



“When politics is no longer a mission but a profession, politicians become more self-serving than public servants.”

Emmanuel Macron, president of France

1. Politics Discussion

1. What is politics? Are you interested in politics?
2. What are some important political issues in your country at the moment?
3. Do you like to talk about politics with other people? Why or why not?
4. How would you describe the politics of your country?
5. Why do people become involved in politics? Have you ever been involved in politics? If not, would you like to get involved?
6. What are the major political parties of your country? What do they stand for?
7. What are the most significant political events that have happened in your country? How about the world?
8. How would you describe your political views? Have these views changed over your lifetime?

2. Politics Vocabulary

- **office politics** (noun) – *behaviour or actions to gain power or a higher status in the workplace.*
- **dirty trick** (noun) – *a dishonest or underhand activity to damage the reputation or discredit a political opponent, or to otherwise gain the support of the electorate.*
- **political suicide** (noun) – *something which causes, or would cause, a politician or political party to lose widespread support or confidence from the voting public.*
- **to spin** (verb), **spin** (noun, concept), **spin doctor** (noun, person) – *to describe a situation as better than it really is; the communications director of a political party whose job is to present a favourable interpretation of events to the media and public.*
- **to play politics** (verb) – *to use a situation for personal advantage instead of acting out of principle.*
- **to toe the party line** (verb) – *to do what you are told by the group or organisation you belong to.*

Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun):

1. After speaking with his **spin doctor** on the morning of Princess Diana's death, it was decided that Prime Minister Tony Blair would refer to her as "the people's princess" to capture the public mood.
2. I always keep out of **office politics**, so I won't say who I think should be the new boss.
3. If political party in the United Kingdom, left or right, proposed privatising the National Health Service, it would be **political suicide**.
4. Many MPs refused to **toe the party line** and voted against the Iraq War.
5. The leader of the opposition was accused of **playing politics** when he criticised the prime minister's response to the recent terrorist attacks.
6. The rumour that Barack Obama was not born in the United States was a **dirty trick** by his opponents to cast doubts in the minds of the electorate.

Politics vocabulary comprehension questions

1. What kind of office politics have you experienced?
2. What kind of dirty tricks happen in your country around election time?
3. What would be considered political suicide in your country?
4. Why do governments hire spin doctors? Can you think of any examples of spin?
5. Can you think of a time a politician played politics instead of acting in the best interests of the people they represent?
6. Do politicians always toe the party line in your country?

3. Video: Citizen Assemblies

You are going to watch a video by The Economist called "How to restore trust in politics."

Watch the video here: <https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/esl-conversation-lesson-plan-politics/>

While you watch the video, answer the following questions:

Multiple choice

1. What crisis is democracy facing?
a) *electoral fraud* b) *political violence* **c) trust**
2. Citizen Assemblies are designed to be a cross section of what?
a) society b) *political beliefs* c) *voters*
3. Since 2019, how many times had the Citizen Assembly met?
a) 3 **b) 4** c) 5
4. How does representative democracy make people feel?
a) *more confident* b) *more respectful* **c) angrier**

Sentence completion

5. In a deliberative process, people are nearly always able to find **consensus**.
6. Instead of the passive role of voting in elections every four or five years, citizens need more **voice** between these times.
7. Citizen assemblies were an **Ancient Greek** idea and are coming back into fashion.
8. The recent increase in deliberative processes is succeeding in giving people more **influence** over policies made by politicians.

Short answer

9. In which year did the Irish government form a citizen assembly to help decide on abortion legislation? **2016**
10. Citizen assemblies are not a silver bullet for what? **(Troubled) liberal democracies**
11. Who are reluctant to implement a citizen assembly model of democracy? **Politicians**
12. Politicians think deliberative processes will reduce what? **Power**

4. Politics Conversation Questions

1. What is your opinion of politicians? Who are your favourite politicians and why?
2. Is being a politician a career or a public service? What's the difference?
3. What do politicians do? What are their responsibilities? What would a typical day for a politician be like?
4. Are the politicians of your country generally respected and trusted? If not, how did they manage to get elected? Do you think politicians are only interested in themselves?
5. Why do politicians seem to find it so difficult to answer simple questions? Do politicians always keep their promises? If not, what is the reason for this?
6. How do politicians use fear or emotions to motivate or manipulate people? Can you think of any examples?
7. If politicians are supposed to do what is best for the people they represent, why do we need political parties?
8. How can we restore trust in politics and politicians?

5. Politics Writing Task

Write about your opinion of politicians. Try to use some of the vocabulary you learned earlier in this lesson. In your answer, you could include some of the following topics:

- What motivates people to become involved in politics.
- What politicians do.
- Whether you trust politicians and why.

Alternative exam practice question:

These days, many countries are suffering from a lack of confidence and trust in their politicians. What is the reason for this, and what can be done to resolve this problem?