

Britain

Official Name: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Location: off the northwest coast of Europe

Population: 62 million (#22)

Population growth rate: .557% (#149)

Birth rate: 12.29 per 1,000 (#163)

Death rate: 9.33 per 1,000 (#46)

Infant mortality: 4.62 per 1,000 (#190)

Life expectancy:

Male= 77

Female= 82

Language: English

Literacy: 99%

Net migration: 2.6 per 1,000 (#32)

Urbanization: 80%

Capitol: London (8.5 million)

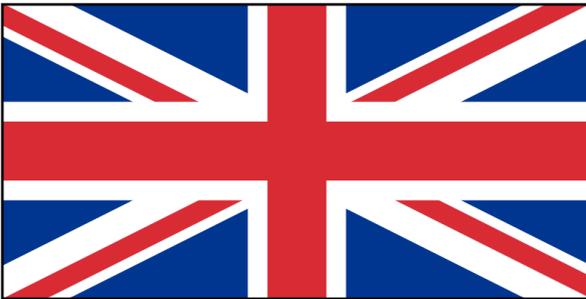
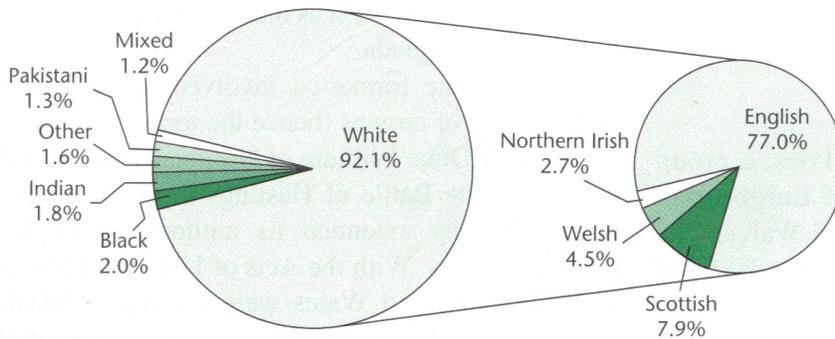


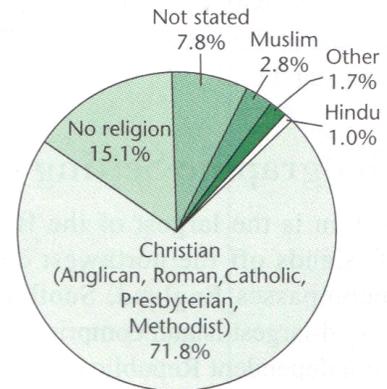
FIGURE 2.1

The British Nation at a Glance

Britain: Ethnicity



Britain: Religion



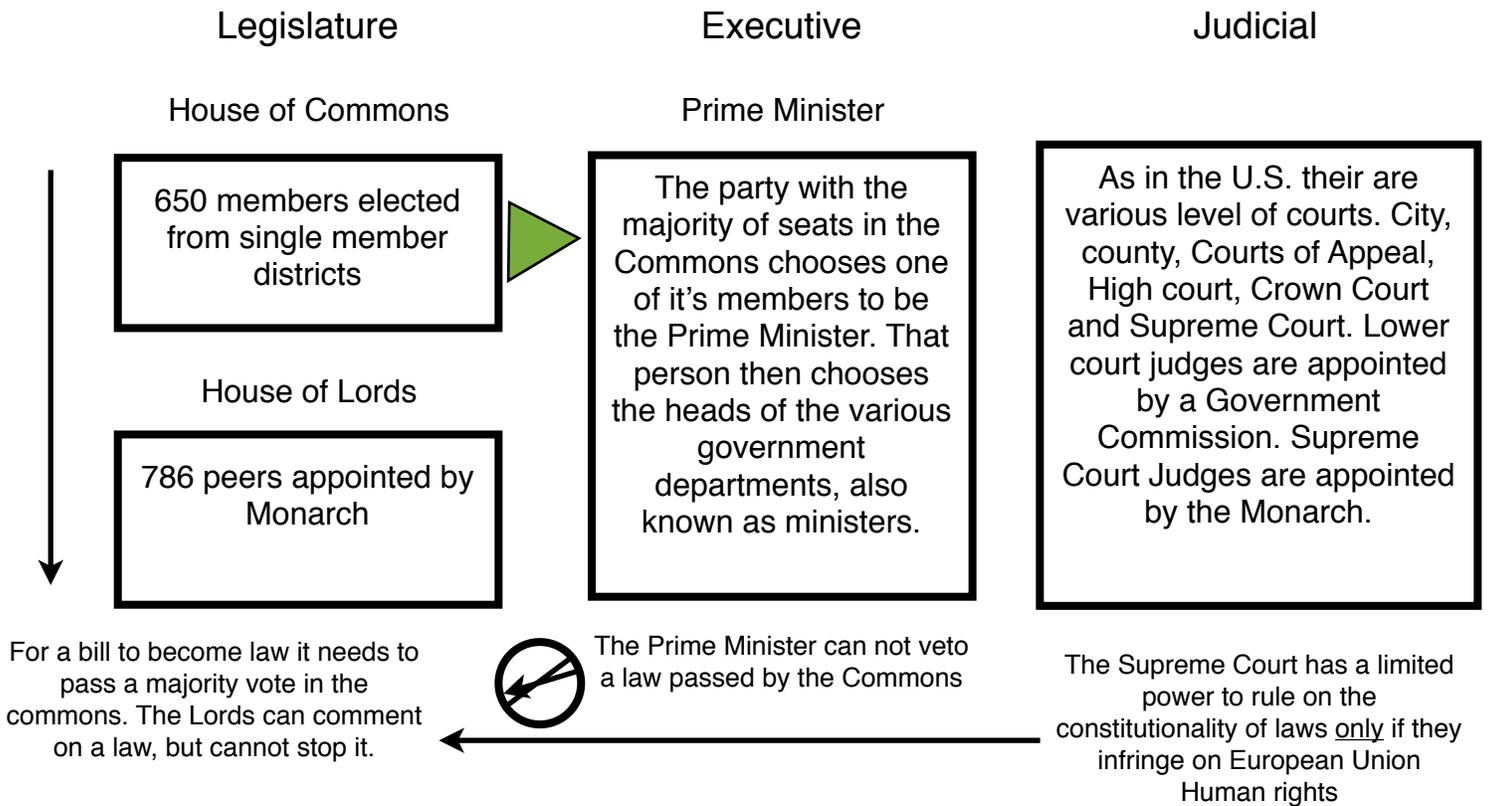
Critical Junctures (pg. 52 to 60)

- 1.1066: Norman conquest
- 2.1215 Magna Carta
- 3.1536 & 1542: Acts of Union (Wales)
- 4.1603: James VI, King of Scotland becomes James I king of England
- 5.1688 Glorious Revolution

- 1.1707 Act of Union (England & Scotland)
- 2.1820 to late 1800, Industrial Revolution
- 3.1914 to 1945 World Wars I & II
4. Collectivist Consensus (1945 to 1979)
5. Thatcher and the enterprise culture (79 to 1990)
6. The New Labor Party's 3rd. way

Government Structure

No written constitution. Government formed over time by tradition. The Prime Minister as leader of the majority party has considerable legislative and executive power. No need for veto power as the majority party will not propose legislation that its own Prime Minister would not want. Until recently the courts had no authority to check the power of the other branches of government. With the passage of the Constitutional Reform Act in 2005 a Supreme Court was created with the power to rule on cases involving Human Rights only.



Political Information



Party in power: Conservative in coalition with the Liberal Democrats

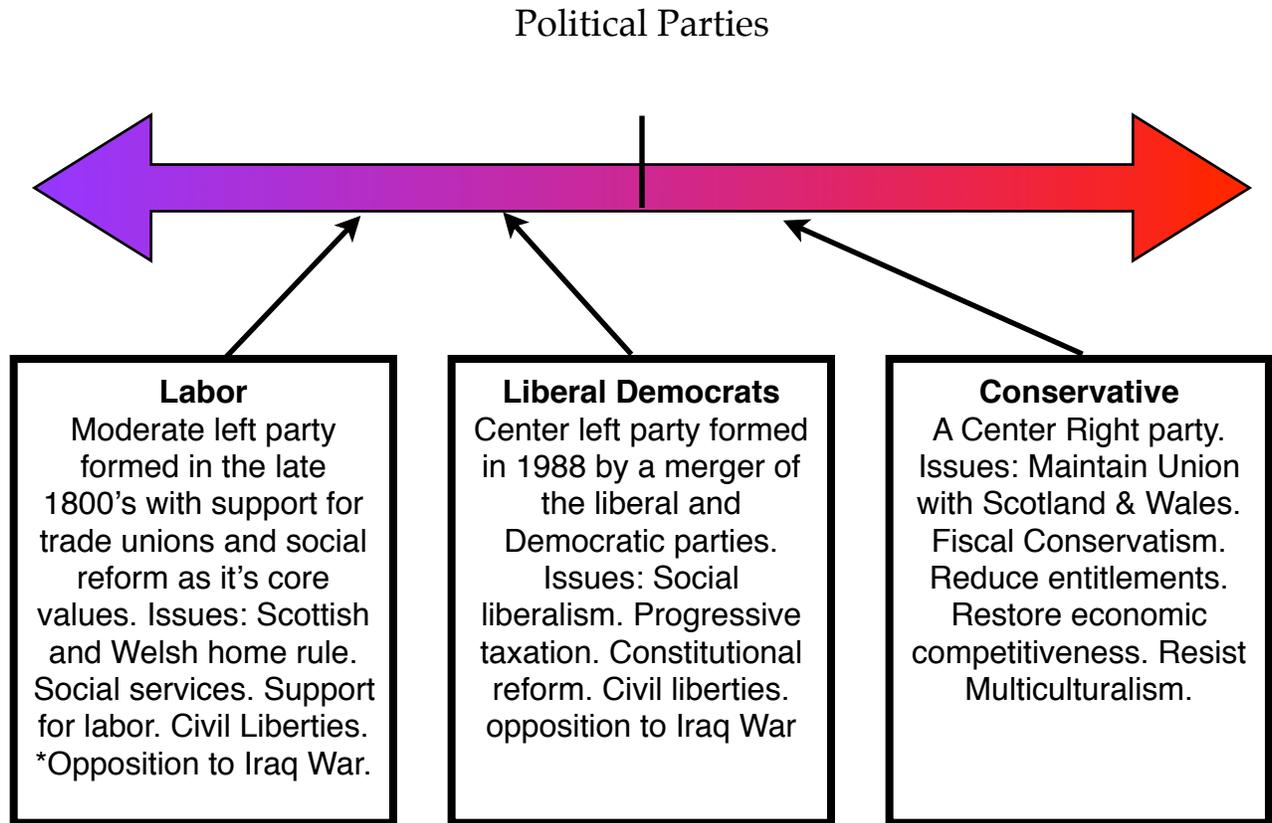
Prime Minister: David Cameron (Con)

Deputy Prime Minister: Nick Clegg (Lib Dem)

Last Election: May 2010

Next Election: within five years

Notes: In the last election the Conservative party failed to win a majority of seats in the parliament. They were forced to form a coalition with the moderate Liberal Democratic Party in order to claim control of the House of Commons.



* Important Note: Labor Prime Minister Tony Blair (1997 to 2007) supported the war in Iraq in opposition to his own party and seriously damaged the national popularity of his party.

Economic Information

GDP by Economic Sector:

Agriculture=.9%

Industrial= 2.1%

Service=77.1%

Per Capita GDP= \$35,100 (#36)

GDP Growth Rate=1.6% (#164)

Labor Force= 31.45 million (#19)

Unemployment Rate= 7.9% (#86)

Population living below Poverty Line=14%

Important Economic Activity:

Banking, Insurance, Financial Services, Import & Export, Oil Exportation, Extensive Coal and Oil Reserves. Industry in Decline.

Current Issues

1. The collapse of the American real estate bubble left many English banks in jeopardy of closing as they were also heavily invested in U.S. real estate. Public fear over the loan crisis also drove global stock markets into a nose dive further impacting the English financial market. In response the British government privatized some banks, allocated public funds to "Bail Out" troubled financial institutions and instituted "austerity" measures to reduce the debt burden on the government. These austerity measures included, reductions in public services, pay freezes/ delays for public employees, increased retirement age requirements and the institution of fees on once free services. This has resulted in demonstrations and some rioting particularly among college students who are facing tuition fees to attend once free colleges, the retired and those nearing retirement who fear a reduction in retirement benefits and a general concern over the loss of social services.
2. Continuing low level protests over British participation in the wars in Iraq & Afghanistan.
3. Occasional Green and anti-nuclear activism.
4. Farmer protest over trade policy within the European Union (cheap tariff free produce from Eastern Europe) & the introduction of genetically modified foods.
5. Public resistance to full participation in the European Union, i.e. no adoption of the Euro as national currency and a desire to maintain an independent foreign policy and concerns over unrestricted immigration for other EU member states.