

МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ И НАУКИ РФ

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**GOVERNMENT IN BRITAIN:
POLITICAL PARTIES, THE CROWN, PARLIAMENT AND
PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNING**

Учебно-методическое пособие

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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, 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, регионоведов и политологов, учитывает содержание курса страноведения, курсов политологии, истории и теории международных отношений.

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Введение

Учебно-методическое пособие «GOVERNMENT IN BRITAIN: POLITICAL PARTIES, THE CROWN, PARLIAMENT AND PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNING» представляет собой тематический сборник текстов общественно-политической направленности по государственно-политической системе Великобритании.

Данное пособие состоит из 5 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 страны. 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, регионоведов и политологов 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.

POLITICAL PARTIES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

Pre-reading guesses

Read the head of the unit. Investigate the idea of *political parties*.

1. A **political party** is a group of people united by shared political preferences and a general ideological identity that is organized for the purpose of winning government power, by electoral or other means. In other words, a political party is an organization that seeks to attain political power within a government by participating in electoral campaigns. Parties often espouse a certain ideology, but may also represent a coalition among disparate interests. **Political parties** should be distinguished from **pressure/interest groups**. Essentially a political party will have policies to cover all general areas of public life, whereas a pressure/interest group will seek to influence one specific policy area, for example environmental issues.
2. Write down some words and phrases which you associate with political parties and try to make up your definition of this term.
3. Now study other definitions of political parties. Underline similarities and circle differences. Which of them best matches your understanding of this phenomenon?
 - A political party is a group of people who seek to influence or form the government according to their agreed views and principles;
 - A political party is an organization that mobilizes voters on behalf of a common set of interests, concerns, and goals. It formulates political and policy agendas, selects and nominates candidates, conducts election campaigns, and monitors and scrutinizes the work of their elected representatives. Political parties link citizens and the government, providing a way for people to have a voice in their government;
 - A political party is an organization of individuals and factions attempting to gain control of the government by winning elections.
4. When did the first political parties appear? Where did it happen? In your opinion, what was the main driving force behind the formation of the first political parties?
5. What are the fundamental functions of political parties in modern politics?
6. What types of political parties do you know? Using your knowledge of political theory and information you can find on the Internet, describe peculiarities of the following types of modern political parties:
 - Elite parties
 - Mass parties
 - Catch-all parties

- Cartel parties
- Protest parties
- Spoiler parties
- Splinter parties
- Marginal parties
- Agrarian parties
- Green parties
- Fascist parties
- Populist parties
- Progressive parties
- Reactionary parties

Having done that, try to find examples of these political parties both in Russian and foreign politics.

7. What is understood by the political spectrum? How can political parties be classified according to their position on the political spectrum? Fill in the following table:

	Left-wing parties	Centrist parties	Right-wing parties
Dominant ideology			
Economic views			
Internal affairs			
Foreign policy priorities			
Sources of funding			
Typical voters			
Examples			

8. How would you put Russian political parties on this spectrum? Give grounds for your views and ideas.
9. Can a modern state do without political parties? Justify your opinion.

Vocabulary in use:

I. Some useful words and expressions which can be used to speak about political parties:

1. **Political parties** are associated with/ adopt/ endorse/ favour/ support/ challenge/ oppose radical/ progressive/ conservative/ traditional/ moderate policies/ stance/ views/ position on something
2. **Political parties** can be Democratic/Republican/Conservative/Labour/ Liberal; ruling/ governing/ dominant/ opposition/ majority/ minority/ parliamentary; main/major/core/established/national/regional/peripheral/ newly-founded; Catholic/Protestant/ Islamist/ secular; centralized/ strong/ cohesive/ flexible/ loose/ open/ weak/ decentralized.

3. **Party leaders** can be called party officers/chairmen/ bosses/chiefs/ party elite/ party's top committee/ party's big shots. They are **in charge of a party** (lead/ chair/ preside/ head a party, exercise/provide leadership and stay on as party leaders), **struggle for and win party leadership** (stand for/ battle for/ campaign for/ race for/ challenge/ contest leadership, face/ withstand/ defeat a challenge to smb's leadership, assume/win leadership, take on/over from smb and beat off a leadership rival/competitor) and, sooner or later, **leave the position of the party leader** (resign as party leader, step aside/down and give up the chairmanship of the party).
4. **Party members and supporters** can be described as party activists/ party operatives/ core identifiers/ the party faithful/ the rank-and-file/ the grass-roots. They can be members of/belong to/ join/ leave/ resign from/ be expelled from a political party.
5. **Groupings within parties** are known as the left/right wing of the party, factions (which are frequently warring/competing/rival/opposing, conservative/hard-line/liberal/moderate/radical, dominant/leading/major, formal/informal, dissident/anti-reform/anti-talks), cliques and the right-wing/nationalist/radical fringe.
6. **Political parties** originate/emerge/develop, seek to govern, contest elections, rise to/gain power, wield/use/exercise power, fall from/lose power. **Parties** are set up/established/founded/formed, break up/wind up and can be dissolved/disbanded or even banned/outlawed/abolished.
7. **Political parties** represent/express/articulate/voice group interests/concerns, formulate/establish/set the political/policy agenda, choose/select/nominate candidates, conduct election campaigns, seek electoral support and battle for votes and monitor/scrutinize the work of their elected representatives.
8. **Party representatives** are obliged to *toe/follow the party line*, which is frequently enshrined in *a party platform or manifesto* which consists of different *platform planks*. Almost all political parties make *election promises* and *manifesto commitments* during an election campaign.
9. **Party gatherings** are known as party conferences (the UK)/party conventions and caucuses (the US)/ party congresses (communist states).
10. **Sources of party funding/finance** can be state subsidies/ state subventions/ federal funds, membership fees/dues/subscriptions and sponsors' contributions and donations.

II. Answer the following questions using the active vocabulary:

1. What is the major objective of political parties? How can parties achieve their main aim?
2. Do you think that political parties should always adopt a progressive stance on burning political issues? Why?/Why not?
3. Do you believe that minority and peripheral parties should have some say in national politics?
4. What is your opinion on religious (Catholic/Protestant/ Islamist, etc.) parties and their participation in the decision-making process?

5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of centralized and decentralized political parties?
6. How long can (and should) a person serve as the party chief? Justify your opinion, referring to particular examples of world political leaders.
7. What party members are described as the rank-and-file and grassroots of a party? Would you like to be one of them?
8. Why can party members be expelled from their party?
9. What role do factions play in party politics? Can a modern political party exist without them or not? Base your opinion on some examples.
10. What are the most common reasons for a party's winding up?
11. Do you know any political parties which were outlawed? Why did it happen?
12. Do you think that parties are an efficient tool of scrutinizing the activities of different governmental institutions?
13. Have you ever read any party manifesto? If so, what were your impressions? Did that political party manage to keep its election promises?
14. What role do party conferences and conventions play in the work of modern political parties?
15. What are the most widespread sources of party funding in Russia?

Pre-reading questions

1. When did the modern political system of the United Kingdom emerge?
2. What are the distinguishing features of the British political system?
3. What are the main political parties in modern Britain?
4. Which is the ruling party now?
5. Who are the leaders of the main political parties in Britain?
6. Do parts of the UK (Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland) have their own political parties?

Reading I

Brief history and modern views of the major British political parties

For a long time, British parliamentary democracy was dominated by the two-party system, with two main parties forming the government and the official Opposition. Historically, these two parties were the Tories (now the Conservative Party) and the Whigs (now the Liberal Democrats). The terms Tory and Whig were originally insults: a “whiggamor” was a cattle driver, and a “tory” was an Irish term for an outlaw.

Traditionally the Tories were associated with the gentry, favouring agricultural interests and the Church of England, while the Whigs were more linked with trade, money, larger land holders (or “land magnates”). Both were committed to the political system in place, but neither group could be considered a true political party in the modern sense but somewhat loose alliances of interests and individuals.

In the 18th century the Tory Party experienced its ups and downs. In the 19th century it picked up and became known as the Conservative Party (the word “conservative” first came into use in the 1830s). After becoming associated with repression of popular discontent in the early 19th century, the Tories underwent a fundamental transformation under the influence of Sir Robert Peel, himself an industrialist rather than a landowner, who outlined a new “Conservative” philosophy of reforming ills while conserving the good.

Whigs were traditionally in opposition to the Tory Party. Initially they controlled the government, but later developed into the minority party until 1830. During the next few years, the Whigs became known as the Liberal Party. The term “Liberal Party” was first used officially in the late 19th century, though it was used colloquially for decades beforehand.

The Liberals and Conservatives dominated the political scene until the 1920s, when the Liberal Party declined in popularity and suffered a long stream of resignations. It was replaced as the main anti-Tory opposition party by the newly emerging Labour Party, which represented an alliance between the labour movement, organized trade unions and various socialist societies. The establishment of the Labour Party led to the demise of the Whigs as the liberal force in British politics and caused a slow waning of energy from the Liberal movement.

Throughout the second half of the 20th century Labour governments alternated with Conservative ones. The Conservatives were in power for most of the time, with the Labour Party suffering the “wilderness years” of the 1950s and the late 20th century (several General Election defeats). In 1979 Margaret Thatcher became leader of the Conservative Party and made a fundamental change to Conservative policies, turning the Conservative Party into a right-wing radical body. Her successor John Major pursued radical policies of privatization, anti-trade-union legislation and monetarism, otherwise known as Thatcherism.

The Labour Party responded to Margaret Thatcher’s government by moving the party further to the left, which split it and made it unelectable for a decade.

In response to the leftward shift of the Labour Party some moderate party members formed a breakaway group, called the Social Democratic Party, as a centrist alternative to the Labour and the Conservatives. It eventually merged with the Liberal Party to form the Liberal Democrats (1988). Support for the new party has increased ever since, and the Liberal Democrats (often referred to as the LibDems) in 2001 won a record number of seats in the House of Commons.

Tony Blair became leader of the Labour Party in 1994. In 1997 Labour won the General Election with a historic landslide result and the promise of an entirely new beginning. It had dissociated itself from old-style Labour by rejecting the ideology of state-owned industry, and by reducing trade union influence on the party. It also portrayed itself as filled with youthful vigor, in vivid contrast with the Conservatives who seemed old and tired. It made long-term issues its priority, in particular raising educational standards in order to achieve a workforce fit for the 21st century. Above all, Labour promised to rejuvenate Britain. They consolidated

their position in 2001, winning a second consecutive General Election – the first time ever achievement for the Labour Party.

This led to the crisis of confidence in the Conservative Party, which had become complacent with its position as the ‘natural party of government’ after its 18 years of power. Its drift to the right as well as leadership problems lost it a large number of voters and made its chiefs take on a challenging role of improving the party’s image. It was successfully done when David Cameron headed the Conservatives (2005) and announced his intention to reform and realign the party, making the Conservative brand more attractive to young, socially liberal voters.

Thus, nowadays there are three major national political parties in the United Kingdom. They are the Conservative Party, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats.

The Conservative Party is the party of the Right, identified with the idea of economic freedom and until Margaret Thatcher’s coming to power in 1979 with the idea of resistance to change. It has successfully portrayed itself as the party of patriotism. As in the 19th century, it appeals to a ‘property-owning democracy’, and as a result its support tends to lie with the wealthier classes, receiving much money from major business and financial institutions. It gives emphasis to the importance of law and order, and the maintenance of strong armed forces to protect British interests.

According to the Conservatives’ party manifesto, “it’s time for a Government that will deliver. It’s time to support marriage and the family; time for a war on crime; time to cut taxes; time for our schools and hospitals to benefit from choice and freedom; time to show respect to our pensioners; time for real savings, not welfare dependency; time to endow our universities. It’s time for common sense”.

In other words, the fundamental principles of the Conservative Party can be summarized as follows: individuals have an absolute right to liberty; ownership is the strongest foundation of individual freedom, opportunity and independence; the role of government is to strengthen individual liberty and choice; in economic affairs the Government should establish a climate in which enterprise can flourish.

Labour is preeminently the party of social justice, though its emphasis is less on equality than on the achievement of well-being and opportunity for all members of society. It tends to give the collective well-being of society slightly more importance than individual freedom. It was once committed to public ownership of major industries, and to economic planning. It now favours an entrepreneurial but socially aware economy. The trade union movement, which founded the Labour Party, has lost the influence it once had over the party.

As Labour claims, they “want to create a community in which power, wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many not the few, where the rights people enjoy reflect the duties they owe, and where people live together freely, in a spirit of solidarity, tolerance and respect”.

Consequently, the Labour Party seeks to achieve a dynamic economy serving the public interest; a just society, which judges its strength by the condition of the weak as much as the strong; an open democracy, in which government is

held to account by the people; a healthy environment, which has to be protected, enhanced and held in trust for future generations.

The **Liberal Democratic Party** seeks to attract the votes of the middle ground between Labour and the Conservatives, but has also tended to attract opponents of the Conservatives, dominant in the south of England, and opponents of the Labour Party, dominant in the north. It is the party keenest on constitutional and electoral reform. It also prides itself on being less tied to either capitalist or union interests, and being free to offer more radical policies.

As they say, “the Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community, and in which no one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity. We champion the freedom, dignity and well-being of individuals. We believe that the role of the state is to enable all citizens to attain these ideals, to contribute fully to their communities and to take part in the decisions which affect their lives”.

Standing for human rights and freedoms, the LibDems promote the idea that individual liberty lies at the heart of society. According to them, the main aim of the government is to enable men and women to develop their own talents to the full, free from arbitrary interference of government. Thus, the role of the government is to guarantee this freedom, to create an enterprising, competitive market-based economy.

Pronunciation

Check the pronunciation of the following words:

gentry

demise

alternate

wilderness

successor

privatization

monetarism

vigour

rejuvenate

consecutive

complacent

realign

portray

endow

flourish

preeminently

entrepreneurial

opponent

Word study

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

1. to favour smth.
2. to be committed to smth.
3. to outline sth.
4. the demise of smth.
5. to alternate
6. a successor
7. monetarism
8. unelectable
9. to merge
10. to dissociate itself from smth.
11. to portray itself as smth.
12. to rejuvenate
13. consecutive
14. to realign
15. to endow
16. to flourish
17. preeminently
18. the middle ground
19. to safeguard smth.
20. to champion smth.

II. Explain the meaning of the following word combinations, translate them from English into Russian and use them in your own sentences to comment on British and Russian political parties:

1. a loose alliance
2. to experience ups and downs
3. repression of popular discontent
4. to decline in popularity
5. to suffer a long stream of resignations
6. to cause a slow waning of smth.
7. leftward shift
8. to form a breakaway group
9. a historic landslide result
10. the crisis of confidence
11. to become complacent with smth.
12. drift to the right
13. property-owning democracy
14. public ownership
15. economic planning
16. a socially aware economy

17. to serve the public interest
18. to be held to account
19. to lie at the heart of smth.
20. arbitrary interference of government
21. an enterprising and competitive market-based economy.

III. Find in the text the English equivalents for the following words and expressions and use them in the sentences referring to political parties in your country:

1. всеобщие выборы
2. поражение на выборах
3. недовольство народа
4. укрепить положение
5. внести существенные изменения в политику партии
6. проводить радикальную политику
7. победить на выборах
8. борьба с преступностью
9. основа свободы личности
10. благосостояние людей
11. рыночная экономика
12. быть избранным в Парламент
13. нести ответственность перед народом
14. сократить налоги
15. защищать права личности

After-reading questions:

1. What were the first two political parties which originally dominated the British political system?
2. What were the Tories and the Whigs traditionally associated with?
3. Why do you think the first British political parties are called loose alliances of interests and individuals rather than genuine political parties?
4. When and who was the Conservative party formed by?
5. What political party did the Whigs develop into in the 19th century?
6. How did the British party scene change in the 1920s? In your opinion, what were the reasons for such changes?
7. What was the Labour Party originally based on?
8. Which political party dominated the national political scene in the second half of the 20th century?
9. What is understood by the “wilderness years” which the Labour Party suffered in the 1950s?
10. What are the main principles of Thatcherism?
11. How was the Social Democratic Party founded?
12. What made the Labour Party unelectable for a decade in the 1980s?
13. What changes did Tony Blair make to the traditional Labour image?

14. What caused the crisis of confidence in the Conservative Party? How was it overcome?
15. What is the traditional electorate of the Conservative Party? Why is it so?
16. Why do you think the trade union movement finally lost its leverage on the Labour Party?
17. Who are typical voters of the Liberal Democratic Party? In your opinion, why is it so?
18. Are there any platform planks which all the three major British political parties share? If so, what are they?

Talking point

I. Using the official websites of all the three major British political parties (www.conservatives.com; www.libdems.org.uk, www.labour.org.uk) fill in the following table:

	Conservatives	Labour	LibDems
Economic views			
Internal policy			
Devolution of power			
Views on migration			
British membership in the EU			
British-American relations			
Representation in Parliament			
Leader and famous members (both past and present)			
Electorate			

II. Using the table above as well as information from the British and Russian media compare and contrast the main political parties of Great Britain and Russia, try to identify some similarities and differences.

Comment on the following statements:

1. Political parties... are the only place left to us where people don't talk politics (Oscar Wilde).

2. Things must be done by parties, not by persons using parties as tools (Benjamin Disraeli).
3. Vote for the man who promises least; he'll be the least disappointing (Bernard Baruch).

Pre-reading guesses

I. Investigate the idea of *party systems*:

A **party system** is a set of all significant parties in a country, their interactions, and the electoral system and voter loyalties that produce it. In **one-party/single-party** systems one party *monopolizes/ usurps power*, which allows such states to be classified as one-party states. In **two-party** systems two major parties *alternate in power* and control of government power shifts between two dominant parties, which makes possible a system of responsible party government. In **multiparty** systems several parties *share power or participate in power*, increasing the likelihood of multiparty coalitions. In **dominant** party systems, one party is *a constant component* of the executive, governing either alone or in coalition.

II. Answer the following questions:

1. What are the pros and cons of having each type of a party system?
2. Which type of a party system do you consider the most stable one? And which is the shakiest one? Why? Justify your opinion.
3. Can you give examples of states with each type of a party system?
4. How can you characterize the Russian party system? How has it evolved since the emergence of the first Russian political parties in the late 80s – early 90s?
5. Can a one-party state be democratic?

Reading II

Britain is normally described as having a 'two-party system'. This is because, since 1945, one of the two big parties has, by itself, controlled the government, and members of these two parties have occupied more than 90% of all of the seats in the House of Commons. Moreover, this is not a peculiarly modern phenomenon. Basically the same situation existed throughout the nineteenth century, except that the Liberals, rather than Labour, were one of the two big parties. The Labour party was formed at the beginning of the 20th century and within about thirty years had replaced the Liberals in this role.

One reason for the existence of this situation is the electoral system. The other is the nature of the origin of British political parties. Britain is unlike most other countries in that its parties were first formed inside Parliament, and were only later extended to the public at large. During the eighteenth century Members of Parliament tended to divide themselves into two camps, those who usually supported the government of the time and those who usually did not. During the nineteenth century it gradually became the habit that the party which did not

control the government presented itself as an alternative government. This idea of an alternative government has received legal recognition. The leader of the second biggest party in the House of Commons (or, more exactly, of the biggest party which is not in government) receives the title 'Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition' and even gets a salary to prove the importance of this role. He or she chooses a 'shadow cabinet', thereby presenting the image of a team ready to fill the shoes of the government at a moment's notice.

As a result of these origins, neither party existed solely to look after the interests of one particular group (although some groups in society were naturally more attracted to one of the two parties than the other). Furthermore, although they could be distinguished by certain broad differences in their outlooks on life, the two parties did not exist to promote single, coherent political philosophies. The main reason for their existence was to gain power by forming effective coalitions of interest groups and individuals.

Although the Labour party was formed outside Parliament, and, as its name implies, did exist to promote the interests of a particular group (the working class), it soon fitted into the established framework. It is very difficult for smaller parties to challenge the dominance of the bigger ones. If any of them seem to have some good ideas, these ideas tend to be adopted by one of the three biggest parties, who all try to appeal to as large a section of the population as possible.

The fact that the party system originated inside Parliament has other consequences. Parties do not, as they do in many other countries, extend into every area of public and social life in the country. Universities, for example, each have their Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat clubs, but when there is an election for officers of the student union, it is not normally fought according to national party divisions. The same is true of elections within trade unions.

Another consequence is that it is usually a party's MPs who have the most control over party policy and the biggest influence on the choice of party leader. This does not mean that the parties are undemocratic. Their members who are not MPs can have an effect on policy in a number of ways. First, they can make their views known at the annual party conference. In the case of the three main parties, this takes place in the autumn and lasts about a week. Second, the local party has the power to decide who is going to be the party's candidate for MP in its area at the next election. However, these powers are limited by one important consideration - the appearance of unity. Party policies are always presented as potential government policies, and a party's leading MPs are always presented as potential ministers. If you want to look like a realistic potential government, you don't want to show the public your disagreements. Party conferences are always televised. As a result they sometimes tend to be showcases whose main purpose is not so much to debate important matters as to boost the spirits of party members and to show the public a dynamic, unified party. Similarly, if local party members decide not to re-select the present MP as their candidate in an election, it betrays disagreement and argument. Therefore, party members do not like this happening and most MPs can be sure that their local party will choose them again at the next election.

Word study

Rephrase the following words and word combinations, translate them from English into Russian and use them in your own sentences describing the party systems of the UK and Russia:

1. to receive legal recognition
2. to fill smb's shoes
3. at a moment's notice
4. to look after smb's interests
5. a coherent philosophy
6. to fit into the established framework
7. to challenge smb's dominance
8. to originate
9. to appeal to smb
10. to extend into every area of public life

Skimming Activities

Skim through the text and continue the following statements:

1. Britain is normally described as...
2. The reasons for the existence of a "two-party system" are...
3. The leader of the biggest party which is not in government receives the title...
4. Although the Labour Party was formed outside Parliament, it soon...
5. The powers of the main parties are limited by one important consideration...
6. It is very difficult for other smaller parties ...
7. If a party wants to look like a realistic potential government...

Talking point

I. Work with the partner. Read the following sentences from the text. Answer the questions:

1. The leader of the second biggest party chooses a "shadow cabinet", thereby presenting the image of the team ready to fill the shoes of the government at a moment's notice.

What is meant by "presenting the image of the team"?

2. The powers are limited by one important consideration – the appearance of unity.

What is meant by "the appearance of unity"?

II. Nowadays many political scientists describe Britain as having a "two-and-a-half" party system. What does it mean? In your opinion, how will the situation evolve in the foreseeable future?

III. What type of party system best suits Russia? Give grounds and justify your opinion.

Reading III (Additional)

The Workers' party? That's us, say Conservatives in bid to rebrand

They are two words David Cameron's ancestors would more often have put together to describe a summer shindig for the employees on their estates. But the words "Workers' party" will now be used to describe the Conservatives as Cameron tries to rid the Tories of their image as the guardians of the rich.

Grant Shapps, the party chairman, will stand alongside Sir John Major, the former champion of the "classless society", to announce that the Tories are now determined to show they want to spread – and not defend – privilege.

Speaking at the new Conservative campaign headquarters, the Tory chairman will say: "The Conservatives are the Workers' party and we are on your side."

The name of the Workers' party has a long, if less than noble, history. It was the moniker taken by former supporters of the Official IRA, which split from the Provisional IRA in 1969, when they broke from paramilitarism in the 1970s. Provisionals refer to the Officials as "stickies".

There is also the Trotskyist Socialist Workers' party, which rails against capitalism in the west and used to campaign against the "state capitalism" of the USSR.

The Tories are depicting themselves as the Workers' Party as they try to reach out to blue collar workers. Tory strategists believe that the only way to win a majority, by increasing the party's vote in the north of England and in the Midlands, is by reaching out to voters who may see the Conservatives as the party of the rich – hence the repositioning exercise.

Shapps has decided to go some way to accepting a proposal by the campaigning backbench MP Robert Halfon for the Tories to rename themselves the Workers' party. In a Sun article, Halfon said the party should replace its green oak tree logo with a ladder.

The Tory chairman will keep the party's name but will then describe the Conservatives in the next breath as the "Workers' party".

In his speech, extracts of which were released to the Daily Mail, Shapps will say: "Sir John Major campaigned for what he called a 'classless society, and I would argue this is the society we are fighting for in government today: a Britain where it doesn't matter who your parents are, where you can go as far as your talents and hard work will take you, and where work – rather than benefits – is what pays."

In a sign of the impact of the Tories' general election campaign chief Lynton Crosby, Shapps will release a five point pledge card modelled on the New Labour pledge card of 1997 which sets out the ideas for Britain's "long term economic plan".

The pledges, released to the Daily Mail, are: reducing the deficit, cutting income tax and freezing fuel duty, backing small business to create more jobs, capping welfare and reducing immigration; and delivering the best schools. Shapps will say of Major: "Imagine a young kid growing up in inner city London – just a few miles from here. His mum and dad are working, but not very rich, trying to pay the bills.

"This young man was not particularly academic. He quit school at 16 and struggled to get on. So let me ask you something: what did the Conservative Party have to offer someone like that? I'll tell you. That young man's name is John Major, and the Conservative Party made him Prime Minister ... His life is a symbol of our party. It shows whose side we are on."

The remarks by the Tory chair came as Downing Street did little to distance itself from a report in the Daily Telegraph that Cameron will give an undertaking during the general election campaign not to enter into another coalition even if he falls short of an overall majority. A No 10 source said: "The prime minister has made clear he is going all out for a Conservative majority."

*Nicholas Watt, chief political correspondent The Guardian,
Tuesday 25 February 2014*

Answer the following questions:

1. What Conservative leader was the first to stand for the “classless society”? Why so?
2. How did the name “the Workers’ party” appear on the political scene of the UK?
3. Why are the Conservatives trying to depict themselves as the Workers’ party nowadays?
4. Does it seem to be a good idea to rebrand the Conservative party?
5. What are the election promises of the Conservative party? Do they appeal to the electorate from all walks of life?
6. What is your opinion on the problem raised by the author in the article? Express your own point of view.

THE CROWN

Pre-reading guesses

I. Read the head of the unit. Analyze the concept of *monarchy*.

1. What words and phrases are related to ‘monarchy’?
2. 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.**
MACMillan 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

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

II. 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?

III. Before reading the text do the following quiz:

Who was Royally Who?

1. Who is the head of state in the UK?
2. How many kings and how many queens have there been in Britain since 1066?

3. Who was the first king of England? What monarch started the Church of England and why?
4. Who ruled Britain in the times of William Shakespeare?
5. When and why was the rule of monarchy broken in Britain? Who was the country governed by then?
6. What monarch had the longest reign in Britain?
7. What monarch abdicated from the British throne in 1936 and why?
8. Since when has the present monarch been ruling Britain? Do you know the full official title of the Queen?
9. Who is the current heir to the British throne?

Reading

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 16th and 17th 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

I. 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

III. 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 17th 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?

Talking point

1. Is there a place for monarchies in the 21st 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?

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).

PARLIAMENT

Pre-reading guesses

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

1. What words and phrases are related to ‘parliament’?
2. 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;**
MACMILLAN Dictionary
 - **The main lawmaking institution in some countries;**
Webster’s New World College Dictionary
 - **An official or formal conference or council, usually concerned with government or public affairs;**
American Heritage Dictionary
 - **A national representative body having supreme legislative powers within the state;**
American Heritage Dictionary
3. Underline the similarities and circle the differences.
4. Give your own definition of *parliament*.
5. In groups of three or four compare and contrast your notes. Discuss and report back to the class the different points of view.
6. Compare your definition with the ones provided in the unit.
7. What role and functions are performed by parliament in a country?

Vocabulary in use

I. 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 bill
- 24. to veto a bill
- 25. to defeat/ to kill a bill

II. 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).

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

1. to dissolve, to dismiss a parliament
2. to convene, convoke a parliament
3. to stand for parliament/ to run for parliament
4. a hung parliament
5. parliamentary elections
6. parliamentary majority/ minority
7. parliamentary opposition
8. parliamentary representation
9. parliamentary session
10. accountability to smb./smth.
11. to be accountable to smb.
12. to hold smb. accountable
13. members of parliament (MPs), congressmen, representatives, deputies, senators
14. legislators, law-makers

Reading I

Pre-reading activities

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.

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.

The essential role of the House of Lords is to discuss non-controversial subjects.

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

I. 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

II. 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

III. 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.

IV. 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.

1. the supreme legislative authority
2. to possess legislative supremacy
3. to be legally barred
4. to receive royal assent
5. to block/ delay bills
6. prerogative

7. to be constitutionally unacceptable
8. to be elected by universal suffrage
9. resignation
10. by-election
11. to control taxation
12. to scrutinize the workings of the government

Talking Point

In groups of 3 or 4 discuss the following statements, which of them do 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’.

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 20th 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

I. 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

II. 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

III. 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

IV. 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

I. 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 ...

II. 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 items 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

Culture Quiz

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

- Question1:** 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
- Question2:** In which year were the Houses of Parliament that stand today completed?
 (a) 1670 (b) 1770 (c) 1870
- Question3:** Who is the United Kingdom's Head of State?
 (a) The Queen (b) The Prime Minister (c) The Archbishop of Canterbury
- Question4:** 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.

Question5: 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

Question6: 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)armouredconvoy

Question7: '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

Question8: According to UK law, a general election must be held every ?

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

Question9: 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

Question10: 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

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

I. 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 –

II. 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

III. 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
	f. to refuse to allow smth. to happen

6. proponent 7. to veto	g. to dismiss
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IV. Fill in the gaps with the words from the Word Study section.

1. The House of Lords is supposed to be reformed in the near future, however, ...of the House of Commons over the Lords should be
2. ... are members of the House of Lords who are ... by the Monarch and can't ... their title to their descendants.
3. The functions of the Monarch include opening parliamentary sessions and ... it.
4. 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.
5. 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

I. Complete the following sentences:

1. Being an unelected element of the British Parliament, the House of Lords.....
2. Under the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 the judicial functions of the Lords.....
3. Originally the Lords represented.....
4. Until 1958 the right to sit in the House of Lords.....
5. The House of Lords Act 1999.....
6. A great number of attempts have been made so far to.....
7. To improve the representative character of the House of Lords the proponents of a reformed House suggest.....

II. Answer the following questions:

1. Do the two houses of the British Parliament have the same powers?
2. What are the functions of the House of Lords confined to?
3. What groups of peers does the current composition of the House comprise?
4. Who are the majority of peers appointed by?
5. Does the House of Lords perform any judicial functions at present?
6. Why has the power of the House of Lords been eroded?
7. What broad changes in the power of the Upper Chamber were introduced in the first half of the XXIst century?
8. Who are life peers? When was the title introduced?
9. 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?
10. What does the principal controversy regarding the House of Lords reform consist in?
11. Was a compromise between the two houses of the British Parliament over the

- issue of the House of Lords composition reached in 2007?
12. 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:

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

Talking Point

“The Changing Role of the Lord Chancellor”

The Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, or Lord Chancellor, is a senior and important functionary in the government of the United Kingdom. He is the second highest ranking of the Great Officers of State, ranking only after the Lord Steward. The Lord Chancellor is appointed by the Sovereign on the advice of the Prime Minister.

The Lord Chancellor is a member of the Cabinet and, by law, is responsible for the efficient functioning and independence of the courts. Formerly he was also the presiding officer of the House of Lords, and the head of the judiciary. However, the Reform Act 2005 marked drastic changes in the powers and functions of the official.

Using information given on the Internet, find answers to the following questions, share the information with your group-mates:

You may use the following links:

http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Lord_Chancellor

<http://www.parliament.uk/about/mps-and-lords/principal/lord-chancellor/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers/secretary-of-state-for-justice>

1. What were the main duties of the Lord Chancellor before the Reform Act 2005?
2. Why was the issue of conducting the reform of the office of the Lord Chancellor raised? Why was Great Britain accused of being “undemocratic”?

3. What important functions are performed by the Lord Chancellor at present?
4. How will the reform of the office impact on the efficiency of the British state system?

Writing

Write an essay on the following topic “*The office of the Lord Chancellor. The impact of the reform on the efficiency of the British state system.*”

Reading II

“The Pros and Cons of the House of Lords Reform”

Pre-reading activities

I. Read the following opinions of the British concerning the prospects of the House of Lords reform:

- “How can true democracy exist when the majority of people who work for a living are represented by individuals who have never known the strife and turmoil of real life?”
Andrew, Swansea
- “The House of Lords is a club for unelected politicians and has no connection with real life. The church has no right to represent the public.”
Anon
- “Anyone who wields power, anyone who can affect the laws that we all have to obey, must be approved by those that they govern for their power to be of any legitimacy at all”
Ed Northampton
- “The system of “appointees” is obviously open to party political corruption and favouritism”
Anthony B. Kent
- “No other country in the world has an unelected law-making body; it is backward and does not help bring confidence in our government”
Beka, London

II. Discuss the following questions in groups of 3 or 4. Share your ideas with the class:

1. What arguments for the House of Lords reform are mentioned by the respondents?
2. What other arguments for the reform of the upper chamber of British Parliament could you give?
3. What counterarguments might the opponents of the reform give?

Reading

Read the text about the pros and cons of the reformed House of Lords and compare the arguments pro and contra the reform with the ideas of yours.

The House of Lords is seen by some as an antiquated addition to the government structure, a mockery of modern democracy and an inhibiting influence in the drive for progress. While the function of a second chamber is recognized as beneficial as it ensures checks and balances on the activity of the House of Commons, the composition of its members reflects a society long past, a reminder of a time when equality was not a social aspiration. New Labour's first stage of reform in 1999 did some work to reduce hereditary peers in the House of Lords, but since then the gradual phasing in of reforms that was proposed has failed to materialize. Many advocates of democracy and the rule of law are now calling for these reforms to be completed, to abolish members of birth right and to introduce an electorally voted body to ensure that the House of Lords is as fully democratic as the rest of the country claims to be. Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg presented the House of Lords Reform Draft Bill and the accompanying White Paper to Parliament on 17 May 2011. It proposed reform to a smaller, 80%-elected House with 15-year maximum terms for elected peers. Whether or not this bill will be met with enthusiasm, apathy or disdain, and whether or not it will prove to the greater good of the House of Lords and government of Britain is yet to be seen.

Points for the Reform

1. The current House of Lords is undemocratic.

<i>Point</i>	<i>Counterpoint</i>
Currently the members of the House of Lords consist of hereditary peers, senior members of the Church of England and those appointed by political parties. Whether or not there is an abuse of power or the outcome of the House of Lords is beside the point – its very existence in its current state is undemocratic, so it should be reformed. It seems nonsensical that a country that lectures to the rest of the world the importance of democracy, to the point of war, should overlook such a grievance in their own society.	Although the House of Lords may not be a true expression of “democracy”, it has a positive function in the governing of the country and is based in a tradition and heritage that the people of Britain should not try and abandon. One could argue in return that those very decisions and wars that Britain is involved in to defend “democracy” do not reflect the will of the people and that modern states are not true democracies at all. In practice the British people have a limited say in how the country is run and it would be naïve to champion the idea of Britain being a “democracy” by ignoring the existence of such an overpowering state machine.

2. The House of Lords is out of touch with the electorate. It is non-representative.

Point	Counterpoint
<p>The 19th century US President Abraham Lincoln stated that democracy should be “Government of the people, by the people and for the people”. Therefore peers who sit in the house based on noble birth right or their membership of the Church of England do not represent the people of Britain. Although a small number of members of the House of Lords are industry experts the fact remains that there is still a proportion of hereditary peers, which guarantees no expertise. Furthermore political parties can elect peers which is simply absurd, parties should not be able to appoint their own watch dogs.</p>	<p>The House of Lords may not be representative of the British population but instead they represent an array of educated experts who can give informed advice on Government policy. While the members of the House of Lords may represent a small section of society, they also include expert peers, such as lawyers, scientists, businesspeople, academics, doctors and civil servants that can balance out the political opportunism present in the House of Commons. Election does not guarantee this expertise, so having a second chamber that is appointed rather than elected improves the quality of the governance of the country.</p>

3. The House of Lords has an inbuilt conservative majority.

Points	Counterpoints
<p>Peers are known to be conservative in their outlook. They represent a social and economic elite and seem to flaunt diversity monitoring in a house with a small number of female peers and those from ethnic minorities. Thus unfair skew in the favour of the conservative has the power to slow down and revise legislation and is a gross misrepresentation of the British population. The House should be reformed in order to better reflect the British people so that their actions and decisions benefit the whole of society and not just their own.</p>	<p>The accusation that the House is inherently conservative is unjust. Today no party has a majority in the Chamber, with independent peers holding the balance of power in any vote.</p>

4. Reform would strengthen the House of Lords.

Points	Counterpoints
<p>Reform of the House of Lords would strengthen the legitimacy of the house and therefore improve its functions. By electing the second chamber they would gain the legitimacy to not simply stall bills but reject them all together or draft bills of their own, thus facilitating a more dynamic government, able to change. Using a different electoral technique, e.g. Proportional Representation with members sitting for longer periods would allow them to still be of a different composition to the House of Commons and not sway to short-term political popularity. Electing different portions at different times would also guard against a freak landslide result affecting the House's balance. By creating a worthy opposition to the House of Commons all burning issues would be debated and resolved more fairly and government would be more closely monitored.</p>	<p>House of Lords reform defeats the point; firstly the election process would deter many industry experts and attract political opportunists instead, thus eliminating the current worth of the House of Lords. It is likely that if elected the House of Lords would simply become a mirror for the House of Commons. By being non-elected the House of Lords is free from political sways and can work in the long-term interests of the country.</p>

Word Study

Give definitions to the following words and word combinations from the text. Restore the context in which they were used:

1. antiquated addition
2. a mockery of democracy
3. inhibiting influence
4. advocates of democracy
5. apathy
6. disdain
7. abuse of power
8. to overlook smth.
9. to have a limited say in smth.
10. to champion an idea
11. to flaunt
12. skew
13. to stall bills
14. to be free from political sways

Talking Point

Discuss the following questions in groups of 3 or 4. Share your ideas with the class:

1. What are the weak and strong points of having an unelected upper house?
2. Why have all the attempts of reforming the House of Lords been unsuccessful so far?
3. What are the possible changes in the structure of the House of Lords? Will the reform be completed?

Project work

Imagine that you are members of the commission responsible for working out the project of the House of Lords reform. Prepare a presentation on the topic. While preparing consider the following issues:

1. the changes in the structure of the House;
2. the benefits of the new chamber;
3. the impact of the reform on the efficiency of the decision-making process upon the whole and the work of the Upper Chamber of the British Parliament in particular.

You may choose from the options given below or work out other alternatives:

Abolition

Many legislatures, such as the parliaments of Sweden, Denmark and New Zealand (and within UK, the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Assembly and the Northern Ireland Assembly) are unicameral, and do not have an upper house. Instead scrutiny is carried out by parliamentary committees.

Allotment/sortition

Allotment is selection by lot. Proposals vary from a House chosen completely at random from the whole electorate to those where allotment was applied to smaller groups such as those volunteering or those selected in another way.

Appointment

The main advantages of the fully appointed house include: achieving a range of representation, bringing in those with skills and experience, ensuring a continuity of membership; maintaining the status and independence of the Lords without endangering the supremacy of the Commons; maintaining the low cost of the present House and preventing the possibility of a constitutional clash between appointed and elected members.

Combination

By far the most commonly suggested proposal for reform amongst politicians is a combination of an elected and appointed House. Proponents suggest the combination would allow an appointed element to retain the skills and experience

of the present House and elections would make it democratic without the problems of being fully elected which would allow the Upper House to challenge the primacy of the Commons.

Democratic appointments

Under this proposal, a jury would select some or all members of the chamber so retaining the skills and experience of the present House and also making its selection more democratic.

Election

Many countries have directly elected Upper Chambers but they try to make their electoral systems for the second chamber as distinct as possible from the first chamber by holding elections on a different cycle or electing only a proportion of members on each occasion.

Heredity

A large number of hereditary peers were crossbenchers with a wide range of interests outside politics – a valuable asset to Parliament. A hereditary right, which passes across the generations, may have the benefit of encouraging a longer-term perspective but this is perhaps at the expense of creating a divisive society. Moreover, in practice, the hereditary Peers have a natural bias on many issues.

Indirect election/ appointment

About 30 % of overseas second chambers are elected by indirect methods. The electoral college often consists of members of local authorities, or regional assemblies, and may include members of the primary chamber.

Secondary mandate

A system in which the share of each party's votes at general election is aggregated and each party is allocated a number of places proportionally using a closed list system. The advantages of this system consist in the fact that there would be only one election campaign to fund, it does not waste votes because votes for minority parties will count in the Upper House and so it should improve voter turnout, and as the upper house has no direct vote it has no separate mandate and so the Commons will remain supreme.

Speaking

Prepare a monologue on the following topic: *“The Reform of the House of Lords, its Pros and Cons.”*

Rendering

Find articles in the current press concerning the reform of the House of Lords and render them using the vocabulary from the unit.

GOVERNMENT

Pre-reading guesses

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

1. 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?

2. 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.

3. Underline the similarities and circle the differences.

4. Give your own definition of **government**.

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

6. Compare your definition with the ones provided in the unit.

7. What is the role of government in a country?

8. What branch of power is government vested in?

9. 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.

10. 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?

11. Can a state be effectively managed without government?

Vocabulary in use

I. 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)

II. 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.

I. Mind the pronunciation of the following words:

1. comprehensive
2. autonomous
3. executive
4. machinery
5. Privy Council
6. Royal Charters
7. Judicial Committee
8. component

II. 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.

III. Make up a summary of the text using the following expressions:

1. executive
2. institutions
3. to be appointed by the monarch
4. to run the country
5. to take on various responsibilities
6. the group of the closest advisors
7. to advise the monarch on a range of matters
8. the resolution of constitutional issues
9. 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.

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

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'.

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

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).

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

I. Mind the pronunciation of the following words:

1. treasury
2. technically
3. oath
4. initiate
5. parliamentary
6. proceedings
7. audiences
8. departmental
9. resignation

II. 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

III. 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 |

IV. 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/>

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

Reading IV (Additional)

Read the following articles, paying attention to the underlined expressions:

British Coalition Governments' Effectiveness Debated

For the first time in almost 70 years Britain has a coalition government and its leaders are calling it a new kind of politics for Britain. Some analysts say it's a democratic move that brings Britain in line with politics elsewhere in the world, but skeptics warn that coalitions can lead to weak and unstable government.

Britain's Conservatives and Liberal Democrats formed a coalition after the May 6 General Election failed to give any one party an overall majority. It's the first coalition in Britain since WWII and opinions here are mixed over whether it will be a good or a bad thing for Britain.

Jan Meyer-Sahling from the University of Nottingham says Britons don't have to look far to see whether coalitions work. "I think it's important to recognize that the UK is a bit of an exception in the wider European context," said Meyer-Sahling. "In most of Europe you have actually coalition governments in place rather than single-party majority governments as you have in the UK." He says most coalitions in Europe have been very effective. New democracies in Eastern Europe, he says, have been headed almost entirely by coalitions and it's been an important way to unite different groups within each country. "Generally there is a sense for the new member states or for the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe that coalition governments have been important to find compromises between different segments in society," he added.

Richard Vinen from King's College London says it can be difficult for a single-party majority government to push through tough legislation without causing a backlash from other political parties. In a coalition, he says, a wider range of parties are responsible for those decisions so the electorate is more willing to accept hard-hitting policies like cuts in public spending. He says coalitions also bring new voices into government that might not otherwise be heard. "It's often

gone with de-radicalization of politics," said Vinen. "It's often gone with quite unexpected groups being brought into the political consensus - so the German Greens collaborating in government, for example, the French Communists in the early 1980s collaborating in government."

But critics of coalition governments say they are often short-lived. Italy has a history of fractious coalition governments and has had over 60 governments in office since 1945. And they say in coalition governments the lowest common denominator always triumphs, which means strong, but necessary decisions are not made.

Christian Schweiger, from Britain's Durham University, says it's an inefficient form of government. He says this is so even in Germany, which is Europe's largest economy and is widely held up as an example of the benefits of coalitions. "I would argue that in terms of political efficiency and in terms of efficiency of implementing a coherent agenda, trying to make swift decisions particularly on the economy, it has been very problematic in recent years," note Schweiger.

Rosemary Hollis is a Middle-East specialist at Britain's City University. She says Israel has been led almost entirely by coalitions. She says the result is a failure to resolve two major issues, the economy and the Palestinians. She says each segment of Israel's population has a different plan for how to solve the ongoing conflict with the Palestinians. "In the Israeli experience, an accurate reflection of public opinion means inaction on the big issues like peace with the Palestinians," noted Hollis.

In Britain the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats say they will pass legislation that will keep their coalition government in power for five years. That move should steer the country clear of Italy's frequently collapsing governments. But it's yet to be seen whether the two parties will find enough common ground to govern Britain together.

Selah Hennessy, 18 May 2010, Voice of America

Cameron and Clegg present a united front to mark first year of coalition

David Cameron and Nick Clegg have marked the coalition government's first anniversary with a show of unity and a pledge to see out a full five-year term in power.

At an event in east London, the prime minister and his deputy took turns to portray the coalition as two parties with distinct identities, prone to arguments behind the scenes, but intent on coming up with unified policy conclusions that would best serve the country.

Cameron and Clegg appeared together in Stratford as the coalition government sought to draw a line under the events of last week, when the Lib Dems fared very badly in local and devolved parliament elections and failed to win the alternative vote referendum.

Cameron said the voters would not be swayed by unspecified "fripperies" but by whether the government delivered "good results about the things that British people care about".

Clegg insisted that "whoever was in government" would have to do difficult, controversial and, in some respects, downright unpopular things.

"I went into this with my eyes open, my party went into this collectively with our eyes open, that it wouldn't be easy— you shouldn't go into government because it is easy – but because we genuinely believe that what we are doing together, two parties coming together, yes retaining our differences, to clear up a lot of the problems we have inherited of the past that is the long-term interest of the country."

Clegg added: "Polls go up and down. People's popularity goes up and down, parties' popularity goes up and down. At the end of the day, how will we be judged? We will be judged about whether we have sorted out the mess we have inherited and restored a sense of optimism, of prosperity, of jobs for this country. It is a job we have started and we are going to see it through. This was always going to be the really, really tough part for the coalition and the tough part for the country economically."

The reason for coalition was "as strong today as it was a year ago", said Cameron, as he highlighted long-term "structural problems" facing the country, the nation's debt and youth unemployment.

"We have different traditions and views and beliefs and we have robust discussions, even arguments in private, and then we come out with agreed policies that we think are good for the country," said Cameron. "If people could see what actually happens in private, where both parties stand up for their views but we come to a good, collective decision, I think they'd see it is a strong coalition government and that's what I'm absolutely committed to delivering."

Hélène Mulholland, 12 May 2011, The Guardian

'Go home' campaign against illegal immigrants could go nationwide

Downing Street took the risk of escalating coalition tensions on Monday by declaring that a controversial campaign telling illegal immigrants to "go home" was working and could be extended nationwide.

A day after the Liberal Democrat business secretary, Vince Cable, called the campaign "stupid and offensive", a No 10 spokesman said David Cameron disagreed, adding that the posters and leaflets were attracting "a great deal of interest".

In a separate move, Lib Dem sources said that a Home Office plan to force visitors from certain Asian and African countries to pay a £3,000 bond before being allowed to visit the UK had not been agreed within the coalition. Reports saying the plan had been signed off prompted a particularly angry reaction from India.

Immigration is one of the issues on which the two coalition parties differ most sharply and the future of the illegal immigration advertising campaign and the bond policy are likely to be the subject of further arguments in coming weeks.

The campaign, which features the message: "In the UK illegally? Go home or face arrest", has been widely criticised because the blunt "go home" message is said to be reminiscent of racist graffiti common in the 1970s.

But on Monday the prime minister's spokesman said: "This pilot that is currently running is about targeting [illegal immigrants] and it is working."

He said Cameron believed that encouraging illegal immigrants to leave the UK voluntarily was more cost-effective than arresting them and removing them by force.

No 10's enthusiasm for the campaign failed to impress the Lib Dems, who said they continued to find the adverts distasteful. A party source said Lib Dem ministers would need a lot of persuading that the campaign was having a beneficial effect and called claims that it only cost £10,000 misleading, because the row about the campaign's political undertones meant that it had now had as much publicity as a much more expensive advertising drive.

Andrew Sparrow, 29 July 2013, The Guardian

Talking point

1. What offices do the leaders of the parties hold in the British coalition government?
2. Do party differences make a coalition stronger or weaker?
3. Do you agree with the idea that coalition governments are doomed and destined to be weak, unstable and ineffective?
4. Do you think that coalition governments really contribute to finding compromises and uniting different groups within a country?
5. Why are coalitions believed to accept hard-hitting policies more easily and push through tough legislation with greater success than single-party governments?
6. What "new voices" do you think should be brought into the British government? And into the Russian one?
7. Is it difficult for the parties involved in a coalition government to keep their different identities?
8. Can the government implement a policy, which hasn't been agreed within the coalition? What can it lead to?
9. Under what circumstances can a coalition collapse?
10. In your opinion, what issues are likely to spark the most heated debate in the incumbent British government?
11. Do you reckon that the current Conservative-Libdems coalition is strong and efficient enough to respond to the present threats and challenges Britain is facing now? Justify your opinion with examples of particular events and government decisions.

12. Why has the migration issue triggered such a fierce debate in the ruling coalition?
13. From your perspective, what accounts for the failure of the major Libdems' initiatives?
14. Is the next British government likely to be a coalition one? Why/Why not?

Reading V

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 three 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

I. Mind the pronunciation of the following words:

1. Privy Counsellor
2. ceremonial

3. dependencies
4. arbiter
5. honorary
6. honorable
7. confer
8. precedence
9. accession

II. 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

III. 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

IV. 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?

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.
4. How can the government use the Privy Council to issue regulation without Parliament having any say? Does it undermine the supremacy of Parliament?
5. Is there any institution in the Russian Federation similar to the British Privy Council? What body advises our head of state?

Listening

I. 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

II. 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. Government is too big and too important to be left to the politicians (Chester Bowles).
4. Whenever you have an efficient government you have a dictatorship (Harry S Truman).
5. 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).
6. Government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state, an intolerable one (Thomas Paine).