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TEMA

63

British Institutions. The Houses of Parliament. The Government. Political Parties and the Electoral System. The Crown

Las instituciones británicas. Las Cámaras parlamentarias. El Gobierno. Los partidos políticos y el sistema electoral. La Corona.

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Material de elaboración propia a partir de las fuentes oficiales que se citan al final del tema. No es un temario oficial ni sustituye a la normativa publicada.

Índice

1. INTRODUCTION
2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE EVOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT AND THE CONSTITUTION
3. THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT
    3.1. The House of Commons
    3.2. The House of Lords
4. THE GOVERNMENT
5. POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM
    5.1. Political parties
    5.2. The electoral system
6. THE CROWN
7. PEDAGOGICAL AND DIDACTIC IMPLICATIONS
8. CONCLUSION
Fuentes

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1867 Walter Bagehot wrote that "the efficient secret of the English Constitution may be described as the close union, the nearly complete fusion, of the executive and legislative powers". It explains why the British institutions cannot be understood one by one: the Crown, the two Houses, the Government and the parties are parts of a single machine. This very year, 2026, Parliament ended a seven-hundred-year-old tradition, the right of hereditary peers to sit in the House of Lords, and the country changed Prime Minister without a general election.

The United Kingdom has no single written constitution. Its rules come from statutes, from common law and, above all, from conventions: unwritten practices that everybody obeys because breaking them would be politically intolerable. For this reason I will follow the order of the title, always combining origin and present-day operation. I will first sketch the historical background of Parliament. Secondly, I will examine the Houses of Parliament, the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Thirdly, I will study the Government, from the Prime Minister to the Cabinet. Fourthly, I will turn to political parties and the electoral system. Fifthly, I will deal with the Crown. Finally, I will consider the pedagogical and didactic implications of the topic for the Secondary classroom and close with a conclusion. All data on current office-holders and figures are given as of November 2026.

Before moving on, I would like to mention the sources consulted. For the theory of the constitution I have used Walter Bagehot's The English Constitution (1867), Anthony King's The British Constitution (Oxford University Press, 2007), Vernon Bogdanor's The Monarchy and the Constitution (Oxford University Press, 1995) and Philip Norton's Parliament in British Politics (Palgrave Macmillan, 2nd edn, 2013). For current data I have relied on official sources: parliament.uk and the House of Commons and House of Lords Libraries, gov.uk, royal.uk, legislation.gov.uk and the Electoral Commission. As regards the legal framework, the pedagogical section refers to Organic Law 3/2020 (LOMLOE), Royal Decrees 217/2022 and 243/2022, and the Extremaduran Decrees 110/2022 and 109/2022.