

# The Political System of the United Kingdom

## I. Monarchy

### 1) Facts:

- Oldest institution in the UK
- One of the oldest monarchies
- Succession to the throne is hereditary
- Monarch must be protestant
- Preference of the eldest son

### 2) The Monarch's Functions:

#### a) Representative

#### b) Ceremonial

- Official head of the Church of England
- Member of the Church of Scotland
- Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces
- Head of the Commonwealth

#### c) Political (Prerogatives)

- The right to be informed
- The selection of the Prime Minister
- Royal assent

### 3) Actuality:

- expected to be political neutral
- acts only on the advice of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Ministers
- less power nowadays

## II. Parliament

### 1) History:

- One of the oldest in the world (13<sup>th</sup> century)
- "Model Parliament"

### 2) Functions:

- Authorising the government's policy and administration
- Checking EU legislation
- Debating political issues
- Making new laws

### 3) Parts:

#### • **House of Commons:**

##### 1) Members:

- 646 "Members of Parliament" (MPs)
- Elected during general elections

##### 2) Functions:

- a) Legislative:
  - Discussion of new laws (called readings)

- b) Controlling:
  - Control of the executive government
  - Vote of "no confidence"
  - "Question time"
  - Selection of committees

- **House of Lords:**

- 1) Members: (called peers)

- Hereditary peers
    - Life peers
    - Archbishops of York and Canterbury and senior bishops of the Church of England
    - Law Lords

- 2) Functions:

- a) Legislative:
    - discuss and revise bills
    - introduce bills
  - a) Controlling:
    - check the government
  - b) Judicial:
    - Law Lords (highest court)

- **The Monarch**

### III. Government

- **Prime Minister**

- 1) Functions:

- Choice and dismissal of ministers
    - Appointment of bishops, judges and military personnel
    - Creation of life peers
    - Annulment of parliament
    - Declaration of war
    - Signing of treaties

- **Ministers**