

Brexit 1



Brexit (Part 1 of 2)

Purpose

To understand the concept of Brexit including what makes up the UK and the European Union; what is an election and who can vote; what is a referendum; what are members of parliament; what is a government?

Entrance of Pupils

A thought provoking slideshow introducing the concept of 'Brexit' for the pupils to enter assembly to (10 minutes)

Introduction

There's a very good chance that over the last few months you have heard the word "Brexit" used a number of times. It's constantly being mentioned on TV especially in the news and many are talking about it too.

What is Brexit and why are people paying it so much attention?

Brexit is made up of two words: Britain and Exit

Britain - or more precisely the United Kingdom - is due to exit its membership of the European Union (also known as the EU).

Exit means leave - so the UK is aiming to leave the EU.



United Kingdom (UK)

So a little reminder of what the United Kingdom is - and what the EU is before we move on.

The United Kingdom is our country - made up of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In turn - Great Britain is made up of England, Scotland and Wales - so altogether, our country - the United Kingdom or UK is made up of:

- England
- Scotland
- Wales and
- Northern Ireland.

European Union (EU)

What is the EU?

The European Union is an organisation in Europe of countries who have joined together. To join the EU you have to ask and be accepted. Not

everyone who asks is accepted, there are some countries who have not been admitted into the EU.

Member countries include (among others)

- The Republic of Ireland
- France
- Germany
- Belgium
- Holland
- Italy
- UK

and others.



When did We Join the European Union and Why Did We Want to Join Then?

We joined the EU on 1st January 1973. At the time it was frequently called “**The Common Market**” because it was thought of as a place where the countries could trade with each other - sell and buy goods from each other easily and cheaply.

Since then, the EU has become more complicated.

For many years it has been clear that a large group of people in the United Kingdom were unhappy with the EU and wanted to leave, whilst a different large group of people really like it - and wanted to remain in the organisation.

There had been so much discussion and difference of opinion about it that in June 2016 a huge vote across the entire country - called a **Referendum** - was held. It asked people whether they wanted to stay in Europe or whether they wanted to leave.

Since the United Kingdom joined the EU in 1973 - it has changed. In a special agreement between countries called a **Treaty** in 1992 set up the EU to be able to have freedom for a person who lived in any one of the EU countries to travel, live and work in any other. Additionally, the EU was then allowed to have a say in the laws of all the countries who are members.

Some of these changes are part of the reason why a group from the UK decided they didn't want to stay as members any longer.

In the run up to the big vote - the referendum - there was a big campaign from supporters of the **Leave Group** - who wanted the UK to leave the EU and supporters of the **Remain Group** - who wanted to remain in the EU.

A campaign is where the supporters put up adverts and tell their story about why people should vote for their side. There were lots of adverts on TV and posters were hung around many parts of the country.



Why Did Some People Want To Leave?

The Leavers had a number of reasons why they wanted to come out of the European Union

- Many of them thought that they didn't want the EU to have a say in UK laws
- Some felt that it was harder to trade with other countries of the world like Canada, America and Australia - who are not in the EU - whilst we were still members - and leaving would allow us to set new deals with those countries.
- Some thought that we would be better off financially - the money we have - by leaving
- Some also wanted to stop people from anywhere in the EU being able to just come and live in the UK since they wanted more control over who is allowed to live here.

The Remainers had a Different View

- Some wanted to be able to move to other countries in Europe themselves easily- they liked being able to do that - to travel there and live and work there should they wish.
- Some felt that the EU is our nearest and best partner for trade - buying and selling goods - and that we would be better off staying with the EU since they felt we would be better off financially that way.
- Many also felt that being part of such a large organisation kept the UK safer from people who wanted to do harm.

There were further arguments and viewpoints for both sides.



Referendum

The referendum - the big vote - was held on June 23rd 2016.

In order to vote you had to be over 18 years of age (that's also the rule for voting for leaders and representatives of the country.)

During the campaign there was lots of disagreement about some of the issues that were raised.

Some people said that people who were trying to Leave the EU made false claims about how much money we would have as a result.

Others said that the people who argued to Remain in Europe were trying to scare people not to vote to leave - they called it "Project Fear"

After the referendum, the votes were cast. The result was very close.

Approximately 52% of people (that's 52 out of every 100 voters) voted to leave

Whilst just over 48% of people voted to stay in the EU.

The Leave Campaign won.

The Law, Elections and Parliament

At that time, the people who run our country were given the responsibility of sorting out the way we would leave the EU. It quickly proved much trickier than anyone had really expected.

To fully understand this - we need to be reminded about how our laws are made. To Leave the EU with a deal- two things had to happen:

1. The country to have an agreement with the EU about how things would work between the UK and the other EU countries after we left. That would be the "Leaving Deal"
2. There would need to be a new law passed which approved the Leaving Deal and finally took us out of the EU.



To pass a law (which we need to leave the EU) - this involves people who represent the people of the country meeting and discussing the law, setting out the terms of the law - how everything would work -and then win the vote to pass the law.

This all takes place in London in what's called the Houses of Parliament.

The representatives of the people of the country get their jobs by being elected to their post in another big vote. This is called an Election. When all the jobs are being decided in Parliament at the same time –it's called a General Election.

The winners of these votes are then called Members of Parliament - since that is where they do much of their job.

Most Members of Parliament belong to large groups who have similar views about how best to run the country. These are called Parties.

The party - or group - which has the greatest number of members elected to Parliament are allowed to run everything for the next period of time. (The longest allowed life of a parliament is about five years.) For example– the two largest parties are the Conservatives (often called the 'Tories') and Labour.

They are called the Government.

The leader of the party that has the biggest number of Members of Parliament is usually made the Prime Minister. It is that person's job to run the country and keep everybody safe and look after our nation's interests.



The Bible Says:

For both Christians and Jews, the law is based on the Ten Commandments given to Moses in the Old Testament. It is interesting that most of our current laws relate back to these principles especially the 5th, 7th and 8th commandments:

5. Do not murder
7. Do not steal
8. Do not tell lies about people

Old Testament Exodus 31:18

Let's Pray:

Dear God

We pray for our politicians and those who help to run our country.
We ask for wisdom, compassion and understanding, that decisions taken regarding the Brexit challenges, consider all countries and people involved.
We pray for a just end to this complex situation.
Amen

Putting it into Practice:

Find out about the term Democracy and discuss whether you think this is the best way for countries to be ruled.

Exit of Pupils

A thought provoking slideshow reminding pupils of the key issues raised in the assembly about the concept of 'Brexit' for the pupils to exit assembly to (10 minutes)



Collective Worship and Putting it into Practice for the Rest of the Week

Day 2

Dear God

Help us to understand complicated situations from different people's points of view. Let us try to keep to the forefront of our minds, those who are poor, disadvantaged or have no voice in what happens to them.

Help to ensure that our opinions consider their need.

Amen

Remind yourselves about the key points of each side of the Leave or Remain arguments from the Brexit (Part 1 Assembly). Have a discussion in class about how the members of the class would have voted .

Day 3

Dear God

The Brexit argument has raised many, many strong feelings amongst people. Please help us all to remember that whilst holding a particular view is important, it should never lead to harsh words, anger or violence.

We pray that whatever the outcome of the Brexit situation, all people work together for peace and harmony.

Amen

The legal age to vote in a General Election in the UK is 18 years old. Those in prison lose the right to vote whilst serving their sentence.

Do you agree with these two rules?



Day 4

Dear God

Thank you for laws and the justice system in the UK that ensures our rules keep us as safe as possible.

Please remind us to support all of those who work on our behalf including the police force and those in the justice system.

Amen

In the same way that we have laws for our country, in class we could come up with a number of rules that govern behavior in our classroom.

In groups , write a number of rules that you think would make life in school fair, peaceful, kind and pleasant for everyone.

Day 5

Dear God

Help me to find a way of being heard in discussions. Give me the courage to speak out if I am shy and quiet and remind me to listen to others if I tend to like to talk too much.

Help me to respect and consider the views of others, especially if they are very different to my own. Help me to be open to change my mind if I hear a different and stronger point of view.

Amen

Following on yesterday's writing of classroom rules, find a fair way to agree on the 5 most important ones that your class agrees to adopt.

Think about a democratic decision which might include a voting system.



