

# Talk a Lot

## Politics – Who would you vote for?

### Student A

Ask and answer questions to complete the gaps, and find out information about four prospective MPs. It's the day of a general election. You go to vote and find this choice of candidates on your card. You can only vote for one of them. Who do you vote for? Why?

	Paul Collins	Frank Smith
Party	Conservative Party	
No. Years in Parliament		35 years
Current Job		Opposition backbencher
Biggest Achievement	successful bank merger in 1996	campaigning hard for fairer benefit laws
Family Life	married to Carol; two kids	
Hobbies		
Controversial Views		none
Reason for Entering Politics	to become prime minister	

	Junita Khan	Mr. Wally Wardrobe
Party	Green Party	
No. Years in Parliament		
Current Job	environmental campaigner	checkout supervisor at B&Q
Biggest Achievement		"my boys"
Family Life	divorced; three daughters	
Hobbies		pub quizzes, any kind of sport
Controversial Views	"Britain could be totally flooded!"	
Reason for Entering Politics		a drunken bet that may backfire



### Student B

Ask and answer questions to complete the gaps, and find out information about four prospective MPs. It's the day of a general election. You go to vote and find this choice of candidates on your card. You can only vote for one of them. Who do you vote for? Why?

	Paul Collins	Frank Smith
Party		Labour Party
No. Years in Parliament	14 years	
Current Job	Home Secretary	
Biggest Achievement		
Family Life		Civil Partner called Bob
Hobbies	exotic birds	fishing, cycling, long walks in the country
Controversial Views	"Bring back capital punishment!"	
Reason for Entering Politics		to make the country a better place

	Junita Khan	Mr. Wally Wardrobe
Party		Bigger Wardrobes for All Party
No. Years in Parliament	none	none
Current Job		
Biggest Achievement	raising awareness in schools	
Family Life		separated from Alice; two sons
Hobbies	music, writing poetry, swimming	
Controversial Views		"Free clothes hangers for judges!"
Reason for Entering Politics	to help save the planet	

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## Politics

### Information Exchange

#### Answers

#### Politics – Who would you vote for?

Task: "Ask and answer questions to complete the gaps, and find out information about four prospective MPs. It's the day of a general election. You go to vote and find this choice of candidates on your card. You can only vote for one of them. Who do you vote for? Why?"

	Paul Collins	Frank Smith
Party	Conservative Party	Labour Party
No. Years in Parliament	14 years	35 years
Current Job	Home Secretary	Opposition backbencher
Biggest Achievement	successful bank merger in 1996	campaigning hard for fairer benefit laws
Family Life	married to Carol; two kids	Civil Partner called Bob
Hobbies	exotic birds	fishing, cycling, long walks in the country
Controversial Views	"Bring back capital punishment!"	none
Reason for Entering Politics	to become prime minister	to make the country a better place

	Junita Khan	Mr. Wally Wardrobe*
Party	Green Party	Bigger Wardrobes for All Party
No. Years in Parliament	none	none
Current Job	environmental campaigner	checkout supervisor at B&Q
Biggest Achievement	raising awareness in schools	"my boys"
Family Life	divorced; three daughters	separated from Alice; two sons
Hobbies	music, writing poetry, swimming	pub quizzes, any kind of sport
Controversial Views	"Britain could be totally flooded!"	"Free clothes hangers for judges!"
Reason for Entering Politics	to help save the planet	a drunken bet that may backfire

\* Cultural note: At general elections in the UK, it's possible for any British citizen (or citizen of the Republic of Ireland, or a Commonwealth country) over the age of 18 to stand as an MP, representing their own party – even a wacky made-up party like the "Bigger Wardrobes for All Party" – as long as they have paid a deposit of £500. If they fail to win more than 5% of the vote, they will lose their deposit. This freedom often leads to "joke" candidates appearing at elections alongside serious candidates. The only aims of such candidates may be to have fun, impress their friends, and win back their deposits – or win a bet, like our candidate in this activity. The man standing as Mr. Wally Wardrobe works in a DIY store – B&Q – and has probably sat in the pub with his friends until late at night dreaming up his joke party and identity (including the wardrobe costume!). In the cold light of day – i.e. at the election, when everybody else will be smartly dressed and behaving seriously – he might come to regret his decision!

"Who do you vote for? Why?" Answers will vary. When they have completed filling the gaps, students should discuss – given this choice of four candidates on their polling card – which prospective MP they would vote for in a general election. "Prospective" means that the candidates would like to be MPs, but are not guaranteed the job after the general election – they have to be voted in, to either gain or keep their seat in Parliament. Students should produce appropriate reasons for their choices – why they would choose one candidate rather than another. For example: "I would vote for Junita Khan because she is passionate about the environment, and that's a really important issue these days..." Or... "I would vote for Frank Smith, because it looks like he's trying to help people..." Or... "I wouldn't vote for Mr. Wally Wardrobe, because he isn't a serious candidate..." [etc.]

#### Sample Questions

Which party does \_\_\_\_\_ represent?  
 How many years has \_\_\_\_\_ been in Parliament?  
 How long has \_\_\_\_\_ been in Parliament?  
 What is \_\_\_\_\_'s current job?  
 What does \_\_\_\_\_ do for a living?  
 What is \_\_\_\_\_'s biggest achievement?  
 Tell me about \_\_\_\_\_'s family life.  
 Is \_\_\_\_\_ married?  
 Has \_\_\_\_\_ got any children?  
 What are \_\_\_\_\_'s hobbies?

#### Sample Answers

He / she represents the \_\_\_\_\_ Party.  
 He's / she's been in Parliament for \_\_\_\_\_ years. /  
 He / she hasn't been elected to Parliament before.  
 Since \_\_\_\_\_.  
 He / she is \_\_\_\_\_.  
 He / she is \_\_\_\_\_.  
 \_\_\_\_\_.  
 He's / she's \_\_\_\_\_ / He's / she's got \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Yes, \_\_\_\_\_ / No, \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Yes, he's / she's got \_\_\_\_\_ children. / No, he /  
 she hasn't got any children.  
 \_\_\_\_\_.

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### Information Exchange

What does \_\_\_\_\_ enjoy doing in his / her free time? He / she enjoys \_\_\_\_\_.  
Has \_\_\_\_\_ got any controversial views? Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ / No.  
Why did \_\_\_\_\_ enter politics? \_\_\_\_\_.  
What was \_\_\_\_\_'s reason for entering politics? \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Examples

How many years has Paul Collins been in Parliament? He's been in Parliament for fourteen years.  
What is Frank Smith's biggest achievement? He has campaigned hard for fairer benefit laws.  
Is Junita Khan married? No, she's divorced.  
Has Mr. Wally Wardrobe got any controversial views? Yes: "Free clothes hangers for judges!"

[etc.]

Extension 1: you could try to encourage some comparative/superlative questions and sentences too, for example:

Who has been in Parliament the longest? Frank Smith has...  
Who has got the most children? Junita Khan has...  
Which prospective MP has got the silliest reason for entering politics? Mr. Wally Wardrobe has...

[etc.]

Extension 2: you could get students to develop short role plays using the characters of the prospective MPs. For example, a small group of students could hold a debate, with each student playing one of the characters and arguing about a controversial political issue, such as, "This House believes that we should bring back capital punishment!", or "This house believes that global warming doesn't exist!" Another option is for students to work in pairs, with one playing an interviewer on a political TV programme, and the other playing one of the four candidates. What questions would you ask, if you were the interviewer? How would you answer them to your best advantage, if you were one of the candidates?

[etc.]