

Texte à trou:

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

1. Role of the monarch

Texte à trou :

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

The UK is a constitutional monarchy. The Head of State is King Charles III, but his role is mainly symbolic. He appoints the Prime Minister and gives Royal Assent to laws, but he does not take political decisions.

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?

The relationship between the **House of Commons** and the **House of Lords** reflects democratic principles in the UK by:

- **House of Commons**: Directly elected by the **people**, it holds the most power and ensures laws reflect the will of the electorate.
- **House of Lords**: **Unelected** 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 **legitimacy**.

3. Electoral system

How Does It Work?

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.

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The UK uses a first-past-the-post system. The candidate with the most votes in each constituency wins the seat. If Candidate A gets 35% of the votes, Candidate B gets 33%, and Candidate C gets 32%, **Candidate A wins** the seat.

- What are its advantages and limits?

Advantages of FPTP

- **Simplicity:** Easy for voters to understand and for officials to administer.
- **Strong, stable governments:** Usually produces a **single-party majority**, leading to clear governance and decisive policy-making.
- **Direct constituency link:** Each MP represents a specific geographic area, fostering local accountability.

Limitations of FPTP

- **Disproportionality:** Parties can win a majority of seats without a majority of the national vote. Smaller parties (e.g., Greens, UKIP) often win few seats despite significant national support.
- **Wasted votes:** Votes for losing candidates or votes beyond what is needed to win a seat do not contribute to the outcome.
- **Lack of representation:** Many voters feel their views are not represented, especially in "safe seats" where one party consistently wins.

Vocabulaire essentiel

- constitutional monarchy
- parliamentary democracy
- Head of State
- Prime Minister
- House of Commons / House of Lords
- constituency
- majority system
- election
- representative democracy
- accountability
- political stability

Points culturels clés :

- le roi = symbole
- le Parlement = pouvoir réel
- le système = stable mais imparfait
- The monarchy is **symbolic**
- The real power is held by Parliament and Government
- The House of Commons dominates the political system
- Elections determine the composition of Parliament
- The system is **parliamentary, not presidential**

- ⇒ The United Kingdom is a parliamentary democracy. The Head of State is the monarch, but real political power lies in Parliament and the government. The House of Commons plays a central role, while the House of Lords has a revising function. Elections are based on a first-past-the-post system, which ensures stability but can create inequalities in representation. Overall, the system is stable but remains the subject of debate.

DEBATE

“Should voting age be lowered to 16?”

FOR

MP 1 : No taxation without representation => 16 y olds can work : young people deserve a voice.

MP 2 : Students learn citizenship at school, they are informed enough to vote.

MP 3 : Young people will live longest with political decisions, therefore they should help shape the future.

MP 4 : Age alone does not determine political maturity.

MP 5 : Austria allows voting at 16 and democracy has not suffered.

MP 6 : It could reduce political apathy

AGAINST

MP 1 : Many 16-year-olds lack political experience and voting requires responsibility.

MP 2 : If people cannot legally do certain adult activities, why should they vote?

MP 3 : Teenagers may be too influenced by parents, teachers or social media.