

Electoral Reform

Students should read & précis Chapter 3 (p.67-79) of 'Essentials of UK Politics' by Heywood

First Past the Post

- In which type of elections is the FPTP used in the UK?
- **In simple terms - How does the FPTP system work?**
- What does "simple plurality" mean?
- **Can a candidate win an election while obtaining less the 50% of the votes cast?**

Single member constituencies

- Constituencies in the UK vary in size - Isle of Wight has an electorate of 106,000 - while the Western Isles has less than 22,000.
- English Constituencies average 69,000 - - Scottish and Welsh 55,000. **Why was there such over-representation? What does DC want to do?**
- **What does the Boundary Committee do?**

Two-party system and FPTP

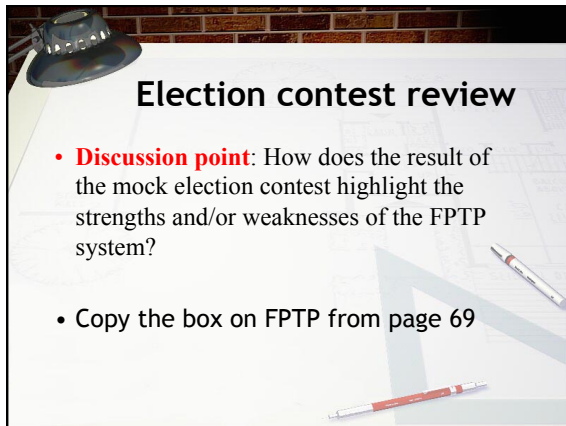
- FPTP tends to foster a two-party system. It discourages break away parties and often produces parliamentary majorities un-related to the popular vote ...

FPTP outcomes-The Winner's Bonus

- In 1983 and 87 - the Conservatives had a majority of over 100 seats with just over 42% of the popular vote.
- In 1997 Labour had a majority of 179 with 43.4% of the vote. In 2001 they had a 167 seat majority with only 40.7% of the popular vote. **How can this be justified?**

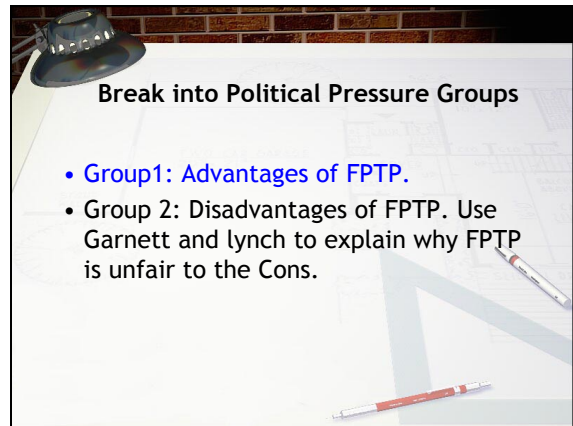
Mock election contest ...

- **Mock election:** Volunteers needed to be candidates on the mock ballot papers for each of the main UK parties.
- 5 minutes: Vote for the candidate and party of your choice.
- The ballot papers will then be collected in and mixed up.
- Everyone will then receive a random ballot paper back and we will count up the votes together as a class and declare the winner. (see next slide)



Election contest review

- **Discussion point:** How does the result of the mock election contest highlight the strengths and/or weaknesses of the FPTP system?
- Copy the box on FPTP from page 69



Break into Political Pressure Groups

- **Group1: Advantages of FPTP.**
- **Group 2: Disadvantages of FPTP. Use Garnett and Lynch to explain why FPTP is unfair to the Cons.**