

A The British political system

In the British political **system**, **elections** must be **held** every five years, though it can be sooner than that in some situations. The UK is divided into 650 political areas, and in each area people **vote for one** person **representing** the **political party** they want to see **in power**. The **politician** with the most **votes** becomes the **Member of Parliament** (known as an **MP**) for that area. **Parliament**, therefore, has 650 MPs, and the party with the **majority** of MPs usually forms the **government**. The leader of that party also becomes **prime minister**.

SPOTLIGHT *politics*

Politics is the work and ideas that are connected with government. A **politician** is somebody who works in politics, and a **political party** is a group of people with the same ideas who want to win an election, e.g. in the UK, the **Labour Party** and the **Conservative Party**.

GLOSSARY

system	a set of ideas or rules for organizing sth
election [C, U]	the time of choosing a Member of Parliament, President, etc. by voting
elect v	
hold an election	organize an election
vote (for sb/sth)	choose sb/sth in an election vote n
represent	speak or do sth in place of another person or a group
in power	in political control of a country
Member of Parliament (pl Members of Parliament)	a person who has been elected to represent people from a particular area in Parliament ALSO MP
parliament	the group of people elected to make the laws in a country
majority	the largest number or part of sth OPP minority
government	the group of people in control of a country
prime minister (OR PM)	the leader of the government in some countries

1 True or false about the British system? Write T or F. Correct the sentences that are false.

- ▶ In the UK, elections must be held every four years. F - In the UK, elections must be held every five years.
- 1 Politics is the work and ideas that are connected with governing a country, a town, etc.
- 2 People can only vote for one person in UK elections.
- 3 Two or three people may be elected in each area.
- 4 If you are a Member of Parliament, you are in the government.
- 5 The leader of the largest political party in parliament becomes prime minister.
- 6 The party with the minority of elected MPs usually forms the government.

2 Complete the sentences.

- ▶ PM is an abbreviation of prime minister.
- 1 How often does your country elections for parliament?
- 2 My uncle was as an MP a few years ago.
- 3 In the UK, the Labour Party was in from 1997 to 2010.
- 4 Who did you for in the last election?
- 5 from all the political parties agreed with the idea.
- 6 She had over 50% of the , so it was a that voted for her.
- 7 The Labour party is one of the main in the UK.
- 8 Politicians the people who elect them.
- 9 Is the British political similar to the one in your country?

3 ABOUT YOUR COUNTRY Write your answers, or ask another student.

- 1 How often does your country usually hold elections?
- 2 Which political party is in power at the moment?
- 3 How long have they been in power?
- 4 What is the title of the leader of the party?
- 5 How many people are there in parliament?



TEST YOURSELF

B Political objectives

The government is now preparing for the next election, and today the prime minister will **focus on** education and the **need for** more young people to go to university.

The Transport Minister is also **due to announce** today a new transport **policy**, including special **measures** which aim to **persuade** drivers to leave their cars at home.

The government has already said that one of its **objectives** will be to **put forward** ideas for new laws to **protect** immigrant workers.



GLOSSARY

focus (on sth)	give all your attention to sth focus <i>n</i>
need (for sth)	a situation in which you must have or do sth
due to do sth	arranged or expected
announce	say sth officially and in public announcement <i>n</i>
policy	a plan to do sth, agreed by a government, company, etc.
measure (usually <i>pl</i>)	an official action that is done for a special reason
persuade sb (to do sth)	make sb think sth or do sth by giving them good reasons
objective	sth that you want and plan to do SYN aim; aim <i>v</i>
put sth forward	suggest sth for discussion
law	a rule of a country that says what people may or may not do
protect	keep sb/sth safe protection <i>n</i>
immigrant	a person who comes from one country to another country to live there immigration <i>n</i>

4 Cover the glossary. Circle the correct answer.

- ▶ A law is something that people *often do in a country* / *must do in a country*.
- 1 If you announce something, you say it in *public* / *private*.
- 2 If you persuade somebody to do something, they *do* / *don't do* it.
- 3 If you protect somebody, you *keep them safe* / *support and help them*.
- 4 If you focus on something, you *give it your attention* / *decide to do something*.
- 5 Immigration is the process of coming to *visit* / *live in* another country.
- 6 If you put something forward, you *suggest* / *vote for* it.
- 7 An objective is something you *want* / *don't like*.
- 8 A policy is *a plan agreed by a group* / *a political idea you like*.

5 Complete these sentences about language.

- ▶ The noun from the verb **protect** is *protection*.
- 1 The noun from the verb **announce** is
- 2 The noun from the verb **focus** is
- 3 The preposition that follows **focus** is
- 4 Another word for an **aim** is an
- 5 **Persuade** is followed by an object and an
- 6 The noun **need** can be followed by the preposition

6 Complete the words in each sentence.

- ▶ The government has admitted the *need* for a change in its education policy.
- 1 The party has agreed a new p..... on house building, and will a..... it tomorrow in parliament.
- 2 The number of i..... coming to this country from Eastern Europe has fallen.
- 3 The prime minister still has to p..... many of her MPs to agree with her farming policy.
- 4 This week, MPs will consider m..... to reduce air pollution in cities as soon as possible.
- 5 The main a..... of the education policy is to give parents more choice.
- 6 The prime minister is d..... to announce a general election for 18 May.
- 7 In the speech, the prime minister will f..... on health issues and the n..... for more hospital beds.
- 8 The new law gives workers more p..... from bad employers.



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