

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
Hung Parliament	Westminster	Downing Street

- 1) This person is the head of the government
- 2) This person is the head of state
- 3) When one party doesn't have an overall majority after an election. They will try to form a coalition with another smaller party so that they can be in power.
- 4) These people are elected to represent their areas (known as constituencies). They are also known as MPs.
- 5) This place is where the Parliament meets.
- 6) This is the area of London where the Houses of Parliament are, and which we often use to talk about the government in general
- 7) This is the name of the main right-wing party.
- 8) This is the name of the main left-wing party.
- 9) This is the name of the street where the Prime Minister lives.

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 – **Generation divide in politics**

B – **Green generation**

C – **Parties and partying**

D - **Hi-tech politics**

Politics and Youth

People often say that youth are politically apathetic. In the 2015 UK General election, only 43% of young people (aged 18-25) voted. Many young people didn't identify with any of the political parties.

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. 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. In the next two general elections in the UK, in 2017 and 2019, more young people voted, and a large majority of those young people voted for the Labour party, with support for the Conservatives much higher with people over 50, suggesting very different attitudes between the young and the old. Some people refer to this renewed interest of young people in politics as a “youthquake”.

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, as well as promoting political campaigns. Some people argue that this can have negative effects on politics, especially with the increase in fake news.

4 –

With many nations declaring a “climate emergency”, and with the growth in climate strikes (over 6 million people took part in climate strikes in September 2019), environmental issues are more important than ever in politics, especially for young people. A recent poll suggested that the environment was one of the most important political issues for 42% of people under 30 in the UK.

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 that age is now a big factor in how people vote? Is this the same in your country?

- 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!