

МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ И НАУКИ РФ

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**GOVERNMENT IN BRITAIN:  
PEOPLE, POLITICS AND POLICY**

Учебно-методическое пособие

Рекомендовано методической комиссией Института международных отношений и мировой истории для студентов ННГУ, обучающихся по направлениям подготовки 031900 «Международные отношения», 032000 «Зарубежное регионоведение», 030200 «Политология»

Нижний Новгород  
2014

УДК 42.8 (07)  
ББК 143.21я.73  
Ж 60

Ж 60 GOVERNMENT IN BRITAIN: PEOPLE, POLITICS AND POLICY.  
Составители: Жерновая О.Р., Бузуева Ю.С., Глазунова Н.А., Ходырева Е.Б.:  
Учебно-методическое пособие. – Нижний Новгород: Нижегородский  
государственный университет, 2014. – 51 с.

Рецензент: д.п.н., профессор **М.И. Рыхтик**

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

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

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

УДК 42.8(07)  
ББК 143.21я.73

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## Введение

Учебно-методическое пособие «GOVERNMENT IN BRITAIN: PEOPLE, POLITICS AND POLICY» представляет собой тематический сборник текстов общественно-политической направленности по государственно-политической системе Великобритании.

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

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

## **DEFINING POLITICS AND POLICY**

### ***Pre-reading guesses 1***

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

1. A crisp definition of politics is impossible. ***Politics*** is a term with varied uses and nuances. ***Politics***, in its broadest sense, is the activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rule under which they live. Write down some words and phrases related to ***politics***.
2. Study the dictionary definitions of ***politics***:
  - **political affairs, especially considered as a profession or as means of winning and keeping governmental control;**  
*Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*
  - **the art and science of government;**  
*Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics*
  - **the practice of the art or science of directing and administrating states or other political units.**  
*Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics*
3. Underline the similarities and circle the differences.
4. Give your own definition of ***politics***.
5. In groups of three or four compare and contrast your notes. Discuss and report back to the class the different points of view.
6. Compare your definition with the dictionary ones.
7. Can there be societies without politics?

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

#### **I. Some useful words and expressions with *politics*:**

1. to do, read, study, teach politics
2. to talk, discuss politics
3. to enter, go into politics
4. to retire from, abandon politics
5. to be interested in, be active in, be engaged in, be involved, participate in politics
6. to dabble in politics (be involved in an activity for a short time in a way that is not serious)
7. to meddle in politics (interfere in)
8. to dominate politics (have more importance than other things )
9. to reshape politics (influence and make it develop in a particular way)
10. to play politics (act for personal or political gain rather than principle)

#### **II. Answer the following questions using active vocabulary:**

1. Is it interesting to do politics? Why?/Why not?

2. Do you find the study of politics challenging and difficult?
3. Would you rather be a political scientist or politician? Explain your point of view.
4. What scientific research are you carrying out in your chosen specialization
5. Do you like to talk politics with your family or friends? When do people more often discuss politics?
6. What makes people go into politics?
7. What may make a politician abandon politics?
8. If you were involved in politics what sphere of political interest would you get engaged in? Why so?
9. In your opinion, is it wise to participate in local politics first in order to launch a successful political career at the national level?
10. What does the term “mainstream politics” refer to?
11. What is the difference between these two expressions “to dabble in politics” and “to play politics”?
12. Is it really necessary for the head of state to stand above party politics? Why?/Why not?
13. Is it a must for a skillful politician to be good at power politics?
14. What are the main characteristics of a successful politician? Justify your point of view.

### ***Pre-reading guesses 2***

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

1. What is the difference between *politics* and *policy*?
2. Give your definition of *policy* and report back to the group your point of view.
3. Study the dictionary definitions of *policy*:
  - **a way of doing something that has been officially agreed and chosen by a political party, business, or other organization;**  
*Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics*
  - **a principle or set of ideas that you think is sensible or wise and that influences the way you behave;**  
*Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*
  - **a political line, the course of action adopted by a government, party, person, a rule of behaviour.**  
*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*
4. Comment on the statement:
  - ***It's, ultimately, difficult to distinguish the study of policy from that of politics, since there can be no politics without policy.***  
*Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics*

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

**I. Some useful words and expressions with *policy*:**

1. national, domestic, internal

2. foreign, external
3. bellicose, belligerent
4. myopic, short-sighted – ant. forward-looking
5. brinkmanship policy
6. wait-and-see policy
7. see-saw policy
8. kid-glove policy
9. big stick policy
10. gunboat policy
11. middle-of-the-road policy
12. appeasement policy
13. policy of intimidation
14. carrot-and-stick policy
15. flip-flop policy
16. open-door policy
17. policy of arm-twisting
18. give-and-take policy
19. in line/in accordance/in keeping with ... policy
20. a reversal/change/shift of policy
21. the cornerstone/keystone/central plank of policy
22. to develop, form, formulate policy
23. to frame, shape
24. to make, elaborate
25. to establish, introduce
26. to implement, carry out
27. to follow, pursue
28. to revise, review, re-examine
29. to abandon, drop
30. to prove, endorse
31. to reject
32. to condemn, attack

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

1. Who defines the main objectives of internal and external policy in Russia?
2. What issues of domestic policy do you consider most important?
3. What are the foreign policy priorities of the Russian Federation?
4. Do you agree that a shift in foreign policy can shape real events in a real world? Could you give any examples.
5. Is your country's legislation in line with international law?
6. What kind of policy do we call myopic? Could you give examples of a short-sighted policy?
7. If you were the President of a country in what case would you pursue a wait-and-see policy?

8. What situation can the policy of arm-twisting be applied to?
9. Do you think an open-door policy could solve a labour shortage problem? Why?/Why not?
10. Can an appeasement policy be effective? Justify your point of view.
11. What countries are known to implement flip-flop policy. Give some examples.
12. What kind of policy was implemented by the governments of the USSR and the USA during the Cold War? Why was it condemned?

### III. Choose *politics* or *policy*:

1. The inescapable presence of diversity and scarcity ensures that *politics/policy* is an inevitable feature of the human condition.
2. At the level of actions *politics/policy* is reflected in the behaviour of government – what government actually does.
3. To study *politics/policy* is in essence to study government, or, more broadly, to study the exercise of authority.
4. *Politics/policy* is usually thought of as a “dirty” word: it brings to mind images of trouble, disruption and even violence on the one hand, and deceit, manipulation and lies on the other.
5. *Politics/policy* is, in essence, power: the ability to achieve a desired outcome through whatever means.
6. All collective decisions result from *politics/policy* but the best *politics/policy* produces good, well-executed *politics/policy*.
7. *Politics/policy* as the profession dealing with the management of public affairs at every level, whether local, state, or national, conditions the very climate in which virtually all activity is conducted.
8. *Politics/policy* is usually seen to be made through four distinct stages: initiation, formulation, implementation, and evaluation.
9. *Politics/policy* is associated with production, distribution and use of resources in the course of social existence.
10. *Politics/policy* are almost as exciting as war, and quite as dangerous. In war, you can only be killed once, but in *politics/policy* many times (W. Churchill).

### **Pre-reading questions**

1. Have you ever seen the British TV programme “*Yes, Prime Minister*”?  
(If not see the following video episodes from this programme:  
<http://youtu.be/G5P34nJzsaY>;  
[http://youtu.be/\\_3wmRUbullM](http://youtu.be/_3wmRUbullM);  
[http://youtu.be/IX\\_d\\_vMKswE](http://youtu.be/IX_d_vMKswE);  
<http://youtu.be/WPJTrI04DSE>).
2. If you saw the programme, what impression did it produce on you?
3. Do there exist any political satire programmes on TV in your country?
4. Do you like such programmes? Why?/Why not?
5. Why are such political satire programmes popular with TV viewers?



6. Can such programmes be called a reflection of reality?
7. Do you agree that these programmes illustrate the public attitude to politicians and politics?

### **Reading 1**

**Look at the extract from a fictional diary (*The killer instinct*). It is taken from the book of *Yes, Prime Minister*, a very popular radio and television comedy of the 1980s. Like all political satire, this programme could only have been popular because people believed that it was, at least partly, a true reflection of reality. It therefore illustrates the British attitude to politicians and politics.**

#### **THE KILLER INSTINCT**

In this extract from *Yes, Prime Minister*, the Prime Minister has just resigned. There are two candidates to be the new Prime Minister, Eric Jeffries and Duncan Short, both of them ministers in the present government. Another minister, Jim Hacker, also wants the job. He has recently learnt some scandalous information about events in the pasts of the other two candidates, so now he has the opportunity to make them withdraw. Here is an extract from his diary.

I told Duncan that some information had come my way. Serious information. To do with his personal financial operations. I referred to the collapse of Continental and General.

He argued that there was nothing improper about that. I replied that technically there wasn't, but if you looked at it in conjunction with a similar case at Offshore Securities... I indicated that, if he stayed in the running for PM<sup>1</sup>, I would be obliged to share my knowledge with senior members of the party, the Fraud Squad, and so forth. The Americans would also have to know. And Her Majesty... He panicked. 'Hang on! Financial matters can be misinterpreted.' I sipped my drink and waited. It didn't take long. He said that he didn't really want Number Ten<sup>2</sup> at all. He felt that the Foreign Office was a much better job in many ways. 'But I won't support Eric!' he insisted hotly.

'How would it be if you transferred all your support to someone else?' I suggested.

Duncan looked blank. 'Who?'

'Someone who recognized your qualities. Someone who'd want you to stay on as Foreign Secretary. Someone who would be discreet about Continental and General. Someone you trust.

Gradually, I saw it dawning upon him. 'Do you mean – you?' he asked.

I pretended surprise. 'Me? I have absolutely no ambitions in that direction.' 'You *do* mean you,' he observed quietly. He knows the code.

I told Eric what I knew. He went pale. 'But you said you were going to help me get elected Prime Minister.'

I pointed out that my offer to help him was before my knowledge of the shady lady from Argentina. And others. 'Look, Eric, as party Chairman I have my duty. It

would be a disaster for the party if you were PM and it came out. I mean, I wouldn't care to explain your private life to Her Majesty, would you?'

'I'll withdraw,' he muttered.

I told him reassuringly that I would say no more about it. To anyone. He thanked me nastily and snarled that he supposed that bloody Duncan would now get Number Ten.

'Not if I can help it,' I told him.

'Who then?'

I raised my glass to him, smiled and said, 'Cheers.'

The penny dropped<sup>3</sup>. So did his lower jaw. 'You don't mean — you?'

Again I put on my surprised face. 'Me?' I said innocently. 'Our children are approaching the age when Annie and I are thinking of spending much more time with each other.'

He understood perfectly. 'You *do* mean you.'

**Adapted from *Yes, Prime Minister* by Jonathan Lynn and Antony Jay**

<sup>1</sup>PM is short for 'Prime Minister'.

<sup>2</sup>Number Ten Downing Street is where the Prime Minister lives.

<sup>3</sup> He finally understood (that Hacker intended to be PM).

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

1. How many candidates claimed the office of Prime Minister?
2. Who were they?
3. What hot news did Jim Hacker learn about Duncan Short?
4. How did Jim blackmail Duncan Short?
5. Was Duncan Short made to withdraw from running for Prime Minister?
6. Why did Duncan Short agree to stop his election campaign?
7. What news did Jim Hacker break to Eric Jeffries?
8. What did Jim Hacker promise Eric Jeffries not to do?
9. How did Eric Jeffries understand that Jim Hacker was going to run for Prime Minister?
10. Did Jim Hacker confess that he intended to become Prime Minister?

### ***Talking point***

1. What can you say about the election campaign in Great Britain following this extract?
2. Why do politicians always try to find any compromising against each other?
3. What are the qualifications for someone running for leadership?
4. Who are some of your most popular leaders? What personal qualities do they have?
5. How can you characterize the last election campaigns in Great Britain and in Russia? Do they have anything in common?

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

**Read the following article from *The New York Times* and express your own opinion on it. Are you of the same opinion with its author or not?**

### **MAKING A LITTLE FUN OF RUSSIA'S POWERFUL**

It is not, from a purely technical standpoint, impossible to make fun of Vladimir V. Putin. His head is shaped a bit like a light bulb, with eyes that are heavy-lidded, as if to convey that he has just been reading your dossier. He has a needle nose, a prizefighter's swagger and a fondness for posing shirtless. If all else fails, there is always the matter of height.

But caricatures of the Russian prime minister long ago vanished from state-controlled television. Ten years ago, the creators of the show "Kukly" came under such pressure from the Kremlin to retire their grotesque puppet of Mr. Putin that they responded, rather sardonically, by depicting him as a burning bush. The show was eventually canceled, and caution has prevailed since then. A talk show, "Real Politics," included Mr. Putin in cartoons, but he was seen only from the neck down. So it came as a surprise on Friday morning a few minutes after midnight when 3-D animations of Prime Minister Putin and President Dmitri A. Medvedev appeared on a New Year's special on Channel One, Russia's leading channel. The two figures performed a soft-shoe on Red Square, singing slightly raunchy doggerel about gas pipelines and Ukrainian debt. Hardly shocking stuff, except for this: Mr. Putin's and Mr. Medvedev's figures are being added to the regular cast of "Mult Lichnosti," a biweekly show lampooning public figures, according to Konstantin L. Ernst, the channel's director.

Gleb O. Pavlovsky, a political consultant who advises the Kremlin, said "the ability to joke is appearing" after a long pause that he attributed mostly to fear. "So far, there is a very careful selection of targets," said Mr. Pavlovsky, who hosted "Real Politics" for three years. "But I think nothing frightening will happen if that selection is lifted. Of course, it cannot happen overnight, because there is still a sense that the president should be above the fray, at a higher level, a level where he cannot be hit by a rotten apple."

Mr. Ernst said he was exploring a sharper-edged humor because younger viewers demanded it. One of the channel's recent success stories is "Projector Paris Hilton," in which four comedians riff ironically on current events, à la Jon Stewart. He said he was not obliged to consult with the Kremlin while developing animations of Mr. Putin and Mr. Medvedev, but allowed that "we have to be careful."

"One shouldn't do anything insulting," he said. "You can insult someone in show business, because a person like that is selling himself, and does not answer for anything else. Whereas the president and prime minister also represent the work they do. When you insult one of them, you insult many things at once. In any case, our authors have no desire to insult them." He added, "There are some jokes that are unpleasant, but don't injure your heart."

But critics of the government say there is no sign that political satire will be allowed to return to Russia's airwaves, which have become squarely supportive of the nation's leaders.

The first three episodes of "Mult Lichnosti" (the name translates as "cartoon personalities" but is a play on the Russian for "cult of personality") dole out their harshest treatment to safe targets: pop stars and politicians out of favor with the Kremlin.

President Viktor A. Yushchenko of Ukraine is shown in a wheat field, idly inflating balloons with Russian natural gas diverted from a pipeline. President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia lustily consumes his own tie. President Aleksandr Lukashenko of Belarus sits in a wooden hut, so aching for a call from Moscow that he pays an impersonator to mimic Mr. Putin's voice.

American leaders are there too: President Obama, perpetually dribbling a basketball, and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, mooning over Russia's foreign minister like a lovesick schoolgirl. Only Russia's leaders, it seems, are immune.

Until they come in for equal ridicule, this is not satire, said Viktor A. Shenderovich, who wrote scripts for "Kukly" and has since become an opposition activist. He recalled an old joke: An American and a Soviet are debating free speech. The American boasts that he can go to the White House and yell "Reagan is an idiot" with no consequences. The Soviet proudly says that he is equally free to go to Red Square and yell "Reagan is an idiot."

"A satirist is someone who criticizes the authorities," Mr. Shenderovich said. "So Jon Stewart criticized Bush, and now he criticizes Obama. Because regardless of where his sympathies lie, that's where the power is. And on this show there is no Kadyrov, no Putin, no Medvedev." Ramzan A. Kadyrov is president of the Russian republic of Chechnya.

"It's a simulation," Mr. Shenderovich said, "and a simulation of satire might be worse than an absence of satire."

It is unclear whether the ruling tandem will face real mockery on future episodes of "Mult Lichnosti." But close observers of Russian television – and some inside it – say the boundaries of televised humor do seem to be expanding, if slowly. Arina Borodina, who covers television for the newspaper Kommersant, said she was struck by recent episodes of "Projector Paris Hilton" in which the hosts "carefully, and I stress carefully," made fun of such things as the emblem of the Sochi Olympics and Mr. Putin's four-hour televised question-and-answer session. That edgy humor, rare on television, paid off last year, vaulting the show into the 20 most popular, she said.

Vladimir V. Pozner, who hosts a political talk show on Channel One, described the change as "much slower than a turtle." But he said executives were under pressure to engage a younger and more sophisticated audience.

"They're sick and tired of pap; they want something they can sink their teeth into," he said. "There's been some change, I know that. You can feel it."

Mr. Pozner himself appears on “Mult Lichnosti”; his character occasionally plants his face on his own desk, having put himself to sleep with his stories about the old days. He said he believed that the channel had been “given the green light” to lampoon Mr. Putin and Mr. Medvedev — but, green light notwithstanding, there is, he said, no way to guarantee that they will not take offense.

“The minute you start making fun of someone, it may rub someone the wrong way,” he said. “If I had a different disposition, I might be angry. There’s always that danger. It depends a lot on the guy — when he got up this morning, was he in a bad mood or a good mood?”

**ELLEN BARRY, January, 2010, The New York Times**

### ***Reading 3***

**Read the text and compare public attitudes to politics and politicians in Great Britain and in your country. Find the statements you agree or disagree with.**

#### **THE PUBLIC ATTITUDE TO POLITICS IN GREAT BRITAIN**

Politicians in Britain do not have a good reputation. To describe someone who is not a professional politician as 'a politician' is to criticize him or her, suggesting a lack of trustworthiness. It is not that people hate their politicians. They just regard them with a high degree of suspicion. They do not expect them to be corrupt or to use their position to amass personal wealth, but they do expect them to be frequently dishonest. People are not really shocked when the government is caught lying. On the other hand, they would be very shocked indeed if it was discovered that the government was doing anything actually illegal. A scandal such as the Watergate affair in the USA in the early 1970s would endanger the stability of the whole of political life.

At an earlier point in the 'diary', Jim Hacker is wondering why the Prime Minister has resigned. He does not believe the rumour that 1 million worth of diamonds have been found in the Prime Minister's house. This is partly, no doubt, because he does not think the Prime Minister could be so corrupt but it is also because 'it's never been officially denied. The first rule of politics is **‘Never Believe Anything Until It's Been Officially Denied’**. This is the basis of the joke in the two conversations in the extract. Duncan and Eric are only sure that Jim wants to be Prime Minister after he implies that he doesn't!

The lack of enthusiasm for politicians may be seen in the fact that surveys have shown a general ignorance of who they are. More than half of the adults in Britain do not know the name of their local Member of Parliament (MP), even though there is just one of these for each area, and quite a high proportion do not even know the names of the important government ministers or leaders of the major political parties.

The British were not always so unenthusiastic. In centuries past, it was a maxim of gentlemen's clubs that nobody should mention politics or religion in a polite conversation. If anybody did, there was a danger that the conversation would become too heated, people would become bad-tempered and perhaps violent.

However, there has been no real possibility of a revolution or even of a radical change in the style of government for almost two centuries now. This stability is now generally taken for granted. Most people rarely see any reason to become passionate about politics and nobody regards it as a 'dangerous' topic of conversation. They are more likely to regard it as a boring topic of conversation! However, this lack of enthusiasm is not the same as complete disenchantment. Three-quarters of the adult population are interested enough in politics to vote at national elections, even though voting is not compulsory. There is a general feeling of confidence in the stability and workability of the system.

*Yes, Prime Minister* is just one of many programmes and publications devoted to political satire. All of them are consistently and biting critical. Moreover, their criticism is typically not about particular policies but is directed at the attitudes of politicians, their alleged dishonesty and disloyalty, and at the general style of political life. Given this, you might think that people would be very angry, that there would be loud demands that the system be cleaned up, even public demonstrations. Not at all! The last demonstrations about such matters took place 150 years ago. You might also think that the politicians themselves would be worried about the negative picture that these satires paint of them. Far from it! On the back cover of the 1989 edition of *Yes, Prime Minister* there is a tribute - from Margaret Thatcher, the real Prime Minister of the country throughout the 1980s. In it, she refers to the book's "*closely observed portrayal of what goes on in the corridors of power*" (suggesting it is accurate) and how this portrayal has given her 'hours of pure joy'.

In Britain it is generally accepted that politics is a dirty business, a necessary evil. Therefore, politicians make sure that they do not appear too keen to do the job. They see themselves as being politicians out of a sense of public duty. That is why, in the extract, Jim Hacker does not admit that he actually wants to be Prime Minister. Eric and Duncan, and Jim himself, all know and accept that to be the Prime Minister is the ultimate goal of most politicians. But for Jim Hacker to admit this openly, even in a private conversation, would make him seem dangerously keen on power for its own sake.

### ***Word Study***

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

1. trustworthiness
2. corrupt
3. illegal
4. to endanger
5. to resign
6. to imply
7. disenchantment
8. compulsory
9. ultimate

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

1. to regard smb. with a high degree of suspicion
2. to amass personal wealth
3. to endanger the stability
4. to show a general ignorance of smb./smth.
5. to be taken for granted
6. to have alleged dishonesty and disloyalty
7. to be keen on power for its own sake

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

1. In what sense could the British attitude to politics be described as 'happily cynical'?
2. Why do the British people regard their politicians with a high degree of suspicion?
3. Do the British expect their politicians to be corrupt and dishonest?
4. What is the first rule of politics in Great Britain and how do you understand it?
5. What fact proves that the British show a general ignorance of who their politicians are?
6. Have the British people always been so unenthusiastic about politics and politicians?
7. Why do most British people rarely see any reason to become passionate about politics?
8. What is people's criticism of politics usually directed at? Why?
9. How is politics generally accepted in Great Britain?
10. What is the ultimate goal of most politicians in Great Britain?

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

#### **I. Some useful words and expressions connected with corruption in politics:**

1. political corruption (the misuse of governmental power for illegitimate, usually secret, private advantage)
2. political sleaze (dishonesty and corruption)
3. to be susceptible to (likely to be affected by a particular problem) political corruption
4. a corruptible, bribable, buyable, crooked (inf.) politician
5. money-grabbing (extremely interested in getting money)
6. a bribe-taker
7. bribery (a crime of giving a benefit (money) in order to influence the conduct of a person in a position of trust)
8. extortion (a criminal offence that occurs when a person obtains money or property from another through coercion or intimidation)
9. patronage (the power of a government official to make appointments and offer favors: cronyism - the practice of giving jobs to friends; nepotism - the practice of giving jobs to relatives and family members)

10. blackmail (a criminal offence that occurs when a person obtains money or property from another by threatening another's reputation with the disclosure of incriminating statements that are true or false about him/her)
11. fraud (a deception made for personal gain)
12. embezzlement (a fraudulent appropriation of property by a person to whom it has been entrusted)
13. influence peddling (the practice of using one's influence in government or connection with persons in authority to obtain favors for another, usually in return for payment)
14. money laundering (the process whereby the origin of dishonest and illegally obtained money is concealed so that it appears to come from a legitimate source)
15. to root out, eradicate, stamp out, combat, tackle corruption

## II. Answer the following questions using active vocabulary:

1. Why are politicians susceptible to political corruption?
2. Comment on the following: "It is said that power corrupts, but actually it's more true that power attracts the corruptible. The sane are usually attracted by other things than power" (D. Brin).
3. What makes government officials buyable and money-grabbing?
4. If a politician is caught taking a bribe what consequences can it lead to?
5. Comment on the following: "I have often noticed that a bribe has that effect – it changes a relation. The man who offers a bribe gives away a tittle of his own importance; the bribe once accepted, he becomes the inferior, like a man who has paid for a woman" (G.Green).
6. Why are government officials interested in giving jobs to their friends and relatives? Is it a vicious practice? Can it be considered a serious offence?
7. What was Russian tycoon Berezovsky accused of by the Russian government?
8. Is it likely to eradicate political sleaze? Why?/Why not?
9. Why is it difficult to tackle corruption in all walks of life?
10. Comment on the following: "Corruption has never been compulsory" (A.Eden).

### ***Reading 4 (Additional)***

#### **BRITISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES SURVEY:**

#### **TRUST IN POLITICS HITS NEW LOW OVER MPS' EXPENSES SCANDAL**

*Trust in politics has hit at all time low in the wake of the MPs expenses scandal as Britain adopts a "straightforwardly cynical" attitude towards the workings of government.*

A major report published today found four in 10 people no longer trusted politicians to put the national interest first and the majority of voters believed MPs never told the truth.



The study – charting social attitudes over the last three decades – found that mistrust in politics was now four times higher than it was in the mid-80s.

Researchers insisted confidence in the political system had never been particularly high but the MPs' expenses scandal appeared to have “helped erode trust yet further”.

The disclosure will be seen as a damning verdict on public perceptions of the workings of government in the wake of The Daily Telegraph's investigation into MPs' expenses.

We told how dozens of politicians exploited the system of parliamentary allowances to fund their lifestyles and – in some cases – avoid tax.

Earlier this month, David Chaytor, the former Labour MP, pleaded guilty to three charges of fraud after misusing £20,000 of “second home” and office allowances – and claiming almost £13,000 for a London flat he already owned.

The former member for Bury North could face up to seven years in jail after becoming the first MP to face a criminal trial as a result of the Telegraph's investigation.

In today's study, researchers said “perhaps the biggest problem” for the current government was how to lead Britain away from recession, despite massive loss in confidence towards politics and the banking system, which has also been badly hit in the wake of the economic downturn.

“These findings might lead one to suggest that a public that has long had its doubts about the trustworthiness of its political class is now on the verge of being straightforwardly cynical in its attitude towards government and politicians,” the study said.

Four in 10 people “almost never” trust governments of any party to put the national interest first, up from the previous all time high of 34 per cent, according to research.

And the banking crisis has resulted in a “catastrophic falling away in public confidence in the banks”. In 1983, 90 per cent of people believed banks were well run but this plummeted to just 19 per cent last year.

**13 December 2010, the Daily Telegraph**

### **PUBLIC ATTITUDE TOWARDS POLITICS WORSENING, SAYS HANSARD SURVEY**

The public are “disgruntled, disillusioned and disengaged” with politics, according to an annual survey by the Hansard Society.

Only 9% of the Brits trust politicians either a great deal or a lot, compared to 58% who trust the police the same amount. One in five of them trusts governments of any party all or most of the time.

Interviews with 1,163 people found that only 42% were interested in politics – down from 58% last year and the lowest since the survey began nine years ago.

Meanwhile, coalition government becoming a reality has not led to fondness – the amount of people who think a coalition government is best for Britain is down from

40% in 2010 to 28% - and much lower than is high of 50% in 1995. Meanwhile, only 27% want to change the voting system, down from 41% in 2010 and the lowest score since 1983.

The political engagement audit is carried out annually by Hansard.

The society said "the public's growing sense of indifference to politics" had "hardened into something more serious".

The survey found that:

- 42% of people said they were interested in politics – down 16% on 2010 and the lowest figure since the audit was first carried out;
- 48% of people said they would definitely vote if a general election was called tomorrow – down 10% from last year and again, the lowest figure in the audit's history;
- 30% said they were unlikely or absolutely certain not to vote – up 10% from 2010;
- 24% of people believe the current system of coalition government is working "reasonably well" – a fall of 7%;
- 56% agree their involvement in politics locally could bring about change, but only 38% actually want to be involved.

The audit also uncovered variations in attitudes according to political party allegiance.

While just 29% of Liberal Democrat supporters thought the coalition was working well - down 4% from last year – 56% of Conservatives were happy with it, a rise of 10%.

Dr Ruth Fox, director of the Hansard Society's parliament and government programme, said: "2011 was one of the most turbulent and momentous years in recent history, but it appears that the economic crisis, the summer riots and phone hacking did not lead to any greater interest in or knowledge of politics.

"The public seem to be disgruntled, disillusioned and disengaged. Thus far, coalition politics does not appear to have been good for public engagement.

"Worryingly, only a quarter of the population are satisfied with our system of governing, which must raise questions about the long-term capacity of that system to command public support and confidence in the future."

**25 April 2012, the BBC**

### ***Talking point***

1. Are Russian people cynical to politics and politicians? Do they trust them?
2. Do Russian people regard their politicians with a high degree of suspicion, either?
3. Do you agree that most people enter politics only to amass personal wealth?
4. What are the reasons for going into politics? If you went into politics what would your main reason be?
5. Do you know the names of your local deputies?
6. Have you already taken part in voting at national or local elections?

7. Are people of Russia enthusiastic or unenthusiastic about politics and politicians? Give reasons for your opinion.
8. Why has politics always been considered “a dirty business” and “a necessary evil”? Justify your opinion.
9. Do you agree that the ultimate goal of any politician is to become the head of state?
10. Do you have a feeling of confidence in the stability and workability of the governmental system in Russia today? Why?/Why not?

***Comment on the following statements***

1. Politics is not an exact science...but an art.
2. A week is a long time in politics.
3. Politics is not the art of the possible. It consists in choosing between the disastrous and the unpalatable.
4. If you want to know what a man is, place him in authority.
5. Politicians put themselves first, their party second and their country last.
6. Politicians are marvels of energy and principle when they are out of office, but when they get in, they simply run behind the machine.
7. The political machine works because it is a united minority acting against a divided majority.
8. Just because you do not take an interest in politics doesn't mean that politics won't take an interest in you.

## Political culture in Britain

### Part 1

#### *Pre-reading guesses*

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

1. ***Political culture*** encompasses both the political ideals and operating norms of a polity. Political culture is thus the manifestation form of the psychological and subjective dimensions of politics. A ***political culture*** is the product of both the collective history of a political system and the life histories of the members of the system and thus it is rooted equally in public events and private experience
2. Study the dictionary definitions of *political culture*:
  - **the set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behaviour in the political system**  
*The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*
  - **the attitudes, beliefs, and values which underpin the operation of a particular political system**  
*Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics*
  - **Political culture is the political psychology of a country or nation. Political culture studies attempt to uncover deep-seated, long-held values characteristic of a society or group rather than ephemeral attitudes toward specific issues that might be gathered through public-opinion surveys**  
*Encyclopedia Britannica*
  - **Political culture is a particular pattern of orientations to political action', a 'set of meanings and purposes' within which every political system is embedded. Political culture therefore refers to the beliefs, values and expressive symbols (the 'flag', the monarchy, and so on) that comprise the emotional and attitudinal context of political activity**  
*The Blackwell Dictionary of Modern Social Thought*
3. Underline the similarities and circle the differences.
4. Suggest your own definition of *political culture*.

#### ***Pronunciation***

Mind the pronunciation and the stress of the following words:

1. to model
2. experience
3. parliamentary
4. elite
5. compliance

6. conformity
7. acquiescence
8. continuity
9. dissent
10. doctrine
11. consequences

### ***Pre-reading questions***

1. What makes Britain unique as a democratic state?
2. What do you know about British democracy?
3. How can you characterise the British political life?

### ***Reading 1***

#### **POLITICAL CULTURE IN BRITAIN (PART I)**

Britain has a long history of independent existence as a more or less united nation. It has a strong commitment to democracy, with its representative institutions of government, based on regular and free elections, in addition to strong liberal values about individual rights and responsibilities. It was the first parliamentary democracy in Europe, so that many of the other countries modelled their institutions, party system and methods on the British experience. In particular, the Westminster model was exported to many of the colonies and territories of the old Empire, when countries became independent.

The British have traditionally preferred to use parliamentary channels rather than the anti-parliamentary politics of street demonstrations, direct action and terrorist violence. People generally accept the main institutions of state and the idea that issues should be resolved through the ballot box and not by the bullet and the bomb, even if at various times individuals and groups in parts of Ireland have not subscribed to that preference. People have been willing to place trust in the political elite that rules them, so that social deference (respect for or compliance with the wishes of those in authority) has often been mentioned as a source of British conformity and acquiescence in the status quo.

Continuity is another key element in British political life. It affects not just the hereditary monarchy and the House of Lords, which until 1999 had a large hereditary element, but other institutions that also have a long history. The country has not been a prey to the internal turmoil, revolutionary dissent or occupation by a foreign power which many of our continental neighbours have experienced. Relatively free from upheaval, the British have enjoyed a stable political system, in which the past presses heavily on the present practice. Evolutionary rather than revolutionary change has been preferred. The British have a preference for pragmatism over ideology and doctrine. As the country lacks a written constitution, ideas and institutions relating to government evolved over the years, being modified as change becomes desirable or necessary. When politicians do suggest something which is very different to what voters are used to, such proposals are regarded with suspicion. Constitutional and

parliamentary reformers invariably find that many individuals and groups are resistant to new thinking.

Britain's island position has affected its attitudes, with important historical, economic and political consequences. The sea has helped to protect the country from invasion, but has also strengthened the development of the common language and national identity. It has made people reluctant to throw in their lot with the European Community/Union, for Britain is separated from the continent by geography, language and culture. In many respects it has stronger bonds with the United States, with ties of historical development, defence interests, language and entertainment. To the island Britain, trade was always important and a spur to colonial expansion – it developed a British Empire, now the Commonwealth, so that in foreign policy it has links with Europe (since joining the Community in 1973), the Commonwealth and the USA.

### ***Word study***

#### **I. Find words in the text which correspond to the following:**

1. a willingness to give your time and energy to something that you believe in, or a promise or firm decision to do something
2. respect and politeness
3. the act of obeying an order, rule, or request
4. behaviour that follows the usual standards that are expected by a group or society
5. willing to do what other people want
6. the fact of something continuing for a long period of time without being changed or stopped
7. to be hurt or deceived by someone or something bad
8. a state of confusion, uncertainty, or disorder
9. strong difference of opinion on a particular subject, especially about an official suggestion or plan or a popular belief
10. a great change, especially causing or involving much difficulty, activity, or trouble
11. the quality of dealing with a problem in a sensible way that suits the conditions that really exist, rather than following fixed theories, ideas, or rules
12. who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group that make them different from others
13. something that acts as an encouragement for an activity or development

#### **II. Find in the text antonyms for the following words:**

1. authoritarian
2. conservative
3. disobedience
4. unwanted
5. compliant

6. disinclined

**III. Make up the Adjective/Participle collocations as used in the text and suggest their translation into Russian:**

a. Social	Existence
b. Independent	Deference
c. Parliamentary	Elite
d. United	Democracy
e. Liberal	Rights
f. Internal	Nation
g. Political	Values
h. Evolutionary	Turmoil
i. Strong	Dissent
j. Individual	Change
k. Revolutionary	Reformers
l. Economic	Commitment
m. Constitutional	Consequences

**IV. Translate the following word combinations into Russian and recall how they were used in the text:**

1. to model something on
2. to resolve through the ballot box
3. to subscribe to a preference
4. to be a prey to
5. to be free from upheaval
6. to have a preference for something over something else
7. to evolve over the years
8. to be regarded with suspicion
9. to be resistant to new thinking
10. to be a spur to something

***After-reading questions***

1. What characterises Britain as a united nation?
2. What importance is attached to the fact that Britain was the first constitutional democracy in Europe?
3. Why do the British prefer parliamentary channels rather than demonstrations, direct action and violence?
4. What is a source of British conformity and acquiescence?
5. What is another key element in British political life?
6. Why does Britain have a stable political system?
7. How do voters treat constitutional and parliamentary reformers? Why?
8. What role does the island position of Britain play in shaping the British?
9. Why does Britain have stronger ties with the USA?

10. What role did the trade play in the development of the British Empire?

### ***Skimming***

**Agree or disagree with the following statements using the expressions of agreement/disagreement:**

*I can't agree more; I totally/fully/absolutely agree; I agree with...entirely; I'd go along with that; That's not entirely true; It's unjustifiable to say that; On the contrary; Far from so, etc.*

1. Many other countries modelled their government structure on the British experience
2. The British have traditionally preferred street demonstrations, direct action and terrorist violence to using parliamentary channels
3. A source of British conformity and acquiescence is social deference
4. Britain has been a prey to the internal turmoil, revolutionary dissent and occupation by foreign power
5. Constitutional and parliamentary reformers invariably find that many individuals are not compliant with new thinking
6. Trade was a spur to colonial expansion and contributed to the development of the British Empire

## **Part 2**

### ***Pre-reading guesses***

1. From your point of view, what characterises the British political system?
2. Do you think the British democracy can be called stable? Why/why not?
3. What attitude do the British people have to politicians in comparison with Russia?

### ***Pronunciation***

**Pay attention to the pronunciation and the stress of the following words:**

1. procedural
2. legitimate
3. to emphasise
4. surveillance
5. resilient
6. discontent
7. to defy
8. ambivalent



## ***Reading 2***

### **POLITICAL CULTURE IN BRITAIN (PART II)**

Political unity, stability and a tradition of independence have long been regarded as characteristics of the British political system. So too has consensus – the preference for agreement, cooperation and moderation. The majority of British people have long preferred cooperation to confrontation and party politicians, once in office, have acknowledged this and for much of the time avoided confrontationalism. A political consensus prevailed in the post-war era through to the late 1970s, but the procedural consensus – broad agreement about the means of conducting political debate – has a much longer history.

British governments usually command a parliamentary majority following their election victory. This provides them with a legitimate right to govern. The British appear to favour strong government by leaders of united parties and often punish divided parties at election time. Defenders of the First Past the Post electoral system have traditionally emphasised the importance of effective and stable government by a single party, in preference to any notions of fairness to small parties. Other than after a result which has been particularly distorted and harsh on the Liberals or some other third party, there has been until relatively recently little demand for change in the way we elect our MPs.

Many people like to be led by politicians who know what they are doing and who lead parties which are broadly in agreement about what needs to be done and the manner and timing of doing it. Leaders such as Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair have both been seen as 'strong leaders', prepared to ignore the dissident voices of some of their backbenchers and even carry out unpopular social policies. In both cases, too, they have relished the role of war leader and statesperson on the global stage. Such has been the power of British administrations in the post-war era that writers have claimed we have an 'elective dictatorship'. British government has a reputation among commentators for being powerful and centralised, so that opposition in the House of Commons can be ignored – particularly if the majority is a large one. Ministers can use the government majority to push through fundamental changes in British life, if it is their will so to do.

Yet alongside the preference for strong government, there is also an attitude of tolerance towards the expression of alternative and minority opinions, with a clear recognition of the right – duty – of the Opposition to oppose. The existence of an official Opposition party in the House symbolises a commitment to free speech and the rights of personal liberty. Individual freedom is a much-cherished value. Whenever suggestions are made which appear to make an inroad into that attachment, there tends to be an outcry that is not just confined to civil libertarians. In a more dangerous age, people have had to get used to more security checks at airports, but issues such as alleged tapping of telephones, proposals for greater police surveillance, speed cameras to control the way we drive, the abandonment of juries in some court trials and the possible introduction of ID cards cause such resentment, if not actual resistance. British people do not like having to prove who they are and the idea of

carrying 'papers' goes 'against the grain'. Neither do they like unnecessary regulations which deny them access or tell how something should be done.

In spite of the growth of a less deferential, more questioning attitude and a willingness on occasion to resort to direct action, there is still no great desire on the part of the majority for radical change. There remains a broad – if declining – acceptance of the institutions of government and a preference for democratic methods. Madgwick has described the way in which 'the British people stumble on, resilient, tolerant, hopeful, confused, but with a remarkable capacity for putting up with discontent for fear of worse, and defying the political scientists to penetrate the secret of the ambivalent political attitudes which have sustained their stable democracy'.

### ***Word study***

#### **I. Find the words in the text which mean the following:**

1. the quality of doing something within reasonable limits
2. to be common among a group of people or area at a particular time
3. allowed by law
4. to change something from its usual, original, natural, or intended
5. meaning, condition, or shape
6. a person who publicly disagrees with and criticizes their government
7. to like or enjoy something
8. to intentionally not listen or give attention to
9. to cause a plan or suggestion to be officially accepted or put into use
10. a strong expression of anger and disapproval about something, made by a
11. group of people or by the public
12. a person who believes that people should be free to think and behave as
13. they want and should not have limits put on them by governments
14. the feeling of anger because you have been forced to accept someone or
15. something that you do not like
16. the act of fighting against something that is attacking you, or refusing to
17. accept something
18. able to quickly return to a previous good condition
19. to tell someone to do something that you think will be impossible
20. having two opposing feelings at the same time, or being uncertain about
21. how you feel

#### **II. Find synonyms for the following words from the text:**

1. to abstain
2. to control
3. to prefer
4. to discount
5. cardinal
6. to refuse

7. respectful
8. waning
9. unbigoted
10. disoriented

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

1. What characterises the British political system?
2. Why do British politicians try to avoid confrontationalism?
3. Why do the British favour strong governments?
4. What politicians are preferred by many people and why?
5. What reputation does the British government have among commentators?
6. Why is the Opposition party important?
7. What value is much cherished by the British?
8. What causes much resentment among British people?
9. Does there remain a broad acceptance of the institutions of government and a preference for democratic methods? Why?
10. How are the British described by Madgwick?

### ***Skimming activities***

#### **I. Finish the following sentences:**

1. What have always been regarded as characteristics of the British political system are...
2. British governments are provided with a legitimate right to govern when...
3. Politicians are popular with the people when they...
4. Leaders such as Margaret Thatcher and Toni Blair have both been seen as 'strong leaders' who...
5. Opposition party in the House symbolises... because...
6. People have had to get used to... which causes much resentment because...
7. There is still no great desire on the part of the majority for radical change in spite of...
8. The British people defy the political scientists...

#### **II. Find the facts in the text that can prove the following statements:**

1. Party politicians try to avoid confrontationalism.
2. The British appear to favour strong government by leaders of united parties.
3. British government has a reputation of being powerful and centralised.
4. There is also an attitude of tolerance towards the expression of alternative and minority opinions.
5. Though in a more dangerous age people have to get used to more security checks the possible introduction of ID cards causes resentment.
6. There remains a broad acceptance of the institutions of government and a preference for democratic methods.
7. The British have a capacity for putting up with discontent.

### ***Talking Point***

**Compare the political culture in Great Britain and Russia taking into consideration the following:** *characteristics of the political system; the procedural consensus; the role of the state leader; the expression of alternative and minority opinions; strengthening of security and identification measures; readiness to resort to direct action.*

### ***Writing***

**Write a short essay where you compare the political cultures of these two countries.**

## DEMOCRACY. THE BRITISH STYLE OF DEMOCRACY

### *Pre-reading guesses*

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

1. What words and phrases are related to “*democracy*”?
2. Study the dictionary definitions of democracy:
  - **government by the people, or by elected representatives of the people;**  
*Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture*
  - **government by the people, exercised either directly or through elected representatives;**  
*American Heritage Dictionary*
  - **a system of government in which power is vested in the people, who rule either directly or through freely elected representatives;**  
*American Heritage New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Third Edition*
  - **a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections.**  
*Meriam Webster's Dictionary of Law*
3. Underline the similarities and circle the differences.
4. Give your own definition of “**democracy**”.
5. In groups of three or four compare and contrast your notes. Report back to
6. the class different points of view.
7. Compare your definition with the dictionary ones.
8. What role does democracy play in the modern world?

### *Vocabulary in use*

#### **I. Some useful words and expressions with *democracy*:**

1. to form, establish, build democracy
2. to reach, increase, achieve democracy
3. to practice, maintain, strengthen democracy
4. to promote, spread democracy
5. genuine, true, consolidated, developed, meaningful democracy
6. constitutional, parliamentary, multiparty democracy
7. fledgling, fragile, infant, immature, democracy

#### **II. Answer the following questions using active vocabulary:**

1. What steps should be made to build democracy?
2. Is it easy to increase democracy?
3. Is democracy effectively maintained in the Russian Federation?

4. Were you a governor what would you do to promote democracy in Russia?
5. Can you give any examples of countries with genuine democracy?
6. What is understood by constitutional democracy? Think of the countries having such type of democracy.
7. Do you know any countries with parliamentary democracy? What features are typical of such states?
8. Three decades ago, less than 30% of the countries of the world were democratic. Today more than 60% have governments produced by some form of elections. Does it mean that democracy is consolidated in all these countries?
9. What is necessary for a fledgling democracy to establish firm roots?
10. What problems of democratic transition do there exist in your country? What obstacles is your country still facing?

**III. Study the following issues peculiar for a democratic state. Try to explain their meaning, give the examples of your own with these expressions “Key features of democracy”:**

1. universal franchise/ suffrage
2. rule on people's behalf
3. rule of law
4. a system of checks and balances
5. separation of power
6. pluralism
7. equality before the law

***Conditions (prerequisites)***

1. competitive market economy
2. developed middle class
3. informed, committed society
4. citizens' political involvement through various groups of civil society
5. political parties/ trade unions articulate/ promote/ secure/ advance interests of the people

**IV. Which of the features and conditions does Russia have to form democracy?**

**V. Which of them does it lack to establish true democracy? Analyze the conditions for building a consolidated democracy, fairness of elections, the presence of democratic institutions and the rule of law. Think of the reasons for their absence.**

## ***Pre-reading activities (Pronunciation)***

**Consult the dictionary to check the pronunciation of the following words**

1. majority rule
2. minority right
3. authority
4. an avenue
5. guarantee
6. diversity
7. legitimacy

## ***Reading 1***

**Read the following text:**

### **DEMOCRACY**

Democracy is a powerful system for social and political organization, which has spread around the world and takes many different forms.

Actually any democratic state assumes having a system, in which citizens freely make political decisions by majority rule. However, rule by the majority is not democratic: no one would call a system fair if 51 per cent of the population are permitted to oppress the remaining 49 per cent in the name of the majority. In a democratic society majority rule must be together with guarantees of individual or human rights that serve to protect the rights of minorities (ethnic, political, religious).

Democracy is more than a set of constitutional rules and procedures that determine how a government functions. Democracy includes not only government but also different institutions, political parties, organizations. This diversity is called pluralism, and it means that the many organized groups and institutions in a democratic society do not depend on government for their existence, legitimacy, authority.

These groups represent the interests of their members in many ways. They support candidates for public office, debate issues, try to influence political decisions. With the help of such groups individuals have an avenue for participation both in government and in their own communities. The examples of such organizations are charitable, environmental groups, churches, business associations and labour unions.

## ***Word Study***

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

1. принимать политические решения
2. подавлять
3. защищать права меньшинств
4. набор конституционных правил и процедур
5. определять
6. функционировать
7. многообразие

8. законность
9. представлять интересы
10. обсуждать проблемы
11. профсоюз

**II. Match the words with their definitions. Use these words in the sentences of your own:**

1. a guarantee
  2. human rights
  3. to function
  4. a procedure
  5. in the name of
  6. to debate
- 
- a. to discuss a subject formally when you are trying to make a decision or find a solution;
  - b. a formal and firm promise that smth will be done or will happen;
  - c. the correct or normal way of doing smth
  - d. the basic rights which every person has to be treated in a fair, equal way without cruelty, especially by their government;
  - e. doing smth as smn else's representative;
  - f. to work in the way smth is supposed to.

***After-reading questions***

1. What is democracy?
2. How do majority rule and minority rights operate in democracies?
3. What does democracy include?
4. What are characteristic features of a democratic society?
5. What role do different groups play in establishing democracy?

***Talking point***

**I. Study the following pillars of democracy. Explain each of them.**

1. sovereignty of the people;
2. government based on consent of the governed;
3. majority rule;
4. minority right;
5. guarantee of basic human rights;
6. free and fair elections;
7. equality before the law;
8. constitutional limits on government;
9. social, economic and political pluralism;
10. value of tolerance, pragmatism, cooperation and compromise.



**II. Read the following quotes of famous politicians, philosophers and writers. Do you agree or disagree with them? Give your arguments.**

1. Democracy is the rule of the people, by the people and for the people (*Abraham Lincoln*).
2. Democracy opens mouths but cannot fill them (*Leonid Sukhorukov*).
3. Democracy is a very admirable form of government – for dogs (*Edgar Allan Poe*).

**III. Make up a monologue “The Nature of Democracy” using the information from the text and active vocabulary from “Vocabulary in Use”.**

***Pre-reading activities (Pronunciation)***

**Consult the dictionary to check the pronunciation of the proper names:**

1. China
2. Cuba
3. Europe – European
4. Asia – Asian
5. Latin America
6. the Soviet Union
7. the Communist party
8. Aristotle
9. Greece – Greek

***Reading 2***

**Read the following text and summarize the basic features of the three types of democracy.**

**THREE TYPES OF DEMOCRACY**

**Democracy** is a word used to describe at least three political systems. In one system the government is said to be democratic if its decisions serve the 'true interests' of the people whether or not those people directly affect the making of those decisions. It is by using this definition of democracy that various authoritarian regimes – China, Cuba, and certain European, Asian, and Latin American dictatorships – have been able to claim that they were “democratic”. Presidents of the now-defunct Soviet Union, for example, used to claim that they operated on the principle of **democratic centralism**. Democracy consisted in the fact that the highest body of the Party was its congress to which delegates were elected by local organization. In theory at least, therefore, although party members were bound to carry out a policy once it had been adopted, there was room for democratic input in the pre-congress discussion and elections. In practice, criticism of party leaders under any circumstances was considered disloyal and grounds for expulsion. Thus, the true interests of the masses were discovered through discussion within the Communist party and then decisions were made under central leadership to serve those interests.

The collapse of the Soviet Union occurred in part because many average Russians doubted that the Communist party knew or would act in support of the people's true interests.

Second, the term **democracy** is used to describe those regimes that come as close as possible to Aristotle's definition – the “rule of the many”. A government is democratic if all, or most, of its citizens participate directly in either holding office or making policy. This is often called **direct** or **participatory democracy**. In Aristotle's time – Greece in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. – such a government was possible. The Greek city-state, or *polis*, was quite small, and within it citizenship was extended to all free adult male property holders. (Slaves, women, minors, and those without property were excluded from participation in government.) In more recent times the New England town meeting approximates the Aristotelian ideal. In such a meeting the adult citizens of a community gather once or twice a year to vote directly on all major issues and expenditures of the town. As towns have become larger and issues more complicated, many town governments have abandoned the pure town meeting (in which a larger number of elected representatives, perhaps two or three hundred, meet to vote on town affairs) or representative government (in which a small number of elected city councillors make decisions).

The third definition of democracy is the principle of governance of most nations that are called democratic. It was most concisely stated by economist Joseph Schumpeter :” The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individual (that's leaders) acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.” Sometimes the method is called approvingly **representative democracy** (Representative democracy is any system of government in which leaders are authorised to make decisions by winning a competitive struggle for the popular vote.); at other times it is referred to, disapprovingly, as the elitist theory of democracy. It is justified to be one or both of two arguments: first, it is impractical, owing to limits of time, information, energy, interest, and expertise, for the people to decide on public policy, but it is not impractical to expect them to make reasonable choices among competing leadership groups. Second, some people believe that direct democracy is likely to lead to bad decisions because people often decide large issues on the basis of fleeting passions and in response to popular demagogues. This fear of direct democracy persists today, as can be seen from the statements of those who do not like what the voters have decided. For example, politicians who favored Proposition 13, the referendum measure that in 1978 sharply cut property taxes in California, spoke approvingly of the “will of the people”. Politicians who disliked Proposition 13 spoke disdainfully of “mass hysteria”.

### ***Word Study***

**Find the words in the text above that mean the following:**

1. not existing any more
2. to fail

3. to be similar to but not exactly the same as smth
4. the total amount of money that a government spends during a particular period of time
5. used to say when showing agreement for smth
6. used to say when showing that you do not respect someone or smth, that they are unimportant

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

1. What three kinds of democracy are described in the text?
2. What is understood by “democratic centralism”?
3. Can we speak about a “democratic” aspect of this principle?
4. What is “the rule of the many”?
5. Where was direct or participatory democracy possible? Why?
6. What are the advantaged and disadvantages of direct democracy?
7. What are the advantaged and disadvantaged of representative democracy?

### ***Speaking***

**Make up the summary of this text, using the following expressions:**

1. to serve the interests of people;
2. to operate on the principle of;
3. to be bound to;
4. to carry out a policy;
5. to participate in;
6. to hold office;
7. to make policy;
8. to vote directly;
9. to abandon in favour of;
10. a competitive struggle for the popular vote;
11. to decide on public policy.

### ***Listening 1 (Additional)***

#### **I. Why mayors should rule the world?**

*It often seems like federal-level politicians care more about creating gridlock than solving the world's problems. So who's actually getting bold things done? City mayors. So, political theorist Benjamin Barber suggests: Let's give them more control over global policy. Barber shows how these "urban homeboys" are solving pressing problems on their own turf - and maybe in the world.*

*Benjamin Barber believes that the future of the world may lie with the politicians who implement practical change every day: mayors.*

**II. Watch the video and while listening to the talk “Why city mayors should rule the world” given by political theorist Benjamin Barber, answer the following questions: [http://www.ted.com/talks/benjamin\\_barber\\_why\\_mayors\\_should\\_rule\\_the\\_world.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/benjamin_barber_why_mayors_should_rule_the_world.html)**

1. What dilemma does the central problem of current democracy lie in?
2. Where was democracy born and what is the cradle of democracy?
3. Why do cities play such a big and vital role in people’s life?
4. What makes cities much more different from nation-states?
5. What evidence is given by Benjamin Barber that city mayors are already ruling the world?
6. What are the main differences between city mayors and prime ministers or presidents?
7. Why is it important for mayors to be pragmatists?
8. What bright examples of city mayors does Benjamin Barber give in his talk?
9. Why are city mayors called homies?
10. Why do mayors or local authorities have a higher level of trust than national governing officials?
11. Why is it easier for cities than nation-states to interact with each other?
12. How do the mayors of big polluted cities collaborate in tackling global environmental problems?
13. Benjamin Barber says: ”We still live politically in a world of borders, ..... a world where states refuse to act together. Yet we know that the reality we experience day to day is a world without borders”. What is your opinion on this statement?
14. What should humanity do to address global problems democratically?
15. What does, in Benjamin Barber’s opinion, the road to global democracy run through? Do you share his view? Why?/Why not?

### ***Pre-reading guesses***

1. What is understood by democracy?
2. Do there exist different kinds of democracy? What are they?
3. What is known to you about the British style of democracy?

### ***Reading 3***

#### **THE STYLE OF DEMOCRACY IN GREAT BRITAIN**

The British are said to have a high respect for the law. Although they may not have much respect for the present institutions of the law, this reputation is more or less true with respect to the principle of law. Of course, lots of crimes are committed, as in any other country, but there is little systematic law-breaking by large sections of the population. For example, tax evasion is not the national pastime that it is said to be in some countries.

However, while 'the law' as a concept is largely respected, the British are comparatively unenthusiastic about making new laws. The general feeling is that,

while you have to have laws sometimes, wherever possible it is best to do without them. In many aspects of life the country has comparatively few rules and regulations. This lack of regulation works both ways. Just as there are comparatively few rules telling the individual what he or she must or must not do, so there are comparatively few rules telling the government what it can or cannot do. Two unique aspects of British life will make this clear.

First, Britain is one of the very few European countries whose citizens do not have identity cards. Before the 1970s, when tourism to foreign countries became popular (and so the holding of passports became more common), most people in the country went through life without owing a document whose purpose was to identify them. British people are not obliged to carry identification with them. You do not have to have your driving license with you in your car. If the police ask to see it, you have twenty-four hours to take it to them.

Second, though there is a law (a Freedom of Information Act) which obliges a government authority or agency to show you what information it has collected about you, there is also a law (called the Official Secrets Act) which obliges many government employees not to tell anyone about the details of their work\*. It seems that in Britain, both your own identity and the information which the government has about your identity are regarded as, in sense, private matters.

These two aspects are characteristic of the relationship in Britain between the individual and the state. To a large degree, the traditional assumption is that both should leave each other alone as much as possible. The duties of the individual towards the state are confined to not breaking the law and paying taxes. There is no national service (military or otherwise); people are not obliged to vote at elections if they can't be bothered; people do not have to register their change of address with any government authority when they move house.

Similarly, the government in Britain has a comparatively free hand. It would be correct to call the country 'a democracy' in the generally accepted sense of this word. But in Britain this democracy involves less participation by ordinary citizens in governing and lawmaking than it does in many other countries. There is no concept of these things being done 'by the people'.

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\* In 1992 the existence of MI 6, the British Secret Service, was publicly admitted by the government for the first time. Nobody was surprised. Everybody already knew that there was a secret service, and that its name was MI 6. But the admission itself was a surprise. British government do not like public revelations of their activities, even if these are no longer secret. (In this case, the reason for the new openness was that, with the cold war over, MI 6 had to start justifying why it needed money from taxpayers.)

For years during the 1980s, for instance, the government successfully prevented the publication in Britain of the book *Spycatcher* (the memories of an MI 6 agent) even though, by the end of the decade, it had already been published in several other countries and could therefore not contain any genuine secrets. Eventually, in 1991, the European Court ruled that publication should be allowed in Britain too.

If the government wants to make an important change in the way that the country is run – to change, for example, the electoral system of the powers of the Prime Minister – it does not have to ask the people. It does not even have to have a special vote in Parliament with an especially high proportion of MPs in favour. It just needs to get Parliament to agree in the same way as for any new law.

In many countries an important constitutional change cannot be made without a referendum in which everybody in the country has the chance to vote 'yes' or 'no'. In other countries, such as the USA, people often have the chance to vote on particular proposals for changing laws that directly affect their everyday life, on smoking in public places or the location of a new hospital, for example. Nothing like this happens in Britain. There has only been one countrywide referendum in British history (in 1975 on whether the country should stay in the European Community). In Britain democracy has meant that the people have a hand in the running of the country; rather it means that the people choose who is to govern the country, and then let them get on with it.

### ***Word Study***

#### **I. Match the words from the text with their definitions:**

1. principle
2. concept
3. rule
4. regulation
5. identification
6. assumption
7. referendum
8. proposal
9. evasion
10. authority

- a. smth. taken for granted, supposed, but not proved
- b. an offer put forward for consideration as a suggestion, plan or purpose
- c. finding a way of not doing smth.
- d. general law of cause and effect
- e. person or group of people having power to give orders and make people obey
- f. general notion
- g. proof, finding out who or what smb. is
- h. authoritative direction
- i. law or custom which guides or controls behaviour or action
- j. putting a political question to a direct vote of the electorate

## II. Find the following words and word-combinations in the text and explain their meanings in the sentences of your own:

1. to commit a crime
2. an identity card
3. to be obliged to do smth.
4. tax evasion
5. to be confined to
6. to have a hand in smth.

### *After-reading questions*

1. Why are the British people unenthusiastic about making laws?
2. What two unique aspects are characteristic of the relationship between the individual and the state in Britain?
3. Do the British have identity cards?
4. What is the Official Secrets Act?
5. What are the duties of the individual towards the state confined to?
6. Why don't ordinary people in Britain participate much in governing and lawmaking of the country?
7. Can an important constitutional change be made without a referendum in Britain?
8. Has there ever any referendum been held in Great Britain?
9. What was the countrywide referendum of 1975 in Britain devoted to?
10. What does the British democracy mean?

### *Talking point*

1. Compare the attitudes of the Russian and the British people towards the law.
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having few rules and regulations?
3. Can you say that there is a lack of regulations in Russia?
4. Compare the role of identity cards in Britain and in Russia.
5. How can you characterize the relationship between the individual and the state in Russia?
6. How do Russian citizens participate in governing and lawmaking of the country?
7. In what case is a referendum held in Russia? What was the last referendum devoted to?
8. Do you think that democracy is suitable for Russia? Why? / Why not?

### *Listening 2 (Additional)*

#### **I. Why democracy matters?**

*The public is losing faith in democracy, says British MP Rory Stewart. Iraq and Afghanistan's new democracies are deeply corrupt; meanwhile, 84 percent of people in Britain say politics is broken.*

**II. Listen to the talk given by British Member of Parliament Rory Stewart who says that it's important to rebuild democracy. Answer the following questions:**

[http://www.ted.com/talks/rory\\_stewart\\_how\\_to\\_rebuild\\_democracy.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/rory_stewart_how_to_rebuild_democracy.html)

1. What political joke did Rory Stewart tell the audience at the beginning of his talk? Have you got it?
2. Why is democracy considered to be a problem across the developing world?
3. What side benefits does democracy have if it is imposed?
4. How does Rory Stewart describe the creation of democratic systems of government in such states as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq?
5. What events took place in Iraq and why weren't any elections held there?
6. Why weren't the Iraqi people satisfied with the interim provincial council established in Iraq in 2003?
7. What political systems would the Iraqi population rather have according to the opinion polls conducted in Iraq in 2003? Why so?
8. What ideas, in Rory Stewart's opinion, does democracy reflect? Can you add any other ideas?
9. How does Rory Stewart interpret the idea that *democracy is a state of mind, democracy is an activity*?
10. Why should politicians pay more attention to local democracy? Do you agree with him? Express your opinion.

***Comment on the following statements***

1. "Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time." (Speech in the House of Commons, 11 November 1947) – (Winston Churchill: Collected Speeches in Peace and War, 1897-1963).
2. Democracy substitutes election by the incompetent many for appointment by the corrupt few (George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), *Man and Superman* (1903) "Maxims for Revolutionists").
3. It's not the voting that's democracy, it's the counting (Tom Stoppard (1937-), *Jumpers* (1972) act 1).
4. "The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter" (Winston Churchill).
5. "All the ills of democracy can be cured by more democracy" (Alfred E Smith).



## BRITISH CONSTITUTION

### Part 1: What is Constitution

#### *Pre-reading guesses*

Investigate the idea of a constitution.

1. Write down some words and phrases related to constitution.
2. Give your own definition of constitution.
3. In groups of three or four compare and contrast your notes. Discuss and report back to the class the different points of view.
4. Study the dictionary definitions of constitution:
  - *the system of basic laws and principles that a democratic country is governed by, which can't be easily changed by the political party in power;*  

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English
  - *the set of fundamental rules governing the politics of a nation or subnational body;*  

Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics
  - *the system of laws and principles according to which a country or organization is governed.*  

Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture
5. Underline the similarities and circle the differences.
6. Compare your definition with the dictionary ones.

#### *Vocabulary in Use*

**I. Some useful verbs and expressions that are used to describe *the main functions of a constitution*:**

1. to set out the formal structure of the state
2. to establish (to institute) the duties, powers and functions of government institutions
3. to regulate relations between government institutions
4. to list (to enumerate, to specify) the rights of citizens
5. to define the relationship between the individual and the state

**II. Nouns which are used with the adjective *constitutional*:**

1. arrangements
2. conflict
3. court
4. dispute
5. framework(s)
6. freedoms
7. guarantees

8. law
9. order
10. principles
11. protection
12. reform
13. regime
14. rights
15. rule

### **III. Verbs most frequently used with *constitution*:**

#### ***noun+verb***

1. to codify
2. to come into being, to come into force
3. to constrain
4. to cover
5. to declare
6. to define
7. to empower
8. to envisage, to provide
9. to grant power to
10. to vest power in
11. to lay down, to establish
12. to legitimize
13. to proclaim
14. to protect
15. to regulate
16. to set out , to set forth
17. to specify
18. to take effect

#### ***verb+noun***

1. to abolish
2. to adopt
3. to amend
4. to approve/ to endorse
5. to change
6. to draft
7. to draw up
8. to elaborate
9. to enact
10. to observe
11. to ratify
12. to reject

13. to revise
14. to suspend
15. to violate

#### **IV. People who write constitutions:**

1. constitution-makers
2. law-makers
3. legislators
4. founders of the constitution

#### **V. Prepositional phrases with *constitution*:**

1. under the constitution
2. in accordance with/ according to
3. in violation of
4. to be contrary to/ to be in contradiction with the constitution

#### **VI. The Structure of the Constitution:**

1. **A preamble** that usually starts with a declaration of principles and proclaims ideological priorities. Preambles often function as statements of national ideas.
2. **An organizational section** usually consists of chapters and sets out the powers of various institutions of government.
3. **A bill of rights** that covers individual or sometimes group rights.
4. **Procedures for amendment** that define the rules for revising the constitution.

#### **VII. The most important functions of the constitution:**

1. **to empower states** (give power to) – the constitutions *mark out the existence of states* and give them formal jurisdiction over a particular territory or a governing apparatus;
2. **to establish unifying values and goals** – constitutions formulate a regime's ideology and an underlying set of values;
3. **to provide government stability** – constitutions formalize and regulate the relationships between political bodies and provide mechanisms through which conflicts can be resolved;
4. **to protect freedom** – the central purpose of constitutions in democracies is to constrain government, protect individual liberty and guarantee civil liberties;
5. **to legitimize regime** – the existence of a constitution is essential for international recognition.

#### **VIII. Complete the sentences with one of the following words. Use the correct form of the verbs.**

*establish, adopt, legitimize, set out(2), amend(2), ratify, enact, constrain, establish, vest in, suspend, under the Constitution.*

1. The US Constitution was ..... on September 17, 1784.

2. It was .....by the states in 1788.
3. It was ..... 27 times.
4. The constitution .....the formal structure of government.
5. A two-thirds majority is normally required to .....the constitution.
6. Constitutions .....regimes in the eyes of other states.
7. The existence of a codified constitution .....a hierarchy of laws.
8. The “age of constitutions” was initiated when the first written constitutions were ..... – the US constitution in 1787 and the French declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen in 1789.
9. What emerged (in Philadelphia) was a formula which .....constitutionally all units of the federation in such a way that exit would be constitutionally impossible or extremely difficult.
- 10....., republics have higher status as members of the Russian Federation than do territories, regions, federal cities, autonomous regions and autonomous areas.
- 11.Canada’s constitution .....parliamentary government in a centralized federation.
- 12.The Constitution of the USA .....executive power ..... a President.
- 13.The power to ..... is the one that originally raised fears that the presidential system could lapse into authoritarianism.

#### **IX. Use synonyms to replace the words in bold type.**

1. A constitution **aims** to bring stability, predictability and order to the actions of the government.
2. A rigid constitution is one that **cannot be** easily **changed** while a flexible constitution is more easily changed.
3. Codified constitutions **give supreme power to** supreme or constitutional courts, with no body having the right to override their decisions.
4. Article 16 authorizes the president to rule by emergency powers, **making** the constitution **inoperative for some time**.
5. The constitution of the 5<sup>th</sup> Republic **was approved** in September 1958.
6. The political system of France as we know it **emerged** as a result of a change in the constitution: the referendum of October 26, 1962 that **ratified** the election of the president of the republic by universal suffrage.
7. Some provisions of the constitutions or statutes of the 89 subjects of the federation **contradict** the 1993 Russian constitution.
8. All efforts are being made by EU leaders **to draw up** a slimmed-down version of the draft constitution originally **signed** in 2004.

#### **X. Translate the following text from English into Russian.**

All over the world, various association, people, states or countries have a supreme law, or body of rules, which regulate such unit of people, the internal

structure of the country, the powers and functions of government and the rights and duties of the people.

These rules spell out the collective aspirations of the people, its desire to remain as one political entity, establishes the system of government, specifies qualification to hold or vacate public offices, proclaims the rights and duties of government, on the one hand, and guarantees the rights and freedoms of the citizens, on the other hand.

This fundamental law, whether codified or unwritten, rigid or flexible, unitary, federal or confederal in character, is known to be the Constitution of such unit of people, or country.

Thus, a Constitution is an instrument of government made by the people, stating the formal structure of the state, laying down the duties, powers and functions of the various institutions of government and regulating relations between them, enumerating the rights of citizens and defining the relationship between the individual and the state.

**XI. Using the active vocabulary of Unit IV explain or define the following. Comment on the statements giving as much information as possible.**

1. The central purpose of the constitution is .....
2. A codified constitution is one which .....
3. A flexible constitution is one which .....
4. A typical constitution consists of .....
5. Constitution lay down the relationship .....
6. A Bill of rights is a constitutional document that specifies .....
7. The preamble to the constitution contains .....
8. The main functions of the constitution include .....
9. Constitutionalism in a broad sense is .....

***Writing***

**Using the information from the Unit write an essay on the following topic: “The basic features of the Constitution of the Russian Federation. What changes to the RF Constitution might you propose to make its functioning more efficient?” Don’t forget to use Active Vocabulary!**

***Talking Point***

**Discuss the following issues in groups of three or four. Share your ideas with the class.**

1. Can a state exist without a constitution?
2. What is the oldest constitution in the world?
3. Think of the example of an ideal constitution. What basic requirements should such document correspond to?
4. What does the efficiency of a constitution as the main law of the land depend on?

5. What role does a constitution play in the life of a state?

### ***Speaking***

**Prepare a monologue on the following topic:** “*Constitution as the main law of the land: its basic principles, functions and the role it plays in the life of a country.*”

## **Part 2: The British Constitution**

### ***Pronunciation***

**Mind the pronunciation and stress of the following words.**

1. European Community
2. parliamentary democracy
3. overthrow
4. a pillar
5. accession
6. impacting (adj)
7. the supremacy of Parliament
8. parliamentary sovereignty
9. infringed

### ***Reading***

**Read the text and find a reason for Britain's having an unwritten Constitution.**

#### **THE PECULIAR FEATURES OF THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION**

The United Kingdom is one of six constitutional monarchies within the European Community. That means it is a country governed by a king or queen who accepts the advice of a Parliament. It is also a parliamentary democracy. That is, it is a country whose government is controlled by a Parliament which has been elected by the people. In other words, the basic system is not so different from anywhere else in Europe. The highest positions in the government are filled by members of the directly elected Parliament. In Britain, as in many European countries, the official head of state, whether a monarch (as in Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark) or a president (as in Germany, Greece and Italy) has little real power.

However, there are features of the British system of government which make it different from that in other countries and which are not 'modern' at all. The most notable of these is the question of the constitution. It has an “unwritten” one: unlike the great majority of countries there is no single written document which sets out in one place the fundamental laws outlining how the state works.

Britain’s “lack” of a codified Constitution can be explained by its history. In other countries, many of which experienced revolutions or regime overthrow, it was necessary to start with first principles, constructing new state institutions and defining in detail their relations with each other and their citizens. By contrast, the British Constitution evolved over a long period of time, reflecting the relative stability of the

British political development. It has never been thought vital to consolidate the pillars of this order in Britain.

The British Constitution is supposed to be summed in eight words: what the Queen in Parliament enacts is law. This means that Parliament, using the power of the Crown, makes the law which no other body can challenge.

In Britain the principles and procedures by which the country is governed and from which people's rights are derived come from a number of sources. Some important documents, such as *Magna Carta* and *the Bill of Rights* proclaim the fundamental rights and freedoms of British citizens. *Statutes* are laws passed by Parliament and generally accepted as the highest form of law. They regulate many aspects of government and wider systems, such as the running of elections, for example. The UK's accession to the European Community Act 1972 meant that *European law* became increasingly impacting on the British Constitution. Foreign treaties which are passed as *Acts of Parliament* are also of constitutional importance. As the United Kingdom uses the common law legal system, *case law* (or *precedents*) established by judges also make up a source of the British Constitution. Other important unwritten sources are *Constitutional Conventions* which, for example, attempt to establish lines of accountability for ministers, *customs*, *traditions* and some *important documents*.

The key principles of the Constitution are its underlying features. The two most important ones have existed for a very long time, since the creation of Parliament. They are identified as the twin pillars of the British Constitution and include *the supremacy of Parliament* (it implies that there is no body which can declare the activities of Parliament unconstitutional and that Parliament can in theory do whatever it wants); *the rule of law* (i.e. that everyone is subject to the law). Other important principles include *a unitary state* (it means that the power resides in the centre), *constitutional monarchy*, *EU membership* and the principle that *EU law takes precedence over UK law*. This appears to undermine the principle of parliamentary sovereignty but Parliament could still withdraw from the EU by repealing the European Community Act 1972, so in a way Parliament sovereignty is preserved.

The constitutional safeguard of the separation of powers between the Legislature (the two Houses of Parliament), which makes laws, the Executive (the Government), which puts laws into effect and plans policy, and the Judiciary, which decides on cases arising out of the laws, is only theoretical.

The British Constitution is flexible as it can be amended by a simple act of Parliament. On the one hand, it makes it responsive to political and social changes especially since many political principles are conventions. However, the absence of entrenchment means that in theory far-reaching changes could be made without significant popular support.

An unwritten Constitution creates two other problems. First, it makes it difficult to assess what the actual state of the Constitution is. Second, it suggests that it is easier to make changes to the UK Constitution than in the countries with written

ones because the latter have documents with a “higher law status” against which ordinary status law and government action can be tested, and they are rigid.

The Labour Government under PM Tony Blair originated sweeping constitutional reforms in the late 1990s – early-to-mid 2000s. The incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights made it possible for the British courts to suspend any Act of Parliament which imperils the rights of citizens guaranteed by the European Community law. Therefore, parliamentary sovereignty was infringed.

Recent reforms have also decentralized the UK by giving more autonomy and self-government to the regions of Great Britain. Devolution has challenged the tradition of the UK being a centralized, unitary state.

### ***Word Study***

#### **I. Translate the following words and phrases from the text from Russian into English. Use the words in the sentences of your own.**

Управлять страной, принимать во внимание мнение парламента, избираться народом, значительный, основные законы, свержение режима путем государственного переворота, основы порядка, проведение выборов, вступление (в организацию), прецедентное право, аннулировать, принципы, лежащие в основе; подрывать, выйти (из организации), восприимчивый, влекущий серьезные последствия, оценивать, приостановить действие закона, угрожать, нарушать суверенитет, дать право самоуправления, передача власти.

#### **II. Find synonyms in the text to the following words and word groups:**

1. to run a country
2. to set forth the main laws
3. the cornerstone
4. to come from, to originate
5. influencing, essential
6. basic
7. protection
8. existing at present, current
9. to pose a threat to, to menace
10. to violate

#### **III. Complete the sentences with the vocabulary units from the previous exercise.**

1. One of the basic duties of the head of state is to ..... the country, defining the basic objectives of its internal and external policy.
2. The majority of democratic principles ..... Ancient Greece.
3. The world financial crisis was extremely ..... on the economies of the EU member states that faced a great number of economic, social and political challenges.



4. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child aims at preventing the .....of the civil, political, economic and social rights of children.
5. The nuclear ambitions of North Korea ..... the stability in the region.
6. The .....of democracy include sovereignty of the people, equality before the law and guarantee of basic human rights.
7. As the basic law of the land, a Constitution .....the basic principles according to which the country .....

**IV. Give definitions to the following political notions.**

1. constitutional monarchy
2. parliamentary democracy
3. the Crown in Parliament
4. an uncodified Constitution
5. the supremacy of Parliament
6. the rule of law
7. a unitary state
8. the separation of powers
9. the Legislative
10. the Executive
11. the Judiciary
12. a flexible Constitution
13. internal self-government
14. devolution of powers

**V. Give words that correspond to the following definitions (all of them denote the sources which the British Constitution comes from):**

1. precedents established by judges through cases
2. the body of practices and thoughts belonging to a particular country, people or institutions over a relatively long period of time
3. an international treaty to protect human rights and freedoms in Europe
4. practices which have developed over time and regulate the business of governing
5. laws passed by Parliament and formally written down
6. long-established habits or traditions of a society

***Scanning***

**Complete the following sentences.**

1. The type of state system in Great Britain is usually described as .....
2. One of the most peculiar features of the British Constitution is that .....
3. The sources which the British Constitution derives from include .....
4. The key principles of the British Constitution include .....
5. The constitutional safeguard of the separation of powers into three branches is .....

6. The problems that having an unwritten Constitution causes in Great Britain, consist in .....

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

#### **Answer the following questions:**

1. What does the term “constitutional monarchy” imply?
2. What is understood by parliamentary democracy?
3. What does it mean that Britain has an “unwritten” Constitution?
4. Why does Great Britain have an uncodified Constitution?
5. What is the essence of the British Constitution?
6. What are the most important written sources that the British Constitution derives from?
7. What are the basic unwritten sources of the British Constitution?
8. What are the main principles of the Constitution of Great Britain?
9. What is understood by the supremacy of Parliament?
10. How could you explain the principle of the rule of law?
11. How does the British membership in the European Union influence the British Constitution?
12. Does the British Constitution safeguard the separation of powers into three branches?
13. How can the Constitution of Great Britain be amended?
14. What problems can the flexibility of the Constitution cause?
15. What problems does an unwritten Constitution cause?
16. Has any attempt to conduct a constitutional reform been made by the British government?
17. Have any traditions of the United Kingdom been jeopardized recently?

### ***Speaking***

**Prepare a monologue on the topic:** *“The British Constitution as a unique feature of the British political life”*.

### **Part 3: The constitutional reform in Great Britain**

*The issue of introducing a codified Constitution is on the agenda of the British politics. The issue is widely discussed by people in the country. The issue seems to be ambiguous. Both proponents and opponents of introducing a codified Constitution have arguments pro and contra.*

### ***Listening (Pre-listening guesses)***

**Discuss the following questions in groups of three or four. Share your ideas with the class.**

1. What are the advantages of having an uncodified Constitution in Britain?
2. What are the disadvantages of an unwritten Constitution?

**I. Watch the videos of some MPs speaking about the constitutional reform. Compare your own ideas with the opinions expressed by them.**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qojCML2sCTQ>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oq9IhgCyUr0>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PR9rhO21gcs>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYLZbbs1-0o>

**II. While watching the videos fill in the table.**

<i>Name</i>	<i>For or against introducing a written Constitution</i>	<i>The arguments he gives to support his viewpoint</i>
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**Richard Gordon**

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**Iain McLean**

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**Bill Cash**

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**Sir Christopher Foster**

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***Talking Point***

**Discuss the following questions in pairs. Share your ideas with the group.**

1. Whose point of view do you mostly agree? Give arguments to support your ideas.
2. What other arguments for and against introducing a codified Constitution can you think of?
3. Do you think it is necessary to conduct a constitutional reform in Great Britain?

***Writing***

**Write an essay on the following topic: "The introduction of a written Constitution in Great Britain. Arguments pro and contra."**