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# **Political systems of Canada, The USA, The UK**

Учебное пособие

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Учебное пособие по английскому языку для студентов 1, 2 курсов дневного отделения специальностей «Реклама и связи с общественностью», «Электронный бизнес» и «Прикладная информатика в экономике».

Учебное пособие содержит оригинальные тексты, заимствованные из английских и американских научных, научно-популярных и общественно-политических изданий, сопровождаемые лексико-грамматическими упражнениями разной степени сложности.

Пособие рассчитано на студентов, продолжающих изучать английский язык, и может быть использовано в группах магистрантов и аспирантов, а также оно может представлять интерес для всех желающих подготовиться к общению на английском языке по данной тематике.

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## **Предисловие**

Настоящее учебное пособие предназначено для студентов 1, 2 курсов дневного отделения специальностей «Реклама и связи с общественностью», «Электронный бизнес» и «Прикладная информатика в экономике».

Цель пособия — подготовить студентов к чтению специальной литературы и обсуждения тем, связанных с многочисленными проблемами современного общества.

Тексты учебника отобраны по принципу возрастания трудности и постепенного усложнения языка и тематики.

Пособие содержит три блока, состоящих из базовых и дополнительных текстов, а также лексико-грамматических упражнений, способствующих развитию разговорных.

Учебное пособие будет способствовать развитию умения будущих специалистов вести дискуссии на английском языке по актуальным проблемам современной жизни, что чрезвычайно важно в связи с ростом контактов между специалистами из России и зарубежных стран.

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## **UNIT 1**

### **Canadian Political System**

#### **Text 1**

##### **Aboriginal peoples**

People have lived in Canada for at least 12,000 years. In Canada, we usually describe the ancestors of these first peoples as Aboriginals. There are three main groups of Aboriginal people in Canada.

- First Nations people live all across the country in cities, on traditional lands and on reservations (land reserved for them).
- Inuit people live in the Far North, and they share ancestors with the Aboriginal peoples of Siberia, Alaska and Greenland.
- Métis people have a combination of ancestors of First Nations and European origin.

##### **Confederation**

Canada became a nation, the Dominion of Canada, in 1867. Before that, British North America was made up of a few provinces, the vast area of Rupert's Land (privately owned by the Hudson's Bay Company), and the North-Western Territory. By 1864, many leaders felt that it would be good to join into one country. Known as the Fathers of Confederation, these leaders met and wrote a constitution for the new country, which had to be passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom. Once passed, it became known as the British North

America Act, or the BNA Act. This Act brought together the three provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Canada (which became the provinces of Ontario and Quebec). The BNA Act described the structure and main laws of the new country, as well as the division of powers between the new provinces and the federal government.

### **Democracy Defined**

The word democracy describes a political system. In a democratic country, all eligible citizens have the right to participate, either directly or indirectly, in making the decisions that affect them. Canadian citizens normally elect someone to represent them in making decisions at the different levels of government. This is called a representative democracy. Countries like Canada, the United States of America and the United Kingdom all have representative democracies. Before European people came to Canada, many different Aboriginal people governed their regions using many different political systems, including a democratic one.

*WORD BUILDER — The word democracy comes from the Greek word demos (meaning the people) and kratos (meaning rule). Early forms of democracy began around 2,500 years ago, in Athens and other Greek cities.*

1. Talk about Confederation; defined democracy
2. Set up five questions to the text

### **The Constitution**

The Constitution is the highest law in Canada. It includes several different laws, decisions by judges, agreements between the federal and provincial governments, and traditions. The main written parts of the Constitution of

Canada are the Constitution Act, 1867 (this used to be called the British North America Act) and the Constitution Act, 1982.

### **Constitution Act, 1982**

In 1982, the Queen and the Right Honourable Pierre Trudeau, Prime Minister, signed the Constitution Act, 1982, which includes the British North America Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

*WORD BUILDER* — Many words can be changed from a verb to a noun by adding *-ment*: • *amend* → *amendment* • *govern* → *argue* (careful of the *e!*) → • *assess* → • *assign* →

### **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms**

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms forms the first part of the Constitution Act, 1982. Here are some protections that the Charter guarantees:

- freedom of religion, of thought, of expression, of the press and of peaceful assembly
- the right to participate in political activities and the right to a democratic government
- the freedom to move around and live within Canada, and to leave Canada
- legal rights such as the right to life, liberty and security
- equality rights
- language rights

*WORD BUILDER:*

*FREEDOM* the word divides into two – free and dom. The word free comes from the old German frei (meaning beloved) and the Sanskrit priyah (beloved); -dom is sometimes added to the end of a word to make it a noun (wisdom, kingdom).

## **Text 2**

### **Overview of the Canadian Parliamentary System**

Three branches work together to govern Canada: the executive, legislative and judicial branches. The executive branch (also called the Government) is the decision making branch, made up of the Monarch represented by the Governor General, the Prime Minister, and the Cabinet. The legislative branch is the law-making branch, made up of the appointed Senate and the elected House of Commons. The judicial branch is a series of independent courts that interpret the laws passed by the other two branches. Parliament itself is made up of the following three parts: the Monarch, the Senate and the House of Commons. Canada is a constitutional monarchy, which means that we recognize the Queen or King as the Head of State, while the Prime Minister is the Head of Government.

### **The Three Levels of Government Canada has three main levels of government.**

**The federal level** (from the Latin foedus, meaning league). This level of government deals with areas of law listed in the Constitution Act, 1867 and that generally affect the whole country. (See list on next page.)

**The provincial level** (from the Latin provincia, meaning under Roman rule: from pro, to be in favour of something, and vincere, to conquer) and the territorial level (from the Latin terra, meaning land). In each of the 10

provinces in Canada, the provincial government is responsible for areas listed in the Constitution Act, 1867, such as education, health care, some natural resources, and road regulations. Sometimes they share responsibility with the federal government. The three territories have their own governments, with responsibilities that are given to them by the federal government.

**The municipal level** (from the Latin *municipalis*, meaning of a citizen of a free town). This is the level of government that is usually based in a city, town or district (a municipality). Municipal governments are responsible for areas such as libraries, parks, community water systems, local police, roadways and parking. They receive authority for these areas from the provincial governments. Across the country there are also band councils, which govern First Nations communities. These elected councils are similar to municipal councils and make decisions that affect their local communities.

### **The Division of Powers**

The federal level of government has powers that are different from those of provincial governments, including: The federal government tries to make things fairer among the provinces. Through equalization payments (extra money) given to provinces that are less wealthy, the federal government tries to make sure that the standards of health, education and welfare are the same for every Canadian. In the same way that it lists the powers of the federal government, the Constitution Act, 1867 lists the powers of the provinces, including: • direct taxes • hospitals • prisons • education • marriage • property and civil rights

The Act also says that the power over agriculture and immigration should be shared between the federal and provincial governments.

1. Talk about the parliamentary system in Canada
2. Describe the levels of Government
3. Summaries the text

### **Elections**

According to the Constitution Act, national elections must be held at least once every five years to decide who will represent Canadians in the House of Commons. Canada is divided into areas called ridings (also called constituencies or electoral districts). Canadian citizens vote for the candidate in their riding they think will best represent them. In a riding there may be several different candidates, each from a different political party or running independently. How does a person become a candidate? First, he or she has to be nominated (or chosen) by fellow party members in his or her riding during a special meeting called a nomination meeting. If more than one person in the party wants to be a candidate for that riding, there is a vote during the nomination meeting to decide who it will be. If a person does not belong to a party, then he or she can run for election in his or her riding as an independent candidate. On Election Day, the candidate who gets the most votes becomes a Member of Parliament (MP) and represents his or her riding in the House of Commons in Ottawa. The party with the most number of elected MPs across the country usually forms the Government. The leader of that party becomes the Prime Minister.

*WORD BUILDER — In the world of politics, the verb to run has a specific meaning. To run in an election means that*

*you are competing with other candidates to represent your riding. During an election, you may hear the expressions run for office and running in an election. They both mean to compete in an election as a candidate.*

*The word elect means to choose. Here are a few sentences with the word elect: • She was elected in 2006. • An election will be held this year. • He is the Chief Electoral Officer.*

## **Dissolving Parliament**

The Prime Minister asks the Governor General to end (or dissolve) Parliament and call an election. Dissolution (the act of dissolving) happens when:

- the Government's fixed four-year term is complete
- the Government loses a vote on certain important bills – on the budget, for example – in the House of Commons
- a majority of MPs vote to defeat the Government in the House of Commons on a vote of confidence, including a vote against certain important government measures or bills, such as the budget Even with the fixed four-year term, an election could still be held after the Government loses an important vote in the House of Commons.

## **Campaigns**

After an election is called and before the day voting takes place (usually called Election Day), each candidate competes with the other candidates in the riding to convince voters why he or she is the best choice. This is called a campaign. A candidate tells voters his or her message in many different ways:

- campaign signs
- door-to-door canvassing
- advertising campaigns (on television, radio, billboards and in newspapers, for example)
- public meetings
- debates Many of these activities cost money.

There are rules about how much money candidates are allowed to spend on campaigns, and how much money people are allowed to give to candidates. Of course, to do all this work, candidates have several people helping them. These people are called campaign workers. People of any age, including youth, can help out on campaigns.

*WORD BUILDER — A teacher can dismiss class – that is, the teacher can tell the class that they can go home. The Governor General can dissolve Parliament, which is somewhat similar. These words both start with dis-. Take a look at these words: • disable • dissolve • disappear • disagree*

1. Read the text and describe the procedure of election
2. Talk about campaigns

### **Text 3**

#### **Political Parties**

Canada has many different political parties. People in the same party usually have similar opinions about public issues. In Parliament, members of different parties often have different opinions. This is why there are sometimes disagreements during elections and when Parliament is sitting.

Having different parties allows criticism and encourages watchfulness. Canadians have a choice in expressing different views by voting for a member from a specific party during election time. This is called *the party system*.

*WORD BUILDER* — *The word campaign comes from the Latin campus, which means field. In ancient times, armies would take to the field when they fought. In English, we still use the word campaign to mean a military battle or series of battles. We can also use the word race to describe an election competition. Race comes from the Old Norse ras, meaning running water. Like many words in English, we can use race either as a noun or as a verb.*

## **Voting**

A Canadian citizen who is 18 years of age or older by Election Day can vote after he or she has registered with Elections Canada. Elections Canada will then send out a voter information card and add him or her to the voters' list. On Election Day, most voters go to a nearby location called a polling station, where their names are checked off the voters' list if they are already registered. If they have not yet registered, they can do so at this time. At the polling station, each voter is given a ballot (a piece of paper listing all the candidates in the riding). Voters do not have to tell anyone who they are voting for — it is a secret ballot. Voters make an X beside the name of the candidate they prefer. Then they fold up the ballot and place it into a ballot box. If they incorrectly mark a ballot, or mark more than one name, that is called a spoiled ballot and it will not be counted. Citizens can vote even if they are travelling away from home or out of the country on Election Day. Elections Canada has information on how to vote by using a special mail-in ballot. Once the voting ends, the votes are collected and added up. This can take a long time.

Television stations have special news programs to report the election results. Some races are very close and are decided by a small number of votes.

#### **Text 4**

#### **Forming a Government**

When the election is over, all winning candidates are called Members of Parliament, or MPs for short. The MPs who belong to parties that are not forming the Government are called opposition MPs. The Official Opposition is usually the party with the second-highest number of elected members after the winning party. The leader of this party is called the Leader of the Official Opposition. When it is time for Parliament to sit, all Parliamentarians will discuss and debate new bills (proposed laws), and make decisions that affect every Canadian.

#### *WORD BUILDER*

#### *SENATE*

*This word comes from the Latin *senex*, meaning elder. Literally, it means a council of elders.*

#### *HOUSE OF COMMONS*

*The word *commons* comes from the Latin *communis*, which means shared by many. Other related words are *community*, *communication* and *commune*.*

1. Talk about the party system
2. Describe voting
3. What is opposition?

## **The Role of the Monarch**

Canada's Monarch (King or Queen) is also Monarch of 15 other independent nations. The Monarch, on the advice of the Prime Minister, appoints a Canadian to represent him or her in Canada. This person is called the Governor General. The Governor General has several duties related to Parliament. He or she officially appoints the Prime Minister as Head of Government, and opens a new session of Parliament with the Speech from the Throne in the Senate Chamber. This is a ceremonial speech, written by the Privy Council Office, in which the Governor General describes the goals of the new government. He or she also officially dissolves Parliament, and gives Royal Assent to bills passed in Parliament. The role of the Governor General also includes:

- serving as Commander-in-Chief of Canada (of the Canadian Forces)
- hosting foreign dignitaries, and visiting other countries at the request of the Prime Minister
- celebrating excellence by giving awards to outstanding Canadians

### **WORD BUILDER**

*GOVERN* – from the Greek word *kybernan*, meaning to steer a ship (the same root as the word *cyber*). Govern is a verb: The King governed well and wisely. Can you think of other words that stem from govern?

*MONARCHY* – from the Greek *monarkhia*, meaning ruling of one. It contains two parts: *mono-*, which means one, and *arkhein*, which means to rule. Mono is used often in English. Think of these words: • monopoly • monotonous •

*monologue -archy sometimes ends words that describe how something is ruled. For example: • anarchy • hierarchy*

## **The Two-Chamber System:**

### **The Senate and the House of Commons**

Canada has a bicameral parliamentary system (the prefix bi- means two). That means that there are two separate Chambers, each housing its own separate group of parliamentarians: the Senate and the House of Commons.

#### **The Senate**

Senators are appointed by the Governor General on the Prime Minister's recommendation. The formula for the number and distribution of Senators was written into the Constitution. In 1867, the Senate started with 72 members, but this increased as the country's population and geography grew. In 2009, the number of seats in the Senate was 105. A Senator must be at least 30 years old and must retire on his or her 75th birthday.

#### **Chamber Business**

The Senate has an important role in the law-making process: it reviews and debates bills proposed by both Chambers. Although Senators usually consider bills proposed by the House of Commons, they also suggest new bills (but these bills cannot be about spending public money or creating taxes). Bills must pass through both Chambers — the Senate and the House of Commons — and be given Royal Assent before becoming law. All debates that take place in the Senate are recorded and published in both official languages. In

addition, Senators present petitions, table documents, discuss committee reports and make statements in the Chamber.

### **The House of Commons**

The House of Commons is the elected lawmaking body in Parliament. When MPs meet together in the House of Commons Chamber in Ottawa, we say that the House is in session or is sitting. How is the seating of MPs in the House of Commons arranged? In the House of Commons Chamber, politicians from the same party normally sit together. The governing party sits to the right of the Speaker of the House of Commons. The Official Opposition sits directly opposite the government. Where the members of the other opposition parties sit depends on the number of MPs elected from each party.

### **Chamber Business**

The work of an MP in the Chamber includes reviewing and debating new bills that affect all Canadians. It also includes taking part in question period, making statements about important events and issues from the riding, raising issues and presenting recommendations and reports. Usually it is the Government that introduces bills, but Opposition and individual MPs can also introduce new bills (called Private Member's bills), so long as the bills do not involve taxes. The House is also where the budget estimates for each ministry or area of government services are debated and passed.

1. Talk about the role of the monarch
2. Speak on the functions of the Senate and the House of Commons
3. Describe the Chamber Business

## **The Prime Minister**

In Canada, the leader of the political party that wins the most seats in the House of Commons becomes Prime Minister. (This is in contrast to some countries, where citizens vote to elect their leader directly, such as the President in the United States.) The Prime Minister is usually an MP who, after winning the election, is officially sworn in by the Governor General.

### *WORD BUILDER*

*PRIME* – from the Latin *primus*, meaning first. Here are some other words and phrases that contain prime: • primary • prime-time television • prime number

## **The Cabinet**

The Prime Minister chooses members of the Cabinet. These are usually elected MPs (and at least one Senator), and normally belong to the party in power. Those who head government departments are called Ministers. By custom, each province has at least one Cabinet Minister. As Canada has grown and changed, the Cabinet has also grown and evolved, with ministries sometimes being renamed, added, dropped or reorganized. The Cabinet takes collective responsibility for government policies. It must, in public, agree with the government's decisions or resign.

### *WORD BUILDER*

*MINISTER* – from the Latin *minister*, meaning servant. This word has the same root as *minor*. Related words include *administer* (administration, administrator) and *minor* (meaning less or little). *CABINET* – originally, this word meant small room. Today, it sometimes means a cupboard or a piece of

*furniture where objects can be stored. In Parliament, it means the group of Ministers appointed by the Governor General at the request of the Prime Minister.*

## **The Speakers**

The Senate and the House of Commons each has a *Speaker* . The Speaker represents his or her Chamber when dealing with the other parts of Parliament (the Monarch or Govern or General , the Senate and the House of Commons ) . Each speaker is also responsible for making sure that rules of order are followed when his or her Chamber is sitting. The Speaker of the Senate is appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister, usually for the life of the Parliament . The Speaker of the Senate enforces (makes sure a rule is followed) the Senate rules about the order of speaking and the length of time a Senator gets to speak, and announces the result of votes. Electing a Speaker of the House of Commons is the first thing the House of Commons does when beginning a new Parliament. MPs choose by secret ballot which one of them will be speaker. All questions during debate in the House of Commons are directed through the Speaker. Whenever a Senator or an MP enters, crosses or leaves the Chamber, he or she bows to the Speaker's chair. Speakers must be neutral and fair. For example, the Speaker of the House of Commons must be prepared to enforce the same rules for the Prime Minister as for a Member of an opposition party. Although the Speaker of the House of Commons is an elected MP, he or she does not vote on decisions unless there is a tie. The speakers have important diplomatic and social duties outside Parliament. They are often asked to represent Canada at important international events and meetings. The speakers also meet and host foreign dignitaries and ambassadors.

1. Talk about the role of Prime Minister in the government
2. Describe the functions of the Cabinet
3. Describe the functions of the Speakers

### **Process of Passing a Bill**

Making laws is tough work. Every day, something that you do or that you touch has been considered by a lawmaker. But how does an idea get to be a law that affects everyone? The following steps describe the process of passing a bill through either the House of Commons or the Senate. (If the bill were to pass through the Senate, it would go through the same stages.) The government typically introduces bills. Opposition and individual parliamentarians also introduce new bills (called Private Member's Bills).

#### **FIRST READING**

Any idea for a new law or a change to current law is written down. The idea is now called a bill. The bill is printed and read in the House it is starting from.

#### **SECOND READING**

The bill is given a Second Reading in the House it is starting from, where parliamentarians debate the idea behind the bill. They consider questions such as, "Is the idea behind the bill good?" "Does it meet people's needs?" "Who will be affected by this bill?" If the House votes for the bill and it passes this stage, it goes to a committee of the House, which usually meets in a smaller committee room outside the Chamber.

## COMMITTEE STAGE

At the Committee Stage, the bill is studied carefully. Committee members hold hearings or special meetings where different people inside and outside government can make comments about the bill. The committee can ask for government officials and experts, or witnesses, to come and answer questions. The committee can suggest changes or amendments to the bill when it gives its report to the House.

## REPORT STAGE

At the Report Stage, the committee reports the bill back to the House. All parliamentarians can then debate it. During this stage, those who were not part of the committee that studied the bill can suggest changes to the bill.

## THIRD READING

The bill is then called for a Third Reading. The parliamentarians debate it again. Sometimes they can change their minds about a bill. They might vote for it at Second Reading but not at Third Reading if they do not like the changes made to the bill. If it passes Third Reading, the bill then goes to the other House where it goes through the same stages.

## ROYAL ASSENT

Once both the Senate and the House of Commons have passed the bill in exactly the same wording, it is given to the Governor General (or his or her appointed representative) for Royal Assent (final approval), and it can become law.

*WORD BUILDER — Both Senators and MPs work on committees. You probably have committees at your school. The*

*root of this word comes from commit — from the Latin word committere, com- (together) and mittere (to put, or send).*

*The prefix com- or con-, meaning together, is a common one in English. Write down all of the words you can think of that start with com or con. What do they mean? Is there a connection?*

### **On the Job with a Senator**

When Parliament is in session, Senators spend much of their time in Ottawa. During the week, they debate and vote on bills in the Senate Chamber. Much of their work, however, is done outside the Chamber. Senators often sit on at least two different committees, as well as subcommittees. In committee, Senators work hard to understand all details of a proposed bill: they hear evidence from groups and individuals who will be affected by the proposed legislation and recommend changes. Members of the committees also review budgets and investigate issues that are important to Canadians, such as health care, children's rights and official languages. Committees also report on those issues. In addition, Senators take part in caucus meetings. All these meetings mean serious research and preparation. Senators also like to meet the people they represent in their regions. Between Chamber debates, committee work, meetings and travel, they try to find time to make public speeches and attend important national and international events. Senators have many years of experience in the working world. They may have had prominent careers in politics, medicine, the military, law, sports, journalism, education or business. Their rich backgrounds make them experts in their fields. This helps them make decisions about bills that the government wants to pass, or to advise the government on new or better policies.

## **Text 5**

### **A Day in the Life of a Member of Parliament**

In addition to their work in the Chamber, MPs have many responsibilities. They are accountable (must answer) to the people who voted for them. At the same time, they must follow their party leader. While Parliament is in session, MPs typically spend Monday to Thursday in Ottawa, and Fridays and weekends in their riding, although this can change depending on their meeting schedules and on Parliament's business. When MPs are in Ottawa and Parliament is sitting, there is a routine schedule to follow called the Daily Order of Business. MPs spend a set amount of time in the Chamber, in their offices and in committees. Like Senators, MPs work on committees to examine proposed bills in detail and to investigate issues. They also hear witnesses and report back to the House with their findings and recommendations. Some committees are permanent (these are called Standing Committees), and consider very important issues such as the environment or immigration. Other committees are formed (or struck) if a temporary issue needs to be examined. MPs also spend time in caucus every Wednesday morning, where they discuss strategy and ideas for laws with the rest of the Senators and MPs from the same political party. While in their home ridings, they attend events and meet with people and organizations to listen to their concerns. At their offices in their home ridings and in Ottawa, they have a group of people who help them set up meetings, and prepare for debates and committee meetings. These researchers and administrators are called staff. While Parliament is in session, the House has a daily schedule.

*WORD BUILDER* *Constituent, from the same root as constitution, means a part of. In politics, a constituent is a person a politician represents.*

1. Describe the process of passing a bill
2. Talk about the job with a Senator
3. Describe the day of MP

## **Capital**

Citizens elect different people from their communities to different levels of government to make laws. These lawmakers, or politicians, meet regularly to talk about current laws and to make new ones. They do this in a place called the capital. Ottawa, the national capital of Canada, is where federal politicians meet.

## **Why Ottawa?**

Choosing a capital city is not easy! Should it be in the centre of the country? Should it be the biggest city? Who decides where a capital should be? In 1857, there were a few cities competing to be the capital city. To settle it, Queen Victoria chose Ottawa because it was centrally located between the cities of Montreal and Toronto, and was along the border of Ontario and Quebec (the centre of Canada at the time). It was also far from the American border, making it safer from attacks.

*WORD BUILDER* — *Some words have two parts, like lawmaker (law + maker). Can you think of other words that use the word law or maker? The word capital comes from the Latin word caput, which means head. Capital has many different meanings: very serious (capital punishment); money*

*(capital investment); and very important (capital letter, capital city). Here are some other words that come from this same root: to cap something; a baseball or bottle cap; captain; caption. The English word citizen comes from the Latin word civis, which means a person who lives in a city. Other words in this group include city, civic or civilian.*

## **On the Hill**

The busiest part of downtown Ottawa is Parliament Hill. This is where Senators and Members of Parliament have their offices, meet to make laws, and have meetings with advisors and citizens. Parliament Hill is a gathering place for Canadians who go there for a variety of reasons: to celebrate, to protest, to go on tours and to enjoy the beautiful scenery. The Hill is on high ground next to the Ottawa River. If you look across the water, you can see the province of Quebec. Government offices and national institutions are located on both sides of the river.

## **The Parliament Buildings**

Parliament has three main buildings: the East Block, the West Block and the Centre Block. The Centre Block you see today is not the first — the first Centre Block of the Parliament Buildings burned down in 1916. The only part of the Centre Block to survive was the Library of Parliament, which had fire-proof iron doors. The East and West Blocks were untouched by the fire.

## **Evolving Parliamentary Democracy**

Because Canada has a constitution, Canadians have reliable rules to follow. But sometimes, old laws do not fit society any more. For example, in 1923 Parliament passed the Chinese Immigration Act, which closed Canada's doors to

people of Chinese origin. This law was changed in 1947. The democratic system is flexible and allows Parliament to change old laws and create new ones. National and even international events and issues influence Canadians' values on many levels. As Canadians consider these issues through open discussion and debate, their ideas may change over time. In turn, Canadians influence Parliament to change laws or introduce new ones.

*WORD BUILDER — FLEXIBLE / INFLEXIBLE* The word *flex* means to bend. If you are flexible, it can mean that you can bend in certain ways (touch your hands to the floor, for example), or it can mean that you are able to adapt to changes as they occur.

### **Getting Involved in Democracy**

The voting age in Canada for a federal election is 18. But voting is not the only way for you to get involved. If you feel strongly about an issue, there are many ways to express your views. Become knowledgeable about the issue by reading, researching and interviewing experts. Write to your local newspaper. Form a council. Send letters to your Senator and your MP to let them know how you feel. They may want to talk to you more about it. Helping out in an election campaign is another good way to get involved, no matter what your age. You can meet the candidate, help him or her prepare for public events, and help organize supporters. Does a political party interest you? Almost all parties have a youth wing that organizes events and distributes information. Your local community might need your help — you can volunteer for a community association, or for the board of your local school, library or community centre. This is a great way to meet your neighbours and find out what is important to them. Community organizations have been successful across Canada in getting

their concerns heard by politicians at all levels. It is important to talk to your family about getting involved, too. Find out their opinions and discuss what issues are important to them. Canada's government works because of its citizens, and you are never too young to become part of it.

*WORD BUILDER — WING – from Old Norse wenge (meaning wing of a bird). In English, the word wing means the wing of a bird, but also something that extends from a central base. Consider these sentences: • the Canadian art collection is in the east wing of the museum. • He belongs to the youth wing of the party. Because the places to either side of a theatre's stage are called the wings, English also uses some phrases like: • I have no idea what is on the test; I will just have to wing it. (Note: this slang comes from an actor learning his or her lines in the wings – it means to do something without being prepared.)*

1. Set up five questions to the text
2. Retell the text

## Grammar review

### Exercise 1. Find the subject in the sentences

- *It is going to rain tonight* — Сегодня вечером будет дождь.
- *To everyone's surprise, the album was selling very slowly* — К всеобщему удивлению, альбом продавался очень вяло.
- *My friend's dog likes carrots* — У моего друга собака любит морковку.
- *Snow removal in rural areas is often delayed* — Уборка снега в сельской местности часто задерживается.

### Exercise 2. Find the direct object in the sentences

- *That trip cost me a fortune* — Эта поездка стоила мне котлету денег.
- *Madonna keeps herself in shape with regular exercise* — Мадонна держит себя в форме при помощи физкультуры.
- *We spent all the weekend on the beach* — Мы провели все выходные на пляже.
- *People like simple answers to complex questions* — Людям нравятся простые ответы на сложные вопросы.

### Exercise 3. Find and write the infinitive forms of the verbs

- *This tent seems rather weak to me* — Эта палатка кажется мне довольно хлюпкой.

- *This tent withstood a strong storm* — Эта палатка выдержала сильный шторм.
- *My friend is turning 18 this week* — Моему другу на этой неделе исполняется 18.
- *My friend is turning to me for help* — Мой друг обращается ко мне за помощью.

#### Exercise 4. Find adverbial modifiers

- *Puzzled, I looked out the window* — Озадаченный, я выглянул в окно.
- *After lunch we went out for a stroll* — После обеда мы вышли прогуляться.
- *The flight was behind the schedule, as usual* — Рейс задерживался, как обычно.
- *Luckily, a day later we found the lost ring* — По счастью, днем позже мы нашли пропавшее кольцо.

#### Exercise 5. Form participles I, II

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • <i>to</i><br><i>sleep</i> (спать)          | • <i>to</i><br><i>return</i> (возвращать)      |
| • <i>to</i><br><i>close</i> (закрывать)      | • <i>to</i><br><i>prepare</i> (подготавливать) |
| • <i>to</i><br><i>swim</i> (плавать)         | • <i>to</i><br><i>flip</i> (переворачивать)    |
| • <i>to</i><br><i>grow</i> (расти)           | • <i>to</i><br><i>delay</i> (задерживать)      |
| • <i>to</i><br><i>process</i> (обрабатывать) | • <i>to</i><br><i>attach</i> (прикреплять)     |
| • <i>to</i><br><i>destroy</i> (разрушать)    | • <i>to</i><br><i>reply</i> (отвечать)         |

## Exercise 6. Transform to the passive voice

### Example:

Медики считают грипп опасным — *Medics consider the flu dangerous.*

Грипп считается опасным медиками — *The flu is considered dangerous by medics.*

• Сильные магниты удерживают рамку на месте — *Strong magnets hold the frame in place.*

Рамка удерживается на месте сильными магнитами. \_\_\_\_\_

• Полиция нашла пропавшую собаку — *The police found the missing dog.*

Пропавшая собака была найдена полицией. \_\_\_\_\_

• Местный ОПСОС предоставляет бесплатный Wi-Fi. — *A local telecom company provides free Wi-Fi.*

Бесплатный Wi-Fi предоставляется местным ОПСОСом. \_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 7. Transform Present Simple to the Present Continuous

### Example:

*Students use the library* — Студенты используют библиотеку.

*Students are using the library.*

• *The school bus arrives at 8:30 AM* — Школьный автобус прибывает в 8:30.

• *This event brings up important issues* — Это событие поднимает важные вопросы.

• *Our senses guide us in our everyday life* — Наши чувства направляют нас в нашей повседневной жизни.

Exercise 8. Use the appropriate form of the verb

- *I (to receive) the package already* — Я уже получил посылку.

- *My parents (to receive) the package yesterday* — Мои родители вчера получили посылку.

- *John confirmed that he (to receive) the package* — Джон подтвердил, что получил посылку.

- *Hens (to sit) on the eggs most of the time* — Куры сидят на яйцах большую часть времени.

- *I (to sit) at Starbucks across from your place* — Я сижу в Старбаксе напротив твоего дома.

- *Sarah (to sit) at the computer since noon* — Сара сидит за компьютером с обеда.

- *I (to check) my email regularly* — Я буду регулярно проверять электронную почту.

- *I (to check) their schedule online* — Я посмотрю их расписание в интернете.

- *I (to check) my luggage by then* — Я уже сдам вещи в багаж к этому времени.

## **UNIT 2**

### **The USA Political System**

#### **Text 1**

#### **Immigration and Population**

In 1775, in the era of the War of Independence, there were less than four million Americans. Until 1848, the population was rather small. This was changed by two important historical events; the fact that gold was found in California (1848) and the Homestead Act (1862), an act of law giving away land to farmers.

The population surged after this. Suddenly millions of immigrants came to “the land of opportunity” or “The Promised Land”. Within 50 years, the U.S. population tripled. Until 1840, mainly British people came, but more and more immigrants from Western Europe began to arrive. They came from countries such as Germany, Norway and Ireland. Immigration from southern and eastern parts of Europe and the Far East gradually increased after 1880. Poverty and political persecution were some of the reasons why people emigrated and sought freedom in the “New World”.

The U.S. has traditionally been more open to immigration than other countries. However, since the beginning of the 20th century, and especially after the First World War, many Americans have wanted a more restrictive immigration policy. Those favoring restrictions warn against overpopulation, unemployment, poorer social conditions and a dilution of national identity. Others, with a more inclusive attitude, welcome the cultural riches ethnicity represents. Neither the Native Americans nor the African Americans are immigrants in the traditional sense.

Since 1965, people from countries such as Mexico, the Caribbean islands, and Asiatic countries have been entering the U.S., and some people claim that the USA is changing its color. By the year 2050, whites may have become a minority group.

### **Waves of Immigration**

Immigration to the United States was influenced by both push and pull factors. The push factors were what drove the immigrants from their country such as religious persecution, political oppression and poverty. The pull factors were those which attracted immigrants to America such as civil rights, freedom of expression, religion and speech and economic opportunity. America was seen as the Promised Land by the oppressed and exploited masses.

Thus, the freedom, opportunity, and civil rights that were denied Europeans throughout centuries, and at the same time guaranteed to the immigrants, became the basis of the American value system and dream. The dream was that individuals would be given the opportunity through hard work to succeed. However, opportunity to succeed was all that was promised. The individual would be responsible for his own success or failure, and, in the latter case, often be left to himself to survive.

### **Religious Freedom**

To better understand immigration, let us look at the four major waves. The colonial period was from 1607-1680 and established the basic division that eventually led to the Civil War. The first immigrants were called colonists because they founded the first colonies in America. There was a great difference between the types of colonies. In the northern

colonies such as Plymouth, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island, many colonists came for religious freedom. In addition, they had small farms and were what we would call middle-class. Many were well educated and through the decades developed industries, such as lumber, linen and woolen mills and shipbuilding, opened small shops, got involved in trading or became craftsmen. Their society was much more middle-class.

### **Plantations**

However, in the South, there were large plantations due to the mild climate and fertile soil. The original intention of the first southern colonies was profit. The first settlers in Virginia, for example, were fortune seekers looking for gold and trade routes. When those ideas failed, they turned to farming. They had enough capital to buy large sections of land, which formed the basis of a plantation economy based on large crops of cotton, tobacco and indigo. The plantations were like mini-societies where slaves or indentured servants did most of the work. There wasn't much opportunity to develop a middle-class. The ideas of equality and opportunity were non-existent for the slaves and not as widespread in the South as in the North. The existence of slavery the "American tragedy" and along with the treatment of the Indians form the darkest chapters in American history. The question of slavery so divided the United States that it eventually led to conflicts, which would end in the Civil War.

### **European Waves**

The next period, called the first wave of immigration, was from 1680 to about 1776 where Scots-Irish and Germans were the major immigrant groups. After, the War of Independence, there was not much immigration until 1820.

The second wave of immigration from 1820 to 1890 was a period where America went from being mainly a rural and agricultural society to the beginnings of an industrial society. It was during this second wave, that many Irish and Norwegians emigrated. The Irish were highly dependent on the potato and when the potato crop failed in the 1840's many either emigrated or faced starvation. Emigration was largely to Northern England or the United States.

Most of the Norwegians emigrated to the Midwest drawn by the promise of free land (the Homestead Act of 1862). By settling, building housing and farming the land, they were granted 160 acres (about 600 mål) of fertile soil, a farm that would make their former landlords' farms seem like peanuts. They could write home to family and friends and brag about being large landowners.

During the latter part of this period, the United States grew to a major industrial nation and this growth continued on into the third wave, which was from 1890 to about 1930. During the third wave, the United States received a whole new type of immigrant. They mostly came from Eastern and Southern European cities and moved into American cities and worked in industry. The promised land began to seem less and less promising as immigrants were stuffed into tenement buildings in over-crowded cities and forced to work in factories under deplorable conditions. The immigrants soon discovered that American streets were not paved with gold. Nevertheless, immigrants poured into the United States where at least they felt that they had a chance. This wave continued until the Great Depression and World War II.

## **Asian and Latin America Waves**

The United States is now experiencing the fourth wave of immigration which is a mixture of Asians (Koreans, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Chinese and Japanese,) and Hispanics, people who speak Spanish. The Asians, as a rule, are successful. The Asians' success can be explained by two factors. First, many of them, particularly the Chinese and Koreans arrive with money and invest it wisely. They often start businesses and shops and work long hours. Secondly, family honor is an important factor and their children study hard, get into good universities and get good jobs.

Hispanics have not been as successful as the Asians. They are often poor when they arrive and for some reason do not stress the importance of education. In addition, a number of them are illegal and can be exploited. They often work for less money and won't complain about the working conditions for fear of being caught and deported. However, it looks like Mexican-Americans are starting to get established and working their way into the middle class.

In thirty years, it is predicted that Hispanics, and Mexican-Americans will be the largest ethnic group in California, including whites. A Hispanic group which has been successful is the Cubans, most of whom live in southern Florida. They are generally well educated, middle class, politically conservative and anti-Castro. Two Hispanic groups which have not done very well, are Puerto Ricans and Dominicans who primarily live in East Coast inner cities.

One of the most popular tourist attractions in Washington D.C. is the White House, where the President

resides and his administration holds its meetings. The President, who is elected by the people, heads the Executive Branch together with his/her Cabinet.

1. Talk about the cause of immigration and the consequences of it

2. Describe the waves of immigration

## **Text 2**

### **The President**

The presidential term is four years, and since 1951 the President may only serve two terms in office. The presidential election is a long and somewhat complicated process, but to simplify and summarize in a few words: every fourth year there are primary elections where people from each state vote to nominate the candidates of the political parties. The nominated candidates campaign to gain the most votes before the final election, which takes place in November of the same year. Presidential candidates prepare for this race for years. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent to run a campaign, often coming from the candidate's private funds.

In addition to being the leader of his/her political party and chief of the Executive Branch, the President cooperates with Congress. If Congress has a majority of senators and congressmen from the opposite party, he may find it difficult to get laws passed. The President also administers the budget and is Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. Further, he appoints judges, called justices to the Supreme Court, who the Senate later approves or disapproves. He works as the top diplomat in foreign affairs, negotiates international treaties, has

meetings with ambassadors and ministers from other countries, and cooperates with NATO and the UN.

### **The Cabinet**

The President's Cabinet includes the Vice President, senior officers and the heads of 15 executive departments. Cabinet members are appointed by the President, but must be approved by the Senate. Members of the Cabinet answer to the President alone, and they can sit in office only as long as the President requires.

1. Speak on the President's powers in the American political system

2. Describe the Cabinet

### **Text 3**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The United States is - by size of electorate - the second largest democracy on the globe (India is the largest and Indonesia comes third) and the most powerful nation on earth, politically, economically and militarily, but its political system is in many important respects unlike any other in the world. This essay then was written originally to inform non-Americans as to how the American political system works.

What has been striking, however, is how many Americans - especially young Americans - have found the essay useful and insightful. There is considerable evidence that

many Americans know and understand little about the political system of their own country - possibly more than is the case with any other developed democratic nation.

In the U.S., the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) tests what American students are learning. It has found that the two worst subjects for American students are civics and American history. One NAEP survey found that only 7% of eighth graders (children aged 13-14) could describe the three branches of government.

On one of my trips to the United States, I was eating cereal for breakfast and found that the whole of the reverse side of the cereal packet was devoted to a short explanation of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the American government. I find it hard to imagine that many democratic nations would feel it necessary to explain such a subject in such a format.

It is probably more important than ever than both Americans and non-Americans understand the fundamentals of the American political system because, in Donald Trump, we have a US President who is behaving quite unlike his predecessors and effectively challenging the famed constitutional system of 'checks and balances'.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

To understand any country's political system, it is helpful to know something of the history of the nation and the background to the creation of the (latest) constitution. But this is a fundamental necessity in the case of the American political system. This is because the Constitution of the United States is so different from those of other nations and because that

Constitution is, in all material respects, the same document as it was over two centuries ago.

There were four main factors in the minds of the 'founding fathers' who drafted the US Constitution:

1. The United States had just fought and won a bloody War of Independence from Britain and it was determined to create a political system that was totally different from the British system in which considerable authority still resided in a hereditary King (George III at the time) or Queen and in which Parliament was increasingly assertive in the exercise of its growing powers. Therefore the new constitution deliberately spread power between the three arms of government - executive, legislature and judiciary - and ensured that each arm was able to limit the exercise of power by the other arms.

2. The United States was already a large country with problems of communications and a population of varied background and education. Therefore, for all the intentions to be a new democracy, it was seen as important to limit the influence of swings in public opinion. So the election of the president was placed in the hands of an Electoral College, rather than the subject of direct election, and the terms of office of the president and the two chambers of the legislature were all set at different lengths.

3. The United States was the creation of 13 individual states, each of which valued its traditions and powers, and so the overarching federal government was deliberately limited in its powers compared to the position of the central government in other nations. Arguably the later Civil War was about states' rights

more than it was about slavery and there is still a real tension today between the states and federal government.

4. The original 13 states of the USA were of very different size in terms of population and from the beginning there was a determination by the smaller states that political power should not be excessively in the hands of the larger states. Therefore the Constitution is built on a 'Great Compromise' between the Virginia plan (representation by population) and the New Jersey plan (equal representation for all states) which resulted in the House of Representatives being constructed on the basis of population and the Senate being composed of an equal number of representatives regardless of population. This is why today six states have only one member in the House of Representatives but two members in the Senate.

Whatever the 'founding fathers' intended, the sheer longevity of the Constitution and the profound changes in America since its drafting means that today the balance of power is not necessarily what the drafters of the Constitution had in mind. So originally the legislature was seen as the most powerful arm of government (it is described first in the Constitution) but, over time, both the Presidency (starting with the time of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War) and the Supreme Court (especially on social issues like desegregation, marriage and abortion) have assumed more power.

1. Talk on historical background and necessity of creation the Constitution
2. What the 'founding fathers' intentions?

## **Text 4**

### **THE CONSTITUTION**

Unlike Britain but like most nation states, the American political system is clearly defined by basic documents. The Declaration of Independence of 1776 and the Constitution of 1789 form the foundations of the United States federal government. The Declaration of Independence establishes the United States as an independent political entity, while the Constitution creates the basic structure of the federal government. Both documents are on display in the National Archives and Records Administration Building in Washington, D.C. which I have visited several times. Further information on the thinking expressed in the Constitution can be found in the Federalist Papers which are a series of 85 articles and essays published in 1787-1788 promoting the ratification of the Constitution.

The United States Constitution is both the longest-lasting in the world, being over two centuries old, and the shortest in the world, having just seven articles and 27 amendments. As well as its age and brevity, the US Constitution is notable for being a remarkably stable document. The first 10 amendments were all carried in 1789 - the same year as the original constitution - and are collectively known as the Bill of Rights. If one accepts that these first 10 amendments were in effect part of the original constitutional settlement, there have only been 17 amendments in over 200 years (the last substantive one - reduction of the voting age to 18 - in 1971).

One of the major reasons for this relative immutability is that - quite deliberately on the part of its drafters - the Constitution is a very difficult instrument to change. First, a proposed amendment has to secure a two-thirds vote of members present in both houses of Congress. Then three-quarters of the state legislatures have to ratify the proposed change (this stage may or may not be governed by a specific time limit).

As an indication of how challenging this process is, consider the case of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). This was first written in 1920, shortly after women were given the vote in the USA. The proposed amendment was introduced in Congress unsuccessfully in every legislative year from 1923 until it was finally passed in 1972. It was then sent to each state for ratification but, by 1982, it was still three states short of the minimum of the 38 needed to add it to the constitution. Various attempts since 1982 to revive the amendment have all failed.

At the heart of the US Constitution is the principle known as '**separation of powers**', a term coined by the French political, enlightenment thinker Montesquieu. This means that power is spread between three institutions of the state - the executive (President & Cabinet), the legislature (House of Representatives & Senate) and the judiciary (Supreme Court & federal circuits) - and no one institution has too much power and no individual can be a member of more than one institution.

This principle is also known as '**checks and balances**', since each of the three branches of the state has some authority to act on its own, some authority to regulate the other two branches, and has some of its own authority, in turn, regulated by the other branches.

Not only is power spread between the different branches; the members of those branches are deliberately granted by the Constitution **different terms of office** which is a further brake on rapid political change. So the President has a term of four years, while members of the Senate serve for six years and members of the House of Representatives serve for two years. Members of the Supreme Court effectively serve for life.

The great benefit of this system is that power is spread and counter-balanced and the 'founding fathers' - the 55 delegates who drafted the Constitution - clearly wished to create a political system which was in sharp contrast to, and much more democratic than, the monarchical system then in force in Britain. The great weakness of the system is that it makes government slow, complicated and legalistic which is a particular disadvantage in a world - unlike that of 1776 - in which political and economic developments are fast-moving and the USA is a - indeed the - super power.

Since the Constitution is so short, so old and so difficult to change, for it to be meaningful to contemporary society it requires interpretation by the courts and ultimately it is the Supreme Court which determines what the Constitution means. There are very different approaches to the interpretation of the Constitution with the two main strands of thought being known as *originalism* and the *Living Constitution*.

Originalism is a principle of interpretation that tries to discover the original meaning or intent of the constitution. It is based on the principle that the judiciary is not supposed to create, amend or repeal laws (which is the realm of the legislative branch) but only to uphold them. This approach tends to be supported by conservatives.

Living Constitution is a concept which claims that the Constitution has a dynamic meaning and that contemporary society should be taken into account when interpreting key constitutional phrases. Instead of seeking to divine the views of the drafters of the document, it claims that they deliberately wrote the Constitution in broad terms so that it would remain flexible. This approach tends to be supported by liberals.

1. Speak on the main principles of the US Constitution
2. Describe the heart of the US Constitution

## **Text 5**

### **THE PRESIDENCY**

#### **What is the Presidency?**

The President is the head of the executive branch of the federal government of the United States. He - so far, the position has always been held by a man - is both the head of state and the head of government, as well as the military commander-in-chief and chief diplomat.

The President presides over the executive branch of the government, a vast organisation numbering about four million people, including one million active-duty military personnel. The so-called Hatch Act of 1939 forbids anyone in the executive branch - except the President or Vice-President - from using his or her official position to engage in political activity.

## **Who is eligible to become a President?**

To be President, one has to:

- be a natural-born citizen of the United States
- be at least 35 years old
- have lived in the US for at least 14 years

## **How is a President chosen?**

The President is elected for a fixed term of four years and may serve a maximum of two terms. Originally there was no constitutional limit on the number of terms that a President could serve in office and the first President George Washington set the precedent of serving simply two terms. Following the election of Franklin D Roosevelt to a record four terms, it was decided to limit terms to two and the relevant constitutional change - the 22nd Amendment - was enacted in 1951.

Elections are always held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November to coincide with Congressional elections. So the last election was held on 8 November 2016 and the next election will be held on 3 November 2020.

The President is not elected directly by the voters but by an Electoral College representing each state on the basis of a combination of the number of members in the Senate (two for each state regardless of size) and the number of members in the House of Representatives (roughly proportional to population). The states with the largest number of votes are California (55), Texas (38) and New York (29). The states with the smallest number of votes - there are seven of them - have only three votes. The District of Columbia, which has no voting

representation in Congress, has three Electoral College votes. In effect, therefore, the Presidential election is not one election but 51.

The total Electoral College vote is 538. This means that, to become President, a candidate has to win at least 270 electoral votes. The voting system awards the Electoral College votes from each state to delegates committed to vote for a certain candidate in a "winner take all" system, with the exception of Maine and Nebraska (which award their Electoral College votes according to Congressional Districts rather than for the state as a whole). In practice, most states are firmly Democrat - for instance, California and New York - or firmly Republican - for instance, Texas and Tennessee. Therefore, candidates concentrate their appearances and resources on the so-called "battleground states", those that might go to either party. The three largest battleground or swing states are Florida (29 votes), Pennsylvania (20) and Ohio (18). Others include North Carolina (15), Virginia (13), Wisconsin (10), Colorado (9), Iowa (6) and Nevada (6).

This system of election means that a candidate can win the largest number of votes nationwide but fail to win the largest number of votes in the Electoral College and therefore fail to become President. Indeed, in practice, this has happened four times in US history: 1876, 1888, 2000 and 2016. On the last occasion, the losing candidate (Hillary Clinton) actually secured 2.9 million more votes than the winning candidate (Donald Trump). If this seems strange (at least to non-Americans), the explanation is that the 'founding fathers' who drafted the American Constitution did not wish to give too much power to the people and so devised a system that gives the ultimate power of electing the President to members of the Electoral College. The same Constitution, however, enables

each state to determine how its members in the Electoral College are chosen and since the 1820s states have chosen their electors by a direct vote of the people. The United States is the only example in the world of an indirectly elected executive president.

In the event that the Electoral College is evenly divided between two candidates or no candidate secures a majority of the votes, the constitution provides that the choice of President is made by the House of Representatives and the choice of Vice-President is made by the Senate. In the first case, the representatives of each state have to agree collectively on the allocation of a single vote. In the second case, each senator has one vote. This has actually happened twice - in 1800 and 1824. In 1800, the House of Representatives, after 35 votes in which neither Thomas Jefferson nor Aaron Burr obtained a majority, elected Jefferson on the 36th ballot. In 1824, neither John Quincy Adams nor Andrew Jackson was able to secure a majority of the votes in the Electoral College and the House of Representatives chose Adams even though he had fewer Electoral College votes and fewer votes at the ballot boxes than Jackson.

#### 1. Discuss the procedure of the President's election

#### **What are the powers of the President?**

- Within the executive branch, the President has broad constitutional powers to manage national affairs and the workings of the federal government.
- The President may issue executive orders to affect internal policies. The use of executive orders has varied enormously between presidents and is often

a controversial matter since, in effect, it is bypassing the Congress to achieve what would otherwise require legislation. Very few such orders were issued until the time of Abraham Lincoln (the Emancipation Declaration was such an order); use of executive orders was considerable and peaked during the terms of the seven presidents from Theodore Roosevelt to Franklin D Roosevelt (1901-1945); but, since the Second World War, use has been more modest with Democrats tending to issue them a bit more than Republicans. Barack Obama has made very sparing use of this power, notably to reform immigration law and to tighten gun controls. Executive orders can be overturned by a succeeding President.

- The President has the power to recommend measures to Congress and may sign or veto legislation passed by Congress. The Congress may override a presidential veto but only by a two-thirds majority in each house.

- The President has the authority to appoint Cabinet members, Supreme Court justices, federal judges, and ambassadors but only with the 'advice and consent' of the Senate which can be problematic especially when the Senate is controlled by a different political party to that of the President.

- The President has the power to pardon criminals convicted of offences against the federal government and most controversially President Gerald Ford used this power to pardon his predecessor Richard Nixon.

- The President has the power to make treaties with the 'advice and consent' of the Senate.

- The President can declare war for 60 days but then has to have the approval of Congress

(although it can be difficult to withdraw troops once they have been committed).

Since 1939, there has been an Executive Office of the President (EOP) which has consistently and considerably expanded in size and power. Today it consists of some 1,600 staff and costs some \$300M a year.

Besides the formal powers of the President, there are informal means of exercising influence. Most notably, Teddy Roosevelt introduced the notion of 'the bully pulpit': the ability of the President to use his standing to influence public opinion. Over time, the changing nature of media - newspapers, radio, television, the Internet, social media - has presented a variety of instruments for the White House to use to 'push' Congress or other political players or indeed communicate directly with the electorate. Currently Donald Trump uses his personal Twitter account to issue several messages a day to (as at summer 2017) some 32.4 million followers. Add to that his POTUS Twitter account (18.8 million followers), Facebook pages (22.4 million likes and 1.7 million followers), YouTube subscribers (103,000 and 4.3 million), and Instagram (7 million followers). That is a lot of 'bullying'.

### **Other interesting facts about the Presidency**

- Although the 'founding fathers' wanted to avoid a political system that in any way reflected the monarchical system then prevalent in Britain and for a long time the Presidency was relatively weak, the vast expansion of the federal bureaucracy and the military in the 20th century has in current practice given a greater role and more power to the President than is the case for any single individual in most political systems.

- The President may be impeached which means that he is removed from the office. The House of Representatives has the sole power of impeaching, while the Senate has the sole power to try all such impeachments. Two U.S. Presidents have been impeached by the House of Representatives but acquitted at the trials held by the Senate: Andrew Johnson (1868) and Bill Clinton (1999). Richard Nixon resigned before he would certainly have been impeached (1974).

- Although the President heads the executive branch of government, the day-to-day enforcement and administration of federal laws is in the hands of the various federal executive departments, created by Congress to deal with specific areas of national and international affairs. The heads of the 15 departments, chosen by the President and approved with the 'advice and consent' of the Senate, form a council of advisors generally known as the President's "Cabinet". This is not a cabinet in the British political sense: it does not meet so often and does not act so collectively.

- In fact, the President has powers of patronage that extend way beyond appointment of Cabinet members. In all, the President appoints roughly 4,000 individuals to positions in the federal government, of which around 1,200 require the confirmation of the Senate. As the divisions in American politics have deepened, so the confirmation process has become more fractious and prolonged - when first elected, Barack Obama had to wait ten months before all his nominees were in their jobs.

- The first United States President was George Washington, who served from 1789-1797, so

that the current President Donald Trump is the 44th to hold the office. However, there have been 45 presidencies. Grover Cleveland was the 22nd and 24th President and therefore was the only US president to serve two non-consecutive terms (1885-1889 and 1893-1897) and to be counted twice in the numbering of the presidents.

- So far, every US President has been male. All but one President has been Protestant (the exception was John Kennedy who was a Catholic) and all but one President has been white (the exception is Barack Obama). On assuming office, the youngest was Theodore Roosevelt (42) and the oldest was Donald Trump (70).

- Four sitting Presidents have been assassinated: Abraham Lincoln in 1865, James A. Garfield in 1881, William McKinley in 1901, and John F. Kennedy in 1963. A further eight Presidents were subject to near misses in assassination attempts.

- The President is sometimes referred to as POTUS (President Of The United States) and the Presidency is often referred to by the media as variously the White House, the West Wing, and the Oval Office.

- Such is the respect for the Presidency that, even having left office, a President is referred to by the title for the remainder of his life.

The position of Vice-President is elected on the same ticket as that of the President and has the same four-year term of office. The Vice-President is often described as 'a heart beat away from the Presidency' since, in the event of the death or incapacity of the President, the Vice-President assumes the office.

In practice, however, a Vice-Presidential candidate is chosen (by the Presidential candidate) to 'balance the ticket' in the Presidential election (that is, represent a different geographical or gender or ethnic constituency) and, for all practical purposes, the position only carries the power accorded to it by the President - which is usually very little (a major exception has been Dick Cheney under George W Bush). The official duties of the Vice-President are to sit as a member of the "Cabinet" and as a member of the National Security Council and to act as ex-officio President of the Senate.

1. What are the powers of the President?
2. Talk on Other interesting facts about the Presidency

## **Text 6**

### **PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES**

An important feature of the American political system is that the two major parties - the Democrats and the Republicans - hold a system of primaries to determine who will be their candidate in the general election. These primaries are particularly important when it comes to the four-yearly Presidential election.

The key point to understand is that formally the Democratic and Republican Parties choose their Presidential candidate through a vote of delegates at a national convention and not directly through the various ballots in the various primaries.

Each party allocates delegates to each state, roughly proportionate to its size in numbers of citizens. There are two

types of delegates. The normal delegates are those who are chosen by voters to back a specific candidate. Technically these delegates are pledged to that candidate but there are circumstances in which they can switch their support. Then there are what the Democrats call super delegates and the Republicans call unpledged delegates who are notable figures in the party such as former presidents, state governors and members of the two houses of Congress who are free to back whichever candidate they wish. They can do this any time they like. They can also change their mind before the convention.

How the normal delegates are chosen is a matter for each party in each of the 50 states.

Some hold caucuses which require voters to turn up to discussions on the merits of the contending candidates. Most hold conventional-style elections. In the case of the Democrats in Texas, there is both a caucus and an election. Another variation is that, in some cases, one can only take part in a caucus or election if one is registered for that political party but, in other cases, anyone in the state - including those registered for another party or none - can vote.

How normal delegates are then allocated to the different candidates is also a matter for each party in each of the 50 states. In most of the Republican contests (but not all), the candidate who wins the most votes in that state's primary wins all the party's delegates for that state - a system known as 'winner takes all'. In all the Democrat contests, delegates are allocated roughly proportional to the vote secured by the candidate subject to a minimum performance. The allocation process varies, but typically it is based on the performance of the candidate in particular Congressional districts.

In practice, normally the parties have clearly decided on a candidate well before the holding of the convention which therefore becomes more a coronation than a selection.

However, it is not unknown for a party to reach the convention with no clear choice. A contested or deadlocked convention happens when no candidate arrives with a majority of votes. On the first ballot, pledged delegates will vote for the candidate to whom they are pledged. But, in any subsequent ballots, delegates are then free to vote for whomever they want. This could include the other candidates or even - subject to the rules of the convention - people who are not candidates. Delegates keep on voting until someone wins a majority.

The most famous deadlocked convention - it involved the Democrats - took place in 1924. It required 103 ballots to choose the Democratic candidate - who then lost to the Republican candidate in the general election. The last deadlocked convention was experienced by the Republicans in 1976, when Gerald Ford did not have enough delegates before the convention to claim the nomination (his opponent was Ronald Reagan), but eventually won the nomination (Reagan withdrew) and went on to lose the general election. The last time a contested convention produced a candidate who went on to win in the general election was in 1932 with Franklin Roosevelt.

For the 2016 convention, the Democrats had a total of 4,763 delegates including super delegates and so, to win the nomination, the Democratic front runner needed a total of 2,382 delegates. For the 2016 convention, the Republicans had a total of 2,472 delegates including unpledged delegates and so, to win the nomination, the Republican front runner needed a total of 1,237 delegates. The Republicans had their

convention in Cleveland, Ohio from 18-21 July 2016 and nominated Donald Trump as their candidate, while the Democrats held their convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from 25-28 July 2016 and nominated Hillary Clinton as their candidate.

1. Speak on the primaries
2. Describe the activities of the major parties in the system of primaries

## **Text 7**

### **THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

#### **What is the House of Representatives?**

The House of Representatives is the lower chamber in the bicameral legislature known collectively as Congress. The founders of the United States intended the House to be the politically dominant entity in the federal system and, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the House served as the primary forum for political debate. However, subsequently the Senate has been the dominant body.

#### **Who is eligible to become a member of the House?**

To be a member of the House, one has to:

- be at least 25 years old
- have been a US citizen for at least seven years

- live in the state which one represents (but not the actual district)

### **How is a member of the House chosen?**

The House consists of 435 members (set in 1911), each of whom represents a congressional district and serves for a two-year term. House seats are apportioned among the states by population according to each decennial (every 10 years) census, but every state must have at least one member and in fact seven states have only one Representative each (Alaska, Delaware, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont and Wyoming). Typically a House constituency would represent around 700,000 people.

Once House seats are reapportioned to the states, it is state legislatures that must redraw the physical boundaries of Congressional districts. Although the states are bound by limits established by Congress and the Supreme Court, there is scope for gerry-mandering to ensure electoral advantage for the dominant political party in the state. Such reapportionment of members of the House takes effect three years after the decennial census so, as the next census will take place in 2020, reapportionment will take effect for the 118th Congress (2023-2025).

Members of the House are elected by first-past-the-post voting in every state except Louisiana and Washington, which have run-offs if no candidate secures more than 50% of the vote. Elections are always held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in even numbered years. Voting in congressional elections - especially to the House - is generally much lower than levels in other liberal democracies. In a year when there is a Presidential election, turnout is typically around

50%; in years when there is no Presidential election (known as mid-terms), it usually falls to around one third of the electorate.

In the event that a member of the House of Representatives dies or resigns before the end of the two-year term, a special election is held to fill the vacancy.

The House has five non-voting delegates from the District of Columbia (1971), Guam (1972) the Virgin Islands (1976), American Samoa (1981) and the Northern Mariana Islands (2008) and one resident commissioner for Puerto Rico (1976), bringing the total formal membership to 441. Non-voting delegates are not allowed floor votes, but can vote in any committees to which they are assigned.

### **What are the powers of the House?**

- The House of Representatives is one of the two chambers that can initiate and pass legislation, although to become law any legislation has to be approved by the Senate as well.
- Each chamber of Congress has particular exclusive powers. The House must introduce any bills for the purpose of raising revenue.
- If the Electoral College is tied, the choice of President is made by the House of Representatives.
- The House has a key role in any impeachment proceedings against the President or Vice-President. It lays the charges which are then passed to the Senate for a trial.
- The House (and the Senate) have the power to declare war - although the last time this happened was in 1941.

## **Other interesting facts about the House**

- The Speaker of the House - chosen by the majority party - has considerable power. He or she presides over the House and sets the agenda, assigns legislation to committees, and determines whether and how a bill reaches the floor of the chamber.

- Currently the Majority Leader in the House - and therefore the Speaker - is the Republican Paul Ryan, while the Minority leader is Democrat Nancy Pelosi.

- Much of the work of the House is done through 20 standing committees and around 100 sub-committees which perform both legislative functions (drafting Bills) and investigatory functions (holding enquiries). Most of the committees are focused on an area of government activity such as homeland security, foreign affairs, agriculture, energy, or transport, but others are more cross-cutting such as those on the budget and ethics.

- Activity in the House of Representatives tends to be more partisan than in the Senate. One illustration of this is the so-called Hastert Rule. This Rule's introduction is widely credited to former Speaker Dennis Hastert (1999-2007); however, Newt Gingrich, who directly preceded Hastert as Speaker (1995-1999), followed the same rule. The Hastert Rule, also known as the "majority of the majority" rule, is an informal governing principle used by Republican Speakers of the House of Representatives since the mid-1990s to maintain their speakerships and limit the power of the minority party to bring bills up for a vote on the floor of the House. Under the doctrine, the Speaker of the House will not allow a floor vote on a bill unless a

majority of the majority party supports the bill. The rule keeps the minority party from passing bills with the assistance of a small number of majority party members.

- The House of Representatives has met in its chamber in the south wing of the Capitol in Washington DC since 1857.

- Offices of members of the House are located in three buildings on the south side of the Capitol along Independence Avenue: the Cannon, Longworth, and Rayburn Buildings.

- The House and Senate are often referred to by the media as Capitol Hill or simply the Capitol or the Hill.

1. Describe the House of Representatives

2. Speak on the powers of the House of Representatives

## **THE SENATE**

### **What is the Senate?**

The Senate is the upper chamber in the bicameral legislature known collectively as Congress. The original intention of the authors of the US Constitution was that the Senate should be a regulatory group, less politically dominant than the House. However, since the mid 19th century, the Senate has been the dominant chamber and indeed today it is perhaps the most powerful upper house of any legislative body in the world.

### **Who is eligible to become a member of the Senate?**

To be a member of the Senate, one has to:

- be at least 30 years old
- have been a US citizen for at least nine years
- live in the state which one represents

### **How is a member of the Senate chosen?**

The Senate consists of 100 members, each of whom represents a state and serves for a six-year term (one third of the Senate stands for election every two years).

Each state has two Senators, regardless of population, and, since there are 50 states, then there are 100 senators. This equality of Senate seats between states has the effect of producing huge variations in constituency population (the two senators from Wyoming represent less than half a million electors, while the two senators from California represent 34M people) with gross over-representation of the smaller states and serious under-representation of racial and ethnic minorities.

For a long time, Senators were elected by the individual state legislatures. However, since the 17th Amendment to the Constitution in 1913, members of the Senate are elected by first-past-the-post voting in every state except Louisiana and Washington, which have run-offs. Elections are always held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in even numbered years.

Each Senator is known as the senior or junior Senator for his or her state, based on length of service.

In the event that a member of the Senate dies or resigns before the end of the six-year term, a special election is not normally held at that time (this is the case for 46 states). Instead the Governor of the state that the Senator represented nominates someone to serve until the next set of Congressional elections when the special election is held to fill the vacancy.

### **What are the powers of the Senate?**

- The Senate is one of the two chambers that can initiate and pass legislation, although to become law any legislation has to be approved by the House of Representatives as well.

- Each chamber of Congress has particular exclusive powers. The Senate must give 'advice and consent' to many important Presidential appointments including Cabinet members, Supreme Court justices, federal judges, and ambassadors.

- The Senate has the responsibility of ratifying treaties.

- If the Electoral College is tied, the choice of Vice-President is made by the Senate.

- The Senate has a key role in any impeachment proceedings against the President or Vice-President. Once the House of Representatives has laid the charges, the Senate then conducts a trial on these charges. The Supreme Court Chief Justice presides over such a trial. A two-thirds majority of the Senate is required to uphold impeachment charges.

- The Senate (and the House) have the power to declare war - although the last time this happened was in 1941.

## **Other interesting facts about the Senate**

- The most powerful position in the Senate is the Majority Leader but he or she does not have the same control over the upper chamber as the control that the Speaker of the House has over the lower chamber, since the 'whipping' system is weaker in the Senate.

- Currently the Majority Leader in the Senate is the Republican Mitch McConnell, while the Minority leader is Democrat Chuck Schumer.

- Much of the work of the Senate is done through 16 standing committees and around 40 sub-committees which perform both legislative functions (drafting Bills) and investigatory functions (holding enquiries). Most of the committees are focused on an area of government activity such as homeland security, foreign relations, health, energy, or transport, but others are more cross-cutting such as those on the budget and rules.

- Activity in the Senate tends to be less partisan and more individualistic than in the House of Representatives. Senate rules permit what is called a filibuster when a Senator, or a series of Senators, can speak for as long as they wish and on any topic they choose, unless a supermajority of three-fifths of the Senate (60 Senators, if all 100 seats are filled) brings debate to a close by invoking what is called cloture (taken from the French term for closure).

- The Senate has met in its chamber in the north wing of the Capitol in Washington DC since 1859.

- Offices of members of the Senate are located in three buildings on the north side of the

Capitol along Constitution Avenue: the Russell, Dirksen, and Hart Buildings.

- The Senate and House are often referred to by the media as Capitol Hill or simply the Capitol or the Hill.

1. Describe the Senate
2. Talk on the powers of the Senate
3. Speak on other interesting facts about the Senate

## **Text 8**

### **THE SUPREME COURT**

#### **What is the Supreme Court?**

The Supreme Court is the highest court in the land. Originally it had five members but over time this number has increased. Since 1869, it has consisted of nine Justices: the Chief Justice of the United States and eight Associate Justices. They have equal weight when voting on a case and the Chief Justice has no casting vote or power to instruct colleagues. Decisions are made by a simple majority.

Below the Supreme Court, there is a system of Courts of Appeal, and, below these courts, there are District Courts. Together, these three levels of courts represent the federal judicial system.

#### **Who is eligible to become a member of the Court?**

The Constitution does not specify qualifications for Justices such as age, education, profession, or native-born citizenship. A Justice does not have to be a lawyer or a law school graduate, but all Justices have been trained in the law. Many of the 18th and 19th century Justices studied law under a mentor because there were few law schools in the country.

The last Justice to be appointed who did not attend any law school was James F. Byrnes (1941-1942). He did not graduate from high school and taught himself law, passing the bar at the age of 23.

All Supreme Court judges are appointed for life.

### **How is a member of the Court chosen?**

The Justices are nominated by the President and confirmed with the 'advice and consent' of the Senate. As federal judges, the Justices serve during "good behavior", meaning essentially that they serve for life and can be removed only by resignation or by impeachment and subsequent conviction.

Since the Supreme Court makes so many 'political' decisions and its members are appointed so rarely, the appointment of Justices by the President is often a very charged and controversial matter. Since Justices serve for life and therefore usually beyond the term of office of the appointing President, such appointments are often regarded as an important part of any particular President's legacy.

### **What are the powers of the Court?**

The Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States. The court deals with matters pertaining to the federal government, disputes between states, and interpretation of the Constitution.

It can declare legislation or executive action made at any level of the government as unconstitutional, nullifying the law and creating precedent for future law and decisions.

However, the Supreme Court can only rule on a lower court decision so it cannot take the initiative to consider a matter.

There are three ways that a matter can come to the Supreme Court:

1. A federal authority makes a decision that is challenged as unconstitutional which goes straight to the Supreme Court which is not obliged to take it
2. A state makes a decision which someone believes is unconstitutional but the matter would have to have previously been heard by a Federal Court of Appeal (there are 11 circuits covering the 50 states)
3. There is a conflict between states that needs to be resolved (if the two or more states are in the same circuit, the matter would first have to go to the appropriate Federal Court of Appeal)

### **Other interesting facts about the Court**

- Each year, around 8,000 petitions are made to the Supreme Court seeking a judgment, but each term the number of cases determined is only about 100.

- When a case is considered in public by the Court, each side of the case only has half-an-hour to state its position. All the detail is set out in documents and all the rest of the time of the public hearing is taken up by questions from the Justices.

- Decisions of the Supreme Court are taken in private conference, following discussion and debate. No Justice speaks for a second time until every Justice has spoken once.

- Given how difficult it is to change the US Constitution through the formal method, one has seen informal changes to the Constitution through various decisions of the Supreme Court which have given specific meanings to some of the general phrases in the Constitution. It is one of the many ironies of the American political system that an unelected and unaccountable body like the Supreme Court can in practice exercise so much political power in a system which proclaims itself as so democratic.

- The Supreme Court in practice therefore has a much more 'political' role than the highest courts of European democracies. In the 1960s, the court played a major role in bringing about desegregation. The scope of abortion in the USA is effectively set by the Supreme Court whereas, in other countries, it would be set by legislation. Indeed in 2000, it made the most political decision imaginable by determining - by seven votes to two - the outcome of that year's presidential election. It decided that George W Bush had beaten Al Gore, although Gore won the most votes overall.

- A recent and momentous instance of this exercise of political power was the Supreme Court decision in the case of the challenge to Barack Obama's signature piece of legislation, the Patient Protection and

Affordable Care Act, often dubbed Obama care. No less than 26 states challenged the legality of these health reforms under a clause in the constitution governing interstate commerce. In the end, the Court ruled by five to four that, while the individual mandate provision in the Act is not itself a tax, the penalties imposed for not buying health insurance do represent taxes and therefore the entire requirement falls within the remit of Congress's right to impose taxes.

- William Howard Taft (1857-1930) was the 27th President of the United States (1909-1913) and later the tenth Chief Justice of the United States (1921-1930). He is the only person to have served in both of these offices.

- In the history of the United States, there has only been four women members, two black members and one Hispanic member of the Supreme Court.

- The present membership of the Supreme Court includes three women members and one black member. Of the nine members, five are Catholic and three are Jewish while one - Neil Gorsuch - was raised as a Catholic but attends a Protestant church.

- Following the appointment by President Trump of Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court, there is now a five to four conservative-liberal majority on the court. All the conservative members were appointed by Republican presidents, while all the liberals were appointed by Democratic presidents.

- A special feature of the American political system in respect of the judiciary is that, although federal judges are appointed, nationwide 87% of all state court judges are elected and 39 states elect at least some of their judges. Outside of the United States,

there are only two nations that have judicial elections and then only in limited fashion. Smaller Swiss cantons elect judges and appointed justices on the Japanese Supreme Court must sometimes face retention elections (although those elections are a formality).

1. Describe the powers of the Supreme Court
2. Talk on other interesting facts about the Court

## **Text 9**

### **POLITICAL PARTIES & ELECTIONS**

To an extent quite extraordinary in democratic countries, the American political system is dominated by two political parties: the Democratic Party and the Republican Party (often known as the 'Grand Old Party' or GOP). These are very old and very stable parties - the Democrats go back to 1824 and the Republicans were founded in 1854.

In illustrations and promotional material, the Democratic Party is often represented as a donkey, while the Republican Party is featured as an elephant. The origin of these symbols is the political cartoonist Thomas Nast who came up with them in 1870 and 1874 respectively.

The main reason for the dominance of these two parties is that - like most other Anglo-Saxon countries (notably Britain) - the electoral system is 'first past the post' or simple majority which, combined with the large voter size of the constituencies in the House and (even more) the Senate, ensures that effectively only two parties can play. The other key factor is the huge influence of money in the American

electoral system. Since effectively a candidate can spend any amount he can raise (not allowed in many other countries) and since one can buy broadcasting time (again not allowed in many countries), the US can only 'afford' two parties or, to put it another way, candidates of any other party face a formidable financial barrier to entry.

Some people tend to view the division between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party in the United States as the same as that between Labour and Conservative in Britain or between Social Democrats and Christian Democrats in Germany. The comparison is valid in the sense that, in each country, one political party is characterised as Centre-Left and the other as Centre-Right or, to put it another way, one party is more economically interventionist and socially radical than the other. However, the analogy has many weaknesses.

1. The Centre in American politics is considerably to the Right of the Centre in most European states including Britain, Germany, France, Italy and (even more especially) the Scandinavian countries. So, for instance, most members of the Conservative Party in the UK would support a national health service, whereas many members of the Democratic Party in the US would not.

2. As a consequence of the enormous geographical size of the United States and the different histories of the different states (exemplified by the Civil War), geography is a factor in ideological positioning to a much greater extent than in other democratic countries. For instance, a Northern Republican could be more liberal than a Southern Democrat. Conversely there is a group of Democratic Congressmen that are fiscally very conservative - they are known as "blue

dog" Democrats or even DINO (Democrats In Name Only).

3. In the United States, divisions over social matters - such as abortion, capital punishment, same-sex relationships and stem cell research - matter and follow party lines in a way which is not true of most European countries. In Britain, for instance, these sort of issues would be regarded as matters of personal conscience and would not feature prominently in election debates between candidates and parties.

4. In the USA, religion is a factor in politics in a way unique in western democracies. Candidates openly proclaim their faith in a manner which would be regarded as bizarre elsewhere (even in a Catholic country like France) and religious groupings - such as the Christian Coalition of America - exert a significant political influence in a manner which would be regarded as improper in most European countries (Poland is an exception here).

5. In the United States, the 'whipping system' - that is the instructions to members of the House and the Senate on how to vote - is not as strict or effective as it is in most European countries. As a consequence, members of Congress are less constrained by party affiliation and freer to act individually.

6. In the USA, political parties are much weaker institutions than they are in other democracies. Between the selection of candidates, they are less active than their counterparts in other countries and, during elections, they are less influential in campaigning, with individual politicians and their campaigns having much more influence.

7. The cost of elections is much greater in the US than in other democracies which has the effects

of limiting the range of candidates, increasing the influence of corporate interests and pressure groups, and enhancing the position of the incumbent office holder (especially in the winning of primaries). As long ago as 1895, the Chairman of the Republican National Committee Mark Hanna stated: *"There are two things that are important in politics. The first is money, and I can't remember what the second one is."*

8. Whereas in other countries, voters shape the policies and select the candidates of a party by joining it, in the USA voters register as a supporter of one of the major parties and then vote in primary elections to determine who should be the party's candidate in the 'real' election.

One other oddity of the American party system is that, whereas in most countries of the world the color red is associated with the Left-wing party and the color blue with the Right-wing party, in the United States the reverse is the case. So the 'blue states' are those traditionally won by the Democrats, while the 'red states' are those normally controlled by the Republicans.

Two interesting features of American political elections are low turnout and the importance of incumbency.

Traditionally turnout in US congressional elections is much lower than in other liberal democracies especially those of Western Europe. When there is a presidential election, turnout is only about half; when there is no presidential election, turnout is merely about one third. The exception was the elections of 2008: the excitement of the candidacy of Barack Obama led to an unusually high turnout of 63%, the highest since 1960 (the election of John F Kennedy).

While Congress as an institution is held in popular contempt, voters like *their* member of Congress and indeed there is a phenomenon known as 'sophomore surge' whereby incumbents tend to increase their share of the vote when they seek re-election. More generally most incumbents win re-election for several reasons: they allocate time and resources to waging a permanent re-election campaign; they can win "earmarks" which are appropriations of government spending for projects in the constituency; and they find it easier than challengers to raise money for election campaigns.

1. Speak on the peculiarities of the US political parties
2. Talk on features of American political elections

## **Text 10**

### **THE FEDERAL SYSTEM**

Understanding the federal nature of the United States is critical to appreciating the complexities of the American political system.

Most political systems are created top-down. A national system of government is constructed and a certain amount of power is released to lower levels of government. The unique history of the United States means that, in this case, the political system was created bottom-up.

First, some 240 years ago, there were 13 autonomous states who, following the War of Independence against the British, created a system of government in which the various states somewhat reluctantly ceded power to the federal government. Around a century later, the respective authority of

the federal government and the individual states was an issue at the heart of the Civil War when there was a bloody conflict over who had the right to determine whether slavery was or was not permissible. With the exception of Switzerland, no other Western democracy diffuses power to the same degree as America.

So today the powers of the federal government remain strictly limited by the Constitution - the critical Tenth Amendment of 1791 - which leaves a great deal of authority to the individual states.

Each state has an executive, a legislature and a judiciary.

The head of the executive is the Governor who is directly elected. As with the President at federal level, state Governors can issue Executive Orders.

The legislature consists of a Senate and a House of Representatives (the exception is the state of Nebraska which has a unicameral system).

The judiciary consists of a state system of courts.

The 50 states are divided into counties (parishes in Louisiana and boroughs in Alaska). Each county has its court.

Although the Constitution prescribes precisely when Presidential and Congressional elections will be held, the dates and times of state and local elections are determined by state governments. Therefore there is a plethora of elections in the United States and, at almost all times, an election is being held

somewhere in the country. State and local elections, like federal elections, use the 'first past the post' system of election.

In fact, most states choose to elect the governor and legislature when Congressional elections are held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in even numbered years. Exceptions are the states of Virginia and New Jersey which hold their governor and legislature elections in odd numbered years (known as "off-year elections"). This means that these states provide the first electoral indication of how voters view the performance of a newly-elected President and/or Congress.

The debate about federalism in the US is far from over. There are those who argue for a stronger role for the federal government and there are advocates of locating more power at the state level. The recent rise of the electorally-successful Tea Party movement owes a good deal to the view that the federal government has become too dominant, too intrusive and too profligate.

Meanwhile many states - especially those west of the Rockies - have what has been called "the fourth arm of government": this is the ballot or referendum initiative. This enables a policy question to be put to the electorate as a result of the collection of a certain number of signatures or the decision of the state legislation. Over the last century, some 3,000 such initiatives have been conducted - in some cases (such as California) with profound results.

1. Describe the federal level of the US government
2. Speak on the essence of federalism

## RECENT TRENDS

In all political systems, there is a disconnect between the *formal* arrangements, as set out in the constitution and relevant laws, and the *informal* arrangements, as occurs in practice. Arguably, in the United States this disconnect is sharper than in most other democratic systems because:

- The US Constitution is an old one (late 18th century) whereas most countries have had several constitutions with the current one typically being a 20th century creation.
- The US Constitution is relatively immutable so it is very difficult to change the provisions to reflect the reforms that have come about over time from the pressure of events.
- Since the US adopted its Constitution, the US has become the pre-eminent world economic and political power which has brought about major changes in how the Presidency operates, most especially in the international sphere.

What this means is that, in the last century and most especially since the end of the Second World War, the reality of how the American political system operates has changed quite fundamentally in terms which are not always evident from the terms of the Constitution (and indeed some might argue are in some respects in contravention of the Constitution). The main changes are as follows:

- The balance of power between the Congress and the President has shifted significantly in favor of the President. This is evident in the domestic sphere through practices like 'impoundment' (when

money is taken from the purpose intended by Congress and allocated to another purpose favored by the President) and in the international sphere through refusal to invoke the War Powers Resolution in spite of major military invasions. Different terms for this accretion of power by the Presidency are "the unitary executive" and "the imperial presidency".

- The impact of private funding of political campaigns and of lobbyists and special interest groups in political decision making have increased considerably. Candidates raise their own money for campaigns, there is effectively no limit on the money that can be spent in such campaigns (thanks to what is called super Political Action Committees), and the levels of expenditure - especially in the presidential primaries and election proper - have risen astronomically. In the presidential race of 2012, both Barack Obama and Mitt Romney spent over one billion dollars. Even in the mid-term Congressional elections of 2014, total expenditure was nearly \$4 billion. All this has led to some observers describing the American political system as a plutocracy, since it is effectively controlled by private finance from big businesses, which expect certain policies and practices to follow from the candidates they are funding, and big donors, who often expect preferment such as an ambassadorship from a candidate elected as President.

- There has been a growth of what is called "pork barrel" politics through the use of "earmarks". The term "pork barrel" refers to the appropriation of government spending for projects that are intended primarily to benefit particular constituents, such as those in marginal seats, or campaign contributors. Such appropriations are achieved through "earmarks" which

can be found both in legislation (also called "hard earmarks" or "hardmarks") and in the text of Congressional committee reports (also called "soft earmarks" or "softmarks").

- The nature of political debate in the United States has become markedly more partisan and bitter. The personal lifestyle as well as the political record of a candidate might well be challenged and even the patriotism or religiosity of the candidate may be called into question. Whereas the politics of most European countries has become more consensual, US domestic politics has become polarised and tribal. As a result, the political culture is often more concerned with satisfying the demands of the political 'base' rather than attempting to achieve a national consensus.

One final trend worth noting is the frequency of the same family to provide members of Congress. Low polling in elections, the high cost of running for election, and the focus on the individual more than the party all mean that a well-known name can work successfully for a candidate. Everyone is familiar with the Kennedys, Clintons and Bushs in American politics but, in 2014, there are no less than 37 members of Congress who have a relative who has served in the legislature.

1. Speak on the recent trends of the US political system

## **A DIVIDED DEMOCRACY**

Of course, all nation states are divided, especially in terms of power and wealth, but also - to different extents - by gender, race, ethnicity, religion and other factors. Indeed the constitution and institutions of a democratic society are deliberately intended to provide for the expression and

resolution of such divisions. However, it is often observed that the USA is an especially divided democracy in at least four respects:

1. It is divided *horizontally* through the 'separation of powers', so that the executive, the legislature and the judiciary are quite distinct in terms of both powers and personalities. Each arm of government exercises a check on the other.

2. It is divided *vertically* through the federal system of government with the division of powers between the federal government and the state governments a very important issue that arguably was once the subject of a civil war. In such a large country geographically, the federal government can seem very distant to many citizens.

3. It is divided *politically* through the sharp (and often bitter) differences of view on many economic issues like tackling the recession and reforming health care and social issues ranging from gun control to gay rights. Since 2009, such differences have been highlighted by the presence of the first black President in the White House and the rapid emergence of a Tea Party movement that is both virulently anti-Obama and anti-mainstream Republicanism.

4. It is divided *racially* through the growth of the non-white electorate. When Ronald Reagan was first elected President in 1980, almost 90% of the US electorate was white; today some 30% of voters are non-white; and that proportion is growing (especially Spanish-speaking communities). The Democratic Party tends to do better among non-white voters than the Republicans and therefore the demographic trends are viewed as favorable to Democrats.

One of the most visible and dramatic illustrations of how the divisions in American politics frustrate decision-making is the regular failure to agree a federal budget before the start of the new financial period. This results in what is known as federal 'shutdown' when most federal employees are sent home because they cannot be paid and many federal institutions therefore close down. This is not an isolated occurrence: it has happened 18 times since 1976 (the last one was in 2013).

A major role of the Congress is to pass legislation but the divided nature of American politics has made this increasingly difficult and the Congress frequently exhibits legislative grid-lock. Hillary Clinton - former First Lady, former Senator, and former Secretary of State - in her memoir "Hard Choices" (2014) talks of "*all the horse trading, arm-twisting, vote counting, alternating appeals to principle and self-interest, and hard-ball politics that go into passing major legislation*".

1. Describe the principles of the divided democracy

## **AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM**

Reading this short essay, it will be evident to many (especially non-American) readers that the United States is *different* from other democracies. This observation has given rise to the notion of "American exceptionalism". This is an ill-defined term which has been used differently at different times.

From the creation of the Republic in 1776, there has been a sense that the United States has been exceptional in its commitment to freedom as expressed in the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Even though today there are many

challenges to freedom in the USA, many Americans still feel that their attachment to freedom - however defined - is a distinguishing feature of their nation as compared to all others.

Another important version of "American exceptionalism" revolves around the lack of a clear ideological or class-based division between the two major political parties. The USA has never had a credible socialist or anti-capitalist party; both the main parties are pro-capital and pro-business and speak largely to the 'middle class'.

Other versions of the concept revolve around the alleged 'superiority' of the United States because of its history, size, wealth and global dominance plus the 'sophistication' of its constitution and power of its values such as individualism, innovation and entrepreneurship.

In perhaps its most extreme form, the concept has a religious dimension with the belief that God has especially chosen or blessed the country.

Of course, it is easy to view the American political system as exceptional in negative terms such as the unusual influence of race, religion and money as compared to other liberal democracies.

In truth, for all its special features, the American political system needs to be seen as one among many models of democracy with its own strengths and weaknesses that need to be assessed in comparison to those of other democracies.

1. Speak on the differences of American democracy from the European one

## 2. Describe the versions of "American exceptionalism"

### CONCLUSION

Americans are losing faith in the American political system as people around the world are questioning the continued pre-eminence of the United States as the dominant global power.

Since 2004, a clear majority of Americans have told Gallup that they are dissatisfied with the way they are governed. The numbers of those has several times climbed above 80% which is higher than at the time of the Watergate scandal. This disillusionment is reflected in the falling number of Americans who even bother to vote. In "The World In 2015", John Micklethwait, editor-in-chief of "The Economist", wrote: *"In America, there is nothing particularly democratic about the ascent of money politics, the arcane blocking procedures of Congress or the gerrymandering of district boundaries. Indeed they are all reminiscent of the rotten boroughs of 18th century England that infuriated the Founding Fathers."*

The debate about the effectiveness of the US political system is a part of the wider debate about whether or not the United States is in relative decline on the world stage. In his book "Time To Start Thinking: America And The Spectre Of Decline" [for my review], Edward Luce writes: *"Sometimes it seems Americans are engaged in some kind of collusion in which voters pretend to elect their lawmakers and lawmakers pretend to govern. This, in some ways, is America's core*

*problem: the more America postpones any coherent response to the onset of relative decline, the more difficult the politics are likely to get."*

These issues have been highlighted by the recent election as US President of Donald Trump, someone who ran for election as the anti-establishment candidate who was going to "drain the swamp", who has never previously held political office, and who is governing in a most unconventional style. His insistence that he will "Make America Great Again" and his intention to boost dramatically defense expenditure address directly the position of the US as global player.

## Grammar review

Exercise 1. Use the proper modal verb

### Example:

Местоимение + модальный глагол  
(*can/could/must/should*) + *go*.

- Я должен уйти.
- Вы можете уйти.
- Мы могли бы уйти.
- Им следует уйти.

Exercise 2. Translate into English using the given words

- Дорога может быть скользкой — *the road, may, (to be), slippery*.
- Ваш план мог бы сработать — *your plan, might, (to work)*.
- Ты должна посмотреть этот фильм — *you, must, (to see), this movie*.

Exercise 3. Form different questions and negative form

### Statement:

*You can bake cakes* — Ты умеешь печь торты.

- Ты умеешь печь торты?
- Что ты умеешь печь?
- Ты не умеешь печь торты.

Exercise 4. Use the passive forms of the verb

### Example:

Карфаген должен быть разрушен — *Carthage, must, (to destroy).*

***Carthage must be destroyed.***

- Книга должна быть возвращена немедленно — the book, must, (to return), immediately.
- Заявления можно подавать по почте — applications, may, (to submit), by mail.
- Симптомы гриппа следует воспринимать серьезно — flu symptoms, should, (to take), seriously.
- Ваш рейс может быть задержан — your flight, might, (to delay).

Exercise 5. Define the functions of the infinitive (subject, object, attribute, adverbial modifier)

- *My decision to become a teacher was a conscious choice* — Мое решение **стать** учителем было осознанным выбором.
- *To raise children is a hard job* — **Растить** детей — трудная работа.
- *Sarah wears high-hill shoes to look taller* — Сара носит туфли на высоком каблуке **чтобы казаться** выше.
- The committee agreed **to reevaluate** the budget — Комитет согласился **пересмотреть** бюджет.

Exercise 6. Define the part of speech (participle, gerund)

- *Breathing heavily, we reached the top of the hill* — Тяжело **дыша**, мы добрались до вершины холма.

- *Breathing at high altitudes is natural for many kinds of birds* — Дыхание на большой высоте естественно для многих видов птиц.

- *On average, patients breathing oxygen recovered faster* — В среднем, пациенты, дышавшие кислородом, восстанавливались быстрее.

Exercise 7. Make sentences using gerund, infinitive

**Example:**

Я люблю давить пузырьки на упаковке — *I, like, (to pop), bubble wrap.*

***I like popping bubble wrap.***

- Марк учится играть на гитаре — *Mark, is learning, (to play) the guitar.*

- Мой отец наконец бросил курить — *My dad, finally, stopped, (to smoke).*

- Продолжайте следить за уровнем кровяного давления — *Keep, (to watch), your blood pressure.*

- Вы обещали позвонить мне — *You, promised, (to call), me.*

Exercise 8. Find the verbals

*"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving."* — *Albert Einstein*

"Жизнь подобна езде на велосипеде: чтобы сохранять равновесие, нужно продолжать двигаться." — Альберт Эйнштейн

## **UNIT 3**

### **The UK Political System**

#### **Text 1**

The United Kingdom is a parliamentary democracy. The Parliament of the United Kingdom is in London. It has two chambers, the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The House of Commons has members which are elected from all the countries in the UK. The Scots and Welsh voted for devolution in a referendum in 1997. The system came into effect in 1999 and since then, the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments have had more control over their domestic affairs. The Scottish Government has responsibility for issues such as, health, education, justice, transport and rural affairs, but the Welsh Assembly Government has fewer powers.

#### **The UK System in Brief**

The Monarch (Queen or King)

Head of State, Head of the Commonwealth, Appoints the Prime Minister, Head of the Armed Forces. Little real power and acts only on the advice of her ministers.

The Prime Minister

Leader of the government party  
Appoints ministers (about 100) and forms the Cabinet

The Cabinet

The most important ministers in the government (about 20 members)

The House of Lords

Has 753 members (January 2011) - hereditary peers and life peers, 2 archbishops and 24 bishops  
Can only revise and delay bills.

House of Commons

650 Members of Parliament (MPs) (from 2010). Each represents one of the constituencies (district), into which the country is divided. Each belongs to a political party. Some are members of the government party and some are from the opposition parties. Elected by the people. The UK Members of Parliament are elected by first-past-the-post system.

### **How Does the System Work?**

The Cabinet is like the leaders of the Government and the Government is like the management of the country. It decides how the country will be run. It makes the important decisions, for example about foreign policy, education, or health, but these decisions have to be approved by Parliament. If Parliament thinks that a particular Government policy is against the public interest, it can force the Government to change its mind. The Government would then have to change its policy. The power of the Government depends on support from the House of Commons, which, in turn, depends on the support of the voters.

- Elections must be held at least every 5 years.
- Two main political parties; Conservative and Labour.
- Liberal Democrats are a third smaller party.
- The party with the majority of votes in the election forms the Government.
- The second largest party forms the Opposition.
- Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all have national political parties, the Scottish National Party (SNP),

Plaid Cymru and Sinn Fein. These parties would like their countries to become independent.

1. Speak on the UK System in Brief
2. Describe how the system works

### **Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland**

Members of the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments are made up of a representative for each constituency and representatives from each of the regions used in the European Parliament elections. First the constituencies Members are elected by the first-past-the-post system and then the regional Members are elected by a proportional representation system.

Devolution of powers to the Northern Ireland Assembly also occurred in 1999 and the Assembly has legislative authority for matters which have been transferred from the UK government.

The UK government has responsibility for all matters of foreign policy.

Scotland is now planning a referendum in 2014 to vote on whether Scotland should become an independent country.

### **Some Oddities in British Politics**

**The Whip** is the person who has to “whip” together or count the MPs when they are going to vote on a new bill.

**The Shadow Ministry** This is the group of ministers which the Opposition sets up to monitor the government's ministers.

**The British Constitution** Norway has a written Constitution which states the laws of the country. Britain has no written Constitution, but uses tradition or, if necessary, makes a new law when a problem comes up.

*(\*Theresa Mary May 2016-...; David William Donald Cameron 2010-2016; James Gordon Brown 2007-2010)*

To understand fully any country's political system, one needs to understand something of its history. This is especially true of the United Kingdom because its history has been very different from most other nations and, as a result, its political system is very different from most other nations too.

Like its (unwritten) constitution, the British state evolved over time. We probably need to start in 1066 when William the Conqueror from Normandy invaded what we now call England, defeated the Anglo-Saxon King Harold and established a Norman dynasty. The Normans were not satisfied with conquering England and, over the next few centuries, tried to conquer Ireland, Wales and Scotland. They succeeded with the first two and failed with the last despite several wars over the centuries.

By one of those ironical twists of history, when Queen Elizabeth of England died in 1603, she was succeeded by her cousin James VI, King of Scots who promptly decamped from Edinburgh and settled in London as King James I of England while keeping his Scots title and running Scotland by remote control. Regal pickings were more lucrative in his southern capital.

A century later the Scottish economic and political elite bankrupted themselves on the Darien Scheme and agreed to a scheme of Union between England and Scotland to make themselves solvent again and so Great Britain with one Parliament based in London came into being. The Irish parliament was abolished in 1801 with Ireland returning members to Westminster and the new political entity was the

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The southern (Catholic) Irish never reconciled themselves to being ruled by the English and rebelled in 1916 and gained independence in 1922. The northern (Protestant) Irish did not want independence and so the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland arrived. Not a snappy name.

Meanwhile, although the Normans were the last to mount a successful invasion of the country, there were plenty of other plans to conquer the nation, notably the Spanish under King Philip II in 1588, the French under Napoleon in 1803-1805, and the Germans under Hitler in 1940. None succeeded.

Furthermore, in recent centuries, Britain has not had a revolution of the kind experienced by so many other countries. Some might argue that the English Civil War (1642-1651) was the nation's revolution and - although it was three and a half centuries ago - it did bring about a major shift in power, but the main constitutional consequence - the abolition of the monarchy - only lasted 11 years and the Restoration of the Monarchy has so far lasted 350 years (although it is now, of course, a very different monarchy). There was a time in British history which we call the Glorious Revolution (1688) but it was a very English revolution, in the sense that nobody died, if a rather Dutch revolution in that it saw William of Orange take the throne.

So the British have never had anything equivalent to the American Revolution or the French Revolution, they have not been colonised in a millennium but rather been the greatest colonisers in history, and in neither of the two world wars were they invaded or occupied.

## 1. Talk on the Oddities in British Politics

## 2. Describe the history of political system of the UK

### **Text 2**

#### **HOW HISTORY HAS SHAPED THE POLITICAL SYSTEM**

The single most important fact in understanding the nature of the British political system is the fundamental continuity of that system. For almost 1,000 years, Britain has not been invaded or occupied for any length of time or over any substantial territory as the last successful invasion of England was in 1066 by the Normans. Is this true of any other country in the world? I can only think of Sweden.

This explains why:

- almost uniquely in the world, Britain has no written constitution (the only other such nations are Israel & New Zealand)
- the political system is not neat or logical or always fully democratic or particularly efficient
- change has been very gradual and pragmatic and built on consensus
- British attitudes towards the rest of Europe have been insular, not just geographically but culturally, which was a major factor behind the Brexit decision of 23 June 2016.

To simplify British political history very much, it has essentially been a struggle to shift political power and accountability from the all-powerful king - who claimed that he obtained his right to rule from God - to a national parliament that was increasingly representative of ordinary people and

accountable to ordinary people. There have been many milestones along this long and troubled road to full democracy.

A key date in this evolution was 1215 when King John was forced to sign the Magna Carta which involved him sharing power with the barons. This is regarded as the first statement of citizen rights in the world - although Hungarians are proud of the Golden Bull of just seven years later.

The so-called Model Parliament was summoned by King Edward I in 1295 and is regarded as the first representative assembly. Unlike the absolute monarchs of other parts of Europe, the King of England required the approval of Parliament to tax his subjects and so, then as now, central to the exercise of power was the ability to raise funds.

The bicameral nature of the British Parliament - Commons and Lords - emerged in 1341 and the two-chamber model of the legislature has served as a template in very many other parliamentary systems.

The Bill of Rights of 1689 - which is still in effect - lays down limits on the powers of the crown and sets out the rights of Parliament and rules for freedom of speech in Parliament, the requirement for regular elections to Parliament, and the right to petition the monarch without fear of retribution.

It was the 19th century before the franchise was seriously extended and each extension was the subject of conflict and opposition. The great Reform Act of 1832 abolished 60 'rotten', or largely unpopulated, boroughs and extended the vote from 400,000 citizens to 600,000, but this legislation - promoted by the Whigs (forerunners of the Liberals) - was only carried after being opposed three times by

the Tories (forerunners of the Conservatives). Further Reform Acts followed in 1867 and 1884. It was 1918 before the country achieved a near universal franchise and 1970 before the last extension of the franchise (to 18-21 year olds).

Another important feature of British political history is that three parts of the United Kingdom - Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland - have a special status and have local administrations with a wide range of responsibilities. However, England - which represents about 84% of the total UK population of around 65 million - does not have a clear and strong sense of regionalism. So the British political system does not have anything equivalent to the federal system of the 50 states in the USA. The nature of this (dis)United Kingdom took on a new form in the General Election of May 2015 when the Scottish National Party won 56 out of 59 seats in Scotland.

The final important part of British political history is that, since 1973, the UK has been a member of what is now called the European Union (EU). This now has 28 Member States covering most of the continent of Europe. Therefore the UK Government and Parliament are limited in some respects by what they can do because certain areas of policy or decision-making are a matter for the EU which operates through a European Commission appointed by the member governments and a European Parliament elected by the citizens of the member states [for a guide to the working of the EU]. However, in a referendum held on 23 June 2016, the British people narrowly voted that the country should leave the European Union (a decision dubbed Brexit), a process that was activated in March 2017 but will take two years and be very complex.

The year 2015 was a special year for the British Parliament as it was the 750th anniversary of the de Montfort Parliament (the first gathering in England that can be called a parliament in the dictionary sense of the word), along with the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta, the document that set the scene for the later 1265 de Montfort Parliament.

1. What are the key facts in the British political history
2. Describe the final important part of British political history

### **THREE ARMS OF THE STATE**

The British political system is headed by a monarchy but essentially the powers of the monarch as head of state - currently Queen Elizabeth II - are ceremonial. The most important practical power is the choice of the Member of Parliament to form a government, but the monarch follows the convention that this opportunity is granted to the leader of the political party with the most seats in the House of Commons or who stands the best chance of commanding a majority in a vote of confidence in the Commons.

Although any remaining powers of the monarchy are largely ceremonial, the Royal Family does have some subtle and hidden influence on the legislative process because of a little-known provision that senior royals - notably the Queen and her eldest son the Prince of Wales - have to be consulted about legislation that might affect their private interests and given the opportunity to have such legislation amended.

Traditionally the choice of monarch has been determined on the hereditary and primogeniture principles

which means that the oldest male child of a monarch was the next in line to the throne. Under the terms of the Act of Settlement of 1701, the monarch and the monarch's spouse could not be Catholics because the UK monarch is also the Head of the Church of England. In 2015, the primogeniture principle was abolished, so that the next in line can now be a female eldest child, and the monarch can marry a Catholic but not himself or herself be one.

In classical political theory, there are three arms of the state:

1. The executive - the Ministers who run the country and propose new laws
2. The legislature - the elected body that passes new laws
3. The judiciary - the judges and the courts who ensure that everyone obeys the laws.

In the political system of the United States, the constitution provides that there must be a strict division of powers of these three arms of the state, so that no individual can be a member of more than one. So, for example, the President is not and cannot be a member of the Congress. This concept is called 'separation of powers', a term coined by the French political, enlightenment thinker Montesquieu. This is not the case in the UK where all Ministers in the government are members of the legislature and one individual, the Lord Chancellor, is actually a member of all three arms.

1. Describe the three arms of the state
2. Compare with American political system

### **Text 3**

#### **THE U.K. PARLIAMENT**

The British Parliament is often called Westminster because it is housed in a distinguished building in central London called the Palace of Westminster which stands out because of the clock tower at the south end (this is the Elizabeth Tower and it houses Big Ben) and the tower with a flag at the other end (this is the Victoria Tower). Although this is a grand building, it is in an appalling state of repair and there are currently discussions about a major project of refurbishment which will probably begin in 2020 and require Parliament to relocate to other buildings in central London.

The British Parliament - like that of most larger countries - is bicameral, that is there are two houses or chambers. One tends to find unicameral legislatures in smaller nations such as Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Greece, Israel and New Zealand, although China and Iran are two larger nations with a single legislative chamber (but neither of these countries is a democracy).

#### **The House of Commons**

This is the lower chamber but the one with the most authority. I worked there as a Research Assistant to Merlyn Rees MP, then Labour's Opposition spokesperson on Northern Ireland, from 1972-1974.

- The House of Commons sits each week day for about half of the weeks of the year. The precise hours of sitting are:

- Monday 2.30 - 10.30 pm
- Tuesday 2.30 - 10.30 pm
- Wednesday 11.30 am - 7.30 pm
- Thursday 10.30 am - 6.30 pm
- Friday 9.30 am - 3 pm

- The Commons is chaired by the Speaker. Unlike the Speaker in the US House of Representatives, the post is non-political and indeed, by convention, the political parties do not contest the Parliamentary constituency held by the Speaker.

- The House of Commons currently comprises 650 Members of Parliament or MPs (the number varies slightly from time to time to reflect population change). This is a large legislature by international standards. For instance, the House of Representatives in the USA has 435 seats but, of course, each of the 50 US states has its own legislature. Before the General Election of 2010, the Conservative Party said that it wished to reduce the number of Commons seats by around 10% (65 seats) and the Liberal Democrats said that the Commons should be reduced by 150 MPs. The Coalition Government of 2010-2015 passed legislation to reduce the number from 650 to 600, as part of a wider change to the number and size of constituencies, but Parliament blocked the process of redrawing boundaries that is necessary before an General Election can be held with fewer seats.

- Rather oddly (but deliberately), there is insufficient seating capacity in the chamber of the House of Commons for all the MPs. Members do not sit at desks (like most legislatures) but on long, green-covered benches and there is only seating capacity for 437 MPs out of the total of 650. The origin of this strange arrangement is that the Commons first home was the medieval St Stephen's Chapel in

the Palace of Westminster which could only fit around 400 Members.

- Equally odd is that Members vote (votes are called 'divisions') by physically walking through one of the two lobbies which run along the side of the Commons chamber. These lobbies are the 'aye' lobby and the 'nay' lobby. This archaic procedure means that votes take a long time to conduct and it is not unknown for a member accidentally to walk into the wrong lobby. The votes are counted by 'tellers' who then return to the chamber to announce the numbers to the Speaker.

- Each member in the House of Commons represents a geographical constituency. Typically a constituency would have around 60,000-80,000 voters, depending mainly on whether it is an urban or rural constituency. The largest constituency in the country is the Isle of Wight with around 110,000 electors, while the smallest is Na h-Eileanan an Iar (formerly known as the Western Isles) with an electorate of only around 22,000. The Coalition Government of 2010-2015 intended to make the size of constituencies more equal in terms of electors, but so far the legislation has not been implemented.

- Every citizen aged 18 or over can vote once in the constituency in which they live. Voting is not compulsory (as it is in Australia). In the last General Election of May 2015, 66.1% of the electorate actually voted. Most democratic countries use a method of election called proportional representation (PR) which means that there is a reasonable correlation between the percentage of votes cast for a particular political party and the number of seats or representatives won by that party. However, much of the Anglo-Saxon world - the USA, Canada, and the UK but not Australia or New Zealand - uses a method of election called the simple majority system or 'first past the post' (FPTP). In this system, the country is divided into a number of constituencies each with a single

member and the party that wins the largest number of votes in each constituency wins that constituency regardless of the proportion of the vote secured. The simple majority system of election tends to under-represent less successful political parties and to maximise the chance of the most popular political party winning a majority of seats nationwide even if it does not win a majority of the votes nationwide.

- Until recently, in the UK (unlike many countries), there was not fixed term parliaments. A General Election - that is, a nationwide election for all 650 seats - was held when the Prime Minister called it, but the election could not be more than five years after the last one and it was usually around four years after the last one. I fought the General Elections of February 1974 and October 1974 as the Labour candidate for the north-east London constituency of Wanstead & Woodford. The Coalition Government of 2010-2015 passed legislation to provide for fixed five-year parliaments which meant that the next General Election was scheduled for May 2020. However, the Prime Minister Theresa May was able to call a snap General Election for 8 June 2017 by winning a Commons vote of more than two-thirds to activate provision for an early election in the Fixed Term Parliaments Act.

The result of the last General Election was as follows:

- Conservative Party: 318 seats (down 13) with 42.45% of the vote
- Labour Party: 262 seats (up 32) with 39.99% of the vote
- Scottish National Party: 35 seats (down 19) with 3.04% of the vote
- Liberal Democrat Party: 12 seats (up 4) with 7.4% of the vote

- Other parties: 22 seats (down 1) with 7.1% of the vote
- Total turnout nationwide was 69% - the highest since the election of 1997

Note 1: In practice, the Speaker is not counted against any political party because he or she is required to be neutral and therefore traditionally he or she is not opposed by other parties in the election.

Note 2: In Northern Ireland, Sinn Fein - which won 7 constituencies in 2017 - does not take its seats.

1. Speak on the British Parliament structure
2. Describe the work and powers of the House of Commons

### **The House of Lords**

This is the upper chamber but the one with less authority. Its main roles are to revise legislation and keep a check on Government by scrutinising its activities. Since 1911, its power to block "money bills" is limited to one month and its power to block other bills is limited to one session, so ultimately it cannot block the will of the House of Commons. Furthermore, since 1945, there has been the Salisbury Convention that the House of Lords will not oppose a measure that was specifically mentioned in the last election manifesto of the political party forming the Government.

The House of Lords is an utterly bizarre institution that has no parallel anywhere in the democratic world. The explanation for the unusual nature of the Lords goes back to

the beginning of this essay: the British political system has evolved very slowly and peacefully and it is not totally logical or democratic.

- There is no fixed number of members in the House of Lords, but currently there are 826 members - many more than in the House of Commons, more than the combined houses of the American Congress or the Indian Parliament (although both of these nations have a federal system), and the second biggest legislative body in the world (after the Chinese National People's Congress which is effectively a rubber-stamping body). The number was actually halved to 666 in the reforms of 1999 but, since then, successive Prime Ministers (especially David Cameron) have been adding new life peers much faster than members are dying. Indeed the last (Coalition) Government added over 100. Ironically the size of the House of Lords continues to rise at the same time as the House of Commons has legislated to reduce its size.

- Historically most members of the House of Lords have been what we called hereditary peers. This meant that years ago a king or queen nominated a member of the aristocracy to be a member of the House and, since then, the right to sit in the House has passed through the family from generation to generation. Clearly this is totally undemocratic and the last Labour Government abolished the right of all but 92 of these hereditary peers to sit in the House.

- Almost all the other members of today's House of Lords are what we call life peers. This means that they have been chosen by the Queen, on the advice of the Government, to sit in the House for as long as they live, but afterwards no member of their family has the right to sit in the House. Almost 200 are former Members of Parliament. Others are distinguished figures in fields such as education, health and social policy.

- A small number of other members - 26 - are archbishops and bishops of the Church of England. The archbishops of Canterbury and York and the bishops of London, Durham and Winchester automatically take seats in the Lords, while the further 21 seats are allocated on the basis of length of service. Iran is the only other country in the world that provides automatic seats for senior religious figures in its legislature.

- There is no retirement age for peers and the average age is an incredible 69.

- There is nowhere near sufficient seating capacity in the chamber of the House of Lords for all the peers. Members do not sit at desks (like most legislatures) but on long, red-covered benches and there is only seating capacity for 230 peers out of the total of over 800. Even on a 'whipped' vote, a couple of hundred peers will not turn up.

- House of Lords reform is unfinished business. The Parliament Act of 1911 first raised the prospect of an elected upper house but it has still not happened. There is a cross-party consensus that it should become a mainly elected body, although there is as yet no agreement on the details of the next stage of reform.

1. Describe the functions and the powers of the House of Lords

2. What are life peers?

#### **Text 4**

### **Some distinguishing features of the British Parliamentary system**

- Much of the work of Parliament is done in Committees rather than on the floor of the chamber. The House of Commons has two types of committee:

- Select Committees are appointed for the lifetime of a Parliament, 'shadow' the work of a particular Government Department, conduct investigations, receive written and oral evidence, and issue reports. Membership is made up only of backbenchers and reflects proportionately the balance of the parties in the Commons.

- General Committees (previously known as Standing Committees) are temporary bodies, most of them Public Bill Committees formed to examine the detail of a particular piece of proposed legislation and consider amendments to the Bill. Membership includes Government and Opposition spokes persons on the subject matter of the Bill and overall membership reflects proportionately the balance of the parties in the Commons.

- The House of Lords only has Select Committees (it does not need Standing Committees because the details of Bills are considered on the floor of the chamber).

- Finally there are some Joint Committees of the Commons and the Lords.

- Discussion and debate involve quite a gladiatorial or confrontational approach. This is reflected in the physical shape of the chambers. Whereas most legislatures are semi-circular, both the House of Commons and the House of Lords are rectangular with the Government party sitting on one side and the Opposition parties sitting on the other side. The House of Lords alone has cross-benches for independent peers. It is quite normal for speakers in debates to be interrupted by other members, especially of another party, and, in the Commons, cheering and jeering is a regular occurrence.

- In the Commons, there is a Prime Minister's Question (PMQ) Time for 30 minutes at 12 noon every

Wednesday. Questions can be asked on any subject. This is frequently a heated affair with the Leader of the Opposition trying to embarrass the Prime Minister and it is the one part of the week's proceedings guaranteed to attract the interest of the media. In his book "A Journey", former Prime Minister Tony Blair wrote: "PMQs was the most nerve-wracking, discombobulating, nail-biting, bowel-moving, terror-inspiring, courage-draining experience in my prime ministerial life, without question."

- The Government is normally assured of a majority in the House of Commons for any measure or vote. This is mainly because in the Commons there is a strong 'whipping' system in which political parties tell their members how to vote on every significant division though a weekly set of instructions. The importance of actually being present to vote in the manner instructed depends on whether the 'whip' is one-line, two-line or - the most serious - three-line. Even when there is a rebellion by members of the majority party, the Government usually obtains its wish because all Ministers and their Parliamentary Private Secretaries (PPSs) are required to vote for the Government or resign their Ministerial or PPS position. This is called 'the payroll vote' (although PPS are not actually paid to be a PPS) and currently around 120 MPs or 22% of the Commons make up this block vote.

- The official record of the proceedings of the Commons and the Lords is called Hansard. The press and broadcasters are present all the time and live audio and visual broadcasting can take place at any time.

1. Speak on distinguishing features of the British Parliamentary system

2. Describe the work of committees

## **THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS**

In the British political system, almost all legislation is proposed by the Government and much of it comes from promises made in the manifesto of the relevant political party at the last election. At the beginning of each annual session of the Parliament, the main Bills to be considered are announced by the Queen in a speech opening that year's session of Parliament.

All legislation has to be approved by both Houses of Parliament.

In each House of Parliament, a proposed piece of legislation - called a Bill - goes through the following stages:

- First Reading - the Bill is introduced with simply a reading by a Minister of the long title of the Bill
- Second Reading - the general principles of the Bill are debated by all the members of the House and a formal vote is taken
- Committee Stage - each clause and schedule of the Bill, plus amendments to them and any new clauses or schedules, is examined in detail, in the Commons by a small, specially chosen group of members meeting as Public Bill Committee or in the Lords by the members as a whole on the floor of the House
- Report Stage - the changes made to the Bill in the Committee are reported to and debated by the whole House which is invited to consider the Bill as a whole, approve the changes by the Committee, and consider any further proposed changes that might be suggested

- Third Reading - the final version of the Bill is considered by the whole House in a short debate (in the Commons without the facility for further amendments)
- Royal Assent - the Crown gives assent to the Bill which then becomes an Act, the provisions becoming law either immediately or at a date specified in the Act or at a date specified by what is called a Commencement Order

Several points are worth noting about the legislative process:

- Under normal circumstances, all these stages must be completed in both Houses in one session of Parliament; otherwise the process must begin all over again.
- Debates on most Bills are timetabled through a programme motion (when Government and Opposition agree) or an allocation of time motion which is popularly known as a 'guillotine' motion (when Government and Opposition do not agree).
- As well as almost all legislation coming from the Government, almost all successful amendments originate from the Government.
- Ultimately, exactly the same text of a Bill must be approved by both Houses of Parliament. If the House of Lords approves an amendment to a Bill from the House of Commons, then the Bill returns to the Commons for further consideration. Usually the Lords amendment is not accepted by the Commons which is, after all, the elected chamber with the democratic mandate. If the Lords insists on passing the amendment - or something like it - again, then the process of the Bill passing back and forth between the two Houses is known colloquially as "ping-pong".
- The House of Lords has much more limited legislative powers than the House of Commons. Money Bills

can only be initiated in the Commons and the Lords can only reject legislation from the Commons for one year. Furthermore there is a convention - called the Salisbury Convention - that the Lords does not block legislation in fulfillment of the election manifesto of the elected Government.

This process of enacting legislation applies to what is called primary legislation which starts as a Bill and finally become an Act. Another type of legislation is called secondary (or delegated) legislation which is usually more detailed. The power to make specific pieces of secondary legislation comes from specific pieces of primary legislation. A piece of secondary legislation - formally called an Order-in-Council - is not even debated unless it is particularly controversial and then it cannot be amended but simply approved or opposed. In practice, the last time Parliament rejected a piece of secondary legislation was in 1979.

In recent years, the number of Bills passed by Parliament has remained broadly constant at around 50 a year. However, these Bills have become longer and, in the past few years, about 3,000 pages of primary legislation, as well as around 13,000 pages of secondary legislation, have been processed by Parliament. The reality, therefore, is that Parliament provides increasingly less scrutiny of a lot of legislation. This situation could become even worse as Parliament attempts to deal with all the legislation needed to take the UK out of the European Union (Brexit).

1. Describe the stages the legislative process
2. Speak on the procedure of debates

## **Text 5**

## **POLITICAL PARTIES**

The idea of political parties first took form in Britain and the Conservative Party claims to be the oldest political party in the world. Political parties began to form during the English civil wars of the 1640s and 1650s. First, there were Royalists and Parliamentarians; then Tories and Whigs. Whereas the Whigs wanted to curtail the power of the monarch, the Tories - today the Conservatives - were seen as the patriotic party.

Today there are four major political parties in the British parliamentary system:

- The Conservative Party (frequently called the Tories) - the centre-Right party, currently led by Theresa May, which since 2010 has been in Government either in coalition (2010-2015) or alone (since 2015)
- The Labour Party - the centre-Left party, led by Jeremy Corbyn, which was last in Government from 1997 to 2010
- The Scottish National Party - the party supporting Scottish independence, which is led by Nicola Sturgeon
- The Liberal Democrat Party (known as the Lib Dems) - the centrist, libertarian party, led by Vince Cable, which was the junior member of the Coalition Government of 2010-2015

In recent years, Britain has seen the rise of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) led by Nigel Farage until May 2015, which was formed in 1993 but achieved some spectacular performances in local and European elections in May 2014. In the general election of May 2015, it won 12.6%

of the vote but, in the general election of June 2017, its vote collapsed to a mere 1.8%.

In addition to these five parties, there are some much smaller UK parties (notably the Green Party) and some parties which operate specifically in Wales (Plaid Cymru) or Northern Ireland (such as the Democratic Unionist Party for the loyalists and Sinn Fein for the nationalists).

Each political party chooses its leader in a different way, but all involve all the Members of Parliament of the party and all the individual members of that party. By convention, the leader of the political party with the largest number of members in the House of Commons becomes the Prime Minister (formally at the invitation of the Queen).

Political parties are an all-important feature of the British political system because:

- The three main UK political parties in the UK have existed for a century or more and have a strong and stable 'brand image'.
  - It is virtually impossible for someone to be elected to the House of Commons without being a member of an established political party.
  - All political parties strongly 'whip' their elected members which means that, on the vast majority of issues, Members of Parliament of the same party vote as a 'block'.

Having said this, at least until the 2017 general election, the influence of the three main UK political parties was not as dominant as it was in the 1940s and 1950s because:

- The three parties have smaller memberships than they did, since voters are much less inclined to join a political party.
- The three parties secure a lower overall percentage of the total vote, since smaller parties between them now take a growing share of the vote.
- Voters are much less 'tribal', not supporting the same party at every election, and much more likely to 'float', voting for different parties at successive elections.
- The ideological differences between the parties are less than they were, with the parties adopting more 'pragmatic' positions on many issues.

For decades, therefore, the combined share of the vote taken by Conservatives and Labour diminished as the two-party model fractured. The last election dramatically reversed this trend as the two parties took 82.4% of the votes. The Liberal Democrats, the Greens and especially the UK Independence Party all did badly and now only have a mere 13 seats between them.

In the past, class was a major determinant of voting intention in British politics, with most working class electors voting Labour and most middle class electors voting Conservative. These days, class is much less important because:

- Working class numbers have shrunk and now represent only 43% of the electorate.
- Except at the extremes of wealth, lifestyles are more similar.
- Class does not determine voting intention so much as values, trust, competence and (in Scotland) nationalism).

In the British political system, there is a broad consensus between the major parties on:

- the rule of law
- the free market economy
- the National Health Service (NHS)
- membership of NATO and possession of a nuclear deterrent

The main differences between the political parties concern:

- how to tackle poverty and inequality
- the levels and forms of taxation
- the extent of state intervention in the economy
- the balance between collective rights and individual rights
- the terms of the UK's departure from the European Union

1. Speak on the main political parties

2. Describe the main differences between the political parties

## **Text 6**

### **THE U.K. GOVERNMENT**

All Government Ministers have to be a member of either the House of Commons (most of them) or the House of Lords (the remainder of them) and every Government Department will have at least one Minister in the Lords, so that the Department can speak in either House as necessary. The

number of Ministers varies from administration to administration, but typically there will be around 120, the 20 or so most senior being Cabinet Ministers. The Ministerial and Other Salaries Act, passed in 1975, limits prime ministers to 109 ministerial salaries being paid at any one time with a maximum of 95 ministers in the House of Commons.

Historically most British governments have been composed of ministers from a single political party which had an overall majority of seats in the House of Commons and the 'first-past-the-post' (FPTP) electoral system greatly facilitates and indeed promotes this outcome. However, occasionally there have been minority governments or coalition governments.

For five years, the UK had its first coalition government in 65 years when, in May 2010, the Conservatives went into coalition with the Liberal Democrats because in the General Election they did not secure a majority of the seats. In this coalition, the Lib Dems had 17 ministers led by the Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg.

However, at the General Election of May 2015, the Conservative Party won an overall majority and the normal arrangement resumed of all Ministers coming from the same party. Then, at the General Election of June 2017, the Conservatives failed to win an overall majority resulting in what is called a 'hung parliament' and so the party is governing with the support of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) of Northern Ireland. This is not a formal coalition but a 'confidence and supply' agreement in which the DUP has undertaken - in return for a comprehensive package of measures and funding - to support the government on key votes.

## **The Prime Minister**

The UK does not have a President. Constitutionally the head of state is the monarch who is a hereditary member of the Royal Family. However, the monarch has very few formal powers and stays above party politics. He or she receives a weekly oral report from the Prime Minister, a tradition which began with King George I in 1714 because this German had struggled to follow the English deliberations of his Cabinet.

Therefore, in practice, the most important person in the British political system is the Prime Minister. The first modern Prime Minister was Sir Robert Walpole who served from 1721-1742, so the current PM Theresa May is the 54th (and only the second woman to hold the post). In theory, the Prime Minister simply chooses the ministers who run Government departments and chairs the Cabinet - the collection of the most senior of those Ministers. In practice, however, the Prime Minister is a very powerful figure and increasingly has been behaving much like a president in other political systems, especially in the area of foreign policy.

I have personally met four British Prime Ministers: Harold Wilson, Jim Callaghan, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown.

The official residence of the Prime Minister is at 10 Downing Street in central London - a location I have visited about a dozen times - and the country residence of the Prime Minister is at Chequers in Buckinghamshire.

One British Prime Minister has been assassinated: Spencer Perceval was shot dead in the House of Commons in 1812.

## **Government Departments**

The most important political departments are called:

- The Treasury - In most countries, this would be called the Ministry of Finance. It is responsible for the raising of all taxes and the control of all government expenditure plus the general management of the economy. The head of the Treasury is called the Chancellor of the Exchequer and is currently Philip Hammond.

- The Home Office - In most countries, this would be called the Ministry of the Interior. It is responsible for criminal matters, policing, and immigration. The Head of the Home Office is called the Home Secretary and is currently Amber Rudd.

- The Foreign and Commonwealth Office - In most countries, this would be called the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is responsible for all international relationships, especially membership of the European Union. The head of the Foreign Office is called the Foreign Secretary and is currently Boris Johnson.

Many other UK Government Departments are similar to those in other countries and cover subjects such as education, health, transport, industry, and justice. However, there are also small departments for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

When talking about the British Government, the media will often use the term Whitehall because a number of

Government Departments are located along a central London street very close to Parliament called Whitehall.

## **Government Ministers**

All Government Departments are run by Ministers who are either Members of the House of Commons or Members of the House of Lords. There are three classes of Minister:

- Secretary of State - This is usually the head of a Department.
- Minister of State - This is a middle-ranking minister.
- Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State - This is the most junior class of minister.

The Prime Minister and all the Secretaries of State together comprise an executive body of government called the Cabinet. The Cabinet meets usually once a week on Tuesday morning. Cabinet meetings are confidential and all members are bound by any decision that it takes in a practice called collective responsibility. An extensive system of Cabinet Committees considers matters either before they go to Cabinet or (more usually) instead of them going to Cabinet.

Although all Ministers are appointed by the Prime Minister and report to him, ultimately all Ministers are accountable to Parliament:

- About once a month, they have to face questions in the House of Commons about the work of the Department.

- Each government department has a special committee of the House of Commons which watches the work of that Department.

- Any government initiative or important statement concerning a Department must be the subject of an appearance in the House of Commons by a minister from that Department.

### **The civil service**

- Each Secretary of State is able to appoint a couple of political advisers – formally known as Special Advisers – to serve him or her. I was a Special Adviser to Merlyn Rees in the Northern Ireland Office from 1974-1976 and in the Home Office from 1976-1978, while my son Richard was a Special Adviser to Ruth Kelly in the Department for Education & Skills in 2005 and a Special Adviser to Douglas Alexander at the Department for International Development in 2009-2010.

- But Special Advisers are simply advisers. They have no line management responsibilities in respect of the staff of the Department. Besides these tiny number of Special Advisers, Government Departments are run by civil servants who are recruited in a totally open manner and serve governments of any political parties. The independence and professionalism of the British civil service are fundamental features of the British political system. My son Richard once worked as a civil servant in what was then the Department of Trade & Industry and my half-brother Chris was an official in the Treasury for five years.

1. Describe the structure of the UK Government
2. What are the powers of Prime Minister?

3. What are the main Government Departments?
4. Speak on the civil service activities

## Grammar review

### Exercise 1. Use the negative form

- *The movie was very interesting* — Фильм был очень интересным.
- *We will come tomorrow* — Мы придем завтра.
- *I recommend this book* — Я рекомендую эту книгу.
- *My son slept well last night* — Мой сынок хорошо спал вчера ночью.

### Exercise 2. Form the negative sentence

#### Example:

Он больше никогда не обидит тебя — *He, (never, to hurt), you again.*

***He will never hurt you again.***

- Ничто не пахнет так классно как свежие цветы — *(Nothing, to smell), as good as fresh flowers.*
- Коалы не водятся больше нигде в мире — *Koalas, (to exist, nowhere else), in the world.*
- Никто не может мне помочь — *(Nobody, can, to help), me.*

### Exercise 3. Form the general question to the sentence

#### Example:

Кролики делают норки — *Rabbits make burrows.*  
Делают ли кролики норки? — ***Do rabbits make burrows?***

• Вы были заняты вчера — *You were busy yesterday.*

Были ли вы заняты вчера? — \_\_\_\_

• Мама готовит ужин — *Mom is making dinner.*

Готовит ли мама ужин? — \_\_\_\_

• Тодд починил мою машину — *Todd has fixed my car.*

Починил ли Тодд мою машину? — \_\_\_\_

Exercise 4. Make direct question from the reported one

**Example:**

Папа спрашивает, во сколько наш рейс — *Dad is asking what time our flight is.*

Во сколько наш рейс? — ***What time is our flight?***

• Я знаю, откуда идет этот запах — *I know where this smell is coming from.*

Откуда идет этот запах? — \_\_\_\_

Мы не представляли, насколько жарко там будет — *We did not realize how hot it would be there.*

Насколько жарко там было? — \_\_\_\_

• Никто не понял, как это произошло — *Nobody understood how it happened.*

Как это произошло? — \_\_\_\_

• Скажи мне, почему ты так расстроена — *Tell me why you are so upset.*

Почему ты так расстроена? — \_\_\_\_

Exercise 5. Define the types of conditional sentences (0, 1, 2, 3)

• *If my team wins, I'll buy you a beer* — Если моя команда победит, я выставлю тебе пиво.

- *If the flight had left as scheduled, we wouldn't have been able to make the connection* — Если бы рейс вылетел по расписанию, мы бы не смогли поспеть на стыковку.

- *If I lived downtown, I wouldn't need a car* — Если бы я жил в центре, мне была бы не нужна машина.

- *If you like seafood, check out this restaurant* — Если ты любишь морепродукты, наведайся в этот ресторан.

#### Exercise 6. Make conditional sentences (type 0)

##### **Example:**

Если вы передумаете, я верну вам деньги — *If, you, (to change), your mind, I, (to return) your money. If you change your mind, I will return your money.*

- Если ты не прекратишь пить, я сломаю твои удочки — *If, you, (not, to stop), drinking, I, (to snap), your fishing rods.*

- Если посылка придет вовремя, я поеду в отпуск с новым фотоаппаратом — *If, the package, (to arrive), on time, I, (to go), on vacation, with a new camera.*

- Если они заменят радиатор, я не стану подавать жалобу — *If, they, (to replace), the radiator, I, (not, to be filing), a complaint.*

#### Exercise 7. Make conditional sentences (type 1)

##### **Example:**

Если бы у нас было молоко, я могла бы напечь блинов — *If, we, (to have), milk, I, (could, to make), some pancakes.*

*If we had milk, I could make some pancakes.*

- Если бы люди могли читать мысли, нам были бы не нужны телефоны — *If, people, (could, to read), minds, we (not, would, to need) telephones.*
- Если бы я был президентом, я бы запретил бибиканье — *If, I, (to be), president, I, (would, to prohibit), honking.*
- Если бы лед не плавал, наш мир был бы совершенно другим — *If, ice, (not, to float), our world, (would, to be), totally different.*
- Было бы идеально, если бы ты смог заскочить вечером — *It, (would, to be), ideal, if, you, (could, to stop by), tonight.*

#### Exercise 8. Define the type of conditional sentences

*"If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything."* — *Mark Twain*

"Если вы говорите правду, вам не надо ничего помнить." — Марк Твен

*"If we couldn't laugh, we would all go insane."* — *Robert Frost*

"Если бы мы не могли смеяться, мы бы все сошли с ума." — Роберт Фрост

*"If I'd observed all the rules I'd never have got anywhere."* — *Marilyn Monroe*

"Если бы я соблюдала все правила, я бы никогда ничего не добилась." — Мэрилин Монро

#### Exercise 9. Find the principle clause

- *Unless it's too cold, I am going skiing tomorrow* — Если только не будет слишком холодно, я завтра иду кататься на лыжах.

- *People tend to overeat when they are drunk* — Люди склонны переедать, когда они "под шафе".
- *Before paper was invented, other materials were used for writing* — До того как изобрели бумагу, для письма использовались другие материалы.
- *Yogis like to sleep on nails, because it is harder to get up from screws* — Йоги любят спать на гвоздях, потому что с шурупов труднее вставать. (КВНская шутка)

Exercise 10. Find the relative clause

- *We chose a small restaurant where the prices seemed reasonable* — Мы выбрали маленький ресторанчик, где цены выглядели разумно.
- *The couple that wins tonight advances to the finals* — Пара, которая сегодня победит, выходит в финал.
- *Our son, who was five at the time, desperately wanted a dog* — Наш сын, которому тогда было пять лет, сильно хотел собаку.
- *I remember the day when he finally proposed to me* — Я помню день, когда он наконец сделал мне предложение.

## **СПИСОК ИСПОЛЬЗУЕМОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ**

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