

CHAPTER 2: United Kingdom

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. _____ is a system based on local customs and precedent, and serves as the basis for contemporary legal systems in the United Kingdom (except Scotland).
- Celtic law
 - Code law
 - Common law
 - Informal law

ANS: C DIF: Easy REF: Historical Development of the State MSC: Remembering

2. The Magna Carta set an important precedent by establishing
- authoritarian rule.
 - liberal democracy.
 - lower-class power.
 - limits to the power of the monarchy.

ANS: D DIF: Moderate REF: Historical Development of the State MSC: Remembering

3. The English Civil War resulted in a victory for
- Catholic supporters.
 - the monarchy.
 - supporters of Parliament.
 - peasant laborers.

ANS: C DIF: Easy REF: Historical Development of the State MSC: Remembering

4. In which of the following ways does the Labour Party differ from the Conservative Party?
- It has proved less willing to engage in coalition governments.
 - It has formally reduced the once-dominant role of trade unions in party policy.
 - It is more ideologically pure.
 - It has suffered more internal divisions.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: Political Conflict and Competition MSC: Applying

5. Which branch of government instituted reforms in 1999 to reduce the number of “hereditary peers,” or members of the aristocracy, from positions of power?
- House of Lords
 - judiciary

- c. cabinet
- d. regional legislatures

ANS: A DIF: Moderate REF: Political Regime MSC: Remembering

6. Which of the following statements about British foreign relations is accurate?
- a. The United Kingdom retains a relatively small army compared to its Western European counterparts.
 - b. Since the end of World War II, the United States has counted on the United Kingdom as its most dependable ally.
 - c. Most Britons have supported the idea of full participation in a stronger EU.
 - d. The United Kingdom identifies itself with continental Europe far more strongly than it does with partners across the Atlantic.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: Foreign Relations and the World MSC: Remembering

7. Which term best describes the United Kingdom's political regime?
- a. authoritarian
 - b. majoritarian
 - c. oligarchy
 - d. corporatist

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: Political Regime MSC: Remembering

8. The SNP's ability to win the 2007 Scottish regional elections resulted in part from which of the following?
- a. Scottish support for Blair's Iraq policy
 - b. the Labour Party's refusal to devolve power to Scotland
 - c. economic revival in Scotland
 - d. the promise by the EU of membership for an independent Scotland

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: Current Issues in the United Kingdom MSC: Understanding

9. The British party system is often called a "two-and-a-half party system" because the
- a. Labour Party has two unofficial wings that operate with different policy objectives.
 - b. House of Lords is part of government but is not popularly elected.
 - c. Scottish National Party holds only a regional sway instead of a national one.
 - d. Liberal Democratic Party trails far behind the Conservative and Labour parties in electoral strength.

ANS: D DIF: Moderate REF: Political Conflict and Competition MSC: Understanding

10. Which of the following descriptions of the UK prime minister is accurate?
- a. Prime ministers are frequently removed by votes of no confidence.
 - b. Prime ministers are elected to a maximum term of ten years.
 - c. Prime ministers are responsible for maintaining the support of their fellow MPs.
 - d. Prime ministers largely cede diplomatic responsibilities to the head of state.

ANS: C DIF: Difficult REF: Political Regime MSC: Understanding

11. Which of the following descriptions of members of the UK House of Commons is accurate?
- a. Members are typically more accessible to the electorate than American legislators.
 - b. Members typically act independently of their party's wishes.
 - c. Members enjoy more material support and staff than their U.S. counterparts.
 - d. Individual members are unable to propose legislation.

ANS: A DIF: Difficult REF: Political Regime MSC: Understanding

12. In which of the following ways did Tony Blair's policies as prime minister differ from those of Margaret Thatcher?
- a. He was more accepting of his party's status quo mode of operation.
 - b. He devolved more power to regional governments.
 - c. He moved the country away from free-market policies.
 - d. He sought to strengthen the power of trade unions.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: Political Regime MSC: Applying

13. Which of the following is a characteristic of Britain's use of the single-member district (SMD) electoral system?
- a. It strengthens democratic rule.
 - b. It encourages the strength of smaller parties, which results in more coalition governments.
 - c. It supports the dominance of the Labour and Conservative parties.
 - d. It weakens the regional concentration of smaller parties.

ANS: C DIF: Difficult REF: Political Regime MSC: Understanding

14. Local government in the United Kingdom
- a. is constitutionally protected.
 - b. does not exist at any level.
 - c. is led by appointed rather than elected officials.
 - d. has formal powers only when granted by the central government.

ANS: D DIF: Moderate REF: Political Regime MSC: Remembering

15. The current mayor of London, notable for being the first nonwhite and Muslim mayor of a major Western capital, is
- a. Sadiq Khan.
 - b. Boris Johnson.
 - c. Ken Livingstone.
 - d. Nigel Farage.

ANS: A DIF: Easy REF: Political Regime MSC: Remembering

16. In 1998, violence in Northern Ireland was largely ended by
- a. a military intervention by the Irish Republic.

- b. the Catholic victory in the civil war.
- c. the Good Friday Agreement.
- d. the Protestant victory in the civil war.

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: Society MSC: Remembering

17. Which of the following statements best describes the Third Way of the Labour Party today?
- a. It is a means of governing with a very slim majority that requires courting votes from the opposition.
 - b. It involves a frequent coalition government between the Labour Party and the Green Party.
 - c. It represents devolution to regional governments in order to quell nationalist sentiment.
 - d. It is a moderate compromise between the ideological right and the left of moderate free-market policies and ambitious constitutional reform.

ANS: D DIF: Difficult REF: Why Study This Case? MSC: Understanding

18. Which of the following statements accurately describes results of the 2015 elections as they relate to the smaller British parties?
- a. The SNP demonstrated surprising strength in the 2015 election, nearly sweeping all of Scotland's 59 seats in Parliament.
 - b. The United Kingdom Independence Party won increased support for its anti-EU platform, but it still holds only five seats in Parliament.
 - c. The showing of the Liberal Democratic Party made the best case in a half century for the viability of a three-party system.
 - d. The Liberal Democrats, who had maintained a coalition government with the Conservatives, were able to earn greater support by riding on the popularity of the Conservative Party in the 2014 elections.

ANS: A DIF: Moderate REF: Political Conflict and Competition MSC: Understanding

19. The Conservative Party is also known as the
- a. Whigs.
 - b. Reds.
 - c. Backbenchers.
 - d. Tories.

ANS: D DIF: Easy REF: Political Conflict and Competition MSC: Remembering

20. What type of social division or identity is most salient in the United Kingdom?
- a. ethnic
 - b. religious
 - c. class-based
 - d. regional

ANS: C DIF: Easy REF: Society MSC: Remembering

21. Which of the following accurately lists two results of the 2017 “snap” parliamentary elections in the UK?
- a. the first coalition government involving the Scottish National Party and a major party; a dramatic reduction in popular support for the Labour Party
 - b. a rise in the popular vote for the UKIP to 13 percent; the taking of ten seats in Parliament by the UKIP
 - c. the replacement of David Cameron as the prime minister and Conservative Party leader; a general popular acceptance of the previous government’s austerity measures
 - d. a net loss of seats in Parliament for the Conservatives; the return to a “hung parliament”

ANS: D DIF: Difficult REF: Political Conflict and Competition MSC: Understanding

22. In which of the following ways has the British welfare state changed in recent decades?
- a. It has sought more of its funding from personal income taxes instead of corporate taxes.
 - b. It has moved away from direct benefits and toward “welfare-to-work” programs.
 - c. It has taken on a more Labour-centric structure and moved away from Conservative preferences for welfare.
 - d. It has increased in size while providing a narrower range of benefits to citizens.

ANS: B DIF: Difficult REF: Political Economy MSC: Remembering

23. Which of the following statements about the United Kingdom’s relationship with the European Union (EU) is accurate?
- a. The United Kingdom is a full EU member and has adopted the euro as its currency.
 - b. Until recently, people living in the United Kingdom have been fully supportive of membership in the EU.
 - c. In the recent referendum known as “Brexit,” UK citizens voted to leave the EU.
 - d. The United Kingdom is a transitional member of the EU, with membership conditional on acceptance of the single currency.

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: Political Economy MSC: Remembering

24. In which of the following ways does the British democracy differ from most other parliamentary democracies in Europe?
- a. The British system has a written constitution that is vastly more comprehensive and explicit than others.
 - b. The majority party can enact policies with almost no checks from other branches of government.
 - c. The minority party in Parliament has abnormally strong abilities to stop the work of government if it disapproves of policy choices.
 - d. The head of government is not elected to a fixed term of office.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: Political Regime MSC: Applying

25. The Labour Party’s devolution reforms of 1999 are best described as
- a. an effort to encourage Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland to seek independence.
 - b. turning over some central governmental power to regional legislatures in Scotland, Wales, and

Northern Ireland.

- c. asserting more power for central government and blocking attempts at independence among Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
- d. an increase in the number of parliamentary districts in the regions of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

ANS: B

DIF: Moderate

REF: Society

MSC: Remembering

ESSAY

1. Describe the theorized causes behind the four-decade decline in the UK economy following World War II. What is the nature of the current postindustrial UK economy?

ANS:

A good answer will elaborate on three main components—the United Kingdom’s early industrialization, the burden of empire, and a collectivist consensus post–World War II.

DIF: Difficult

REF: Political Economy

MSC: Understanding

2. Describe the similarities that exist between Tony Blair and Margaret Thatcher, despite Thatcher being a Conservative and Blair a Labourite.

ANS:

A good answer will discuss how Blair and Thatcher both defied the conventions of their respective parties—Thatcher weakened the aristocracy’s influence over the Conservative Party and Blair made the Labour Party less dependent on trade unions—and both pushed for a more free market–oriented political economy.

DIF: Difficult

REF: Political Regime

MSC: Analyzing

3. What factors led to the recent vote in favor of “Brexit” in the United Kingdom? Does Brexit represent a sharp break in UK–EU relations?

ANS:

A good answer will note that the European migration crisis and the EU policy of free movement between member states were the two largest factors. However, the Brexit vote was not a sharp break from UK–EU relations, as the United Kingdom has been skeptical of the EU’s single currency and agricultural subsidies since joining the EU.

DIF: Moderate

REF: Current Issues in the United Kingdom

MSC: Understanding

4. What does it mean for the United Kingdom’s political regime to be majoritarian? What about the structural relationship among the legislature, judiciary, and executive encourages majoritarianism, and what effect has it had on electoral politics in the United Kingdom?

ANS:

A good answer will specify that a majoritarian regime grants significant political power to the party controlling the majority of seats in the legislature. In the United Kingdom, because of no written constitution, a mostly ceremonial upper house of Parliament, and no local authorities, the majority party that forms a government is virtually unchecked.

DIF: Moderate REF: Political Regime MSC: Understanding

5. Why is the United Kingdom's political system an unlikely candidate for coalition government? Briefly explain why a significant increase in support for third parties in the 2015 elections (Scottish National Party (SNP) and United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) in particular) did not translate into seats in Parliament.

ANS: A good answer will note that coalition government (lack of a majority party) is rare in plurality SMD electoral systems (or "first past the post") because it strongly favors a two-party system. Third parties gained considerably more support between 2010 and 2015 in the aggregate but this increased support was concentrated in a small number of districts (high levels of SNP support in Scotland, e.g.) or the increased support was diffused throughout districts (UKIP) where they were unable to win pluralities.

DIF: Difficult REF: Political Regime MSC: Analyzing