**Politics Today**

* Everyone over 18 can vote except for the mentally ill, lords and some criminals.
* Voting is secret. No one can see how you vote.
* There are 651 constituencies in Britain, of roughly even size.
* Each constituency sends one MP to Parliament.
* In an election, voters vote for one person to be their MP. The candidate with the most votes becomes the MP.
* General elections are held every 5 years.
* Parliament is made up of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Parliament passes all the new laws.
* The political party with the most MPs in Parliament forms the government.
* MPs are paid a salary.

**Politics in 1800**

* In 1800, nobody under 21 could vote. Fewer than 5% of the population had this political right.
* Most of the new cities and towns had no MP to represent them.
* Voting was open. There was no secret ballot, so it was possible to pay a voter to vote. Sometimes voters were frightened into voting for a particular candidate.
* The country was divided into constituencies made up of counties and boroughs. The seats were unevenly distributed. There were some boroughs where nobody lived or where there were only a few voters. These were called rotten boroughs.
* In many constituencies, there was only one candidate for voters to choose from.
* MPs in Parliament were not paid a salary, so they had to have enough money to support themselves.
* Parliament was made up of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The king chose the Prime Minister, but increasingly the Prime Minister and his Cabinet made the decisions of government.
* Elections were held at least once every seven years.
* No women were allowed to vote.