

**POLITICAL SYSTEM IN THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND
NORTHERN IRELAND**

Sovereign: Queen Elizabeth II (1952)

Government: The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy, with a queen and a Parliament that has two houses: the House of Lords, with 574 life peers, 92 hereditary peers, 26 bishops, and the House of Commons, which has 651 popularly elected members. Supreme legislative power is vested in Parliament, which sits for five years unless

sooner dissolved. The House of Lords was stripped of most of its power in 1911, and now its main function is to revise legislation. In Nov. 1999 hundreds of hereditary peers were expelled in an effort to make the body more democratic. The executive power of the Crown is exercised by the cabinet, headed by the prime minister.

Prime Minister: Tony Blair (1997)

Area: 94,525 sq mi (244,820 sq km)

Population (2003 est.): 60,094,648 (growth rate: 0.1%); birth rate: 11.0/1000; infant mortality rate: 5.3/1000; density per sq mi: 636 Capital and largest city (2000 est.): London, 11,800,000 (metro. area).

Other large cities: Birmingham, 1,009,100; Leeds, 721,800; Glasgow, 681,470; Liverpool, 479,000; Bradford, 477,500; Edinburgh, 441,620; Manchester, 434,600; Bristol, 396,600

Monetary unit: Pound sterling (J)

Languages: English, Welsh, Scots Gaelic

Ethnicity/race: English 81.5%; Scottish 9.6%; Irish 2.4%; Welsh 1.9%; Ulster 1.8%; West Indian, Indian, Pakistani, and other 2.8%

Religions: Church of England (established church), Church of Wales (disestablished), Church of Scotland (established church—Presbyterian), Church of Ireland (disestablished), Roman Catholic, Methodist, Congregational, Baptist, Jewish

Literacy rate: 99% (1978)

Economic summary: GDP/PPP (2000 est.): \$1.36 trillion; per capital \$22,800. Real growth rate: 3%. **Inflation:** 2.4%. Unemployment: 5.5%.

Arable land: 25%. Agriculture: cereals, oilseed, potatoes, vegetables; cattle, sheep, poultry; fish.

Labor force: 29.2 million (1999); agriculture 1%, industry 19%, services 80% (1996 est.).

Industries: machine tools, electric power equipment, automation equipment, railroad equipment, shipbuilding, aircraft, motor vehicles and parts, electronics and communications equipment, metals, chemicals, coal, petroleum, paper and paper products, food processing, textiles, clothing, and other consumer goods.

Natural resources: coal, petroleum, natural gas, tin, limestone, iron ore, salt, clay, chalk, gypsum, lead, silica, arable land.

Exports: \$282 billion (f.o.b., 2000): manufactured goods, fuels, chemicals; food, beverages, tobacco. Imports: \$324 billion (f.o.b., 2000): manufactured goods, machinery, fuels; foodstuffs. **Major trading partners:** EU, U.S., Japan.

Communications: Telephones: main lines in use: 34.878 million (1997); mobile cellular: 13 million (yearend 1998). Radio broadcast stations: AM 219, FM 431, shortwave 3 (1998). Radios: 84.5 million (1997). Television broadcast stations: 228 (plus 3,523 repeaters) (1995). Televisions: 30.5 million (1997). Internet Service Providers (ISPs): 245 (2000). Internet users: 19.47 million (2000).

Transportation: Railways: total: 16,878 km (1996). Highways: total: 371,603 km; paved: 371,603 km (including 3,303 km of expressways); unpaved: 0 km (1998 est.). Waterways: 3,200 km. Ports and harbors: Aberdeen, Belfast, Bristol, Cardiff, Dover, Falmouth, Felixstowe,

Glasgow, Grangemouth, Hull, Leith, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Peterhead, Plymouth, Portsmouth,

Scapa Flow, Southampton, Sullom Voe, Tees, Tyne. Airports: 489 (2000 est.).

International disputes: Northern Ireland issue with Ireland (historic peace agreement signed 10 April 1998); Gibraltar issue with Spain; Argentina claims Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas); Argentina claims South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands; Mauritius and the Seychelles claim Chagos

Archipelago (UK-administered British Indian Ocean Territory); Rockall continental shelf dispute involving Denmark and Iceland; territorial claim in Antarctica (British Antarctic Territory) overlaps Argentine claim and partially overlaps Chilean claim; disputes with Iceland, Denmark, and Ireland over the Faroe Islands continental shelf boundary outside 200 NM.

DIRECT MEANING OF THE WORD «MONARCHY»

Monarchy, form of government in which sovereignty is vested in a single person whose right to rule is generally hereditary and who is empowered to remain in office for life. The power of this sovereign may vary from the absolute to that strongly limited by custom or constitution. Monarchy has existed since the earliest history of humankind and was often established during periods of external threat or internal crisis because it provided a more efficient focus of power than aristocracy or democracy, which tended to diffuse power. Most monarchies appear to have been elective originally, but dynasties early became customary. In primitive times, divine descent of the monarch was often claimed. Deification was general in ancient Egypt, the Middle East, and Asia, and it was also practiced during certain periods in ancient Greece and Rome. A more moderate belief arose in Christian Europe in the Middle Ages; it stated that the monarch was the appointed agent of divine will. This was symbolized by the coronation of the king by a bishop or the pope, as in the Holy Roman Empire. Although theoretically at the apex of feudal power, the medieval monarchs were in fact weak and dependent upon the nobility for much of their power. During the Renaissance and after, there emerged “new monarchs” who broke the power of the nobility and centralized the state under their own rigid rule. Notable examples are Henry VII and Henry VIII of England and Louis XIV of France. The 16th and 17th cent. mark the height of absolute monarchy, which found its theoretical justification in the doctrine of divine right. However, even the powerful monarchs of the 17th cent. were somewhat limited by custom and constitution as well as by the delegation of powers to strong bureaucracies. Such limitations were also felt by the “benevolent despots” of the 18th cent. Changes in intellectual climate, in the demands made upon government in a secular and commercially expanding society, and in the social structure, as the bourgeoisie became increasingly powerful, eventually weakened the institution of monarchy in Europe. The Glorious Revolution in England (1688) and the French Revolution (1789) were important landmarks in the decline and limitation of monarchical power. Throughout the 19th cent. Royal power was increasingly reduced by constitutional provisions and parliamentary incursions. In the 20th cent., monarchs have generally become symbols of national unity, while real power has been transferred to constitutional assemblies. Over the past 200 years democratic self-government has been established and extended to such an extent that a true functioning monarchy is a rare occurrence in both East and West. Among the few remaining are Brunei, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia. Notable constitutional monarchies include Belgium, Denmark, Great Britain, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Thailand.

Constitutional monarchy: System of government in which a monarch has agreed to share power with a constitutionally organized government. The monarch may remain the de facto head of state or may be a purely ceremonial head. The constitution allocates the rest of the government's power to the legislature and judiciary. Britain became a constitutional monarchy under the Whigs; other constitutional monarchies include Belgium, Cambodia, Jordan, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Thailand.

THE BRITISH CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY

"The British Constitutional Monarchy was the consequence of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and was enshrined in the Bill of Rights of 1689. Whereby William and Mary in accepting the throne, had to consent to govern 'according to the statutes in parliament on.'" . A monarch does not have to curry favour for votes from any section of the community. A monarch is almost invariably more popular than an Executive President, who can be elected by less than 50% of the electorate and may therefore represent less than half the people. In the 1995 French presidential election the future President Chirac was not the nation's choice in the first round of voting. In Britain, governments are formed on the basis of parliamentary seats won. In the 1992 General Election the Conservative Prime Minister took the office with only 43% of votes cast in England, Scotland and Wales. The Queen however, as hereditary Head of State, remains the representative of the whole nation. Elected presidents are concerned more with their own political futures and power, and as we have seen (in Brazil for example), may use their temporary tenure to enrich themselves. Monarchs are not subject to the influences which corrupt short-term presidents. A monarch look back on centuries of history and forward to the well being of the entire nation under his/her heir. Elected presidents in their nature devote much energy to undoing the achievements of their forebears in order to strengthen the position of their successors.

A long reigning monarch can put enormous experience at the disposal of transient political leaders. Since succeeding her father in 1952 Queen Elizabeth has had a number of Prime Ministers, the latest of whom were not even in Parliament at the time of her accession. An experienced monarch can act as a brake on over ambitious or misguided politicians, and encourage others who are less confident. The reality is often the converse of the theory: the monarch is frequently the Prime Minister's best adviser. Monarchs, particularly those in Europe are part of an extended Royal Family, facilitating links between their nations. As Burke observed, nations touch at their summits. A recent example of this was the attendance of so many members of Royal Families at the 50th birthday celebrations for Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustav. Swedish newspapers reported that this was a much better indication of their closeness to the rest of Europe than any number of treaties, protocols or directives from the European Union. A monarch is trained from Birth for the position of Head of State and even where, as after the abdication of Edward VIII, a younger brother succeeds, he too has enormous experience of his country, its people and its government. The people know who will succeed, and this certainly gives a nation invaluable continuity and stability. This also explains why it is rare for an unsuitable person to become King. There are no expensive elections as in the US where, as one pro-Monarchist American says, "we have to elect a new 'Royal Family' every four years." In the French system the President may be a member of one party, while the Prime Minister is from another, which only leads to confused government. In a monarchy there is no such confusion, for the monarch does not rule in conflict with government but reigns over the whole nation. In ceremonial presidencies the Head of State is often a former politician tainted by, and still in thrall to, his former political life and loyalties, or an academic or retired diplomat who can never have the same prestige as a monarch, and who is frequently little known inside the country, and almost totally unknown outside it. For example, ask a German why is Britain's Head of State and a high proportion will know it is Queen Elizabeth II. Ask a Briton, or any Non- German, who is Head of State of Germany, and very few will be able to answer correctly. Aided by his immediate family, a monarch can carry out a range of duties and public engagements - ceremonial, charitable, environmental etc. which an Executive President would never have time to do.

A monarch and members of a Royal Family can become involved in a wide range of issues which are forbidden to politicians. All parties have vested interests which they cannot ignore. Vernon Bogdanor says in 'The Monarchy and the Constitution' - «A politician must inevitably be a spokesperson for only part of the nation, not the whole. A politician's motives will always be

suspected. Members of the Royal Family, by contrast, because of their symbolic position, are able to speak to a much wider constituency than can be commanded by even the most popular political leader." In a Republic, then, who is there to speak out on issues where the 'here today, gone tomorrow' government is constrained from criticising its backers, even though such criticism is in the national interest. All nations are made up of families, and it's natural that a family should be at a nation's head. While the question of Divine Right is now obsolescent, the fact that "there's such divinity doth hedge a King" remains true, and it is interesting to note that even today Kings are able to play a role in the spiritual life of a nation which presidents seem unable to fulfil.

It has been demonstrated that, even ignoring the enormous cost of presidential elections, a monarch as head of state is no more expensive than a president. In Britain many costs, such as the upkeep of the Royal residencies, are erroneously thought to be uniquely attributable to the monarchy, even though the preservation of our heritage would still be undertaken if the country were a republic! The US government has criticized the cost to the Brazilian people of maintaining their president. Even Royal Families which are not reigning are dedicated to the service of their people, and continue to be regarded as the symbol of the nation's continuity. Prominent examples are H.R.H. the Duke of Braganza in Portugal and H.R.H. the Count of Paris in France. Royal Families forced to live in exile, such as the Yugoslav and Romanian, are often promoters of charities formed to help their countries.

KINGS AND QUEENS OF ENGLAND

The history of the English Crown up to the Union of the Crowns in 1603 is long and varied. The concept of a single ruler unifying different tribes based in England developed in the eighth and ninth centuries in figures such as Offa and Alfred the Great, who began to create centralised systems of government. Following the Norman Conquest, the machinery of government developed further, producing long-lived national institutions including Parliament.

The Middle Ages saw several fierce contests for the Crown, culminating in the Wars of the Roses, which lasted for nearly a century. The conflict was finally ended with the advent of the Tudors, the dynasty which produced some of England's most successful rulers and a flourishing cultural Renaissance. The end of the Tudor line with the death of the 'Virgin Queen' in 1603 brought about the Union of the Crowns with Scotland.

THE MONARCHY TODAY **THE QUEEN'S ROLE**

The Queen is the United Kingdom's Head of State. As well as carrying out significant constitutional functions, The Queen also acts as a focus for national unity, presiding at ceremonial occasions, visiting local communities and representing Britain around the world. The Queen is also Head of the Commonwealth. During her reign she has visited all the Commonwealth countries, going on 'walkabouts' to gain direct contact with people from all walks of life throughout the world. Behind and in front of the cameras, The Queen's work goes on. No two days in The Queen's working life are ever the same.

QUEEN'S ROLE IN THE MODERN STATE

Until the end of the 17th century, British monarchs were executive monarchs - that is, they had the right to make and pass legislation. Since the beginning of the eighteenth century, the monarch has become a constitutional monarch, which means that he or she is bound by rules and conventions and remains politically impartial.

On almost all matters he or she acts on the advice of ministers. While acting constitutionally, the Sovereign retains an important political role as Head of State, formally appointing prime ministers, approving certain legislation and bestowing honours.

The Queen also has important roles to play in other organisations, including the Armed Forces and the Church of England.

QUEEN'S ROLE IN THE MODERN STATE

Until the end of the 17th century, British monarchs were executive monarchs - that is, they had the right to make and pass legislation. Since the beginning of the eighteenth century, the monarch has become a constitutional monarch, which means that he or she is bound by rules and conventions and remains politically impartial.

On almost all matters he or she acts on the advice of ministers. While acting constitutionally, the Sovereign retains an important political role as Head of State, formally appointing prime ministers, approving certain legislation and bestowing honours. The Queen also has important roles to play in other organisations, including the Armed Forces and the Church of England.

QUEEN AND COMMONWEALTH

The Queen is not only Queen of the United Kingdom, but Head of the Commonwealth, a voluntary association of 54 independent countries. Most of these countries have progressed from British rule to independent self-government, and the Commonwealth now serves to foster international co-operation and trade links between people all over the world. The Queen is also Queen of a number of Commonwealth realms, including Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

SYMBOLS

Many of the most familiar objects and events in national life incorporate Royal symbols or represent the Monarchy in some way. Flags, coats of arms, the crowns and treasures used at coronations and some ceremonies, stamps, coins and the singing of the national anthem have strong associations with the Monarchy and play a significant part in our daily existence. Other objects - such as the Great Seal of the Realm - may be less familiar to the general public but still have a powerful symbolic role.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

'God Save The King' was a patriotic song first publicly performed in London in 1745, which came to be referred to as the National Anthem from the beginning of the nineteenth century. The words and tune are anonymous, and may date back to the seventeenth century. In September 1745 the 'Young Pretender' to the British Throne, Prince Charles Edward Stuart, defeated the army of King George II at Prestonpans, near Edinburgh. In a fit of patriotic fervour after news of Prestonpans had reached London, the leader of the band at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, arranged 'God Save The King' for performance after a play. It was a tremendous success and was repeated nightly thereafter. This practice soon spread to other theatres, and the custom of greeting the Monarch with the song as he or she entered a place of public entertainment was thus established.

There is no authorised version of the National Anthem as the words are a matter of tradition. Additional verses have been added down the years, but these are rarely used. The words used are those sung in 1745, substituting 'Queen' for 'King' where appropriate. On official occasions, only the first verse is usually sung, as follows:

God save our gracious Queen!

Long live our noble Queen!

God save the Queen!

Send her victorious,

Happy and glorious,

Long to reign over us,

God save the Queen.

An additional verse is occasionally sung:

Thy choicest gifts in store

On her be pleased to pour,

Long may she reign.

May she defend our laws,

And ever give us cause,

To sing with heart and voice,

God save the Queen.

The British tune has been used in other countries - as European visitors to Britain in the eighteenth century noticed the advantage of a country possessing such a recognised musical symbol - including Germany, Russia, Switzerland and America (where use of the tune continued after independence). Some 140 composers, including Beethoven, Haydn and Brahms, have used the tune in their compositions.

British Parliament.

Great Britain is a constitutional monarchy. This means that it has a monarch as its Head of the State. The monarch reigns with the support of Parliament. The powers of the monarch are not defined precisely. Everything today is done in the Queen's name. It is her government, her armed forces, her law courts and so on. She appoints all the Ministers, including the Prime Minister. Everything is done however on the advice of the elected Government, and the monarch takes no part in the decision-making process. Once the British Empire included a large number of countries all over the world ruled by Britain. The process of decolonisation began in 1947 with the independence of India, Pakistan and Ceylon. Now there is no Empire and only few small islands belong to Britain. In 1997 the last colony, Hong Kong, was given to China. But the British ruling classes tried not to lose influence over the former colonies of the British Empire. An association of former members of the British Empire and Britain was founded in 1949. It is called the Commonwealth. It includes many countries such as Ireland, Burma, the Sudan,

Canada, Australia, New Zealand and others. The Queen of Great Britain is also a Head of the Commonwealth, and also the Queen of Canada, Australia, New Zealand...

The British Constitution. The British Constitution is to a large extent a product of many historical events and has thus evolved over many centuries. Unlike the constitutions of most other countries, it is not set out in any single document. Instead it is made up of statute law, common law and conventions. The constitution can be changed by Act of Parliament, or by general agreement to alter a convention.

The Monarchy in Britain. When the Queen was born on 21 April 1926, her grandfather, King George V, was on the throne and her uncle was his heir. The death of her grandfather and the abdication of her uncle (King Edward VIII) brought her father to the throne in 1936 as King George VI. Elizabeth II came to the throne on 6 February 1952 and was crowned on 2 June 1953. Since then she has made many trips to different countries and to the UK also. The Queen is very rich, as are other members of the royal family. In addition, the government pays for her expenses as Head of the State, for a royal yacht, train and aircraft as well as for the upkeep of several palaces. The Queen's image appears on stamps, notes and coins.

The Powers of Parliament. The three elements, which make up Parliament – the Queen, the House of Lords and the elected House of Commons –, are constituted on different principles. They meet together only on occasions of symbolic significance such as the State Opening of Parliament, when the Commons are invited by the Queen to the House of Lords.

Parliament consists of two chambers known as *the House of Lords* and *the House of Commons*. Parliament and the monarch have different roles in the government of the country, and they only meet together on symbolic occasions such as coronation of a new monarch or the opening of Parliament. In reality, the House of Commons is the only one of the three which has true power. It is here that new bills are introduced and debated. If the majority of the members aren't in favour of a bill it goes to the House of Lords to be debated and finally to the monarch to be signed. Only then it becomes law. Although a bill must be supported by all three bodies, the House of Lords only has limited powers, and the monarch hasn't refused to sign one.

The Functions of Parliament. The main functions of Parliament are: to pass laws; to provide, by voting taxation, the means of carrying on the work of government; to scrutinize government policy and administration; to debate the major issues of the day. In carrying out these functions Parliament brings issues before the electorate. By custom, Parliament is also informed before all-important international treaties and agreements are ratified. A Parliament has a maximum duration of five years, but in practice general elections are usually held before the end of this term. Parliament is dissolved and rights for a general election are ordered by the Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister. The life of a Parliament is divided into sessions. Each usually lasts for one year – normally beginning and ending in October or November. The average number of "sitting" days in a session is about 168 in the House of Commons and about 150 in the House of Lords.

At the start of each session the Queen's speech to Parliament outlines the Government's policies and proposed legislative programme.

The House of Commons. The House of Commons is elected and consists of 651 Members of Parliament (MPs). At present there are 60 women, three Asian and three black MPs. Of the 651 seats, 524 are for England, 3 for Wales, 72 for Scotland, and 17 for Northern Ireland. Members are paid an annual salary of £30,854. The chief officer of the House of Commons is the Speaker, elected by the MPs to preside over the House. The House of Commons plays the major role in law making. MPs sit on two sides of the hall, one side for the governing party and the other for the opposition. Parliament has intervals during its work. MPs are paid for their parliamentary work and have to attend the sittings. MPs have to catch the Speaker's eye when they want to speak, then they rise from where they have been sitting to address the House and must do so without either reading a prepared speech or consulting notes.

The House of Lords. The House of Lords consists of the Lords Spiritual and the Lords Temporal. The Lords Spiritual are the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the 24 next most senior bishops of the Church of England. The Lords Temporal consist of: all hereditary peers of England, Scotland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom; all other life peers. Peerages, both hereditary and life, are created by the Sovereign on the advice of the Prime Minister. They are usually granted in recognition of service in politics or other walks of life. In 1992 there were 1,211 members of the House of Lords, including the two archbishops and 24 bishops. The Lords Temporal consisted of 758 hereditary peers and 408 life peers. The House is presided over by the Lord Chancellor, who takes his place on the woolsack as the Speaker of the House. The division of Parliament into two Houses goes back over some 700 years when feudal assembly ruled the country. In modern times, real political power rests in the elected House although members of the House of Lords still occupy important cabinet posts.

The Political Party System. The present political system depends upon the existence of organised political parties, each of which presents its policies to the electorate for approval. The parties are not registered or formally recognised in law, but in practice most candidates in elections, and almost all winning candidates, belong to one of the main parties. For the last 150 years there were only 2 parties: the Conservative Party and the Labour Party. A new party – the Liberal Democrats – was formed in 1988. Social Democratic Party is also the new one founded in 1981. Other parties include two nationalist parties, Plaid Cymru (founded in Wales in 1925) and the Scottish National Party (founded in 1934). The effectiveness of the party system in Parliament rests largely on the relationship between the Government and the Opposition parties. Depending on the relative strengths of the parties in the House of Commons, the Opposition may seek to overthrow the Government by defeating it in a vote on a "matter of confidence". In general, however, its aims are to contribute to the formation of policy and legislation by constructive criticism; to oppose government proposal - it considers objectionable; to seek amendments to government bills; and to put forward its own policies in order to improve its chances of winning the next general election.

Because of the electoral method in use, only two major parties obtain seats in the House of Commons. People belonging to smaller political parties join one of the larger parties and work from within to make their influence felt. The exception to this are members of the Scottish National and Welsh Nationalist Parties, who, because their influence votes are concentrated in specific geographical areas, can manage to win seats although their total support is relatively small.

Her Majesty's Government: Prime Minister, the Cabinet. Her Majesty's Government is the body of ministers responsible for the administration of national affairs. The Prime Minister is appointed by the Queen, and all other ministers are appointed by the Queen on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. Most ministers are members of the Commons, although the Government is also fully represented by ministers in the Lords. The composition of governments can vary both in the number of ministers and in the titles of some offices. New ministerial offices may be created, others may be abolished and functions may be transferred from one minister to another. The Prime Minister is also, by tradition, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister for the Civil Service. The Prime Minister's unique position of authority derives from majority support in the House of Commons and from the power to appoint and dismiss ministers. By modern convention, the Prime Minister always sits in the House of Commons. The Prime Minister presides over the Cabinet, is responsible for the allocation of functions among ministers and informs the Queen at regular meetings of the general business of the Government. The Prime Minister's Office is situated at 11 Downing Street. The Cabinet is composed of about 20 ministers chosen by the Prime Minister. The functions of the Cabinet are initiating and deciding on policy, the supreme control of government and the co-ordination of government departments. The exercise of these functions is vitally affected by the fact that the Cabinet is a group of party representatives, depending upon majority support in the House of Commons. The Cabinet meets in private and its proceedings are confidential. Its members are

bound by their oath as Privy Counsellors not to disclose information about its proceedings, although after 30 years Cabinet papers may be made available for inspection. So Great Britain is the constitutional monarchy. Monarch is the Head of the State. But Queen or King rules with the support of the parliament. And practically monarch has no real political power. The main political decisions are made by the Parliament and Cabinet. And the House of Commons are more powerful.

Vocabulary

democracy noun a) [uncountable] a method of government in which every citizen in the country can vote to select its officials:

- a system of parliamentary democracy
- b) [countable] a country that has this system of government:
- There is freedom of speech in a democracy.

republic noun [countable] a country governed by elected representatives of the people, and led by a president, not a king or queen:

- the Czech Republic
- Mauritius became a republic in March 1992.

monarchy noun a) [uncountable] the system in which a country is ruled by a king or queen:

- Modern monarchy developed mainly in Spain, France, and Britain.
- b) [countable] a country that is ruled by a king or queen:
- The United Kingdom is a monarchy.

government (also Government) noun [countable usually singular also + plural verb British English] the group of people who govern a country or state:

- the French government
- a democratic government

cabinet (also Cabinet) noun [countable also + plural verb British English] the politicians with important positions in a government who meet to make decisions or advise the leader of the government:

- a Cabinet minister

- leading members of the Cabinet

parliament (also Parliament) noun [countable and uncountable also + plural verb British English]
a) the group of people who are elected to make a country's laws and discuss important national affairs:

- the parliaments of several European countries
- b) the main law-making institution in the UK, which consists of the House of Commons and the House of Lords:
- There are still too few women in Parliament.

legislature noun [countable] an institution such as a parliament that has the power to make or change laws:

state/national/federal etc legislature: The bicameral federal legislature consists of a 217-member lower house (the National Assembly) and an 87-member upper house (the Senate).

the executive noun [singular] the part of a government that makes sure decisions and laws work well:

- Parliament sets the framework of general rules for society, and the executive governs within those rules.

the judiciary noun [singular] all the judges in a country who, as a group, form part of the system of government:

- The judiciary has the function of interpreting the law and applying it to specific cases.

legislation noun [uncountable] a law or set of laws:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act is a major piece of legislation.

bill (also Bill) noun [countable] a written proposal for a new law, which is brought to a parliament so that it can be discussed:

approve/pass/veto a bill: The bill was passed by 105 votes to 38 with one abstention.

act (also Act) noun [countable] a law that has been officially accepted by Parliament or Congress:

- the Criminal Justice Act 1991
- an Act of Parliament

politician noun [countable] someone who works in politics, especially an elected member of the government:

- Politicians from all parties attended the funeral of the former prime minister.

Minister (also minister) noun [countable] a politician who is in charge of a government department, in Britain and some other countries:

foreign/defence/finance etc minister: the French Foreign Minister

ministerial adjective [only before noun]:

- Berri had held ministerial posts in a number of Cabinets during the 1980s and 1990s.

Secretary (also secretary) noun [countable] an official who is in charge of a large government department, in the US and some other countries:

Defense/Education/Treasury etc Secretary: a committee led by former Housing Secretary Jack Kemp

MP (also Member of Parliament) noun [countable] someone who has been elected to represent people in a parliament:

- Diane Abbott, MP for Hackney
- a Conservative Member of Parliament

backbencher noun [countable] an ordinary British Member of Parliament who does not have an important official position:

- Conservative backbenchers

shadow adjective [only before noun] the Shadow Chancellor/Foreign Secretary etc is the politician in the main opposition party in the British parliament who would become Chancellor etc if their party was in government, and who is responsible for speaking on the same subjects:

- The Shadow Foreign Secretary attacked the government for signing up to the directive.

mayor (also Mayor) noun [countable] the person who has been elected to lead the government of a town or city:

- The mayor has a good record for improving public safety.

the political spectrum noun [singular] the complete range of opinions relating to politics, going from the left, which supports socialism and communism, to the right, which supports capitalism:

- The parties at the centre of the political spectrum became more outspoken in their criticisms of the government.

the left noun [singular] political groups and beliefs that support the ideas of socialism. They usually want large industries to be owned by the state, and to use taxes to help solve social problems:

- There were criticisms of the government from politicians on the left of the party.

the right noun [singular] political groups and beliefs that support the ideas of capitalism. They usually want low taxes and to encourage private business rather than businesses owned by the state:

- After leaving university, he shifted his political allegiance to the right.

coalition noun [countable] a union of two or more political parties that allows them to form a government or fight an election together:

- a coalition of the Liberal and the National parties
- The formation of a coalition government is normal political practice in a situation of war.

party politics noun [uncountable] activities that are concerned with getting support for one political party in a country:

- He had been active in party politics for over 20 years.

party political adjective:

- thinly disguised party political propaganda

general election (=an election in which all the people in a country who can vote elect a government) | All adults enjoy the right to vote in a free general election that must be held at least every 5 years.

primary election (=an election in the US at which people vote to decide who will be a party's candidate in the main election) | the results of the primary election for the US Senate

by-election British English noun [countable] an election to replace a politician who has left parliament or died:

- Key issues during the by-election were health policy and the economic recession.

elect verb [transitive usually passive] to choose someone for an official position by voting:

- He was elected President two years ago.

vote verb [intransitive and transitive] to show by marking a paper, raising your hand etc which person you want to elect or whether you support a particular plan:

- Which candidate did you vote for? Sweden's ruling Social Democrats voted in favour of joining the European single currency.
- More than 20 backbenchers voted against the government's proposal.

vote noun [countable] an act of voting in an election or meeting, or the choice that you make when you vote:

- The House of Commons agreed to approve the new regulations by 366 votes to 174.

voter noun [countable] someone who has the right to vote in a political election, or who votes in a particular election:

- Judging from the election results, a sizable number of voters agreed that change was needed.

the electorate noun [singular] all the people in a country who have a right to vote:

- Political parties compete to win elections by submitting distinct programmes from which the electorate can choose.

constituency noun [countable] an area of a country that elects a representative to a parliament:

- The constituency of Bromsgrove and Redditch had an electorate of 104,375.

candidate noun [countable] someone who is competing in an election:

- You have the right to vote for the candidate of your choice.
- the Republican candidate for mayor

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Thorpe, Lewis, trans., Geoffrey of Monmouth: The History of the Kings of Britain, Penguin Books, London, 1966;

G. R. Elton, Modern Historians on British History, 1485–1945: A Critical Bibliography, 1945–1969 (1971);

P. Catterall, British History, 1945–1987:

C. Read, Bibliography of British History: Tudor Period, 1485–1603 (2d ed. 1959, repr. 1978);

C. L. Mowat, Great Britain since 1914 (1971);

G. Davies, Bibliography of British History: Stuart Period, 1603–1714 (1928; 2d ed., ed. by M. F. Keeler, 1970);

Sir George Clark, ed., The Oxford History of England (2d ed., 16 vol., 1937–91);

G. S. Graham, A Concise History of the British Empire (1971);

F. E. Halliday, A Concise History of England (1980);

F. M. L. Thompson, ed., The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750–1950 (1990);

Е.А. Рыбкина. Monarchy in the world. English Monarchy.- СПб.: Каро, 2001.

Encyclopedia Britannica