C1–C2 Politics & Public Affairs Vocabulary Worksheet

Part A. Match the Vocabulary

1. underhanded tactics
2. gain ground
3. cut through the undergrowth
4. pin your hopes on
5. political underworld
6. patently false
7. vast overestimate
8. cheap shot
9. constituency
10. toe the party line
11. stand your ground
12. weigh the circumstances
13. scapegoat
14. subterfuge
15. impunity

Match with:
a. support the official position of a political group
b. obviously untrue
c. dishonest methods used to achieve an aim
d. become more popular or successful
e. carefully consider all factors before deciding
f. someone blamed for a problem they didn't cause
g. secret or deceptive behaviour
h. continue defending your position despite pressure
i. choose one thing/person to place your trust in
j. an unfair criticism or attack
k. freedom from punishment
l. hidden political forces or networks
m. remove obstacles and make progress
n. a much larger estimate than reality
o. the voters represented by a politician

Part B. Complete the Sentences

Use the vocabulary from Part A.

1. The minister refused to change his position and continued to _____ despite criticism.
2. Many voters believe the figures published by the government are a _____.
3. Opposition parties accused the government of using _____ during the campaign.
4. She decided to _____ the new reform programme to solve the crisis.
5. The candidate has started to _____ among younger voters.
6. The article claimed that a shadowy _____ controls key decisions.
7. Before making a judgement, we should _____ carefully.
8. Calling someone unpatriotic without evidence is a _____.
9. The statement that elections are unnecessary is _____.
10. The committee hopes to _____ and simplify the legislation.

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Part C. Political Idioms

Idioms:
• be up to one's ears in
• put up a smokescreen
• like a bolt from the blue
• put all one's eggs in one basket
• barefaced lie

Complete the sentences with the correct idiom.

Part D. Word Formation

Complete the table:

estimate → _____ → estimated
distrust → _____ → distrustful
disenfranchise → _____ → disenfranchised
understate → _____ → understated
mislead → _____ → misleading
burden → _____ → burdensome

Then use three of the new words in your own sentences.

Part E. Error Correction

Each sentence contains one vocabulary mistake. Correct it.

1. The party is gaining hopes among young voters.
2. The minister refused to toe his ground.
3. The newspaper published a patently estimate.
4. The opposition accused the government of a barefaced tactics.
5. Many citizens feel burdened with distrustful in institutions.

Part F. Discussion Questions

Use at least two vocabulary items in each answer.

1. Why do some political movements gain ground rapidly?
2. Can a politician ever justify using underhanded tactics?
3. Why do voters sometimes pin their hopes on charismatic leaders?
4. Should politicians who spread patently false information face legal consequences?
5. How can citizens cut through the undergrowth of modern political communication?

Part G. Advanced Synonyms

Match:
underhanded tactics – deceptive methods
cheap shot – unfair attack
gain ground – make progress
subterfuge – trickery
deleterious – harmful
expediency – practicality
impunity – freedom from punishment

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scapegoat – fall guy

Part H. C1–C2 Gap Fill

Words:
underhanded • constituency • gain ground • subterfuge • scapegoat • impunity • patently false • stand their ground

Complete the text using all the words.

Part I. Speaking Challenge

Role A: Government Minister – defend a controversial policy.
Role B: Journalist – challenge the minister.

Try to use:
cheap shot, gain ground, stand your ground, patently false,
underhanded tactics, constituency, subterfuge.

Extension (C2)

Write a 250-word opinion article:

'In the age of social media, citizens find it increasingly difficult to cut through the undergrowth of political communication.'

Use at least 8 expressions from the worksheet.

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