

Politics and International Relations

Task 1 – Discussion questions

- 1) How important is it to follow current political events?
- 2) Do you take an interest in the international politics of your country? Can you name some recent events?
- 3) What about the international politics of other countries? Can you name some recent events?
- 4) Has the study of international politics become broader in recent years?
- 5) Do you think that international politics has direct relevance to everyone?

Task 2: Listen and take notes that you may use for Task 7a.

Facebook's Role in Brexit and the Threat to Democracy (15:02)

https://www.ted.com/talks/carole_cadwalladr_facebook_s_role_in_brexit_and_the_threat_to_democracy

Task 3 – Vocabulary – Match the words and expressions taken from the text below with synonyms or definitions provided. Decide whether they are formal, neutral or colloquial.

**A) blinkered B) abstention C) ongoing D) force E) move away from F) to close your eyes to
G) important H) boil down I) rip out of J) validity K) a field day L) dumbed down
M) current state N) turnout O) binding**

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) status quo | 9) compel |
| 2) constant | 10) reduce/simplify |
| 3) serving the less educated | 11) participation |
| 4) an opportunity | 12) non-participation |
| 5) remove from | 13) legitimacy |
| 6) valid | 14) drift |
| 7) ignore | 15) narrow-minded |
| 8) vital | |

Task 3a – Debating – Read the YES / NO arguments below and add your own points to verify or falsify any statements. Then discuss your ideas in small groups. Take notes to present to the class.

Debate topic: Should we have more referendums?

Student 1 argues FOR more referendums:

- ✓ Direct democracy bypasses an unpopular and disconnected governing class, which is either too ideologically *blinkered* or too “politically correct” to deliver common-sense solutions in accordance with the views of ordinary people.
- ✓ Referendums can encourage lively debate on issues or decisions that may not only cut across party lines but are also too important to be decided at general elections when voters have to take into account many topics.
- ✓ Direct democracy can help decide questions that would otherwise cause *ongoing* division and distract the country from other important matters.
- ✓ Referendums ensure that constitutional issues that will affect the political “rules of the game” are not decided by those who play it - and, indeed, only temporarily.
- ✓ Knowing that any legislation they produce may be overturned by a referendum, parliaments will tend to ensure that such legislation is in accord with the will of the people. Furthermore, in the case of citizens’ initiatives, allowing the people to recommend or even *compel* politicians to act on certain issues means they can never *drift* too far out of touch or *close their eyes* to a *vital* matter of public concern.
- ✓ Improving technology will allow us to vote instantly – think of TV’s *Big Brother*.

Student 2 argues AGAINST more referendums:

- *Boiling down* a complex issue into a straightforward question that everyone can understand will encourage dangerous oversimplification; it also *rips* particular issues out of context. People may end up voting for something that, for instance, could impact negatively on other programmes that they value, or for policy that may be difficult to implement or afford.
- Turning issues into “either/or” questions provides a *field day* for populists and a *dumbed-down* media – who may encourage voters to make irrational and prejudiced decisions, when it might be better to leave the issue to politicians, who are elected to do just that job and have more time and resources to do it properly.
- Low *turnout* is a problem: getting less than about half of the electorate to vote will throw the *legitimacy* of a referendum result into question and can even mean the result is not *binding*; this can encourage campaigners for the *status quo* to call for mass *abstention* – which defeats principles of democracy.
- Even a “respectable” *turnout* will be unrepresentative, given that older, wealthier and better-educated people are more likely to vote.
- Referendums don’t always bring closure – the losing side may call for another vote on the same question at a later date (unless the original referendum is set to be binding)

Adapted from: European politics: a comparative introduction / Tim Bale. – 2nd ed. -- Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Grammar – Connectors and Linking Words

Sequence	Result	Emphasis
First / firstly, second / secondly, third / thirdly, etc. Next, last, finally In addition, moreover Further / furthermore Another Also In conclusion To summarise	So As a result As a consequence (of) Therefore Thus Consequently Hence Due to	Undoubtedly Indeed Obviously Generally Admittedly In fact Particularly In particular Especially Clearly Importantly
Addition	Reason	Example
And, also, In addition / additionally Furthermore As well as	For Because Since, as Because of	For example (e.g.) For instance That is (i.e.) Such as Including Namely
Contrast	Comparison	
However Nevertheless Nonetheless Still, but (less formal) Although / even though Though Yet Conversely Despite / in spite of In contrast (to) In comparison While, whereas On the other hand On the contrary	Similarly Likewise Also Like Just as Just like Similar to Same as compare(d) to / with Not only...but also	

Adapted from https://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/lu/content/4_writingskills/writing_tuts/linking_LL/linking3.html

Task 4 – Conjunctions and Linking Words – Choose the best answer. More than one may be possible.

- 1) We are planning a series of conferences; *however* / *therefore* / *nonetheless* there will be a weekend devoted to International Relations in the 21st Century.
- 2) I failed my exam precisely *although* / *despite* / *because* I didn't have time to study.
- 3) There is no record of the transaction; *nonetheless* / *while* / *thus* there is no proof that it ever took place.
- 4) The speaker is ill and will *therefore* / *because* / *although* be unable to lecture today.

- 5) John, *as / although / despite* you speak French, I wonder if I could ask you about some words?
- 6) Some people believe that the politician became ill *because / due to / hence* he was poisoned.
- 7) Jerome Smith has ambitions in politics; *despite / consequently / on the contrary* he is interested in the media.
- 8) *Hence / Because / As* we have not heard from you, we assume that you have no objections to the proposal.
- 9) Everyone has arrived; *because / consequently / however* the meeting can begin.
- 10) *Since / However / Even though* everyone agreed, we went ahead with the proposal.
- 11) The talks broke down *in spite of / although / because of* the effort.
- 12) The parties did not reach an agreement *because / because of / due to* their mutual suspicion.
- 13) *Thus / Although / As* diplomatic relations were restored 6 months ago, ambassadors have not been exchanged yet.
- 14) *Due to / Furthermore / Because* widening differences, the two countries broke off relations.
- 15) *Even though / However / As* we did not agree on certain issues, in the end we made concessions.

Task 5: Fill in the missing words in the instructions for this writing task:

BOTH	EXAMPLES	MORE	OTHERS
OPINION	REASONS	TOPIC	CONCLUSION

A: Write about the following statement: **Holding more referendums contributes to a better-functioning democracy.**

B: Discuss _____ main views and give your _____.

C: Give _____ for your answer and include any relevant _____ from your own experience or knowledge.

D: You should write no _____ than 220 words.

E: Formulate a clear _____ sentence that includes a controlling idea.

F: Include a comprehensive _____ that rounds out your main idea (rather than just ending with a specific example).

Task 6: Read the model answer and check whether it follows all the instructions above.

Should referendums be used more widely and why? Referendum voting by the electorate directly on a specific issue may be advisory or binding. Some people believe that referendums should be used more widely in UK decision and policy-making. They justify this belief by the fact that there are many demands being made on UK democracy; furthermore, there was a severe lack of voters in the last general election. One reason that supports this argument is that voters would feel more involved in decisions. An example of this is the so-called greening of the conservative party where, because of public pressure, they paid increasing attention to environmental issues.

On the contrary, there are people who believe that referenda should not be used more widely and they too have many good arguments to back this claim. The main one is that the government do not have to take the results into consideration: they may simply use them as opinion polls, rather than policy changers or decision makers. In such a case, fewer people would participate each time, and the government by either paying no attention or going against the referenda result would create voter apathy. Clearly, the overuse of referenda would not be a good idea, because it may simplify a complex issue to a yes or no vote, or even merge two

important issues into one. Nevertheless, my main reason for disagreeing with referenda is that they may allow governments to get away with shifting blame onto the public when it comes to making unpopular decisions.
(254 words)

A: Fulfilled / Not fulfilled

D: Fulfilled / Not fulfilled

B: Fulfilled / Not fulfilled

E: Fulfilled / Not fulfilled

C: Fulfilled / Not fulfilled

E: Fulfilled / Not fulfilled

Task 7: Read the following comments and find the sections in the text that they refer to.

- 1) The writer in this writing sample does not have a clear thesis in the introduction. A question, rather than a more general statement, is posed. Then the overly specific types of referendum, advisory or binding, are mentioned right at the start, rather than introducing the issue through a more general statement that links to the given theme. (e.g. Paragraph 1, Sentences 1 & 2: **Should referendums be used more widely? Referendum voting by the electorate directly on a specific issue may be advisory or binding.**)
- 2) Looking at the structure, the topic sentence makes it clear when the writer is moving onto the next opinion (**Paragraph** __, **Sentence** __: _____).
- 3) Connectors (**Par.** __, **Sen.** __: _____, **Par.** __, **Sen.** __: _____) are used well to introduce each new supporting idea or to expand on these ideas. (**Par.** __, **Sen.** __: _____, **Par.** __, **Sen.** __: _____)
- 4) Finally, the writer has demonstrated the ability to use complex sentence structures (**Par.** __, **Sen.** __: _____) and discussed both views.
- 5) The writer offers a good final example and position; however, the closing ideas do not tie in to the original topic statement in a general comprehensive way. (**Par.** __, **Sen.** __: _____).

Task 7a: Write an argumentative text of about 200 words. You may use the above format (from Task 6), where the introduction is a part of the first argument and the conclusion is a part of the second argument.

Conversely, you may also choose to structure your text into 4 short paragraphs:

- 1) the **introduction** with thesis statement and background
- 2) **arguments** for or against, with examples and evidence
- 3) the **opposing arguments**, with examples and evidence, which should lead up to your conclusion
- 4) the **conclusion** (making a more general statement and possibly stating your final position)

You may write your text on the assertion from the above example:

Holding more referendums contributes to a better-functioning democracy.

OR one that relates to Task 2, for example:

Today's social media are a major threat to democracy.

Task 8 – Institutions – pre-listening tasks

1. Which of these organizations do you know about? Match them to the descriptions below.

1. The United Nations
 2. Trade Unions
 3. International Monetary Fund
 4. World Trade Organization
 5. Friends of the Earth
 6. International Aid Organizations (such as Oxfam)
- a) The international organization that controls trade between countries.
 - b) Campaigns on environmental issues such as the greenhouse effect.
 - c) An international organization that works to balance and manage the world's economy and to help countries with weak economies to develop
 - d) An international organization that encourages countries to work together in order to solve world problems such as war, disease and poverty.
 - e) Charities that raise money for famine and disaster relief.
 - f) Organizations of workers that aim to improve pay and conditions of work.

2. Are these organizations pro-globalization or anti-globalization? What do you think?

Task 8a – Listening – You are going to listen to a lecture in three sections. Before each section spend half a minute reading the questions and underlining key words.

Section 1 – Which of the following areas does the lecturer say she will cover? CIRCLE TWO ANSWERS.

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|---|
| A | global inequalities | D | key arguments for and against globalization |
| B | poverty in the developing world | E | trade and economics |
| C | the history of globalization | F | the World Trade Organization |

Complete the following sentences using NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS OR A NUMBER.

- 3 Many people feel globalization is about the economy or
- 4 An example is the export of Japanese
- 5 Globalization began approximately

Which of these is NOT mentioned as important to the development of globalization?

- A telephone B fax C the postal service D air travel

Section 2 – Complete the following notes using NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS.

Anti-globalization groups – e.g. Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth. These are (7)..... organizations. They feel globalization causes global warming, and depletion of oil, gas, (8) and sea life. Some organizations representing developing countries think that the WTO should make it easier for poor countries to (9) their own industries. Many businesses in developed nations are against globalization because of competition from (10) Poor countries can provide effective competition with imports of cheap goods in the (11) industries.

Section 3 – Complete this table using ONE OR TWO WORDS OR A NUMBER.

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Established</u>	<u>No. of member states</u>	<u>Role</u>
(12)	(13).....	123	Prevents members favouring (14)
IMF	(15)	(16)	Provides temporary (17)
(18)	1946	-----	Promotes shared values between UN and the (19)

Vocabulary

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. well-off | zámožný, bohatý |
| 2. gain | získat, nabýt |
| 3. counterpart | protějšek, doplněk |
| 4. backward region | zaostalý region |
| 5. unhindered | bez překážek |
| 6. legally-enforceable | právně vymahatelný |
| 7. tackle in unison | jednohlasně se vypořádat |
| 8. inherent | základní, podstatný |
| 9. subsidise | subvencovat, dotovat |
| 10. biased | neobjektivní, zkreslený |
| 11. buffer zone | nárazníková zóna |
| 12. bridgehead | předmostí |
| 13. crunch | kritický moment, zlomový okamžik |
| 14. sheer | pouhý, čirý |
| 15. overturn | zvrátit, změnit, svrhnout |
| 16. compel | přinutit, donutit |
| 17. drift | odklánět se, odchylovat se |
| 18. turnout | účast |
| 19. binding | závazný, povinný |
| 20. to disband | rozpadnout se, rozejít se |