British & Scottish Politics

Now that you know all about the countries that go together to make up The United Kingdom and Great Britain, let's find out about British / Scottish politics. At the same time have a try at testing your own political knowledge



Group Discussion

What do you know about?

- Local Government
- Scottish Government
- British Government



Let's find out - Who runs the United Kingdom?

Parliamentary democracy



The United Kingdom is a parliamentary democracy with a constitutional Monarch, King Charles III, as Head of State. The King, the official head of state has a symbolic role. In reality, power belongs to Parliament. Although the King 'opens' Parliament each year and laws are passed in his name, the King himself plays no part in decisions made in Parliament.

Living in a democratic country means we all have a say in how the country is run. This takes place through the Houses of Parliament, in London.

Parliament is made up of three parts:

(1) The Crown.

(2) The House of Commons.

(3) The House of Lords.

Parliament is where we send our Members of Parliament (MPs) to represent our views and make decisions on our behalf in the House of Commons.

The House of Commons – the most important place for discussing policies and making new laws - has 659 Members of Parliament (MPs) Each MP represents a constituency (areas in the United Kingdom) and is a member of a political party, such as the Conservative or Labour Party.

The House of Lords (792 members) Members of the House of Lords are not elected – Members are made up of people who (a) have inherited family titles (b) been appointed by political parties: (c) people who have been given titles because of their outstanding work in various fields.

Parliament is where politicians (Members of Parliament) meet to (a) debate issues; (b) make new laws; and (c) decide how money is spent for the United Kingdom. The Parliament is not the same

as the Government- the Government runs the country – Parliament checks that the Government is running the country properly.

Worksheet 1

Understanding

Using your notes, answer the questions below.

Where are the Houses of Parliament?	
What 3 parts make up Parliament?	
Who sits in the House of Parliament?	
Who sits in the House of Lords?	
Which House is the most important?	
How many Members of Parliament are there in the House of Commons?	
How many Members of Parliament are there in the House of Lords?	

Worksheet 2

Who / Where am I Quiz



I chime every day.

Who am I? - - -

Where am I? - - - - - -



Debates are carried out here.

What am I - - - - - -

Where am I - - - - - -



Someone special lives here.

Who am I? - - -

Where am I? - - - - - -



Important place for discussions.

What's my name? - - - - -

Where am I? - - - - - -



New laws are double checked here.

What am I? - - - - -

Where am I? - - - - -



This is worn by an important person

What am I? - - - - -

Who wears me? - - - - -

The United Kingdom Government

The leader of the British Government is the Prime Minister (PM). If the PM is incapacitated the Deputy Prime Minister steps in.



The current Prime Minister is *Keir Starmer,* the current Deputy Prime Minister (vice PM) is *Angela Rayner.*

There are many political parties in the United Kingdom, four of these are:

The Conservative Unionist Party

The Liberal Democrat Party

The Scottish National Party

The Labour Party

Worksheet 3 – Reading and writing

There are many political parties represented in the House of Commons. Work with your partner, and make a list of the four main political parties, their leaders and where on the political scale they are placed?

Political Party	Leader	Political viewpoint

Worksheet 4 - True or False?

Kemi Badenoch is the Leader of the Liberal Democratic Party.

True □

False □

She belongs to the _____Party.

Keir Starmer is the Leader of the Scottish National Party.

True □

False □

He belongs to the_____Party.

Ed Davey is the Leader of the Labour Party.

True □

False □

He belongs to the _____Party.

John Swinney is the Leader of the Conservative Party.

True □

False □

He belongs to the_____ Party.

Types of Government

The United Kingdom is currently governed under a **Majority Government** with Keir starmer as the leader. His Labour Party government was sworn in by King Charles III in 2024. The 'Majority Government' is when the governing party has an absolute majority of seats in parliament.

In the recent past UK has had a **Coalition Government** consisting of Conservative and Liberal Democratic Parties. This type of government is formed when no party on its own achieved a majority in parliament. Both parties co-operate and blend their policies and actions into a single government approach but maintain their independent party identity. They campaign separately at elections.

Another form of government is the **Minority Government**– this is when a political party or coalition of parties do not have a majority of overall seats in the parliament but is sworn in to avoid a 'Hung Parliament'.

A **Hung Parliament** occurs when neither of the major political parties has an absolute majority of seats in the parliament. One or both main political parties may try to form a coalition government with smaller third parties, or a minority government in order to avoid a dissolution of parliament. Dissolution results in a fresh election.

Worksheet 5 – Student discussion

In your own words describe what is meant by:

A Coalition Government

A Minority Government

A Hung Parliament

Majority Government

What type of Government currently governs the United Kingdom?



The Prime Minister chooses a team of people from Parliament who will run the country with him. A United Kingdom Parliament has a fixed duration of five years. At the end of the five years, a general election must take place so members of parliament can be re-elected or replaced.

The Parliament and Government mean two different things:

United Kingdom Parliament's main roles are:

Examining and challenging the work of the government (*scrutiny*).

Debating and passing all laws *(legislation).*

Enabling the government to raise taxes.

The United Kingdom Government runs the country. It has responsibility for developing and implementing policy and for drafting laws.

In other words:

Parliament sets the laws.

Government runs the country in accordance with these laws.

Any one over the age of 21 can be nominated to stand as a candidate for election.

Worksheet 6 - Reading and writing

Test your knowledge.

Use your notes to answer the questions below.

What is the name of the current Prime Minister?	
What is the name of the current Deputy Prime Minister?	
What is the length of Parliament?	
What's the difference between Parliament and Government?	
Who sets the Laws?	
Who runs the Government?	
What age must you be before you can become a candidate?	
How many other parties are in the House of Commons?	

Can you find these ten words in the word search?

chosen: policies: describe: nominate: monarch: symbolic: democratic: determine: constitution: coalition

o	s	y	m	b	o	l	i	c	h	b	c	c	l
c	m	h	d	w	k	f	o	m	e	i	k	k	r
o	o	n	p	e	d	e	t	e	r	m	i	n	e
n	n	p	n	o	m	i	n	a	t	e	o	c	l
s	a	o	g	n	o	c	p	h	d	p	f	o	n
t	r	l	l	e	c	d	e	k	e	a	u	a	a
i	c	i	t	c	f	c	e	i	s	r	l	l	p
t	h	c	m	n	r	o	g	h	c	k	e	i	n
u	s	i	c	h	o	s	e	n	r	w	u	t	l
t	o	e	c	s	g	s	n	g	i	a	n	i	t
i	l	s	h	a	i	g	i	p	b	p	e	o	k
o	a	g	p	o	n	r	p	i	e	s	w	n	d
n	d	e	m	o	c	r	a	t	i	c	h	t	i
d	t	a	i	o	o	e	a	t	c	c	f	o	h

Voting at Election

When an MP gets the most votes for his constituency (local area) he gains a seat. This means he has a place in Parliament representing that area.

To vote for your candidate, your details must be recorded on the Electoral Register (a list of the names and addresses of everyone who is registered to vote).

You can register to vote if you are 16 years of age or over (however, you must be age 18 or over to vote)

Voting

Once registered and just before an election, a poll card is sent out to everyone named on the Electoral Register. The card contains information details of the local polling, date and times of voting.

In the UK, there are three different ways to vote.

- In person at a polling station.
- By post.
- By proxy - (someone appointed to vote on your behalf).

On arrival at the polling station each person is handed a ballot paper (voting paper).

The ballot paper lists the name of each candidate along with their party name, party logo and their address.

In a straightforward vote, simply put an X (a cross) next to the one candidate that you wish to vote for - the Member of Parliament (MP) to sit in the UK Parliament in Westminster and represent your constituency.

When Polling Stations close, the votes are counted. The candidate with the most votes is elected. This is known as '***First Past the Post'*** system. If there is a tie then a candidate is selected by the drawing of lots.

Occasionally, you may also be asked to vote in other elections. In this case the candidates are ranked in preference of order. For example, Scottish Government & Local Council Elections.

Worksheet 8 – What do you know about voting?

