

Yr 8 HLB 2 - the Birth of Britain's Democracy

What is Democracy?

Democracy is a Greek word. It literally means "the people have the power". Countries that are democracies hold **elections** to choose their governments. An election is a vote.

Every country's elections work differently. In some countries, they choose the President, who then chooses his or her government. In Britain, we don't elect our government directly. Instead, we elect people to **Parliament**. **Parliament** is the body that makes our laws.

Inside **Parliament**, these people work in groups called **parties**. The **party** with the most members of Parliament (**MPs**) usually becomes the government, and the party leader usually becomes the leader of our country - the **Prime Minister**.

Our current Prime Minister is Keir Starmer, of the Labour Party.

Was Britain always a democracy?

No. In the early 19th century Britain was not very democratic at all! We had a Parliament, and it was elected, but there were very strict laws about who was allowed to vote. In the year 1819, only a small number of people were allowed to vote. The rules varied from place to place, but generally only the richest landowners were allowed to vote in elections. About 1 person in 12 could vote, and only rich landowners were allowed to become MPs.

What changed?

In the late 18th century, Britain experienced the Industrial Revolution. New inventions like the steam engine and the power loom changed the way people lived and worked. People moved to towns and cities to find jobs in the new factories. There, they worked long hours in terrible conditions for meagre pay. Because these towns expanded rapidly, houses were often poorly built and overcrowded. Filth and crime became rampant.

These cities allowed the spread of new ideas. In the wake of the French revolution, ordinary working people began to feel like they had the right to be heard. They began to organise protests demanding better working conditions and better pay.

The Peterloo Massacre

At St Peter's fields in Manchester, a crowd of protesters gathered to listen to Henry Hunt. They were charged by Yeomanry (soldiers) who killed 19 people and injured 200. It became obvious to the people of Britain that unless they could get the vote they would never be listened to. Newspapers and campaign groups were set up arguing that Britain should become a democracy, and that all men should have the right to vote.

The Great Reform Act

In 1832 the government passed a new law which gave more people the right to vote. This law required people to be wealthy landowners or to have a lot of money. It doubled the number of people who had the right to vote in elections, but still only around 1 man in 6 had the vote (and no women were allowed).

Answer these questions in full sentences.

Use the words of the question to help you structure your answer

1. What is Democracy?

Democracy is where a country ...

2. What is Parliament?

3. Who is the Prime Minister?

4. Why was Britain not a true Democracy in 1819?

5. What was the Industrial Revolution?

6. How did the Industrial Revolution help Britain become a Democracy?

7. How many people were injured at Peterloo?

8. Why did the people of Britain want the right to vote?

**9. Did the "Great Reform Act" make Britain a true democracy?
Give a reason for your answer.**



The Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha‘apai Eruption (2022)



Location of the Volcano

The Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha‘apai volcano is located in the **South Pacific Ocean**, about **65 kilometers north of Tongatapu**, the main island of **Tonga**. It belongs to the **Tonga–Kermadec volcanic arc**, a region formed where the **Pacific Plate** is being forced underneath the **Indo-Australian Plate**. Most of the volcano lies **under the ocean**, with only small parts of its rim sometimes visible above the surface.



Type of Volcano

Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha‘apai is an underwater cone volcano. This means it has a cone-shaped structure built from layers of ash, lava, and rock that have built up over time. Because the volcano lies mostly underwater, its eruptions can cause **powerful steam explosions** when hot magma meets seawater.



The 2022 Eruption

The major eruption took place on **15 January 2022**, following smaller eruptions in **December 2021**. It was one of the most **powerful volcanic events of the 21st century**. The explosion sent a massive cloud of ash and gas **over 55 kilometers into the atmosphere** — the highest volcanic plume ever recorded by satellites. The eruption was so strong that it produced **shock waves** that traveled around the world several times.



Impacts of the Eruption

The force of the eruption triggered a **tsunami** that hit Tonga's coastline and reached across the Pacific Ocean, affecting countries such as **Japan, Chile, and the United States**. In Tonga, the tsunami and falling ash caused **widespread damage**, covering homes, crops, and water supplies with thick ash. Communication lines were also cut off for several days, isolating the islands.



Scientific Importance

Scientists continue to study the 2022 eruption closely. Using **satellite data and atmospheric measurements**, they have been able to learn more about how **underwater volcanoes** behave and how such eruptions can influence the **global atmosphere**. This eruption released a very large amount of **water vapor** but relatively little **sulfur dioxide**, which means it is not expected to cool the Earth's climate. In fact, it may cause a **slight short-term warming effect** instead.



Why It Matters

The Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha‘apai eruption is a reminder of the **enormous power of Earth's natural forces**. It shows that even volcanoes hidden beneath the sea can have **global effects**. The event also highlights why it is important for scientists to **monitor volcanic activity**, especially in regions where underwater eruptions can cause tsunamis and widespread damage.

Questions on the Hunga Tonga eruption 2022



- 1. Where is the Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha‘apai volcano located?**
- 2. What type of volcano is Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha‘apai, and what does that mean?**
- 3. Why can eruptions from underwater volcanoes be especially powerful?**
- 4. When did the major eruption of Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha‘apai take place?**
- 5. How high did the ash and gas plume rise into the atmosphere during the eruption?**
- 6. What caused the tsunami that followed the eruption?**
- 7. Which countries, other than Tonga, were affected by the tsunami?**
- 8. What kinds of damage did the eruption cause in Tonga?**
- 9. What did scientists learn from studying this eruption?**
- 10. Why didn't this eruption have a cooling effect on Earth's climate?**
- 11. How did the eruption show the importance of monitoring volcanoes?**