

Your Voice, Your Vote

English for Elections and Voting



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Common idioms and expressions that come up when discussing politics



Time for a poll!

01



Basic Vocabulary

-
- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| c 1. politics | a. A group of people with similar political beliefs. (<i>noun</i>) |
| e 2. politician | b. A survey in which people are asked who they will vote for. (<i>noun</i>) |
| a 3. political party | c. The activities involved in getting and using power in public life |
| d 4. policy | d. A plan of action agreed or chosen by a political party (<i>noun</i>) |
| b 5. poll | e. A person who has been elected to represent a constituency or someone involved with politics. (<i>noun</i>) |
-



Origins of **Left** and **Right**



Left

Left wing (adj) / left-winger (n)

On the left

Far-left

Extreme left

Progressive

- Socialist
 - Liberal (?)
-

Right

Right wing (adj) / right-winger (n)

On the right

Far-right

Extreme right

Conservative

- Fiscal Conservative
 - Social Conservative
-



“I’m a Tory”
“I vote Tory”

“I’m a conservative”
vs.
“I’m a Conservative”



“I’m a conservative with a small C”
“I’m politically conservative”

More Terms...

Lefty

Woke

Snowflake

Alt-right

Red pill



In the middle

Centrist

Centre left / Centre right

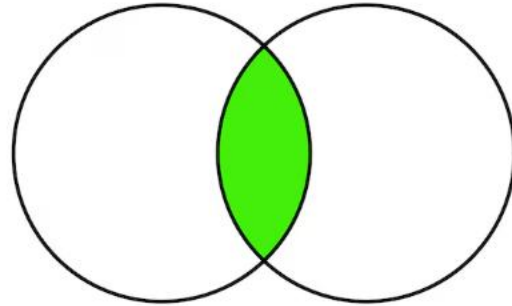
Moderate

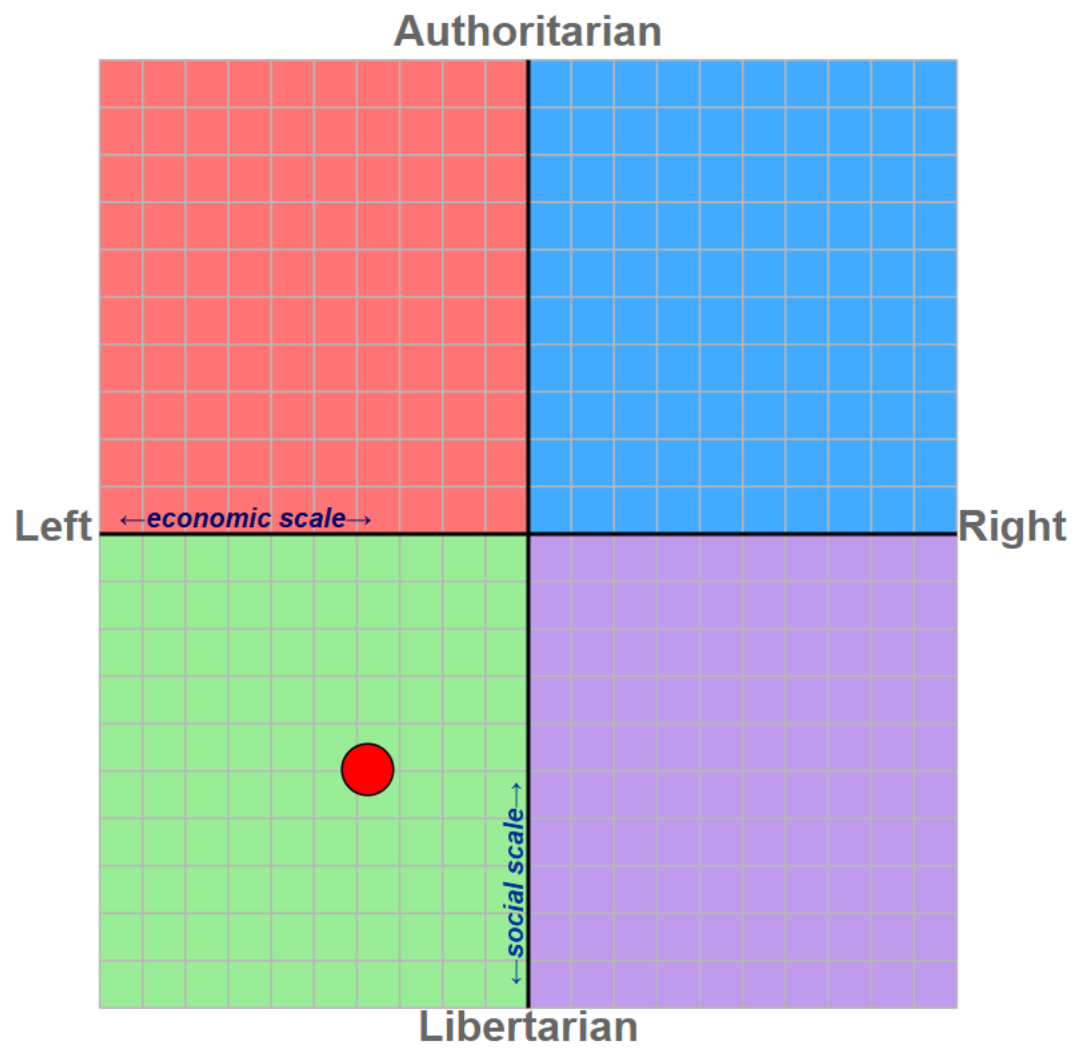
Independent

Swing voter

Middle-of-the-road

Nonpartisan





Dialogue about Elections

Alex: Hey, Sarah! Now that you are 18, are you planning to **vote** in the upcoming **general election**?

Sarah: Yeah, I already decided. I think I'll **vote for** Labour. After 14 years I'm sick of the Tories. The Labour **candidate** is Daniel Shearer, have you seen his **campaign** ads?

Alex: I have! He seems really passionate about **the issues**. But, I'm for Paul Holmes who's seeking **re-election**.

Sarah: Oh, I remember him from last time. Didn't he win by a **landslide**?

Alex: Yeah, he did. But I don't think he'll be able to repeat it. The **polls** are showing that Labour will get the **majority** of the **seats** this year.

Sarah: I suppose it'll depend on how well **the leaders** do in the **debate**. People are really paying attention to what is said this year.

Alex: True. The debate could be a big **deciding factor**. I'm still not sure who I'll **vote for**. I'll probably wait until after the debate **to make my** final **decision**.

Sarah: Sounds like a good plan. I'm not really sure how the voting process works. Can you talk me through it?

Dialogue about Elections

Sarah: Sounds like a good plan. I'm not really sure how the voting process works. Can you talk me through it?

Alex: Of course! First, you'll need to go to your **polling station**. You'll find it listed on your voter registration card. It's usually a school, community hall, or local church.

Sarah: Right, got it. And then what?

Alex: When you get there, you'll need to give your name and address to the people running the station and they'll find your name on the **register**.

Sarah: Do I need to show **ID**?

Alex: No, not in the UK. Once you're checked in, you'll be given a **ballot paper**. It will have the names of all the **candidates** running in your area. You'll see each candidate's **party** and sometimes a brief description.

Sarah: Cool. So, I just pick one?

Alex: Yep! You'll have to **tick the box** next to the candidate you want to vote for. Make sure you only tick one box, or your vote will be **spoiled**. Then you fold the **ballot paper** and put it in the **ballot box**.

Sarah: That sounds easy enough. Thanks!

Question 1

What do you call a person
who is running for election?

Answer:

Candidate

Question 2

Presidential candidates in the USA
always belong to either the
Republican or Democratic what?

Answer:

Party

Question 3

In a UK general election, what
are candidates trying to win?
(un escaño in Spanish)

Answer:

A seat

Question 4

What do you call the paper
on which you mark your vote
in an election?

Answer:

Ballot, Ballot paper

Question 5

What is the name of the container where voters place their completed ballot papers?

Answer:

Ballot Box

Question 6

What is it called when a voter marks their ballot incorrectly, such as ticking more than one box?

Answer:

Spoiled, Invalid

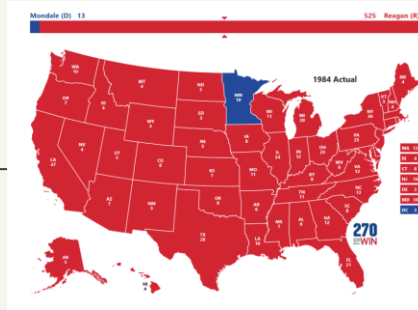
Question 7

What term refers to the number of votes or seats needed for a party or candidate to win control in an election?

Answer:

Majority

Question 8



What do you call an outcome where one political party wins by a very large margin, far more than the others?

Answer:

Landslide

Question 9

What preposition is missing in this sentence?
“Which candidate did you vote _____?”

Answer:

for

02

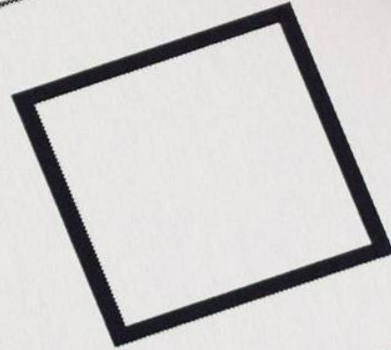
Who should you vote for?

Spoiler. I don't know.



**How do
you vote?**

Time for a poll!
(don't worry, I'm not asking
for a party)



www.isidewith.com



The screenshot shows the homepage of the website 'I Side With...'. The header is dark blue with a 'LOGIN' button on the left, the site name 'I SIDE WITH... BETA' in the center, and a language selector 'SPAIN' with a dropdown arrow and 'SPEAKING ENGLISH' on the right. Below the header is a navigation bar with links for 'Issues', 'Elections', 'Parties', 'Ideologies', and 'Discuss'. A search bar with a magnifying glass icon and the word 'search' is on the right. The main content area has a dark blue background with a faint image of a classical building. It features the title '2025 Political Quiz' in large white text, followed by the subtitle 'See which political parties and ideologies match your personal beliefs' in smaller white text. A white rounded button with the text 'Take the quiz!' is positioned below the subtitle.

LOGIN

I SIDE WITH...^{BETA}

SPAIN  SPEAKING ENGLISH

Issues Elections Parties Ideologies Discuss

 search

2025 Political Quiz

See which political parties and ideologies match your personal beliefs

[Take the quiz!](#)

Should the minimum voting age be lowered?

[STATS](#) | [DISCUSS](#)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other stances

Should foreigners, currently residing in Spain, have the right to vote?

[LEARN MORE](#) | [STATS](#) | [DISCUSS](#)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other stances

Answer Overview

Response rates from 330k Spain voters.

Yes

8%

No

92%

Yes

7%

No

79%

Yes, any citizen that pays taxes should be allowed to vote **1%**

No, and voters should be required to pass a basic test demonstrating their understanding of politics in order to vote **10%**

No, it should be raised **2%**

Should foreigners, currently residing in Spain, have the right to vote?

[LEARN MORE](#)[STATS](#)[DISCUSS](#)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, but only if they are European Union citizens
- ☐ Yes, but only after living in the country for 5 years
- ☐ Yes, but only after living in the country for 10 years
- ☐ Yes, anyone who pays taxes should have the right to vote
- ☐ Yes, but they should not be allowed to vote in local elections
- ☐ Yes, but they should only be allowed to vote in local elections
- ☐ No, only legal citizens should be allowed to vote
- ☐ Add your own stance
- ☐ This question is no longer relevant and should be removed



@8VBBHXB

ANSWERED...

No, only if they already have the Spanish nationality.



REPLY TO THIS

AGREE

DISAGREE



@8TPH3D4

ANSWERED...

Si, pero los de terceros países deben llevar viviendo más de 10 años.



REPLY TO THIS

AGREE

DISAGREE



@8PKM35V

ANSWERED...

Yes, but only after living in the country for 10 years and have shown a willingness to integrate



REPLY TO THIS

AGREE

DISAGREE



SOCIAL ISSUES

Should the government ban cultural ceremonies that involve the killing of animals for entertainment?

SCIENCE ISSUES

Do you support the use of nuclear energy?

NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES

Should Spain assassinate suspected terrorists in foreign countries?

HEALTHCARE ISSUES

Should there be more or less privatization of hospital and healthcare services?

CURRENT EVENTS ISSUES

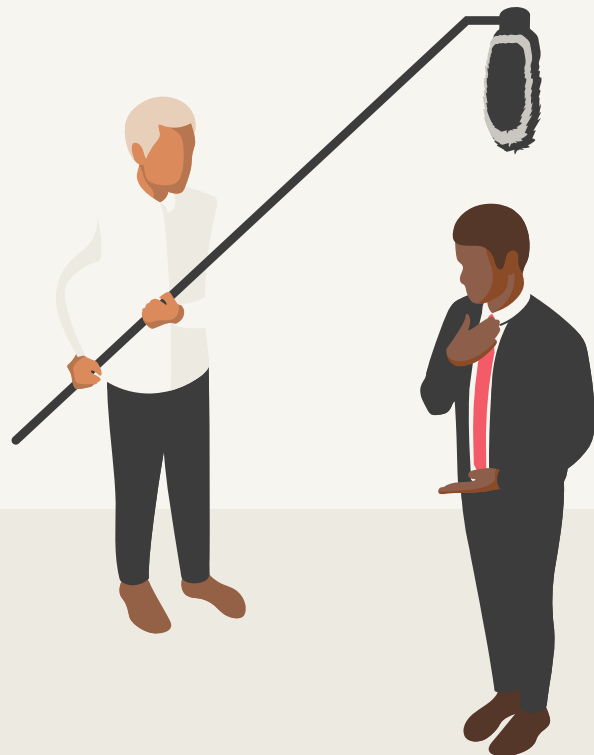
Should the European Union maintain its 20% retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods in response to U.S. tariffs on EU exports?

HOUSING ISSUES

Should the government provide assistance to homeowners facing foreclosure?

03

Political Vocabulary in the News



Protest

(noun – protest)



Thousands protest against overtourism in Spain's Canary Islands

By Borja Suarez and Corina Pons

May 18, 2025 5:30 PM GMT+2 · Updated 3 days ago



Aa



Bribery

(verb – to bribe)

FT Financial Times

Qatar denies its offer of \$400mn jet to Donald Trump is bribery

Country's prime minister says the US has accepted many gifts from allies in the past.

1 day ago



Ceasefire



 Sky News

Fresh UK and EU sanctions on Russia announced - as Putin procrastinates on ceasefire talks

The sanctions will target Russia's weapons supply chains, Kremlin-funded information operations, financial institutions and its "shadow..."

21 hours ago

Cover-up

(verb – to cover something up)

 The Washington Post

Opinion | The Biden cover-up demands deep soul-searching

Those who colluded in the cover-up of Joe Biden's cognitive decline are eager to put it behind them. The election is over, so why dwell on...

12 hours ago



Ban

(verb – to ban)

Spanish PM calls for Israel ban at Eurovision

2 days ago



Corruption

(adjective – corrupt)



Former DR Congo PM sentenced to hard labour on corruption charge

7 hours ago

Otilie Mitchell

BBC News

Share  Save 

Whistle-blower

(verb – to blow the whistle on something/one)



 NPR

A whistleblower's disclosure details how DOGE may have taken sensitive labor data

The DOGE team may have taken data related to union organizing and labor complaints and hid its tracks, according to a whistleblower.

04



Talking about politics



There should be more referenda.

Expressing Personal Opinion

I think / believe / feel, there should be more referenda.

In my opinion, there should be more referenda.

I tend to think, there should be more referenda.

If you ask me, there should be more referenda.



Voting should be mandatory.

Tentative Phrases

Perhaps, voting should be mandatory.

It may be beneficial to make voting mandatory.

It seems to me that voting should be mandatory.

Although I can see both points of view, I think voting should be mandatory.

We need to increase taxes.



Warning shot

To be honest, we need to increase taxes.

This may well be controversial, but we need to increase taxes

I know this isn't a popular opinion, but we need to increase taxes.



The new law will backfire.

backfire = salir por la culata

Modal Verbs

The new law **might** backfire

The new law **could** backfire

The new law **may** backfire



The new law will backfire.

backfire = salir por la culata

Modal Verbs + Diplomatic Language

The new law **might** not succeed as planned

The new law **could** have unexpected consequences

The new law **may** result in unforeseeable issues

Every law they make is terrible

Less absolutist

Some of the laws they pass seem to have unintended consequences

There are concerns that many of their laws do not address the issues effectively.

A number of laws that have been passed could be improved to better serve the public





Social media should be regulated to prevent the spread of lies

Combos

In my opinion regulating social media might help prevent the spread of misinformation.

It seems to me that regulation could play a role in reducing misleading information.

Perhaps social media could be regulated to decrease the amount of disinformation.

Agreeing

and

Disagreeing

- I agree ~~(not I am agreed)~~
 - That sounds like a great idea
 - You're right
 - Sounds good to me
 - Absolutely
 - That's true
-

- (I'm sorry, but) I don't agree
 - I don't think that's a good idea
 - I'm not convinced
 - I'm not sure about that (to be honest)
 - I see your point, but I have a different take on it
 - I understand where you're coming from, but I see it differently
-

Transformation Exercise – Any Volunteers? —

We should implement a four-day workweek across the whole of Spain.

Every citizen should be forced to do mandatory national service.

Everyone in Spain should receive a universal basic income.

We need to legalise all drugs.

Every CEO's pay should be capped relative to worker pay.

Spain should become a Republic tomorrow.

Taxation should be a universal flat rate of 10%.

All public transport should be free.

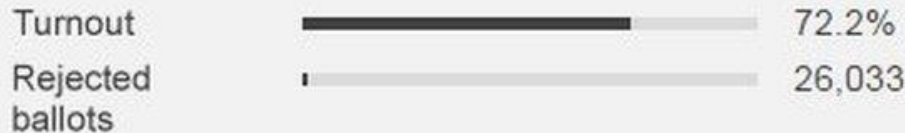
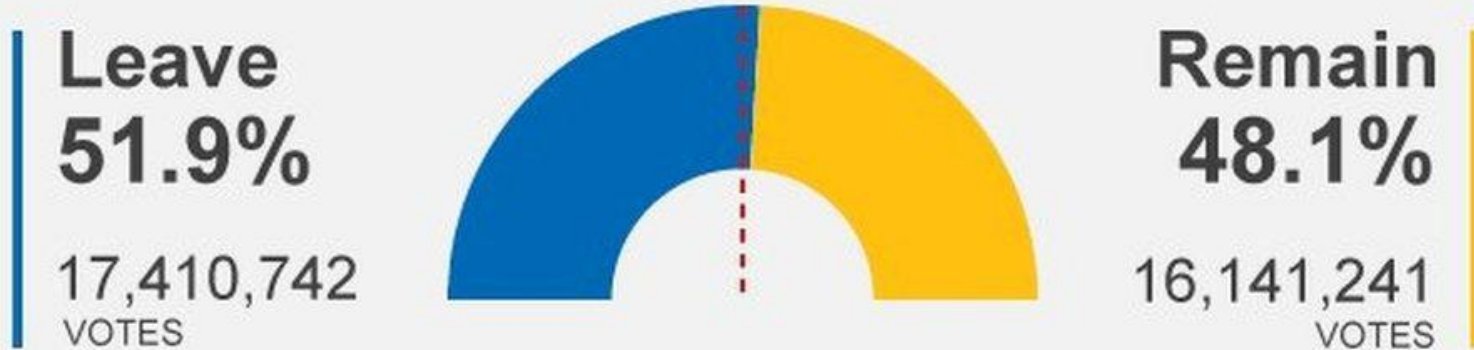
05



Brexit

How did people vote in the Brexit Referendum?

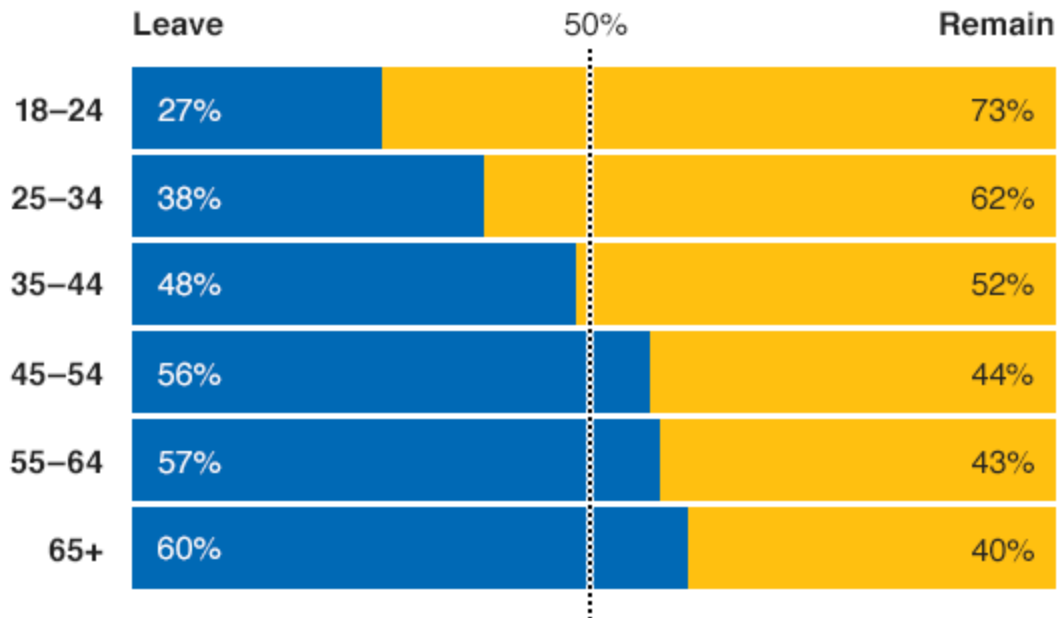
UK Votes Leave



How did people vote (or not vote) in the Brexit Referendum?



How different age groups voted

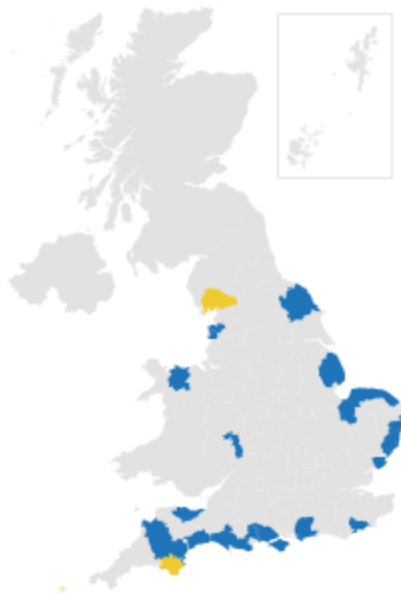


Source: Lord Ashcroft Polls

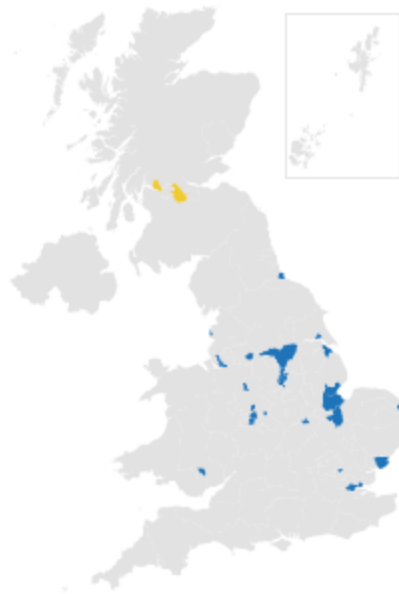
BBC

Of the 30 areas with the...

most elderly people,
27 voted Leave



fewest graduates,
28 voted Leave

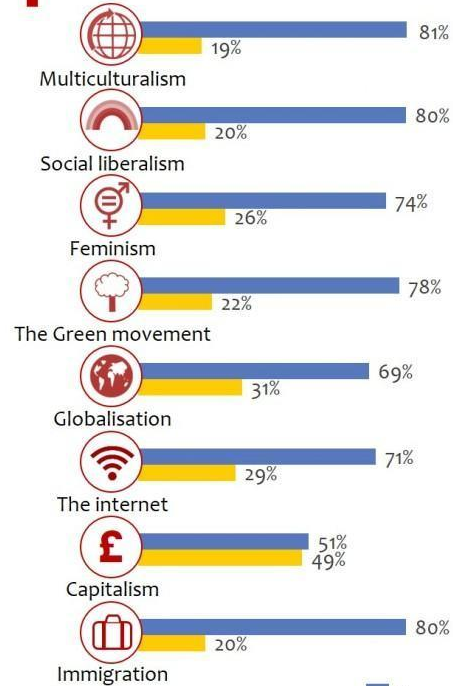


**most people
identifying as English,**
all 30 voted Leave

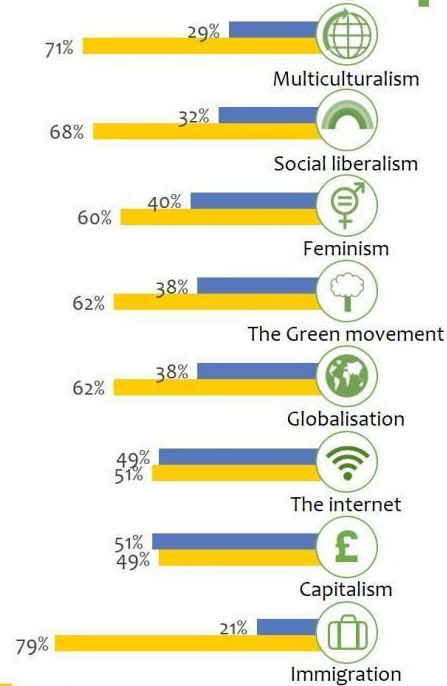


Do you think of each of the following as being a force for good, a force for ill, or a mixed blessing?

How did the people who thought the following were a **force for ill** vote?



How did the people who thought the following were a **force for good** vote?

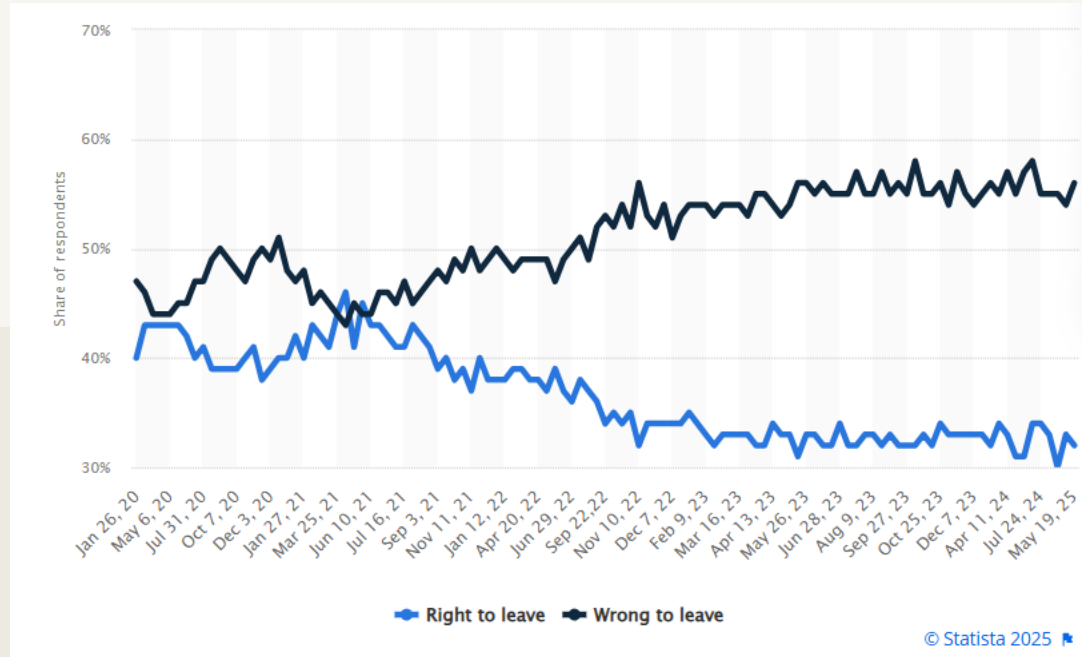


Leave Remain

Lord Ashcroft Polls
@lordashcrofts

Mixed blessing =
con ventajas y
inconvenientes

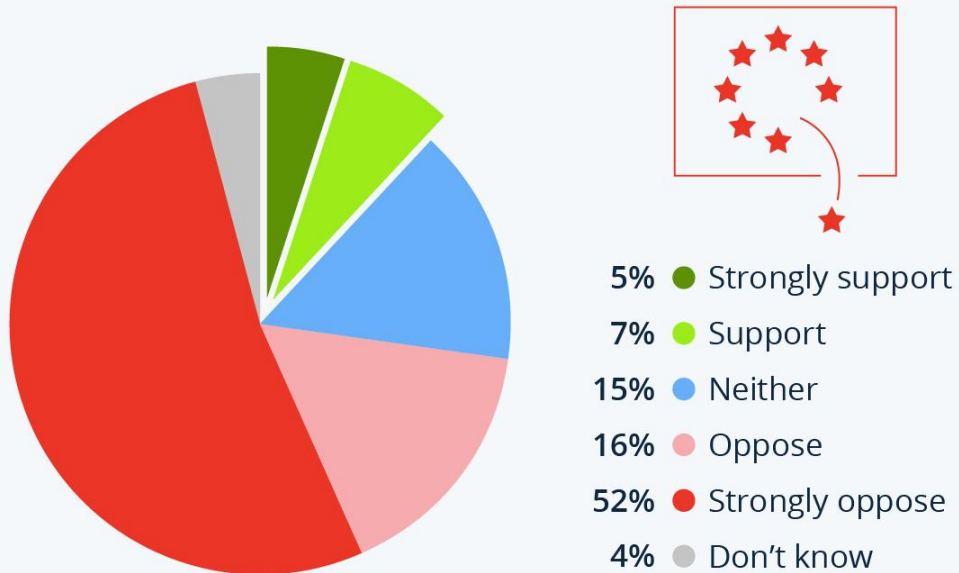
"In hindsight*, do you think Britain was right or wrong to vote to leave the European Union?"



*hindsight - comprensión / mirada retrospectiva

Bregrets? There Are a Few

'Leave' voters responses to the question: "Would you personally support or oppose the UK rejoining the EU?"



Figures do not sum to 100 due to rounding effects.
4,005 UK adults (18+) surveyed May 26 to Jun. 2, 2023

Source: Public First



Why Leave voters voted Leave

Overall UK



Headlines from the UK

Now they've really gone bananas. Euro bosses ban "too bendy" ones and set minimum shop size at 5.5 inches.

German children banned from sending their wish-lists to Santa...because of EU privacy laws.

Fishmongers furious as EU fines them for not using LATIN names of fish.

Brussels may ban mushy peas.

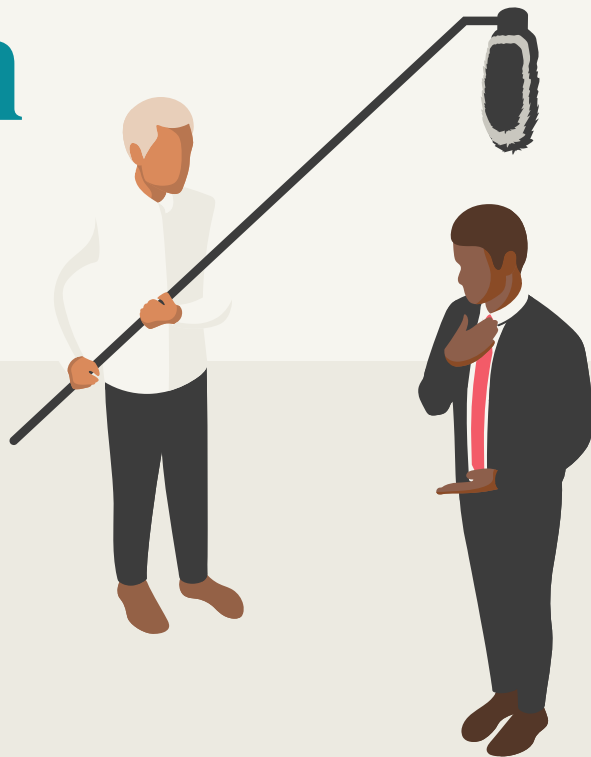
Children denied cancer drugs due to EU delays.

Top Tory explains why we should return to imperial measures NOW and stick two fingers up to EU bureaucrats

Farmers forced to issue pigs with toys

Pronunciation

06



Pronunciation - ism

Economic & Ideological Beliefs

Communism

Capitalism

Socialism

Marxism

Libertarianism

Elitism

Progressivism

Radicalism

Pronunciation - ism

Government Systems and Power
Structures

Anarchism
Fascism
Federalism
Monarchism
Totalitarianism

Pronunciation - ism

Isolationism
Globalism
Imperialism
Interventionism
Colonialism

Foreign Policy and International Views

Pronunciation - ism

Activism
Environmentalism
Feminism
Nationalism
Populism
Secularism

Cultural, National, and Identity Politics

Pronunciation - ist

Economic & Ideological Beliefs

Communist

Capitalist

Socialist

Marxist

Libertarianist

Elitist

Progressivist

Radicalist

Pronunciation - ist

Government Systems and Power
Structures

Anarchist
Fascist
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Totalitarianist

Pronunciation - ist

Isolationist
Globalist
Imperialist
Interventionist
Colonialist

Foreign Policy and International Views

Pronunciation - ist

Activist
Environmentalist
Feminist
Nationalist
Populist
Secularist

Cultural, National, and Identity Politics



07

Idioms & Expressions

To jump on the bandwagon

- "After the new health policy gained widespread approval, many politicians **jumped on the bandwagon**, supporting it even though they had initially opposed it."
 - "She wasn't interested in social media at first, but now she's **on the bandwagon**, posting pictures every day."
-



Meaning: To adopt a popular cause or trend, especially when it becomes successful or widely supported, sometimes without a genuine commitment.

Office politics

- "There's a lot of office politics going on right now. People are trying to take credit for each other's work, and no one knows who to trust anymore."
 - "She's really good at navigating office politics—she knows how to build relationships with the higher-ups and still be a team player."
 - "The design process can be influenced as much by office politics as by engineering considerations"
-



Meaning: "Office politics"
refers to actions and
behaviour involving
competition for status or
power in a workplace.

Red tape

- “Starting a business in that country is challenging due to the amount of red tape involved”
 - “Citizens often complain about the red tape involved in accessing government services.”
 - “The new policy aims to reduce red tape and make government processes more efficient.”
-



Meaning: Red tape refers to excessive bureaucracy or official procedures that are often complicated, time-consuming, and unnecessary, leading to delays or inefficiency in completing tasks.

Champagne Socialist

- “Despite advocating for wealth redistribution, the politician's lavish lifestyle led critics to label him a **champagne socialist**”
 - “She often posts about social justice issues, but her designer wardrobe suggests she's more of a **champagne socialist** than a grassroots activist”
-



Meaning: a pejorative term used to describe someone who espouses socialist ideals—such as advocating for wealth redistribution and social equality—while enjoying a luxurious, affluent lifestyle that seems at odds with those beliefs.

To toe the party line

- Despite his personal reservations, the senator chose to toe the party line and voted in favor of the new healthcare bill.
 - “The CEO expected all employees to toe the company line, even if they had concerns about the direction of the business.”
 - “As the Chief Whip, it was her responsibility to ensure that all party members toed the party line during the critical vote, applying pressure when necessary to maintain unity.”
-



Meaning: To strictly follow the policies or directions of one's political party

To be up in arms



- “Environmentalists are up in arms about the government’s decision to approve the new oil drilling project.”
 - “Parents were up in arms when the school announced it would be introducing mandatory uniforms”
 - “Workers were up in arms after the company implemented a new policy that reduced their benefits.”
-

Meaning: to be very angry or upset about something, often to the point of taking action or expressing strong opposition.

To be politically correct (PC)



- “He was criticized for not being **politically correct** in his comments about the new policy.”
 - “The Trump administration has declared war on DEI and **political correctness**.”
 - “The **p.c.** approach to addressing gender issues involves using inclusive language and avoiding stereotypes.”
-

Meaning: conforming to a belief that language and practices which could offend political sensibilities (as in matters of sex or race) should be eliminated

Thank you!



Do you have any questions?

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