

Topics: Politics by Adrian Tennant

LEVEL: Pre-intermediate
AGE: Teenagers / Adults
TIME NEEDED: 90 minutes + project
LANGUAGE FOCUS: Linking words;
 understanding vocabulary in context

LEAD-IN

Ask students to look at the picture. Then, put students in pairs and ask them to answer the questions. Monitor and help where necessary, and check the answers as a class.

Key _____
 1. the White House; 2. Washington DC;
 3. the US president

READING 1: HEADLINES

Ask students to read the headlines and circle all the words connected to politics. Next, ask the pairs to discuss what they think happened in each of the newspaper stories. Elicit ideas from students as a whole class discussion.

Key _____
 leaders; vote; elections

READING 2: NEWS IN BRIEF

Ask students to read through the stories and match the headlines, from the Reading 1: Headlines exercise, to the correct one. Tell them they don't need to understand every word (you could give a short time limit, e.g. four minutes). Get students to check their answers in pairs before checking as a class.

Key a _____
 1. 70% stay at home; 2. New elections soon; 3. World leaders talk trade; 4. The right to vote is important; 5. Promises, promises!

Next, ask students to read the five sentences and decide if each one is true (T) or false (F). Again, get pairs to check their answers together before checking as a class.

Key b _____
 1. F (only 30%); 2. T; 3. F; 4. T; 5. T

WORKING WITH THE LANGUAGE

Ask students to read the introductory sentence and then look at the examples in the box, taken from the Reading 2: News in brief exercise. Then, ask students to complete the four grammar explanations by filling in the gaps. Get students to check their answers in pairs before checking as a class.

Key a _____
 1. however; 2. and; 3. but; 4. or

Next, ask students to choose the correct word to complete each sentence. Again, ask students to check their answers in pairs before checking as a class.

Key b _____
 1. or; 2. but; 3. however; 4. and

WORKING WITH VOCABULARY

Ask students to look back at the newspaper stories and find words that match the definitions. Encourage them to work in pairs and discuss their ideas as they look at the stories.

Key _____
 a. election; b. politician; c. vote; d. resigned; e. scandal;
 f. slim; g. majority; h. coalition; i. abolish; j. opposition

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LISTENING

Ask students to listen to a short radio news report. Play the report and ask students which of the newspaper stories, from the Reading 2: News in brief exercise, it is about (the third one). Now, ask students to read the third newspaper story and circle any differences they can remember between it and the radio report. Put students in pairs and ask them to discuss their answers together. Play the recording again, if necessary, and check the answers as a class.

Transcript:

Newsreader: ... and now, over to David for today's news in politics.

Politics reporter: Tomorrow, the US president will meet the Chinese president to discuss trade between the two countries. With the American economy in recession, these talks are very important, especially as there are elections next year and the president hopes to be elected again.

Key

tomorrow / earlier today; Chinese president / Japanese prime minister; discussing trade / trade and other things; US economy in recession / Japanese Prime Minister has a slim majority

Extra information in the radio report which is not in the newspaper story: there are elections next year in the US

SPEAKING

Put students in small groups and ask them to discuss the questions together. Afterwards, ask a few groups to report back on their discussion. You might want to open this out to the whole class.

PROJECT

Ask students to carry out the project for homework and follow it up in the next lesson.

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LEAD-IN

Look at this picture and answer these questions.

- 1. What's this building called?
- 2. Which city is it in?
- 3. Who lives there?



READING 1: HEADLINES

Read the headlines and circle all the words connected to politics.

WORLD LEADERS TALK TRADE

The right to vote is important

PROMISES, PROMISES!

70% STAY AT HOME

NEW ELECTIONS SOON

What do you think happened in each story?

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READING 2: NEWS IN BRIEF

a. Read the newspaper stories below and match the headlines from the previous page to the correct story.

1.

Important elections in the UK usually happen in May. Often it's the month for national elections, but it is also the time when people elect European MPs (MEPs) and local politicians. It was thought that May was a good month to encourage people to vote. However, in recent years the number of people voting has gone down, sometimes to as low as around 30%.

2.

The Australian prime minister finally resigned this morning. Over the past few weeks there have been a series of scandals, so her resignation was not a surprise. It means that people will be going to the polls to choose a new government.

3.

Earlier today there was a meeting between the US president and the Japanese prime minister. They are holding talks about trade between the two countries, environmental issues and several other topics. The talks are very important for the Japanese prime minister, who has a slim majority in his parliament.

4.

"People want democracy," a young man shouted into a news camera, but what exactly is democracy? A coalition government often happens when there are lots of political parties, for example in Germany or Italy. But the US has only two main parties! Of course, what people really want is choice. They want to be able to vote and not have one man rule them.

5.

"I will keep my promises," said the new mayor of London after winning the election. The first thing he plans to do is abolish the congestion charge which was introduced in February 2003. He faces opposition from the UK government but said his job was to look after the people of London.

b. Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

1. Lots of people vote in elections in the UK.
2. The Australian prime minister was expected to resign.
3. The two leaders are only talking about trade.
4. Democracy isn't the same in every country.
5. The UK government doesn't support some of the plans made by the new mayor of London.

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WORKING WITH THE LANGUAGE

We often want to link two ideas together in one sentence. To do this we use linking words, or *connectors*. Look at these examples from the newspaper stories:

1. *However*, in recent years the number ...

2. ... talks about environmental issues and a few other topics.

3. ... for example, in Germany or Italy.

4. He faces opposition from the UK government but said his job was ...

a. Look at the examples above and complete the sentences below with one of the underlined words.

- We use _____ to change the subject or give surprising information.
- We use _____ in lists to join similar ideas together.
- We use _____ to join two ideas or statements when the second one is different from the first one.
- We use _____ when there is a choice.

b. Now choose the correct word to complete each sentence.

- In the US, you can vote for the Democrats *and / or* the Republicans.
- Election day is on 5th May *and / but* I don't think many people will vote.
- I don't think he'll resign. *However / Or*, I could be wrong.
- There are local elections *and / but* national ones.

WORKING WITH VOCABULARY

Find words in the newspaper stories, from Reading 2: News in brief, to match these definitions.

- an occasion when people choose a new government
- someone who has a job in politics
- to decide or choose a representative in an election
- said officially that you are leaving your job
- talk or reports in the news about shocking events involving important people
- very small
- the number of votes by which a person or party wins an election
- a government of different political parties working together, usually for a short time
- to officially get rid of a law or a system
- strong disagreement with a plan

**Topics: Politics
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Listen to the radio news report and answer the questions below.

1. Which newspaper story is the report about?
2. How many differences between the newspaper story and radio report did you hear?
3. What were they?

**SPEAKING**

Discuss these questions in groups.

1. Are you interested in politics? Why? Why not?
2. Do you vote? Why? Why not?
3. What do you think of politicians? Why?
4. Do the decisions politicians make effect you? How?
5. Would you ever want to be a politician? Why? Why not?

PROJECT

Find a newspaper report in English about politics. Circle all the words in the report connected to politics. Then write a short summary of the report.