**Student activity**

**Investigation**

First try to read the rest of the online resources and follow each activity on this sheet to help you carry out an investigation of the geography of the 2010 General Election. Then try to formulate questions which you can follow up after the results are in for the 2015 vote in May.

1. **Introduction**
   * In this section you will explain what it is that you are investigating.
   * You will **choose questions for enquiry** that you want to answer.
   * You will explain important background information.
   * Outline a **plan** of what you intend to do and what data you will collect.
2. **Results**
   1. Tabulate (put in tables) data.
   2. Convert the data into easier forms to interpret:
      * Use graphs
      * Simplify data into things like rounded numbers or a representative mean.
3. **Analysis**

* Show how your results answer your questions for enquiry:
  + Annotate graphs and diagrams
  + Construct paragraphs.

1. **Conclusions**

* For each of your enquiry questions what have you found out? What is the answer?

1. **Methodology**

* Often the Methodology follows the Introduction as you explain what you plan to do. In this investigation we are going to place the Methodology before the Evaluation so that we can better develop our evaluative skills for the future.
* You will explain how you gathered your data and justify your choices.
* You will explain how you represented your data and justify your choices.

1. **Evaluation**
   1. Evaluate your **process** (how you carried out your investigations (methods)) – what was successful? What went wrong? What could you do differently next time?
   2. Evaluate your **sources** – (your information and data) which are reliable and why? Which might be biased and why?
   3. Evaluate your **outcomes** – (your conclusions) what is reliable and why? Which may be wrong or inaccurate and why?
   4. Formulate more questions for a future enquiry based on your findings; this is especially important to find out if your predictions may be correct after the election.
2. Use the Section heading **Introduction** before answering the following questions in the form of a paragraph (not separately):
   1. What is a General election?
   2. What is a parliamentary constituency/seat?
   3. Who will form a government if they have an absolute majority?
   4. What might happen if no party has an absolute majority of seats?
3. Try to carry out research before answering this question: What are the main political parties and what are their main policies?

Try to answer them in the form of two paragraphs (not separately):

**Paragraph 1**

* 1. What is socialism?
  2. What is capitalism?
  3. What do we mean by left or right when describing the political parties?
  4. What is unionism?
  5. What is republicanism?
  6. What is nationalism?

**Paragraph 2**

* 1. What are the main ideas and policies of each of the main parties?

1. Use a subheading of ‘**Questions for Enquiry**’ before completing these activities:
   1. Try to write 2 or 3 of your own questions for enquiry based on **secondary** (collected by someone else) data such as these examples:
      1. What are the biggest parties in Parliament?
      2. Should voting be made compulsory by law?
      3. Is there a pattern between party elected and the area of constituency (large area constituencies are usually rural and small area constituencies are usually urban).
      4. Is there a pattern between population density and political party?
      5. Is there a pattern between G.D.P. per Capita and political party?
      6. Is the first ‘past the post’ election system a fair system for a modern democracy?
   2. Try to write 1 or 2 of your own questions for enquiry based on **primary** (collected by you) data such as these examples:
      1. Question iv above.
      2. Which would be the most popular party in my local area/s?
      3. Which party would be the most popular in my age group?
      4. Should voting be made compulsory by law?
2. Use the Section heading **Results** before answering the following activities:
   1. Select from the following information on seats from the 2010 General Election and seats at the moment and then use suitable graphs to help you to answer your Questions for Enquiry:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Party** | **After**[**2010 General Election**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom_general_election,_2010) | **Current** |
| Conservative | 306 | 303 |
| Labour | 258 | 257 |
| Liberal Democrat | 57 | 56 |
| D.U.P. | 8 | 8 |
| S.N.P | 6 | 6 |
| Sinn Féin | 5 | 5 |
| Independent | 1 | 3 |
| Plaid Cymru | 3 | 3 |
| S.D.L.P. | 3 | 3 |
| U.K.I.P. | 0 | 2 |
| Alliance | 1 | 1 |
| Green | 1 | 1 |
| Respect | 0 | 1 |
| Speaker\* | 1 | 1 |
| Total number of seats | 650 | 650 |
| Actual government majority | 83 | 75 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Turnout %**  **Voter Turnout** |
| **2010** | 65.1 |
| **2005** | 61.4 |
| **2001** | 59.4 |
| **1997** | 71.4 |
| **1992** | 77.7 |
| **1987** | 75.3 |
| **1983** | 72.7 |
| **1979** | 76 |
| **1974 Oct** | 72.8  **2010 voter share and seats** |
| **1974 Feb** | 78.8 |
| **1970** | 72 |
| **1966** | 75.8 |
| **1964** | 77.1 |
| **1959** | 78.7 |
| **1955** | 76.8 |
| **1951** | 82.6 |
| **1950** | 83.9 |
| **1945** | 72.8 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Party | Vote Share % | Seats |
| Conservative | 36.1 | 47.1 |
| Labour | 29 | 39.7 |
| Liberal Democrat | 23 | 8.8 |
| Others | 11.9 | 4.4 |

1. Tabulate and then graph primary data that you collect either in a mock election or by interviewing people in an opinion poll.
2. Use the Section heading **Analysis** before answering the following activities:
   1. Annotate directly on and around your graphs to show any information or pattern that helps to answer your Questions for Enquiry.
3. For each of the graphs you have drawn or for each map that you have used write a paragraph that helps you explain what they show you, include:
   1. Which map or graph are you writing about? What is its title? Can you give a page number?
   2. Actual numbers; what is the highest? What is the lowest? What is the range (difference between highest and lowest)? What is representative of the average (either calculate a mean or approximate a rough value)?
   3. What does this show you?
   4. Why is it important?
4. Use the Section heading **Conclusions** before answering the following activities:
   1. For each of your enquiry questions write a paragraph (do not answer these question individually but use them to help build up a paragraph) to show what have you found out?
      1. What is the answer?
      2. Where is your evidence (which maps or graphs)?
      3. Do you have any actual numbers to back up your conclusion?
5. Use the Section heading **Methodology** before answering the following activities:

Often the Methodology follows the Introduction as you explain what you plan to do. In this investigation we are going to place the Methodology before the Evaluation so that we can better develop our evaluative skills for the future.

Answer questions in the form of a paragraph; use the question answers to choose what to include in your paragraphs.

* 1. Explain how you gathered your primary data and justify your choices:
     1. How did you collect information?
     2. What was good about this?
     3. What was bad about this?
  2. Explain what sources of secondary data that you chose and justify your choices:
     1. What was good about the source?
     2. What was bad or weak about the source?
     3. Do you think the source was biased or was it reliable and fair?
  3. Describe the methods that you chose to represent and simplify your data such as different types of graphs; justify your choices:
     1. What was good about your choice?
     2. What was bad or weak about your choice?
     3. Is there a better way for you to do this next time?

1. Use the Section heading **Evaluation** before answering the following questions in the form of a paragraph (not separately); use the question answers to choose what to include in your paragraphs.
2. Evaluate your **process** (how you carried out your investigations (methods)):
   1. What was successful?
   2. What went wrong?
   3. What could you do differently next time?
3. Evaluate your **sources** – (your information and data):
   1. Which are reliable and why?
   2. Which might be biased and why?
4. Evaluate your **outcomes** – (your conclusions):
   1. What is reliable and why?
   2. Which may be wrong or inaccurate and why?
5. Put a subheading **Important Issues** and try the following exercises to write a series of paragraphs to focus on the following issues with subheadings.
6. Subheading for paragraph **– Are marginal seats mare important than other seats?**
   1. Scan the following information and make a rough note of key pieces of information:

“Even though all constituency seats are equal, some are of far more importance than others in deciding which party or parties will form the next government. Some seats are described as being ‘safe seats’, this means that one party is so strong in that constituency that it would be almost impossible for its candidate to lose to one of the other parties. Often such seats are very geographical; many former industrial areas such as the Valleys of South Wales are often strongholds for the Labour Party, many wealthier areas in the South of England are Conservative Party strongholds. Some seats however are described as marginal constituency seats; these are seats where no single party is much stronger than another. Out of the 650 seats 194 currently have a majority of 10% of the people who voted, so these seats would need a 5% (or less) swing in the vote for it to change hands. Roughly this means that if 5% of voters from the party that won last time switched to the party that came second then the seat would change hands. These are the marginal seats that will decide the next government of the U.K. Marginal seats are not evenly distributed: within England, 15% of seats in the South East have majorities of 10% or less, compared with 51% in the South West. In Scotland, 19% of seats fall into this category, compared with 45% in Wales. Wales is going to be a very important battleground especially for the Labour Party that currently holds 11 of these.”

* 1. Use your rough notes or key pieces of information to help you to answer the question with your opinion.

1. Subheading for paragraph **– Is ‘first past the post’ a fair system for a modern democracy?**
   1. Scan the following information and make a rough note of key pieces of information:

“We can take this idea of not all seats being of equal importance further by looking at our democracy and the idea of one person – one vote, and asking “Is each vote equal?” Look at this table, does this seem fair to you? This is the kind of pattern that exists with a ‘first past the post’ system. A lot of other countries have a system called Proportional Representation in which seats are awarded in line with the share or proportion of the vote; if a party wins 23% of the vote then it gets 23% of the seats. In the National Assembly elections in Wales we have a system in which 40 seats are first past the post in constituencies and then the remaining 20 seats are based on a form of proportional representation. A referendum on changing to a similar system for U.K. Parliamentary seats was a condition for the Liberal Democrats to join the current coalition government. They and a number of smaller parties campaigned for it but the Conservative and Labour parties joined forces against it and it was defeated easily.”

* 1. Use your rough notes or key pieces of information to help you to answer the question with your opinion.

1. Put a subheading **Further Questions for Enquiry.**
   1. Discuss ideas with a friend that you find important that you have not investigated.
   2. Use some of these ideas to write some new questions that you could investigate in the future.
   3. Discuss ideas with a friend for questions that you could ask about ready for the results from the General election in May.