



Bildung und Sport

Brexit or Bremain – that is the question!



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This unit is designed to give an overview of the key issues in the UK's EU Referendum. It is also a very good way to introduce and revise political vocabulary!

There is obviously a great deal of material on this topic. I have chosen a “**question and answer**” **article** on the BBC website that presents the main facts so that the students get a general overview of what is happening and why. The **three-and-a-half minute BBC video** with Norman Smith provides an overview of the five key issues that are likely to be debated in the lead up to the referendum. Following this, there is an **infographic** from *The Economist*, in which five key issues for each campaign are presented. The students then put to use what they have learned by choosing to describe and evaluate one of two **cartoons**. There are **two possible final tasks**, depending on which you find more appropriate for your students.

Background information

BBC article: The students should read up to, and including, the section “Why is a referendum being held?”. After the students have watched the video in task 2, they could then continue to read up to, and including, the section “What about businesses?”, to gain more insight into the issues for both sides.

Video: As the video summarises the stance for the “in” and “out” groups on the screen for each issue, this should be done as a listening comprehension if you intend to do the task as outlined below. Once the students have done so, they could watch the video to check their answers. If you would prefer to do it as a viewing activity, the students should elaborate on each side's stance and not just repeat the summary! This will mean listening for details.

Graphic: Interestingly, of the five key issues outlined here only two are the same as the ones in the BBC video: immigration and trade. The BBC video presents two further issues that are key ones for the general public, namely jobs and security. These number amongst the key issues that are being used to gain votes. However, the issues presented in the graphic (and delivered by two campaign groups) are also crucial to the decision on a political but for the general public perhaps less tangible level.

Cartoons: There are a great many cartoons available, but these two provide interesting talking points. Having heard the arguments for and against leaving the EU, the students will be able to interpret and evaluate Patrick Chappatte's cartoon “Alarm will sound” more effectively. Steven Camley's cartoon “Project fear II” shows a rather frightened Cameron and refers to the scare tactics that both sides are accused of adopting to frighten people into voting for their side. Britain has long prided itself on being an island without any physical links to the continent (aside from the Channel Tunnel). The students should also speculate as to what the cartoonist is saying about what Scotland will do if the British vote to leave the EU.

Final tasks: The first task is a straightforward research task to find out more about the German perspective, both in the press and concerning those around them. Additionally the students could also find out about how other European countries view the referendum (for instance France, Italy or Spain if they are learning one of these languages).

The second task is more creative and is to get the students thinking about possible implications for themselves, e.g. travel restrictions, more difficult to study or get a job in the UK, etc. The students should think how to make their presentation more professional by using appropriate visuals, well-thought out text and an appropriate presentation style.

Introductory task

1a) What do the two words “Brexit” and “Bremain” refer to? Which words were used to form the compounds?

b) In pairs, brainstorm what you know about the EU Referendum in the UK. Share your findings in class.

Task 1: The basic facts

Read the article “[The UK’s EU Referendum – all you need to know](#)” on the BBC website up to, and including, the section “Why is a referendum being held?”. Briefly sum up the answer to each question.

Task 2: Listening – five key issues

1. Listen to Norman Smith from the BBC explain [five key issues](#) which are likely to be debated in the lead up to the referendum. Complete the following table. Note down the issue and sum up what the people who want to “stay in” the EU and those who want to “get out” say about each issue.

Issue	People who want to stay in the EU	People who want to get out of the EU

2. Look at the graphic [“The debate”](#) by The Economist outlining the arguments for and against Brexit. Compare them to what you found out in the listening task. Why do you think the issues mentioned in the listening task are the ones that are considered more likely to be debated?

Task 3: Cartoons

Describe, interpret and evaluate one of the following cartoons: [“Alarm will sound”](#) or [“Project fear II”](#).

Research task

How is the UK's EU Referendum being reported in the German press? How do those around you view it? Briefly share and discuss your findings in class.

Creative task

If the UK does leave the EU, what might the implications be for you? In small groups, make notes of them and decide how to present them in an engaging and interesting way, e.g. as a presentation, a poster, or short video. Present your ideas to the class.

Delving deeper

Depending on how much time you have for this topic, here are some other interesting materials.

Interview: [Brexit is more likely than you think](#)

Although this short interview might seem a little dry at first glance, Gideon Rachman, chief foreign affairs columnist at *The Financial Times*, provides a very interesting analysis of why Brexit is not as unlikely as we might think. He also touches on parallels between the US and the UK, and the US attempt to get involved.

The word “bookmaker” (*Wettbüro*) should be explained in advance so that the students understand what is said at the beginning!

Campaign groups

The two main Brexit campaign groups are [Vote leave](#) and [Grassroots Out. Britain Stronger in Europe](#) is the pro Europe campaign group. Although there are other groups, these are the ones that are submitting formal applications to the elections watchdog, which will decide on the lead campaigns for “leave” and “remain” by 14 April. Once chosen, these organisations will have greater advantages regarding spending, campaign broadcasts and sending information via post. The **question and answer” article** on the BBC website in task 1 contains a short overview of each of these parties.

The students could compare the arguments on their websites, as well as how they try to appeal to people.

The Queen's position

Another aspect that has been the subject of much debate is why the Queen does not get involved. On 8th March *The Sun* claimed in a front-page story "[Queen backs Brexit](#)". You can read the article [here](#). Buckingham Palace immediately complained to the UK press watchdog, insisting that the Queen is "politically neutral". In fact, the Queen must remain [politically neutral](#). Which is why, when *The Sun* made its claims, everyone was up in arms. As *The Guardian* wrote, "The implications of the Queen not only holding views on the European Union but expressing them were considered as significant by both sides of the EU referendum debate." In short, her views could affect the outcome of the vote. Perhaps this is why on April Fool's Day, *The Guardian* came up with their own "exclusive", claiming the exact opposite: "[Exclusive: royal family considering dramatic Brexit intervention](#)".

The topic could be introduced using the following [cartoon](#), published by *The Daily Mail* on 18 February 2016. (The Queen is referring to allegations that Prince William [backed the "in" campaign](#) in a speech he gave to British diplomats at the Foreign Office in February 2016.)

