

EPISODE 10  
LEVEL B2

READING COMPREHENSION



POLITICS IN THE UK AND THE US



The political system in the UK is, unlike in Poland, not a multi-party one. There are two main parties, the Conservatives (**right-wing** = conservative) and the Labour (**left-wing** = socialist) party. The British do not have a president, but the **head of the state** (= the leader of the country) is the Queen.

In the US in turn, there is no government and the country is **ruled** (= officially controlled) by the president elected every four years. The US president co-operates closely with the American parliament, the Congress, whose two **chambers** (= sections) are called the Senate and the House of Representatives. Similarly to the UK, there are two big parties in the United States, so if you are an American **citizen** (= someone who has the right to live permanently in a particular country), you support either the Democrats or the Republicans.

Great Britain also has its own parliament with the House of Lords (the higher chamber) and the lower House of Commons.

The main difference is, however, that Poland is a **republic**, the UK is a **monarchy** and the USA is a **federation**.

More contexts for the new words:

- The **chambermaid** came to clean our room and changed the towels every day.  
(= a woman whose job is to clean the bedrooms in a hotel)
- The court **rules** that Mr Freeman was guilty of committing the crime.  
(= make and announce a decision, usually about a legal matter)



### EXERCISE 1

Decide if the following sentences are true or false.

1. The UK is a republic.
2. The US is ruled by a king.
3. The American Congress consists of two chambers.
4. Polish citizens can vote for the president.
5. The head of state in Poland is the president.
6. In the UK, the Labour party is conservative.



### EXERCISE 2

Complete the questions, then answer them.

1. What are the names of the two c..... of the Polish Parliament?
2. Who is the current head of s..... in Poland?
3. Which parties do you support: left-w..... or right-w.....? Why?

## ENGLISH IN USE



Let's look at two sentences from the lesson above:

*The US president co-operates closely with the American parliament, the Congress, **WHOSE** two chambers are called the Senate and the House of Representatives.*

*A chambermaid is a woman **WHOSE** job is to clean the bedrooms in a hotel.*

WHOSE is used to show that someone or something belongs to/is connected with the person or thing that you have just mentioned (in our sentences, the chambers belong to the parliament, and cleaning is the chambermaid's job).

The examples above show you that WHOSE (although it contains WHO-), can be used both with reference to people and things. Look at a handful of examples that follow:

*People **WHOSE** homes were destroyed in the fire desperately need help.*

*We stayed at a hotel **WHOSE** name I cannot recall.*

*I have an uncle **WHOSE** job is related to sailing.*

*We live in a block of flats **WHOSE** walls are painted blue and orange.*

## IDIOM CLOSE-UP



A/ Do you also have the impression that our Parliament are always **AT the President's BECK AND CALL**?

B/ Yeah, I know what you mean, they never seem to have an opinion of their own and always support his ideas!

If you are **at sb's beck and call**, you are always willing and able to do whatever someone asks.

## PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP



1. If you **BACK** somebody **UP**, you support somebody.

Members of his party **backed** him **up** when he wanted to introduce the new ideas in Parliament.

My family **backed** me **up** throughout the court case.

2. If you **STAND UP TO** somebody, you state your opinions forcefully and refuse to change them or do what others want.

He **stood up to** the influential MPs, refusing to change his reform plans.

He wasn't afraid to **stand up to** bullies.



### EXERCISE 3

Match sentences from the two columns into synonymous pairs.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. My parents always backed me up.             | a. They were ready to do what I asked. |
| 2. I always stood up to my parents.            | b. They supported me.                  |
| 3. My parents were always at my beck and call. | c. I opposed them.                     |

## NEWS



### BARACK OBAMA

Barack Obama is a **remarkable** figure in the world of politics. First of all, he is the first African American to **hold the office** of the US President, which is noteworthy in a country with such painful history of racial conflict and tension. Secondly, he was named the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize laureate – a decision which, **albeit** controversial, puts him **on a par** with Mother Teresa and Dalai Lama. He is also **applauded** by some feminist circles for **appointing** two women to serve on the Supreme Court, and certain pro-abortion movements. Whether you love him or hate him, he definitely will be a President to remember.

### GLOSSARY

- **remarkable** – unusual, special
- **to hold the office** – to have the position
- **albeit** – although
- **on a par with** – the same as or equal to
- **to applaud** – to praise, to admire
- **to appoint** – to nominate

## KEY TO EXERCISES

### Ex.1

1. F
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. T
6. F

### Ex. 2

1. chambers – the Sejm and the Senat
2. state
3. wing

### Ex.3

1. b
2. c
3. a