

# The political System in the United Kingdom



British politics can seem very confusing – there are lots of different political parties and branches of government, and even though we have a monarchy we are also a democracy.

Is the Queen in charge of the UK?

Sort of. The United Kingdom is a parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy. This means that while a monarch – in this case, Queen Elizabeth II – is the head of state, she is not the head of government. She does not get to make most of the decisions about how the government is run; that job belongs to the Prime Minister, or PM.



# The Politics of Britain is divided into two houses -

The House of Lords is **the second chamber of the UK Parliament**. It is independent from, and complements the work of, the elected House of Commons. The Lords shares the task of making and shaping laws and checking and challenging the work of the government.

The **House of Commons** is the democratically elected house of the **UK Parliament**, responsible for making laws and checking the work of **Government**.

Do England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland each have their own governments?

Yes and no. England is the most powerful country of the four and the British Government works for the Queen, who is an English monarch. Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland are all ultimately beholden to English law. However, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland all have governing bodies that work exclusively on issues in their own countries.



The Union Flag (1606–1801), in which are combined the white-on-blue Cross of St. Andrew (for Scotland) and the red-on-white Cross of St. George (for England). **The Union Jack** is the most important of all British flags and is flown by representatives of the United Kingdom all the world over.