

Politics and youth

Task 1: Political people and places

Match the people and places in the box with the descriptions below:

The Queen	The Conservative Party	The Prime Minister
Members of Parliament	The Houses of Parliament	The Labour Party

- 1) This person is the head of the government
- 2) This person is the head of state
- 3) These people are elected to represent their areas (known as constituencies). They are also known as MPs.
- 4) This place is where the Parliament meets.
- 5) This is the name of the main right-wing party.
- 6) This is the name of the main left-wing party.

Task 2: Find someone who...

Find somebody who...	Name	Extra information
... knows the name of the British Prime Minister.		
... would like to be a politician.		
... thinks that voting in elections is very important.		
... thinks there should be more women politicians in their country.		
... believes that most politicians are too old!		
... can name five politicians from their own country.		

Task 3: Sentence completion

Complete the following sentences, giving your opinions. Then compare your sentences with a partner.

- 1) In my opinion, most politicians.....
- 2) If I were Prime Minister or President of my country I would.....
- 3) The political system in my country is.....
- 4) I wish politicians would.....
- 5) In an ideal world.....

Task 4: Reading – Politics and Youth

Read the text about Politics and Youth and put the paragraph headings in the right place.

A – **Issues that are important**

B – **Green generation**

C – **Parties and partying**

D - **Hi-tech politics**

Politics and Youth

At the 2015 UK General election, only 43% of young people (aged 18-25) voted. Does this make UK youth politically apathetic?

1 –

I spent a couple of days asking young people in the Manchester and London area how they felt about party politics. I spoke to 11 twenty-somethings and only one had voted in the last general election. Here's some of their comments;

'To be honest I'm not too bothered. I don't keep up with developments at Westminster [the site of UK government]. These days my job, my cash flow and socialising are more important!'

Tom, 28, from Manchester.

'I can't relate to any of the politicians. They all seem fairly similar and rarely listen to young people. The smaller parties are more interesting, but are a long way to getting to power.'

Fiona, 25, from London.

These two examples were typical of many young people's attitudes to state politics.

2 –

This would suggest that we are just not interested in politics but a closer study is more revealing.

In 2016, there was a national vote (referendum) to ask whether the UK should leave the European Union. This was an issue that young people felt strongly about and they wanted to get their voice heard. Polls say that 64% of young people voted in the referendum. Many 16 and 17 year olds wanted the right to vote, because the result would have a big impact on their future.

3 –

Technology now plays a huge role in politics. Many social media websites stream videos of political debates and events, and young people are now becoming more involved with these online activities. Social media has also played an important role in the organization of political protests in the UK in the last ten years.

The British Council's Café Society project allows young people from countries across the world to meet in a relaxed, informal setting and share opinions through video conferencing.

4 –

When David Cameron was the leader of the Conservative party, he started cycling to work as gesture of the need to take green issues more seriously. Since then, politicians have been keen to win the green label and secure the support of the younger generation. Young people are often perceived to be the 'greenest' age group.

Indeed environmental issues are taken far more seriously than ever before.

Perhaps they'll leave behind a greener UK.

Task 5: Discussion

When you have read the task, discuss these questions in groups:

- What are the main problems facing young people in your country today?
- Do you think politicians understand these problems – why (not)?
- Were you surprised at the percentage of young people that voted in the 2015 election? Do you think the percentage would be similar where you live? Are young people apathetic about politics?
- Would you like to be a politician? Why (not)? What might be good/bad about it?

Task 6: Vote for us!

You are going to create a new political party. Think of a name for your party and five things you will do if you are elected. Then try to persuade your classmates to vote for you.

The _____ Party.

If we are elected we will:

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

Vote for us!

You know it makes sense!