

Topic: Systems of government

Lesson 1 of 2: We need an election!	KS or Year Group: Year 10
Resources: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Resource 1 – Sky News video clip: ‘Cameron: People deserve better than this’2. Resource 2 – What is a general election?3. Resource 3 – The election race4. Resource 4 – Your manifesto5. Resource 5 – Possible campaign costs6. Resource 6 – Planning sheets7. Resource 7 – Our campaign has taught us that ...	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students can understand what a general election is.• Students can appreciate what is involved in an election campaign.

National Curriculum

Key Concept 1.1d

Key Processes: 2.3a

Range and Content: 3d, 3e

Curriculum Opportunities: 4c, 4e

Lesson overview

Students find out more about general elections through a lively activity in which groups plan election campaigns for imaginary political parties. The pressure is on to plan the best campaign for next lesson’s political rally!

Starter

- Share the lesson objectives with the students.
- Show students **Resource 1 – Sky News video clip: ‘Cameron: People deserve better than this’**.
- Ask students why the leader of the Conservative Party (David Cameron) was keen to push for a general election straight after the June 2009 European elections.

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- Examples of good responses:
 - ▶ ‘He felt that the country had not supported Labour in the European elections, so he wanted a general election because he thought that his party might get into power.’
 - ▶ ‘Politicians want their party to win a general election. David Cameron thought that the public had turned against Labour and so he believed that his party would have a good chance in a general election.’
- Explain that although the Prime Minister decides on a general election, it can be forced on him/her by the strength of public opinion. Point out that Cameron had this in mind when he gave his television interview.
- Ask students to read through **Resource 2 – What is a general election?**.
- Ask them to fill in the date of the last general election at the bottom of the sheet. (At the time of writing, this was 5 May 2005.)

Main activity

Activity 1:

- Ask students to get into groups of at least six. Explain that they are going to plan a political campaign.
- Give each group copies of **Resources 3–5** and ask them to read through the sheets very carefully.
- Explain that each group will need:
 - ▶ a Prime Minister elect (will become Prime Minister if his/her party is elected: face of the party, oversees the work of group members and checks that they are aware of each other’s responsibilities)
 - ▶ a deputy Prime Minister (assists Prime Minister elect by showing group members each other’s work at regular intervals)
 - ▶ a campaign manager (makes final decisions about slogan, symbol and campaign spending)
 - ▶ a financial minister (prepares information for spokesperson about how party will allocate taxpayers’ money)
 - ▶ a spokesperson (prepares speech for political rally and predicts possible questions from audience in order to plan responses)
 - ▶ a press manager (sketches ‘photos’ of ministers interacting in community for newspapers, prepares soundbites for local radio station)
 - ▶ any other ministers that are felt to be useful (e.g. minister for education; minister for defence; minister for health; minister for children, schools and families; minister for energy and climate change, etc).
- Tell students that there will be a political rally next lesson during which spokespersons will make speeches (and questions will be taken from the audience). Emphasise the need for teamwork and a clear allocation of roles in order for each group to be ready for the rally.

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Activity 2:

- Throughout the planning stage, move between groups. Ask each group to consult the following checklist:
- Have we:
 - ▶ named our party?
 - ▶ decided which principles our party stands for?
 - ▶ chosen our party slogan?
 - ▶ designed our party symbol?
 - ▶ produced our manifesto?
 - ▶ made decisions about our campaign costs?
 - ▶ got everything organised for the political rally?
- Provide each group with **Resource 6 – Planning sheets** and explain that they should use these to help plan their campaign.
- Highlight the need for each group to discuss financial decisions in detail and to be transparent about campaign costs. Also emphasise the need for their manifesto to appeal to citizens of different backgrounds and age groups.

Plenary

- Ask students to discuss (in the same groups) what they have learnt about elections through their own campaigns.
- Display **Resource 7 – Our campaign has taught us that...** on the board and invite volunteers to come up and complete the sentence.
- Examples of good responses:
 - ▶ Our campaign has taught us that it's important to choose a catchy slogan and a memorable symbol so that your party sticks in the voters' minds.
 - ▶ Our campaign has taught us that people in a political party need to know what everyone else is in charge of during an election campaign.
 - ▶ Our campaign has taught us that there's no point promising the voters things that sound unrealistic.

Aim high

Ask students to comment upon (and justify) why it is important for citizens who are too young to vote to research different political parties' policies.

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Assessment

For homework, ask students to find out what percentage of those on the electoral register voted at the last general election.

Level 5:

- Students communicate clearly their ideas about which symbols best represent their chosen political parties.
- Students consider what is fair and unfair to different groups in Britain when planning their parties' manifestoes.

Level 6:

- Students describe some of the influences that affect people's voting behaviour.
- Student successfully plan for the political rally with their team members.

Level 7:

- Students take into account diversity in the UK when planning their election campaigns.
- Students evaluate the role that voters can take in shaping British society.

Level 8:

- Students make perceptive observations about what the public is looking for in political parties' election campaigns.
- Students prepare challenging questions for spokespersons from opposing parties for next lesson's political rally.

Check the web

www.aboutmyvote.co.uk

Encourages British citizens to exercise their right to vote

www.electoralcommission.org.uk

Overview of Electoral Commission's role

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/UKgovernment/Politicalpartiesandelections/DG_073242

Government's overview of general elections

Summary of key learning

- Students can understand what a general election is.
- Students can appreciate what is involved in an election campaign.

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Resource 2 – What is a general election?

Sometimes **Parliament** gets **dissolved**. When it does, a general election is held so that the seats in the House of Commons can be filled again. In a UK general election, each voter can vote for one candidate. The winning MP from each area (constituency) then gets a seat in the House of Commons. Whichever political party wins the most seats in the House of Commons usually forms the **government**.

When are general elections held?

They occur at least every five years. Not all Parliaments last for five years though because the Prime Minister can call for a general election if he/she chooses to. Sometimes politicians run media campaigns to persuade people that a general election is needed. Members of the public sometimes campaign for a general election too. For instance, they might sign a petition, write to the Prime Minister or email their MP.

Where do people vote?

There are plenty of polling stations (such as schools and community centres) all over the UK. Voters can apply to vote by post if they prefer. British people who live abroad can use a postal vote for 15 years after leaving the UK.

How does a general election work?

Each voter has a choice of candidates and is allowed to cast one vote. Whoever gets the most votes in each area wins (and becomes the Member of Parliament for that constituency).

Candidates are sometimes 'independent' (i.e. they do not represent a political party). However, most candidates are from one of the parties registered with the Electoral Commission (e.g. the Liberal Democrats or the Green Party).

The last general election was on:

.....

VOCABULARY

Parliament: elected politicians who make laws
dissolve: end an official arrangement
government: group of people who officially run a country

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Resource 3 – The election race

Your group is standing as a political party and you want to run the country.

You need to decide on your politics, your campaign and your catchphrases. Also think about the policies you want to bring in and/or change.

Consider what other parties believe and which ideas/arguments they might use to get into power.

Within your team you will need:

- a Prime Minister elect
 - a deputy Prime Minister
 - a campaign manager
 - a financial minister
 - a spokesperson
 - a press manager
 - any other ministers that you feel are useful.
1. Your first job is to think of a name for your party that represents the ideas that you stand for. You also need a symbol and a slogan that work together: be sure to promote a powerful image that will grab attention and help to win votes! You need to be memorable in the right way.
 2. You need to decide the principles upon which your party is based.

What kind of political party are you?

- A party that believes in capitalism and the free market? *You believe that the first aim is to make money in business, that the marketplace should be given free rein and that this will create a healthy economy in which there are jobs, opportunities and prospects.*
- A party that believes in equality? *You treat everyone equally and pay everyone the same no matter who they are. With this approach you ensure that there are no 'haves' and 'have nots'.*
- A party that believes in supporting the less wealthy in terms of health, education and services? *You tax wealthy people more heavily than others.*
- An alternative form of government which shares ideas with all or some of the other parties?
- A green party that believes in putting environmental concerns above all other issues?

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Resource 4 – Your manifesto

3. When you have decided on your principles and your publicity, you need to write your manifesto. You will use your manifesto in your political campaign.

Make sure that you use some features of persuasion in your work.

Persuasion checklist

<input type="checkbox"/> adjectives to describe	<input type="checkbox"/> alliteration
<input type="checkbox"/> appeal to the head	<input type="checkbox"/> appeal to the heart
<input type="checkbox"/> appeal to the senses	<input type="checkbox"/> benefits
<input type="checkbox"/> commands	<input type="checkbox"/> emotional words (to get you to feel)
<input type="checkbox"/> exaggeration	<input type="checkbox"/> hard evidence – statistics
<input type="checkbox"/> soft evidence – opinions	<input type="checkbox"/> informal or formal
<input type="checkbox"/> positives	<input type="checkbox"/> repetition
<input type="checkbox"/> rhetorical questions	<input type="checkbox"/> rule of three
<input type="checkbox"/> slogans or catchphrases	<input type="checkbox"/> statements
<input type="checkbox"/> using the words ‘we’, ‘you’ or ‘our’	<input type="checkbox"/> verbs (tell people what to do)
<input type="checkbox"/> different length sentences – short and long	

You need to come up with ideas about how you will approach:

- a) education
- b) transport
- c) health (hospitals and the health of the nation)
- d) crime.

4. Finally, look at your campaign costs. What will you do to raise money? What will you spend on your political campaign?
5. You will attend a political rally where you will present your ideas to an audience. You will also have a chance to hear from opposing political parties. Be ready to share your manifesto and your campaign aims.

Remember, your aim is to gain as many votes as you can and to try to predict how the opposition will act – you don't want to have the same views as them or your party will lose its individuality and lose votes. However, don't be too extreme in your views either; it could cost you the mainstream vote!

Good luck.

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Resource 5 – Possible campaign costs

Legally, you have £125,000 for campaigning. Look at the ideas and costs below. It is up to you which options you go for. Do not exceed your budget!

Automated text message advertising	£1,000 per week – maximum 10,000 texts sent
Campaign bus	£750 per day
Campaign dinners	£2,500 per venue – host about 100 people
Car stickers	£400 per million
Carrier bags	£400 per million
Dining with potential donors	£250 per dinner – maximum of five diners
Election adverts – local	£750 local daily/weekly papers
Election adverts – national	£2,500 national daily papers
Election broadcast – radio	£200 per 45 seconds radio spot
Election broadcast – TV	£3,000 per 5-minute TV spot
Election car	£150 per day (includes running costs)
Flyby airplane banner	£375 per 30-minute flight
Fundraising events	£1,500 (including security)
Leaflets	£5,000 print run per million
Pens	£350 per million
Posters	£1,500 print run per million posters
Website	£500 start up + £100 per week servicing (to prevent hackers from breaking into your site)
Website banners – linking to official site	£50 per banner per week

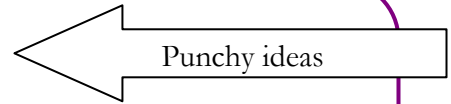
How can you raise extra funds?

Generous donors to your campaign	As much as they will give – up to a legal maximum of £10,000
Fundraising events	Any amount – up to a total of £10,000

Don't forget that the tax office will want to see where all your money has gone. You can't afford to be caught in any financial or political scandal: it would lose you votes and might even cost you the election!

Resource 6 – Planning sheets

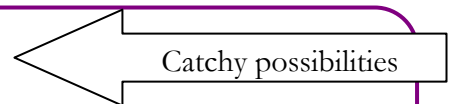
1. What will we name our party?



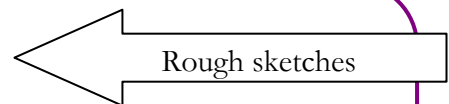
2. Which principles will our party stand for?



3. What will our party slogan be?

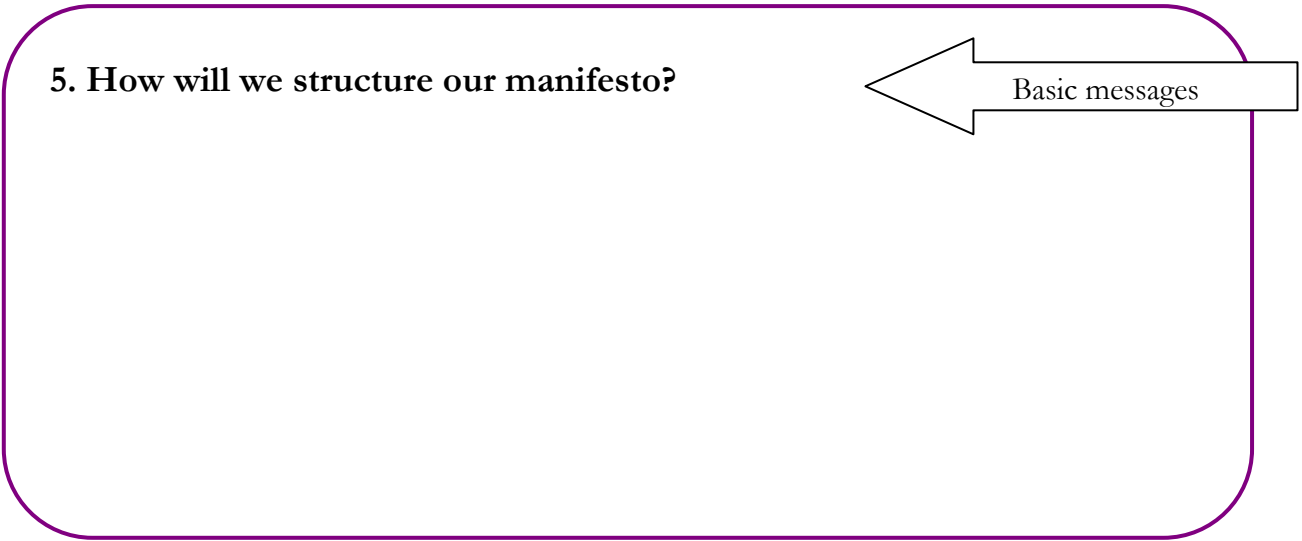


4. What will our party symbol be?



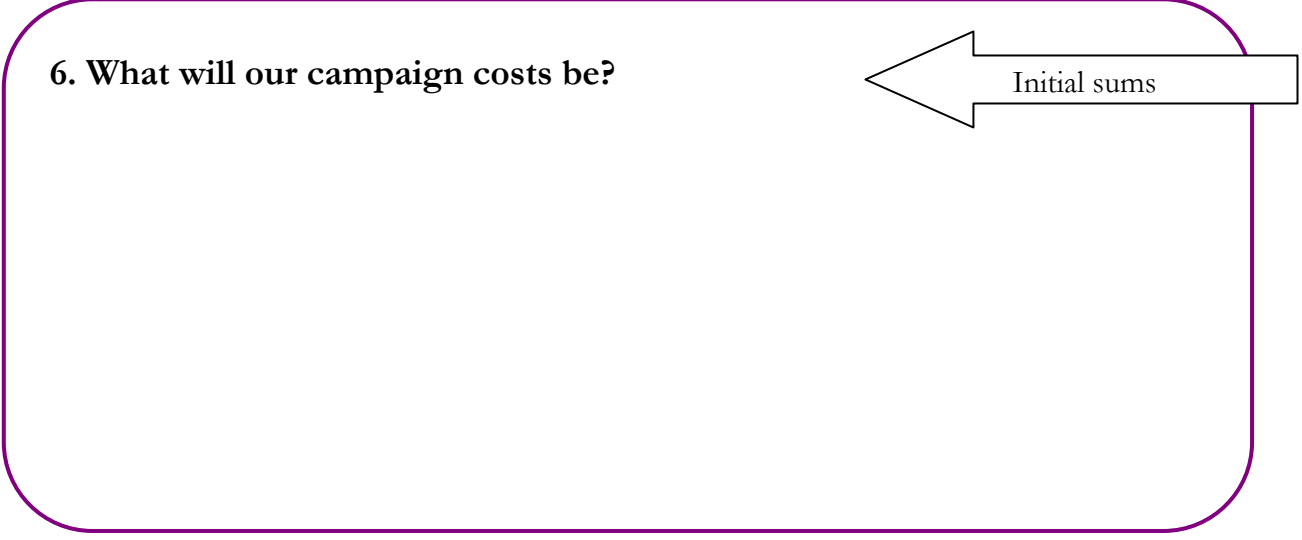
Resource 6 (continued) – Planning sheets

5. How will we structure our manifesto?



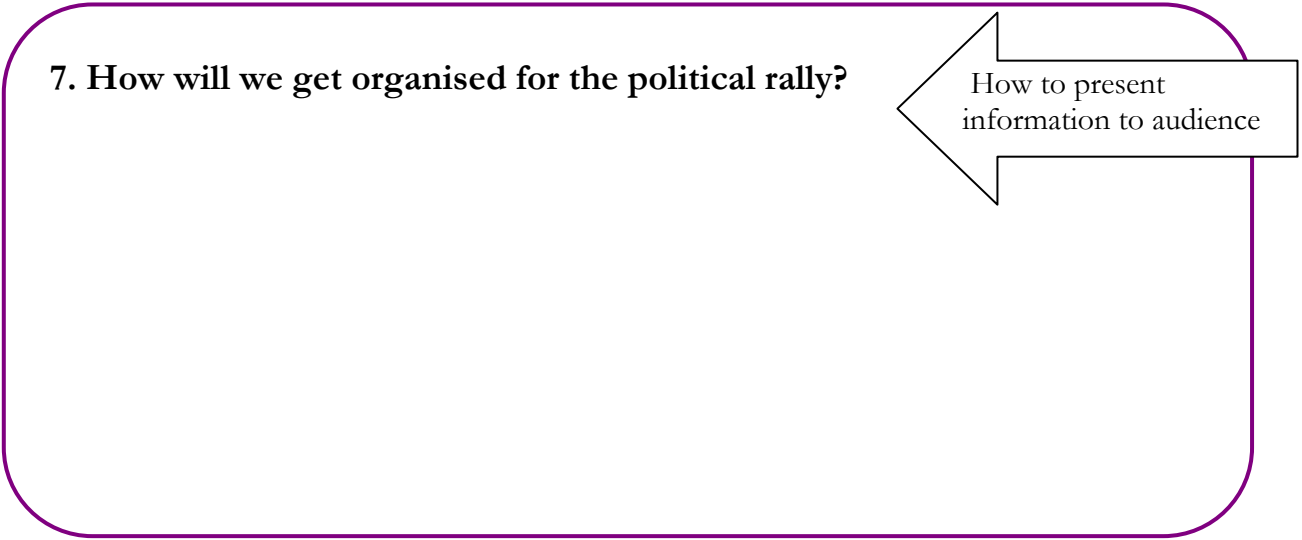
Basic messages

6. What will our campaign costs be?



Initial sums

7. How will we get organised for the political rally?



How to present
information to audience

