

### Who holds power in the UK?



Presentation by Duncan Bunce

Read & Précis: Chapter 5, Issue 1, pages 205-225

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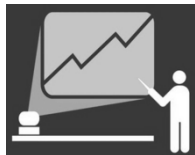
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### Welcome

- Ensure mobile phones are off.
- No eating in the classroom.
- You may take notes.



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### Topic Aims

- The concept and nature of **power**.
- Who has **economic** power in the UK?
- What is the influence of the **media** and how is its power controlled?



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## Extended Reading

The following textbooks and periodicals are in the College Library and will deepen your knowledge:

- AQA Citizenship AS. Watts, D. Nelson Thornes (Chapter 9).
- Citizenship and Participation. Firth, L. Issues, **Volume 175** (page 16, 17 -20, 22-26).

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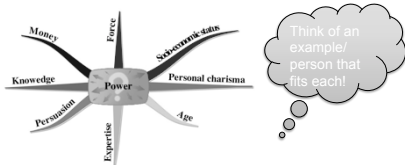
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## The concept and nature of power

- Power is the ability to achieve certain aims.
- In politics, it is linked with the ability to govern.
- However, power can be attained a number of ways other than position:




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## The concept and nature of power

- Power is present in both the private and public sphere.
- In the **private sphere**, a family member who has influence over decision making has power. 
- In the **public sphere**, how can a citizen gain influence?
- In small groups, undertake **Activity 1** on **page 206** and be prepared to discuss them in depth.

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### Authority, democracy and mandate

- **Authority** is the ability to exercise power with legitimacy and justification.

*E.g. You organise a Government protest (angered by the increase in retirement age) outside Parliament.*

Do you have the **authority**?



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### Authority, democracy and mandate

- The British monarchy used to have 'absolute power' and 'absolute authority', however since the 17<sup>th</sup> century we now operate as a **democracy**.
- **Democracy** means 'rule by the people'.

In pairs, make a list which provides evidence that:

- (1) We do live in a democracy.
- (2) We do not live in a democracy.

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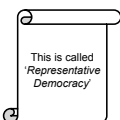
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### Authority, democracy and mandate

- However, it is impractical to consult every citizen about how to govern the country.



- We elect representatives (MPs) who we feel will best serve our interests – giving them the *permission* to govern (i.e. **mandate**).

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### Power and the state

In the UK there is a fusion of powers:

*What does each function achieve?*

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graph TD; A[Legislature (Parliament)] --> B[Executive (Government)]; B --> C[Judiciary (Judges)];
```

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### Who holds political power in the UK?

- There are many political parties in the UK, however what are the **main three**?
- The party with the most seats in the House of Commons has the most influence in **creating legislation**.



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### Who has economic power in the UK?

- Countries with the most power are developed industrialised nations (resource rich such as coal, oil and gas).
- However, as states become **interdependent** upon one another government budgets can be affected by global events in global markets.
- In the UK, why do we have **taxes** on income, services and products?

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### The Bank of England

- The UK's central bank, responsible for:
  - maintaining the country's financial stability.
  - setting interest rates (to keep **inflation** low).
  - issuing bank notes.
- Works with the **Financial Services Authority** and the Government to keep a stable and reliable financial system. Has the power to:
  - lend money to other banks if needed.
  - regulate other institutions.

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### Case Study: The Credit Crisis

- **Read and copy** the 'What is it and how did it happen?' box on **pages 215-216**.
- How might the crisis have been avoided?
- Do you think the Government should place greater regulation on banks?



*"Your card is fine. I'm just checking that your bank hasn't expired"*

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### Influence of the media

All forms of media together (TV, radio, newspapers, internet) are called **mass media**.

**Group Activity:**

Research your media type (see pages 218-222) and be prepared to present to class:

- (1) Newspapers      (4) Magazines
- (2) TV                (5) Internet
- (3) Radio

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## Influence of the media

Undertake **Activity 2** on page 221.



Mary Whitehouse - a passionate campaigner, founder of mediawatch-uk.



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## Media ownership

- If an individual owns not just one media outlet but several they can prove powerful, exerting their **biased** message to many citizens.

Many citizens are unaware of this...

Who are these people? Why are they influential?



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## Politics and the media

- The mass media can help shape the political climate.
- In 1992 opinion polls suggested Labour would win the general election comfortably...  
...they *lost* to the Conservatives who gained a small majority.
- Political scientists still argue as to how influential *The Sun* was in changing voters minds.  
...who owns *The Sun* newspaper?

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### Politics and the media

- In 1997, *The Sun* backed Tony Blair in the general election and New Labour won.
- Did voters follow the advice of *The Sun*?
- Or did *The Sun* follow the mood of the voters?




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### Regulation of the media

- The UK enjoys **freedom of the press**. What is this?
- The Press Complaints Commission (PCC) is an independent body that deals with complaints from the public about newspapers and magazines.
- How does the PCC resolve a complaint?

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### Just to remind you...

- For the Unit 2 exam, you should be able to **know, understand** and **discuss**:
  - The concepts of power, authority, democracy and mandate.
  - Economic power in the UK.
  - The influence of the mass media and how it is regulated.

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