

МІНІСТЕРСТВО ОСВІТИ І НАУКИ УКРАЇНИ
Національний університет «Одеська юридична академія»

GOVERNMENTAL REALIA OF MODERN BRITAIN

Методичні рекомендації

для здобувачів вищої освіти
гуманітарних спеціальностей



Одеса
«Юридична література»
2023

УДК 811.111:378(075.8)
G70

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Рекомендовано до друку на засіданні кафедри іноземних мов
Національного університету «Одеська юридична академія»
(протокол № 1 від 29 серпня 2023 року)

Рекомендовано навчально-методичною радою
Національного університету «Одеська юридична академія»
(протокол № 1 від 26 вересня 2023 року)

G70 **Governmental Realia of Modern Britain** : методичні рекомендації для здобувачів вищої освіти гуманітарних спеціальностей / упоряд.: Н. В. Варешкіна, С. В. Ковбасюк. — Одеса : Юридична література, 2023. — 72 с.

ISBN 978–966–419–423–2

Методичні рекомендації складаються з п'ятих розділів, що містять інформативні тексти та завдання для підготовки до занять за темами, що присвячені британським інституціям влади.

Рекомендації призначені для здобувачів вищої освіти гуманітарних спеціальностей.

УДК 811.111:378(075.8)

ISBN 978–966–419–423–2

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упорядкування, 2023

ВСТУП

Створення єдиного простору вищої освіти в Європі висуває непросте завдання щодо мобільності здобувачів вищої освіти, більш ефективного міжнародного спілкування. В умовах значного розширення міжнародних зв'язків України знання іноземної мови кваліфікованими спеціалістами всіх царин науки набуває особливого значення. Тому матеріал подано англійською мовою, незважаючи на те що він за тематикою може бути використаним не тільки для опанування дисципліни «Лінгвокраїнознавство англomовних країн», спеціальність 035 «Філологія»; але також під час викладання дисциплін «Англійська мова за професійним спрямуванням», спеціальність 081 «Право»; «Правові системи сучасності», спеціальність 081 «Право»; «Політичні системи сучасності», спеціальність 052 «Політологія», тощо.

Національна культура, традиції та політичне життя сучасної країни – це фактори, що визначають самосвідомість народу, особливості поведінки та менталітет. Методичні рекомендації спрямовані на забезпечення вивчення сучасного політичного та правового життя Великої Британії, щоб в подальшому здобувачі вищої освіти були спроможні дослідити вплив британських інституцій влади та політичних традицій на інституційні системи інших країн, а також сприяти розумінню складових організації глобальної спільноти, в якій вони живуть. Під час ретельного ознайомлення з навчальними матеріалами здобувачі вищої освіти мають змогу поглибити свої знання про структуру британської системи влади, характерні риси сучасного суспільства Об'єднаного Королівства, що буде сприяти міжкультурній комунікації та діалогу культур. Британія – це історична єдність, в якій різні культури та спільноти боролися за верховенство чи виживання більш ніж тисячу років. Сучасний тип правління почав складатися з XVI сторіччя, політичний устрій та органи влади постійно змінювалися щоб в решті решт набути сучасних форм правління. Поряд з демократичними структурами в Британії існує інститут монархії як ознака вшанування історичних традицій, прихильниками яких є більшість британців.

Це також є свідченням того що громадяни надають перевагу еволюційним, не революційним підходам до змін у країні. В пропонованій методичній розробці розглядаються основні інститути державної влади та засади організації політичного життя Великої Британії. Засвоєння матеріалу сприятиме адекватності мовленнєвої та соціальної поведінки здобувачів вищої освіти в іншомовному середовищі.

Загальною нашою метою є підготовка здобувачів вищої освіти до ефективної усної та письмової комунікації в академічному та майбутньому професійному оточенні. Це передбачає, що комунікативні мовленнєві компетентності мають бути загальними для здобувачів вищої освіти різних спеціальностей. Кожна освітня програма зорієнтована як на здобувачів вищої освіти, так і на процес навчання, сприяючи усвідомленню мовленнєвих міжкультурних особливостей та приділяючи увагу соціокультурному змісту, текстовому характеру комунікації. Пропоновані методичні вказівки допоможуть розвивати мовленнєву, прагматичну та міжкультурну компетентності здобувачів вищої освіти, їхню здатність до самостійного навчання.

Метою пропонованих методичних рекомендацій є також сприяння розвитку та вдосконалення навичок та вмінь у таких видах мовленнєвої діяльності як письмове та усне мовлення, комунікативних навичок в цілому.

Опанування навчальних матеріалів іноземною мовою з подальшим обговоренням може не тільки вирішувати основні комунікативні завдання, але й сприяти здійсненню надважливої освітньої мети – прилученню здобувачів вищої освіти до світу культури країни тої мови, що вивчається.

Вміння знаходити в тексті найбільш важливі компоненти – це стрижень навчання та опанування навчальним матеріалом. Тому розуміння структурно-сислової організації тексту є цілковито необхідним і доречним. Дуже важливе значення має змістовна складова навчальних матеріалів, призначених для читання та засвоєння, бо саме зміст приховує потенційну спроможність породжувати позитивну мотивацію у здобувачів освіти, створювати потребу в поглибленні знань.

При розробленні методичних рекомендацій були використані запозичення текстів з різних англомовних джерел: книг, підручників, методичних посібників та інтернет-ресурсів:

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“Here is the first principle of foreign policy: good government at home.”

William E. Gladstone

The Monarchy

The political system of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is characterized as a constitutional monarchy. The role of the monarch in Britain serves as a prime example of the constitution's inherent contradiction. Based solely on written laws, the King possesses an almost limitless authority, which appears highly undemocratic. In contrast, the American constitution emphasizes the notion of “government for the people, by the people”. Such a concept is nonexistent in Britain, as there is no legal framework that recognizes the collective entity of “the people” at all.

During the autumn session, when Parliament convenes, the King delivers a speech outlining the intentions of “my government” for the upcoming year. It is important to note that the government is under his control, rather than being representative of the people. Legally, the King has the freedom to appoint anyone he chooses to govern on his behalf. There are no limitations on his selection of a Prime Minister or the numerous other ministerial positions. Furthermore, if he becomes dissatisfied with his ministers, he has the authority to dismiss them. It is officially stated that they are all “servants of the Crown”, rather than servants of “the country” or “the people”. The monarch also possesses a significant level of control over Parliament. It is the monarch's prerogative to convene and disband a parliamentary session, effectively signaling its existence or termination. Furthermore, any legislation approved by Parliament requires the royal assent from the monarch in order to be enacted as law.

In the same vein, it is the monarch who personifies the legal system within court proceedings. In the United States, when an individual is charged with a crime,

the legal documentation reflects that “the people” have lodged the accusation against said person. In contrast, other countries may attribute the accusation to “the state”. However, in Britain, the accusation is attributed to “the Crown”, symbolizing the legal authority held by the reigning monarch. Furthermore, upon a guilty verdict, the convicted individual is incarcerated in one of “His Majesty's” correctional institutions.

The actual situation, however, is far from what is commonly believed. In reality, the King does not possess the authority to appoint just anyone as the Prime Minister. The selection of an individual who will garner the majority support in the House of Commons is a necessary task. This is due to the legal requirement that 'his' government can only levy taxes with the consent of the Commons. Consequently, if he were to neglect this duty, the government would cease to operate. Actually, the chosen individual is typically the leader of the most influential party in the Commons. Likewise, it is ultimately the Prime Minister's prerogative to determine the composition of the rest of the government's ministers. (Although, officially, the Prime Minister merely provides counsel to the monarch regarding the selection process.)

The situation is no different when it comes to Parliament. Once again, the Prime Minister will discuss the act of “requesting” the dissolution of Parliament as a means to call for an election. However, it is highly unlikely for the monarch to reject such a “request”. Likewise, in principle, the King has the power to withhold royal assent from a bill that has been approved by Parliament. However, since the year 1708, no monarch has exercised this authority. The bestowal of the royal assent is such an innate process that the King himself does not feel the need to personally deliver it. Instead, the responsibility of signing the documents is delegated to another individual.

In actuality, the King wields very little authority. On the occasion of the annual opening of Parliament, he delivers a speech that has been meticulously crafted for him. This truth is not concealed in any way. It is abundantly clear that he recites the exact words that have been scripted for him. In the event that he strongly opposes a

policy proposed by the government, he may request slight alterations to the speech beforehand, but his influence ends there. He lacks the power to impede the government from implementing any of its policies.

In a time long gone, during an era when the monarchy held tangible authority, the sole means of altering the governing body was through the replacement of the monarch. Those who endeavored to undertake this task were deemed culpable of the offense of treason, which involved conspiring to overthrow the state. Upon apprehension, they were commonly condemned to the ultimate penalty of death. This occurrence is now obsolete due to the fact that the current monarch holds no authoritative power. The act of treason is only a plausible occurrence in times of warfare. The most recent instance of someone being executed for treason transpired during the First World War, in which Sir Roger Casement was the condemned individual. Casement, who advocated for Ireland's independence from Britain, conspired with the German enemy to facilitate this aspiration. In contrast, during the Second World War, no individuals were charged with treason, including Sir Oswald Moseley, the leader of the pro-Hitler British fascists. In fact, Moseley was even released from prison in 1943, a full two years prior to the war's conclusion.

The British royal family is commonly known by the surname Windsor. In certain instances, the media might refer to the members of the royal family as “the Windsors”. It is worth noting that King Charles is the fifth monarch to bear this name. This does not indicate a change in the royal lineage five monarchs ago; rather, it is a result of Queen Elizabeth's grandfather, George V, making the decision to alter the family name.

Born in 1926, Queen Elizabeth II ascended to the throne in 1952, making her the second-longest reigning monarch in British history. Throughout her reign, she garnered widespread admiration and respect for her exemplary execution of her royal responsibilities. Queen Elizabeth II enjoyed a general popularity until her passing in 2022.

In the year 1947, Prince Philip Mountbatten entered into matrimony with Queen Elizabeth II. Throughout his life, Prince Philip was known for expressing his thoughts openly, which occasionally caused discomfort within the royal household.

Born in the year 1948, King Charles III, previously known as the Prince of Wales, is the eldest son of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, which consequently makes him the rightful heir to the throne. His deep concern for the environment and the state of urban living in the cities of Britain is well-known. Occasionally, he delivers speeches that offer critical perspectives on certain aspects of contemporary life. In the year 2023, he ascended to the throne and was duly crowned as King.

In the year 1981, Princess Diana and Prince Charles entered the sacred bond of marriage. However, their relationship eventually grew apart, leading to their separation in 1992 and subsequent divorce. Tragically, Diana's life was cut short in 1997 due to a fatal car accident. Throughout her existence, she radiated an aura of glamour that captivated the public's adoration. Unlike other members of the royal family, Diana possessed a relatability that resonated with people from all walks of life. It is worth noting that she holds the distinction of being the very first Englishwoman to wed an heir to the throne.

In the year 2005, upon her marriage to Prince Charles, Camilla assumed the esteemed position of Duchess of Cornwall. It is widely acknowledged that her enduring connection with Charles played a significant role in his separation from Diana, which has resulted in her lack of favor among the general public. However, it is noteworthy that individuals tend to exhibit empathy towards those engaged in enduring romantic relationships, thus indicating the possibility of an increase in her popularity as time progresses. At present, she holds the esteemed title of Queen Consort.

Born in 1950, Princess Anne, also known as the Princess Royal, is the daughter of the Queen. After the birth of her son and daughter, she decided to separate from her husband. In the year 1992, she entered into a second marriage. Her philanthropic endeavors have garnered her widespread admiration and esteem.

Born in 1960, Prince Andrew, the Duke of York, is the second son of the Queen. He is currently separated from his wife, Sarah Ferguson, who is commonly referred to as “Fergie” in the media. Together, they share two daughters.

Born in 1964, Prince Edward, the Queen's youngest son, entered into matrimony with Sophie Rhys-Jones in 1999. As a result of their union, they now hold the titles of Earl and Countess of Wessex.

Born in 1982, Prince William is the firstborn child of Charles and Diana, making him the direct successor to the throne following his father. Following in the footsteps of their predecessors, both Prince William and his younger brother Prince Henry, born in 1984, have chosen to pursue military careers.

Questions for the seminar:

1. What is the role of the monarch in Britain?
2. What kind of authority does the King possess? Does it appear to be democratic?
3. Who are, as officially stated, the “servants of the Crown”?
4. What symbolizes the legal authority held by the reigning monarch?
5. Does the monarch lack the power to impede the government from implementing any of its policies?
6. How can you explain the offense of treason?
7. What is the surname of the British royal family nowadays? Who and why made the decision to alter the family name?
8. Who is the ruling British monarch at present?
9. Does the current monarch hold any authoritative power?
10. Who do you consider to be the most admirable person in the royal family? Why?

Modern Style of Democracy in Great Britain

It is often claimed that the British hold a deep reverence for the concept of law. However, in contrast to this general respect, there is a distinct lack of enthusiasm among the British when it comes to creating new legislation. In fact, the number of

regulations dictating the actions of individuals is relatively limited. Consequently, there are also few restrictions placed on the powers and actions of the government. Two particular aspects of British society shed light on this phenomenon.

Among the nations of Europe, Britain stands out as one of the rare few where identity cards are not a requirement for its citizens. In fact, individuals in Britain are not obligated to carry any form of identification on their person. This extends to the absence of a requirement to possess a driving license while operating a motor vehicle. Even if law enforcement officials request to see one's driving license, there is a twenty-four-hour period to present it to them.

In contrast to certain other nations in Western Europe, Britain does not possess a Freedom of Information Act. Consequently, there is no legislative requirement for government authorities to disclose the information they have gathered regarding an individual. Numerous government officials are bound by the Official Secrets Act, a legislation that mandates their silence regarding the intricacies of their professional duties.

The dynamic between the individual and the state in Britain is defined by two distinct features. One of these features is the prevailing belief that both entities should refrain from interfering with each other to the greatest extent possible. In this regard, the responsibilities of the individual towards the state are limited to adhering to the law and fulfilling tax obligations. Furthermore, there is no mandatory national service, be it military or otherwise, and individuals are not obligated to participate in elections. Additionally, when individuals change their place of residence, there is no requirement to formally notify any government agency of this change.

In a similar way, the British government enjoys a relatively higher degree of autonomy. In contrast to numerous other nations, democracy in Britain entails less active involvement from the general populace in matters of governance and legislation. Should the government seek to implement a significant alteration in the country's administration, it is not obligated to seek the consent of the people. In order to become a law, Parliament must give its consent for a bill, just as it would for any other legislation.

A referendum is a necessary requirement for making significant constitutional changes in numerous countries. It is noteworthy that there have been two nationwide referendums in British history, the first occurred in 1975. This referendum pertained to the decision of whether the country should remain a part of the European Community. The second referendum was held in June 2016 across the United Kingdom about whether the UK should remain a member of the European Union. Then Brexit followed. In the context of Britain, democracy has never implied that the populace actively participates in the administration of the nation. Rather, it signifies that they elect individuals to govern the country and entrust them with the responsibility of doing so.

Special Features of the Constitution

In the United Kingdom, the political system is characterized as a constitutional monarchy. This means that the country is ruled by a king or queen who takes advice from the parliament. Additionally, it is a parliamentary democracy, wherein the government is controlled by a parliament that is elected by the citizens. Essentially, the fundamental structure of the political system in Britain is not dissimilar to that of other European nations. The individuals holding the highest positions in the government are members of the directly elected parliament. Similar to many countries in Europe, the official head of state in Britain, whether it be a monarch (e.g., Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark) or a president (e.g., Germany, Greece, Italy), wields limited actual power.

Nevertheless, there are distinct aspects of the British system of governance that set it apart from other nations, and these aspects are not considered to be "modern" in nature. One particularly noteworthy distinction is that Britain stands nearly alone among contemporary countries in its lack of a formal constitution. The governance of a country is done by a set of rules, regulations, principles, and procedures. These aspects, collectively known as "the constitution", are the subject of study for political scientists and legal experts. However, it is important to note that there is no singular written document that holds the highest authority as the law of the land.

Contrarily, the principles and protocols that govern the nation and establish the basis of individuals' rights stem from a myriad of origins. These foundations have been constructed and accumulated throughout history. Certain principles have been codified in legislation endorsed by Parliament, while others have been articulated in verbal form and subsequently transcribed (such as court rulings). Additionally, there are principles that have never been formally documented. Notably, there is no written statute in Britain that delineates the qualifications for the position of Prime Minister or enumerates the extent of their authority, despite the fact that the Prime Minister is arguably the most influential individual in the country. Rather than relying on a singular written document, the establishment and evolution of these principles are shaped by customary practices. While certain rights, such as protection against sex and race-based discrimination, have been formally recognized by Parliament through specific legislation in modern democratic societies, others, like the right to be free from discrimination based on religion or political beliefs, have not been explicitly codified. Nonetheless, it is widely acknowledged that these latter rights are also inherent components of the constitution.

British style of politics

In spite of the advancements in modern technology, such as the live broadcasting of Parliamentary sessions, the political landscape in Britain is still heavily influenced by a deep-rooted respect for privacy and a preference for secrecy. Additionally, the atmosphere is relatively informal. Rather than making important decisions at official public meetings or private gatherings, they are often made during informal settings such as lunch or social gatherings, as well as in the corridors of power. It was once famously said that the House of Commons was the most exclusive club in London. This statement holds true, as there are numerous aspects of Parliament that instill a sense of belonging in its members (MPs), even when they hold opposing political ideologies. Firstly, according to constitutional theory, Parliament possesses absolute control over its own affairs and is considered to be the highest authority of the nation. Secondly, there are the ancient procedural customs and practices that have been upheld throughout the years. Several of these serve as

reminders to Members of Parliament of a period when the primary divide in politics was not between one political party and another, but rather between the institution of Parliament and the monarch.

The combination of these characteristics, along with a lengthy period of political stability, has fostered a culture of genuine collaboration among politicians from various political parties. The benefit of this is that minimal time is squandered on debates about fair political proceedings. As an illustration, the agenda for parliamentary sessions is predetermined by representatives from each party. Likewise, television advertising is governed by an agreement that prohibits political parties from purchasing airtime. Instead, each party is allotted a specific and equal amount of time. An especially noteworthy instance of this cooperative approach is the practice of “pairing” Members of Parliament.

The concept of a party system is a complex and multifaceted one. It encompasses the organization and structure of political parties within a given society, as well as the ways in which these parties interact and compete with one another. The party system plays a crucial role in shaping the dynamics of a democracy, influencing everything from election outcomes to policy decisions. It serves as a mechanism for representing and aggregating the diverse interests and preferences of the citizenry, providing a framework through which political power is both contested and exercised. The party system is therefore a fundamental component of democratic governance, serving as a vital link between the individual citizen and the larger political process.

Questions for the seminar:

1. Who is nowadays British Prime Minister? What party leader is he/she?
2. What are two unique aspects of British political life?
3. Are individuals in Britain obligated to carry any form of identification with them?
4. What is the Official Secrets Act?
5. What are duties of the individual towards the state?

6. When did the countrywide referendums in British history take place? What issues were on the agenda? Tell what you know about Brexit.
7. What kind of state is Great Britain? Who is the official head of state in Britain?
8. Does Britain have a formal constitution? (Do the British have a written document that holds the highest authority as the law of the land?)
9. What are principles and procedures by which country is governed? How are these principles shaped?
10. What is the political landscape in Britain still heavily influenced by?
11. Why is the House of Commons called the most exclusive club in London?
12. What institution is considered to be the highest authority of the nation?
13. How does the party system play a crucial role in shaping the dynamics of a democracy?
14. Why is the party system a fundamental component of democratic governance?

Parliament

The functions performed by the British Parliament are fairly similar to those of any parliamentary system in the Western world. Its primary responsibilities include the enactment of new legislation, granting the government the power to generate and allocate funds, closely monitoring the actions of the government, and engaging in deliberations regarding these actions.

The Palace of Westminster, commonly referred to as “the Houses of Parliament”, is a grand structure where the British Parliament operates. Within this vast complex, there are numerous amenities and facilities, including offices, committee rooms, restaurants, bars, libraries, and even some residential areas. Additionally, there are two significant chambers within the palace. The first is where the House of Lords conducts its meetings, while the second is where the House of

Commons convenes. The British Parliament is divided into these two distinct “houses”, with its members belonging to either one. However, it is worth noting that only members of the House of Commons are recognized as MPs (Members of Parliament). Although both chambers hold importance, the House of Commons holds greater significance.

The Speaker

Those who happened to be observing the live session of appointing a new Speaker were treated to a truly remarkable sight. They witnessed the physical extraction of a Member of Parliament from his seat on the back benches, seemingly against his own will, by his colleagues. He was then compelled to occupy the prominent chair situated at the center of the House of Commons.

The activities undertaken by the House of Commons were centered around the appointment of a new Speaker. The Speaker assumes the responsibility of presiding over and managing discussions within the House. This entails determining the sequence in which Members of Parliament will speak and ensuring adherence to procedural regulations. In instances where these regulations are breached, the Speaker possesses the authority to demand a public apology from an MP or even impose a temporary ban from the House. This role holds immense significance, as the Speaker is officially recognized as the second most prominent non-aristocratic figure in the kingdom, following the Prime Minister.

The man in that particular scene seemed to be resisting, but the underlying cause of his resistance can be traced back to historical events. In the distant past, the responsibility of the Speaker was to relay the decisions made by the Commons to the monarch, hence the origin of the title 'Speaker'. Given that the king frequently expressed dissatisfaction with the choices made by the Commons, this duty was far from enjoyable. Consequently, there was a lack of desire among individuals to assume this role, and they had to be compelled to accept it.

In present times, the role is significantly more secure, however, the practice of forcibly escorting a Speaker who is reluctant to take the seat has endured.

Members of Parliament, when addressing the Speaker in the House, always use the respectful titles of “Mr Speaker” or “Madame Speaker”. Once a new Speaker is chosen, they willingly relinquish any affiliation with political parties and typically hold the position for however long they desire.

To begin with, it is important to note the arrangement of seating in the designated area. The seating consists of two rows of benches that are positioned in a manner where they face each other. On the left side, one will find the government benches, which are specifically allocated for Members of Parliament belonging to the governing party. Conversely, on the right side, the opposition benches are situated, intended for MPs who are not aligned with the government. The current layout of the parliamentary chamber does not provide an opportunity to reflect the multitude of political opinions. Members of Parliament (MPs), depending on their affiliations, are perceived as either supporting or opposing the government. This physical division is accentuated by the presence of a table on the floor of the House, situated between two rows of benches. The Speaker's Chair, positioned at a raised elevation, oversees and manages the debates that take place. This arrangement fosters a confrontational dynamic between the government and the opposition, while also reinforcing the existence of the two-party system in Britain. Notably, there are no designated "cross-benches" for MPs who do not belong to either the governing party or the main opposition party. In practice, these MPs occupy the opposition benches that are farthest away from the Speaker's chair.

There are several noteworthy aspects of the Commons to consider. Firstly, there is no designated area for individuals to stand while addressing the assembly. Instead, Members of Parliament simply rise and speak from their current seating position. Secondly, it is important to observe that there are no desks provided for MPs. The benches upon which they sit are exactly what they appear to be – benches, akin to those found in a church. This arrangement allows for easy movement in and out of the room, a practice that MPs frequently engage in. Additionally, it is worth noting that the physical space of the room itself is quite limited. In fact, it cannot accommodate all the MPs. Despite there being approximately 650 members, seating

is only available for fewer than 400. It is customary to refer to winning a “seat” in the Commons during an election, however, this seat is purely symbolic. MPs do not have assigned seating, and the benches do not bear any names. Instead, they simply find a place to sit on their respective side of the House. While Members of Parliament (MPs) do not possess designated seating arrangements in the House of Commons, there are two specified areas exclusively reserved for certain MPs. These areas are situated on the front benches, which are located on both sides of the House. It is on these benches that prominent members of the governing party, such as ministers, as well as notable members of the principal opposition party, take their seats. Consequently, these individuals are commonly referred to as frontbenchers. MPs who do not hold a government position or a post in the shadow cabinet are categorized as backbenchers.

The combination of these characteristics leads to a notably relaxed ambiance. The absence of personal seats and desks, which would establish a designated space for each individual MP, fosters a culture of collaboration. Additionally, the compact size of the House, coupled with the absence of a raised platform or lectern from which to address the chamber, means that MPs typically do not employ the same oratorical style as they would at a sizable public gathering. Typically, Members of Parliament adopt an informal and conversational manner of speaking. Due to the lack of a designated spot to keep their notes while addressing the chamber, their speeches tend to be relatively short. However, there are certain significant events when impassioned rhetoric is employed, particularly when all MPs are present. On these notable occasions, the sight of approximately 200 standing MPs, due to the absence of available seats, serves as a visible indication of the event's significance.

The intentional design of the House of Commons should not go unnoticed. Originally, this design was a result of happenstance during medieval times when the Commons started convening in a church. These churches frequently featured rows of benches that faced each other. However, after sustaining significant damage from bombing in 1941, the House of Commons was deliberately reconstructed in accordance with the original layout, with a few modern amenities like central heating

incorporated. The reason behind this was rooted in the adherence to the tradition of presenting arguments from both sides and the overarching belief in the concept of continuity.

The ancient customs and traditions of parliamentary procedure still persist in the present day, manifesting in the numerous intricate rules and regulations that all new Members of Parliament must acquaint themselves with. One of the most notable rules is the prohibition on MPs addressing each other by name. Instead, any remarks or inquiries must be directed "through the chair." When an MP is speaking, they must refer to or direct a question to "the honourable member for Winchester" or "my right honourable friend," even if the fellow MP in question is seated directly opposite. The purpose of these age-old rules was originally to temper the intensity of debates and reduce the likelihood of violence erupting. In the contemporary era, they add an element of formality that complements the informal atmosphere of the Commons, further cementing the MPs' sense of belonging to an exclusive and distinct group.

The annual state opening of Parliament show two distinct cases that exemplify the ceremonial customs ingrained in the occasion. These traditions serve as a reminder to Members of Parliament of their esteemed status and the importance of unity amongst them. The first one depicts "Black Rod", a servant of the reigning monarch, knocking on the door of the House of Commons. His purpose is to request entry on behalf of the King, who wishes to address the MPs and outline the government's plans for the upcoming year. However, the Commons exercises its historical prerogative and denies access to "Black Rod". This practice originated in the seventeenth century when King Charles I forcefully entered the Commons in an attempt to apprehend certain MPs. Since then, it has been prohibited for the monarch to enter the Commons. Instead, the MPs agree to convene in the House of Lords, where they listen to the monarch's address. The second one: as the MPs enter the House of Lords in pairs, adhering to the tradition of each pair consisting of an MP from two different political parties. The mechanism of pairing: the practice of cooperation between political parties in Britain is exemplified by the pairing system. This system involves the pairing of an MP from one party with an MP from another

party. When a vote is scheduled in the House of Commons and these two MPs know that they would cast opposing votes, neither of them attends the vote. As a result, the balance between the two sides is preserved, allowing the MPs to focus on their other responsibilities. This system operates smoothly and effectively, ensuring that there is no room for any form of dishonesty.

Members of Parliament life

In the past, Members of Parliament (MPs) were not expected to be specialized politicians. Instead, they were meant to be regular individuals who dedicated some of their time to monitoring the government and representing the interests of the people. Ideally, they came from diverse backgrounds, bringing their firsthand experiences of the everyday world into the legislative chambers. This is why MPs were not remunerated until the early 1900s. Traditionally, their purpose was to serve the public, not to establish a career for themselves. Naturally, this tradition resulted in only affluent individuals being able to afford to be MPs. Even today, British MPs receive relatively low salaries compared to their European counterparts, and their working conditions, given the prestigious nature of their roles, are somewhat cramped.

Over the past sixty years, the realm of politics in contemporary Britain has undergone a transformation into a profession. The majority of Members of Parliament (MPs) now dedicate themselves entirely to their political careers. In the rare instances where they engage in other employment, it is typically on a part-time basis. However, remnants of the amateur tradition can still be seen in the operational hours of the Commons. Prior to 2003, the House did not convene in the mornings. This time was reserved for Members of Parliament to attend to their regular duties or engage in activities unrelated to parliamentary affairs (during the Commons' sessions). Additionally, the House grants itself extended breaks, akin to the vacation periods observed by schools in the United Kingdom, which includes designated breaks in the academic term.

However, this seemingly uncomplicated lifestyle can be deceiving. In reality, the typical contemporary Member of Parliament dedicates more time to their work

than any other occupation within the nation. Occasionally, the predetermined schedule of parliamentary sessions must be prolonged, and on rare occasions, debates within the House persist throughout the night and into the following day without any respite. The mornings of MPs are occupied with committee responsibilities, conducting research, crafting speeches, and addressing the concerns and issues of their constituents, who are the individuals they represent. On weekends, Members of Parliament (MPs) are obligated to travel to their respective constituencies, where they serve as representatives, in order to lend an ear to anyone seeking their assistance with any issues they may have. This line of work is exceptionally demanding, leaving very little room for the pursuit of alternative careers. Consequently, it also leaves MPs with limited time to devote to their families. As a consequence of these circumstances, politicians experience a higher rate of divorce in comparison to the general population.

Parliamentary proceedings and activities

The fundamental process through which the House of Commons carries out its operations involves engaging in discussions regarding a specific proposition, followed by a decision that either supports or rejects said proposition. While sometimes this decision merely reflects a particular perspective, more often than not, it involves the formulation of new legislation or the endorsement (or rejection) of the government's budgetary plans. On rare occasions, a vote may not be necessary, but in most cases, it is, and during such instances, a “division” takes place. This means that Members of Parliament must cast their votes in favor or against a specific proposal. The House of Commons facilitates their voting process by utilizing two separate corridors. These corridors are designated for the “Ayes”, who are in agreement with the proposal, and the “Noes”, who oppose it. However, the resolutions passed by the Commons represent only a portion of their overall duties. The Commons also establishes various committees, each with their own purpose. Some committees are tasked with examining specific proposals for legislation, while others are permanent committees designed to investigate government activities within a particular field. Comprised of approximately forty members, these committees are structured to

reflect the proportional representation of each political party within the Commons. They hold the authority to summon individuals, such as civil servants, to provide answers to their inquiries. The role of these committees is increasingly significant in shaping the business of the Commons.

The process of transforming a bill into a law follows a specific set of steps. These steps include the proposal and introduction of the bill, its review and debate in legislative committees, voting on the bill in both the House and Senate, and finally, the bill being signed into law by the President. Each of these stages plays a crucial role in shaping and refining the bill until it reaches its final form as a law.

Extensive deliberation takes place before a proposed legislation begins its journey through Parliament. When dealing with a government proposal, it is common for either a Green Paper or a White Paper, or sometimes both, to be published. The purpose of these papers is to provide an in-depth exploration of the background and concepts behind the proposal. While a Green Paper offers a preliminary examination, a White Paper is more specific and committed in its approach. These papers serve to explain the rationale and ideas behind the proposal. Following this, legal experts will draft the proposal into a bill.

The initial stages of most bills take place in the House of Commons.

Upon initial examination, the text “First Reading” may appear to be a straightforward and simple passage. However, upon closer inspection, it becomes evident that the text holds a profound meaning that extends beyond its surface level. In essence, the passage encourages readers to approach literature with an open mind and a willingness to explore beyond the literal words on the page. It urges individuals to delve deeper into the layers of meaning and to consider the various interpretations and perspectives that can be derived from a single text. By doing so, readers are able to fully appreciate the complexities and nuances of literature, and to engage in a more profound and enriching reading experience.

Please note that this is a formal announcement and there will be no room for discussion or deliberation.

The act of reading a text for a second time is a valuable exercise that can yield new insights and deepen one's understanding of the material. By revisiting a piece of writing, one can uncover additional layers of meaning, notice details that were previously overlooked, and make connections that were not initially apparent. Additionally, a second reading allows for a more critical analysis of the text, enabling the reader to evaluate the author's arguments, assess the evidence presented, and consider alternative interpretations. Ultimately, engaging in a second reading enhances one's overall comprehension and appreciation of the text.

In the House, there is a discussion regarding the fundamental principles of the bill. Typically, a vote is then held to determine the outcome.

The Committee Stage is an integral part of the legislative process. It is during this stage that a committee, comprised of members with expertise in the relevant subject matter, thoroughly examines and scrutinizes the proposed legislation. The purpose of this examination is to ensure that the legislation is well-crafted, addresses any potential issues or concerns, and aligns with the overall objectives and goals of the legislative body. The committee members carefully review and analyze each provision of the legislation, considering its potential impact, feasibility, and effectiveness. They may also propose amendments or modifications to improve the legislation or address any identified shortcomings. The Committee Stage is a crucial step in the legislative process, as it allows for a comprehensive evaluation of the proposed legislation and ensures that it is thoroughly vetted before proceeding to the next stage.

The bill is scrutinized by a committee of Members of Parliament (MPs) who carefully analyze its particulars. Subsequently, the committee proceeds to vote on amendments, which entail modifications to various sections of the bill.

The report stage is an important step in the process of creating a comprehensive report. During this stage, the focus is on reviewing and refining the content of the report to ensure accuracy and clarity. This involves carefully examining each section of the report and making any necessary revisions or additions. Additionally, the report stage involves organizing the information in a

logical and cohesive manner, so that readers can easily follow the flow of the report. It is also essential to ensure that the report is formatted correctly and that any references or citations are properly cited. By thoroughly completing the report stage, you can ensure that your final report is of the highest quality and effectively communicates the intended message.

The amendments are under consideration by the House.

The third reading of a text is an essential part of the reading process. It allows the reader to delve deeper into the content and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the material. During the third reading, the reader focuses on analyzing the text, identifying key themes and ideas, and making connections between different parts of the text. This stage of reading also involves critically evaluating the author's arguments and evidence, considering alternative perspectives, and forming one's own interpretations and conclusions. The third reading is a valuable tool for developing critical thinking skills and enhancing overall comprehension of the text.

The revised legislation is deliberated in its entirety.

Once the bill has been sent to the House of Lords, it undergoes a parallel process to that of the House of Commons. Any new amendments proposed by the Lords will then be reviewed and deliberated upon by the Commons.

Typically, the proceedings in the chamber of the House of Commons adhere to a structured sequence as follows:

Prayers. In just one minute, take a moment to offer up your prayers.

Question Time. The allotted time for the question session is one hour.

Miscellaneous business. One of the miscellaneous aspects of business includes a minister's statement, which can span up to 45 minutes in duration.

Main business. The primary focus of business in Parliament spans a duration of up to six and a half hours. During more than half of these days, the topic of discussion revolves around a proposed legislation commonly referred to as a "bill". While the majority of these bills are introduced by the government, there are also designated days each year for the consideration of "private members' bills", which are

bills introduced by individual Members of Parliament. However, it is worth noting that only a limited number of these bills actually progress into becoming law, primarily due to insufficient interest from other MPs and inadequate time for thorough deliberation.

Adjournment debate, which lasts for approximately thirty minutes, signifies a pause in the main proceedings. During this time, Members of Parliament are granted the opportunity to introduce a new topic for open discussion.

In the past, the parliamentary day would typically commence at 2.30 p.m. and conclude at 10.30 p.m. However, a shift occurred in 2003, resulting in a modification of the schedule. As a result, sessions now commence in the morning and wrap up in the early evening. The purpose behind this alteration was to provide Members of Parliament (MPs) with additional opportunities to spend time with their families. Additionally, it aimed to project a more conventional and restrained image to the general public, adhering to a standard working schedule from nine in the morning to five in the evening. Another factor contributing to this change is the acknowledgment that the House of Commons is no longer an exclusive domain for gentlemen, as it now includes a significantly larger number of women MPs, many of whom have young children.

The implementation of the new schedule was met with widespread disapproval, extending beyond just male MPs. Traditionally, mornings were dedicated to committee work, but with the new hours, these committees were forced to commence before 9 a.m. Numerous MPs voiced their grievances, citing the lack of time to drop off their children at school. Additionally, for those who resided far from London and were unable to return home, they aimlessly wandered in the evenings, feeling lost and disoriented. As a result of the new system, MPs were compelled to condense all their additional responsibilities into a significantly shorter timeframe.

Currently, there exists a resolution that has been agreed upon. Specifically, the previous schedule is in effect for Mondays and Tuesdays, while the revised schedule is implemented for Wednesdays and Thursdays. The specific details are as follows:

Monday 2.30 p.m. – 10.30 p.m. Tuesday 2.30 p.m. – 10.30 p.m. Wednesday 11.30 a.m. – 7.30 p.m. Thursday 10.30 a.m. – 6.30 p.m. Friday 9.30 a.m. – 3 p.m. (the Commons do not work every Friday).

Question Time. The busiest and most boisterous segment of the parliamentary day is often considered the most well-attended. Lasting approximately an hour, this portion of the day does not involve any formal debates on specific topics. Instead, Members of Parliament are given the opportunity to pose questions to government ministers. The purpose of this exercise is to theoretically hold the government accountable by compelling them to disclose certain information and clarify their intentions. This platform also provides opposition MPs with a chance to potentially expose the incompetence or lack of honesty of government ministers.

The questions and responses, on the other hand, are not impromptu. Queries directed towards ministers must be formally submitted two days ahead of time and are subsequently recorded and placed on the table below the Speaker's seat. This allows ministers ample time to ready their answers, preventing any significant potential for embarrassment. However, the key lies in posing an unforeseen "supplementary" question. Following the minister's response to the initial tabled question, the Member of Parliament who initially submitted it is granted the opportunity to ask an additional question that pertains to the minister's answer. MPs have the occasional opportunity to catch a minister off guard in this manner.

Question Time has gained global recognition and has been emulated in various countries. It is, without a doubt, the most recognizable facet of Parliament amongst the general populace. Most of the televised news coverage featuring Parliament is typically derived from this segment of its proceedings. Particularly prevalent is the practice of showcasing a snippet from the Prime Minister's allotted 15 minutes each week dedicated to addressing inquiries.

The party system in Parliament

Most divisions within parliamentary proceedings align with party affiliations. Members of Parliament are acutely aware that their position is owed to their party, thus they consistently vote in accordance with their party's directives. The individuals

responsible for ensuring compliance among MPs are known as Whips, with each major party employing multiple MPs to fulfill this role. Their primary duty is to communicate to all MPs within their party how they are expected to vote. As per tradition, if the government fails to secure a victory in a crucial parliamentary vote, they are obligated to relinquish power. Consequently, when a division on a matter of great importance arises, MPs are expected to be present in the House and cast their vote, even if they did not participate in the preceding debate.

The role of Whips within a political party is to serve as a link between the backbenchers and the frontbench. Their main responsibility is to relay the sentiments and opinions of the backbenchers to the party leadership. Due to their influential position, they possess the ability to shape the advancement of backbenchers to the front bench by having direct access to party leaders.

On certain occasions, the major political parties permit a 'free vote', wherein Members of Parliament have the freedom to cast their vote based on personal convictions rather than adhering to party directives. Notably significant resolutions, such as the elimination of capital punishment, the admission of television cameras into the House of Commons, and the prohibition of fox hunting, have been determined through this method.

The House of Lords, an integral part of the British parliamentary system, holds a distinct position in the legislative process. While its specific definition may vary depending on interpretation, it is widely acknowledged that the House of Lords plays a crucial role in scrutinizing and amending proposed legislation. Additionally, it serves as a platform for robust debates and discussions on matters of national importance. The House of Lords, with its unique composition and historical significance, contributes to the democratic governance of the United Kingdom.

The House of Lords

In most parliamentary systems, there exists a secondary chamber, known as the House of Lords in the British system. Similar to other secondary chambers, the House of Lords possesses minimal influence and lacks substantial power. While the Lords have the ability to postpone the passage of a bill, they ultimately cannot prevent it

from becoming law, even in the face of persistent opposition. Consequently, their role is primarily advisory in nature. Within the Lords, bills can be subjected to more extensive discussions than what is feasible in the bustling Commons, allowing for the identification and rectification of any irregularities or inconsistencies within these proposals before they are enacted into law. Furthermore, the House of Lords serves as a platform for deliberation, providing an avenue for addressing issues that may have been overlooked by the House of Commons. It is strongly emphasized that the House of Lords plays a crucial role in safeguarding against any potential abuse of power by governments that may be exerting excessive control over the House of Commons, thus preventing a slide into authoritarianism.

The House of Lords is often associated with aristocracy, but the reality is that only a small number of its members actually inherit their positions. Furthermore, even these hereditary members are unlikely to retain their seats for much longer. It took a considerable amount of time for Britain to address this undemocratic aspect of its political system. Prior to 1958, all members of the House of Lords were indeed aristocrats. However, the first step towards reform was taken with the passing of a law that allowed for the creation of "life peerages" through the honours system. This allowed individuals to be granted the right to sit in the House of Lords, but their children were not granted the same entitlement. In the latter half of the 20th century, the system of life peerages emerged as a means of providing a platform for esteemed senior politicians who desired a less hectic role than that of a Member of Parliament in the House of Commons, while still having the ability to express their opinions in a public setting. At present, four out of the last six Prime Ministers, along with numerous former ministers and other esteemed politicians, have embraced the opportunity to become life peers. Political parties have shown particular enthusiasm for sending their senior members, who previously held leadership positions within the party, to the House of Lords. This serves as a form of recognition, granting them prestige while simultaneously removing them from the Commons, where their status and reputation may potentially cause complications for the current party leader and

the overall unity of the party. Unofficially, this practice has come to be known as 'being promoted to a higher position'.

As the twentieth century was approaching its end, there was a noticeable increase in the number of life peers that were being appointed. This resulted in a situation where, in many sessions of the House of Lords, the life peers actually outnumbered the hereditary peers. This was not surprising, as many aristocrats were not actively involved in politics. The next significant development occurred in 1999, when a decision was made to restrict the number of aristocrats with sitting rights in the Lords to 92, which accounted for approximately 15% of the total membership. Simultaneously, there was also an increase in the number of appointments for life peers.

As of the current moment, there exists uncertainty regarding the subsequent course of action. The issue at hand stems from the fact that, although nearly everyone acknowledges the need for additional changes, a consensus has yet to be reached regarding the optimal structure for the House of Lords. A significant portion of the population advocates for the election of members. Furthermore, the duration of their tenure as members is also a subject of debate. (Merely mirroring the electoral process for Members of Parliament in the House of Commons would serve no purpose.) The value of the Lords is widely acknowledged to stem from the fact that its members are not reliant on party politics to secure their positions. Their lifelong tenure ensures that they need not worry about losing their seats, granting them the freedom to make decisions independently, solely based on the merits of each case. In fact, it is evident that since the hereditary element has diminished significantly, the Lords has become more assertive and more inclined to challenge the decisions made by the government-controlled Commons. As a result, proponents argue that the system of life-peerages should be preserved. However, this raises the question of who has the authority to appoint these members. Currently, they are appointed either through the recommendation of the Prime Minister, political parties, or an independent entity known as the House of Lords Appointments Commission, which was established in 2000.

The enduring presence of a hereditary component within the House of Lords continues to captivate as a vestige of bygone eras. It is important to highlight a final observation. In true British fashion, there has been a noticeable absence of any substantial conversation regarding the possibility of renaming the House of Lords. As a result, regardless of future developments, the second chamber of British governance will persist as a steadfast symbol of tradition.

The group known as the Lords Spiritual holds a unique position within the British Parliament. Comprised of the archbishops and bishops of the Church of England, their presence in the House of Lords is an integral part of the legislative process. While the House of Lords is predominantly made up of appointed life peers and hereditary peers, the Lords Spiritual bring a religious perspective to the proceedings. This allows for a diverse range of beliefs and values to be considered when shaping legislation. Their role in the legislative process reflects the historical and constitutional ties between the Church of England and the British government.

In addition to life peers and the few hereditary peers that remain, the House of Lords also includes a distinct category of peers. These are the 26 highest-ranking bishops of the Church of England. It is customary for the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to be granted life peerages upon their retirement. Prior to 2009, there was a separate group known as the "Law Lords", who served as the ultimate court of appeal in the state. However, this responsibility has now been transferred to the Supreme Court.

The decline of the House of Lords power

In the year 1910, the Liberal government put forth a proposition to impose substantial taxes on the wealthy. However, this proposition was met with opposition and subsequently rejected by the House of Lords. This act of rejection stood in direct contradiction to a longstanding convention that bestowed control over financial affairs to the House of Commons.

Following the request of the government, the king granted an election which resulted in their victory. Subsequently, they successfully passed their tax proposals in the Commons, along with a bill that aimed to restrict the authority of the Lords.

However, the Lords refused to accept both bills, prompting another election which the government triumphed in once again. This sequence of events led to a significant constitutional crisis.

What was the anticipated outcome? An uprising? No. Instead, the king made it clear that if the Lords were to reject the same bills once again, he would appoint a substantial number of new peers who would vote in favor of the bills. The intention was to secure a majority in the Lords for the government. Consequently, in 1911, rather than face the humiliation of their House being diminished in such a manner, the Lords conceded to both bills, including the one that curtailed their own authority. From that point forward, a bill that had been approved in the Commons for three consecutive years could be enacted into law without the Lords' consent. This timeframe was subsequently shortened to two years in 1949.

The seating arrangements in the House of Commons can vary significantly from those in the parliament of different countries. The reasons for these differences are multifaceted, and they can have a notable impact on the functioning of the respective legislative bodies. It is essential to explore and understand the disparities in seating arrangements to comprehend their significance.

* If you wish to see the real activity, there is a TV channel called Parliament Live.

Questions for the seminar:

1. Why do the seating arrangements in the House of Commons differ from those in the parliament of our country?
2. Who are recognized as Members of Parliament?
3. What responsibilities does the Speaker have to be officially the second most prominent non-aristocratic figure in the United Kingdom?
4. Do all MPs possess designated seats reserved for them? Who are called frontbenches?
5. What does the compact size of the House of Commons foster?
6. How do MPs address each other? Why?
7. What are distinct traditions in the Houses of Parliament?

8. The process of voting in the Commons does not occur immediately. Rather, a signal known as the “division bell” resounds throughout the Palace of Westminster, alerting Members of Parliament. Following this, MPs are granted a ten-minute period in which they may cast their votes. What is the purpose behind this ten-minutes interval?

9. What are the activities of British Parliament? Where does Parliament work?

10. Which House is more important nowadays?

11. Have MPs always been paid salaries? When did politics in Britain become professional?

12. What is the basic procedure for business in the Commons?

13. How do Members of Parliament vote? Who are the Whips?

14. When does the government have to resign?

15. What is a free vote?

16. Does the House of Lords have much real power? Why does the House of Lords still play a significant role in law-making process?

17. What is the composition of the Lords?

18. The general consensus among the British population is that the House of Lords requires additional reform. What are your thoughts on the necessary reforms for the House of Lords?

The system of Elections

The evolution of the electoral system

1832 – With the passing of the Great Reform Bill, there comes a significant change in the political landscape. The elimination of minuscule boroughs, where voters can be easily swayed, is a key aspect of this reform. In their place, seats are allocated to burgeoning urban centers like Birmingham and Manchester, which have thus far lacked representation.

The uniformity of the franchise, or the right to vote, is extended to all regions of the nation, although variations still persist between rural and urban locations. The criteria for eligibility are based on the ownership of property. Presently, approximately five percent of the adult populace has been granted the right to vote.

1867 – The franchise has been expanded to encompass a majority of the male workforce residing in urban areas.

1872 – The introduction of the Secret Ballot marks a significant shift in the voting process, which had previously relied on a visible display of hands.

1884 – The franchise has been expanded to encompass male agricultural workers residing in rural areas.

1918 – The right to vote is granted to women who have reached the age of thirty.

1928 – The right to vote is granted to women on an equal footing with men. Presently, all individuals who are over the age of twenty-one possess the privilege to participate in elections.

1969 – In a recent development, the legal age for voting has been reduced to eighteen years. Additionally, there has been a significant change in the way candidates can present themselves on the ballot paper. Formerly, only their addresses were permitted, but now they are allowed to include a 'political description' alongside their name.

The political representation system in Britain is unique in that it predates the advent of democracy and the prioritization of national affairs over local matters. The House of Commons, in theory, is a gathering of individuals who represent specific areas within the kingdom. Initially, the method of selecting these representatives was left to the discretion of each town or county, with no involvement from the government. It was not until the nineteenth century that legislation was enacted to regulate the conduct of elections.

Before the emergence of contemporary political parties, a different system was in effect. In today's world, however, the majority of voters select a candidate based on their party affiliation. Nonetheless, it is still customary for Members of Parliament

(MPs) to primarily represent a specific locality. As a result, the electoral process remains remarkably straightforward. Here's how it works: the country is divided into several constituencies, each with a roughly equal population size (around 90,000 individuals). To become an MP, one must declare their candidacy in a chosen constituency. On election day, voters visit their designated polling stations, where they receive a single ballot paper containing the names of the candidates running in their constituency. Each voter then marks a cross next to the name of their preferred candidate. Once the polling stations have closed, the ballot papers are tallied. The individual who receives the highest number of checkmarks adjacent to their name emerges as the victor and assumes the position of Member of Parliament for the specific region. This electoral system is commonly referred to as the 'first-past-the-post' system, drawing a parallel to the world of horse racing.

In the voting system described, there is no allowance for preferential voting. If a voter selects more than one candidate, their ballot is considered invalid and not included in the final count. Additionally, there is no calculation or consideration of the proportion of votes received by each political party. Any votes cast for candidates who do not win are simply disregarded. Furthermore, there is no allocation of additional seats in Parliament based on the strength or popularity of each party. During the 2010 election, there were a total of 650 constituencies, and for each constituency, one Member of Parliament (MP) was elected. Although commonly referred to as a general election with the outcome determining the government, strictly speaking, there were 650 distinct and separate elections taking place simultaneously.

Official arrangements

Arranging things in a formal manner involves following a set of specific steps and guidelines. These steps ensure that the arrangement is structured, organized, and appropriate for the intended purpose. Whether it is arranging furniture in a room, organizing a business event, or setting up a formal meeting, the process remains the same. By adhering to these formal arrangements, one can create a professional and well-ordered environment.

The responsibility of determining the timing of an election lies with the government. According to the law, elections must occur at minimum once every five years. Typically, the time span between elections tends to be slightly less than the mentioned duration. It is customary for a ruling party to not prolong the decision until the final conceivable instance. In cases where a party holds a minimal majority or no majority whatsoever in the House of Commons, the interval can be significantly curtailed.

Once the date for an election has been determined, individuals wishing to run as candidates in a specific constituency must ensure that their names are included on the ballot paper for said constituency. In order to achieve this, they are required to submit a deposit of £500 to the Returning Officer, who is responsible for overseeing the election process in each constituency. If a candidate receives five percent or more of the votes, they are eligible to have their deposit refunded. Candidates have the option to indicate their political affiliation alongside their names on the ballot paper. Typically, this is the name of the political party that they are representing. However, it is not mandatory to be affiliated with a party in order to run as a candidate. It is permissible to label oneself as 'Independent' or leave this section blank altogether. Additionally, the process of registering as a political party is relatively straightforward, with lenient regulations regarding the naming of parties.

In order to participate in the electoral process, an individual must meet certain criteria. Specifically, they must have reached the age of 18 and have their name included in the electoral register. It is important to note that the electoral register is compiled annually for each constituency on an individual basis. It is worth mentioning that there is no obligation for anyone to actually cast a vote.

The campaign

The campaign was an intense and arduous undertaking, requiring relentless effort and unwavering dedication from all those involved. It demanded strategic planning, effective communication, and meticulous execution at every stage. The team left no stone unturned in their quest for success, leaving behind a lasting impact on all who witnessed it.

Elections in Britain are known to be relatively tranquil events. The campaign process highlights the disparity between the official procedures and the actual political landscape. On the surface, each constituency engages in its own distinct campaign. Candidates host public gatherings, garner attention from local newspapers, adorn their windows with party posters, and some supporters proudly display party rosettes while engaging in door-to-door canvassing. There are strict regulations in place regarding the financial expenditure of candidates, who are required to provide thorough records for examination. Any form of illicit voter manipulation is strictly prohibited by law. Additionally, the process of registering as a political party is relatively straightforward, with lenient regulations regarding the naming of parties.

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candidate represents, rather than considering their individual qualities or political beliefs. Only a small number of people attend candidates' gatherings, and many individuals do not read local newspapers. Furthermore, due to the large size of constituencies, candidates are unable to personally engage with most voters, even if they tirelessly go from door to door.

The true battleground for the campaign lies within the national sphere. Even here, party expenditures are subject to legal regulations. However, the major parties allocate millions of pounds towards advertising through billboards and newspapers. It is worth noting that, as per an agreement, they refrain from purchasing airtime on television. Instead, they are each granted a set number of meticulously timed 'party election broadcasts'. In addition, there are lengthened segments of the nightly news dedicated to political coverage, and each party conducts a daily press conference. The focus in all of this lies primarily on the personalities of national party figures, rather than on the individual candidates running at the local level.

The day of polling and the night of the election

Since the year 1931, general elections have consistently occurred on Thursdays. These elections do not warrant a day off from work, meaning individuals must continue with their regular schedules. To ensure that everyone has the chance to cast their vote, polling stations remain open for extended hours, from seven in the morning until ten at night. The only individuals who are fortunate enough to have a day off are the schoolchildren whose schools are designated as polling stations.

Once the voting concludes, the ballots that have been marked are collected and placed into boxes. These boxes are then transported to a designated location within the constituency where they are subsequently opened. At this central location, the votes for each individual candidate are tallied and recorded. The counting process is conducted in a transparent manner, with ample opportunity for scrutiny. Representatives of the candidates are permitted to move about freely, and in several instances, members of the general public are able to observe the proceedings from a distance. It is not uncommon to find television cameras present at these events as well. After the completion of the vote tally, the Returning Officer, accompanied by

the candidates, ascends a platform and publicly declares the number of votes received by each candidate. This announcement determines the Member of Parliament for the respective constituency.

The recent outcomes and the prospects ahead

Starting from the mid-twentieth century, the competition to establish the governing body has essentially boiled down to a direct battle between the Labour and Conservative parties. Traditionally, the northern regions of England and the majority of urban areas within the country have predominantly elected Labour Members of Parliament in Westminster, while the southern regions of England and the majority of areas outside the urban centers have primarily elected Conservative MPs. The party that assumes governance hinges on their performance in the suburban areas and major towns of England.

In the past five decades, the Conservative Party has struggled to secure parliamentary seats in Scotland and Wales. Instead, the majority of elected Members of Parliament (MPs) from these regions have belonged to the Labour Party, while the remaining seats have been won by nationalist parties or the Liberal Democrats. The Liberal Democrats, on the other hand, have found success in predominantly winning seats in the southwest of England, although they have also achieved victories in various other regions across England. The region of Northern Ireland has deviated from the established pattern, consistently maintaining a similar ratio of elected representatives between Protestant Unionists and Catholic Nationalists, albeit with a slight numerical advantage for the former.

The voting patterns in Britain have undergone a significant shift, with class allegiances no longer playing as prominent a role. In the past, working-class individuals would consistently vote for the Labour party, while the middle-class favored the Conservatives. The outcome of elections often hinged on the support of a small group of swing voters. However, since 1997, Labour has managed to attract a substantial number of middle-class votes, challenging the notion that a middle-class majority guarantees a Conservative majority in Parliament. Labour has successfully won three consecutive elections with comfortable margins. Despite this, the

Conservatives emerged victorious in the subsequent election. Furthermore, support for other parties has seen an increase. It appears that in the twenty-first century, the British electorate exhibits a greater degree of flexibility in their voting habits.

Ensuring the vitality of a democracy necessitates fostering a sentiment of inclusivity and efficacy within the democratic process, whereby individuals perceive their ability to actively engage and contribute in a just and meaningful manner. Concerns have arisen due to the outcomes of recent elections in Britain. Firstly, there is a noticeable decline in voter turnout, particularly among the younger generation. Secondly, there has been a surge in support for smaller political parties. However, the parliamentary representation does not accurately reflect this support due to the first-past-the-post system. As a result, the Labour party formed a government despite receiving less than a quarter of the adult population's votes. Understandably, many individuals question the legitimacy of a party's right to govern under these circumstances.

To address these apprehensions, modifications have been made to allow for distant voting, granting anyone the opportunity to cast their vote remotely. During the recent election, approximately 15% of votes were submitted through this method. In the past, postal voting was restricted to specific circumstances, resulting in only around two percent of votes being cast in this manner. In the past, postal voting was only permitted under special circumstances and accounted for a mere two percent of all votes. However, there have been instances where local elections have experimented with alternative voting methods, such as postal, phone, and internet voting. Regarding the second issue, it is unlikely that the British general election's seat allocation system will transition to a more proportional representation system, as seen in other European countries. This is primarily due to the presence of vested interests that would not benefit the two major political parties, who hold decision-making power. Nonetheless, Northern Ireland Assembly, Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, European Parliament, and certain local government elections utilize various forms of proportional representation. As a result, the British population may gradually become more familiar with such systems, and if support for smaller parties

grows, there may be increasing public pressure for a change that becomes difficult to resist.

However, both types of change, formerly postal and now other forms of remote voting, diminish the primary advantage of the system. The United Kingdom has a well-earned reputation for conducting elections in a manner that is both free and fair. One of the main reasons for this is the system's basic simplicity. The act of voting, the tabulation of votes, and the announcement of results are all carried out by individuals in each other's physical presence, without the need for any technology more advanced than a pencil and paper. It is worth noting that the introduction of widespread remote voting has resulted in a significant increase in instances of electoral fraud. Similarly, the simplicity of the first-past-the-post system further reduces the opportunities for fraudulent behavior during the vote counting process.

According to a survey conducted prior one of the recent elections, a mere 22% of individuals residing in Britain expressed a high level of trust in the electoral system. In contrast, 46% of respondents indicated that they had previously placed their trust in the system but had since lost faith in it. Many individuals attribute their lack of trust to remote voting. Consequently, it is plausible that this endeavor to enhance engagement in the democratic process will ultimately result in diminished faith in it.

Questions for the seminar:

1. How did the system of political representation evolve?
2. When were the first laws about elections passed?
3. How does the electoral system work? How is British electoral system called?
4. Who decides when to hold an election?
5. Who can become a candidate in a constituency?
6. What is a Polling Day?
7. What parties fight the contest to form the government? Which areas are considered to be Conservative and which – Labour?

8. In what ways is political campaigning in our country different from that in Britain?

9. Is there a similar level of interest in learning about election results in our country as there is in Britain? Why (not)? Does it seem to reflect the general level of interest in politics which exists at other times - in Britain and in our own country?

10. Britain has “single-member constituencies”. This means that one MP alone represents one particular group of voters. Is this a good system? Or is it better to have several MPs representing the same area?

11. Do you think Britain should adopt the electoral system used in our country? Or perhaps the other way around? Or are the two different systems the right ones for the two different countries?

Parties and political landscape of Britain

The **Conservative Party** is a prominent political faction that espouses conservative principles and values. It has a longstanding tradition of advocating for limited government intervention and promoting individual liberty and personal responsibility. The party has historically emphasized the importance of maintaining social order and stability, as well as preserving traditional values and institutions. With a focus on fiscal responsibility, the Conservative Party advocates for free-market policies and economic growth. It has been a significant force in shaping governmental policies and legislation, particularly in areas such as taxation, healthcare, and education.

Originating from the faction of Members of Parliament recognized as the Tories during the initial years of the 1800s and continuing to be commonly referred to by that designation in informal contexts, particularly in the press due to its brevity.

The traditional perspective is deeply rooted in established customs and beliefs that have been passed down through generations. It embodies a steadfast adherence to conventional values and norms, often resisting change and innovation. This outlook places great importance on preserving cultural heritage and upholding time-honoured

traditions. It cherishes the stability and familiarity that comes with conforming to long-standing practices and rejecting unconventional ideas. The traditional outlook tends to prioritize continuity and stability over rapid societal transformations, valuing the wisdom of the past as a guiding force for the present and future.

Advocating for a right-leaning ideology, this perspective supports hierarchical power structures and limited government intervention in economic affairs. It favors lowering income tax rates and places great importance on national security and maintaining law and order within the country.

During its tenure in government there has been a strong emphasis on implementing extensive changes to various sectors such as education, welfare, housing, and numerous public services. These reforms were aimed at promoting greater consumer choice and incorporating elements of market economies into their operations.

Organization: The leader possesses a notable level of autonomy when it comes to guiding policy.

Voters: those who adhere to conventional practices and beliefs. A significant portion of the affluent population, along with a sizable minority within the working class.

Money: Many of the contributions come from individuals in the business sector.

The **Labour party** is a prominent political entity in the United Kingdom. With a rich history dating back to its establishment in 1900, the party has played a significant role in shaping the country's political landscape. Known for its commitment to social justice, equality, and workers' rights, the Labour party has consistently advocated for progressive policies and reforms. Over the years, the party has championed issues such as universal healthcare, affordable housing, and fair wages. It has also been instrumental in advancing labor rights and improving working conditions for workers across various industries. The Labour party has a diverse membership base, attracting individuals from different backgrounds and professions who share a common vision for a more equitable society. Through its participation in

parliamentary elections and grassroots organizing, the party strives to represent the interests of the working class and marginalized communities, seeking to create a better future for all citizens.

The traditional perspective, although widely held, can be subject to scrutiny and debate. It is grounded in long-standing beliefs and values that have been ingrained in society over time. This outlook emphasizes the importance of adhering to established norms, customs, and practices that have been passed down through generations. It places a strong emphasis on preserving cultural heritage and maintaining stability within social structures. The traditional view values continuity and resists rapid change or disruption. It seeks to uphold traditional roles, responsibilities, and hierarchies, often based on gender, age, or social status. This outlook tends to prioritize conformity, order, and a sense of familiarity. It is deeply rooted in history, tradition, and the collective wisdom of the past.

Advocating for equality and prioritizing the needs of marginalized individuals, the left-of-centre ideology emphasizes greater government intervention in the economy. Rather than focusing on minimizing income tax, it places a stronger emphasis on ensuring comprehensive social services for all.

Initially, there was opposition to the reforms proposed by the Conservative party. However, over time, this opposition transformed into acceptance. When the party was in government and it placed a strong emphasis on promoting community ethics and ensuring equal opportunities for all, rather than focusing solely on the equal distribution of wealth. Additionally, there has been a gradual loosening of ties to trade unions.

Organization: In practice, the power of the leader often surpasses the requirement for policy approval by the annual conference, despite what is stipulated in theory.

Traditional voters are individuals who adhere to long-standing political practices and beliefs when participating in electoral processes. These voters tend to favor established candidates and policies, often based on historical affiliations and loyalty to specific political parties or ideologies. They prioritize stability, continuity,

and preservation of traditional values in their decision-making. Voters: The working class, in addition to a small segment of the intelligentsia from the middle class.

Money: Originally consisting primarily of trade union members, the composition of this group has now shifted to predominantly include individuals from the business community.

The **Liberal Democratic party**, known as the LDP, is a political party that holds liberal democratic principles at its core. With a strong emphasis on individual freedoms and democratic governance, the LDP strives to protect civil liberties and promote inclusive policies. As one of the major political parties in the country, the LDP plays a significant role in shaping public policy and advocating for the rights and welfare of its citizens.

Emerging in the latter part of the 1980s, a merger took place between the Liberals, who originated from the Whigs during the early 1800s, and the Social Democrats, a faction of Labour politicians who had separated from the party.

Policies: Characterized as being positioned in the center or slightly left of center, this party is known for its support of increased integration with the European Union. It places a greater focus on environmental issues compared to other political parties. Additionally, it advocates for devolving more authority to local governments and proposes reforms to the electoral system.

Conventional voters: While individuals from various social classes contribute, it is particularly noticeable that those from the middle class are more prevalent.

Money: Significantly less affluent compared to the top two.

Once it assumed the position of one of the two major parties, replacing the Liberal party in the early 20th century, it seamlessly assimilated into the existing structure. The hegemony of the larger parties makes it arduous for smaller parties to challenge their dominance. Should any of these smaller parties present compelling ideas, they are swiftly co-opted by one of the major parties, who strive to appeal to the widest cross-section of the populace.

Political parties with nationalist ideologies

Plaid Cymru, which translates to 'party of Wales' in Welsh, and the SNP, or Scottish National Party, share a common objective of achieving independence from the United Kingdom. However, their respective supporters encompass not only those who seek complete separation, but also individuals who strive for enhanced autonomy within their respective regions.

Over the past five decades, it has been typical for both political parties to have a small number of Members of Parliament in Westminster. However, it is important to note that the proportion of MPs representing their respective countries falls significantly short of the majority.

History: Emerging in the early 1900s through a coalition of labor activists and intellectuals, the inaugural administration took office in 1923.

In Northern Ireland, political parties play a crucial role in shaping the socio-political landscape. These parties are rooted in a complex history and often reflect deeply entrenched divisions within society. They engage in various political activities, including electoral campaigns, policy formulation, and representation of their constituents. The political landscape in Northern Ireland is characterized by a diverse range of parties, each with its own ideologies, goals, and strategies. These parties often align themselves along sectarian lines, representing either the nationalist or unionist communities. However, some parties have emerged to challenge traditional sectarian divisions and promote a more inclusive and shared future for all citizens. Despite the challenges and complexities, political parties in Northern Ireland continue to play a vital role in shaping the political discourse and pursuing their respective agendas.

In this context, the four primary political parties in question exclusively represent either the Protestant or Catholic communities. Specifically, the Democratic Unionists and Ulster Unionists are the Protestant parties, while Sinn Féin and the Social Democratic and Labour Party are the Catholic parties. Typically, these parties collectively secure all the Irish seats in the Westminster parliament and the overwhelming majority of seats in the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Alliance

Party, which seeks backing from both communities, holds a small number of seats within the assembly.

Alternative political groups

In recent years, there have been several minor political parties that have gained some attention. The three most prominent ones are as follows: firstly, the Green party, which garners support from those concerned about environmental issues; secondly, the British National Party (BNP), which focuses its campaign on opposition to immigration; and thirdly, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), which advocates for Britain's withdrawal from the European Union. Due in part to the electoral system (as discussed in chapter 10), none of these parties has ever secured a seat in Parliament or come close to doing so. However, the first two have seen some success in local elections and currently hold a few seats on various local councils throughout the country. All three parties perform better in European elections, with the Greens and UKIP having secured seats in the European parliament.

The political landscape of Britain is commonly characterized as having a "two-party system. The reason for the current situation in the House of Commons, where more than 85% of the seats are occupied by members of just two parties, can be attributed to two factors. The first factor is the electoral system, while the second factor is the origin of British political parties. Unlike in many other countries, British political parties were initially formed within Parliament before extending their reach to the public. In the eighteenth century, Members of Parliament (MPs) began to align themselves into two distinct groups: those who consistently supported the government and those who did not. This division persisted into the nineteenth century, with the opposition party positioning itself as an alternative government to the ruling party. This concept of an alternative government has been formally recognized, with the leader of the second largest party in Parliament being bestowed the title of 'Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition' and receiving additional compensation for this role. The leader selects a 'shadow cabinet', creating the perception of a cohesive group prepared to assume governmental responsibilities at any given moment.

Due to their historical roots, neither of these political parties were solely focused on advocating for the interests of a specific social group. Additionally, although they held distinct perspectives, their primary goal was not to advance singular and comprehensive political ideologies. Instead, their *raison d'être* was to amass power by forging a strong coalition of diverse factions and viewpoints. It is undeniable that the Labour party, one of the two major contemporary parties, was established outside of Parliament and, as its name suggests, aimed to champion the interests of a specific demographic—the working class.

Once it assumed the position of one of the major two parties, replacing the Liberal party in the early 20th century, it seamlessly integrated into the existing structure. Smaller political parties face tremendous challenges in attempting to contest the dominance of the larger parties. When any of these ideas appear promising, they are embraced by one of the major political parties, who strive to attract the widest range of individuals within the population.

The origins of the party system within Parliament have additional implications. Unlike in numerous other nations, parties in this country do not permeate every facet of public life.

One outcome of this dynamic is that typically, the members of a political party who hold the most influence over policy are the party's Members of Parliament. It is important to note that this does not imply that the parties themselves are undemocratic. Non-MP party members still possess the ability to impact policy through various avenues. Firstly, they have the power to elect the party's leader. Secondly, they have the opportunity to express their opinions at the annual party conference. Lastly, the local party holds the authority to determine the party's candidate for Member of Parliament in their respective area during the upcoming election. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that these powers are constrained by a significant factor - the need to maintain a façade of unity. Party policies are consistently portrayed as plausible policies for the government, while the party's prominent Members of Parliament are depicted as potential ministers. When aspiring to appear as a viable governing entity, it is imperative to avoid displaying public

disagreements. Party conferences, which are broadcasted on television, often function as grand displays intended to uplift party members and present a cohesive, energetic image to the public, rather than facilitating genuine deliberation.

Questions for the seminar:

1. What is a prominent political faction that espouses conservative principles and values?
2. What values and policies does the Conservative Party advocate for?
3. Which faction of Members of Parliament did the Conservatives originate from?
4. What outlook do the Conservatives place great importance on?
5. The Conservative Party advocates for a right-leaning ideology, isn't it? What does it mean?
6. During Conservative Party tenure in government there has been a strong emphasis on implementing extensive changes to various sectors. Which ones?
7. Which party that dates back to its establishment in 1900, has played a significant role in shaping the country's political landscape?
8. Known for its commitment to social justice and equality, what party has consistently advocated for progressive policies and reforms?
9. The Labour party has been instrumental in advancing labor rights and improving working conditions across various industries. What membership base does the Labour party have?
10. Does Labour party advocate for equality, having the left-of-centre ideology?
11. Which party emphasizes greater government intervention in the economy? What else does it place a strong emphasis on ?
12. Who are traditional voters of the Labour party?
13. What principles does the Liberal Democratic party, known as the LDP, holds?
14. Having a strong emphasis on individual freedoms and democratic governance, what does the LDP strives to protect ?

15. How can you characterize policies of the LDP? Is this party known for its support of integration with the European Union?

16. It places a greater focus on environmental issues compared to other political parties. Which party is meant?

17. Tell about the political parties with nationalist ideologies within the United Kingdom. Would you support any of them? Why (not)?

The Government

The functioning institution known as the government plays a vital role in the management and governance of a society. It is responsible for the enactment and enforcement of laws, the provision of public services, the maintenance of order and security, and the representation of the people's interests. Through its various branches and agencies, the government exercises power and authority, making decisions and implementing policies that impact the lives of its citizens. Its core functions include legislation, executive action, and judicial oversight. Furthermore, the government serves as a platform for democratic processes, facilitating the participation of the populace in decision-making through elections and political representation. In essence, the government is an indispensable entity that shapes the social, political, and economic landscape of a nation.

When discussing 'the government', the media typically refers to one of two concepts. The first refers to the collective body of politicians responsible for overseeing various government departments, with multiple politicians assigned to each department. This meaning also encompasses those politicians who hold special roles, such as managing the operations of Parliament. In this context, 'the government' typically consists of approximately one hundred individuals. While these individuals hold different positions and carry distinct titles such as Ministers and department heads, they are commonly referred to as 'ministers'. It is uncommon for someone who is not a member of Parliament to assume a ministerial role.

The term 'the government' can also have a narrower definition. In this context, it specifically pertains to the most influential politicians, namely the Prime Minister and the remaining members of the cabinet. The cabinet typically consists of approximately twenty individuals, although there are no strict regulations regarding this number. The majority of cabinet members hold leadership positions within various government departments.

Due in part to its electoral system, Britain typically experiences what is known as 'single-party government', a practice uncommon in many other Western European countries. This means that all individuals who make up the government are affiliated with the same political party. On the other hand, forming a coalition government, which involves the participation of multiple parties, is generally perceived as unfavorable.

The longstanding practice of single-party governance has played a significant role in the development of a custom known as collective responsibility. This principle dictates that every member of the government, regardless of their rank, bears accountability for each policy enacted by the government, even if they were not involved in its formulation. While it is inevitable that individual government officials may hold divergent viewpoints, they are expected to keep these perspectives confidential. As a matter of convention, it is impermissible for any government member to publicly critique government policies. Any individual who violates this convention is obliged to tender their resignation.

The Cabinet

The history of the cabinet serves as a prime illustration of the inclination towards confidentiality in British politics. Its origins can be traced back to the 18th century when it began as an informal assemblage of significant ministers and officials within the royal household. At that time, it lacked any official recognition or status. The official governing body was the Privy Council, consisting of a sizeable group of individuals (including members of 'the cabinet'), who directly reported to the monarch but not to one another. The gradual transition of power over time resulted in the cabinet assuming control. As a result, the Privy Council now serves primarily as a

ceremonial entity. This council consists of the current ministers as well as significant former ministers.

Over the course of the past century, the cabinet has undergone significant changes in terms of its visibility and acknowledgment by the public. Additionally, it has expanded in size, which has resulted in its current state of being excessively inflexible and formal, making it unable to effectively make substantial decisions. In the past five decades, there have emerged unofficial formations known as "inner cabinets," consisting of the Prime Minister and a select group of influential ministers. It is within these inner cabinets and various cabinet committees where the majority of substantial decision-making occurs.

Typically, the prominent politicians within the ruling party are appointed to the cabinet, where they are bound to adhere to government policies through the principle of collective responsibility. The cabinet convenes on a weekly basis to deliberate on matters pertaining to policy formulation, policy execution, and the administration of different governmental divisions. Due to the necessity of presenting a unified front, the specifics of individual contributions during these meetings are treated as highly confidential. The meeting reports, which are disseminated to government departments, provide an overview of the subjects discussed and the resolutions made, while refraining from mentioning any specific individuals involved.

In order to manage the intricate operations of a contemporary government, there exists an entity known as the cabinet office. This office oversees an active communication network, ensuring that ministers remain connected and orchestrating the agenda for cabinet meetings. Additionally, it performs these same functions for the numerous cabinet committees. These committees are established by the cabinet with the purpose of delving into specific matters in greater depth than the cabinet itself can accommodate, whether due to time constraints or lack of expertise. It is important to note that unlike the government as a whole, the individuals serving on these committees need not be politicians.

The role of the British Prime Minister (PM) stands in stark opposition to that of the monarch. Although the Queen may seem to possess significant authority, the

reality is quite the opposite. On the other hand, the PM may appear to hold limited power, but the truth is that they possess a substantial amount. In practice, the Queen is compelled to appoint the individual who can garner a majority in the House of Commons as the PM. Typically, this entails selecting the leader of the party with the highest number of Members of Parliament (MPs).

The conventional expression characterizes the role of the Prime Minister within the cabinet as "primus inter pares," which translates to 'first among equals' in Latin. However, the reality is that the other ministers do not possess the same level of authority. According to official protocol, the Queen appoints individuals to governmental positions 'based on the advice of the Prime Minister.' However, in practice, it is the Prime Minister who unilaterally makes these decisions.

The extent of the Prime Minister's authority in granting favors is evident through the contemporary occurrence referred to as the 'cabinet reshuffle'. The Prime Minister has developed a customary practice of regularly reshuffling the cabinet, typically occurring at least once every two years. During these reshuffles, a handful of cabinet members are removed from their positions, and a few new members are introduced. However, the majority of existing members are repositioned, akin to a deck of cards being rearranged, with each member assuming responsibility for a new department.

The majority of ministers, excluding the Prime Minister, are occupied with the management of their respective governmental departments. Consequently, they have limited opportunities to contemplate government policy as a cohesive entity. Conversely, the Prime Minister is afforded the time and capacity to do so. Additionally, the cabinet office operates under the direct jurisdiction of the Prime Minister and is situated within the same premises. Consequently, the Prime Minister possesses a greater awareness of ongoing affairs compared to their ministerial counterparts. Due to time constraints, the cabinet is unable to deliberate on every matter, necessitating the exercise of discretion. This responsibility falls upon the Prime Minister, who makes the ultimate decision. Matters that are not deliberated upon can then be effectively resolved by the Prime Minister. The principle of

collective responsibility mandates that the remaining members of the government must align themselves with the decisions made by the Prime Minister.

*No. 10 Downing Street. This building serves as the designated residence of the Prime Minister, which exemplifies the commonly held misconception that Prime Ministers are not particularly significant individuals. Interestingly, it lacks a distinctive name and does not possess an outward appearance that exudes grandeur or uniqueness. Surprisingly, it is not even a freestanding house. However, its interior space is significantly more expansive than one would assume. It is within these walls that the cabinet convenes and where the cabinet office conducts its business. Additionally, the Prime Minister resides on the top floor, effectively living in close proximity to their place of work.

The residence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is situated adjacent to No. 11, while the Government Chief Whip resides at No. 12, thus elevating the significance of the entire street beyond its initial impression. In the realm of media, the term 'Downing Street' is commonly employed to encompass not only the Prime Minister but also the cabinet office and other trusted advisors of the Prime Minister. Nevertheless, there is an inherent domestic aspect to this arrangement. In the event of an electoral defeat, all three ministers must patiently await the arrival of removal vans, just like any ordinary individual relocating their residence. The Prime Minister has an official residence in the countryside too. It is situated westward of London and is called Chequers.

The Civil Service

Given the intricate nature of contemporary nation-states, the British 'government' is comprised of relatively few individuals. In contrast, certain other nations, such as the United States, do not experience turnover in the highest-ranking administrative positions when a new government assumes power. While governments may change, the civil service remains a constant presence. It is worth noting that the individual of utmost authority within a government department holds the esteemed position of 'Permanent Secretary'.

In contrast to politicians, civil servants, including those in prestigious positions, remain anonymous to the general population.

To those who are part of it, the British civil service is more than just a job; it is a lifelong commitment. The upper echelons of this esteemed institution are typically occupied by individuals who have dedicated twenty years or more to its service. These individuals are rewarded with a generous salary, often surpassing that of their ministers, along with unparalleled job stability that their ministerial counterparts do not enjoy. Furthermore, they have a significant likelihood of being bestowed with official honors. In contrast, ministers, even those who have spent several years in the same department, are still considered relative newcomers to the role.

Due to these various factors, it is frequently plausible for high-ranking government officials to exert a significant amount of authority over their ministers. In fact, it has been suggested on occasion that it is the civil servants, rather than the ministers themselves, who truly govern the nation. While this viewpoint is subjective, there is evidence to support the notion that top civil servants do anticipate possessing a certain level of influence, if not outright control.

In recent times, it appears that career civil servants may be experiencing a decline in their previous level of influence. During the latter half of the twentieth century, government officials started to bring in external experts to contribute to different initiatives, as well as their own political advisors to collaborate with (or, as some argue, compete against) the civil servants. The quantity of these appointments has consistently risen over time. These individuals rely solely on their ministers for employment, rather than the established career trajectory within the civil service.

Nevertheless, the British civil service possesses a formidable tool to safeguard its authority against these onslaughts. The reputation for absolute political neutrality is largely well-earned. Numerous government officials have acknowledged the power struggle that occurs between them and their top civil servants, but very few have ever accused these civil servants of displaying any political favoritism. The primary strategy for top civil servants to maintain some level of influence over ministers is to

refrain from engaging in overt political activities. By doing so, they are able to establish a level of trustworthiness that personal advisors often cannot attain.

The street in London that stretches from Trafalgar Square to the Houses of Parliament is known as Whitehall. Numerous governmental agencies are situated on this street or in adjacent streets. Consequently, the term 'Whitehall' is occasionally used to denote the administrative facets of the government. When we speak of 'the opinion in Whitehall,' we are referring to the viewpoints held by high-ranking civil servants and other administrators. Therefore, it is not uncommon for there to be discrepancies between 'Whitehall' and 'Downing Street.'

Civil Service is an intriguing field that is filled with fascinating details. At the start of 1994, during the twilight of the Conservative party's extensive rule, a group of senior civil servants lodged a formal grievance, alleging that certain government ministers had subjected them to verbal mistreatment and displayed contemptuous behavior towards them. This marked the first instance of such a complaint being made. However, when the governing party finally changed in 1997, matters took a turn for the worse for the civil servants. The newly appointed ministers, emboldened by their resounding electoral triumph, believed they had been entrusted with the authority to implement sweeping changes in their respective departments while disregarding any objections. The civil servants perceived them as haughty and even went so far as to arrange training programs for their staff on how to handle ministerial individuals who displayed bullying tendencies.

The British admiration for individuals who possess natural talent but lack formal training is typically not openly acknowledged. However, during the mid-nineteenth century when the framework for the contemporary civil service was established, this principle was explicitly declared. To put it differently, it is preferable to possess a general understanding rather than a narrow expertise, to possess intelligence rather than exhaustive knowledge. While reforms implemented since then have placed a greater emphasis on specialized knowledge, the core conviction persists that administration is more akin to an art than an applied science.

Local government

The powers held by local government authorities in Britain, commonly referred to as 'councils', are solely granted to them by the central government. In fact, their very existence is dependent on the central government. Throughout the past century, British governments have undertaken multiple reorganizations of local government, resulting in the abolition of certain councils and the establishment of new ones.

At its core, the structure of local governance mirrors that of the national government. Within this system, individuals elected as councillors, akin to Members of Parliament, convene in a council chamber located in either the Town Hall or County Hall, akin to Parliament. It is in these chambers that policies are formulated, subsequently carried out by local government officers, who serve a role analogous to civil servants.

The public sentiment in Britain reflects the relatively limited authority of local government. Typically, fewer than fifty percent of eligible voters express their participation in local elections. However, it is important to note that the average individual in Britain tends to have significantly more interactions with local government compared to national government. This is because local councils have historically been responsible for the administration of a wide range of public services. In fact, they employ three times the number of individuals in comparison to the national government.

Local councils have the authority to levy a specific tax known as council tax, which is calculated based on the estimated worth of a property. It is worth noting that all other types of taxes are collected by the central government. However, the funds generated from council tax are insufficient to cover the extensive range of services mandated by the central government for local councils to deliver. This is particularly true because governments occasionally impose maximum limits on council tax rates and directly collect taxes from business properties, subsequently distributing the funds among local councils. Consequently, over fifty percent of a local council's revenue is provided by the central government.

Over the past fifty years, there has been a noticeable shift towards increased centralized governance and authority. In recent decades, there has been a noticeable inclination towards increased central government authority. This shift can be attributed to the overwhelming influence of national party politics on local politics. As a result, individuals often cast their votes in local elections based on their alignment with national party affiliations, effectively transforming these elections into a reflection of national public sentiment.

The irony of the trend lies in the fact that all political parties claim to endorse the concept of 'devolution' - the transfer of power from central government to local communities. Nevertheless, in practice, recent administrations have not granted any additional authority to local government entities. Instead, they have circumvented these entities and bestowed greater autonomy upon locally administered services like schools and hospitals. The underlying theory is that the individuals directly involved in these services, both users and employees, should have a say in the decision-making process.

A potential solution to address the issue of power imbalance is to grant local councils the authority to levy a local income tax. However, this proposal has not garnered significant backing or endorsement. There has been an additional effort to revitalize local government in England and Wales. An alternative approach that has already been put into action is the option for local authorities to have a directly elected mayor, similar to the American model. However, there is a sense of wariness towards consolidating too much authority into the hands of a single individual. As of the end of 2008, only approximately ten percent of local authorities in Britain had conducted a vote on this concept, and even then, the majority of those authorities had rejected it. There is, however, a notable exception to this lack of success in London. The mayor of London, who oversees a substantial budget and governs a population larger than that of Scotland, has emerged as one of the most influential figures in the nation.

The range of services provided by local governments encompasses various aspects, such as maintaining public hygiene and conducting inspections to ensure

environmental health. Additionally, they are responsible for the efficient collection of rubbish and the upkeep of all public spaces. Furthermore, local governments oversee the operation of public swimming pools and sports centers, which require an admission fee, as well as the management of public parks, which are accessible to the public free of charge. Public libraries are widely recognized as a valuable resource. They offer a space where individuals can freely access a variety of materials, including books, newspapers, magazines, and in some instances, recorded media. It is important to note that these services are provided at no cost to the public. However, if one wishes to borrow items from the library and take them home, proof of residency within the library's jurisdiction is required, along with the acquisition of a library card.

The organization of local government in areas outside of London

The structure of local government in Britain is based on its four integral components. Scotland is home to 32 local authorities, Wales has 22, and Northern Ireland had 26 until 2011, when it reduced to 11. In England, excluding London, there is a multitude of local units, numbering over 120, that report directly to the central government. It is worth noting that, aside from the Greater London Authority, there are no governing bodies designated as 'regional' authorities.

The *counties* in England and Wales are the most ancient divisions of the country. The majority of these counties had already been established prior to the Norman invasion, as detailed in chapter 2. Remarkably, many of these counties continue to serve important roles in local governance to this day. Some governmental entities no longer serve a practical purpose, yet they continue to be utilized for various other reasons. An example of this is Middlesex, which encompasses the western and certain northern regions of Greater London. Despite its lack of official significance, letters are still directed to 'Middx,' and it is also the name of a highly esteemed cricket team. Numerous counties incorporate the term 'shire' in their designation, such as Hampshire and Leicestershire. Originally, these regions were referred to as 'shires.'

Originally, *parishes* were rural communities that revolved around a central church. It was not until the nineteenth century that they evolved into a distinct form of local governance. Presently, parishes hold the status of the smallest administrative division in England, but possess limited authority. It is worth mentioning that the term 'parish' continues to be employed within the hierarchical structure of the primary Christian denominations in England.

Initially, *boroughs* were towns that had experienced significant growth and development, leading to their recognition as independent entities separate from county jurisdiction. Presently, the term "borough" primarily denotes a form of local governance in London, while its usage outside of the city is relatively infrequent.

Questions for the seminar:

1. What do we mean by the term “government”? Why do the British prefer a “single-party government”?
2. How often does the Cabinet meet? What does it do?
3. Who has more power the King or the Prime Minister? How is the Prime Minister described in Latin?
4. What is the “cabinet reshuffle”?
5. What are all the ministers except Prime Minister busy with? What does “collective responsibility” mean?
6. Do you think the theory of collective responsibility is a good one? Does it exist in our country?
7. What is the title of the most senior civil servant in a government department? Are civil servants known to the larger public?
8. What reputation does British Civil Service have? What is Civil Service criticised for?
9. What is the system of local government? Who does local government consist of?
10. What do local councils manage?
11. What kind of tax are local councils allowed to collect? What taxes does national government collect?

12. What services does local government provide?
13. How does the relation between central and local government in Britain compare with that in our country?

QUESTIONS FOR REVISION

1. Who is nowadays British Prime Minister? What party leader is he?
2. What are two unique aspects of British political life?
3. What is the Official Secrets Act?
4. What are duties of the individual towards the state?
5. When was the only countrywide referendum in Britain history?
6. What kind of state is Great Britain? Does Britain have a constitution? What are principles and procedures by which country is governed?
7. What does “two-party system mean”? What is the reason of “two party system”?
8. What do we mean by the term “government”? Why do the British prefer a “single-party government”?
9. How often does the Cabinet meet? What does it do?
10. Who has more power the Queen or the Prime Minister? How is the Prime Minister described in Latin?
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16. What is the system of local government? Who does local government consist of?
17. What do local councils manage?
18. What kind of tax are local councils allowed to collect? What taxes does national government collect?
19. What services does local government provide?
20. How does the relation between central and local government in Britain compare with that in our country?
21. What are the activities of British Parliament? Where does parliament work?
22. Which House is more important?
23. Were MPs always paid salaries? When did politics in Britain become professional?
24. What is the basic procedure for business in the Commons?
25. How do Members of Parliament vote? Who are the Whips?
26. When does the government have to resign?
27. What is a free vote?
28. Does the House of Lords have real power? What is the composition of the Lords?
29. Why do the seating arrangements in the House of Commons differ from those in the parliament of our country?
30. The process of voting in the Commons does not occur immediately. Rather, a signal known as the 'division bell' resounds throughout the Palace of Westminster, alerting Members of Parliament. Following this, MPs are granted a ten-minute period in which they may cast their votes. What is the purpose behind this ten-minutes interval?
31. The general consensus among the British population is that the House of Lords requires additional reform. What are your thoughts on the necessary reforms for the House of Lords?
32. How did the system of political representation evolve?

33. When were the first laws about elections passed?
34. How does the electoral system work? How is British electoral system called?
35. Who decides when to hold an election?
36. Who can become a candidate in a constituency?
37. What is a Polling Day?
38. What parties fight the contest to form the government? Which areas are considered to be Conservative and which – Labour?
39. In what ways is political campaigning in our country different from that in Britain?
40. Is there a similar level of interest in learning about election results in our country as there is in Britain? Why (not)? Does it seem to reflect the general level of interest in politics which exists at other times - in Britain and in our own country?
41. Britain has “single-member constituencies”. This means that one MP alone represents one particular group of voters. Is this a good system? Or is it better to have several MPs representing the same area?
42. Do you think Britain should adopt the electoral system used in our country? Or perhaps the other way around? Or are the two different systems the right ones for the two different countries?
43. What is a prominent political faction that espouses conservative principles and values?
44. What values and policies does the Conservative Party advocate for?
45. Which faction of Members of Parliament did the Conservatives originate from?
46. What outlook do the Conservatives place great importance on?
47. The Conservative Party advocates for a right-leaning ideology, isn't it? What does it mean?
48. During Conservative Party tenure in government there has been a strong emphasis on implementing extensive changes to various sectors. Which ones?

49. . Which party that dates back to its establishment in 1900, has played a significant role in shaping the country's political landscape?

50. Known for its commitment to social justice and equality, what party has consistently advocated for progressive policies and reforms?

51. The Labour party has been instrumental in advancing labor rights and improving working conditions across various industries. What membership base does the Labour party have?

52. Does Labour party advocate for equality, having the left-of-centre ideology?

53. Which party emphasizes greater government intervention in the economy? What else does it place a strong emphasis on ?

54. Who are traditional voters of the Labour party?

55. What principles does the Liberal Democratic party, known as the LDP, holds?

56. Having a strong emphasis on individual freedoms and democratic governance, what does the LDP strives to protect ?

57. How can you characterize policies of the LDP? Is this party known for its support of integration with the European Union?

58. It places a greater focus on environmental issues compared to other political parties. Which party is meant?

59. Tell about the political parties with nationalist ideologies within the United Kingdom. Would you support any of them? Why (not)?

60. Can you share any information about political parties in Ukraine?

GLOSSARY

1. **accuse** (v) (of) – to charge with an offence, crime; to blame.
2. **act** (n) – statute, a formal record of sth done or transacted.
~ *act of Parliament*.
3. **advocacy** (n) – 1. active support or pleading. 2. the function of an advocate.
4. **allege** (v) – to assert without proof or before proving.
5. **allegation** (n) – statement of what one undertakes to prove.
6. **amend** (v) – to change or modify for the better, improve.
~ *amendment* (n).
7. **appeal** (v) – to take a case to a higher court for rehearing and a new decision.
8. **appoint** (v) – 1. to fix or name officially. 2. to select for an office or position.
9. **approve** (v) – to give formal or official sanction, ratify.
10. **argue** (v) – to consider arguments for and against; discuss.
11. **assent** (n) – agreement.
12. **ballot** (n) – a sheet of paper, or orig. a small ball, used in secret voting.
13. **bench** (n) – 1. any of the long seats on which members sit in parliament. 2. a judge's seat in court. 3. judges or magistrates hearing a particular case collectively.
14. **bill** (n) – a formal proposal for a new law.
15. **canvass** (n) – the act of examining and counting the returns of votes cast at a public election to determine authenticity.
16. **chancellor** (n) – the name given in some states to the judge (or the presiding judge) of a court of chancery.
~ *of the Exchequer* – head of the department of the English government which has charge of the collection of the national revenue.
17. **civil** (adj) – relating to private rights and remedies sought by civil actions (as contrasted with criminal proceedings).
~ *servant* - a government officer.

18. **commit** (v) – to carry out.
19. **constituency** (n) – the inhabitants of an electoral district.
20. **convention** (n) – a treaty, an agreement, a commercial agreement, a contract.
21. **convict** (v) (of) – to find or prove to be guilty.
22. **county** (n) – division of GB, the largest unit of local government
23. **criminal** (adj) – relating to crime or its punishment (as contrasted with civil).
24. **defendant** (n) – a person, company, etc. against whom a criminal charge or civil claim is made.
25. **department** (n) – the largest unit of the executive branch covering a broad area of government responsibility.
26. **dissolve** (v) (~ **Parliament**) – to terminate, cancel, annul.
27. **election** (n) – a formal procedure for voting.
– *national elections*
– *by-elections*
28. **electoral campaign** (n) – an organized effort to persuade voters to choose one candidate over others competing for the same office.
29. **enforce** (v) – to put into execution.
30. **evidence** (n) – any form of proof legally presented at a trial through witnesses, records, documents, etc.
31. **execute** (v) (a law) – to give effect to; to make legally binding.
32. **executive** (adj) **branch** – a part of government with authority and responsibility for the daily administration of the state; it executes or enforces the law.
33. **first-past-the-post** – using a voting system in which a person is elected because they get more votes than anyone else in the area that they want to represent.
34. **forgery** (n) – act of making a false or counterfeit document, money, etc.
35. **government** (n) – an organization that officially manages and controls a state, country or region, creating laws, collecting taxes, providing public services, etc.
36. **guilt** (n) – responsibility for offence.

37. **impartial** (adj) – treating all alike, unbiased; equitable, fair and just.
38. **introduce** (v) – to present formally.
39. **investigate** (v) – to conduct an official inquiry.
40. **judge** (n) – a public official authorized to decide questions brought before a court.
41. **judicial** (adj) (**branch**) – the branch of government that interprets laws.
42. **Judiciary** (n) – 1. the branch of government invested with the judicial power. 2. the system of courts in a country (also *Judicial system*). 3. the body of Judges.
43. **juror** (n) – member of a jury.
44. **jury** (n) – specific number of people (usually six or twelve), selected as prescribed by law to render a decision (**verdict**) in a trial.
45. **justice** (n) – 1. proper administration of laws.
46. **knight** (n) (GB) – in English law, the next personal dignity after the nobility, having several orders and degrees.
47. **law** (n) – 1. a rule of conduct formally recognized as binding or enforced by authority. 2. the whole body of such rules.
48. **lawsuit** (n) – a noncriminal case in a court of law
49. **lawyer** (n) – a person licensed to practice law.
50. **legal** (adj) – 1. recognized and permitted by law. -*Aid*- the system of payments from public funds to those who cannot afford legal advice or representation.
51. **legislate** (v) – to enact laws or pass resolutions via legislation, in contrast to court-made laws.
52. **legislative** (adj) (**branch**) – the law-making branch of government; it is in charge of making new laws. The legislative authority the King-in-Parliament has three separate elements: the Monarch, the House of Lords and the House of Commons.
53. **magistrate** (n) – 1. (Br.) an inferior judicial officer, such as Justice of the Peace.
54. **majority** (n) – the number (of votes) greater than half of any total.
55. **manifesto** (n) (**of a party**) – public declaration or proclamation of political or social principles.

56. **minority** (n) – the smaller number (of votes).
57. **monarchy** (n) – a government in which the supreme power is vested in a single person.
58. **offence** (n) (US offense) – an illegal act or omission punishable under criminal law.
59. **pass** (v) (a bill, law) – to enact or to sanction the adaptation by the majority of votes.
60. **peer** (n) (GB) – (~ *of the realm*) – a person with the right to sit in the House of Lords. *Life* ~ – a person elected to the House of Lords for life (contrasted with a *hereditary* ~).
61. **poll** (v) – 1. to vote at an election. 2. receive a certain number of votes.
~*ing-booth* (station) – place where voters go to record votes.
62. **preside** (v) – to exercise guidance, authority or control over.
63. **property** (n) – 1. possessions, things owned. 2. the unrestricted and exclusive right to a thing.
– *personal* ~ – movable belongings.
– *private* ~ – property belonging absolutely to an individual of which he has the exclusive right of disposition.
– *real* ~ – land; buildings (or whatever is erected or growing upon or affixed to land).
64. **proportional representation** (n) – an electoral system that awards legislative seats to political parties in proportion to the number of votes won in an election.
65. **prosecution** (n) – 1. act of pursuing a lawsuit or criminal trial. 2. the party that initiates a criminal case.
66. **punish** (v) – to impose a penalty on (an offender) or for (an offense).
67. **reading** (n) – an act of formally reading of a bill that constitutes any of the three successive stages of approval by a legislature.
68. **realia** (pl. n) – textual documents and other media such as films, video, sound recordings, illustrations, maps as well as museum objects. Objects of realia

preserve diverse and compound nature. One must consider how the element of realia relates to the source culture.

69. **referendum** (n) – an election on a policy issue.
70. **reign** (v) – to hold office as head of state, although possessing little governing power.
71. **representative government** (n) – (also called **indirect** democracy) – a system of rule in which citizens participate by electing public officials to make government decisions for them.
72. **resign** (v) (from) – to give up a post.
73. **Shadow Cabinet** (n) (GB) – group formed from the leaders of the Parliamentary Opposition, i.e. those who might form a new cabinet if there is a change of government after a general election.
74. **shelve** (v) (a draft) – to remove from active service, to put off or aside.
75. **sovereign** (n) – 1. a chief ruler with supreme power. 2. a king or other ruler in a monarchy.
76. **standing committee** (n) – a permanent parliamentary committee that specializes in a particular legislative area.
77. **suit** (n) – any court proceeding in which an individual seeks a decision.
78. **tax** (n) – a charge by the government on the income of an individual, corporation, or on the value of an estate or gift or property.
– *tax evasion*
79. **term of office** (n) – the period during which elected officer or appointee is entitled to hold office, perform its functions and enjoy its privileges.
80. **trial** (n) – the presentation of evidence in court to a trier of facts who applies the applicable law to those facts and then decides the case.
81. **tribunal** (n) – a court dealing with professional standards, disputes between individuals and government departments (e.g., over taxation).
82. **veto** (n) – the monarch's disapproval of a bill that has been passed by both Houses of Parliament
83. **violate** (v) – to break (a law, a treaty, an oath, etc.).

84. **vote** (n) – right to give an expression of opinion or will by persons for or against sb. or sth., esp. by ballot or by putting up of hands.

85. **welfare state** (n) – a system that allows the government of a country to provide social services such as healthcare, unemployment benefits, etc. to people who need them, paid for by taxes. In a welfare state the government is responsible for the individual and social welfare of its citizens.

86. **will** (n) – a written legal declaration of the manner in which sb. would have his/her property disposed of after his/her death.

87. **witness** (n) – a person who testifies to what he has seen, heard or otherwise observed; a person whose declaration or affirmation under oath is received as evidence for any purpose.

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Навчальне видання

ІНСТИТУЦІЇ ВЛАДИ СУЧАСНОЇ БРИТАНІЇ

Методичні рекомендації
для здобувачів вищої освіти
гуманітарних спеціальностей

Упорядники:
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Англійською мовою

Надруковано в авторській редакції
з готового оригінал-макета

Формат 60x84/16. Ум. друк. арк. 4,19.
Тираж 100 прим. Зам. № 90 (15).

Видавництво і друкарня «Юридична література»
65009, м. Одеса, вул. Академічна, 7
Тел.: (048) 777-48-79; 728-75-45

Свідоцтво суб'єкта видавничої справи ДК № 4284 від 23.03.2012 р.