

AP Comparative Government Unit Guide

United Kingdom

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Backbenchers

→ MP's of a party who have **no governmental office** or sit as rank-and-file opposition members. Three opportunities to voice their concerns: weekly caucus meetings, committees, or private members bills

Tony Blair

→ PM: 1997-2007; **Promised to create a "new labour" party and rule in a "third way"**, between Conservative economic policies and those of Labour's more radical past. He also began devolution (of Scotland, Wales, and N. Ireland) Favored low taxes, tightly controlled social spending, and closer ties to Europe. American ally on war against terrorism aka Iraq War. This damaged the relationship between Britain & France. Lead to the decline of support towards the Labour Party.

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

→ Developed in the Collective Consensus era, this was the TV and Radio Network in England. It was meant to be **more educational and was generally kind to government officials**. Government strictly regulates. (No advertisements may be sold to politicians, parties, or political causes.)

David Cameron

→ **Prime Minister from 2010-2016**. Instituted austerity measures. Emphasized greater roles of private companies, charities, and employee-owned cooperatives, argument that British state has become too big.

Cabinet

→ Consists of the **Prime Minister & minister**, each which had a major bureaucracy of the government. Cabinet members are party leaders in Parliament chosen by the prime minister.

Nick Clegg

→ **Leader of the Liberal Democrats since 2007**. His party is underrepresented in Parliament compared to the number of votes they received. Formed a coalition government with the Conservatives. His Lib Dems lost power after a famous broken promise.

Coalition Government

→ When **two or more parties join together to form a majority** in a national legislature.

Collective Consensus

→ Both the Labour and the Conservative parties **supported the development of a modern welfare system**; lasted until the late 1970s

Collective Responsibility

→ In a parliamentary system, the concept that all cabinet members agree on policy decisions and that all will be responsible for the results. **If they do not agree they must resign.**

Conservative Party

→ A political party in Great Britain which developed from the Tories in the 1830s. One of the two major parties in the UK and is generally more right wing and more towards free-markets and the upper classes. **It advocates a mixed economy and encourages property owning.** Now it is split between traditional wing (noblesse oblige) and "Thatcherites" (roll back government controls and move to a full free market); tend to see the EU as a threat to British sovereignty.

"Constitution of the Crown"

→ The "constitution" of Britain that evolved over time, composed of:

1. **important documents**
2. **common law**
3. **tradition/customs**

Devolution

→ The **delegation of authority**; the voluntary transfer of powers and responsibilities from the central government to a regional government.

The English Bill of Rights

→ This document lists rights **retained by Parliament, not by individual citizens**. William and Mary signed this document in 1688, giving important policy-making power to Parliament.

Eurosceptics

→ People **opposed to the UK's membership in the EU** and the expansion of the EU's power.

"First-past-the-post" Voting System

→ The "first past the post" voting system is the election process for representatives in the House of Commons; **it means the winner takes all**. Therefore, the candidate who receives the most votes is elected and there is no need for a majority.

Good Friday Agreement

→ A practical peace agreement reached by the major parties in Northern Ireland with the British and Irish governments. **It set up a Northern Ireland Assembly** and agreed to end the conflict in Northern Ireland signed in 1998 by Protestants and Catholics.

The "Government"

→ When debating, _____ consists of the MP's on the first rows of the majority party

side. (They are the **most important policy makers.**)

Gradualism

→ The belief or the policy of **advancing toward a goal by gradual, often slow stages**; this process helps explain the transition in policy making power from the King to Parliament in Great Britain.

Hereditary Peers

→ Members of the **House of Lords appointed by the monarch** and whose title automatically passes down to their sons.

House of Commons

→ A person who sits in the _____ is called a Member of Parliament (MP). The _____ has **650 members (MPs)** who have been elected by local residents to represent an area of the country in Parliament. Each MP **represents one of 650 constituencies (areas) in the UK** and is a member of a political party. There is a **two-party system**.

House of Lords

→ _____ is made up of people who have **inherited family titles and those who have been given titles because of their outstanding work in one field or another**. There are 675 members. A person who sits in the _____ is a peer. The main job of the House of Lords is to 'double check' new laws to make sure they are fair and will work. (can delay legislation)

Hung parliament

→ A parliament in which **no single party has majority control in the House of Commons after the elections**. Leads to a coalition parliament. (ex. 2017 election, Conservatives & DUP)(2010, Conservatives & Lib Dem)

Irish Republican Army (IRA)

→ A militant organization of Irish nationalists who **used terrorism and guerilla warfare** in an effort to drive British forces from Northern Ireland and achieve a united, independent Ireland. In 1949, Ireland became independent, except Northern Ireland.

"Iron Lady"

→ **Margaret Thatcher**, the ex-PM of England in the 1980's. Known to be very tough, decisive, and efficient. She executed business-like tactics like cutting taxes, enforcing a small government, and trickling down the economy.

Labour Party

→ Created in 1906 to **represent the rights of the newly-enfranchised working man**, with the help of trade unions to represent the interests of the urban working class. Was partially defined by the "Clause 4." **Jeremy Corbyn is opposition leader.**

Liberalism

→ A political or social philosophy advocating the freedom of the individual, parliamentary systems of government, nonviolent modification of political, social, or economic institutions to assure unrestricted development in all spheres of human endeavor, and governmental guarantees of individual rights and civil liberties. **Economic theory advocating free competition and a self-regulating market and the gold standard.**

Life Peers

→ Distinguished members of the society who are given **lifetime appointments to the house of lords.**

"Loyal Opposition"

→ The **party that does not win the majority in the elections.** Role that the party out of power plays, highlighting its objections to policies and priorities of the government in power

Magna Carta

→ In 1215, King John signed this document, agreeing to **consult nobles before he made important political decisions, especially those regarding taxes**. This forms the basis of limited government that placed restrictions on the power of monarchs.

Members of Parliament

→ **Belongs to a political party**; important ones become ministers in the cabinet; lesser ones are called backbenchers.

Jeremy Corbyn

→ **Took over the labour party after Ed Miliband resigned**. Under his rule, the labour party continued to lose support. His political positions are seen as too far left to appeal to centrist voters.

Multi-Nationalism

→ **Areas that had once been many nations that are now united under one government**. Britain's boundaries include England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland which have been different nations in the past but are united under one government today. Different dialects of the English language and religious differences cause conflict.

Neoliberalism

→ **Revival of classical liberal values**. Supports low levels of government regulation, taxation, and social expenditures and the protection of individual property rights. Move towards a free market economy & denationalization of industries.

Noblesse Oblige

→ The duty of upper classes to take responsibility for the **welfare of the lower classes**.

Oxbridge

→ **Oxford and Cambridge Universities**. Nearly half of all parliament members earn higher education there. Since WWII, scholarships for Oxbridge have been available so more working & middle-class youths may attend.

Parliamentary System

→ A form of government in which the chief executive (prime minister) is the leader whose party holds the most seats in the legislature. After an election, a party forms a major part of the ruling coalition. Executive branch & legislative are fused together because the prime minister & cabinet are leaders in parliament. Separation of power does not exist. Judicial review has no role in interpreting the "Constitution of the crown".

Plaid Cymru

→ Nationalist political party in Wales; advocates the establishment of a Welsh state that is independent of the UK. More rights for the Welsh people, including use of the Welsh language.

Plurality Voting System

→ A voting system in which the candidate who receives the largest portion of the votes, not necessarily the majority, wins the seat. Reason why Lib. Dems don't have a good representation in Parliament.

Prime Minister

→ "First among equals" & stands at the apex of the unitary government. Not directly elected by the people, but is a member of parliament & leader of the majority party.

Proportional Representation (PR)

→ An election system in which each party running receives the proportion of legislative seats corresponding to its proportion of the vote. **Vote for party not candidate.**

Question Time

→ Weekly; A portion of debate in parliament in which the prime minister and his cabinet must defend themselves against attack from the opposition (party out of power), and sometimes from members of their own party.

Rational-legal Legitimacy

- **Legitimacy based on a system of laws and procedures that are highly institutionalized.** Belief that the government has the right to rule based on a system of well-established laws and procedures. Britain's political system has been based on this since the end of the 17th century.

Safe Districts

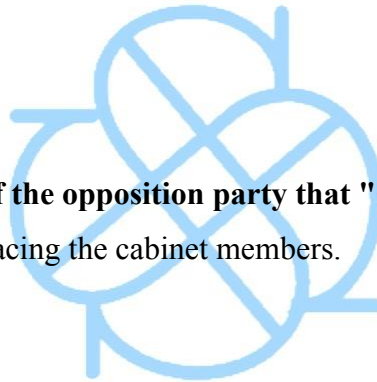
- Districts in which incumbents **win by margins of 55% or more.**

Scottish National Party (SNP)

- Centre-left political party which campaigns for Scottish independence, **most popular party in Scotland.** The Party that wants Scotland to be an independent nation outside of the UK.

"Shadow Cabinet"

- The **official leadership of the opposition party that "shadows" the cabinet.** In debate, sits on the opposite side facing the cabinet members.



Sinn Fein

- **The political arm of the IRA.** An Irish republican political movement founded in 1905 to promote independence from England and unification of Ireland.

Speaker of the House

- **Presides over debates.** Supposed to be objective & often not a member of the majority party. Job is to allow all to speak, but not let things get out of hand. (OURDA, OUARDA)

Thatcherism

- **Conservatives select Margaret Thatcher as their leader.** Her stance towards the economy & politics gained the Conservatives power in 1979. She blamed the weak economy on socialist policies. She privatized business & industry, cut back on social

welfare programs, strengthened national defense, got tough with labor unions, & returned to market force controls on the economy. She also reflected neoliberalism and her supporters called her the "Iron Lady".

The Third Way

→ A centrist alternative to the old labour party on the left and the conservative party on the right. (Tony Blair)

Tories

→ Became the **conservative party**.

UK Independence Party (UKIP)

→ A Eurosceptic and **right-wing populist political party** in the United Kingdom.

Unitary Government

→ **Political authority centralized (London)** and decisions were made by central government, both laws by Parliament & regulations by the bureaucrats in Whitehall.

"Vote of no Confidence"

→ **Where a majority of parliamentary members vote to remove a prime minister from office.** Vote taken by a legislature as to whether its members continue to support the current prime minister. Depending on the country, it can force the resignation of the prime minister and/or lead to new parliamentary elections.

Welfare State

→ A government that **undertakes responsibility for the welfare of its citizens** through programs in public health, public housing/pensions, and unemployment compensation etc.



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