

**МИНИСТЕРСТВО НАУКИ И ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ  
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ**

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**UK GOVERNMENT: CONSTITUTIONAL  
MONARCHY AND PARLIAMENTARY  
DEMOCRACY**

Учебно-методическое пособие

Рекомендовано методической комиссией Института международных  
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Рецензент: канд. псих. наук, доцент **М.В. Архипова**

Учебно-методическое пособие представляет собой тематический сборник текстов общественно-политической направленности по государственно-политической системе Великобритании.

Цель пособия – обучение чтению специальной литературы и анализу текста, развитие речевых навыков подготовленной и спонтанной речи, развитие навыков аудирования, а также творческого письма. Для решения этих задач тексты пособия снабжены лексическими упражнениями, вопросами для обсуждения и инструментами для ведения дискуссий, такими как модели аргументации.

Пособие соответствует профессионально-образовательным программам студентов-международников и регионоведов и учитывает содержание курса страноведения и курсов политологии, истории и теории международных отношений.

Ответственный за выпуск: председатель методической комиссии ИМОМИ  
ННГУ к.и.н., доцент Бушуева С.В.

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## Введение

Учебно-методическое пособие «UK GOVERNMENT: CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY AND PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY» представляет собой тематический сборник текстов общественно-политической направленности по государственно-политической системе Великобритании.

Данное пособие состоит из 4 частей и строится по тематическому принципу и рассматривает основные элементы политической и государственной системы Великобритании. Данное пособие широко представляет страноведческий аспект, позволяющий воссоздать современное государственное устройство Соединенного Королевства. Специальная лексика подается в интересной и легкой для усвоения форме, закрепляется в многочисленных упражнениях, нацеленных на формирование всех видов речевой деятельности. Каждый раздел содержит материалы разнообразной стилистической направленности, что дает возможность обучать студентов работе с разнотипными текстами. В пособие также включены интерактивные задания на аудирование с привлечением интернет ресурсов.

Учитывая современные потребности обучающихся, пособие ставит целью научить молодых специалистов – международных и регионоведов общаться с коллегами на профессиональные темы, проводить дискуссии, участвовать в диспутах, обсуждать и убеждать. Для решения этих задач тексты пособия снабжены вопросами для обсуждения и инструментами для ведения дискуссий.

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## *Unit I*

# **CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY: CROWN IN PARLIAMENT**

### *Pre-reading guesses*

#### **1. Read the head of the unit. Analyze the concept of *monarchy*.**

- a. What words and phrases are related to ‘monarchy’?
- b. Study the dictionary definitions of ‘monarchy’:
  - **Monarchy is a government in which a single person rules, with powers varying from absolute dictatorship to the merely ceremonial.**  
*Mac Millan Dictionary*
  - **Monarchy is a government having a hereditary chief of state with life tenure and powers varying from nominal to absolute.**  
*Webster’s New World College Dictionary*
  - **Monarchy is the system in which a country is ruled by a king or queen.**  
*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*

- c. Underline the similarities and circle the differences.
- d. In groups of three or four compare and contrast your notes. Discuss and report back to the class the different points of view.

#### **2. Answer the following questions:**

1. What types of monarchy do you know? Speak about the distribution of power in each type.
2. What does *dynastic monarchy* mean?
3. What does the concept *constitutional monarchy* mean?
4. What countries have abolished monarchy?
5. What are the most enduring monarchies of modern Europe?
6. Great Britain is a parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarch without a written constitution. What paradoxes do you see in the government type of the country? How can you explain them?
7. How do you understand it that “the reigning monarch is not only the head of state but also a symbol of the unity of the nation”?
8. Do you agree that the monarch in Great Britain is a politically important figure?

## ***Listening task 1***

**Watch the videos and answer the questions:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIOfEHIVp\\_c&t=1s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIOfEHIVp_c&t=1s)

### ***Are monarchies the thing of the past?***

1. How many countries have a monarch as the Head of State?
2. How many monarchs have gone out of business since 2000?
3. How many monarchies have stopped existing since the 1900s?
4. Why does the British monarchy keep alive?
5. How do Thai monarchs undermine democracy?
6. What power do monarchs have in Saudi Arabia and why do they flourish?
7. Why do most monarchs stay out of politics?
8. Comment on the statement: *Monarchs have mastered the art of tight-rope walking.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EsKfw89djgg>

### ***Why do we still need monarchies?***

1. How many nations in the world have monarchies?
2. What is the difference between constitutional and absolute monarchies?
3. What parts of the world are the majority of absolute monarchies situated in?
4. What is the difference between constitutional monarch as the Head of State and the Head of Government?
5. Can the British monarch declare war?
6. Why did the parliament of Luxembourg strip the monarch of his legislative role in 2008?
7. What is considered to be the most important royal duty today?
8. Why are royal families invaluable from the cultural point of view?

## ***Talking point 1***

1. Is there a place for monarchies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?
2. Should Britain have an elected head of state, like many other Western democracies?
3. Are monarchies an unwelcome reminder of times when most people were denied political rights and subject to arbitrary rule? Or are they a welcome symbol of national traditions and social stability?

4. Are monarchies a cause for celebration?
5. Are monarchs nothing more than symbolic figureheads with little or no influence?
6. Do you wish your country had a monarch?

### ***Reading task***

**Before reading the text do the following UK quiz:**

#### **BRITISH MONARCHY QUIZ**

1. Queen Elizabeth II is the 40th monarch since William the Conqueror. When did William the Conqueror obtain the Crown of England?
  - A. 1066
  - B. 1068
  - C. 1073
  - D. 1081
  
2. The English Church was in full communion with the Holy See or the Roman Catholic Church until 1534. In the reign of what monarch did England break away from the Roman Catholic Church?
  - A. Edward VI
  - B. Henry VIII
  - C. George III
  - D. Mary I
  
3. What is the charter that was issued in the year 1215 that started to put an end to absolutism and paved the way to constitutional law?
  - A. Act of Settlement
  - B. Scots militia
  - C. Magna Carta
  - D. Act of Union
  
4. Which one holds the legacy of being the last British sovereign to withhold the Royal Assent?
  - A. Anne
  - B. George III
  - C. Joint rulers William and Mary
  - D. Victoria
  
5. The United Kingdom's motto is "Dieu et mon droit." What does it mean?
  - A. God is to my right

- B. God is my light
- C. God is my right
- D. God and my right

6. By 1534, the English Church was already split from Rome. What religion did it adhere to?

- A. Anglicanism
- B. Lutheranism
- C. Islam
- D. Eastern Orthodoxy

7. The Gunpowder Plot was a conspiracy against which monarch?

- A. Elizabeth I
- B. James I
- C. Mary I
- D. Edward VI

8. Who is the first queen regnant of the United Kingdom?

- A. Elizabeth I
- B. Mary I
- C. Anne
- D. Victoria

9. How old was Elizabeth II when she became Queen in 1952?

- A. 25
- B. 27
- C. 29
- D. 31

10. The British monarch is NOT the Head of...

- A. English church
- B. Armed forces
- C. Cabinet of ministers
- D. Nation

## ***Reading 1***

### ***Monarchy in Britain***

Britain is a democracy, yet its people are not, as one might expect in a democracy, constitutionally in control of the state. The constitutional situation is an apparently contradictory one. As a result of a historical process, the people of Britain are subjects of the Crown, accepting the Queen as the head of the state. Yet even the Queen is not sovereign in any substantial sense since she receives her



authority from Parliament, and is subject to its direction in almost all matters. In short, she “reigns” but doesn’t rule. Technically, if confusingly, British sovereignty collectively resides in the three elements of Parliament: the Crown, and Parliament’s two chambers: the House of Lords and the House of Commons.

The curious situation came about as a result of a long struggle for power between the Crown and Parliament during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. In 1689 Parliament won the struggle, because it controlled most of the national wealth. It agreed to allow the Crown to continue to function within certain limits, and subject to Parliament’s control. No constitution was written down either then or since.

The state – itself sometimes called the Crown – operates on precedent, custom and common sense and the British have traditionally felt uncomfortable with a constitution based either on logic or theory.

The reigning monarch is not only the head of state but also a symbol of the unity of the nation. The monarchy is Britain’s oldest secular institution, its continuity for over 1000 years broken only once by a republic that lasted 11 years (1649-1660). The monarchy is hereditary, the succession passing automatically to the oldest child. By Act of Parliament the monarch must be a Protestant. Succession is automatic on the death of the monarch, confirmed later by a formal coronation ceremony.

In law the monarch is head of the executive and of the judiciary, Head of the Church of England, Head of the British Commonwealth and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. However, since 1689, the monarch’s sovereign powers have been formally limited by the idea that national sovereignty resides in ‘the Crown in Parliament’ – the idea that the Crown is only sovereign by the will of Parliament.

*Ceremonial activities* have long been associated with the monarchy. The Queen formally opens the new session of Parliament each year, usually in October or November. She is at times accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh. The remaining ceremonial powers of the monarch are also to suspend parliament until the next session and dissolve Parliament.

As *constitutional monarch*, the Sovereign is required, on the advice of Ministers, to assent to all Bills issued by Parliament. The Royal Assent has not been refused since 1707. The role of the Sovereign in the enactment of legislation is purely formal today although the Queen has the right to be consulted, to encourage and to warn.

The Queen retains certain *residual powers*, notably to appoint a Prime Minister, and to decide whether or not to grant a dissolution of Parliament. These days, however, the Queen’s influence is mainly informal. She has a right and a duty to express her views on government matters to the Prime Minister at their weekly audiences, but these meetings and all communications between the Monarch and her Government remain confidential. The Queen is expected to be impartial, or “above politics”.

The Queen’s role in *the administration of justice is symbolic*. By the coronation oath, and by common law and various statutes, the Sovereign is required to cause law and justice to be administered with mercy to every individual. In the UK all jurisdiction derives from the Crown. In the area of law, as in her other public

actions, the Queen acts solely on the advice of her Ministers. For example, the Queen appoints senior judges, she does so on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. The prerogative of mercy is also exercised on the advice of Ministers.

The Sovereign confers honours such as peerages, knighthoods and medals. In practice, of course, with the exception of a few honours she is free to decide herself, the monarch discharges all these functions on the direction of the government. In most matters of state, the refusal of the Queen to exercise her power according to the direction of her Prime Minister would risk a serious constitutional crisis.

Nevertheless, the function of the monarch is politically important. The queen is visited regularly by her Prime Minister to receive an account of Cabinet decisions and to be consulted on matters of national life.

### ***Word Study***

**1. Give definitions of the following words and illustrate their meaning in the sentences of your own:**

1. contradictory
2. to reign
3. secular
4. continuity
5. hereditary
6. succession
7. to assent
8. residual (powers)
9. impartial
10. mercy

**2. From the list below match the verbs to the right definitions:**

1. to be present in something
2. to officially order someone to come to a meeting
3. to formally end a parliament before an election
4. to use power or influence
5. to work in a particular way or for a particular purpose
6. to officially stop something from continuing, especially for a short time
7. to go from one person's control to someone's else
8. to do properly everything that is part of a particular duty
9. to officially give someone a title, etc., especially as a reward for something they have achieved
10. to continue to have smth.

***(to reside in, to operate on, to pass to, to summon, to suspend, to dissolve, to retain, to confer, to discharge, to exercise)***

### ***After-reading questions:***

1. Is Britain a completely democratic country?
2. Why is the Queen not sovereign in a substantial way?
3. Where does British sovereignty reside in?
4. What did the Parliament agree to allow the Crown to do in the 17<sup>th</sup> century?
5. How old is British monarchy?
6. When was monarchy broken?
7. How is monarchy inherited in Britain?
8. What are the ceremonial powers of the monarch?
9. What are the duties of the Queen in Parliament?
10. Why is the Queen expected to be impartial? In your opinion, why should the Queen be “above politics”?
11. What is the monarch’s role in the administration of justice?
12. What would it lead to if the Queen refused to exercise her power according to the direction of her Prime Minister?

### ***Listening task 2***

**Watch the videos and answer the questions:**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFxlSVVcNXk>**

#### **Elizabeth II**

1. What is the full name of Queen Elizabeth II?
2. When and where was she born?
3. Who was the king of Britain before Elizabeth II became the queen of Britain?
4. Why was she unlikely to take the throne of the UK?
5. What did Elizabeth II do during World War II?
6. When did Elizabeth II get married?
7. When did Elizabeth II rise to the throne of the UK?
8. How many children does she have?
9. Who is the heir to the British throne?
10. How long has Elizabeth II been reigning?

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wem6AL7DBRw>**

#### **Monarch’s Role in the UK government**

1. Is the British monarch the leader of government?
2. What is royal prerogative?

3. The British monarch is the Head of State and the Head of Nation. What is the difference?
4. What are the Queen's formal duties? Continue the list:
  - meeting with Prime Minister
  - 
  - 
  - 
  - 
  - 
  - 
  -
5. What does the Queen give to all the bills of the Parliament?
6. Does the British monarch have a veto right?
7. What honors does the Queen confer?
8. Is the British monarch or the Prime Minister the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces?
9. What are the duties of the Queen as a public relations figure?
10. What is the Privy Council?

### ***Talking point 2***

#### ***Comment on the following statements:***

1. Only monarchy can provide continuity, remaining constant in a country's ever changing national vision.
2. Monarchy adds dignity and historical relevance to all state occasions.
3. The monarchy unites us; the republic would divide us (Francesco Crispi).

### ***Reading 2 (Additional)***

#### **Read the text about state visits and answer the following questions:**

1. What is a state visit?
2. Who is invited to visit the Queen?
3. How are the visitors welcomed?
4. What else happens during the visit?

From Ethiopia to Chile, Thailand to Bahrain, Iceland to the USA, the Queen has travelled to – or hosted visitors from – a huge number of different countries. These visits, both outward and incoming, play an integral role in strengthening Britain's relationships with countries across the world.

Foreign monarchs, presidents or prime ministers are invited to visit the Queen on the advice of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The programme for outward state visits can vary widely, but incoming visits usually feature a few regular events.

Firstly, the Queen and other members of the Royal Family greet visitors with a ceremonial welcome, which usually takes place on Horse Guards Parade.

The visiting party is invited to inspect a Guard of Honour before travelling back to the Palace in a carriage procession escorted by a large number of mounted soldiers from the Household Cavalry. The welcome is accompanied by gun salutes fired from Green Park and the Tower of London.

Usually on the evening of the arrival day, the visitors will be hosted at a State Banquet, which is a very grand formal occasion held in the Buckingham Palace Ballroom. Around 150 guests are usually invited on the basis of their cultural, diplomatic or economic links to the country being hosted.

Before dinner is served, the Queen makes a speech and proposes a toast to the visiting head of state, who replies and in return proposes a toast to Her Majesty.

For the remainder of the state visit, which normally lasts a few days, the visitor will meet the British Prime Minister, government ministers and leaders of the main political parties. They may attend another banquet hosted by the Lord Mayor and City of London Corporation, where they will meet leaders of commerce and industry.

Sometimes the Royal Collection will display an exhibition of themed items, for example when the President of the United Mexican States visited in 2015, a display of Mexican-themed objects was displayed.

### *Listening task 3*

**Watch the queen make a speech at the China State Banquet and answer the questions below:**

**[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjOF\\_ysu8mc&t=25s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjOF_ysu8mc&t=25s)**

1. What is the aim of the visit of the President of China to Britain?
2. What were the Queen and Prince Phillip impressed by during their visit to China 30 years ago?
3. What did the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration pave the way for?
4. How has the policy of Deng Xiaoping transformed China?
5. What ties bind Britain and China together?
6. Why did the Queen characterize the relationship between Britain and China as a global partnership?
7. What issues do Britain and China need to cooperate on?
8. How will the visit benefit the relations between Britain and China?

## *Unit II*

### **“Parliament”**

#### *Pre-reading guesses*

#### **I. Read the head of the unit. Analyze the concept of *parliament*.**

- e. What words and phrases are related to ‘parliament’?
- f. Study the dictionary definitions of ‘parliament’
  - **An official elected group of people in some countries who meet to make the laws of the country and discuss national issues;**
  - **The main lawmaking institution in some countries;**  
*MACMILLAN Dictionary*
  - **An official or formal conference or council, usually concerned with government or public affairs;**  
*Webster’s New World College Dictionary*
  - **A national representative body having supreme legislative powers within the state;**  
*American Heritage Dictionary*
- g. Underline the similarities and circle the differences.
- h. Give your own definition of *parliament*.
- i. In groups of three or four compare and contrast your notes. Discuss and report back to the class the different points of view.
- j. Compare your definition with the ones provided in the unit.
- k. What role and functions are performed by parliament in a country?

#### *Vocabulary in use*

#### **1. Study the following words and expressions related to the notion of parliament, translate them into Russian:**

1. a party list
2. deliberation
3. to be vested with smth.
4. legislative, law-making
5. a bill
6. the committee room
7. floor debate
8. a deliberative body
9. to debate a bill
10. to make and pass laws
11. the chief mechanism of representation
12. representation
13. to be initiated by

- 14. a reading
- 15. to provide checks and balances
- 16. to observe strict party discipline
- 17. to be introduced to smth
- 18. to sign the bill into law
- 19. a Joint Committee
- 20. to reject a bill
- 21. to be submitted for signature / to submit for signature
- 22. scrutiny
- 23. to override a veto
- 24. to veto a bill
- 25. to defeat / to kill a bill

**2. Fill in the gaps in the text below using the lexical units from the list above:**

***Parliament***

A parliament is a representative, consultative and \_\_\_\_\_, a public forum, in which government policies and major issues can be openly discussed and analyzed.

The lower chamber, usually called the House, is the predominant one in most assemblies. The upper chamber \_\_\_\_\_ (a system of control over the other chamber that creates a balance of power) constraining the power of the lower chamber.

*Key functions of Parliament*

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
Parliaments are supposed to represent society in all its diversity. A representative assembly should serve as a link between government and the entire people. Nowadays representation operates through parties, electors vote for \_\_\_\_\_, the party is the \_\_\_\_\_, representatives are to \_\_\_\_\_ and vote with the party.

b. \_\_\_\_\_  
Parliament are national debating chambers where vital public matters are discussed. In some countries this function mainly takes the form of debate in the chamber - \_\_\_\_\_, in other countries it takes the form of policy debate in the \_\_\_\_\_.

**c. Legislation**  
Parliaments are \_\_\_\_\_ legislative powers, the right to \_\_\_\_\_.

*Basic \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ procedures*

- A \_\_\_\_\_ [proposed law] \_\_\_\_\_ the executive or a member of parliament is \_\_\_\_\_ one of the houses.

- The passing of the bill normally involves three \_\_\_\_\_ [debates] in the assembly, during which the bill is \_\_\_\_\_, amended, \_\_\_\_\_ [thrown out] or \_\_\_\_\_/ \_\_\_\_\_.
- After the first reading it is usually sent to a respective committee for detailed \_\_\_\_\_ [consideration].
- After the third reading it goes to the second chamber where the same procedure is repeated and the amended version is returned to the first chamber.
- If this amended version is rejected by the first chamber a \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ is set up to reconcile the both versions.
- The final version is \_\_\_\_\_ to the head of state \_\_\_\_\_.
- The head of state may \_\_\_\_\_ or may \_\_\_\_\_.
- The parliament may \_\_\_\_\_ the veto by a two thirds majority vote in both chambers.

**Summarize the main ideas of the text; make up a short speech ‘The Nature of parliaments, their main functions’ (15 sentences, with the use of Active Vocabulary).**

**3. Study the following lexical units, be ready to explain their meanings, make up examples of your own with them:**

- to dissolve, to dismiss a parliament
- to convene, convoke a parliament
- to stand for parliament/ to run for parliament
- a hung parliament
- parliamentary elections
- parliamentary majority/ minority
- parliamentary opposition
- parliamentary representation
- parliamentary session
- accountability to smb./smth.
- to be accountable to smb.
- to hold smb. accountable
- members of parliament (MPs), congressmen, representatives, deputies, senators
- legislators, law-makers

## *Reading I*

### *Pre-reading activities*

### CULTURE QUIZ

**You are welcome to do this Culture Quiz to assess your knowledge of the UK Parliament. Consult additional sources if necessary.**



**Question 1:** What is the *actual* name of London's Houses of Parliament?

- (a) The Palace of Westminster    (b) The Chambers of Westminster
- (c) The Courts of Westminster

**Question 2:** In which year were the Houses of Parliament that stand today completed?

- (a) 1670    (b) 1770    (c) 1870

**Question 3:** Who is the United Kingdom's Head of State?

- (a) The Queen    (b) The Prime Minister    (c) The Archbishop of Canterbury

**Question 4:** The British Parliament is made up of the 'House of Lords' and the 'House of Commons'. Which one of the following statements is true?

- (a) Only the members of the House of Lords are elected by the public.
- (b) Only the members of the House of Commons are elected by the public.
- (c) All the members of *both* Houses are elected by the public.

**Question 5:** What is the formal title of the Minister who is responsible for the British Government's financial and economic matters?

- (a) Chancellor of the Bank of England
- (b) Chancellor of the Budget
- (c) Chancellor of the Exchequer

**Question 6:** Every year, the Chancellor (mentioned in Question 5) famously takes his budget plans to parliament in a ..... ?

- (a) wooden chest    (b) red leather case    (c) armoured convoy

**Question 7:** 'Whips' are the names of particular officials in a political party. One purpose of whips is to ensure that ....?

- (a) elections are carried out fairly
- (b) MPs support their party on important votes
- (c) the Houses of Parliament are safe from intruders

**Question 8:** According to UK law, a general election must be held every .... ?

- (a) 3 years    (b) 4 years    (c) 5 years

**Question 9:** A 'green paper' is the name of a government document which is usually the first step in creating or changing government policy. What is issued in response to a green paper?

- (a) A white paper    (b) A red paper    (c) A yellow paper

**Question 10:** What is the name of the senior officer in the House of Lords who is responsible for maintaining order in the House and controlling access?

- (a) Black Rod    (b) Silver Rod    (c) Gold Rod

### ***Pronunciation***

**Consult the dictionary to check the pronunciation of the following words and word-combinations**

1. Westminster
2. supremacy
3. bicameral
4. component
5. Anglophone
6. assent
7. variable
8. the Lords Spiritual
9. Hereditary Peers
10. senior
11. deputy
12. resignation
13. constituency
14. to scrutinize
15. constituents

### ***Reading***

**Read the following text and answer these questions:**

1. When was the British Parliament created?
2. What are the three components of the British Legislature?
3. What are the main functions of each of the constituents?

The Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, commonly known as the British Parliament, is the supreme legislative body in the United Kingdom. It is located in Westminster, London. Parliament possesses legislative supremacy. At its head is the Sovereign.

The parliament is bicameral, with an upper house, the House of Lords, and a lower house, the House of Commons. The Queen is the third component of the legislature.

The Parliament of Great Britain was formed in 1707 following the ratification of the Treaty of Union by both the Parliament of England and Parliament of Scotland passing Acts of Union. It has been called ‘the mother of parliaments’, its democratic institutions having set the standards for many democracies throughout the world. Thus, the UK Parliament is the largest Anglophone legislative body in the world.

In theory, supreme legislative power is vested in the Queen-in-Parliament. In practice in modern times, real power is vested in the House of Commons, as the Sovereign generally acts on the Advice of the Prime Minister, and the powers of the House of Lords have been limited.

### ***Composition and Powers***

The legislative authority, the Crown-in-Parliament, has three separate elements: the Monarch, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons. No individual may be a member of both Houses, and members of the House of Lords are legally barred from voting in elections for the members of the House of Commons.

The British Monarch has all authority, but no power. The sovereign appoints the Prime Minister, and every year opens the sessions of Parliament, in a historical and ritual ceremony called the State Opening of Parliament.

The second major function of the Sovereign is to sign new laws passed by Parliament.

The last major function of the Sovereign – in the parliamentary context – is his or her weekly meeting with the Prime Minister. By tradition, the latter informs the Sovereign, who is the head of state, about important affairs of state and government business, and asks the Sovereign for his or her advice.

**The House of Lords** consists of about 750 members (a variable number). The Lords are basically divided into 2 large groups of Lords Temporal and Lords Spiritual. The Lords Temporal comprise Life peers and Hereditary peers. The latter ones inherit their titles from the ancestors, from the ‘nobility’ of the UK. There are about 96 of them. Life peers are mostly former members of the House of Commons, or former senior officials, judges, or former business leaders or trade union leaders: each government and opposition party has the right, each year, to propose new Life peers. The Lords Spiritual are represented by 26 Bishops of the Anglican Church.

As it is an unelected element of Parliament, it does not have the same powers as the House of Commons, but it retains the right to revise and scrutinize the Government’s actions and legislation. Its independent mind and extensive

expertise form a crucial check on the power of the executive in Parliament. The House of Lords plays an essential role in improving bills: highlighting potential problems and ensuring they will be workable laws.

The House of Lords cannot block bills proposed by the Government in the House of Commons, and can only delay some bills. Actually, this prerogative is rarely used, only in exceptional cases, for the Lords to act against the wishes of an elected government would be constitutionally unacceptable.

In 2012 the Cameron Government proposed to change the status of the House of Lords, making it into a largely elected chamber, but the proposal does not terribly interest in the British public.

**The House of Commons** is the main House of the British Parliament. It is composed of 650 members (Members of Parliament or MPs) elected by universal suffrage. The life of Parliament is 5 years.

According to an ancient tradition, MPs are elected by universal suffrage under a system of relative majority in one round of voting. This means that the candidate with the most votes in an election is elected, whether or not she has an absolute majority of votes.

Elected MPs do not have a deputy, so in the event of the death, resignation or removal of an MP, a ‘by-election’ must be called. Each MP represents a territory, or constituency; the link between an MP and his constituency is symbolically and historically very important, and in the House of Commons, members are not called by their name, but by the name of the constituency, from which they have been elected (or, if they are government ministers, by their function).

The Chairman of the House of Commons is known as the ‘Speaker’, and he or she presides over each parliamentary session, deciding who can speak.

All legislation must be passed by the House of Commons to become law. Besides, it controls taxation and the supply of the money to the government. Government ministers (including the Prime Minister) must regularly answer questions in the House of Commons. Moreover, there are a number of select committees that scrutinize particular issues and the workings of the government. These are also mechanisms that allow members of the House of Commons to bring to the attention of the government particular issues affecting their constituents.

### ***Word study***

**1. Study the following notions related to the British Parliament, be ready to explain each of them, consult additional reliable sources for more exact information if necessary. Use these lexical units in the examples of your own.**

1. legislative supremacy
2. the Queen-in-Parliament
3. Lords Temporal
4. Lords Spiritual
5. Life peers

6. Hereditary peers
7. the House of Commons
8. the House of Lords

**2. Find in the text English equivalents of the following words and word-combinations, restore the context of their use.**

1. конституционно недопустимый
2. верховный законодательный орган
3. контролировать налогообложение
4. отставка
5. обладать законодательным превосходством
6. получить королевскую санкцию
7. заместитель
8. вопросы, не вызывающие разногласий
9. тщательно следить за работой правительства
10. перевыборы
11. выбираться всеобщим избирательным правом
12. оказывать значительное влияние на составляющие части

**3. Look through the following definitions, find in the text the words or phrases, corresponding to them. Use them in the examples of your own.**

1. a right that smn. has, especially because of their importance or social position;
2. consisting of two parts, Chambers, Houses;
3. the fact of being forced out of an important position or dismissed from a job;
4. to be in a position of authority at a time when important things are happening;
5. to be officially prevented from entering a place or from doing smth;
6. to reject a written proposal for a new law, which is brought to a parliament so that it can be discussed;
7. one of 650 geographical areas in the UK, into which it is divided for electoral purposes;
8. smn who is directly below another person in rank, and who is officially in charge when that person is not there;
9. to suspend written proposals for new laws.

**4. Match the words to make collocations:**

1. to block	a. taxation
2. the supreme	b. the workings of the government
3. to be constitutionally	c. legislative supremacy
4. to control	d. barred
5. to be elected by	e. bills
6. to scrutinize	f. legislative authority

7. to delay	g. constituents
8. to possess	h. universal suffrage
9. to be legally	i. bills
10. to affect	j. unacceptable

### *After-reading questions*

1. What is the role of the British Parliament in the political life of the country?
2. Where is it situated?
3. What does Parliament possess?
4. Who is it headed by?
5. What is the structure of this legislative authority?
6. Why has it been called ‘the mother of parliaments’?
7. What is the supreme legislative power vested in, theoretically and practically?
8. What are the conditions of being a member of any of the two Houses?
9. What is peculiar about the position of the British Monarch in Parliament?
10. What are his/ her main functions in the parliamentary context?
11. There are 3 categories of Lords in the upper House, aren't there?
12. Do Life peers inherit their titles from their noble ancestors?
13. The Lords Spiritual are the same as Law Lords, aren't they?
14. What are the power of the Lords limited to?
15. How does this fact affect the role of this constituent in Parliament?
16. What makes the Commons the main House of the British Parliament?
17. How are the British MPs traditionally elected?
18. Do MPs have deputies? What does it mean?
19. How are they addressed?
20. Who is the Commons chaired by?
21. What functions does the lower chamber perform?

### *Speaking*

**Make up the summary of the text, using Active Vocabulary.**

- the supreme legislative authority
- to possess legislative supremacy
- to be legally barred
- to receive royal assent
- to block/ delay bills
- prerogative
- to be constitutionally unacceptable
- to be elected by universal suffrage
- resignation

- by-election
- to control taxation
- to scrutinize the workings of the government

### ***Listening task 1 (Lords)***

**Watch the videos and answer the questions:**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urwQuL4pQmg>**

#### **Who is in the House of Lords?**

1. Which acts ended the right to inherit seats in the upper chamber?
2. What kinds of people can become life peers?
3. How are life peers chosen?
4. What is the role of the appointments panel?
5. Which groups are underrepresented in the House of Lords?
6. What do the lords represent?
7. Do the lords need to vote on all issues?
8. What are the pros and cons of having an unelected chamber?

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpWTM1sz5gs>**

#### **A day in the life of the Lord Speaker**

1. What is a common misconception about the House of Lords?
2. What is the background of Baroness D'Souza and why is it useful for her work in the House of Lords?
3. Who can the Lord Speaker meet during the day?
4. Where does the Lord Speaker sit in the House of Lords?
5. What is the most lively part of the day in the upper chamber?
6. What ceremonial role does the speaker play?
7. Why does Baroness D'Souza consider her job rewarding?
8. What makes the House of Lords different from the lower chamber?

## ***Reading II***

### ***Informative reading***

#### ***Legislative functions and relationship with the government***

Parliament meets in the Palace of Westminster. Laws can be made by Acts of the United Kingdom Parliament. While some Acts can apply to the whole of the UK including Scotland, due to the continuing separation of Scots law, many Acts do not apply to Scotland. They are either matched by equivalent Acts that apply to Scotland alone or, since 1999, by legislation set by the Scottish Parliament relating to devolved matters. This has led to a paradox known as the West Lothian question.

Each Bill goes through several stages in each House. The first stage, called the first reading, is a formality. At the second reading the general principles of the bill are debated. The House may vote to reject the bill, by not passing the motion 'That the Bill be now read a second time'. Defeats of Government Bills are extremely rare, the last was in 2005.

Following the second reading, the bill is sent to a committee. A committee considers the bill clause by clause, and reports the bill as amended to the House for further detailed consideration.

Once the House has considered the bill, the third stage follows. In the House of Commons no further amendments may be made, and the passage of the motion 'That the Bill be now read third time' is the passage of the whole bill. If passed in identical form by both Houses, the Bill may be presented for the Sovereign's Assent. If one House passes amendments that the other will not agree to, and the two Houses cannot resolve their disagreements, the bill fails.

### ***Relationship with the Government***

The British Government is answerable to the House of Commons. However, neither the Prime Minister nor the members of the Government are elected by the House of Commons.

Parliament controls the executive by passing or rejecting its Bills and by forcing Ministers of the Crown to answer for their actions either at 'Question Time' or during meetings of the parliamentary committees. In both cases, Ministers are asked questions by the members of the Houses, and are obliged to answer.

In practice, the House of Commons' scrutiny of the Government is very weak. Since the first-past-the-post electoral system is employed in elections, the governing party tends to enjoy a large majority in the Commons; there is often limited need to compromise with other parties. Modern British political parties are so tightly organized that they relatively little room for free action by their MPs. In many cases, MPs may be expelled from their parties for voting against the instructions of party leaders. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Government has lost confidence issues only 3 times – twice in 1924, and once in 1979.

### ***Pronunciation***

**Note the pronunciation of the following words**

paradox  
Lothian



committee  
identical  
the Sovereign's Assent  
scrutiny

### ***Word study***

#### **1. Explain the meanings of the following notions, if necessary refer to reliable sources:**

1. the West Lothian Question
2. the Sovereign's Assent
3. the first-past-the-post electoral system
4. confidence issues

#### **2. Define the following lexical units, use them in the examples of your own:**

1. to apply to
2. devolved matters
3. the motion
4. to be answerable to smb./ smth.
5. to be tightly organized
6. to be expelled from

#### **3. Translate these words and phrases into Russian, restore the context of their use:**

1. to consider the bill clause by clause
2. detailed consideration
3. to be presented for the Sovereign's Assent
4. to resolve disagreements
5. to enjoy a large majority
6. limited need for compromise
7. to leave little room for free action
8. to lose confidence issues

#### **4. Fill in the gaps, using the words from the exercises above:**

1. Only after a committee \_\_\_\_\_, is the amended bill reported to the House for \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The bill is \_\_\_\_\_ providing it has been \_\_\_\_\_ by the Houses.
3. The bill is killed if the two Houses fail to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The party in power \_\_\_\_\_ in the Commons due to \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ being employed in elections. Hence it causes \_\_\_\_\_ with other parties.
5. One of the peculiarities of modern British political parties is their being \_\_\_\_\_, which \_\_\_\_\_ little \_\_\_\_\_ by their MPs.

## *Skimming Activities*

### **1. Continue the following ideas using Active Vocabulary:**

1. A paradox known as the West Lothian question implies ...
2. At the second stage the House may ...
3. A committee is in charge of ...
4. The whole bill is passed in case ...
5. The bill is presented for the Sovereign's Assent when ...
6. The bill is defeated if ...
7. Parliament exercises control over the executive by ...
8. At 'Question Time' or during meetings of parliamentary committees Ministers are...
9. The House of Commons' scrutiny of the Government is very weak because ...
10. MPs' expulsion from their parties can be caused by ...

### **2. Answer the following questions:**

1. Do all Acts made by the UK Parliament apply to its parts?
2. What are the Acts usually matched by?
3. How many stages does a bill go through?
4. What happens at each of them?
5. Have bills ever been rejected?
6. What functions does a committee perform?
7. What is necessary for the bill to be presented for the Sovereign's Assent?
8. Why can the bill fail?
9. What powers does Parliament possess in relation to the Government?
10. At what occasions are Ministers of the Crown answerable to Parliament for their actions?
11. Does Parliament gain much scrutiny of the Government's workings?
12. What are the reasons for this phenomenon?
13. Have there been frequent cases when the Government lost confidence issues?

## *Speaking*

**Use the following lexical units to summarize the main ideas of the discussed text:**

1. devolved matters
2. the West Lothian question
3. to consider the bill clause by clause
4. detailed consideration
5. to be presented for the Sovereign's Assent
6. the first-past-the-post electoral system
7. to enjoy a large majority

8. limited need for compromise
9. to be tightly organized
10. to leave little room for free action
11. to be expelled from
12. to lose confidence issues

### ***Listening task 2 (Commons)***

**Watch the videos and answer the questions:**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GXXKtvsxgdg>**

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

1. What are the main functions of the House of Commons?
2. Are all MPs members of a political party?
3. What kinds of balance do MPs have to strike?
4. What are the two sides of the House of Commons?
5. Why are prime minister's questions and ministerial questions important to MPs?
6. What stages does a bill go through before it becomes a law?
7. What role do select committees play in the work of the House of Commons?
8. How can British citizens get involved with the work of UK Parliament?

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8fVBmHpqGH8>**

#### **First past the post: The UK voting system explained**

1. How is the UK divided up for electoral purposes?
2. What are marginal seats?
3. Who becomes the winner of a constituency?
4. Do leaders of the major parties have to compete for seats in parliament?
5. How many seats does a party have to win to form a government?
6. What happens if no party can secure a majority?
7. What attitude do the British have to coalition governments?
8. What issue dominated the 2019 electoral campaign?

## *Talking Point*

**In groups of 3 or 4 discuss the following statements, decide which of them you agree with, report your opinion to the rest of the group.**

1. A Parliament is nothing less than a big meeting of more or less idle people.
2. The real political life in Russia unfortunately is not in the parliament but on the streets and in the media.
3. Parliament will train you to talk; and above all things to hear, with patience, unlimited quantities of foolish talk.

**Prepare the monologue ‘The UK Parliament. Its role and functions in the country’s political life’.**

## ***Unit III***

### ***“The Reform of the House of Lords”***

#### ***Pre-reading activities***

Discussions on parliamentary reform started in the second half of the XIXth century and have been conducted since then. It seems that at the turn of the XXth – XXIst centuries this debate has reached its climax, triggering drastic reforms in Parliament.

**Read the following quotations and comment on them. Whose point of view do you agree with? Why has the House of Lords Reform become one of the top priorities of the British internal policy?**

*"It's crucial that the House of Commons endorses Lords reform now to ensure that the first members of the second chamber are elected in 2015. What's more, most MPs stood in the last election on a platform promising to do precisely that; all three main political parties promised democratic reform of the House of Lords in their last party manifestos."*

Unlock Democracy June 2012

*"Electing the second chamber is not self-evidently the democratic option – by dividing accountability it can undermine the capacity of the people to hold government to account (since policies may emerge for which it is not directly responsible) and can sweep away the very benefits that the present system delivers."*

Lord Norton March 2012

#### ***Listening***

**Listen to the opinion of Dr Mark Elliot, a Senior Lecturer in Law at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of St Catharine’s College on the reform of the House of Lords. In his speech he assesses the House of Lords Reform Bill, arguing that a commitment to democracy does not necessarily require an elected House of Lords – and that the debate about reforming the upper chamber must take due account of the wider institutional and constitutional framework.**

**<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dH8bvwY3TJY>**

**Answer the following questions:**

1. Why was the House of Lords reform enacted?
2. Did the British support the reform in 2012?

3. What are the two difficulties that people face during the debates over the reform?
4. What is the current composition of the Upper Chamber of the British Parliament?
5. What are the two crucial powers of the House of Lords?
6. Does the House of Lords have equal powers with the House of Commons?
7. What is the essence of the Reform Bill?
8. Will the changes proposed by the Bill reduce or enhance the efficiency of the chamber?
9. Are the changes needed to make the House of Lords acceptable and legitimate?
10. What are the main obstacles on the way of reforming the House of Lords?

### ***Pronunciation***

**Consult the dictionary to check the pronunciation of the following words and word combinations:**

scrutinize

extensive expertise

to wield

to veto legislation

peerage

life peers

hereditary peers

lords spiritual

lords temporal

primacy

descendant

to dissolve

controversy

overwhelmingly

### ***Reading I***

**Read the following text and say how the powers of the Upper Chamber of the British Parliament have altered since its creation.**

The House of Lords is the second chamber of Parliament and is also called the Upper Chamber. As it is an unelected element of Parliament, it does not have the same powers as the House of Commons, but it retains the right to revise and scrutinize the Government's actions and legislation. Its independent mind and extensive expertise form a crucial check on the power of the executive in Parliament but it is much more likely to wield this power by asking Ministers to reconsider the matter than to veto whole pieces of legislation.

The current composition of the House comprises 786 members of the House of Lords. 671 of these are life peers, 90 are hereditary peers (collectively known as Lords Temporal), and 26 are senior bishops from the Church of England, or Lords Spiritual. So the members of the chamber derive the right to sit in the House from different sources. The majority of peers are appointed by the Queen on the recommendation of the Prime Minister or of the House of Lords Appointments Commission.

The Law Lords, appointed to the House of Lords under the Appellate Jurisdiction Act 1876, sat in the upper chamber until July 2009. The judicial functions of the Lords were transferred to the Supreme Court established under the Constitutional Reform Act 2005. The Law Lords became justices of the Supreme Court in October 2009.

### ***Background***

Historically, the power of the Lords, who were the representatives of the landed interests, was greater than that of Commons, but as democratic ideals took root in the UK, its power has gradually been eroded.

The primacy of the Commons was explicitly stated by the Parliament Act 1911, which compelled the Lords to approve financial legislation, and the Parliament Act 1949, which removed the Lords' power of veto over laws.

Today the debate about the Reform of the House of Lords refers to its composition rather than its powers. Until 1958 with the exception of the Law Lords and Bishops, the right to sit in the Lords derived from membership of the hereditary nobility. The 1958 Act introduced a new type of member: the Life Peer. They sit in the House for life but their rights are not passed on to their descendants.

Although the growing number of life peers diluted the hereditary basis of Lords membership, the House of Lords Act 1999 all but dissolved it. The Act removed the rights of all but 92 hereditary peers to sit in the Lords. This "Stage 1" reform remains a compromise that the government is committed to changing by removing the remaining hereditary peers. Since that time a great number of attempts have been made to reach a consensus and overcome all obstacles and hurdles on the way of making the house more democratic but all the efforts have been fruitless so far.

### ***Controversies***

The principal controversy regarding the House of Lords reform revolves around what should replace the hereditary basis of the Upper Chamber. A number of options were put forward for the future composition of the House, ranging from fully appointed to fully elected, with a series of compromise in between.

The opponents of a fully appointed Chamber warn that it would put too much power in the hands of those making the appointments. The opponents of a fully elected Chamber warn that democratic mandate of an elected House would undermine the primacy of the Commons and might lead to legislative deadlock.

The proponents of a reformed House argue variously in favour of the appointment or election of regional representatives of sectional, community and cultural groups, as a means of improving the representative character of the House

while distinguishing it from the Commons. Some continue to argue for its abolition outright.

The publication in 2007 of a white paper on the House of Lords reform was followed by a free vote on both Houses on the composition of the second Chamber. The Commons voted overwhelmingly for a fully elected House of Lords. The peers themselves, however, voted in favour of a fully appointed House. A compromise was not reached.

The House of Lords Reform Bill announced in the Queen's Speech on 9 May 2012 provides for elected members of the House of Lords to be voted in by a different electoral system to the House of Commons (on a proportional basis). The size of the Upper House would also be reduced substantially under the Bill and membership of the Lords would no longer be linked to the acceptance of a peerage.

### ***Word Study***

**1. Find in the text English equivalents of the following words and word combinations. Use them in the sentences of your own.**

1. охранить право –
2. рассматривать и пристально изучать –
3. получать право от –
4. быть назначенным на пост –
5. по рекомендации –
6. передаваться наследникам –
7. средство усиления представительной функции Парламента –
8. упразднение –
9. преимущественно –

**2. Explain the meaning of the following notions. Give as much information as possible.**

1. Lords Spiritual
2. Lords Temporal
3. Life peers
4. Hereditary peers
5. Lord Chancellor
6. Proportional representation
7. Law Lords
8. Lord Speaker

**3. Match the words with their definitions:**

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. to wield power                 | a. dispute, argument, debate                  |
| 2. to erode (about power)         | b. somebody who argues in favour of something |
| 3. primacy                        | c. supremacy, the state of being first        |
| 4. to dissolve (about Parliament) | d. to exert or maintain                       |
| 5. controversy                    | e. to remove                                  |
| 6. proponent                      | f. to refuse to allow smth. to happen         |
| 7. to veto                        | g. to dismiss                                 |



#### **4. Fill in the gaps with the words from the Word Study section.**

- a) The House of Lords is supposed to be reformed in the near future, however, ...of the House of Commons over the Lords should be ....
- b) ... are members of the House of Lords who are ... by the Monarch and can't ... their title to their descendants.
- c) The functions of the Monarch include opening parliamentary sessions and ... it.
- d) Lacking ..., the House of Lords still performs important legislative functions: it ... and ... the Government's actions and legislation, as well as can ... the bill passed by the Commons.
- e) Despite all the attempts to come to a consensus on the issue of the reform some irreconcilable ... between the opponents and ... of the reform still take place.

#### ***After-reading activities***

##### **1. Complete the following sentences:**

- a) Being an unelected element of the British Parliament, the House of Lords.....
- b) Under the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 the judicial functions of the Lords.....
- c) Originally the Lords represented.....
- d) Until 1958 the right to sit in the House of Lords.....
- e) The House of Lords Act 1999.....
- f) A great number of attempts have been made so far to.....
- g) To improve the representative character of the House of Lords the proponents of a reformed House suggest.....

##### **2. Answer the following questions:**

- a) Do the two houses of the British Parliament have the same powers?
- b) What are the functions of the House of Lords confined to?
- c) What groups of peers does the current composition of the House comprise?
- d) Who are the majority of peers appointed by?
- e) Does the House of Lords perform any judicial functions at present?
- f) Why has the power of the House of Lords been eroded?
- g) What broad changes in the power of the Upper Chamber were introduced in the first half of the XXIst century?
- h) Who are life peers? When was the title introduced?
- i) Why can the House of Lords Act 1999 be called a landmark one in the history of the British Parliament in general and the House of Lords in particular?
- j) What does the principal controversy regarding the House of Lords reform consist in?
- k) Was a compromise between the two houses of the British Parliament over the issue of the House of Lords composition reached in 2007?

1) What prospects for the future development of the chamber were mentioned in the Queen's speech in 2012?

### *Speaking*

**Make up the summary of the text speaking about the essence of the House of Lords Reform. Use the following expressions:**

- to retain the right
- to scrutinize and revise the Government's actions
- to transfer the judicial functions to the Supreme Court
- to remove the Lords' power of veto over laws
- to put forward options for the composition of the House
- to range from ... to...
- to improve the representative character of the House of Lords
- to be voted by proportional representation
- not to be linked to the acceptance of a peerage

## Unit IV

### UK Government

#### Pre-reading guesses

#### I. Read the head of the unit. Investigate the idea of *government*.

a) The term *government* has several meanings and can denote one of the following:

- **the group of people who control a country or state;**

*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*

- **a form or method of governing;**

*Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics*

- **the act or process of controlling a country.**

*Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Law*

Write down some words and phrases related to *government*.

What *forms of government* can you name?

b) Study the definitions of *government* given below. Which of them best matches your understanding?

- **Government** is a political organization comprising individuals and institutions authorized to formulate public policies and conduct affairs of state.
- **Government** is the management of a country which is entitled to serve three major purposes: maintaining order, providing public goods and promoting equality.
- **Government** is the system of social control under which the right to make laws, and the right to enforce them, is vested in a particular group in society.
- **Government** is the legitimate use of force to control human behavior within territorial boundaries.

c) Underline the similarities and circle the differences.

d) Give your own definition of *government*.

e) In groups of three or four compare and contrast your notes. Discuss and report back to the class the different points of view.

f) Compare your definition with the ones provided in the unit.

g) What is the role of government in a country?

h) What branch of power is government vested in?

i) Do you agree with the viewpoint that government appears to be the most powerful and influential political institution in the majority of modern nations? Substantiate your point of view.

j) How has the role of government changed over the last 50 years? In your opinion, do governments nowadays have more powers than they used to have in the past? What do you think accounts for that?

k) Can a state be effectively managed without government?

## ***Vocabulary in use***

### **1. Some useful words and expressions with *government*:**

1. government offices, party, policy
2. a government body/agency/department
3. the head of government
4. to elect, to form, to set up, to install, to appoint, to nominate, to head, to preside over the government
5. to take office, come to power
6. to serve, to support, to leave the government
7. to stay/remain in power
8. to return to, to get into government
9. to exercise power, to run a state
10. to take the first step on the government ladder
11. to bring down, to subvert, to dismiss, to dissolve, to oust, to topple the government
12. to lose control of the government
13. to lose power, to fall/resign/step down/step aside/stand down/stand aside
14. the fall of government
15. to put (an issue) at the heart of government
16. government's plan, approach, reform, programme
17. under the present/current/incumbent government
18. the government is accountable to...
19. democratic, constitutional, liberal, authoritarian government
20. the Thatcher/Blair/Obama government
21. the Labour/Conservative/Social Democratic government
22. left-wing, right-wing government
23. coalition, power-sharing government
24. transitional, interim, provisional government
25. local, regional, central/national government
26. de jure, de facto government
27. a minority government (that does not have enough politicians to control parliament)
28. a divided government
29. puppet government (a nominally sovereign state effectively controlled by a foreign power)
30. atrocious/heinous government
31. invisible government (the true ruling power of a country)

**2. Answer the following questions using active vocabulary:**

1. What are the characteristic features of a democratic government?
2. In what case is the government called authoritarian?
3. Can you give any example of an atrocious/heinous government?
4. Can arbitrary actions of government ever be justified?
5. How can you characterize the government in your country?
6. Who forms the government in Russia? And in the UK?
7. What are usually the most important government departments? What spheres are they responsible for?
8. Who can head the government? How is it connected with the form of government?
9. How long can a government in a modern democratic state remain in power? What factor does it depend on?
10. What can bring down the government? Support your opinion with both recent and historical examples.
11. Who usually enjoys the right to dissolve government?
12. What might happen if the head of the executive lost control of the government?
13. Do you think that a government official should stand down if he or she does not share the government's policy?
14. For what reasons can a minister leave the government?
15. When does the fall of government occur? Give examples.
16. Why do reforms often cause protests in society? Can you give any examples of successfully implemented reforms? And vice versa, can you think of the situations when poorly thought and conducted reforms brought whole nations to the brink of disaster? Who was to blame for such failures?
17. What major initiatives have been implemented by the incumbent Russian government? How can you evaluate them?
18. If you were the Prime Minister, what issue would you put at the heart of government?
19. Who is the government usually accountable to?
20. In your opinion, whose government was the most successful one in the British post-war history? Substantiate your ideas with particular examples.
21. Drawing on your knowledge of the British political parties, can you single out the main differences between the Conservative and the Labour government?
22. What differentiates a left-wing government from a right-wing one?
23. In what situations is a coalition government formed? How is it connected with a hung parliament?

24. What is the difference between a transitional, interim and provisional government? Can you provide examples of each of them?
25. What spheres of life is local government usually responsible for? And the central one? How can devolution of power influence the distribution of power within a country?
26. Can a de-facto government be considered a legitimate one? Justify your opinion with particular examples.
27. What is understood by a divided government? What form of government prevents the existence of a divided government? Why?
28. What is the difference between ‘puppet government’ and ‘invisible government’?
29. What countries do you think are likely to have puppet government? What nations have ever faced such a problem?
30. Whose interests does an invisible government usually act in?

## ***Reading I***

### ***Who Governs Britain?***

**Read the text below and find answers to the following questions.**

1. What institutions are involved in the process of governing the country?
2. Who are the members of the Cabinet?
3. What role is played by the Privy Council?

The many definitions of the term “government” demonstrate that it is not easy to give a comprehensive description. Still more difficult (for a lay person) is to understand the structure and operation of the whole machinery of the executive government.

However, let’s try. It seems that no less than three major British institutions are involved in the process. In the broader sense we may talk about all the politicians who have been appointed by the monarch (on the advice of the Prime Minister) to help run the country through Government Departments or to take on various responsibilities. There are normally about a hundred members of ‘the government’ in this sense. Although there are various ranks, members of the government are usually known as ‘ministers’.

The other meaning of the term ‘government’ is more limited. It refers only to the most powerful of these politicians, namely the Prime Minister and the group of the closest advisors – the Cabinet. There are usually about twenty people in the Cabinet. Most of them are the heads of Government Departments.

Last but not least is the Privy Council. It is one of the oldest institutions of the British government and the Privy Council Office is the smallest autonomous

Government Department with fewer than 50 members of staff. Today its main role is to advise the monarch on a range of matters such as the resolution of constitutional issues and the approval of Orders in Council, plus the granting of Royal Charters to public bodies. The most important task of the Privy Council today is performed by its Judicial Committee.

In this unit we will take a closer look at the structure of the British government and at the functions of all its components.

**Mind the pronunciation of the following words:**

comprehensive  
autonomous  
executive  
machinery  
Privy Council  
Royal Charters  
Judicial Committee  
component

**Say if the statements are true or false. Correct the false statements.**

- 1) At least three major British institutions are involved in the process of governing the country.
- 2) Government ministers are appointed by the monarch (on the advice of the Privy Council) to help run the country through Government Departments.
- 3) There are normally about a hundred members of the Cabinet.
- 4) The majority of Cabinet members are heads of Government Departments.
- 5) The most important task of the Privy Council is the granting of Royal Charters to public bodies.
- 6) The Privy Council is one of the oldest institutions of the British government.

**Make up a summary of the text using the following expressions:**

- executive
- institutions
- to be appointed by the monarch
- to run the country
- to take on various responsibilities
- the group of the closest advisors
- to advise the monarch on a range of matters
- the resolution of constitutional issues
- the approval of Orders in Council

## *Talking point*

**In your opinion, which element in the British executive is the most important? Justify your point of view.**

## *Reading II*

### *The Prime Minister and the Cabinet*

The Prime Minister is the most senior officer of Her Majesty's Government. The full title of the office is Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury, and Minister for the Civil Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Prime Minister's main responsibilities include: running the Government; appointing Cabinet Ministers and other ministers; coordinating the activities of the Cabinet and Government departments; appointing judges, creating Life Peers and making appointments to senior positions in the Church of England; leading the majority party; being the 'face' of the government in the UK and abroad.

The Prime Minister is technically appointed by the Monarch. The appointment takes place after the results of a General Election indicate which political party wins the majority of seats in the House of Commons. After a General Election, the Queen calls upon the leader of the largest party to officially appoint him to a post of a Prime Minister, who then forms the Government and the Cabinet.

**The first Prime Minister in the history of England was Sir Robert Walpole during the reign of King George I (1714-1727). In fact he was filling the role of the King at Council meetings, that George with his poor grasp of English could not manage (born in Germany the King never learned English and was never happy in England, always preferring his beloved Hanover).**

In theory, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom is a *primus inter pares* (first among equals) in the British Cabinet. In appointing a Cabinet the Prime Minister generally includes members of parliament who have political bases of their own and could potentially be a rival of the Prime Minister. However, in practice, a strong Prime Minister can so dominate government that he becomes a 'semi-president', and fulfils the leadership role in a country in the same way as presidents do. Examples include William Ewart Gladstone, David Lloyd George, Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair.

The Cabinet is composed of about 20 ministers, although the number can vary. It must be large enough to include senior ministers whilst small enough to allow for constructive discussions. There is no limit on the size of the Cabinet, but the number of salaried members is restricted by the *1975 Ministerial and Other Salaries Act*.

The functions of the Cabinet are to initiate and decide on policy, to exercise the supreme control of government and to coordinate Government Departments. The



exercise of these functions is vitally affected by the fact that the Cabinet is a group of party representatives, depending upon majority support in the House of Commons.

The Cabinet meets in private and its proceedings are confidential. Its members are bound by an oath not to disclose information about its proceedings, although

The term *Cabinet* was first used during the reign of Charles II. At that time the King used to summon a few favoured members of his Privy Council for consultations in his private apartments and such courtiers became known as members of his 'Cabinet'.

after 30 years Cabinet papers may be made available for inspection in the Public Record Office.

Normally the Cabinet meets for a few hours each week on a Tuesday morning at No. 10 Downing Street during parliamentary sittings, and rather less often when Parliament is not sitting. The Prime Minister can summon the

Cabinet to meet at any time and meeting will be more frequent when the political situation so requires. It is the Prime Minister's duty to meet the Queen during the weekly audiences and inform her about the business of Government.

To keep its workload within manageable limits, a great deal of work is carried on through the committee system. This involves referring issues either to a Standing Cabinet Committee or to an *ad hoc* committee composed of the ministers directly concerned. The committee then considers the matter in detail and either disposes of it or reports upon it to the Cabinet with recommendations for action.

Departmental ministers normally decide all matters within their responsibility. However, on important political matters they usually consult their colleagues collectively, either through the Cabinet or through a Cabinet committee. A decision by a departmental minister binds the Government as a whole.

Cabinet ministers are responsible for their departments, but the Cabinet as a whole is accountable to Parliament for its actions, and its individual members must be willing and able to publicly defend the Cabinet's policies both in the Commons and before a general public. The loss of a vote of confidence or the defeat of a major legislative bill in the Commons can mean a Cabinet's fall from power and the collective resignation of its members. Despite the need for consensus and collective action within a Cabinet, ultimate decision-making power rests with the Prime Minister as the leader of his party.

## ***Word Study***

### **1. Mind the pronunciation of the following words:**

treasury  
technically  
oath  
initiate  
parliamentary  
proceedings  
audiences

departmental  
resignation

**2. Find in the text above the English equivalents for the following key words and expressions:**

1. постоянно действующий комитет
2. специальный комитет
3. вотум доверия
4. всеобщие выборы
5. самый старший по должности чиновник
6. государственный архив Великобритании
7. отставка Кабинета министров
8. назначать на посты членов Кабинета министров
9. быть связанным присягой
10. согласовывать деятельность Министерств
11. провалить законопроект
12. обнародовать информацию
13. возглавлять партию большинства
14. заседать при закрытых дверях
15. руководить деятельностью правительства

**3. Match the words to make collocations.**

- |                 |                        |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| 1. to appoint   | a. the government      |
| 2. to create    | b. the leadership role |
| 3. salaried     | c. control             |
| 4. to summon    | d. to a post           |
| 5. collective   | e. the cabinet         |
| 6. to fulfil    | f. resignation         |
| 7. to run       | g. information         |
| 8. to disclose  | h. peers               |
| 9. to exercise  | i. policy              |
| 10. to initiate | j. members             |

**4. Fill in the gaps with prepositions in the phrases below, then choose any six and use them in the sentences of your own.**

1. to make appointments.....senior positions
2. to be composed .....
3. to allow ..... constructive discussions
4. limit ..... the size
5. to decide ..... policy
6. to meet.....private
7. available.....inspection
8. to depend ..... majority support

9. to be made available ..... inspection
10. to refer issues ..... a committee
11. to consider a matter ..... detail
12. to dispose ..... sth
13. to report ..... sth
14. to decide matters ..... one's responsibility
15. accountable ..... Parliament
16. to defend policies ..... the public
17. a Cabinet's fall ..... power
18. the need ..... consensus and collective action
19. to call ..... the leader
20. to rest ..... the Prime Minister

***After-reading questions:***

1. What are the major functions of the Prime Minister?
2. Which of his/her functions are reflected in his full title?
3. What functions of the British prime minister are not typical of the Heads of Government in other countries? Why is it so?
4. How does the Prime Minister take office?
5. Can there be a situation when the British monarch decides himself/herself who the next prime minister will be?
6. What is understood by the phrase 'primus inter pares'? Is this principle always observed in the real day-to-day work of the government?
7. How is the Cabinet formed?
8. What are the functions of the Cabinet?
9. Do you think that to some extent, the Cabinet depends on Parliament? Justify your opinion.
10. How is the confidentiality of Cabinet proceedings guaranteed?
11. How often does the Cabinet meet?
12. What is understood by the weekly audiences? What role do they play in the political life of the UK?
13. How does the committee system ease the workload of the Cabinet?
14. What are individual ministers within the Cabinet responsible for?
15. Why does the defeat of a major legislative bill in the Commons mean a Cabinet's fall from power?
16. How is the government accountable to people?
17. Who holds the ultimate decision-making power in Government?

## *Speaking*

Using additional sources, prepare a presentation about one of the best known British Prime Ministers. You may find useful information on the following website: <http://www.britannia.com/gov/primes/>

### PRIME MINISTERS QUIZ

1. Who became the prime minister of Britain in 1945?
  - A. Clement Attlee
  - B. Neville Chamberlain
  - C. Stanley Baldwin
  - D. Winston Churchill
2. Which prime minister rallied the British people during World War II?
  - A. Winston Churchill
  - B. Margaret Thatcher
  - C. John Major
  - D. Neville Chamberlain
3. Who was the only British prime minister in the 20th century to win three consecutive terms?
  - A. Tony Blair
  - B. Winston Churchill
  - C. Clement Attlee
  - D. Margaret Thatcher
4. What incident was especially responsible for increasing Margaret Thatcher's popularity?
  - A. mining policies
  - B. Falklands war
  - C. denationalization of the telecommunications industry
  - D. handling of the Irish Republican Army
5. Which British prime minister is identified with initiating the policy of "appeasement" toward Germany in the period immediately preceding World War II?
  - A. Benjamin Disraeli
  - B. Winston Churchill
  - C. Neville Chamberlain
  - D. Joseph Chamberlain

6. Upon which former prime minister's tomb did Queen Victoria lay a wreath in memory of their friendship?

- A. Benjamin Disraeli
- B. William Gladstone
- C. Robert Peel
- D. Winston Churchill

7. This is, possibly, one of Britain's most famous prime ministers, though many people do not even know that he held the office. He was a hero of the Peninsular War and has an article of clothing named after him. What is his name?

- A. Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington
- B. James Brudenell, the Earl of Cardigan
- C. FitzRoy James Henry Somerset, 1st Baron Raglan
- D. Charles Rennie Mackintosh

8. Who was the British prime minister at the start of the millennium?

- A. Tony Blair
- B. John Major
- C. David Cameron
- D. Gordon Brown

### ***Vocabulary in use***

#### **Some useful words and expressions to talk about coalition government:**

1. a minority government
2. to govern with a small majority
3. to accept, to block a coalition
4. to form, join a coalition
5. to go into coalition
6. to lead, head a coalition
7. to launch a coalition
8. coalition partners
9. to be under coalition rule
10. not to be agreed within the coalition
11. coalition disagreements, tensions
12. a coalition collapses, breaks up
13. to attack, to condemn coalition's plans
14. to end, to abandon the coalition
15. the ruling, governing, opposition, two-party, left-wing coalition

### *Pre-reading guesses*

**In groups of three or four discuss the following questions. Report your ideas to the class.**

1. What is a coalition government? For what reasons can such governments be formed?
2. What countries usually have coalition governments? Is it typical of Britain to be under coalition rule?
3. What are the shortcomings of a coalition government?
4. What is the difference between a single-party government and a coalition government? Which of them has more advantages?
5. What is understood by the opposition coalition? Can it pose a real threat to the ruling party/incumbent government?
6. What is meant by *collective responsibility*? Is this principle appropriate for a coalition government?

### *Reading III*

**Read the text below and find out if any of your ideas have been mentioned.**

#### *The Principles of Government*

Partly as a result of the electoral system, Britain, unlike much of Western Europe, normally has a 'single-party government'. In other words, all members of the government belong to the same political party. There were however several governments in Britain whose members were drawn from a variety of different parties (this is known as 'coalition government'). Coalitions were usually formed in times of national crisis, for example during wartime, in periods of economic difficulty or if no party had a majority. Party differences were laid aside while the crisis lasted and the parties agreed on a programme which could be supported by as many MPs as possible.

The habit of a 'single-party government' has helped to establish the tradition known as **collective responsibility**. That is, every member of the government shares the responsibility for every policy made by the government. Since the Second World War, all governments have been formed either by the Labour Party or the Conservative Party. Members of the same party are likely to agree on a programme of policies. Having won elections, they will also have the support of the majority of MPs in the House of Commons. This will enable them to put their policies into practice. Of course, individual government members may hold different opinions, but they are expected to keep these private. By convention, no member of the government can criticize government policy in public. Any member who does so must resign.

Another principle of the Cabinet's work, **the doctrine of ministerial responsibility**, demands that a Minister should accept a full administrative responsibility for the administration of his/her department. A minister's resignation

is the only publicly acceptable course of action if significant mistakes occur. The doctrine provides direct and effective political accountability for the actions of the executive. It is one of the central components of **the doctrine of the separation of powers** which is itself a cornerstone of any democratic government.

**Find in the text above the English equivalents for the following expressions:**

1. доктрина политической ответственности министров
2. публично критиковать политику правительства
3. разделять ответственность за любую политику, проводимую правительством
4. доктрина разделения властей
5. иметь поддержку большинства членов парламента
6. проводить политику в жизнь
7. доктрина коллективной ответственности
8. принадлежать к одной политической партии
9. придерживаться различных мнений
10. разногласия были забыты

### ***Talking point***

1. Do party differences make a coalition stronger or weaker?
2. Do you agree with the idea that coalition governments are doomed and destined to be weak, unstable and ineffective?
3. Do you think that coalition governments really contribute to finding compromises and uniting different groups within a country?
4. Why are coalitions believed to accept hard-hitting policies more easily and push through tough legislation with greater success than single-party governments?
5. What “new voices” do you think should be brought into the British government? And into the Russian one?
6. Is it difficult for the parties involved in a coalition government to keep their different identities?
7. Can the government implement a policy, which hasn't been agreed within the coalition? What can it lead to?
8. Under what circumstances can a coalition collapse?
9. Is the next British government likely to be a coalition one? Why/Why not?

## ***Reading IV***

### ***The Privy Council***

Historically the Privy Council was the name given to the group of ministers who acted as chief advisers to the King or Queen. As the power of the monarch declined the Cabinet replaced the Privy Council as the senior decision-making body.

Today the Privy Council's duties are largely formal and ceremonial. It has about six hundred members, including all Cabinet members (past and present), the leaders of all the main parties, and the Speaker. Its formal tasks include advising the monarch on a range of matters, like the resolution of constitutional issues and the approval of Orders in Council, such as the granting of Royal Charters to public bodies. The most important task of the Privy Council today is performed by its Judicial Committee. This serves as the final court of appeal from the dependencies and Commonwealth countries. It may also act as an arbiter for a wide range of courts and committees in Britain and overseas, and its rulings can be influential. The office of Privy Counsellor is an honorary one, conferred, for example, on former Prime Ministers. In the House of Commons a Privy Counsellor will take precedence over a normal MP when the Speaker calls MPs to speak, and may speak for longer. Privy Counsellors are referred to in the Commons as "Right Honorable" members.

Membership of the Council, which is retained for life, except for very occasional removals, is granted by the Sovereign, on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, to people eminent in public life in Britain and the independent monarchies of the Commonwealth. Cabinet ministers must be Privy Counsellors and, if not already members, are admitted to membership before taking their oath of office at a meeting of the Council. Full meetings of the Privy Council occur only on the death of a monarch and the accession of a new monarch, when the Council issues a proclamation of the accession and announces the name of the new Sovereign.

### ***Word Study***

#### **1. Mind the pronunciation of the following words:**

Privy Counsellor

ceremonial

dependencies

arbiter

honorary

honorable

confer

precedence



accession

**2. Give definitions to the words from the text and illustrate their meaning in the sentences of your own.**

1. to decline
2. approval
3. to grant
4. dependency
5. overseas
6. to confer
7. to retain
8. eminent
9. accession

**3. Comment on the meaning of the following expressions from the text:**

1. to act as chief advisers
2. senior decision-making body
3. to perform a task
4. to serve as the final court of appeal
5. to take precedence over sb
6. to retain for life
7. to admit to membership
8. to take oath of office
9. full meetings

**4. Fill in the gaps in the table below with verbs derived from the following nouns.**

	adviser
	resolution
	approval
	performance
	appeal
	dependency
	ruling
	precedence
	removal
	accession

### ***After-reading questions:***

1. What institution was named the Privy Council?
2. How has the role of the Privy Council changed over time?
3. What modern institution assumed the most important functions the Privy Council used to have in the past?
4. How many members are there in the Privy Council?
5. Who is admitted to its membership?
6. What tasks are performed by the Privy Council?
7. What functions are executed by the Judicial Committee?
8. What is understood by dependencies and Commonwealth countries?
9. How is membership of the Privy Council granted?
10. How are the members of the Privy Council treated in the House of Commons?
11. When do full meetings of the Privy Council occur?
12. Why is the Privy Council often called a relic of the past?

### ***Listening task 1***

***Watch the video and answer the questions:***

**<https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-politics-34475091>**

#### **Privy Council membership and traditions**

1. What can you get at Henry Poole and Co?
2. How often does the Privy Council meet?
3. What issues do Orders in Council cover?
4. How do Orders in Council become law?
5. Can the Privy Council be called a secretive and exclusive body?
6. How many people usually participate in Privy Council meetings?
7. What kinds of people can become Privy Counsellors?
8. What does the ceremony of oath taking involve?

### ***Talking point***

1. Does the Privy Council act as a kind of forum for discussion?
2. Why are its full meetings so rare?
3. Does the Privy Council play an important role in the process of governing the country? Justify your opinion.

## *Listening task 2*

**Listen to the talk given by David Cameron, the prime minister of the UK and the leader of the UK's Conservative Party.**

*The leader of Britain's Conservative Party says we're entering a new era -- where governments themselves have less power (and less money) and people empowered by technology have more. Tapping into new ideas on behavioral economics, he explores how these trends could be turned into smarter policy.*

**[http://www.ted.com/talks/david\\_cameron.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/david_cameron.html)**

**While watching the video, fill in the gaps in the following sentences:**

1. Politics is “showbiz for \_\_\_\_\_.”
2. The scientists thought about replacing \_\_\_\_\_ in their experiments with politicians.
3. If people combine the right political philosophy with the incredible \_\_\_\_\_, they will remake politics and government.
4. If people are given more power, you can create \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Politics and politicians will succeed if they \_\_\_\_\_ as they are.
6. Today people live in a post-bureaucratic age, in a world of \_\_\_\_\_.
7. There was \_\_\_\_\_ in the pre-bureaucratic age.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ gave birth to the bureaucratic age.
9. The information and Internet revolution hasn't touched the \_\_\_\_\_.
10. \_\_\_\_\_, choice and \_\_\_\_\_ will make a huge difference in government.
11. “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask \_\_\_\_\_.”
12. Huge advances in information technology, \_\_\_\_\_ and giving power to people will make life worthwhile.

***Comment on the following statements:***

1. That government is best which governs least (Henry David Thoreau).
2. What we should be asking is not whether we need a big government or small government, but how we can create a smarter and better government (Barack Obama, University of Michigan Commencement, 2010).
3. Whenever you have an efficient government you have a dictatorship (Harry S Truman).
4. In the long-run every Government is the exact symbol of its People, with their wisdom and unwisdom; we have to say, Like People like Government (Thomas Carlyle).
5. Government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state, an intolerable one (Thomas Paine).

# **UK GOVERNMENT: CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY AND PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY**

*Учебно-методическое пособие*

Составители:

Оксана Романовна Жерновая

Наталья Сергеевна Лобанова

Федеральное государственное автономное образовательное учреждение  
высшего образования «Национальный исследовательский Нижегородский  
государственный университет им. Н.И. Лобачевского»  
603022, Нижний Новгород, пр. Гагарина, 23.