

The Hewett Academy: Citizenship Knowledge

Organiser: British Value: Democracy

Democracy is a word that means a country is run by its people.

The word Democracy comes from ancient Greek and is two words - Demos (meaning "people") and Kratia (meaning "power") - people power!

A Direct Democracy is when people directly vote for or against an idea through a referendum, as the UK did over our membership of the EU in June 2016 or Scotland did over independence in September 2014.

An Indirect Democracy is when we vote for elected representatives (in this country we call them MPs - Member of Parliament) who then take decisions on our behalf.

In the UK we have the following types of elections:

- General Election, held every 5 years to elect MPs
- Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections held every 4 years
- Council elections are held every year in Norwich to elect our Councillors which include Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council.

There is a difference between parliament and government.

Parliament is the name given to the whole political institution, made up of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The people who do these jobs are called MPs (in the Commons) and Peers (in the Lords). It is the job of parliament, as a whole, to pass laws and to check the government are doing their job properly. Parliament is sometimes known as the legislature.

Government is the name given to the people who run the country on a day to day basis. The people who do these jobs are called Ministers (including the Prime Minister!). It is the job of the government to implement laws and to run the country. Government is sometimes known as the Executive.

In the UK to be in the government you must also be in parliament. MPs or peers who do not support the government are called "the opposition".

Currently;
Prime Minister - Boris Johnson MP
Home Secretary - Priti Patel MP
Chancellor - Rishi Sunak MP
Foreign Secretary - Dominic Raab MP
Leader of the Opposition - Sir Keir Starmer MP
In parliament there are many political parties, including the Conservatives, Labour, Scottish National Party (SNP), Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), the Liberal Democrats and the Green Party.

The person who makes sure debate happens fairly and keeps order is called "The Speaker of the House of Commons", Lindsay Hoyle MP.

The system we use to elect our MPs is called "First Past the Post" because the winner of the election just needs to beat the next candidate by a single vote to be victorious.

That means Boris Johnson got 44% of the vote in 2019 and still won the election. How? Because the UK is divided into 650 areas, called constituencies, and each elects one MP. To win the whole election you need to win 326 of these constituencies (Mr Johnson won 365). But to win each area you could do so with less than half the vote. Some people wish to change the way we elect MPs, but in 2011 the UK voted against changing First Past the Post in a referendum.

In 2019 the Conservatives won 44% of the vote, Labour achieved 32%, the Liberal Democrats got 7% and the SNP 3%.

The Prime Minister lives at 10 Downing Street and most government departments are found in an area of London called Whitehall. Parliament is located in Westminster.