58 Politics in practice

A A referendum

In 2016 there was a **referendum** in the UK **concerning** membership of the EU: to remain in the EU, or to leave the EU. The **debate divided** the nation and created a huge amount of **conflict**, even within families. Eventually, in a very **closely-fought contest**, there was a **narrow majority** for 'leave' (51.9% versus 48.1%). The **turnout** was high (just over 72% of the **electorate** voted), but that still meant that the outcome was decided by only 37% of the total electorate, and some have questioned, therefore, to what extent the result really represents the democratic **will** of the people. The British government then spent three years trying to **negotiate** an agreement that the British parliament could support.

GLOSSARY

referendum	an occasion when all the people of a country can vote on an important issue
concerning	about sth; involving sb/sth SYN **regarding**
debate	an argument or a discussion expressing different opinions
divide	cause disagreement **division** *n*
conflict	a situation in which people, groups or countries are involved in a serious disagreement
closely	used to indicate that two or more things differ by only a small amount: ***a closely-fought contest*** (= a contest won or likely to be won by a small amount)
contest	a struggle to gain control of sth
majority	the number of votes by which one party wins an election, a discussion, etc: ***a narrow majority***, e.g. 52% OPP ***a clear majority***, e.g. 66%
turnout	the number of people who vote in a particular election
electorate	the people in a country or an area who have the right to vote
will	what sb wants to happen in a particular situation: ***the will of the people***
negotiate	try to reach an agreement by formal discussion **negotiation** *n*

1 Underline the stress on the following words. Use the APP to help you.

concerning debate conflict divide contest
turnout negotiate referendum electorate

2 Replace the underlined words with a word or phrase that keeps the same meaning.

1 The politician refused to answer questions <u>on the subject of</u> his private life. .....
2 They managed to get <u>just over 50% of the votes</u>. .....
3 The issue has <u>caused disagreement across</u> the country. .....
4 The result represented about 70% of the <u>people who have a right to vote</u>. .....
5 The <u>number of people who vote</u> is often low in local elections. .....
6 Both sides will have to <u>discuss this to reach an agreement</u>. .....

3 Complete the sentences.

1 There was a ..... in the UK in 1973 on membership of the Common Market.
2 If banning cars is the ..... of the people, politicians may have to go along with it.
3 The two countries have been in ..... for months now, but nothing has been decided.
4 There has also been a long ..... in the media in Scotland about Scottish independence.
5 The two parties are very ..... matched, so it will be an interesting ..... between them.
6 There has been serious ..... in England for decades over membership of the EU. People have very strong and different opinions.

4 What can you remember? Cover the text and answer the questions.

1 What took place in June 2016 in the UK? .....
2 What was it about? .....
3 How did the people react to this event? .....
4 What was the result? .....
5 How many people voted? .....
6 What happened after that? .....

TEST YOURSELF

LIVEWORKSHEETS

B Coalition government

In a parliamentary system, a **coalition** government is one in which two or even **multiple** political parties **cooperate**, thus reducing the **dominance** of any one party. Broadly speaking, there are two models. The first is to form a coalition before the election. The second is to form a coalition after the election, retaining a party's **core philosophy** and ideals, but then negotiating with other parties to form an administration that can **govern** the country. **Advocates** say that coalition government leads to **consensus**-based politics, which produces **compromise**, while opponents say that no-one gets what they voted for.

GLOSSARY	
coalition	a government formed by two or more parties working together
multiple	involving many different people or things
cooperate (with sb)	work together with sb else in order to achieve sth
dominance	the fact of being more powerful or important than sb else **dominant** *adj*
core	the most important or central part of sth
philosophy	a set of beliefs or an attitude to life that guides sb's behaviour
govern	legally control a country or its people and be responsible for laws, etc.
advocate	a person who supports or speaks in favour of sb/sth, especially a public plan of action **advocate** *v*
consensus	an opinion that all members of a group agree with
compromise	[C] an agreement made between two people or groups in which each side gives up some of the things they want so that both sides are happy at the end; [U] the act of reaching a **compromise**; **compromise** *v*

5 **Is the pronunciation of the underlined letters the same or different? Write *S* or *D*. Use the app to help you.**

1	coalition	coal	.....	5	philosophy	consensus	.....
2	govern	dominance	.....	6	cooperate	soon	.....
3	advocate *n*	advocate *v*	.....	7	compromise	consensus	.....
4	advocate	philosophy	.....	8	compromise	dominant	.....

6 **Complete these words.**

1	gov_____	4	comp_____	7	coal_____
2	coop_____	5	phi_____	8	dom_____
3	advo_____	6	mul_____	9	cons_____

7 **Answer the questions.**

1 What is required for a ***coalition***? _____
2 If you you reach a ***consensus***, how many people agree with you? _____
3 If you ***govern*** a country, how much control do you have? _____
4 If you advocate something, are you ***for it*** or ***against it***? _____
5 Is dominance a fact of being ***richer*** or ***more powerful*** than others? _____
6 If you reach a ***compromise***, what are you prepared to do? _____

8 **Complete the sentences.**

1 It's a complicated government policy and will involve _____ governmental agencies.
2 It's not easy to give up certain things you want and accept certain things you don't, but in the end we all have to _____ sometimes.
3 Whoever gets a majority will have the opportunity to _____ the country.
4 The CDU (Christian Democratic Union) have been the _____ political party in Germany in recent years.
5 If we don't _____ with other groups, we'll never achieve anything.
6 The belief in democracy is at the _____ of their political and moral _____ .
7 The prime minister has always been a strong _____ of personal choice and freedom.
8 If no single party gets a majority, there will have to be some type of _____ to form a government.

TEST YOURSELF

LIVEWORKSHEETS