

---

*What's next for Britain? The risks facing Keir Starmer's Labour government*

---

- **Brainstorming: what's next for Britain? What are the risks facing Keir Starmer's Labour government?**

Opposition from the Conservative Party, who want to gain back power, but as they were just defeated, maybe they're not their biggest opponent.

Other parties might be more dangerous, like the far-right, Reform.<sup>1</sup>

Musk meddling in the country's political system.

Inauguration of Donald Trump, a populist Republican: they are likely to disagree on political or economic questions.

- **Read the article from *The Daily Express* and explain what the risks are for Labour, according to this publication.**

Loss of support from the general public. People not only don't believe in what they can do, but they also don't trust the current government.

Apparently, people are even more likely to trust the Conservatives as far as the economy is concerned.

- **Spot the reasons given for this loss of support.**

End of economic growth, inflation going up again and rising unemployment.

This all seems to be because of a decision made by Starmer's government to raise taxes, and also because they reportedly keep disparaging (= *dénigré*) the country.

- **Pick out the various sources mentioned in the text.**

The Daily Express: a conservative tabloid

The Times: a rather conservative broadsheet

The Shadow Chancellor: the opposition party always forms a shadow cabinet, i.e. members of the party specializing in the same fields as their official governmental counterparts. Mel Stride is the counterpart of Rachel Reeves, the finance minister (Chancellor of the Exchequer).

---

<sup>1</sup> **Reform UK** is a right-wing populist political party in the United Kingdom. Nigel Farage has served as the party's leader since June 2024. The party currently has five members of Parliament (MPs) in the House of Commons. Following the 2024 general election, it was the third largest party by popular vote.

Founded in November 2018 as the **Brexit Party**, advocating a no-deal Brexit, it won the most seats at the 2019 European Parliament election in the UK, but did not win any seats at the 2019 general election. The UK withdrew from the European Union (EU) in January 2020. A year later, in January 2021, the party was renamed Reform UK. Since 2022, it has campaigned to reduce immigration to the UK, supporting low taxation, and opposing net zero emissions.

Farage had been the leader of **the UK Independence Party (UKIP)**, a right-wing populist and Eurosceptic party, in the first half of the 2010s, and returned to frontline politics as leader of the Brexit Party during the Brexit process after the 2016 EU membership referendum, which had been called partly in response to UKIP's influence.

- **What impact do these sources have on the reporting? Justify your answer with words taken from the text.**

This article has to be taken with a pinch of salt. Although it is based on a poll, the conclusions drawn by the Daily Express might be incomplete and biased towards the Labour government. This is confirmed by the use words such as ‘humiliating’ in the subtitle, but also “a New Year nightmare” or “a big blow”.

- **In your own words, explain the last sentence “Labour’s choices have decimated their inheritance.”**

Labour was elected because the country was tired of the Conservative governments, that had been in place for 14 years. So basically, this was a great opportunity for the left-wing government to start anew and show people that they had been right in electing them. However, they ruined this opportunity by not making satisfying decisions in the public’s eyes.

- **Now look at the following document. Describe it and explain what it is, and what it means.**



A tweet by Elon Musk, published on X on January 2, 2025, meaning one day after the publication of the Daily Express article. It was actually posted in reaction to this article.

The American businessman is calling for a new election in Britain, thus complaining about Keir Starmer, and showing support towards his political opponents.

What is unusual is that Musk is not a British citizen, he is not even an elected official in America; and he shouldn’t comment on the government of another country. He is meddling into foreign affairs.

Although this tweet was seen by 45 million people, it was only liked by 169,000, which might show the lack of interest of Musk’s followers for this debate.

- **Look at the following photo now. Describe it, identify the people and comment on it.**



Don’t forget to comment on the portrait of Donald Trump in the background.

- **Split the class into three groups: the best ones get the Kemi Badenoch ['kemi 'beɪdənɒk/] article, 'the intermediate get Starmer urged...', the least advanced ones get the Corse Matin. Summarize the article you have been assigned in an organized way. This should mean, among other things, talking about facts, reactions, consequences...**

**Rules on party funding:** facts = according to Nigel Farage, Elon Musk, whom he met in Florida, wants to fund Reform UK, with up to £100m. This could help the populist group expand. As a result, the Electoral Commission wants to strengthen the rules around political donations, in order to protect the system from foreign interference, which was actually an initiative mentioned in the Labour Party manifesto. The system currently prevents foreigners from funding a British party, but Musk could do that through one of his British-based companies.

**The Daily Mail, Kemi Badenoch:** another article from a tabloid. Probably a conservative source, which explains why Kemi Badenoch is the author of the text. Facts = child abuse scandal in Britain, among the Pakistani community mostly. Apparently, authorities tried to cover the facts so as not to be called racist. We understand this is quite an old story, even though the article was published in early 2025. Badenoch says the Tory government did take action, but maybe not enough. However, she insists on the renewal of her party and rejects any potential blame (last column: "the Conservative Party is under new leadership and we are doing things differently."). In fact, she is denouncing political correctness in the government and blames "safeguarding institutions who are obsessed about 'inflaming community tensions' or being seen as 'targeting' an ethnic group." All in all, she is criticizing the Labour government for its inaction.

**Corse Matin:** The French paper summarizes Musk's recent posts on X, in which he was supporting a British far-right activist, who has been accused of slander/libel and of fueling the race riots last summer. The Tesla CEO predicts a civil war in the UK. He also accuses Keir Starmer of trying to cover up the grooming scandals in the past decades. The Conservatives are also calling for an inquiry, but they don't seem to support Musk, as they fear his support of Reform UK. However, Musk is backed by a number of far-right activists and politicians in Europe.

- **Conclusion: what do these articles show about Musk's recent posts on the UK?**

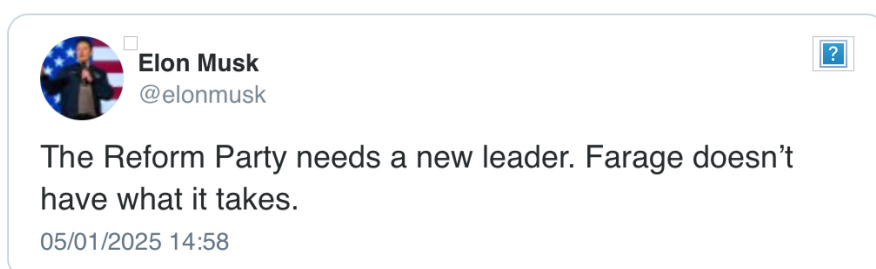
Musk is trying to spread the same message in the UK as in the US. He's trying to support populism and a far-right, anti-immigrant rhetoric. To get to his ends, he's bringing his support to far-right leaders in foreign countries.

- **Watch the TikTok video of Nigel Farage's interview by the BBC. Pick out new information from it, notably what Farage thinks about Musk's interventions.**

"I think he's a hero."

"I think with huge numbers of young people, he makes us look cool." Then the journalist asks him if the reason why he doesn't want to criticize him is the huge amount of money he might give them. Farage reminds the journalist that he doesn't agree with everything Musk stands for, but that he does believe in free speech.

- **Try to predict how Musk may have reacted to this statement. Then, look at the next tweet.**



- **Split the class in 2 groups. “Musk says Farage”... BBC and “Elon Musk turns on Nigel Farage” *The Guardian*.**
- **Read your text and try to find the reason why Musk made this statement on X, how Farage reacted, what consequences this might have for the Reform Party.**

Disagreement over the fate of a far-right activist, Tommy Robinson, supported by Musk but not by Farage.

Farage was embarrassed by all that. He tried to take his distance with Musk’s opinions, and said he would try to smooth things out at the inauguration. The central topic in all that seems to be free speech. Farage says Musk’s declarations are legitimate in the name of free speech.

This argument might have put an end to Musk’s Reform party funding, and it might also have affected Farage’s ties with Trump. In the end, it all comes down to what Trump’s next term might look like: a chaotic and risky business for his partners.

- ***The Guardian*’s addition to the last article (p.5): everybody reads these lines and tries to find their goal. What is *The Guardian* denouncing and defending?**

These lines are a call to their readers to subscribe to their app, so as to fund them. They are denouncing the oligarchy building in America, very much as Joe Biden did in his farewell speech. The editorial team is defending freedom of speech. What is paradoxical is that Trump’s team keep asking for free speech, but at the same time they are trying to muzzle the media that don’t agree with them.

- **Biden’s farewell speech and the text of the First Amendment.**
- **Photo of the oligarchs at Trump’s inauguration**
- **Follow-up work. Read the article on the AfD in Germany + watch the video of Georgia Meloni (Powerpoint).**