

# POLITICS AND POLITICIANS

## STUDENT'S

EXERCISE 1: Warm up. Whole class.

- What's the first thing that pops into your mind when you hear the word POLITICIAN?
- What is the minimum voting age in your country? Should it be higher or lower?
- What are the main political parties in your country? Who is the most controversial politician?

- .....
- |                          |                                   |                                |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ○ Multi-party system     | ○ Dominant political party        | ○ Electoral alliance/coalition |
| ○ Left-wing              | ○ Centre-right                    | ○ leftist                      |
| ○ Nationalist party      | ○ Trade unions                    | ○ green politics               |
| ○ Regional party         | ○ The right to self-determination | ○ independence                 |
| ○ Autonomous communities | ○ Opposition party                | ○ ideology                     |
|                          | ○ Major political parties         |                                |
- .....

EXERCISE 2. Working on Vocabulary: Adjectives

Your teacher will dictate a list of adjectives and qualities that can be applied to politicians, place them under the right column.

POSITIVE    NEGATIVE    NEUTRAL

EXERCISE 3. Cloze with a Twist

## HOW THE USA ELECTION WORKS

Remember the 2016 US election, Donald Trump secured the presidency despite getting almost 3 million fewer votes than Hillary Clinton. It could happen again. And it all comes down to how the president is actually elected. When Americans go to the polls in November, they won't be voting for Donald Trump or Joe Biden. But for members of something called the Electoral College, the word college refers to a group of people or electors with a shared task to choose the President of the United States. The system goes back more than 200 years, the founders of the United States wanted to establish a system but were concerned that a direct popular vote might lead to the election of an president. electors were settled on as a compromise. Each state was given a number of electors based roughly on the size of its population. Today, there are 538 electors and the successful presidential candidate will need to get a majority of these at least 270 in order to win. In most states, the candidate who wins the popular vote gets the support of all of that state's electors. For example, whether a candidate gets 99 or 51% of the vote in California, they would still receive all the state's 55 electoral college votes. That's why it's possible for a candidate to lose the popular vote across the country, but still secure a majority of electoral college votes and become president. Two out of the last five elections were won by candidates who received fewer votes from the

public, although this hadn't happened for more than 100 years before the 2000 election. What all this means is that campaigns often focus on strategies that help the 270 electoral votes needed to win. They tend to target battleground or swing states rather than trying to turn out voters in states which consistently vote for the same party. In fact, in the last presidential election, two thirds of campaign events were held in just six states. So the 538 members of the electoral college play a crucial role in how the President of the United States is elected. Over the years there have been efforts to change the college system, but proponents say it helps deliver decisive results across a vast country and everyone knows the rules of the game before election day.

### **General election: The voting system explained - BBC News**

Have you ever wondered how your vote counts in a general election? First, you're not actually voting for a prime minister. Stick with me, and I'll explain why. Instead, you're deciding who should represent you and your local area in Parliament. That local area is called a constituency. And there are 650 of them in the UK. Some are big, some are small, but each is made up of the same number of voters, typically between 60 and 80,000. So on Election Day, voters in each constituency choose one person from a list of candidates. Most of them are in a political party, but they don't have to be the candidate with the most votes in each constituency wins. This system of voting is called first the post, a term that comes from horse racing, all a candidate needs to be elected is to get more votes than any other candidate in their constituency. The winner then becomes a member of Parliament's an MP. That means they get a seat in the house of commons, where they can debate and vote on laws and check up on the government's work. But the seats are actually benches. And there's only space for about 430 of the 650 MPs to sit down at the same time. The way we elect our MPs explains why you hear a lot of talk about safe and marginal seats in the run up to an election. A seat is one that a candidate from a certain party is likely to win, usually after they've been elected with a large majority last time, but a seat is never completely safe. Large majorities have been overturned. Now a marginal seat is one where the result is likely to be much closer, and it's those seats that are the most hotly contested during the election campaign.

Okay, but what happens to your vote if you didn't back the winner? Put simply, nothing happens with it at all. At the last election, 14 million votes cast for for losing candidates. That's almost half of all the votes that election. And what that means is that the share of votes each party gets on election day isn't the same as the number of seats it ends up with in Parliament's. Take the 2015 general election, Conservative Party candidates got 37% of votes across the country but it still ended up with half the seats in Parliament's UK, on the other hand, only got one seat in the house of commons despite a national vote share of almost 13%. But whichever candidate win on Election Day, they're supposed to represent everyone in that constituency, and not just the people who voted for them. So who gets to be prime minister then? That would usually be the leader of the party with the most MPs in Parliaments and what does the Prime Minister do? We'll leave that for another video.

#### EXERCISE 4. Working on Vocabulary – Speaking activity (blog)

Have a look at how these verbs collocate

- **Boost** the economy
- **Harm/benefit** someone or an organization
- **Put** a strain **on** the finances of a country/area
- **Exacerbate** a problem
- **Undermine** the morale of citizens
- **Create** divisions
- **Lead** to tensions
- **Cut** taxes
- **Extend** working hours
- **Increase** public spending
- **Abolish** unemployment benefits
- **Allow** a vote on independence
- **Increase** penalties for...
- **Damage** the economy
- **Resolve** existing social problems
- **Rise** of income inequality
- **Reform** the education system
- **Solve** social problems
- **Ensure** prosperity
- **Hold** an election
- **Rig** the election
- **Stand** for election

Other words you might want to know: floating voters. popularity ratings, a rightwinger, a left-winger, a polling station, a running mate, a high turnout, voting booth, ballot card