



Functional Skills Certificate
June 2015

Functional English

47251

Component 1 Reading

Level 2

Insert

The three sources that follow are:

- **Source A:** a factsheet about the UK parliament
- **Source B:** a news report about voting
- **Source C:** a brochure about a Houses of Parliament tour

**Please open the insert fully
to see all three sources**

Source A

THE UNITED KINGDOM PARLIAMENT



Membership of the House of Commons

There are currently 650 Members of the House of Commons. They are commonly known as MPs — Members of Parliament. Each MP represents one of the areas or constituencies into which the United Kingdom is divided.

How are MPs chosen?

With a few exceptions, everyone over 18 may vote in Parliamentary elections, provided that they are citizens of either the United Kingdom or the Irish Republic. The exceptions are:

- members of the House of Lords
- those detained under mental health legislation
- those serving prison sentences of more than twelve months
- those convicted of corrupt practices at elections during the previous five years.

Nobody can vote unless they are registered as an elector. A form is sent to each household every autumn so that everyone aged 16 or over has a chance to register. Everyone has one vote, but they do not have to use it.

Normally there has to be a general election within five years of the previous one. A by-election occurs when an MP dies, retires or resigns. In each constituency the candidate with the most votes wins and can then take his or her seat in Parliament.

MPs represent and help all the people who live in the constituency, regardless of whether or how they voted, or if they support the party's policies. Almost all the Members of Parliament belong to a political party. They therefore have certain loyalties to their party as well as to their constituency. An MP has to achieve a balance between the interests of all those who have a claim on him or her.

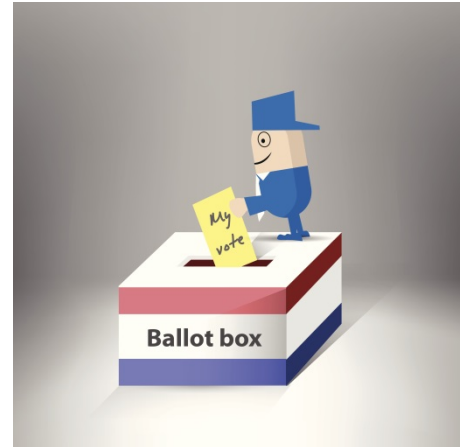
Conservative	303
Labour	257
Liberal Democrat	56
Democratic Unionist	8
Scottish National	6
Independent	5
Sinn Fein	5
Plaid Cymru	3
Social Democratic & Labour Party	3
Alliance	1
Green	1
Respect	1
Speaker	1
Total number of seats	650
Current working Government Majority	75

Source B

Force young people to vote at first opportunity, says think tank

Young people should be required to turn out at the first election in which they have the right to vote, a think tank has said.

The plans involve a small fine for young people deciding not to vote at their first election. They would also offer first-time voters who did not back any political party a "none of the above" option.

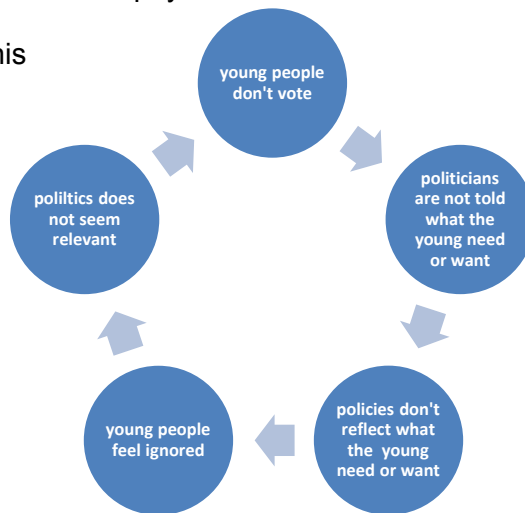


In 2013 local elections, an estimated 32% of 18- to 24-year-olds voted, compared with 72% of those aged over 65.

According to the Institute for Public Policy figures, young people have been hit hardest by public spending cuts. 16- to 24-year-olds face cuts to services worth 28% of their annual household income, compared with 10% of the income of those aged 55-74.

Guy Lodge, an associate director at the think tank, said: "Unequal turnout matters because it gives older and more well-off voters greater influence at the ballot box. If young people don't bother voting, there is less incentive for politicians to pay attention to them".

He went on to explain that this leads to a vicious cycle:



Sarah Birch, a politics professor at the University of Glasgow, added: "There are many other things that young people are required to do, including go to school. Adding just one more small task to this list would not be a huge burden, and it could well help to breathe new life into democracy. It would make politicians target first-time voters like never before and give young voters the potential for far greater political power."

"Young people who don't vote today are less likely than previous generations to develop the habit of voting as they get older, which is why first time compulsory voting is so important."

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Source A: A factsheet about the UK Parliament – <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/current-state-of-the-parties/www.parliament.uk> Contains Parliamentary information licensed under the Open Parliament Licence v1.0

Source B: News report about voting – <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-23832607> BBC and IPPR, The Joseph Roundtree charitable trust

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Source C

HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT TOUR

The Houses of Parliament is a spectacular building with a long and fascinating history, so grab your chance to visit it.

You will learn a lot on the tour but be warned – it can get very busy. There are often 3-4 groups in a room so hearing your Guide can be quite tricky at times.

You will need to leave at least 20 minutes to get through security checks. Bag and body scanners are in use. The tour will commence once there are approximately 20 people assembled. The Guide will take you to the starting point, which is a 5-10 minute walk inside.



The tour begins at the Norman Porch by the Sovereign's Entrance where the Queen arrives for the State Opening of Parliament. You then enter the Queen's Robing Room where the Queen gets dressed in her stately robes.

You can see the amazing 22 ½ carat gold throne on which the Queen sits for the State Opening of Parliament – an incredible sight.

Your tour then takes you into the Central Lobby, which you may well recognise from watching TV political reports, then into the Members' Lobby.

In St Stephen's Hall you will find the gift shop. There are also a number of statues, one of which was damaged by a suffragette who chained herself to it and had to be removed by force.

Resist the temptation to get sidetracked: there is no need as, later in the tour, you will revisit all the areas you pass during this walk. Your guides are very knowledgeable so feel free to ask questions.

No seating is provided anywhere on the tour. Don't try to sit down – you'll get told off. Wearing a hat inside is also forbidden as this is a Royal Palace and must be respected.

Once the tour is over, return to the shop for a souvenir of your visit. It's also worth stopping at the clean toilets and reasonably-priced café.

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**Open out this page to see
Source A and Source B**