

The UK - Séance 2 - The British Political System

- The UK is a : the monarch (currently King Charles III) reigns but does not rule.
- The UK operates as a: political power lies with elected officials and the Parliament.
- A common misconception is the confusion between the (symbolic head of state) and the (held by the government and Parliament).



1. What is the role of the monarch? Does he have real political power?

- The (King Charles III) is the, but his role is and
- His main constitutional duties:
 - Appointing the (the leader of the majority party in Parliament).
 - Giving to laws (a formality, as refusal has not occurred since 1708).
- The monarch **does not make**: executive power lies with the **elected government and Parliament**.



2. Parliament and government

How does the relationship between the House of Commons and the House of Lords reflect the democratic principles of the UK?

- **House of Commons:** Directly elected by the, it holds the most power and ensures laws reflect the will of the electorate.
- **House of Lords:** but provides expert scrutiny and revises legislation, acting as a check on the Commons. However, its unelected nature is often debated as a democratic limitation.

This balance aims to combine **representative democracy** (Commons) with **expertise and tradition** (Lords), though critics argue the Lords lacks democratic



3. The electoral system

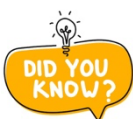
The UK uses the **First-Past-the-Post (FPTP)** system for general elections to the **House of Commons**:

- The country is divided into **650 constituencies**.
- Each constituency elects **one Member of Parliament (MP)**.
- The candidate with the **most votes in a constituency wins**, even if they do not receive a majority (over 50%) of the votes.

List the advantages and limitations of the FPTP system.

Essay : Is the UK a fully democratic system?

How might the UK's electoral system affect voter turnout and trust in democracy?



Devolution is the transfer of certain powers from the UK Parliament in Westminster to elected bodies in different parts of the UK. In 1998, the UK Parliament passed the Devolution Act. Devolved institutions can make decisions on areas such as education, health and transport, while the UK Parliament in Westminster remains responsible for issues such as defence, foreign affairs and immigration.



ACT! Parliamentary simulation : Should the voting age be lowered to 16 ?

Objectives :

- Express and justify an opinion, qualify and nuance a point of view.
- Respond to and challenge other speakers' arguments.
- Use political vocabulary accurately (bill, vote, MP, democracy, rights, responsibility, electorate, turnout, etc.).
- Distinguish between the government and the opposition.
- Observe the influence of a parliamentary majority on the outcome of a vote.



Organisation

- 1 Prime Minister
- 3 MPs (majority party)
- 3 opposition MPs
- 1 Speaker

Speaker of the House - Role: Give speakers the floor. Ensure time limits are respected. Organise and supervise the vote.

Useful Expressions:

- "Order! Order!"
- "The Prime Minister has the floor."
- "I now call the Honourable Member for..."
- "Time is up."
- "We will now proceed to the vote."

Prime Minister

Official Position: In favour of the reform.

Objective: Convince the House to pass the bill.

Possible Arguments:

Majority Party MPs (3)

Role:

These MPs support the government and the proposed reform, but they may defend it using different arguments and examples.

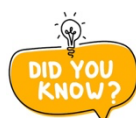
Possible Arguments:

Opposition MPs (3)

Role:

These MPs represent the opposition. They are against the proposed reform and must present arguments to convince the House that the voting age should remain unchanged.

Possible Arguments:



A **General Election** is held to elect Members of Parliament (MPs) to the House of Commons. It must take place at least every **five years**, but it may be called earlier under certain circumstances. The party that wins the most seats usually forms the government, and its leader becomes Prime Minister.

The **Shadow Cabinet** is made up of senior members of the largest opposition party. Its role is to scrutinise and challenge government policies, and offer alternative policies. Each Shadow Minister "shadows" a government minister. For example, the Shadow Education Secretary monitors and challenges the work of the Education Secretary.