

# Great Britain Government Structure

## Constitutional Monarchy

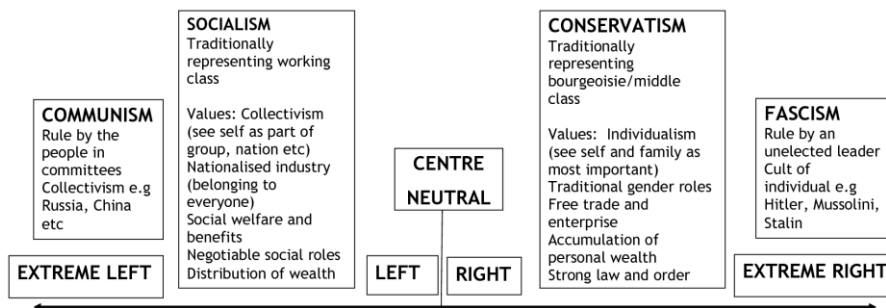
Great Britain includes England, Scotland and Wales. The United Kingdom includes the aforementioned and Northern Ireland. The terms UK, Great Britain and England are informally used interchangeably, but they are different government entities for sure.

For the Comparative Course, the focus is Great Britain.

Great Britain has an unwritten Constitution based on tradition. The system is unitary in nature, but only theoretically today. The last Monarch to try to rule resolutely was George III, the infamous King during the American Revolution, but the Monarch's power had even begun to wane decades before with his great grandfather, George I. And of course there was the Magna Carta signed by King John centuries before, but you'd be foolish to think that his many successors hadn't tried to hold sway.

The government includes an executive group- Prime Minister and his cabinet; Legislative group- called Parliament with bicameral parts: House of Commons (elected) and House of Lords (appointed). All bills only need to pass the House of Commons to become Law, unlike the US where laws must pass both Houses. The House of Lords can cause a delay in legislation, but its stamp of approval is not required. The Monarch technically can approve or disapprove of all laws coming from the House of Commons, and in theory the King's or Queen's veto cannot be overturned by Parliament. However, the use of this veto would most probably be suicide for the royal family's position, so it's a power that goes unused. It is of note that Great Britain did not have a Supreme Court until 2009. Up until then certain members of the House of Lords made the country's ultimate judicial decisions. The House of Lords is gradually becoming more and more of a figure head power just like her current Majesty, Elizabeth II.

## British Political Spectrum



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| Liberal Democrats<br>Far Left | Labour Party (formerly Whigs)<br>Center Left | Conservative Party (formerly Tories)<br>Right<br>David Cameron (Current Prime Minister) |
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