extension activity	Students should use the Internet to visit www.parliament.uk through Parliament.
	Extension timing	10–15 minutes per week, over a number of weeks

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Activity 21	Aim	Explain how governments are formed in the UK.
	Prior knowledge	Information provided in the case study.
	Timing	10–15 minutes
	Answers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) When a party has 50%+1 of the seats in the House of Commons after 2019. 2) When two parties join forces to create a majority in the House of Commons. The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats in 2010. 3) When one party or a coalition of parties gains the informal support of enough votes to govern. This was the Conservative Party in 2017. 4) When the largest party in the House of Commons attempts to form a government. This was the Conservatives between 2017 and 2019.
	Extension activity	Explain your preferred type of government formation.
	Extension timing	10–15 minutes
Activity 22	Aim	Understanding governmental roles.
	Prior knowledge	Information provided in the text.
	Timing	10 minutes
	Answers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Cabinet 2) Over 20 3) Four: Secretary of State, Minister of State, Undersecretary of State, Private Secretary 4) The Secretary of State 5) Once a week
	Extension activity	Research the role of the whips.
	Extension timing	10 minutes
Activity 23	Aim	Explain how government departments are organised.
	Prior knowledge	Information provided in the text.
	Timing	10 minutes
	Answers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 25 2) Treasury 3) The Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary and the Secretary of State 4) Four: Secretaries of State, Ministers of State, Undersecretaries of State, Private Secretaries 5) A committee of MPs which scrutinises each government department 6) Civil servants must be neutral and unbiased, they are not politically aligned and are permanently employed in government
	Extension activity	Research a government department.
	Extension timing	15–20 minutes

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Section 3.4.5 – How can citizens try to bring about political change?

Activity 24	Aim	Understanding how easily citizens can contribute to democracy.
	Prior knowledge	Restrictions on political engagement.
	Timing	10 minutes
	Answers	The barriers to participation could be not holding a UK passport, being a member of a single-parent family, living in Scotland.
	Extension activity	Discuss in groups how barriers can be overcome.
	Extension timing	10–15 minutes
Activity 25	Aim	Political action that citizens can take.
	Prior knowledge	None
	Timing	10 minutes
	Answers	There are no incorrect answers.
	Extension activity	Participate in an activity and prepare a presentation about it.
	Extension timing	To be completed outside of class.
Activity 26	Aim	Identify the interest groups.
	Prior knowledge	None
	Timing	10–15 minutes
	Answers	1) G, 2) A, 3) I, 4) B, 5) C, 6) H, 7) F, 8) C, 9) D, 10) J
	Extension activity	Discuss the effectiveness of each group.
	Extension timing	15–20 minutes
Activity 27	Aim	Understanding pressure groups.
	Prior knowledge	Information is provided in the case studies.
	Timing	10–15 minutes
	Answers	There are no incorrect answers.
	Extension activity	Research and report on a pressure group.
	Extension timing	30 minutes

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Activity 1 – Democracy versus dictatorship



Read the following two case studies. What do you think the advantages of each political system? Give reasons for your views.

Communist Cuba

Since 1959, Cuba has been a communist country, ruled firstly by the revolutionary leader, Fidel Castro, and then by his brother, Raul Castro. As Cuba is a communist country, there are no free elections, no opposition to the communists is allowed. There is no freedom of speech, and the government can get very harsh. Since 1959, many people have fled Cuba to other countries, as they have had to live under a communist regime, as there is no freedom of movement in Cuba – you are not entitled to travel in and out of the country and the government controls who goes in and who goes out.

Supporters of the communist system in Cuba point out the economic benefits. There is no unemployment, as the government controls the economy and ensures most people have a job. There is no poverty, as everyone earns the same amount of money per hour, whether they are a barman or a doctor. Communists argue that this is fairer. There is also healthcare for everyone, and the education is free for all. As a result, life expectancy and education levels have been higher in Cuba than in the United States.

Direct democracy in Switzerland

Switzerland is a federal country divided into six regions, or cantons. Thus, most powers are wielded not by the Swiss government but regionally by the cantons, who are more like counties or counties in the UK.

Switzerland is also a world leader in the use of direct democracy. In Switzerland, the government must hold a referendum to decide an issue, rather than the government alone. If enough people sign a petition, then a referendum will be held, where the people, not the government, decide.

Usually this works well for Switzerland, as this is very democratic. However, in 2009, the Swiss people voted for and passed banning the building of any more minaret towers on Muslim mosques. Switzerland only has about 500 minarets, being only four in the country at the time. Opponents of this as an example of tyranny of the majority. This is when the majority of the people make a decision that takes away the rights of a minority. In this case the rights of the small Muslim minority living in Switzerland.

	Advantages	
Communist Cuba		
Direct Democracy		



STRETCH Activity

The Zig Zag also uses initiatives to decide some issues at state level. Choose one of these issues. Then, as a group, decide whether it should be used more in the UK.

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Activity 2 – The values underpinning democracy: responsibilities, freedoms, equality, the rule of law



Match the words below with the following definitions:

1) Democracy
2) Direct democracy
3) Representative democracy
4) Rights
5) Responsibilities
6) Freedom
7) Legal equality
8) Political equality
9) Equality of opportunity
10) Economic equality
11) Absolute equality
12) The rule of law

A) Where everyone has a say in decisions.
B) Something that you are accountable for.
C) Decisions are made by a few people who vote on them.
D) People power.
E) Liberty, or the ability to do what you want without restrictions.
F) Everyone being treated equally.
G) Everyone ends up in the same position as everyone else, entirely equal to what they have done.
H) A system of rules and laws that everyone must follow, with punishments for breaking them.
I) The ability to participate in decision-making without discrimination.
J) Decisions are made by a few people, then made for everyone.
K) Things that you are entitled to, but which can be taken away from you.
L) The ability to fail or succeed as the chance to get a job on an even playing field, without discrimination.



STRETCH Activity

In groups, decide which of the three ideas above are the most important reasons for your views. Then, discuss this with other groups, and agree on a final list of the most important reasons.

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Activity 3 – The institutions of the British



Complete the following crossword, either on your own or in pairs. This can be done in groups.



Across

- 3 The minister in charge of government spending (10)
- 4 When Parliament isn't sitting (6)
- 5 The lowest form of judge in the UK (10)
- 8 The group of MPs who oppose the government (10)
- 10 The term of Parliament which usually lasts one year (7)
- 11 The person who chairs the House of Commons (7)
- 15 The minister in charge of the police (4,9)
- 16 The type of question used to get information out of ministers (7)
- 17 A group of MPs who scrutinise new legislation (11,9)
- 18 The civil servant who summons the Speaker to the Commons at the King's Speech (5,5)

Down

- 1 Head of the judiciary (5)
- 2 A weekly series of questions asked of ministers on Wednesdays (4)
- 6 The senior committee of the House of Commons that scrutinises the government (7)
- 7 Public employees who represent the public and carry out decisions (5,5)
- 9 The type of question used to get information out of ministers (7)
- 10 The highest court in the UK (5)
- 11 Law that is made by Parliament (5)
- 12 Members of the government who are responsible for specific areas of government (5,5)
- 13 Ordinary MPs who represent their constituents (5,5)
- 14 The MPs who control the government (5,5)



STRETCH Activity

Make a crossword that includes all the titles of all the members of the House of Commons.



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Activity 4 – How the relationships between form an uncoded British consti



Look at the following statements and decide whether each one is an advantage or disadvantage. Give reasons for your views.

The United Kingdom has an uncoded constitution. This means that our constitution is not written down in one place. It also means that our constitution has developed organically over time – from the Magna Carta in 1215, to the decision to leave the EU.

Sources of information include historical documents, statute law, common law, and constitutional conventions (such as *The English Constitution* by Walter Bagehot).

As our constitution is not written down in one place, it is easy to change. This means that parts of our constitution, such as human rights, as other countries have done (such as the USA). It also means that our constitution is open to interpretation by politicians. For example, the case between Gina Miller and the government over leaving the EU in late 2016.

Factor	Advantage	Disadvantage	
Flexibility – human rights cannot be protected by entrenching them.			
Flexibility – laws can be quickly changed in a crisis.			
Flexibility – governments can be strong to make decisions.			
Flexibility – an uncoded constitution gives government too much power.			
Opaque – you cannot see what is clearly going on in an uncoded constitution, so no accountability.			
Opaque – government is accountable for everything, because it has so much power.			
Debate – many sources mean issues can be debated with different opinions.			
Debate – many sources mean that there is no clear best opinion on some issues (e.g. Brexit).			

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Activity 5 – Local government services and accountability of councillors

Abingdon in Oxfordshire has a town or parish council. With only 18 members, it has a museum, and some local parks. Town and parish councils often aren't party political. Many of these councils' members. Parish councils were once famous in the site.

Carlisle has a district council with 52 councillors. Councillors represent an area of the ward will have two or three district councillors, so while Carlisle has 52 councillors, Carlisle District Council has a budget of over £34 million per year. District councils are responsible for recycling, council housing, planning, licensing and local leisure centres. There are 201 district councils in the UK.

Norfolk has a county council, with 84 councillors. The area each single councillor represents is a division, so there are 84 divisions for the council. Norfolk County Council has a budget of over £1 billion. County councils are the biggest type of local council. They have responsibility for libraries and roads. There are 27 county councils in England.

The Isle of Wight has a unitary authority with 40 local councillors. This council has a budget of over £1 billion. Unitary authorities have the powers of both district and county councils. Northern Ireland and London have unitary authorities. They are called metropolitan boroughs. There are 203 unitary authorities in the UK.



Look at the following statements. Which do you agree with? Why? Give reasons.

'Parish councils are a waste of time. They're too small and don't do anything.'



'Unitary authorities are good – there's one council responsible for everything.'

'I prefer having my county council to a unitary authority, because they can achieve more money as they are bigger.'



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'A district council is a better idea than a unitary authority when it comes to planning. It should be as local as possible.'



STRETCH Activity

Research what sort of council or councils your area has. Do you think the structure of local government right in your area? Do you think that authority budgets have been cut significantly since 2010 due to cuts? Give us your views.

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Activity 6 – Regional and devolved government Wales, Northern Ireland and England



Look at the following timeline. Which do you think were the biggest changes in importance. Why? Give reasons for your views.

Date	Change	Effect
1921	Republic of Ireland becomes an independent state.	Ireland partitioned, Northern Ireland remains part of the UK.
1979	Referendum to set up the Scottish Parliament.	Scottish Parliament has power to make own laws and vary taxes by 3p.
1979	Referendum to set up the Welsh Assembly.	Welsh Assembly has only symbolic legislative powers at this stage.
1998	Referendum to set up the Northern Ireland Assembly.	Northern Ireland Assembly has legislative powers but no tax powers.
1998	Referendum to set up the London Mayor.	London Mayor only has advisory powers over budgets.
2004	Failed referendum to set up devolution in North East England.	Devolution stalls in England.
2011	Referendum to give primary devolved power to the Welsh Assembly.	The Welsh Assembly can now make laws, just for Wales.
2012	Referendum to have 10 directly elected mayors instead of councils in 10 English cities.	Not implemented but referendum in 2012.
2014	Referendum for Scotland to become an independent country.	Scotland remains part of the UK. 16–17-year-olds vote in a referendum for the first time.
2015	Scottish devolved powers expanded following recommendations of the Smith Commission.	Scotland now directly collects income tax to spend for the first time.
2016	United Kingdom votes to leave the EU.	Leaving process starts in 2017, expected to complete in 2020.
2016	Manchester, the West Midlands and Cornwall all given limited administrative devolution.	Devolution occurring in parts of England without a referendum.
2017	Devolution fails again in Northern Ireland.	Future of the Northern Ireland Assembly now in doubt.



Research devolution in either Scotland, England or Wales. What are the pros and cons of this type of devolution? Give reasons for your views.

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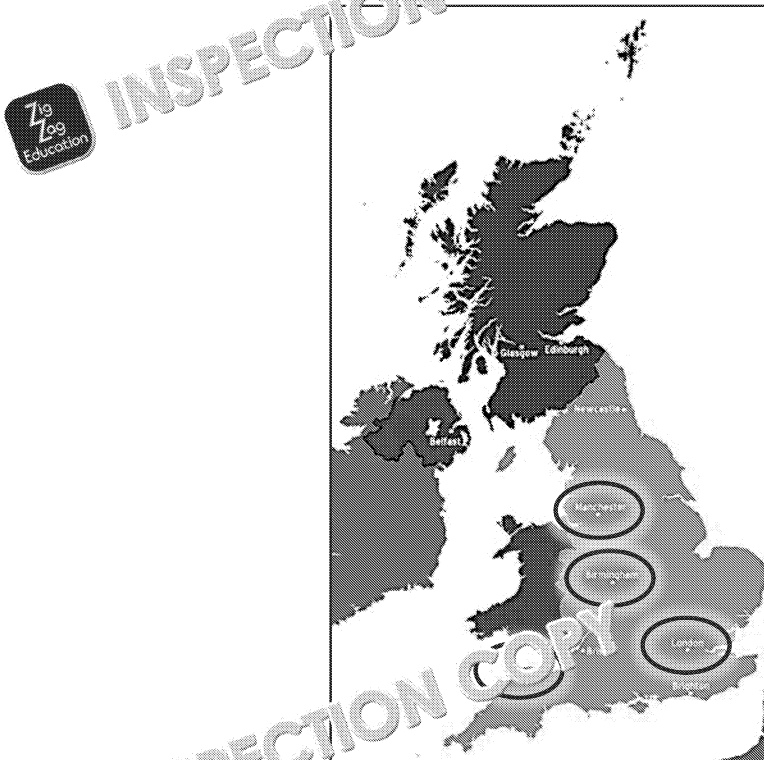


Activity 7 – Devolved power



Look at the map of the UK, below. Use the Internet to research which then fill out the table below.

- Primary legislative powers – the ability to make laws
- Secondary legislative powers – the ability to make laws based on primary legislation



Area	Primary legislative powers	Secondary legislative powers	Tax-raising powers
Scotland			
Wales			
Northern Ireland			
London			
West Midlands			
Manchester			
Cornwall			



Stretch Activity

Look at the areas that have recently received devolution – West Midlands, London, and Cornwall. How do the powers of each area differ? Which areas have mayors? Which area has devolution run through a local council?

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Activity 8 – How candidates are selected

In the Conservative Party, candidates first have to go through an approval process, run by the central party. This is to ensure that all candidates are capable of representing the party. They then go through a selection process, run by each area that has a local MP – called a constituency.

The good thing about this system of no intervention is that it is supposed to choose candidates on individual merit. However, a problem is occurring – not enough women and ethnic minority candidates are being elected for the Conservatives. Although the figures are improving, the Conservatives still only have 21% women MPs and 6% ethnic minority MPs, as opposed to 52% and 13% in the general population.

Up to 2015, the Lib Dems, like other parties, favoured positive action, such as excluding male candidates to help them compete with men. However, at the 2015 general election, only eight MPs were elected – and 100% of them were white and men. ‘Male, pale and stale’ was the slogan at the party.

As a result, the Lib Dems decided to engage in positive discrimination, and ensure that they would select either a woman, or an ethnic minority or disabled person. In the 2019 election, the party elected 11 MPs in 2019, 67% of whom were women. In addition, one became the party’s first ethnic minority MP, and is the first person of Palestinian origin to be elected to the House of Commons.

The Labour Party has also used positive discrimination in the past for several election campaigns. As a result, it has the best record of a major party for



Look at the table below. Which system do you prefer? Why? Give reasons.

	System	
	No intervention	Positive action
Advantage		
Disadvantage		



Sketch Activity

Imagine you had to select a person to be your local MP. What questions would you ask them? Draw up a list of five key questions.

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Activity 9 – Issues relating to voter turnout, suggestions for increasing voter turnout



Look at the following suggestions to increase voter turnout at election order you think would be the most effective to the least effective. Then discuss with another group.

Suggestion	Ranking	
1) Voting at the weekend rather than on a Thursday.		
2) Everyone votes by post.		
3) Everyone can vote using the Internet as well if they want to.		
4) Change the voting system to a form of proportional representation, so that every vote counts and makes a difference to the result.		
5) Compulsory voting like they have in Australia.		
6) Polling stations to be located in supermarkets.		
7) Early ballot voting like they have in the USA, where you can vote for several weeks before the voting day.		
8) Everyone to study Citizenship at GCSE, to underline the importance of voting.		
9) Term limits on politicians, so that politicians cannot stay in office for more than two or three general elections.		
10) Regional government for the different regions of England, so that different regions can decide different priorities closer to the people.		



STRETCH Activity

Which ideas do you think would be acceptable to a wide range of people? Which answers would you support? Give reasons for your views.

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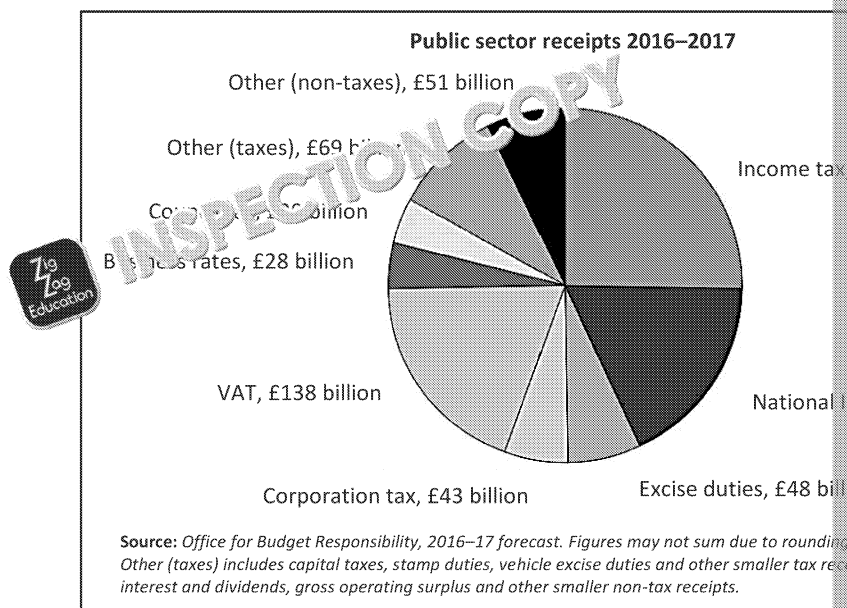
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Activity 10 – Taxes and spend



Look at the pie chart, and answer the following questions:



Pie chart on how government money is raised.

- What is the highest area of income?
.....
- What is the lowest area of income?
.....
- How much more do we raise from corporation tax? Is this too high or too low?
.....
- We raise £138 billion from VAT, which since 2011 is set at 20%. Do you think about right? Give reasons for your views.
.....
.....
.....
- Are there any of the figures that surprise you? Why? Give reasons for your views.
.....
.....
.....



STRETCH Activity

Imagine you had to set your own level of taxes. What would you do? Make a budget in pairs and then compare it in groups.

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Activity 11 – Budgeting and managing risk



Read the article below and answer the following questions:

The Chancellor of the Exchequer is the member of the government responsible for money and spending it. In other words, they are responsible for government tax and oversee the work of the Treasury – the government department responsible for the

The Chancellor of the Exchequer's position is considered to be one of the great offices of state, alongside the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Home Secretary. They are based at 11 Downing Street – next door to the Prime Minister. It can be argued that the Chancellor is the second most powerful figure in government, after that of the Prime Minister.

In coordination with the Bank of England and other institutions, the Chancellor is responsible for the direction of economic policy in the United Kingdom. While the Bank of England sets interest rates, the Chancellor, in consultation with the rest of the Cabinet, determines the government's budget. This includes income tax, VAT, national insurance, and other duties, such as taxes on alcohol.

Each year cabinet ministers submit their plans for government spending for their departments to the Chancellor. There then occurs the spending round – where the Chancellor negotiates with the ministers to produce a figure for overall government spending, and spending for each government department. These figures are usually planned out in three-year cycles, in advance.

The Chancellor also sets the level of government borrowing – the gap between what the government spends and what it takes in. Currently, this is at about 2.5% of overall expenditure.

Recent decisions in government spending include the following:

- To introduce an energy price cap to help people pay their energy bills
- To implement a furlough scheme during the coronavirus pandemic, to pay people who are out of work
- Providing military assistance and funding for Ukraine

1) What is the job of the Chancellor?

.....

2) Who sets interest rates in the UK?

.....

3) Give one example of a decision recently taken by the Chancellor.

.....

4) Research who the Chancellor is currently.

.....



RESEARCH Activity

Looking after the government's finances is so important the Chancellor of the Exchequer is also a member of the Cabinet. Research this role.

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Activity 12 – Policies for welfare, health, the elderly

How to hold a debate

Motion – this is a statement to be discussed. For example: 'This house believes that tuition fees should be scrapped.'

Chair – this is the person who controls the debate, allowing people to speak and ensuring the debate runs smoothly.

Proposer – this is the person who proposes the motion. They usually speak for up to three minutes first in the debate.

Opposer – this is the person who opposes the motion. They usually speak for up to three minutes second in the debate.

Seconders – Each side has a seconder, who will speak for up to three minutes. The proposer goes first, then the seconder supporting the motion goes third in the debate, and the seconder opposing the motion goes fourth. They should be quick on their feet, responding to points the proposer and opposer have made.

Amendments – these change the original motion. For example, an amendment to add the words 'only for nurses and firefighters'.

Speeches from the floor – After the proposer, opposer and seconders have spoken, there are speeches from the floor, where anyone can speak.

Interventions – when a speaker is speaking, a person may ask for a short intervention or make a brief point. Note that the speaker doesn't have to give way for an intervention.



Hold a debate on one of the following motions:

'This house believes that the Conservative plans at the 2017 general election, to force pensioners to cash in their old age out of their property savings, were the best way to deal with the housing crisis.'

OR

'This house believes that the Labour Party were correct at the 2019 general election to scrap tuition fees, give teachers a pay rise and set up a National Education Service.'

OR

'This house believes that the Liberal Democrats were correct at the 2019 general election to propose that the income tax should be raised by 1% to help fund the NHS.'



STRETCH AND THINK

Write down your arguments for each of the motions above. Give reasons for your arguments.

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Activity 13 – First past the post and Westminster

In the UK, we elect one MP per constituency. The candidate with the most votes wins. This is known as a plurality. There are 650 constituencies in the UK. As each constituency has a different number of voters, the number of votes a party gets is very different from the number of seats. For example, Labour got 30.8% of the vote at the last general election, but only 26.3% of the seats.

You have to be aged 18 or over to vote, but it is not compulsory to vote. Some members of the House of Lords and EU citizens are not allowed to vote in general elections. The next general election will be held every 4–5 years, but after the 2017 election there was an election in 2017 (because the Conservatives lost a small majority) and a snap election in 2019 (following months of parliamentary deadlock over Brexit).



Look at the following statements. Rank them in order of which one you agree with the most, to which one you disagree with the most. Then give three advantages and three disadvantages for each idea in pairs. Finally, compare your answers in groups.

	Ranking	Advantages
16-year-olds were able to vote in the Scottish Independence referendum, so they should be able to vote in a general election.		
Prisoners should be able to vote in a general election if they have not committed a non-violent or minor crime, even if they are in jail.		
We should have tests for people being able to vote, like the citizenship test you have to become a United Kingdom citizen. If you fail, you shouldn't be able to vote.		
It is right that members of the House of Lords can't vote, because they don't have a vote in the Upper Chamber of Parliament, so they shouldn't have a say over who is in the Commons as well.		

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	Ranking	Advantages
There are plans to reduce the number of MPs to 600. This will save money, but mean there are fewer backbench MPs to scrutinise the work and decisions of the government.		
We should have a voting system where the number of total seats a party gets is more representative of the total number of votes it receives in a general election.		
There should be compulsory voting – as there is in Australia, which has increased turnout to 96%.		



ETCH Activity

Research the Fixed-term Parliaments Act, which, until 2021, meant that general elections would be held only once every five years. Then look at why the Act was called early. Then decide whether this Act should be brought back and state your views.

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Activity 14 – Other voting systems used in the UK



Look at the following list of advantages and disadvantages for first past the post representation. Rank these factors in order of how strong an argument you can make with a partner which system you prefer, and why. Give reasons for your ranking.

In the United Kingdom there are 650 different constituencies for a general election – one for each MP. The winner is the candidate who gets the most votes. This means a minority of voters, provided they vote for the same candidate, can elect their MP.

This means that on a national level, the number of votes can be very different from the number of seats. For example, the Conservative vote went up by 5% between the 2010 and 2015 general elections. However, because the Labour vote went up as well, the Conservatives actually lost the election. This means that the Labour vote had gone up.

Proportional representation is designed to overcome the differences between votes and seats. Instead of voting for one MP, your vote counts across a wide area. In the system of proportional representation, the transferable vote, the country would be divided into multi-member constituencies. Voters would rank candidates in order of preference.

First past the post

Advantages	Disadvantages
Easy to understand.	Favours major parties over minor parties.
Quick to administer.	Number of seats is very different from number of votes cast nationally.
Maintains the link between one MP and one constituency.	Produces safe seats where MPs are re-elected for life.

Proportional representation

Advantages	Disadvantages
Allows all parties to compete equally whatever their size.	Very complicated mathematical system.
Allows voters to rank candidates in preference.	Abolishes individual constituencies.
Every vote counts – there are no safe seats.	Produces coalition government.



STRETCH Activity

Look at the national list system used in Israel, where the entire country is one constituency with proportional representation. Write down the advantages and disadvantages of this system.

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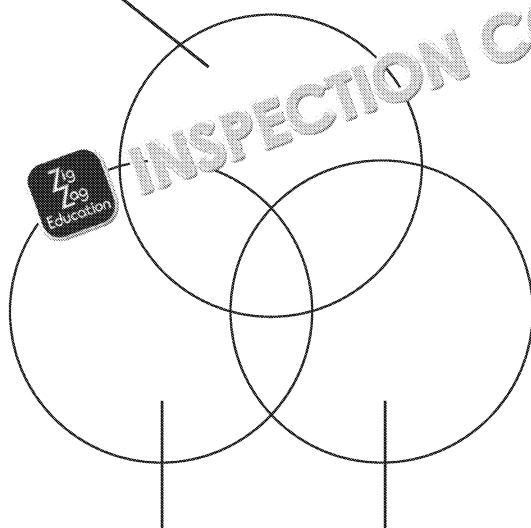
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Activity 15 – The executive, the legislature, the monarchy

Diagram 1 – A fusion of powers

1. The Executive

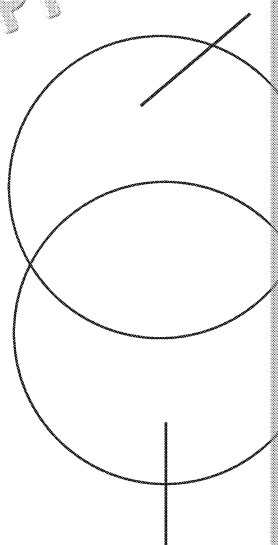


2. The Legislative

3. The Judiciary

Diagram 2 – A par

1. The Executive



2. The Legislative

The job of the executive, or the government, is to make day-to-day decisions.

The job of the legislative is to pass laws. In the UK, this consists of two main chambers: the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

The job of the judiciary is to interpret the law. Before 2005, the highest court of the UK was the House of Lords, where 12 law lords sat in judgement. They were also members of the House of Lords. The Lord Chancellor, who was a member of all three branches of government, was responsible for the judiciary.

After 2009, the UK Supreme Court was set up, which is independent of the other two branches of government. The head of the judiciary became the Lord Chief Justice, who is independent of the other two branches of government.



Read the article above. What two main changes occurred between 2005 and 2009? Was this a good idea? Why / why not? Give reasons for your views.

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RESEARCH Activity

Use the Internet to research the role of the UK Supreme Court, and how important it is when it comes to Brexit.

Activity 16 – UK political part



Matching exercise – which statement goes with which party?

- 1) 2% of the UK's national income should be spent on defence, as per NATO guidelines, and defence spending should increase where possible as a priority.
- 2) We believe that the UK should have zero migration as soon as possible – there should be no net in or out policy.
- 3) Income tax should be raised by 1p in order to fund health and social care properly.
- 4) Taxes should be cut where possible.
- 5) We should renationalise the railways.
- 6) Nuclear power and nuclear weapons should be scrapped as soon as possible.
- 7) Scotland should be a free and independent country.
- 8) We should scrap tuition fees in education.
- 9) Scotland should rejoin the EU, whatever the rest of the UK does.
- 10) There should be a ban on wearing the burka in the UK.
- 11) The voting system used for elections should be changed.
- 12) We should immediately ban arms sales and the arms trade in the UK.

Parties

Conservatives

Labour

Liberal Democrats

Greens

UKIP

Scottish National Party



STRETCH Activity

Rank which statements you most agree with, and why. Give reasons.



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Activity 17 – How Parliament works



Look at the following table. Tick the correct box for each statement. Discuss your answers with a friend. Are there any answers that surprise you? Give reasons.

	House of Commons
All elected chamber.	
Appointed chamber with 26 ordinary peers.	
More powerful than the other of the two chambers.	
The whole of this chamber looks at legislation in more detail than the other as a committee.	
Contains 26 bishops from the Church of England.	
Most draft laws, known as bills, start in this chamber.	
This chamber is where the Prime Minister is drawn from.	
There is a large group of independents known as cross-benchers in this chamber.	
People in this chamber are usually members for life.	
This chamber is known as the lower chamber.	
This chamber is known as the upper chamber.	
The Leader of the Opposition is a member of this chamber.	



STRETCH Activity

One of the chambers provides around 2,500 amendments to legislation, only half of which are accepted. Use the Internet to research which chamber does so much revising work.

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Activity 18 – The role of Members of Parliament



Look at the different roles of a Member of Parliament. In groups, rank them from the most to the least important. Then compare your top 3–5 answers with another group and then with the whole class. Give reasons for your views.

Role
1) Acting as part of the government if your party has a majority.
2) Listening to the views of your constituents and representing these in Parliament.
3) The role of a Member of Parliament is to sort out constituents' problems.
4) Campaigning on behalf of your party.
5) Making sure that you vote on every issue, no matter how minor, in the House of Commons.
6) Developing your party's policies.
7) Representing your party in the local media.
8) Representing your party in the national media.
9) Ensuring that you do not contradict other politicians in the same party as you.
10) Securing debates in the Commons on issues of importance to your constituents.
11) Asking written or spoken questions to government ministers to scrutinise the work of the government.
12) Attending standing committees which sift legislation, to ensure that this is the best it can be before it becomes a law.
13) Attending select committees, which scrutinise the work of a particular government department.
14) Attending all party parliamentary groups, which campaign on specific issues.
15) Building cross-party consensus and relationships to campaign on issues of mutual interest.



STRETCH Activity

You are an MP who has to vote on a particular issue. You can choose to vote on the national interest, the regional interest, your constituency's interest or your own personal feelings. Which are the most important? Write down your views.

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Activity 19 – Key parliamentary



Using the Internet, match the following definitions with the correct role.

1) Prime Minister
2) Cabinet Minister
3) Junior Minister
4) Frontbencher
5) Backbencher
6) Select Committee Chair
7) Speaker
8) Deputy Speaker
9) Black Rod
10) Father of the House

A) Civil servant who is the head of the House of Commons.
B) Head of the Cabinet.
C) An MP who is sworn to support the government in the debates and votes.
D) An MP who is not a member of the government or a spokesperson for the government.
E) The chair of a group of MPs who look at the work of one government department.
F) Any MP who is a member of the House of Commons.
G) MPs who act in place of the Speaker and oversees the work of the House of Commons.
H) One of over 20 senior MPs who advise the Prime Minister and help to run the country.
I) The longest-serving MP in the House of Commons.
J) A member of the government who is a member of the Cabinet and is responsible for a government department.



Research Activity

What is the Official Opposition? Who is the Official Leader of the Opposition? What are opposition frontbenchers? Use the Internet to write a short report on the Official Opposition.

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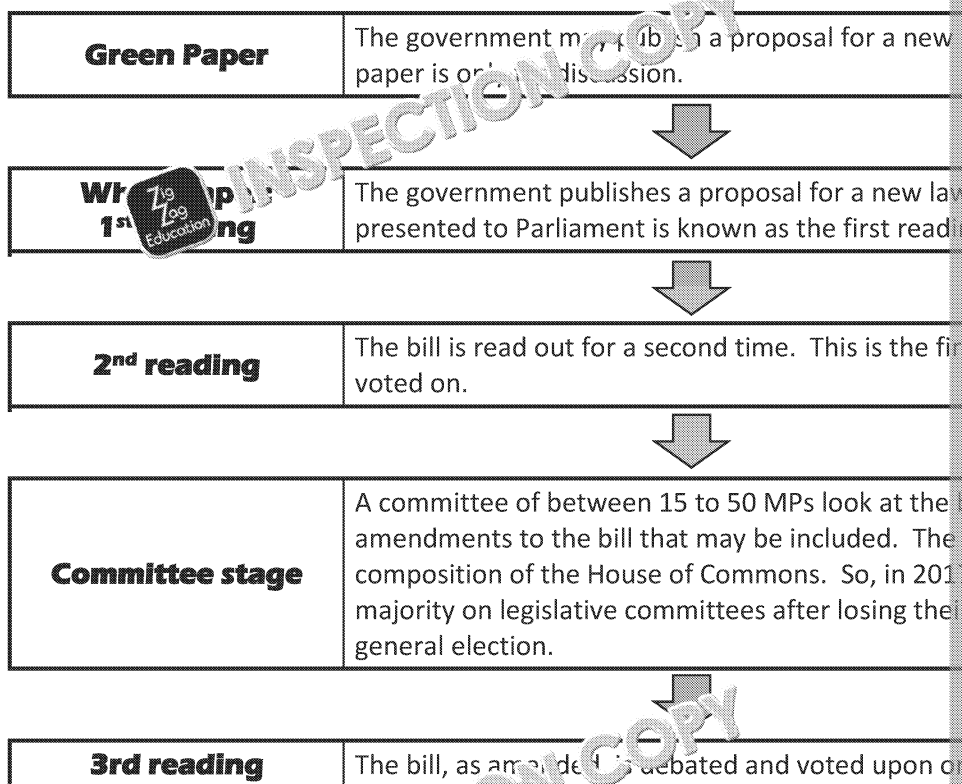


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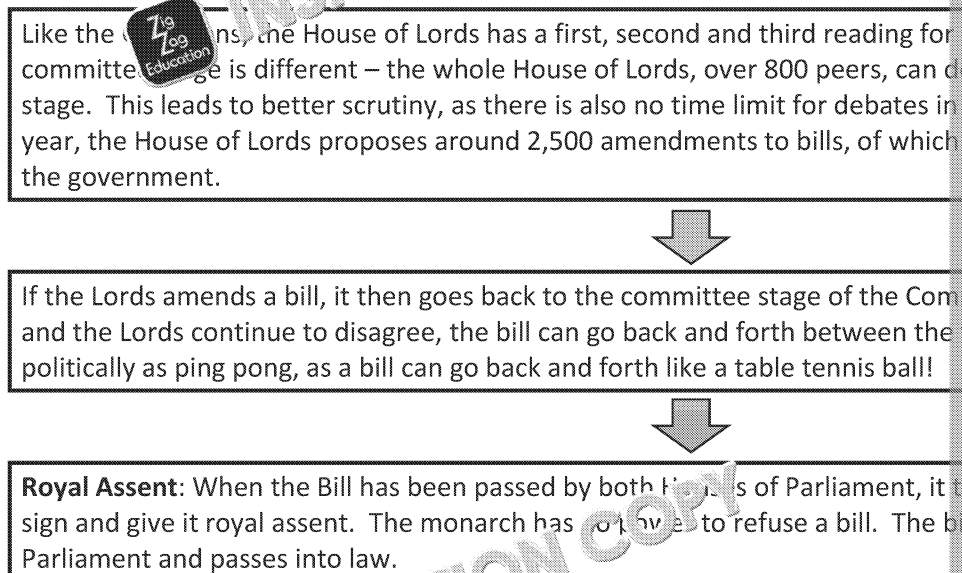


Activity 20 – The legislative process; parliament and deliberation of public issues and

The House of Commons



The House of Lords



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Look at the flow chart, and answer the following questions:

- 1) What is the difference between a green paper and a white paper?

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 2) Where do most bills start?

.....

.....

- 3) Which part of the process has the most parliamentary scrutiny?

.....

.....

- 4) What is 'ping pong' in the context of lawmaking?

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 5) Does the Queen have any real power in the process? Answer either yes or no

.....

.....

.....

.....



STRETCH Activity

Visit www.parliament.uk and find a piece of legislation that is going through the process. Then track its progress, noting any particularly interesting changes along the way.



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Activity 21 – Forming a government

In 2010, no party won a majority at the election. The results were as follows:

Conservatives	309 seats	Labour	258	De
Democratic Unionists	8	Scottish National Party	6	C

This was the first time since 1974 that no party had won a majority – or 326 seats. Negotiations between the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats, and between the Liberal Democrats and the Scottish National Party, began. They took five days to be resolved. Eventually, the Liberal Democrats made a stable majority coalition with the Conservatives. This coalition (a government of two parties in it) had a majority of 76.

In 2015, the result was that the Conservatives won a clear majority of 12. They formed a government – one which has 50% + 1 of the MPs.

Conservatives	331 seats	Labour	232	De
Democratic Unionists	8	Scottish National Party	56	C

In 2017, no one party won a majority, so again there was a hung Parliament.

The results were as follows:

Conservatives	317 seats	Labour	262	De
Democratic Unionists	8	Scottish National Party	35	C

The Conservatives formed a minority government – one with less than 50% of the seats. The Democratic Unionists are supporting them in a confidence and supply arrangement. This means they support the government, but not become part of it. They have agreed to support the government on confidence, on the budget, on Europe and on defence. Yet on other matters the DUP meet regularly with government ministers, but they do not have any say.



Read the article above and answer the following questions:

- 1) Explain what a majority government is, and give an example.

.....

.....

.....

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- 2) Explain what a coalition government is, and give an example.

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- 3) Explain what a confidence and supply arrangement is, and give an example.

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- 4) Explain what a minority government is, and give an example.

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STRETCH AND THINK

Which sort of government do you prefer – a majority government or a minority government propped up by confidence and supply? Give your reasons.



Activity 22 – The role and power of the Prime Minister and Cabinet



Read the following text and answer the questions below.

The Prime Minister is the leader of the largest party or coalition in the House of Commons. The Prime Minister usually has a majority in the House of Commons, which they can use to pass legislation. This contrasts with America, where there is a separation of powers, where the President is not a member of Congress, and the party to the party that has a majority in Congress.

The Prime Minister is responsible for appointing members of the Cabinet. This is a group of ministers that meet once a week to confirm decisions that are taken to run the government. Each cabinet minister for each government department, such as Health, Education or Home Affairs, is known as a Secretary of State. Because spending and control of the budget is so important, the Treasury Department has two cabinet ministers in Cabinet. The Leader of the House of Commons, the Leader of the House of Lords, and the Chief Whip also attend Cabinet.

Below Cabinet, there are three other ranks of politician that help run a government. Ministers of State are the next rung and are usually responsible for part of a government department. Undersecretaries of State, responsible for a narrower area within a government department, are below Ministers of State. These junior ministers will be a member of the House of Lords, so that the Lords can question the department through this individual by asking them questions in the House of Lords.

The lowest ranked members of the government are Parliamentary Private Secretaries. They are unpaid and assist cabinet ministers. Politicians take this job in the hope of progressing their career.

- 1) Which committee does the Prime Minister chair?

.....

- 2) How many members of the Cabinet are there?

.....

- 3) How many different ranks of minister are there?

.....

- 4) Who is responsible for the running of individual government departments?

.....

- 5) How often does the Cabinet meet?

.....



PEACH Activity

Using the Internet, research the role of the Chief Whip and the role of the whips in the government. Why do you think the whips are more important for a government with a slim majority or no majority, rather than a government with a large majority? (What was the government majority after the 2019 general election)?

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Activity 23 – Government departments, agencies, and the role of the civil service

The government is divided into 25 different government departments. Each department is responsible for a different area of government. There are departments for areas such as health, education, and the environment. There are also departments to deal with special areas of the UK, such as Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The Home Office looks after the police and security, and the Foreign Office looks after international relations. The Treasury oversees all government spending.

Each department is headed by a cabinet minister known as a Secretary of State. The main decision-making body of government, known as the Cabinet. The four most important offices of state – the Prime Minister, Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary, and the Secretary of State run the department politically, there are junior ministers known as Ministers of State, Undersecretaries of State, and Parliamentary Private Secretaries who help them but do this in the hope of future promotion in the government.

To scrutinise the work of each department, there is a Departmental Select Committee in the House of Commons. These are permanent cross-party committees made up of members of different political parties. The number of members of each political party on each committee is relative to the House of Commons. So if a party has a majority in the House of Commons, then they won't have a majority on the committee.

To run each department on a day-to-day basis, the government uses civil servants. Civil servants are part of the government. Unlike politicians, civil servants are permanent, anonymous and neutral. They have three main roles. Firstly, they advise governments on what the likely outcomes of different policies will be. Secondly, they provide them with options. Secondly, they carry out the government's wishes or



Look at the article above and answer the following questions:

- 1) How many different government departments are there?
.....
- 2) Which department oversees government spending?
.....
- 3) What are the great offices of state?
.....
- 4) How many different levels of minister are there?
.....
- 5) What is a Departmental Select Committee?
.....
- 6) What are the main differences between a politician and a civil servant?
.....



STRETCH Activity

Pick one government department by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations> and research

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Activity 24 – How citizens can contribute to democracy and hold those in power to account



Look at the following list. In pairs, decide which factors are opportunities for participation as a citizen of the UK. Then, rank each factor in order of the biggest opportunities for and biggest barriers to participating as a citizen below. Remember – some factors can be both a barrier and an opportunity.

Factor	Opportunity	Barrier to participation
Voting in a local election if you are over 18		
Having a foreign passport, rather than a UK passport		
Standing to be a local councillor if you are over 18		
Identifying as LGBTQ+		
Attending a private fee-paying school		
Being a member of a black or ethnic minority		
Taking up an unpaid internship to help you get work experience		
Holding two passports, and dual citizenship		
Being a member of a single-parent family		
Being able to go to university		
Coming from a rich family		
Living in Scotland		



STRETCH Activity

Pick one of the factors you think is a barrier to participating in the best ways you think this barrier can be overcome.

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Activity 25 – Taking action



Look at the different ways people can participate in democracy and pick the top three in order of effectiveness. Then, tick the column for any that you have done. In groups, discuss which things you will do over the next year, and tick the column for those.

Activity	Rank (in order of effectiveness)	Will you do this in the next year?
Write a letter to the newspaper		
Join a political party		
Join a pressure group		
Participate in an Internet discussion		
Vote in a local, regional or national election		
Sign a petition or e-petition		
Go on a demonstration		
Lobby a political decision-maker		
Volunteer in a political party		
Participate in a debate		
Meet a politician		
Join your School Council (or set one up if you don't have one)		



STRETCH Activity

At the end of the school year, review which activities you have done and how effective they were, and what you will do next year.

Pick one of the activities above that you will participate in it, and then write a PowerPoint that is 5 minutes long, to present to your class.

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Activity 26 – The roles played by organisations



Look at the following table, and match the organisations to the examples you think each organisation contributes towards shaping policies and

Organisation	Example	Way each
An insider pressure group, with close links to government		Lobbying
Outsider pressure group, distant from government, which breaks the law		Terrorist testing, a
Sectional pressure group, which has a limited membership		Strikes, p employer members
Interest pressure group, which campaigns on one main policy area		Lobbying releases,
New Social Movement – a large coalition of different pressure groups with common aims across a wide range of areas		Marches, disobedie
A charity		Lobbying releases,
A voluntary group		Discussion
A public institution with members in the House of Lords		Raising is the medi
A uniformed public service		Providing the Gren
A statutory body with legal powers		Legal rep them on

Examples:

a. The Animal Liberation Front	b. The anti-globalisation movement	c. The Church of England	d. The Fire
f. Mumsnet	g. The RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds)	h. Save the Children	i. Unison



STRETCH Activity

In groups, discuss which organisations are the most effective, and wield the most influence. Give reasons for your views.



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Activity 27 – How citizens working together attempt to change their community

A pressure group is a group of people who try to change government policy, without charge themselves. They, therefore, want to wield influence, rather than power. There are many types of pressure group, and thousands of pressure groups in the UK today. One of the main types of pressure group is whether they are an insider group, with close links to the government, or an outsider group, which is more distant.

Case study 1 – The Confederation of British Industry (CBI)

The Confederation of British Industry, or CBI, describes itself as 'the UK's premier business organisation'. It is made up of a wide range of large businesses who have come together to influence government policy in a wide range of areas, most importantly economic and industrial policy. To do this, the CBI acts as lobbyists, arranges meetings with UK government ministers, conducts research, organises conferences, writes articles, letters and briefings to the media and develops policy ideas for the government.

Fans of the CBI say that it gives industry an important voice to government, and provides the government with inside knowledge that the government does not possess. Critics of the CBI argue that the actions of the CBI and its relationship with government are opaque – they are not transparent – therefore, the CBI may be given special favouritism by government.

Case study 2 – Greenpeace – an outsider group by issue

Greenpeace is a campaigning organisation that campaigns to protect the environment. It is a pressure group that has a UK branch, which is often critical of the UK government when it does not do enough to protect the environment. As a result, Greenpeace keeps a distance from the government so that it can be able to criticise it. Sometimes, Greenpeace activists take direct action on an issue, such as scaling a power station in 2006 to draw attention to the issue of climate change. This is a direct action that the government has to keep its distance from. Greenpeace, as governments must respect the environment.



Write about two different types of pressure group. Which one do you think is better? Write your answers.

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STRETCH Activity

Research one of the following other types of pressure group, and write a short report on it:

- 1) Specialist insider group – the National Farmers Union
- 2) Potential insider group – the Countryside Alliance
- 3) Outsider by ideology – Fathers 4 Justice

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