

A Hung Parliament

When there is a general election, everyone over the age of 18 can vote for the political party they want to run the country. In the UK, people have the freedom to vote for the party they want.

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

The main parties in the UK are:

- Conservative
- Labour
- Liberal Democrats
- Scottish National Party
- UK Independence Party

A Hung Parliament Result

To win the majority, a party must have at least 326 seats. When no party wins this amount, 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.



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.

Options

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

- govern with their party, but risk not having enough people on their side when it really matters;
- work alongside another party who did not have enough seats, and rely on their support.

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 trust them to lead.

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

cabinet:

A group of advisers chosen by the prime minister, to give opinions and carry out specific roles.

resign:

Leave the job you are doing.



Questions

1. What is a general election a chance for?

- People to vote for the Queen.
- People to vote for the party they want to run the country.
- People to vote for their favourite programme.
- People to vote for a party they want to go to.

2. What does it mean when it says people have the 'freedom to vote for the party they want'?

- They are told who to vote for.
- They vote for the same person every time.
- They have no choice.
- They can vote for who they like.

3. Tick two parties that people in the UK might vote for:

- Liberal Democrats
- The Party People
- Labour
- The Lazy Party

4. Match up the sentences:

To win the majority of seats

no party has won the majority of seats.

A hung parliament means

will want the majority of seats.

A prime minister

a party must win 326.

5. Explain what one of the options might be for a prime minister in a hung parliament situation.

6. Why might it be difficult for the prime minister to find another party who would be willing to work alongside them? Tick all that apply.

- Another party might not be available.
- Another party might not agree with the prime minister's ideas.
- Another party might want to have power on their own.
- Another party might not have enough people.

7. What might the prime minister have to do if they cannot find another party willing to work with them?

- Go to bed.
- Start another party.
- Leave their job.
- Stay as prime minister.

8. What is the role of the people in the cabinet? Tick two.

- To advise the prime minister.
- To stir up trouble.
- To argue all the time.
- To give their opinions.

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?

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.

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.

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. Voting is anonymous, so your vote cannot be traced back to you. This ensures freedom of choice.

The number of votes are counted throughout the night, but by 3 a.m. it is generally known what the outcome is and which party has the most votes.



How to Win

There are 650 seats available in the House of Commons. That means that a maximum of 650 people can be in Parliament and represent their local constituency, or local council area. Whichever party wins the majority of the seats will win the election overall, and their leader will be the prime minister.

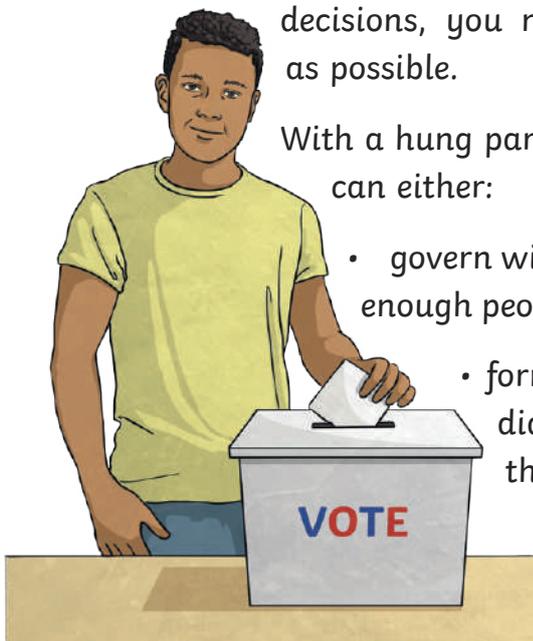
A Hung Parliament Result

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

Winning the majority number of seats means ensuring you have more people on your side. As prime minister, if you want to change the laws or make big decisions, you need to have the support of as many MPs as possible.

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 an alliance with another party who did not have enough seats, and rely on their support (see the table below).



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

This sounds good but it can be very difficult for MPs of one party to find MPs from another party who agree with them and their ideas.

Decisions, Decisions

The prime minister can now form a minority government with another party. This means she would rely on the other party's support to push through plans on their manifesto.

However, the party with the second largest number of seats can also try to get support from another party, in the hope of choosing a different prime minister, so things need to happen quickly.

If a prime minister cannot find another party to work with, they resign, as it shows there is a loss of confidence in their ability to lead.

Decisions and allegiances need to happen quickly. The prime minister must begin putting together their new **cabinet**, competently get back to leading the country as soon as possible, regain the trust of parliament and make the necessary changes in government for the good of the nation.

cabinet:

A group of advisers chosen by the prime minister, to give their opinions and carry out specific roles.

A hung parliament is not an ideal situation for anybody in the House of Commons, or for the person who is trying to run the country for the good of the people.

However, it could work in the favour of the nation. If some controversial decisions are not pushed through too quickly, or at all, this could benefit the general public in the UK.



Questions

1. Imagine you want to vote in the general election. What must happen for you to be able to vote?

2. Find and copy one word which means people do not know what party you have voted for.

3. Do you think it is important that people have freedom of choice when they vote? Explain your thoughts.

4. Think of a more suitable subheading than 'A Hung Parliament Result'.

5. Explain why a prime minister would not want a hung parliament.

6. If you were the prime minister in a hung parliament situation, which option would you choose, and why? Explain what the danger is of a prime minister choosing to govern with just their party.

7. Tick the correct answer to complete this sentence:

A prime minister may have to resign because:

- they have become disillusioned and want to leave.
- the MPs no longer trust that they can lead the country properly.
- they have lost confidence in themselves.
- they want another election.

8. Look at the paragraph beginning 'Decisions and allegiances...'. What impressions do you get about the need for urgency at the time of a hung parliament? Why do you think that is?

9. Explain why a hung parliament might work for the people in the UK.

10. Would you want to be the prime minister? Explain your thoughts.
