

## Topic: Systems of government

<b>Lesson: Has devolution been good or bad for the UK?</b>	<b>KS or Year Group: KS 3</b>
<b>Resources:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Resource 1 – Union flag</li><li>2. Resource 2 – Card sort</li></ol>	<b>Outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All students should know what devolution is.</li><li>• Most students should know some of the effects of devolution.</li><li>• Some students should be able to make informed judgments about the efficacy of devolution.</li></ul>

### National Curriculum

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Key Concepts: 1.3b

Key Processes: 2.1a, 2.1c, 2.2a, 2.2b

Range and Content: 3c

### Lesson

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This role-playing exercise asks students to consider several different viewpoints about devolution looking at it from English, Northern Irish, Welsh and Scottish perspectives. The plenary asks students to make a judgment over whether or not devolution has been a good thing or a bad thing for the UK.

### Starter

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- There is plenty of scope for different starters here. Whilst it is important to give students a definition of devolution at the beginning of the lesson, you might start off with a little brainteaser. Hand out or project **Resource 1 - Union Flag** and ask students to identify the different flags which make up the flag. Students may be

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able to identify these themselves without prompt, but if necessary you could show them the different home countries' flags and then ask again.

- The aim here is to tease out the fact that the Welsh flag is not present. Ask students why they think this is. Now introduce the definition of devolution and ask again why they think that devolution may have been popular in Wales. The aim here is to make a link between the past and current day politics.
- If you are not feeling particularly confident in your class you could just ask them to label the home countries on a blank UK map (freely available from the internet)

## Main activity

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In this activity, students should get to grips with the range of opinions on devolution and consider the opinions in all four home nations. The first aim is to categorise those opinions which support devolution and those which are against devolution. A brief summary of the history of devolution may be necessary here, but teachers need not go into massive detail other than the fact that devolved governments came into force from 1999 after referendums in Wales and Scotland (N.B. The Northern Irish did not have a referendum although going into the details of this may be beyond the scope of an individual KS3 lesson!)

### Activity 1

- In small groups of four, give students a set of the cards from **Resource 2 – Card sort**. In this file is a collection of different opinions about devolution along with some cards to help students structure their cards. This could be done as an ICT activity, using Snap.
- Groups should arrange the cards according to sentiments for and against devolution, and preferably put these into further categories by nation too.
- The aim of this activity is to enable students to engage with the different arguments for and against devolution and also to show the more able that there are different reasons for devolution in the different home countries. This should also inform their next activity.

### Activity 2

- The aim of this activity is for students to consider the implications of devolution in their area. This could be done for England, N. Ireland, Scotland or Wales. Or it could be taken further to involve devolved regional assemblies for your area (like the one planned for the North East, which was John Prescott's rather unpopular idea).
- Still in groups, students should consider whether or not devolution would work (or does work!) in their region. They should think about this under two different headings (although more could be added if you feel it is beneficial):  
**Politics** – are their particular problems in your region that a devolved assembly could sort out?

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**Culture** – does your region have a particularly strong identity which would be supported and promoted by a regional devolved assembly (e.g. Cornwall and the Cornish language)?

- One person from each group should feedback and give their opinion about whether or not their region would benefit from devolution. Teachers could give a pro-forma on the board to start them off, e.g. “We believe that Devolution for  $x$  would be...”

## Plenary

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Think-pair-share: ask students to consider the most important thing that they have learnt in this lesson and share it with their partner. This can be fed back to the class.

### Aim high

There is an opportunity for the most able students to lead within their groups in the main activity.

### Assessment

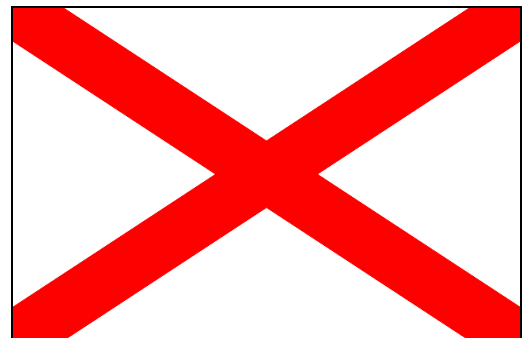
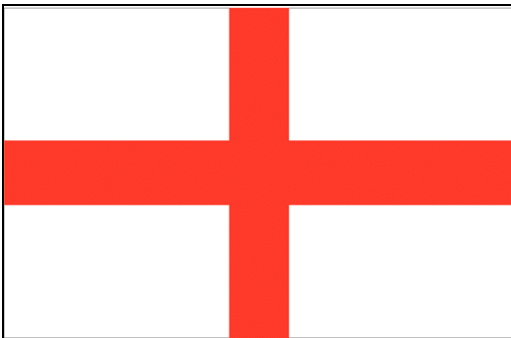
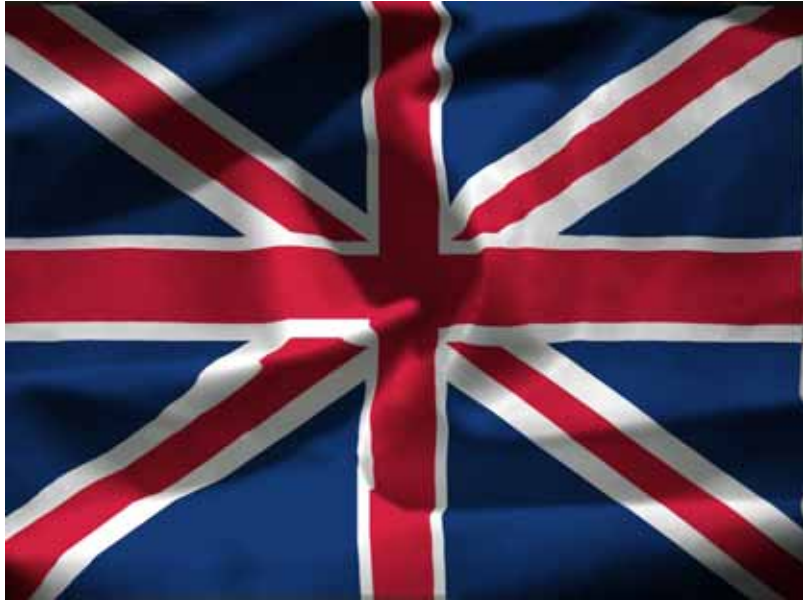
Formal and extended written work can be made from the card-sort activity, which in itself can help structure a two-sided essay on the benefits and drawbacks of devolution.

### Summary of key learning

- Students appreciate the benefits and drawbacks of devolution.
- Students understand the meaning and significance of devolution.

Has devolution been good or bad for the UK?

## Resource 1 – Union Flag



Has devolution been good or bad for the UK?

## Resource 2 – Card sort

### Welsh opinions for

### Welsh opinions against

Wales hasn't been allowed to be a separate country since 1542 ever since our culture and language has been attacked at the hands of the British. Devolution is a step in the right direction and about time too.

The Welsh have a separate language and politics over here are different. Since the Assembly came in to power we've had greater control over Welsh issues. Now our language is recognised officially and will stand a chance of surviving. Devolution has been brilliant for us!

What's the point of this devolution if we don't have the power to do anything? Our budget is still decided by the English Parliament and we don't have control over big issues to do with taxes. Devolution doesn't go far enough – Scotland gets much more power, why doesn't Wales get the same? This is just a talking shop – we don't have any real power.

I consider myself to be British, not Welsh and 33% of people living here do too. Why do we even need this Assembly?

### Scottish opinions for

### Scottish opinions against

Devolution means that Scotland has greater control over her own affairs and we get some real power over things like education and even some control over taxes.

Devolution doesn't go far enough - many people in Scotland want Scotland to be completely independent. We used to be an independent country and if it hadn't been for the English taking all of the money we should have got from North Sea oil we would be a rich country too. "Full independence" I say – it's about time we regained full national identity.

## Has devolution been good or bad for the UK?

Why bother getting excited about the Scottish Parliament? Politicians are the same in every country – they just end up spending money on themselves. What a waste of money! Over £400 million wasted on a new parliament building and we've still got the same old problems to deal with. Just think about the number of schools we could have got for that price!

In its first 12 months, the Scottish Parliament got 19 issues relating to Scotland either finalised or through the process of being accepted. Before that the House of Commons passed only one or two acts a year that directly related to Scotland. The Scottish Parliament has been very successful.

### Northern Irish opinions for

### Northern Irish opinions against

Northern Ireland has had such a troubled past, and it's no coincidence that peace has progressed since devolution happened. Since devolution, two sworn enemies - Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness – have agreed to share power and cooperate in Northern Ireland. This wouldn't have happened without devolution.

I don't want this devolution to be the first step towards independence. Northern Ireland is a part of the United Kingdom and should stay that way. As a Unionist [someone who wants Northern Ireland to stay part of the United Kingdom] I want to have no part in devolution.

### English opinions for

### English opinions against

Devolution has been good for everyone except the English. Now there are Scottish Parliaments, Welsh Assemblies and Northern Irish Assemblies – the English are left with the British Parliament and even then the Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish still get to vote on English issues. That can't be fair.

How can we call this a United Kingdom if Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland have their own governments? Devolution is just the first step towards independence and the break up of the United Kingdom. What next? Devolution for Cornwall?! Devolution for Newcastle?!