

# A Hung Parliament

When there is a general election, everyone over the age of 18 can vote for which political party they want to run the country. People are told when and where they need to vote. Voting is anonymous, which means you don't put your name on so your vote cannot be traced back to you. This means that people have the freedom of choice to vote for the party they choose.

Votes are counted very carefully and the results are known nationally, by the next morning.



## How to Win

There are 650 seats available in the House of Commons. That means 650 people can be in Parliament and represent their local council area, known as their constituency.

Whichever party wins the majority of the seats will win the election overall, and their leader will be the Prime Minister.

## A Hung Parliament Result

However, to win the majority of seats that party must have at least 326. When no party wins this amount, then it is called a hung parliament.

If you are the prime minister, having the majority number of seats means there are more people on your side, who will agree with you when you want to change the laws or make big decisions.

With a hung parliament and no majority, the prime minister can either:

- govern with their party alone, but risk not having enough people on their side when it really matters;
- form a bond with another party who did not have enough seats, and rely on their support (see the table below).

It can be very difficult for a prime minister of one party to find another party who will agree with them and share their ideas of how to run a country.

## Decisions, Decisions

If a prime minister cannot find another party to work with, they resign, as it shows other Members of Parliament do not have confidence in their ability to lead.

Decisions need to happen quickly. The prime minister must begin putting together their new **cabinet**.

A hung parliament is not an ideal situation for a prime minister, as it means they cannot do everything their party planned to do.

However, it could work in the favour of the nation. If some unpopular decisions are not pushed through too quickly, this could help people in the UK.

Political Party	Number of Seats Won
Conservatives	318
Labour	262
Scottish National Party	35
Liberal Democrats	12
Democratic Unionist Party	10
Sinn Féin	7
Plaid Cymru	4
Green	1
Other	1

### **cabinet:**

A group of advisers chosen by the prime minister, to give their opinions on the decisions the PM makes, and carry out specific roles, like being the financial adviser or the foreign secretary.



# Questions

1. What is the purpose of a General Election?

- ☐ To choose who runs the marathon.
- ☐ To choose which party runs the country.
- ☐ To choose who should be allowed to vote.
- ☐ To choose the bank holidays.

2. What is the constituency?

- ☐ the local school
- ☐ Parliament
- ☐ the local council area
- ☐ the House of Commons

3. Which word closely matches the meaning of the word 'majority'?

- ☐ least
- ☐ equal
- ☐ most
- ☐ same

4. Match up these sentences.

There are 650

govern the country.

A party must win

seats in the House of Commons.

The winning party will

the majority number of seats available.

5. Why would a prime minister need the majority number of seats won for their party?

- ☐ So that they can do what they like.
- ☐ To have their friends with them.
- ☐ To have more people on their side.
- ☐ In case they are off work with illness.

6. Explain what the danger is of a prime minister choosing to govern with just their party?

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7. If they do not choose to govern on their own with just their party, what is their other option?

- ☐ Get support from another party who did not win enough seats.
- ☐ Get support from their families.
- ☐ Make all the decisions without their own party.
- ☐ Demand another election.

8. Why would a prime minister resign?

- ☐ They are fed up.
- ☐ They no longer want to be the prime minister.
- ☐ The prime minister has lost confidence in their own ability to lead.
- ☐ The Members of Parliament have lost confidence in their ability to lead.

9. Explain the role of the cabinet.

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10. Why would a prime minister not want a hung parliament?

- ☐ They cannot stay as prime minister.
- ☐ They cannot do all the things they had planned to do.
- ☐ They want a holiday.
- ☐ They want to work alongside another party.