





1. General introduction parliamentary democracy constitutional monarch 2. The British Constitution Much of the constitution is based on unwritten customs and rules called conventions. And it is also formed from other sources like: formal written legislation created and agreed by Parliament - statute law; law developed by judges as part of the justice system - common law; law made in Europe which affects the UK as a factor of our membership in the European Union - EC law

3. What is the job of Parliament? The main functions of Parliament are: to pass laws to provide, by voting for taxation, the means of carrying on the work of government to scrutinise government policy and administration, including proposals for expenditure to debate the major issues of the day

4. The House of Commons The House of Commons has 650 members who have been elected by local residents to represent an area of the country in Parliament. The members are called MPs (Members of Parliament). Each MP represents one of 650 constituencies in the UK and is a member of a political party, such as New Labour or the Conservative party. The Commons is the most important place for discussing policies and making laws.

5. The House of Lords The House of Lords has 27 members who have been appointed by the sovereign, at the suggestion of the Prime Minister, for their outstanding work in one field or another. The House of Lords is a part of the UK's judicial system.

6. The Queen The Queen is the official head of State. Britain has a constitutional monarchy where the Queen only rules symbolically; in reality, power belongs to Parliament. So, although the Queen 'opens' Parliament each year and laws are passed in her name, the Queen herself plays no part in determining decisions made in Parliament. The Queen has the final say on whether a bill becomes law. The last monarch to reject a law that was wanted by both Houses of Parliament was Queen Anne. She died in 1714.

7. How does a bill become law? Basically, a Bill passes through several stages in both Houses of Parliament to become a law. These stages take place in both Houses: First reading (introduction of the Bill without debate); Second reading (general debate); Committee stage (detailed examination, debate and amendments); Report stage (opportunity for further amendments); Third reading (final chance for debate)

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11. Major political parties 1. Labour Party (the present, the end of 19th century) a socialist party, they believe a society should be relatively equal in economic terms 2. Conservative Party (opponent members of the richer part of society and providing support to the poorer part of society) 3. Liberal Democrats (the 3rd biggest) a party of the middle-class 4. Green Party (the 4th biggest) a party of environmentalists 5. UK Independence Party (UKIP) a party of nationalists 6. Scottish National Party (SNP) a party of Scottish nationalists 7. Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) a party of unionists 8. Sinn Féin a party of Irish nationalists 9. Plaid Cymru a party of Welsh nationalists 10. The Green Party a party of environmentalists 11. The Liberal Democrats a party of the middle-class 12. The Scottish National Party a party of Scottish nationalists 13. The Democratic Unionist Party a party of unionists 14. Sinn Féin a party of Irish nationalists 15. Plaid Cymru a party of Welsh nationalists

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