

Politics and Government Vocabulary

Vocabulary Lesson, Examples & Practice Questions

Politics and Government Vocabulary

Understanding the language of politics and government is essential for any advanced English learner. Whether you are reading broadsheet newspapers, following international affairs, participating in academic debates, or engaging with professional colleagues on matters of public policy, a sophisticated command of political vocabulary will allow you to express nuanced opinions, analyse complex systems, and interpret the rhetoric of those in power.

Consider this scenario: *A British political journalist is preparing a long-form analysis of a general election. She must describe the behaviour of political parties, the mechanics of government, the role of the electorate, and the shifting ideological landscape — all with precision and credibility. The vocabulary she reaches for is exactly what you will study in this lesson.*

In this lesson, you will learn sophisticated political and governmental vocabulary grouped into three key areas: **democratic processes and elections**, **governance and policy**, and **political ideology and debate**. You will also study collocations, confusing terms, and common mistakes at C1 level.

Key Vocabulary & Meaning Breakdown

1. Democratic Processes and Elections

Word / Phrase	Part of Speech & Meaning	Example Sentence	Collocations / Notes
electorate	<i>noun</i> — the entire body of people who are entitled to vote in an election	The government's new economic policy failed to resonate with the electorate, leading to a historic defeat at the polls.	appeal to the electorate; the voting electorate; the broader electorate
constituency	<i>noun</i> — a specific geographic district whose residents elect a representative to a legislative body	The MP spent the weekend canvassing in her constituency, listening to residents' concerns about housing shortages.	represent a constituency; a marginal constituency; constituency boundaries

Word / Phrase	Part of Speech & Meaning	Example Sentence	Collocations / Notes
referendum	<i>noun</i> — a direct vote by the general public on a specific political question or proposed legislation	The government called a referendum on constitutional reform, allowing citizens to vote directly on the proposed changes.	hold a referendum; call a referendum; a binding/non-binding referendum
suffrage	<i>noun</i> — the right to vote in political elections; historically used in the context of extending voting rights	Universal suffrage was not achieved in the United Kingdom until 1928, when women gained equal voting rights to men.	universal suffrage; women's suffrage; extend suffrage
canvassing	<i>noun / gerund</i> — the practice of going door-to-door or contacting voters to gather support for a political party or candidate	Volunteers spent weeks canvassing in swing districts, attempting to persuade undecided voters before election day.	go canvassing; canvass for votes; canvassing campaign
incumbent	<i>adjective / noun</i> — currently holding an official position; (as a noun) the current holder of a political office	The incumbent prime minister struggled to defend her record on the economy against a forceful opposition campaign.	the incumbent government; incumbent president; incumbent advantage
mandate	<i>noun</i> — the authority granted to a government or politician by voters to carry out a particular policy agenda	The party won the election by a landslide and claimed a clear mandate to implement its ambitious reform programme.	have/claim a mandate; electoral mandate; a mandate to govern; a strong/weak mandate
gerrymandering	<i>noun</i> — the manipulation of electoral district boundaries to favour one political party over another	Critics accused the ruling party of gerrymandering when it redrew constituency lines in a way that protected its safe seats.	accused of gerrymandering; political gerrymandering; racial gerrymandering
turnout	<i>noun</i> — the proportion of eligible voters who actually cast their votes in a given election	Low voter turnout in rural areas was cited as a key factor in the party's unexpected defeat in the general election.	voter turnout; high/low turnout; record turnout; boost turnout
proportional representation	<i>noun phrase</i> — an electoral system in which the number of seats a party	Advocates of proportional representation argue that it produces parliaments that	introduce proportional representation; under a system of proportional representation

Word / Phrase	Part of Speech & Meaning	Example Sentence	Collocations / Notes
	receives reflects the proportion of votes it wins	more accurately reflect the will of the electorate.	

2. Governance and Policy

Word / Phrase	Part of Speech & Meaning	Example Sentence	Collocations / Notes
legislature	<i>noun</i> — the branch of government that makes and passes laws; a parliament or congress	The bill was passed by the legislature after months of heated debate and several failed attempts at amendment.	the national legislature; a bicameral legislature; pass through the legislature
sovereignty	<i>noun</i> — supreme political authority and independence; the right of a state to govern itself without external interference	The treaty was criticised by nationalists who argued it undermined the country's sovereignty by ceding too much power to a supranational body.	national sovereignty; assert/defend sovereignty; parliamentary sovereignty; cede sovereignty
devolution	<i>noun</i> — the transfer of political power from a central government to regional or local governments	Devolution has given the Scottish Parliament significant powers over education, health, and justice.	further devolution; devolution of power; a devolution settlement
accountability	<i>noun</i> — the obligation of individuals in positions of power to accept responsibility for their actions and be transparent to the public	The independent inquiry was established to strengthen accountability within the civil service following a series of financial scandals.	democratic accountability; hold to account; lack of accountability; government accountability
veto	<i>noun / verb</i> — the constitutional right to reject or block a decision or piece of legislation; to exercise that right	The president used her veto to block the controversial legislation, sending it back to parliament for further revision.	exercise a veto; presidential veto; veto power; right of veto; cast a veto
bureaucracy	<i>noun</i> — a complex system of government	Small businesses complained that the	red tape and bureaucracy; cut through bureaucracy; government

Word / Phrase	Part of Speech & Meaning	Example Sentence	Collocations / Notes
	administration characterised by numerous rules, regulations, and officials; often implies inefficiency	level of bureaucracy surrounding the new licensing scheme was excessive and stifling growth.	bureaucracy; entrenched bureaucracy
ratify	<i>verb</i> — to formally approve and confirm a treaty, agreement, or constitutional amendment, giving it legal force	All member states must ratify the climate accord before it can come into legal effect at the international level.	ratify a treaty/agreement; fail to ratify; ratification process
coalition	<i>noun</i> — a temporary alliance of distinct political parties or factions that agree to govern jointly, typically when no single party holds a majority	Unable to secure an outright majority, the party entered into a coalition with two smaller centrist parties to form a working government.	form a coalition; coalition government; coalition partner; fragile coalition; grand coalition
sanction	<i>noun / verb</i> — (noun) an official measure imposed on a country to compel it to comply with international law; (verb) to officially approve	The international community imposed sweeping economic sanctions on the regime in response to its ongoing human rights abuses.	impose/lift sanctions; economic sanctions; trade sanctions; sanction a policy
bicameral	<i>adjective</i> — describing a parliament or legislative body that consists of two separate chambers or houses	The United Kingdom operates a bicameral system, with legislation passing through both the House of Commons and the House of Lords.	bicameral parliament/legislature/system; bicameral structure

3. Political Ideology and Debate

Word / Phrase	Part of Speech & Meaning	Example Sentence	Collocations / Notes
ideology	<i>noun</i> — a coherent system of political ideas, beliefs, and values that forms the basis of	The party's ideology shifted considerably during the 1990s as it attempted	political ideology; dominant ideology; ideological divide; right-wing/left-wing ideology

Word / Phrase	Part of Speech & Meaning	Example Sentence	Collocations / Notes
	a political theory or movement	to appeal to a broader centrist electorate.	
populism	<i>noun</i> — a political approach that claims to represent the interests of ordinary people against a corrupt or self-serving elite; often oversimplifies complex issues	The rise of populism across Europe has challenged the authority of established mainstream parties and traditional institutions.	the rise of populism; left-wing/right-wing populism; populist rhetoric; populist leader
rhetoric	<i>noun</i> — language that is designed to be persuasive or impressive, often used in political discourse; can imply empty or misleading speech	The prime minister's impassioned rhetoric about national renewal resonated with voters, even as critics questioned the substance behind it.	political rhetoric; empty rhetoric; inflammatory rhetoric; heated rhetoric; use rhetoric
polarisation	<i>noun</i> — the process by which political opinions or positions move towards extreme opposite ends of the spectrum, with less middle ground	Political polarisation has intensified in recent years, making cross-party cooperation on major legislation increasingly difficult to achieve.	political polarisation; growing polarisation; deepening polarisation; ideological polarisation
lobbying	<i>noun / gerund</i> — the act of attempting to influence the decisions of government officials or legislators on behalf of a particular interest group	Environmental groups have been lobbying parliament for years to introduce stronger protections for biodiversity and green spaces.	lobby the government; lobby for/against; lobbying group; lobbying effort; corporate lobbying
secularism	<i>noun</i> — the principle that government and public institutions should operate independently of religious influence or authority	Proponents of secularism argue that the state must remain neutral on matters of religion in order to protect the rights of all citizens equally.	political secularism; defend secularism; secularism vs religion; a secular state
consensus	<i>noun</i> — a general or widespread agreement among a group, especially in politics, achieved through negotiation and compromise	Building a cross-party consensus on pension reform proved elusive, as competing interests made compromise politically painful.	reach/build consensus; broad consensus; political consensus; consensus politics

Word / Phrase	Part of Speech & Meaning	Example Sentence	Collocations / Notes
dissent	<i>noun / verb</i> — the expression of disagreement with an official, dominant, or established opinion, particularly within a political system	Several backbench MPs voiced their dissent over the government's handling of the housing crisis by abstaining from the crucial vote.	voice/express dissent; political dissent; suppress dissent; dissent from official policy
autocracy	<i>noun</i> — a system of government in which one person holds absolute, unchecked power over a state	The opposition accused the president of gradually dismantling democratic institutions and steering the country towards autocracy.	slide into autocracy; autocratic rule; an autocracy; authoritarian/autocratic government
geopolitical	<i>adjective</i> — relating to the influence of geographical factors — such as location, resources, or borders — on international politics and relations	The conflict has significant geopolitical implications, reshaping alliances and trade relationships across the entire region.	geopolitical tensions; geopolitical landscape; geopolitical rivalry; geopolitical interests

Collocations & Useful Expressions

Collocations are word partnerships that native speakers use naturally. At C1 level, knowing the right collocations is what separates competent speakers from truly fluent ones. Below are essential political collocations with example sentences.

hold + a referendum

The government decided to hold a referendum on the issue of electoral reform rather than make a unilateral decision.

claim + a mandate

After winning over sixty per cent of the vote, the new administration wasted no time in claiming a mandate for radical change.

impose + sanctions

The Security Council voted to impose sanctions on the country following its withdrawal from the peace agreement.

form + a coalition

No party won an outright majority, forcing the three largest factions to form a coalition government.

undermine + democracy / sovereignty / accountability

Commentators warned that the proposed media laws would fundamentally undermine press freedom and democratic accountability.

exercise + a veto

The permanent members of the Security Council retain the right to exercise a veto over any binding resolution.

suppress + dissent

The authoritarian regime moved swiftly to suppress dissent by imprisoning journalists and blocking access to social media platforms.

ratify + a treaty

It took almost three years for all signatory nations to ratify the treaty and bring it into international force.

stoke + polarisation / tensions

The leader's divisive language was widely criticised for stoking polarisation rather than fostering national unity.

build + consensus

The committee chair spent months consulting stakeholders in an effort to build consensus around a workable compromise.

wield + power / influence

Corporate lobbying groups wield considerable influence over lawmakers, particularly on matters of tax and regulation.

erode + trust / confidence

A succession of broken promises has steadily eroded public trust in the political establishment as a whole.

Important Differences & Confusing Words

Referendum vs. Election vs. Plebiscite

These three terms are often used interchangeably but carry distinct meanings:

- **Election** — a process in which voters choose between candidates to fill a political office or legislative seat. *The general election is held every five years.*
- **Referendum** — a direct public vote on a specific policy question or constitutional matter, not on a person. *Citizens voted in a referendum on whether to adopt a new constitution.*
- **Plebiscite** — similar to a referendum, but typically used in international or constitutional contexts, often to determine national self-determination. *A plebiscite was held in the disputed territory to decide whether to seek independence.* Note: in practice, *referendum* is the standard term in British political English; *plebiscite* is more formal and historical.

Autocracy vs. Authoritarianism vs. Totalitarianism

These related but distinct terms describe different degrees of political control:

- **Autocracy** — rule by a single individual with unchecked power. Focuses on *who* holds power. *A monarch who rules without a parliament governs under an autocracy.*
- **Authoritarianism** — a governing style that demands strict obedience to authority and restricts individual freedoms, but typically does not seek total control over every aspect of life. *The regime was authoritarian but tolerated a degree of private life and limited economic freedom.*

- **Totalitarianism** — the most extreme form, in which the state seeks to control every aspect of public and private life, including culture, economy, and personal beliefs. *Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia are frequently cited as examples of totalitarianism.*

Policy vs. Politics vs. Polity

- **Politics** — the activities, actions, and processes associated with governing a country or group. *She has been involved in politics since her early twenties.*
- **Policy** — a specific course of action or set of principles adopted by a government to address particular issues. *The government's economic policy has come under heavy criticism from independent economists.*
- **Polity** — a formal academic or philosophical term referring to a politically organised society, state, or community. *Ancient Athens is studied as an early example of a democratic polity.* Note: *polity* is rare in everyday speech but appears frequently in academic writing.

Lobby vs. Campaign vs. Advocate

- **Lobby** — to attempt to influence government officials or legislators directly, often on behalf of a specific interest group. *The pharmaceutical industry lobbied the government to delay price controls.*
- **Campaign** — to engage in a broader public effort to bring about social or political change, often through public awareness. *Activists campaigned for years to change the law on domestic violence.*
- **Advocate** — to publicly support or recommend a particular policy, cause, or approach, often in a more formal or expert capacity. *The charity advocates for greater investment in social housing.*

Common Mistakes

✗ *The government made a mandate to reform the tax system.*

✓ **The government claimed / had a mandate** — *The government claimed a mandate to reform the tax system following its decisive election victory.*

A mandate is *claimed*, *won*, or *given* by voters — it is not something a government "makes."

✗ *The politician made a rhetoric about national security.*

✓ **The politician used / deployed rhetoric** — *The politician deployed heated rhetoric about national security to distract voters from the economic downturn.*

Rhetoric is used as an uncountable noun; we say *use rhetoric* or *employ rhetoric*, not "make a rhetoric."

✗ *They did a referendum about leaving the union.*

✓ **They held a referendum on leaving the union.**

The correct collocation is *hold a referendum* (or *call a referendum*). Use the preposition *on*, not *about*, in formal contexts.

✗ *The two parties made a coalition.*

✓ **The two parties formed a coalition.**

The standard verb collocation is *form a coalition*. You may also say *enter into a coalition*.

✗ *The bill was ratified by the parliament last week.*

✓ **The bill was passed by parliament** — *The bill was passed by parliament last week and will now be sent to the upper house.*

Ratify specifically refers to the formal approval of treaties or constitutional amendments, typically by a

legislative body or head of state — not the regular passing of domestic bills. Bills are *passed* or *enacted*, not "ratified."

✗ *The president vetoed the law because he disagreed with it politics.*

✓ **The president vetoed the legislation on political grounds.**

Use *legislation* or *bill* in formal political contexts rather than "law" when referring to something not yet enacted. Express reasons using *on [adjective] grounds*.

✗ *Many people are now doubting about the government's accountability.*

✓ **Many people are questioning the government's accountability.**

Doubt is not followed by *about* in this structure. Use *question*, *challenge*, or *call into question* when expressing scepticism about political matters.

Politics and Government: Quick Summary & Review

In this lesson, you have explored a wide range of advanced vocabulary essential for discussing politics and government in English at C1 level. Here is a concise overview of the key areas covered:

- **Democratic processes and elections:** Terms such as *electorate*, *constituency*, *suffrage*, *mandate*, *turnout*, and *gerrymandering* allow you to discuss how democratic systems function and where they may be manipulated.
- **Governance and policy:** Words including *sovereignty*, *devolution*, *ratify*, *coalition*, *veto*, and *accountability* describe the structures and mechanisms through which governments exercise and distribute power.
- **Political ideology and debate:** Vocabulary such as *populism*, *rhetoric*, *polarisation*, *dissent*, *consensus*, and *autocracy* helps you engage critically with the ideas, movements, and arguments that define political discourse.
- **Precise collocations matter:** In political English, the difference between *hold a referendum* and *do a referendum*, or between *form a coalition* and *make a coalition*, signals whether you sound like a competent, credible speaker. Always learn words in their natural collocations.
- **Register awareness is key:** Political language operates across registers — from journalistic commentary to academic analysis to parliamentary speech. Words like *polity* or *plebiscite* are appropriate in academic writing, whilst *canvassing* or *turnout* appear naturally in news reports.

Now practise **politics and government vocabulary** in the exercises below.

Politics and Government Vocabulary – Practice Test

C1 | Practice Exercises: Multiple Choice, Fill-in-the-Gap, Fill-in-the-Blank, Matrix Matching & Sorting

Part 1: Multiple Choice (Questions 1–10)

1 The senator's speech was widely regarded as an attempt to _____ public opinion ahead of the controversial vote on welfare reform.

- A** manipulate
- B** provoke
- C** negotiate
- D** adjudicate

2 The newly elected government pledged to _____ the country's outdated electoral system, replacing first-past-the-post voting with proportional representation.

- A** abolish
- B** overhaul
- C** undermine
- D** dissolve

3 Which term refers to a government's exclusive authority to use force within its territory, a concept central to political science since Max Weber?

- A** sovereignty
- B** autonomy
- C** jurisdiction
- D** hegemony

4 The prime minister faced accusations of _____ when it emerged that cabinet members had awarded lucrative contracts to their own business associates.

- A** nepotism
- B** cronyism
- C** gerrymandering
- D** patronage

5 Which word best completes the following: 'The rival factions within the party eventually reached a(n) _____, agreeing to support a compromise candidate for the leadership.'

- A** injunction
- B** accord
- C** mandate
- D** coalition

6 The term _____ describes the process by which political boundaries are redrawn to give one party an unfair electoral advantage.

- A** canvassing
- B** filibustering
- C** gerrymandering
- D** lobbying

7 A government policy that transfers decision-making powers from central authority to regional or local bodies is best described as _____.

- A** federalism
- B** devolution
- C** decentralisation
- D** subsidiarity

8 The opposition leader argued that the new surveillance legislation would fundamentally erode civil _____, threatening the rights of ordinary citizens.

- A** privileges
- B** immunities
- C** liberties
- D** entitlements

9 Which adjective best describes a political system in which power is concentrated in a single ruling party that tolerates no opposition or dissent?

- A** oligarchic
- B** autocratic
- C** authoritarian
- D** despotic

- 10** The practice of a legislator making a lengthy speech to delay or prevent the passage of a bill is known as _____.
- A** lobbying
 - B** filibustering
 - C** abstaining
 - D** canvassing

Part 2: Fill in the Gap (Questions 11–20)

- 11** After months of debate, the opposition finally managed to pass a vote of no ____, forcing the prime minister to resign.
- A** confidence
 - B** approval
 - C** agreement

- 12** The senator was accused of ____ after it was revealed she had awarded lucrative contracts to her brother's firm.
- A** nepotism
 - B** plagiarism
 - C** defamation

- 13** The new administration pledged to dismantle the ____ state that had stifled innovation and individual enterprise for decades.
- A** bureaucratic
 - B** diplomatic
 - C** legislative

- 14** The two rival factions reached a fragile ____, agreeing to share power in the transitional government.
- A** rapprochement
 - B** ultimatum
 - C** manifesto

- 15** Critics argued that the emergency decree represented an overreach of ____ power, bypassing parliamentary scrutiny entirely.
- A** executive
 - B** judicial
 - C** electoral

16 The president was widely criticised for adopting an increasingly ____ style of governance, concentrating authority in his own hands.

- A** autocratic
- B** bureaucratic
- C** technocratic

17 The whistleblower revealed that senior officials had engaged in a systematic ____ of public funds over several years.

- A** embezzlement
- B** arbitration
- C** filibuster

18 The minister argued that the proposed legislation would ____ the constitutional rights of citizens, setting a dangerous precedent.

- A** infringe upon
- B** elaborate on
- C** deliberate on

19 The political analyst described the new electoral law as a form of ____, deliberately designed to dilute the minority vote.

- A** gerrymandering
- B** lobbying
- C** sequestration

20 Following the military coup, the deposed president sought ____ in a neighbouring country, fearing persecution at home.

- A** asylum
- B** amnesty
- C** arbitration

Part 3: Fill in the Blank (Questions 21–30)

21 The opposition party accused the government of passing legislation that would effectively _____ the electoral districts in their favour, giving them an unfair advantage in the upcoming elections.

- 22 After months of political deadlock, the two rival factions finally reached a _____ on the proposed constitutional amendments, allowing the reform bill to proceed to a full parliamentary vote.
- 23 The senator was widely regarded as a _____ who exploited public fears and prejudices to amass political support rather than engaging with substantive policy debates.
- 24 The newly elected president vowed to dismantle the entrenched _____ that had controlled the nation's resources and political institutions for decades.
- 25 The government's decision to rule by _____ during the national emergency bypassed parliament entirely and drew sharp criticism from constitutional law experts.
- 26 The independent judiciary serves as a crucial _____ to executive power, ensuring that no single branch of government can act without accountability or oversight.
- 27 Following the scandal, the minister was forced to resign after it emerged that she had engaged in _____ by appointing several unqualified relatives to senior positions within her department.
- 28 The leaked documents revealed that the intelligence agency had been conducting covert _____ on opposition politicians, raising serious concerns about civil liberties and democratic norms.
- 29 The prime minister's sweeping reforms were met with fierce resistance from the political _____, which viewed any challenge to existing power structures as a direct threat to its influence.
- 30 The two nations signed a landmark _____ treaty on nuclear disarmament, though analysts warned that without robust enforcement mechanisms, its provisions might remain largely symbolic.

Part 4: Matrix / Match Values (Questions 31–40)

31 Match each political term on the left with its correct definition on the right.

MATCHING OPTIONS:

- | | |
|---|---|
| A To obstruct legislation by making prolonged speeches in parliament | B The current holder of a political office or position |
| C To suspend a parliamentary session without dissolving it | D To manipulate electoral district boundaries to favour a particular party |

Item / Phrase	Write Match Letter (A, B, C...)
Gerrymander	[]
Filibuster	[]
Prorogue	[]
Incumbent	[]

32 Match each word on the left with its closest synonym on the right.

MATCHING OPTIONS:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| A Supreme authority | B Despotism |
| C Plebiscite | |

Item / Phrase	Write Match Letter (A, B, C...)
Autocracy	[]
Referendum	[]
Sovereignty	[]

33 Match each political collocation on the left with the word or phrase that correctly completes it on the right.

MATCHING OPTIONS:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A Snap election | B Economic sanctions |
| C A treaty | D Executive power |

Item / Phrase	Write Match Letter (A, B, C...)
To impose ____	[]
To call a ____	[]
To exercise ____	[]
To ratify ____	[]

34 Match each form of government on the left with its correct description on the right.

MATCHING OPTIONS:

- A** Governance led by experts and specialists in their fields
- B** Rule by a small, privileged elite group
- C** A system in which religious leaders hold political power

Item / Phrase	Write Match Letter (A, B, C...)
Oligarchy	[]
Theocracy	[]
Technocracy	[]

35 Match each political phrase on the left with its correct meaning on the right.

MATCHING OPTIONS:

- A** Mechanisms that prevent any one branch of government from gaining excessive power
- B** The power of courts to assess whether laws comply with the constitution
- C** The division of government authority among legislative, executive, and judicial branches
- D** The principle that all individuals and institutions are subject equally to the law

Item / Phrase	Write Match Letter (A, B, C...)
Checks and balances	[]
Separation of powers	[]
Judicial review	[]
Rule of law	[]

36 Match each word on the left with its correct antonym on the right.

MATCHING OPTIONS:

- A** Discord
- B** Opacity
- C** Libertarian

Item / Phrase	Write Match Letter (A, B, C...)
Authoritarian	[]
Consensus	[]
Transparency	[]

37 Match each political term on the left with the context in which it is most appropriately used on the right.

MATCHING OPTIONS:

- | | |
|---|---|
| A Seeking remedy for a political grievance or injustice | B Attempting to influence legislators on behalf of a particular interest group |
| C Government policies of significant spending cuts to reduce public debt | D The authority given to a government by voters following an election |

Item / Phrase	Write Match Letter (A, B, C...)
Redress	[]
Mandate	[]
Lobbying	[]
Austerity	[]

38 Match each idiomatic political expression on the left with its correct meaning on the right.

MATCHING OPTIONS:

- | | |
|--|--|
| A To leave one's political party and join the opposition | B An administration nearing the end of its term with diminished influence |
| C To conform strictly to the official policies of one's political party | |

Item / Phrase	Write Match Letter (A, B, C...)
To toe the party line	[]
A lame-duck government	[]
To cross the floor	[]

39 Match each noun on the left with the verb it most strongly collocates with in political contexts on the right.

MATCHING OPTIONS:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| A To table | B To forge |
| C To exercise | D To enact |

Item / Phrase	Write Match Letter (A, B, C...)
A bill	[]
A motion	[]
An alliance	[]
A veto	[]

40 Match each nuanced political concept on the left with its most accurate description on the right.

MATCHING OPTIONS:

- | | |
|--|---|
| A An ideology that prioritises the interests and identity of a particular nation above all others | B A political approach that appeals to ordinary people against a perceived corrupt elite |
| C A system in which multiple groups, parties, and ideologies coexist and compete for power | |

Item / Phrase	Write Match Letter (A, B, C...)
Populism	[]
Pluralism	[]
Nationalism	[]

Part 5: Sort the Values (Questions 41–50)

41 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

parliament. confidence incumbent minister facing prime vote The is of

no in a

42 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

gerrymandering

introduced

electoral

Sweeping

reforms

restore

public

trust.

were

curb

and

to

43 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

coalition

struggled

maintain

majority

dissent.

working

growing

ruling

amid

The

has

to

a

44 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

unilaterally

violations.

Diplomatic

sanctions

response

regime's

flagrant

imposed

rights

human

were

the

in

to

45 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

acknowledged

considerable

legislative

influence

outcomes.

lobbying

widely

groups

wield

that

over

It

is

46 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

independent

ministerial

misconduct.

opposition

inquiry

alleged

leader

called

into

The

for

an

47 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

concentration

fundamental

government.

preventing

balances

Checks

single

branch

power

and

are

the

any

to

of

in

of

48 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

constitutional significant referendum undergone overhaul. passed, country would
have Had the the a

49 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

disillusionment electorate's mainstream continent. movements politics populist
growing fuelled across with rise The has the the of

50 Arrange the words to make a correct sentence.

Notwithstanding legislation bipartisan ultimately support, proposed vetoed state.
head the was the by of

Answer Key & Explanations

Politics and Government Vocabulary | C1

Part 1: Multiple Choice

1. **A** Correct Answer: **manipulate**

✓ **Explanation:** To **manipulate** public opinion means to influence or control it in a shrewd, often underhanded way. It collocates naturally with **public opinion** in political contexts. *The opposition accused the government of manipulating public opinion through selective media briefings.*

2. **B** Correct Answer: **overhaul**

✓ **Explanation:** To **overhaul** a system means to examine it thoroughly and make significant reforms or improvements. It implies comprehensive restructuring rather than mere abolition or minor adjustments. *The commission was tasked with overhauling the country's constitutional framework.*

3. **A** Correct Answer: **sovereignty**

✓ **Explanation:** **Sovereignty** denotes the supreme political authority a state holds over its territory and people, including the monopoly on legitimate use of force. While **jurisdiction** refers to legal authority and **autonomy** to self-governance, sovereignty is the precise Weberian concept here. *The treaty was seen as an infringement on national sovereignty.*

4. **B** Correct Answer: **cronyism**

✓ **Explanation:** **Cronyism** specifically refers to the practice of favouring close friends or associates in the awarding of appointments or contracts, regardless of merit. **Nepotism** involves favouring family members, while **patronage** is a broader term. *The scandal exposed widespread cronyism at the heart of the administration.*

5. **B** Correct Answer: **accord**

✓ **Explanation:** An **accord** is a formal agreement or settlement, especially between parties in dispute. It collocates with *reach* and conveys a sense of negotiated resolution. A **mandate** is authority granted by voters, and a **coalition** is an alliance of parties, neither of which fits the context of resolving internal disagreement. *The warring factions finally reached an accord after weeks of tense negotiations.*

6. **C** Correct Answer: **gerrymandering**

✓ **Explanation:** **Gerrymandering** is the manipulation of electoral district boundaries to favour a particular party or group. **Filibustering** involves prolonging debate to obstruct legislation, and **lobbying** means seeking to influence politicians. *Critics argued that the new constituency boundaries were a blatant example of gerrymandering.*

7. **B** Correct Answer: **devolution**

✓ **Explanation:** **Devolution** refers specifically to the statutory delegation of powers from a central government to subnational bodies while the central authority retains overall sovereignty. **Decentralisation** is a broader administrative concept, and **federalism** implies a constitutionally divided sovereignty. *The devolution of powers to the Scottish Parliament reshaped British governance.*

8. **C** Correct Answer: liberties

✓ **Explanation:** **Civil liberties** is a fixed collocation referring to individual freedoms protected from government interference, such as freedom of speech and privacy. **Privileges** and **entitlements** suggest conferred benefits rather than inherent rights, and **immunities** relates to legal protection from prosecution. *The legislation was condemned by human rights groups as an attack on civil liberties.*

9. **C** Correct Answer: authoritarian

✓ **Explanation:** **Authoritarian** is the most precise term for a political system demanding strict obedience to authority at the expense of personal freedom, typically associated with single-party states that suppress opposition. While **autocratic** and **despotic** emphasise the rule of one individual, **authoritarian** more accurately describes the systemic repression of dissent by a party or regime. *The regime's authoritarian tendencies became unmistakable after the media crackdown.*

10. **B** Correct Answer: filibustering

✓ **Explanation:** **Filibustering** is a parliamentary tactic in which a legislator prolongs debate, often through lengthy speeches, to obstruct or delay a vote on legislation. **Abstaining** means refraining from voting, **lobbying** is influencing legislators from outside, and **canvassing** involves soliciting votes or opinions. *The senator was accused of filibustering to prevent the healthcare bill from coming to a vote.*

Part 2: Fill in the Gap

11. **A** Correct Answer: confidence

✓ **Explanation:** A **vote of no confidence** is a formal parliamentary procedure used to remove a government or leader from power. *The coalition collapsed after the vote of no confidence succeeded.*

12. **A** Correct Answer: nepotism

✓ **Explanation:** **Nepotism** refers to the abuse of power by favouring one's own relatives or close associates in professional appointments. *Accusations of nepotism undermined public trust in her leadership.*

13. **A** Correct Answer: bureaucratic

✓ **Explanation:** A **bureaucratic** state is one characterised by excessive administrative procedures and rigid hierarchical structures that can impede progress. *The bureaucratic state had become synonymous with inefficiency.*

14. **A** Correct Answer: rapprochement

✓ **Explanation:** **Rapprochement** refers to the re-establishment of harmonious relations between previously hostile parties or states. *The rapprochement between the factions was celebrated as a diplomatic breakthrough.*

15. **A** Correct Answer: executive

✓ **Explanation:** **Executive power** refers to the authority held by the head of government to implement laws and govern, distinct from legislative or judicial powers. *The president's use of executive power without oversight alarmed constitutional scholars.*

16. **A** **Correct Answer: autocratic**
✓ **Explanation: Autocratic** governance describes a system where a single leader exercises absolute, unchecked power without democratic accountability. *His autocratic tendencies alarmed human rights organisations worldwide.*
17. **A** **Correct Answer: embezzlement**
✓ **Explanation: Embezzlement** is the fraudulent misappropriation of funds entrusted to someone in a position of authority or responsibility. *The embezzlement scandal led to criminal charges against three cabinet ministers.*
18. **A** **Correct Answer: infringe upon**
✓ **Explanation:** To **infringe upon** rights means to violate or encroach on legally or constitutionally protected freedoms. *The surveillance law was deemed to infringe upon citizens' right to privacy.*
19. **A** **Correct Answer: gerrymandering**
✓ **Explanation: Gerrymandering** is the manipulation of electoral district boundaries to favour a particular political party or group, undermining fair representation. *The court ruled that the redrawn districts constituted blatant gerrymandering.*
20. **A** **Correct Answer: asylum**
✓ **Explanation: Asylum** is the protection granted by a country to someone who has left their home country as a political refugee fearing persecution. *She was granted political asylum after documenting the threats against her life.*

Part 3: Fill in the Blank

21. **gerrymander** **Correct Answer: gerrymander**
✓ **Explanation:** To **gerrymander** means to **manipulate the boundaries of electoral districts** to favour one political party over another. *The ruling party attempted to gerrymander the constituency maps before the vote.*
22. **consensus** **Correct Answer: consensus**
✓ **Explanation: Consensus** refers to a **general agreement** reached among a group, often after prolonged negotiation. *Building consensus across party lines is essential for stable governance.*
23. **demagogue** **Correct Answer: demagogue**
✓ **Explanation:** A **demagogue** is a political leader who gains power by **appealing to emotions and prejudices** rather than rational argument. *Historians often cite demagogues as precursors to authoritarian regimes.*
24. **oligarchy** **Correct Answer: oligarchy**
✓ **Explanation:** An **oligarchy** is a system in which **a small, elite group holds disproportionate power** over a state or organisation. *Critics argued the country had become an oligarchy dominated by wealthy business interests.*

25. **decree** **Correct Answer: decree**
 ✓ **Explanation:** A **decree** is an **official order issued by a government or authority** that has the force of law, often without legislative approval. *The president issued a decree suspending civil liberties during the crisis.*
26. **counterbalance** **Correct Answer: counterbalance**
 ✓ **Explanation:** A **counterbalance** is a force or institution that **offsets or checks** the power of another. *A free press acts as a counterbalance to governmental authority.*
27. **nepotism** **Correct Answer: nepotism**
 ✓ **Explanation:** **Nepotism** is the practice of **favouring relatives or close associates** in professional appointments, regardless of merit. *The allegations of nepotism undermined public trust in the administration.*
28. **surveillance** **Correct Answer: surveillance**
 ✓ **Explanation:** **Surveillance** refers to the **close monitoring or observation** of individuals, typically by authorities. *Mass surveillance by the state is considered a violation of privacy rights by many legal scholars.*
29. **establishment** **Correct Answer: establishment**
 ✓ **Explanation:** The **establishment** refers to the **entrenched group of influential people** who control or dominate a society's political and social institutions. *The candidate positioned herself as an outsider challenging the political establishment.*
30. **ratified|ratify** **Correct Answer: ratified**
 ✓ **Explanation:** To **ratify** a treaty means to **formally approve and adopt it** through an official process, giving it legal force. *The senate ratified the trade agreement after months of heated debate.*

Part 4: Matrix / Match Values

31. **Gerrymander: D • Filibuster: A • Prorogue: C • Incumbent: B** **Correct Matches:**
- **Gerrymander** → To manipulate electoral district boundaries to favour a particular party
 - **Filibuster** → To obstruct legislation by making prolonged speeches in parliament
 - **Prorogue** → To suspend a parliamentary session without dissolving it
 - **Incumbent** → The current holder of a political office or position
- ✓ **Explanation:** **Gerrymandering** is a tactical redrawing of voting districts, while a **filibuster** is a delaying tactic used in legislative chambers. To **prorogue** parliament means to suspend it temporarily, as seen in *the controversial prorogation of the UK Parliament in 2019*. An **incumbent** refers to someone already in office, as in *the incumbent president sought re-election*.

32. Autocracy: B • Referendum: C • Sovereignty: A

Correct Matches:

- **Autocracy** → Despotism
- **Referendum** → Plebiscite
- **Sovereignty** → Supreme authority

✅ **Explanation:** **Autocracy** and **despotism** both describe systems where a single ruler holds absolute power. A **referendum** and a **plebiscite** are both direct votes by the electorate on a specific issue, as in *the independence plebiscite drew massive voter turnout*. **Sovereignty** denotes the full, independent authority of a state, synonymous with *supreme authority over its territory*.

33. To impose ____: B • To call a ____: A • To exercise ____: D • To ratify ____: C

Correct Matches:

- **To impose** → *Economic sanctions*
- **To call a** → Snap election
- **To exercise** → *Executive power*
- **To ratify** → A treaty

✅ **Explanation:** These are fixed collocations in political discourse. One **imposes** *economic sanctions* on a country as a punitive measure. A government **calls** a *snap election* when it seeks an unexpected mandate from voters. **Exercising executive power** refers to the use of governmental authority, and **ratifying a treaty** means formally approving an international agreement through a legislative process.

34. Oligarchy: B • Theocracy: C • Technocracy: A

Correct Matches:

- **Oligarchy** → Rule by a small, privileged elite group
- **Theocracy** → A system in which religious leaders hold political power
- **Technocracy** → Governance led by experts and specialists in their fields

✅ **Explanation:** An **oligarchy** concentrates power among a few, often wealthy, individuals, as in *the country had devolved into an oligarchy dominated by business magnates*. A **theocracy** merges religious and state authority, as seen in historical and contemporary examples. A **technocracy** places decision-making in the hands of *technically skilled experts rather than elected politicians*.

35. Checks and balances: A • Separation of powers: C • Judicial review: B • Rule of law: D

Correct Matches:

• **Checks and balances** →

Mechanisms that prevent any one branch of government from gaining excessive power

• **Separation of powers** →

The division of government authority among legislative, executive, and judicial branches

• **Judicial review** →

The power of courts to assess whether laws comply with the constitution

• **Rule of law** →

The principle that all individuals and institutions are subject equally to the law

✓ **Explanation:**

These are foundational concepts in constitutional governance. **Checks and balances** ensure no single branch dominates, while **separation of powers** distributes authority structurally. **Judicial review** allows courts to strike down unconstitutional legislation, and the **rule of law** upholds equality before the law as in *no official is above the rule of law*.

36. Authoritarian: C • Consensus: A • Transparency: B

Correct Matches:

- **Authoritarian** → Libertarian
- **Consensus** → Discord
- **Transparency** → Opacity

✅ **Explanation:** **Authoritarian** regimes restrict individual freedoms, whereas a **libertarian** philosophy champions personal liberty and minimal state interference. **Consensus** implies agreement among parties, its opposite being **discord**, meaning open conflict or disagreement, as in *the summit ended in discord*. **Transparency** in governance refers to openness and accountability, while **opacity** implies deliberate concealment of information from the public.

37. Redress: A • Mandate: D • Lobbying: B • Austerity: C

Correct Matches:

- **Redress** → Seeking remedy for a political grievance or injustice
- **Mandate** → The authority given to a government by voters following an election
- **Lobbying** → Attempting to influence legislators on behalf of a particular interest group
- **Austerity** → Government policies of significant spending cuts to reduce public debt

✅ **Explanation:** **Redress** is used in contexts such as *seeking redress for human rights violations*. A political **mandate** grants a government legitimacy to act on its platform. **Lobbying** is a contentious but legal practice in many democracies. **Austerity** measures became prominent during *the European debt crisis of the 2010s*, involving painful cuts to public services.

38. To toe the party line: C • A lame-duck government: B • To cross the floor: A

Correct Matches:

- **To toe the party line** → To conform strictly to the official policies of one's political party
- **A lame-duck government** → An administration nearing the end of its term with diminished influence
- **To cross the floor** → To leave one's political party and join the opposition

✔ **Explanation:** **Toeing the party line** suggests rigid ideological conformity, as in *dissenting MPs were pressured to toe the party line*. A **lame-duck** government lacks the political capital to push through significant reforms. **Crossing the floor** is a dramatic parliamentary act, as in *the minister crossed the floor to join the opposition benches*, often triggering significant political controversy.

39. A bill: D • A motion: A • An alliance: B • A veto: C

Correct Matches:

- **A bill** → To enact
- **A motion** → To table
- **An alliance** → To forge
- **A veto** → To exercise

✔ **Explanation:** In legislative contexts, one **enacts a bill** when it passes into law. Parliamentarians **table a motion** to formally introduce it for debate. Diplomats and politicians **forge alliances**, implying the effort required to build strong coalitions, as in *the parties forged an unlikely post-election alliance*. A head of state **exercises a veto** to block legislation, as in *the president exercised his veto over the contentious bill*.

40. Populism: B • Pluralism: C • Nationalism: A

Correct Matches:

- **Populism** → A political approach that appeals to ordinary people against a perceived corrupt elite
- **Pluralism** → A system in which multiple groups, parties, and ideologies coexist and compete for power
- **Nationalism** → An ideology that prioritises the interests and identity of a particular nation above all others

✓ **Explanation:** **Populism** is often characterised by an us-versus-them rhetoric, as in *the candidate's populist rhetoric resonated with economically marginalised voters*. **Pluralism** underpins healthy democratic systems by ensuring diverse voices are represented. **Nationalism** can range from civic pride to exclusionary ideology, and its resurgence has shaped *major political realignments across Europe and beyond* in recent decades.

Part 5: Sort the Values

41. Correct Answer: The incumbent prime minister is facing a vote of no confidence in parliament.

✓ **Explanation:** The sentence follows standard SVO order: subject *The incumbent prime minister* precedes the continuous verb phrase **is facing**, followed by the noun phrase *a vote of no confidence* — a fixed political collocation — and the prepositional phrase **in parliament** as an adverbial.

42. Correct Answer: Sweeping electoral reforms were introduced to curb gerrymandering and restore public trust.

✓ **Explanation:** The passive construction **were introduced** follows the subject *Sweeping electoral reforms*. The infinitive of purpose **to curb** introduces the reason clause, with two parallel infinitive verbs *curb* and *restore* joined by **and**.

43. Correct Answer: The ruling coalition has struggled to maintain a working majority amid growing dissent.

✓ **Explanation:** The present perfect **has struggled** follows the subject *The ruling coalition*. The infinitive **to maintain** acts as the complement, with *a working majority* as its object and **amid growing dissent** as a prepositional phrase indicating circumstances.

44. Correct Answer: Diplomatic sanctions were imposed unilaterally in response to the regime's flagrant human rights violations.

✓ **Explanation:** The passive verb **were imposed** follows the subject *Diplomatic sanctions*. The adverb **unilaterally** modifies the verb, and the prepositional phrase *in response to* — a fixed formal collocation — introduces the cause.

45. Correct Answer: It is widely acknowledged that lobbying groups wield considerable influence over legislative outcomes.

✓ **Explanation:** This sentence uses the **impersonal it** construction followed by the passive *is widely acknowledged*. The **that-clause** acts as the delayed subject, allowing the complex idea — that *lobbying groups wield considerable influence* — to be presented with formal, academic register.

46. Correct Answer: The opposition leader called for an independent inquiry into alleged ministerial misconduct.

✓ **Explanation:** The phrasal verb **called for** is inseparable and means 'demanded'. It is followed by the noun phrase *an independent inquiry*, with the prepositional phrase **into alleged ministerial misconduct** specifying the subject of the inquiry.

47. Correct Answer: Checks and balances are fundamental to preventing the concentration of power in any single branch of government.

✓ **Explanation:** The fixed political phrase **checks and balances** functions as the subject. The adjective *fundamental* is followed by the preposition **to**, which in this structure requires a gerund: *preventing*. The phrase *concentration of power* is a key political collocation.

48. Correct Answer: Had the referendum passed, the country would have undergone a significant constitutional overhaul.

✓ **Explanation:** This is an **inverted third conditional** — a formal, C1-level structure where **had** is fronted instead of using *if*. The inversion *Had the referendum passed* replaces *If the referendum had passed*, followed by the result clause with **would have undergone**.

49. Correct Answer: The electorate's growing disillusionment with mainstream politics has fuelled the rise of populist movements across the continent.

✓ **Explanation:** The possessive noun phrase **The electorate's growing disillusionment** acts as a complex subject. The collocation *disillusionment with* is followed by the prepositional object *mainstream politics*. The present perfect **has fuelled** links this cause to its ongoing consequence.

50. Correct Answer: Notwithstanding bipartisan support, the proposed legislation was ultimately vetoed by the head of state.

✓ **Explanation:** The formal preposition **notwithstanding** (meaning 'despite') fronts the sentence as a concessive phrase, adding sophisticated register. The main clause uses the passive **was ultimately vetoed** with the agent introduced by *by*. The adverb **ultimately** is correctly placed between the auxiliary and past participle.

Score Guide

45–50 Correct	Excellent! You have mastered this topic.
38–44 Correct	Very good! Review the rules you missed.
30–37 Correct	Good start. Re-read the lesson and examples.
0–29 Correct	Study the lesson again before retaking the test.