

POLITICS AND POLITICIANS

TEACHER'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?

Exercise 2. Working on Vocabulary: Adjectives

- On the board, write three headings: positive, negative and neutral and ask students to do the same in their notebooks. Tell them you are going to dictate a list of adjectives and qualities that can be applied to politicians.
- Start calling out adjectives and ask them to place them under one of the columns. You might need to spell some of them, or alternatively write them down on the board. It is a good opportunity to drill pronunciation and clarify/teach meanings.
- Do the exercise on the board. There might be slight disagreements and that is just fine.

Honest	Passionate	Respectful	Confident	Persuasive	Compassionate	Humble	Fearless
Genuine	Discreet	Diplomatic	Cunning	Calculating	Slippery	Unscrupulous	Astute
Idealistic	Cold-blooded	Zealous	Conciliatory	Astute	Well-informed	Moderate	Ruthless
Far-sighted	Narrow-minded	Two-faced					

Positive

Negative

Neutral

Exercise 3: Focusing on Listening: How the US and the UK election works

This listening exercise has different parts

Individual work:

- Students are divided into pairs. Student A listens to How the US election works and Student B to How the UK election works. In my case, I have set it as homework, but you can do it in class, asking students to bring some earbuds.
- As students listen, ask them to write down any words/expressions related to the topic. Ask them to look them up and practise their pronunciation as they might be asked to explain to the class.

In class:

- Using Mentimeter, ask them to write the words they jotted down from the video. Point to one and ask them to explain it.
- Pair up A and B and ask them to report their findings.

Student A. How the US election works

Student B: The voting system in the UK

Follow up: Cloze with a twist.

Give students the transcript for both videos. Tell them you have deleted some words from the transcript. They will have to listen very attentively as there are no empty spaces showing there is a missing word. Ask them to compare in pairs before correcting the exercise. Complete transcript and Cloze at the end of this handout.

Working on Vocabulary

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 right-winger, a left-winger, a polling station, a running mate, a high turnout, voting booth, ballot card

Speaking

Before each section, ask students to call out 6 words or expressions they have learned in this unit. Divide the class into As and Bs and assign As three words and Bs three words. Display the first section and ask them to take in turns to answer the questions trying to use the vocabulary on the board

LISTENING: CLOZE WITH A TWIST

How the US election works - BBC News

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.

1. Missing words first video

Technically, simply, democratic, unsuitable, winning, secure, electoral

2. Missing words second video

Off, roughly, past, safe, marginal, over, does

ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT

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Biden. But for members of something called the Electoral College, the word college simply 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 democratic system but were concerned that a direct popular vote might lead to the election of an unsuitable 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 winning 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 secure 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 electoral 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.

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Flipgrid Oral and Written activity (see blog)