

# Politics – and the people

by Paul Jenkinson



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“Populismus” – ein Thema, das sowohl bei Politikerinnen und Politikern als auch der Bevölkerung für Unbehagen auslöst. Diese Unterrichtseinheit behandelt das aktuelle und viel diskutierte Thema in seinen unterschiedlichen Ausprägungen. Die Schülerinnen und Schüler arbeiten dabei mit Zeitungsartikeln, einer Karikatur, einer Statistik, einem Hörtext und Videos. Sie gehen kritisch mit dem Begriff “Populismus” um und diskutieren die Auswirkungen populistischer politischer Persönlichkeiten auf das Wahlverhalten der Bürgerinnen und Bürger. Sie behandeln die geschichtliche Rolle der Politik im Leben junger Menschen und die Folgen von Demonstrationen und anderen Formen politischer Teilhabe an der Politik.

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## Oberstufe (Niveau)

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<b>Facts</b>	1
<b>Notes on the material</b>	2
<b>Topic 1: Populism on the rise</b>	3
<b>Topic 2: Manipulation? – Politicians and the press</b>	13
<b>Topic 3: Young people and politics</b>	24
<b>Topic 4: Protests – provoking political change</b>	36
<b>Topic 5: Protests – politics in sport</b>	43

## Competences and skills:

The unit contains texts and tasks that can be classified as level **B2/C1** (*Europäischer Referenzrahmen*). Students improve their **reading** and **writing skills** by working with different text types like newspaper and magazine articles and writing topically related compositions. Furthermore, they practice their **listening comprehension** and **viewing comprehension skills** with the help of videos and a TED-Talk and enhance their **competences in analysis** by analysing a cartoon and statistics. Students also improve their **speaking skills** in that they discuss and present various political matters. Finally, **mediation skills** are enhanced. Overall, students work on a variety of **interdisciplinary themes** concerned with society, history, arts and sport.

## Overview:

### List of abbreviations:

**A** Text analysis

**E** Essay/Statement/Composition

**LVC** Listening/Viewing comprehension

**P** Presentation

**RC** Reading comprehension

**W** Writing

**C** Comment

**LC** Listening comprehension

**MD** Mediation

**R** Research

**T** Working with the text

Topic	Material	Method
1: Populism on the rise	M1–M2	RC, W, T, E
2: Manipulation? – Politicians and the press	M3–M4	C, T, A, W
3: Young people and politics	M5–M6	A, E, MD, R, RC, T
4: Protests – provoking political change	M7	LC, W, PR
5: Protests – politics in sports	M8	C, E, LVC

## Topic 2: Manipulation? – Politicians and the press

### M3 Text: *The Brexit referendum was badly designed and unfairly won. So why is there so much deference to it?*



[...] The UK is a representative democracy that very occasionally holds referendums. Although referendums have been reserved for constitutional issues, it is not the case that constitutional issues are always decided by referendums. Instead they often tend to be used by governments to put to rest major internal debates over constitutional issues. Cameron promised to hold a referendum on EU membership in order to (temporarily as it turned out) silence internal debates within the Conservative Party.

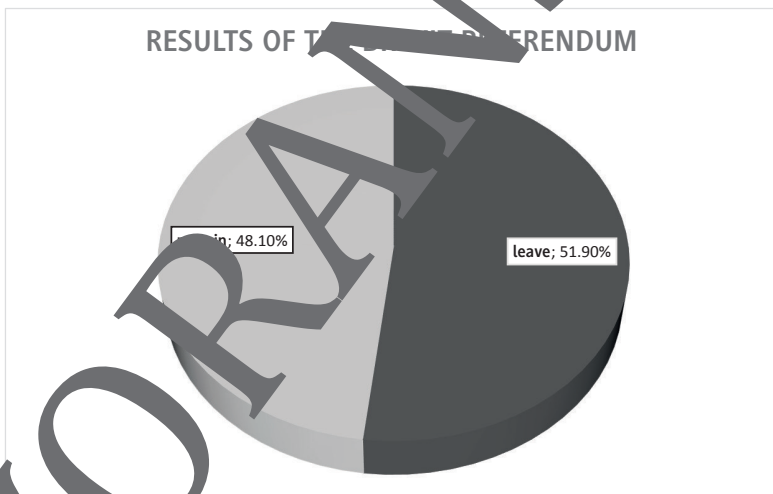
[...] the referendum was badly designed [...]. Leave voters were not required to settle on a particular alternative to being in the EU: EEA membership (Norway), being in the Customs Union or not, being in the Single Market or not, etc. For that reason Boris Johnson can claim that leaving without a deal is closest to what Leavers voted for, even though No Deal was never proposed by the Leave campaign. This lack of specifics also made it easier for the Leave campaign to spin fantasies like “the easiest deal in history”.

The result of the referendum would have its impact on two main groups above all others: UK citizens living in the EU, and EU citizens living in the UK. The only people in that group allowed to vote were UK citizens living in the EU and registered in a UK constituency less than 15 years ago. However, Commonwealth citizens resident in the UK were allowed to vote. In the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence, EU residents were allowed to vote. How do you describe excluding UK residents who would be most affected by a referendum as anything other than rigging? that referendum?

Vote Leave broke election law in at least two ways – yet neither of the main political parties seem to care (one for obvious reasons, the other less so). We still do not know whether the Leave campaign was funded by Russian money or not. To dismiss this by saying the extra spending probably didn't influence the result misses the point. If all that happens after one side breaks spending rules in an election is a fine, then we are on the road to US style elections where

	leave	remain
<b>England</b>	53.4%	46.6%
turnout <sup>1</sup> 73%	15,188,406 votes	13,266,996 votes
<b>Scotland</b>	38.0%	62.0%
turnout 67.2%	1,018,322 votes	1,661,191 votes
<b>Wales</b>	52.5%	47.5%
turnout 71.7%	854,572 votes	772,347 votes
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	44.2%	55.8%
turnout 62.7%	349,442 votes	446,007 votes
<b>UNITED KINGDOM result</b>	<b>51.9%</b> <b>17,410,742 votes</b>	<b>48.1%</b> <b>15,441,241 votes</b>

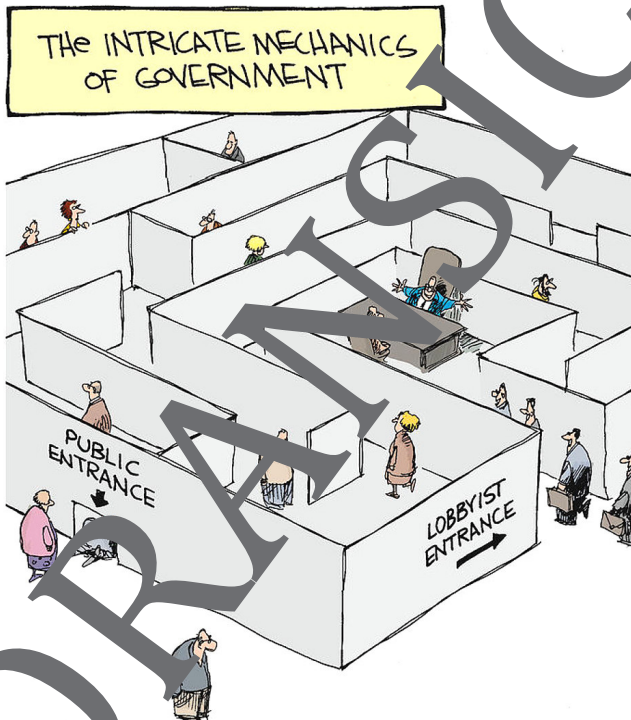
Source: Official figures electoral commission.org.uk  
<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums/eu-referendum/results-and-turnout-eu-referendum>



<sup>1</sup> turnout: number of people who voted in a referendum or election

## Working with cartoons

- Describe and analyse the cartoon.
- Reflect on the cartoon's title *The Intricate<sup>3</sup> Mechanics of Government* and comment briefly on the mechanics of government illustrated in the text.



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Source: Whittaker Inc.

### Annotation

**intricate:** complicated, complex

**lobbyist:** so. who tries to persuade a politician or official group to do sth.

## Composition



7. Select one of the following topics to write about.
- If you could have two minutes of talking time in front of the EU parliament, what would you say? Write your speech in English.
  - If you could choose a cause to support, what would it be and why? Write an article about this for a teenagers' magazine.

## Further activity

8. Political protests take many forms.



- Research one particular example and create a short presentation on it. Look at the cause of the protest, analyse it and comment on the outcome, if any. Some topic suggestions are given below. However, you may select your own.

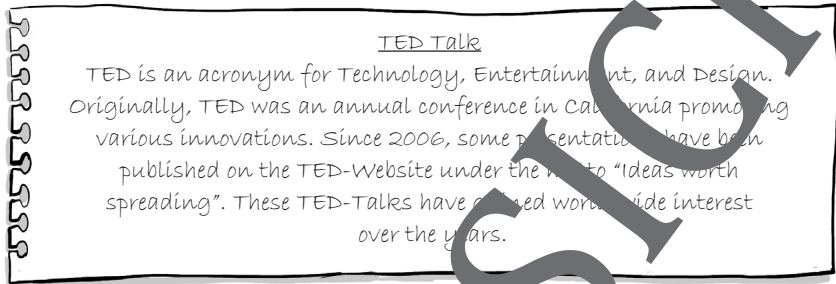


- Then, work in groups. Present your individual findings to your group. Together, discuss the various methods of protesting used in sport, music and art and pick the most influential. Give reasons for your choice.

Sport	Music	Art
Taking the knee	<i>Mr. President</i> (Pink)	An example of Banksy's street art
Emily Davison and the King's horse	<i>Sunday, Bloody Sunday</i> (U2)	George Grosz / Otto Dix (anti-war works)
Muhammad Ali protesting the U.S. Vietnam draft	<i>Don't Stop Believin' in the USA</i> (Bruce Springsteen)	Frida Kahlo example
Black power salute	<i>Big Yellow Taxi</i> (Joni Mitchell / Counting Crows)	Picasso's Guernica
Cathy Freeman at the 2000 Olympic games	<i>American Idiot</i> (Green Day)	Keith Haring (Ignorance = Fear / Silence = Death)

## Topic 4: Protests – provoking political change

### M7 Ted Talk – *How protest is redefining democracy around the world*



#### Listening comprehension



1. Listen to the TED-Talk *How protest is redefining democracy around the world*.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/zachariah\\_mampilly\\_how\\_protest\\_is\\_redefining\\_democracy\\_around\\_the\\_world?refered\\_playlist-the\\_power\\_of\\_protest#t-79535](https://www.ted.com/talks/zachariah_mampilly_how_protest_is_redefining_democracy_around_the_world?refered_playlist-the_power_of_protest#t-79535)

**Vocabulary:** Familiarise yourself with some words from the talk which may be new:

ballot box	die Wahlurne
to abandon	to give up
able-bodied	fit and healthy
to be contentious	controversial
contingent	group
to be devoid of	to be without sth.
to hint	to suggest

Work on the following tasks. There are two types of tasks on the worksheet: gap filling and multiple choice. Before listening to the talk, read each task carefully. The tasks are in the talk order. If you do not know an answer, you should know where to find it when listening to the talk a second time.

**Annotation:** There is a reference to Mugabe, who died in September 2019. Mugabe is not relevant to any answers.



## Topic 5: Protests – politics in sport

### M8 Politically influential athletes



Watch the two interconnected videos about politics in sport one after another. Read all the tasks carefully before watching the videos.

Video 1: Colin Kaepernick [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddTRuCs\\_QCA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddTRuCs_QCA)

Video 2: A historical perspective <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZ...YmqQYO>

#### Pre-viewing discussion

1. Discuss in how far celebrities can influence the political opinions and attitudes of people.

#### Vocabulary

Video 1: Colin Kaepernick	
to be held accountable	to be responsible for sth.
to take a knee	to kneel down on one knee in protest
a backup	a reserve
to put one's neck out	to bravely say or do sth. that could be criticised or might even eventually be wrong
to push down the first domino	to start sth. that leads to a chain reaction
to push the needle	to move onto the next step
to keep sth. real	to talk about sth. in an honest and serious way
a bench warmer	so who is always on the reserve bench in a football game but who never plays
Video 2: A historical perspective	
draft orders	orders to join the military
quarrel	argument
the Viet Cong	in the Vietnam War, they were the communist army fighting against the government
to be scorned	to be criticised and ignored