

Topic: Systems of government

Lesson: How does the UK compare?	KS or Year Group: KS3
Resources: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Resource 1 - World map2. Resource 2 - Country fact sheets3. Resource 3 - Fact chart	Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All students should understand that there are different political systems across the world.• Most students will be able to compare two or more systems of government with some students able to explain the significance of these differences.

National Curriculum

Key Concepts: 1.1b, 1.3b, 1.3b

Key Processes: 2.1a

Range and Content: 3a, 3k

Curriculum Opportunities: 4h

Lesson

This lesson looks at how different countries around the world are governed. However, it is by no means a comprehensive description of political systems.

The lesson provides the opportunity for students to reach Level 6 in the new NC by beginning to make comparisons between the UK system of democratic parliamentary government and those systems in other parts of the world. Group work skills are used with the aim being to get students to understand that there are different ways of ruling countries, some of which are less fair than in the UK.

Starter

- Give out or project **Resource 1 – World map**. Tell the class that the lesson is going to focus on Sweden, USA, Russia, Burma, North Korea and the UK. Ask students to pinpoint these countries on the map. Once they have found them, ask the students to nominate a fact about each country and write it on the board.

How does the UK compare?

Main activity

Activity 1:

- Separate the class into six groups. Give each group a different information pack from **Resource 2 - Country fact sheets**. If groups are set by ability, then the lower ability group could be given the UK.
- Give each group time to read through their information sheet and then they can fill in the details for the country they have been given in the first page of **Resource 3 – Fact sheet**.
- Bring the class back together and each group can feedback to the whole class, allowing all students to fill in the rest of Resource 3.

Activity 2:

- Students can then individually write a report which asks them to compare the UK government to others around the world. More able students will be able to explain the differences and the significance of these differences for people living in those countries. Less able students will be able to compare the facts taken from the chart.

Plenary

Ask students to write which country they would most like to live in and to give three reasons why this is. This could also be done verbally, or as a think-pair-share activity.

Aim high

Some groups countries will be more difficult than others and this is a way to differentiate between ability. By giving students countries like Burma this allows higher ability students to use their own knowledge and information about these countries which have been in the news recently.

Assessment

Students' charts can be assessed formally and the plenary can be made into an assessment focus, possibly even developed into an extended homework essay.

Check the web

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>

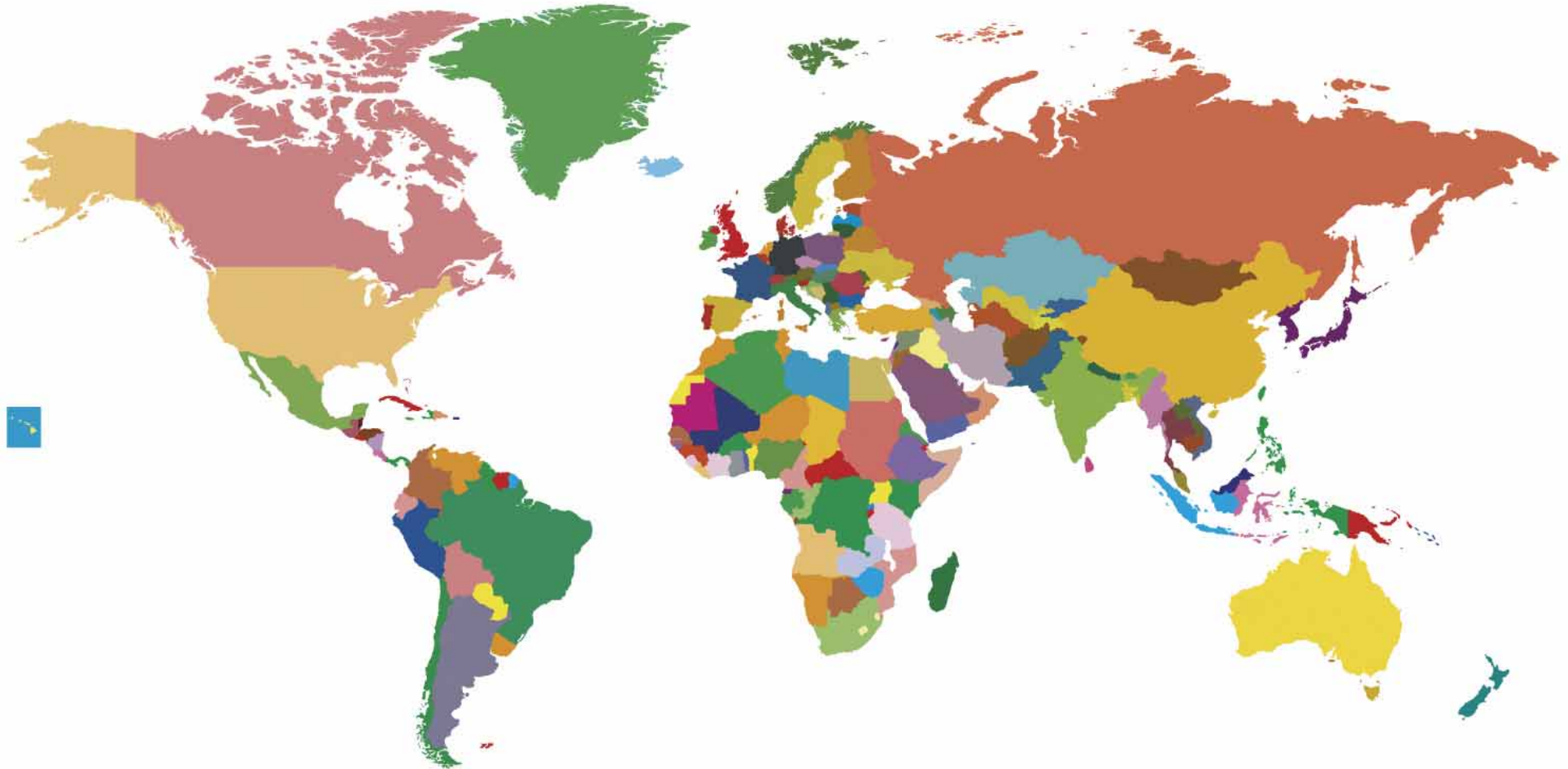
This is a useful website for accurate information on any of the countries in the packs. Also useful for maps and other pieces of information.

Summary of key learning

- Students can identify different political systems across the world
- Students have the opportunity to explain and explore the significance of these differences

How does the UK compare?

Resource 1 - World map



How does the UK compare?

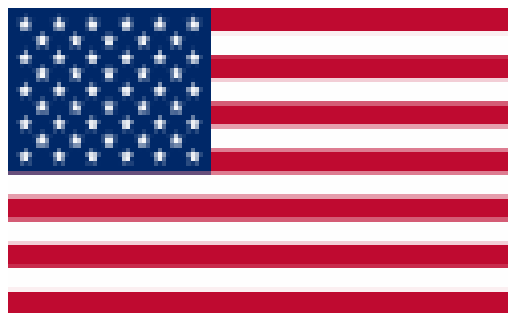
Resource 2 – Country fact sheets

Sweden



- Everyone over the age of 18 can vote.
- There are regular elections for the Swedish parliament (called the Riksdag).
- Sweden is also a monarchy, meaning that the head of state is not elected.
- However, like the UK, the monarch does not have much power.
- Unlike the UK, Sweden has proportional representation (this means that if 25% of the people vote for a party they get 25% of the power).
- The media is free from the government and is able to say whatever it wants about the government.

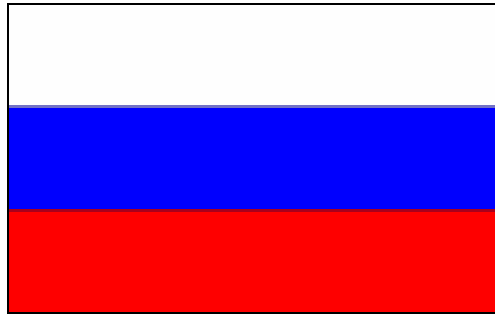
USA



- Everyone over the age of 18 can vote.
- There are regular elections, and people can vote for both the President and the Parliament (called 'Congress').
- There are two main political parties in the USA (Republicans and Democrats) but you don't have to be in either party to run for government.
- The media is free to say whatever it wants in the USA – meaning that some people are very critical, but some are also very supportive of the government too.
- The government is made up of three parts to make sure that no one person or organization can become too powerful.

How does the UK compare?

Russia



- Everyone is able to vote.
- There are regular elections – but a lot of people think that the elections are not fair and may be rigged (i.e. the government has some control over the vote).
- The media is sometimes stopped from criticizing the government. The government has recently prevented the media from saying anything bad about the President.
- There are few political parties. The party in power is controlled by the President and never criticizes him. When this party became too powerful people complained. The President created a new political party – but this one doesn't criticize him either!

UK



- Everyone over the age of 18 is able to vote.
- There are regular elections, but the government gets to choose when they are.
- The media is separate from the government and so is able to criticize it without fear.
- There are hundreds of political parties registered in the UK, but only two of them stand a chance of winning an election.
- The Queen is the head of state, and technically can dissolve (get rid of) the government in power. No one votes for the Queen as her position is hereditary (i.e. it is passed down from parents to children).

How does the UK compare?

Burma



- In 1990 the people voted for a democratic government – but the military prevented it from taking power.
- Recently there have been demonstrations in Burma from people who are angry at the lack of democracy. Hundreds of people were beaten up or imprisoned. Aung San Suu Kyi is the pro-democracy leader in Burma but she is under house arrest for protesting against the government.

North Korea



- There are no elections in North Korea. There is only one political party and it is controlled by the President.
- However, the president is dead! When the then president Kim Il-Sung died in 1994 he was declared Eternal President. His son took over, but refused to take the title president as a mark of respect. Technically, however, 'the President' is dead!
- The TV and newspapers are completely controlled by the government.
- Some people estimate that over 200,000 people have been arrested and put in prison for protesting against the government.

How does the UK compare?

Resource 3 – Fact chart

Name of country:	Draw the flag here:	
Who can vote?		
Who can you vote for?		
Are elections free and fair?		
Can you criticise the government?		

How does the UK compare?

Name of country	Who can vote?	Who can you vote for?	Are elections free and fair?	Can you criticise the government?
The UK				
Burma				
The USA				
Sweden				
North Korea				
Russia				