



# Should the UK be called a democracy?

Key Stage 4 Scheme of work

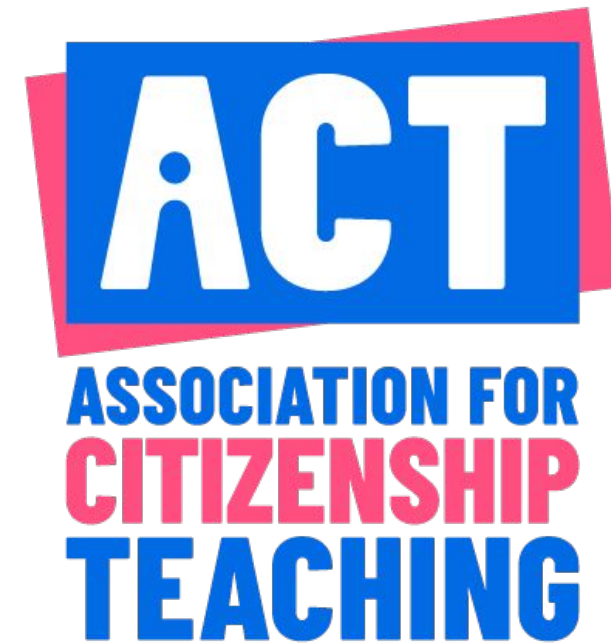
## **Note to teachers: Should the UK be Called a Democracy?**

### **Additional information**

This lesson is part of a scheme of work that comprises six lessons for teaching Key Stage 4 Citizenship in line with the requirements of the Citizenship National Curriculum. The lesson is part of the ACT model Key Stage 4 curriculum, which can be used and adapted to fit with your school's provision. Each scheme of work has an enquiry question as the focus and is then organised into smaller questions that provide a learning focus for each lesson.

These lessons contain sensitive topics. It is crucial to understand the students you teach and their individual circumstances, as content may relate directly to their personal lives. Be mindful of the viewpoints that might arise and encourage empathy and understanding through discussions. Where issues raised in teaching the lesson may be sensitive or controversial in nature, please ensure you are in line with your school policies on such matters. You may also find the ACT guidance on teaching sensitive and controversial issues in Citizenship helpful.

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**[teachingcitizenship.org.uk](https://teachingcitizenship.org.uk)**



# KS4 key enquiry: Should the UK be called a democracy?









## National Curriculum links









Politics, Parliament and government – parliamentary democracy and the key elements of the constitution of the United Kingdom, including the power of government, the role of citizens and Parliament in holding those in power to account, and the different roles of the executive, legislature and judiciary and a free press

Lessons	Lesson 1: How can we tell if a country is democratic?	Lesson 2: What is Parliament and what are its functions?	Lesson 3: How can we hold our leaders to account?	Lesson 4: What is a free press and why is it important for democracy?	Lesson 5: Are democracies making the most of digital technology?	Lesson 6: How can I take part in the democratic process?
Overview	This lesson provides students with the opportunity to discuss the concept of democracy. They explore the key features of a democratic society and begin to identify whether different countries are democratic.	In this lesson, students recap knowledge from the previous lesson and develop critical thinking about the link between Parliament and democracy. They find out about parliamentary functions and consider whether there are enough checks on the prime minister.	In this lesson, students explore how other countries hold their leaders to account in comparison to the UK. They then apply this knowledge in an extended piece of writing using a clear set of criteria.	Students investigate the importance of having a free press in a democracy. They consider the characteristics of a free press in a democracy and how free the press is around the world. They explore if there are ever times when it is acceptable to use censorship.	In this lesson, students explore the relationship between digital technology and democracy. They find out how digital technology is used in democracies worldwide, evaluate the benefits and risks, and consider the UK's use of digital technology for democracy.	This lesson introduces students to select committees. By taking part in a simulated select committee inquiry, they learn that this is a way for them to become part of the democratic process. To end the lesson, they focus on the big question for this scheme of work: Should the UK be called a democracy?
Learning questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do we mean by 'democracy'?</li> <li>What are the key features of a democracy?</li> <li>Is a democracy always better than other forms of government?</li> <li>How can you judge how democratic a country is?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the link between Parliament and democracy?</li> <li>What is Parliament's purpose?</li> <li>How are the UK Parliament and government organised?</li> <li>Are there enough checks on the prime minister?</li> <li>How do the monarch, legislature, executive and judiciary work together?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How are leaders held to account in the UK?</li> <li>How are leaders held to account in other countries?</li> <li>How effective are the checks and balances in different political systems?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is a free press?</li> <li>Why is press freedom important in a democracy?</li> <li>How free is the press in different countries?</li> <li>Why might information be censored?</li> <li>Is it ever acceptable to control the media?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can digital technology be used to support democracy?</li> <li>How is digital technology already being used in democracies worldwide?</li> <li>What are the benefits and risks?</li> <li>Could the UK be making better use of digital technology to support democracy?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are select committees and how are they run?</li> <li>How can we measure the success of select committees?</li> <li>How can I take part in the democratic process through select committees?</li> <li>Should the UK be called a democracy?</li> </ul>
Concepts and skills	Democracy, values, freedom, rule of law, rights and responsibilities, critical thinking, investigation, analysis	Critical thinking, power, democracy, separation of powers	Power, advocacy	Media literacy, democracy, bias, censorship, validity, reliability	Authenticity, media literacy	Democracy, action, rights, problem solving, enquiry, debate
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exploration of the term 'democracy'</li> <li>Discussion of features of democracy</li> <li>Review of case studies to identify whether countries are full democracy, flawed, hybrid, or authoritarian</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recap on prior learning</li> <li>Discussion of the link between Parliament and democracy</li> <li>Writing about Parliament's purpose</li> <li>Understanding UK political structure</li> <li>Scavenger hunt to retrieve facts about checks and balances</li> <li>Discussing and writing about checks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retrieval tasks</li> <li>Review and discussion of case studies about checks and balances in different countries</li> <li>Extended piece of writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retrieval tasks</li> <li>Discussion of free press</li> <li>Writing challenging questions</li> <li>Producing a mind map</li> <li>Reviewing case studies</li> <li>Short writing task</li> <li>Continuum task</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retrieval task</li> <li>Discussion of digital technology and democracy in pairs, small groups and as a class</li> <li>Producing a mind map</li> <li>Research based on case studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select committees briefing</li> <li>Case study discussion</li> <li>Select committee inquiry</li> <li>Writing a report</li> <li>Big question plenary</li> <li>Researching democratic indices</li> </ul>
Resources (in addition to slide presentation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country case studies (eight)</li> <li>Worksheet: Democracy analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worksheet and PDF for a scavenger hunt on parliamentary checks</li> <li><i>How Parliament Works</i> booklet</li> <li><i>Your UK Parliament: the essentials</i></li> <li>SEND/EAL guide to Parliament</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Videos about how four different countries hold their leaders to account</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worksheet to prompt challenging question writing</li> <li>Case studies about four countries</li> <li>Agree/disagree cards</li> <li>Link to World Press Freedom Index</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Video about online democracy</li> <li>Worksheet exploring digital democracy in action</li> <li>Case studies</li> <li>Research task worksheet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Video clips</li> <li>Case studies focusing on digital security and privacy</li> <li>Writing worksheet</li> <li>Links to more information</li> </ul>
Differentiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign case studies with an appropriate level of accessibility (a range is supplied)</li> <li>Direct students to a specific takeaway challenge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask students to form questions for peers about the main function of Parliament, opening up discussion</li> <li>Use different levels of tasks</li> <li>Use the SEND/EAL guide provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide sentence starters and scaffolding for extended writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback a summary of the group discussion to teacher</li> <li>Scaffold mind map</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share and justify ideas for laws on press freedom</li> <li>Extend evaluation of the risks and benefits of using digital technology for democracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocation of roles in simulated select committee activity</li> </ul>
Assessment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge check self-assessments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hinge questions and micro scripts</li> <li>Knowledge checks</li> <li>Self-assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of retrieval tasks</li> <li>Peer assessment of extended piece of writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of a retrieval task and a mind map to improve upon with further knowledge</li> <li>Short written responses</li> <li>Questioning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of a retrieval task and a mind map to improve upon with further knowledge</li> <li>Questioning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Baseline assessment at the start of the lesson</li> <li>Report on the select committee inquiry</li> </ul>
Takeaway task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watch and make notes on a video for discussion in the next lesson</li> <li>Choose a challenge and bring answers to the next lesson</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in the 'MP for a week' online game</li> <li>Take a virtual tour of Parliament</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visit websites and prepare to discuss content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read and review the NUJ Code of Conduct</li> <li>List all the issues you think the press should be free and not free to discuss</li> <li>Create your own law on press freedom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research the work of select committees</li> <li>Research a current inquiry and be ready to report back in the next lesson</li> </ul>	

<b>Bicameral legislature</b>	A bicameral legislature has legislators in two separate assemblies, chambers or houses. For example, the Houses of Parliament in the UK are bicameral: The House of Commons and the House of Lords.
<b>Cabinet</b>	A group of MPs who lead major government departments. The cabinet meets weekly to make decisions about how government policy will be carried out.
<b>Censorship</b>	A government placing limits on the information given to the general public.
<b>Conventions</b>	Rules that are observed despite not being written in a document that has legal authority.
<b>Democracy</b>	A system of government in which citizens vote in regular, fair elections for representatives who then make laws and decisions on their behalf.
<b>Executive</b>	The branch of the government that is responsible for putting laws or decisions into effect.
<b>Government</b>	Individuals who have been elected to run the state. In the UK, the government is led by the Prime Minister (PM).
<b>House of Commons</b>	An elected body currently consisting of 650 MPs. It is the lower house of Parliament and meets in the Palace of Westminster.
<b>House of Lords</b>	The upper house of Parliament, composed of life peers and hereditary peers, who scrutinise the bills approved by the House of Commons. The House of Lords meets in the Palace of Westminster.
<b>Judiciary</b>	The branch of the state that is responsible for enforcing the law. It is composed of judges and other legal officials.
<b>Legislature</b>	The law-making body of the state, i.e. the Parliament in the UK.

<p><b>Monarchy</b></p>	<p>A form of government in which a king or queen reigns as the head of state. The UK is a constitutional monarchy.</p>
<p><b>Parliament</b></p>	<p>The institution of government in the UK. It comprises three parts: the House of Commons, the House of Lords, and the monarch.</p>
<p><b>Parliamentary sovereignty</b></p>	<p>The principle that Parliament is the supreme legal authority in the UK. Only Parliament can create or end any UK law.</p>
<p><b>Press (media) freedom</b></p>	<p>The ability of the press to give information and express opinions.</p>
<p><b>Uncodified</b></p>	<p>An uncodified constitution is one in which the rules are in precedent and customs alongside a variety of texts, rather than one written document.</p>

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