

UK Elections Teacher's Notes **A2**

This A2-level article enables pupils to understand simply the electoral system in the United Kingdom as both the UK and France go to the polls.

It could be part of a topic for an EPI « *Information, communication, citoyenneté* » on different electoral systems, differences between a monarchy and a democracy, in connection with the *parcours du citoyen* and *EMC: L'exercice de la citoyenneté dans une démocratie (rôle du vote)*.

Vocabulary and structures.

- Elections, government
- Culture: United Kingdom's electoral process and forming a government
- Numbers (dates, percentages)
- Simple past and simple present

Interaction

- We suggest video projecting the picture of Theresa May and asking pupils if they have already seen this person before (the news, European country...). Then have them make suggestions about the content of the article from the picture and the title.

Reading + speaking

- **Activity A** has pupils check they have understood the main vocabulary words and the general idea of the article.
- **Activity B** helps pupils around the architecture of the British government and its ties with the Queen.
- **Activity C** gets the pupils to check another aspect of the article (majority/minority and timing) while reviewing how to say and spell numbers.

Background information

- We have deliberately kept the information in the article as simple as possible as pupils may already only have a shaky grasp on how elections work in France, and at this

level of language learning, each new detail is a further difficulty. But in case pupils want to know more, see the documents provided by the UK Parliament in the Webpicks. <http://www.speakeasy-news.com/teaching-about-the-british-electoral-system>

- This information may come in helpful when answering pupils' questions:
- **Number of parties:** There are 11 parties represented in the current parliament. Apart from the three national generalist parties Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrats, there are two "single issue" parties: the United Kingdom Independence Party and the Green Party. And parties who only field seats outside England: the Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru in Wales and four different Northern Irish parties: the Democratic Unionist Party, Sinn Féin, the Ulster Unionist Party and the Social Democratic and Labour Party.

- **Royal Consent:** Theoretically, the Queen doesn't have to give her consent to laws that are passed by Parliament, but it's unheard of her to refuse.

- The **House of Lords** is made up of :
 - 686 life peers (people who are nominated for the personal qualities and service to the community);

- 90 hereditary peers (nobles who have inherited the peerage and pass it on to their children, but who no longer pass on the right to sit in the House of Lords. Most hereditary peers were removed from the House in a 1999 reform. They chose 90 of their number to continue representing them.)
- 25 bishops representing different churches.

To go further (listening + speaking + writing)

■ We've suggested some sites and videos in our Webpicks <http://www.speakeasy-news.com/teaching-about-the-british-electoral-system>. You could have pupils watch the video(s) of your choice and organise group comprehension and discussion around UK elections. Since this school year has been dominated by US, French and UK elections, it could be worthwhile comparing election systems (*using whereas, both, like, unlike...*) and what they find most fitting (citizen voters, presidential electors, president, prime minister, monarch...). Pupils could also come up with a programme to be elected as a school representative in the CVC (*Conseil de Vie Collégienne*).

Solutions

A. 1. Theresa May 2. Conservative 3. leader
4. the House of Commons / the House of Lords / the Monarch 5. Queen Elizabeth II
6. laws, 7. signs 8. Conservative party / Labour party 9. majority.

B. 1. left-wing: Labour / centre: Liberal Democrats / right-wing: Conservatives

2. A. 1e, 2c, 3a, 4d, 5f, 6g, 7b, 8h

2. B. Constituency

Voters vote for one **candidate**:

The **candidate** with the most votes becomes the **Member of Parliament** for the **constituency**.

House of Commons

650 Members of Parliament

The **political party** with the majority of MPs forms the Government.

The **monarch of the UK** asks the leader of the Government party to become the **Prime Minister**.

C. Saying and writing numbers.

1. a. 3 b. 5 c. 4 d. 1 e. 6 f. 2

2. a. 4 b. 3 c. 5 d. 1 e. 6 f. 2

3. a. 36.9% b. 2020 c. 18 d. 326 e. 650