

ЎЗБЕКИСТОН РЕСПУБЛИКАСИ

ОЛИЙ ВА ЎРТА МАХСУС ТАЪЛИМ ВАЗИРЛИГИ

НАМАНГАН ДАВЛАТ УНИВЕРСИТЕТИ

Филология факультети Инглиз тили ва лексика-

стилистика кафедраси ўқитувчиси

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“English speaking countries” мавзусида ёзган

РЕФЕРАТИ

English speaking countries.

Plan:

- 1. Great Britain**
- 2. The United States of America**
- 3. Australia**
- 4. New Zealand**

Great Britain refers geographically to the island of Great Britain, politically to England, Scotland and Wales in combination. However, it is sometimes used loosely to refer to the whole of the United Kingdom.



The term Britain, as opposed to Great Britain, has been used to mean the United Kingdom formally, for example in official government yearbooks between 1975 and 2001. Since 2002, however, the yearbooks have only used the term "United Kingdom".

Great Britain is the largest island of the United Kingdom. Politically, Great Britain refers to the whole of England, Scotland and Wales in combination, but not Northern Ireland; it includes islands such as the Isle of Wight, Anglesey, the Isles of Scilly, the Hebrides and the island groups of Orkney and Shetland. It does not include the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, which are self-governing dependent territories.

The political union that joined the kingdoms of England and Scotland happened in 1707 when the Acts of Union ratified the 1706 Treaty of Union and merged the parliaments of the two nations, forming the Kingdom of Great Britain, which covered the entire island. Prior to this, a personal union had existed between these two countries since the 1603 Union of the Crowns



under James VI of Scotland and I of England.

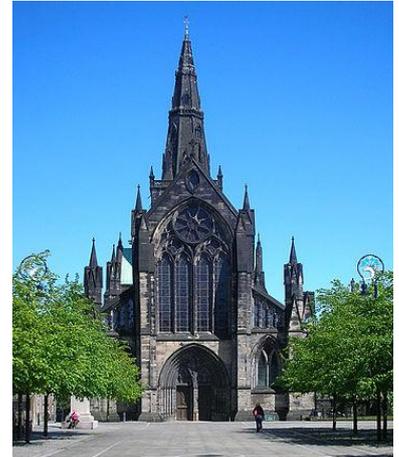
In the Late Bronze Age, Britain was part of a culture called the Atlantic Bronze Age, held together by maritime trading, which also included Ireland, France, Spain and Portugal. In contrast to the generally accepted view that Celtic originated in the context of the Hallstatt culture, since 2009, John T. Koch and others have proposed that the origins of the Celtic languages are to be sought in Bronze Age Western Europe, especially the Iberian Peninsula. Koch et al.'s proposal has failed to find wide acceptance among experts on the Celtic languages.

All the modern Brythonic languages (Breton, Cornish, Welsh) are generally considered to derive from a common ancestral language termed Brittonic, British, Common Brythonic, Old Brythonic or Proto-Brythonic, which is thought to have developed from Proto-Celtic or early Insular Celtic by the 6th century AD.

Brythonic languages were probably spoken before the Roman invasion at least in the majority of Great Britain south of the rivers Forth and Clyde, though the Isle of Man later had a Goidelic

language, Manx. Northern Scotland mainly spoke Pritennic, which became Pictish, that may have been a Brythonic language.

During the period of the Roman occupation of Southern Britain (AD 43 to c. 410), Common Brythonic borrowed a large stock of Latin words. Approximately 800 of these Latin loan-words have survived in the three modern Brythonic languages. Romano-British is the name for the Latinised form of the language used by Roman authors. Modern English is spoken in the present day.



Christianity has been the largest religion by number of adherents since the Early Middle Ages: it was introduced by the ancient Romans and continued through Early Insular Christianity. According to tradition, Christianity arrived in the 1st or 2nd century. The most popular form is Anglicanism (known as Episcopalianism in Scotland). Dating from the 16th century Reformation, it regards itself as both Catholic and Reformed. The Head of the Church is the monarch of the United Kingdom, as the Supreme Governor. It has the status of established church in England. There are just over 26 million adherents to Anglicanism in Britain today, although only around one million regularly attend services. The second largest Christian practice is the Latin Rite of the Roman Catholic Church, which traces its history to the 6th century with Augustine's mission and was the main religion for around a thousand years. There are over 5 million adherents today, 4.5 million in England and Wales and 750,000 in Scotland, although fewer than a million Catholics regularly attend mass.

The Church of Scotland, a form of Protestantism with a Presbyterian system of ecclesiastical polity, is the third most numerous on the island with around 2.1 million members. Introduced in Scotland by clergyman John Knox, it has the status of national church in Scotland. The monarch of the United Kingdom is represented by a Lord High Commissioner. Methodism is the fourth largest and grew out of Anglicanism through John Wesley. It gained popularity in the old mill towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire, also amongst tin miners in Cornwall. The Presbyterian Church of Wales, which follows Calvinistic Methodism, is the largest denomination in Wales. There are other non-conformist minorities, such as Baptists, Quakers, the United Reformed Church (a union of Congregationalists and English Presbyterians), Unitarians. The first patron saint of Great Britain was Saint Alban. He was the first Christian martyr dating from the Romano-British period, condemned to death for his faith and sacrificed to the pagan gods. In more recent times, some have suggested the adoption of St Aidan as another patron saint of Britain. From Ireland, he worked at Iona amongst the Dál Riata and then Lindisfarne where he restored Christianity to Northumbria.

The three constituent countries of the United Kingdom have patron saints: Saint George and Saint Andrew are represented in the flags of England and Scotland respectively. These two flags

combined to form the basis of the Great Britain royal flag of 1604. Saint David is the patron saint of Wales. There are many other British saints. Some of the best known are Cuthbert, Columba, Patrick, Margaret, Edward the Confessor, Mungo, Thomas More, Petroc, Bede and Thomas Becket.

Numerous other religions are practised. The Jews have been on the island as a small minority since 1070. The Jews were expelled from England in 1290 but allowed to return in 1656. Their history in Scotland is quite obscure until later migrations from Lithuania. Especially since the 1950s religions from the former colonies have become more prevalent: Islam is the largest of these with around 1.5 million adherents. More than 1 million people practise either Hinduism, Sikhism or Buddhism, religions introduced from India and South East Asia.



The United States of America (USA or U.S.A.), commonly referred to as the United States (US or U.S.), America, and sometimes the States, is a federal republic consisting of 50 states and a federal district. The 48 contiguous states and Washington, D.C., are in central North America between Canada and Mexico. The state of Alaska is the northwestern part of North America and the state of Hawaii is an archipelago in the mid-Pacific. The country also has five populated and nine unpopulated territories in the Pacific and the Caribbean. At 3.80 million square miles (9.85 million km²) and with around 318 million people, the United States is the world's third- or fourth-largest country by total area and third-largest by population. It is one of the world's most ethnically diverse and multicultural nations, the product of large-scale immigration from many countries. The geography and climate of the United States is also extremely diverse, and it is home to a wide variety of wildlife.



Paleo-Indians migrated from Eurasia to what is now the U.S. mainland around 15,000 years ago, with European colonization beginning in the 16th century. The United States emerged from 13 British colonies located along the Atlantic seaboard. Disputes between Great Britain and these colonies led to the American Revolution. On July 4, 1776, as the colonies were fighting Great Britain in the American Revolutionary War, delegates from the 13 colonies unanimously issued the Declaration of Independence. The war ended in 1783 with the recognition of independence of the United States from the Kingdom of Great Britain, and was the first successful war of

independence against a European colonial empire. The current Constitution was adopted on September 17, 1787. The first ten amendments, collectively named the Bill of Rights, were ratified in 1791 and designed to guarantee many fundamental civil rights and freedoms.



Driven by the doctrine of manifest destiny, the United States embarked on a vigorous expansion across North America throughout the 19th century. This involved displacing native tribes, acquiring new territories, and gradually admitting new states. During the second half of the 19th century, the American Civil War ended legal slavery in the country. By the end of that century, the United States extended into the Pacific Ocean, and its economy began to soar. The Spanish–American War and World War I confirmed the country's status as a global military power. The United States emerged from World War II as a global superpower, the first country to develop nuclear weapons, the only country to use them in warfare, and as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union left the United States as the sole superpower.

Languages spoken at home by more than 1,000,000 persons in the U.S. as of 2010		
Language	Percent of population	Number of speakers
English (only)	80%	233,780,338
Combined total of all languages other than English	20%	57,048,617
Spanish (excluding Puerto Rico and Spanish Creole)	12%	35,437,985
Chinese (including Cantonese and Mandarin)	0.9%	2,567,779
Tagalog	0.5%	1,542,118
Vietnamese	0.4%	1,292,448
French	0.4%	1,288,833
Korean	0.4%	1,108,408
German	0.4%	1,107,869

English (American English) is the de facto national language. Although there is no official language at the federal level, some laws—such as U.S. naturalization requirements—standardize English. In 2010, about 230 million, or 80% of the population aged five years and older, spoke

only English at home. Spanish, spoken by 12% of the population at home, is the second most common language and the most widely taught second language. Some Americans advocate making English the country's official language, as it is in 28 states.

Both Hawaiian and English are official languages in Hawaii, by state law. While neither has an official language, New Mexico has laws providing for the use of both English and Spanish, as Louisiana does for English and French. Other states, such as California, mandate the publication of Spanish versions of certain government documents including court forms. Many jurisdictions with large numbers of non-English speakers produce government materials, especially voting information, in the most commonly spoken languages in those jurisdictions.

Several insular territories grant official recognition to their native languages, along with English: Samoan and Chamorro are recognized by American Samoa and Guam, respectively; Carolinian and Chamorro are recognized by the Northern Mariana Islands; Cherokee is officially recognized by the Cherokee Nation within the Cherokee tribal jurisdiction area in eastern Oklahoma; Spanish is an official language of Puerto Rico and is more widely spoken than English there.

American public education is operated by state and local governments, regulated by the United States Department of Education through restrictions on federal grants. In most states, children are required to attend school from the age of six or seven (generally, kindergarten or first grade) until they turn 18 (generally bringing them through twelfth grade, the end of high school); some states allow students to leave school at 16 or 17. About 12% of children are enrolled in parochial or nonsectarian private schools. Just over 2% of children are homeschooled. The U.S. spends more on education per student than any nation in the world, spending more than \$11,000 per elementary student in 2010 and more than \$12,000 per high school student. Some 80% of U.S.



college students attend public universities.

The United States has many competitive private and public institutions of higher education. According to prominent international rankings, 13 or 15 American colleges and universities are ranked among the top 20 in the world. There are also local community colleges with generally more open admission policies, shorter academic programs, and lower tuition. Of Americans 25 and older, 84.6% graduated from high school, 52.6% attended some college, 27.2% earned a bachelor's degree, and 9.6% earned graduate degrees. The basic literacy rate is approximately 99%. The United Nations assigns the United States an Education Index of 0.97, tying it for 12th in the world.

Australia or officially the Commonwealth of Australia, is a country comprising the mainland of the Australian continent, the island of Tasmania, and numerous smaller islands. It is the world's sixth-largest country by total area. Neighbouring countries include Indonesia, East Timor and Papua New Guinea to the north; the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to the north-east; and

New Zealand to the south-east.



For at least 40,000 years before the first British settlement in the late 18th century, Australia was inhabited by indigenous Australians, who spoke languages grouped into roughly 250 language groups. After the European discovery of the continent by Dutch explorers in 1606, Australia's eastern half was claimed by Great Britain in 1770 and initially settled through penal transportation to the colony of New South Wales from 26 January 1788. The population grew steadily in subsequent decades; the continent was explored and an additional five self-governing crown colonies were established.

On 1 January 1901, the six colonies federated, forming the Commonwealth of Australia. Since Federation, Australia has maintained a stable liberal democratic political system that functions as a federal parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy comprising six states and several territories. The population of 23.6 million is highly urbanised and heavily concentrated in the



eastern states and on the coast.

Australia is a developed country and one of the wealthiest in the world, with the world's 12th-largest economy. In 2012 Australia had the world's fifth-highest per capita income. Australia's military expenditure is the world's 13th-largest. With the second-highest human development index globally, Australia ranks highly in many international comparisons of national performance, such as quality of life, health, education, economic freedom, and the protection of civil liberties and political rights. Australia is a member of the United Nations, G20, Commonwealth of Nations, ANZUS, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), World Trade Organization, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and the Pacific Islands Forum.

The first recorded European sighting of the Australian mainland, and the first recorded European landfall on the Australian continent, are attributed to the Dutch navigator Willem Janszoon. He sighted the coast of Cape York Peninsula in early 1606, and made landfall on 26 February at the Pennefather River near the modern town of Weipa on Cape York. The Dutch charted the whole of the western and northern coastlines and named the island continent "New Holland" during the 17th century, but made no attempt at settlement. William Dampier, an English explorer and privateer, landed on the north-west coast of New Holland in 1688 and again in 1699 on a return trip. In 1770, James Cook sailed along and mapped the east coast, which he named New South Wales and claimed for Great Britain. With the loss of its American colonies in 1783, the British Government sent a fleet of ships, the "First Fleet", under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip, to establish a new penal colony in New South Wales. A camp was set up and the flag raised at Sydney Cove, Port Jackson, on 26 January 1788, a date which became Australia's national day, Australia Day although the British Crown Colony of New South Wales was not formally

promulgated until 7 February 1788. The first settlement led to the foundation of Sydney, the establishment of farming, industry and commerce; and the exploration and settlement of other regions.



A British settlement was established in Van Diemen's Land, now known as Tasmania, in 1803 and it became a separate colony in 1825. The United Kingdom formally claimed the western part of Western Australia (the Swan River Colony) in 1828. Separate colonies were carved from parts of New South Wales: South Australia in 1836, Victoria in 1851, and Queensland in 1859. The Northern Territory was founded in 1911 when it was excised from South Australia. South Australia was founded as a "free province"—it was never a penal colony. Victoria and Western Australia were also founded "free", but later accepted transported convicts. A campaign by the settlers of New South Wales led to the end of convict transportation to that colony; the last convict ship arrived in 1848.

Australia is a constitutional monarchy with a federal division of powers. It uses a parliamentary system of government with Queen Elizabeth II at its apex as the Queen of Australia, a role that is distinct from her position as monarch of the other Commonwealth realms. The Queen resides in the United Kingdom, and she is represented by her viceroys in Australia (the Governor-General at the federal level and by the Governors at the state level), who by convention act on the advice of her ministers. Supreme executive authority is vested by the Constitution of Australia in the sovereign, but the power to exercise it is conferred by the Constitution specifically on the Governor-General. The most notable exercise to date of the Governor-General's reserve powers outside the Prime Minister's request was the dismissal of the Whitlam Government in the constitutional crisis of 1975.

The federal government is separated into three branches:

- The legislature: the bicameral Parliament, defined in section 1 of the constitution as comprising the Queen (represented by the Governor-General), the Senate, and the House of Representatives;
- The executive: the Federal Executive Council, in practice the Governor-General as advised by the Prime Minister and Ministers of State;
- The judiciary: the High Court of Australia and other federal courts, whose judges are appointed by the Governor-General on advice of the Council.

In the Senate (the upper house), there are 76 senators: twelve each from the states and two each from the mainland territories (the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory). The House of Representatives (the lower house) has 150 members elected from single-member electoral divisions, commonly known as "electorates" or "seats", allocated to states on the basis of population, with each original state guaranteed a minimum of five seats. Elections for both chambers are normally held every three years, simultaneously; senators have overlapping six-

year terms except for those from the territories, whose terms are not fixed but are tied to the electoral cycle for the lower house; thus only 40 of the 76 places in the Senate are put to each election unless the cycle is interrupted by a double dissolution.



Australia's electoral system uses preferential voting for all lower house elections with the exception of Tasmania and the ACT which, along with the Senate and most state upper houses, combine it with proportional representation in a system known as the single transferable vote. Voting is compulsory for all enrolled citizens 18 years and over in every jurisdiction, as is enrolment (with the exception of South Australia). The party with majority support in the House of Representatives forms the government and its leader becomes Prime Minister. In cases where no party has majority support, the Governor-General has the constitutional power to appoint the Prime Minister and, if necessary, dismiss one that has lost the confidence of Parliament.

There are two major political groups that usually form government, federally and in the states: the Australian Labor Party and the Coalition which is a formal grouping of the Liberal Party and its minor partner, the National Party. Independent members and several minor parties have achieved representation in Australian parliaments, mostly in upper houses.

Within Australian political culture, the Coalition is considered centre-right and the Labor Party is considered centre-left. Queensland in particular, along with Western Australia and the Northern Territory, are regarded as comparatively conservative. Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, and the Australian Capital Territory are regarded as comparatively socially liberal. New South Wales has often been regarded as a politically moderate bellwether state.

Following a partyroom leadership challenge, Julia Gillard became the first female Prime Minister in June 2010. The most recent federal election was held on 7 September 2013 and resulted in a majority government for the Coalition with Liberal Party of Australia leader Tony Abbott as Prime Minister-elect. He was sworn into office by the Governor-General of Australia on 18 September.



New Zealand is an island country in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. The country geographically comprises two main landmasses – that of the North Island, or Te Ika-a-Māui, and the South Island, or Te Waipounamu – and numerous smaller islands. New Zealand is situated some 1,500 kilometres (900 mi) east of Australia across the Tasman Sea and roughly 1,000 kilometres (600 mi) south of the Pacific island areas of New Caledonia, Fiji, and Tonga. Because of its remoteness, it was one of the last lands to be settled by humans. During its long isolation, New Zealand developed a distinctive biodiversity of animal, fungal and plant life. The country's varied topography and its sharp mountain peaks, such as the Southern Alps, owe much to the tectonic uplift of land and volcanic eruptions. New Zealand's capital city is Wellington, while its most populous city is Auckland.

Polynesians settled New Zealand in 1250–1300 CE and developed a distinctive Māori culture. Abel Tasman, a Dutch explorer, was the first European to sight New Zealand in 1642 CE. In 1840, the British Crown and Māori signed the Treaty of Waitangi, making New Zealand a British colony. Today, the majority of New Zealand's population of 4.5 million is of European descent; the indigenous Māori are the largest minority, followed by Asians and Pacific Islanders. Reflecting this, New Zealand's culture is mainly derived from Māori and early British settlers, with recent broadening arising from increased immigration. The official languages are English, Māori and New Zealand Sign Language, with English predominant. The country's economy was historically dominated by the export of wool, but exports of dairy products, meat, and wine, along with tourism, are more significant today.



Nationally, legislative authority is vested in an elected, unicameral Parliament, while executive political power is exercised by the Cabinet, led by the Prime Minister, who is currently John Key. Queen Elizabeth II is the country's head of state and is represented by a Governor-General. In addition, New Zealand is organised into 11 regional councils and 67 territorial authorities for local government purposes. The Realm of New Zealand also includes Tokelau (a dependent territory); the Cook Islands and Niue (self-governing states in free association with New Zealand); and the Ross Dependency, which is New Zealand's territorial claim in Antarctica. New Zealand is a member of the United Nations, Commonwealth of Nations, ANZUS, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Pacific Islands Forum and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation.

New Zealand was one of the last major landmasses settled by humans. Radiocarbon dating, evidence of deforestation and mitochondrial DNA variability within Māori populations suggest New Zealand was first settled by Eastern Polynesians between 1250 and 1300, concluding a long series of voyages through the southern Pacific islands. Over the centuries that followed these settlers developed a distinct culture now known as Māori. The population was divided into iwi (tribes) and hapū (subtribes) who would sometimes cooperate, sometimes compete and

sometimes fight with each other. At some point a group of Māori migrated to the Chatham Islands (which they named Rēkohu) where they developed their distinct Moriori culture. The Moriori population was decimated between 1835 and 1862, largely because of Taranaki Māori invasion and enslavement in the 1830s, although European diseases also contributed. In 1862 only 101 survived and the last known full-blooded Moriori died in 1933.

The first Europeans known to have reached New Zealand were Dutch explorer Abel Tasman and his crew in 1642. In a hostile encounter, four crew members were killed and at least one Māori was hit by canister shot. Europeans did not revisit New Zealand until 1769 when British explorer James Cook mapped almost the entire coastline. Following Cook, New Zealand was visited by numerous European and North American whaling, sealing and trading ships. They traded food, metal tools, weapons and other goods for timber, food, artifacts and water. The introduction of the potato and the musket transformed Māori agriculture and warfare. Potatoes provided a reliable food surplus, which enabled longer and more sustained military campaigns. The resulting inter-tribal Musket Wars encompassed over 600 battles between 1801 and 1840, killing 30,000–40,000 Māori. From the early 19th century, Christian missionaries began to settle New Zealand, eventually converting most of the Māori population. The Māori population declined to around 40 percent of its pre-contact level during the 19th century; introduced diseases were the major factor.

In 1788 Arthur Phillip assumed the position of Governor of New South Wales and claimed New Zealand as part of New South Wales.^[citation needed] The British Government appointed James Busby as British Resident to New Zealand in 1832 and in 1835, following an announcement of impending French settlement by Charles de Thierry, the nebulous United Tribes of New Zealand sent a Declaration of the Independence to King William IV of the United Kingdom asking for protection. Ongoing unrest and the dubious legal standing of the Declaration of Independence prompted the Colonial Office to send Captain William Hobson to claim sovereignty for the British Crown and negotiate a treaty with the Māori. The Treaty of Waitangi was first signed in the Bay of Islands on 6 February 1840. In response to the commercially run New Zealand Company's attempts to establish an independent settlement in Wellington and French settlers "purchasing" land in Akaroa, Hobson declared British sovereignty over all of New Zealand on 21 May 1840, even though copies of the Treaty were still circulating. With the signing of the Treaty and declaration of sovereignty the number of immigrants, particularly from the United Kingdom, began to increase.

New Zealand, originally part of the colony of New South Wales, became a separate Colony of New Zealand on 1 July 1841. The colony gained a representative government in 1852 and the 1st New Zealand Parliament met in 1854. In 1856 the colony effectively became self-governing, gaining responsibility over all domestic matters other than native policy. (Control over native policy was granted in the mid-1860s.) Following concerns that the South Island might form a separate colony, premier Alfred Domett moved a resolution to transfer the capital from Auckland to a locality near the Cook Strait. Wellington was chosen for its harbour and central location, with parliament officially sitting there for the first time in 1865. As immigrant numbers increased, conflicts over land led to the New Zealand Wars of the 1860s and 1870s, resulting in the loss and confiscation of much Māori land. In 1893 the country became the first nation in the world to grant all women the right to vote and in 1894 pioneered the adoption of compulsory arbitration between employers and unions.

In 1907, at the request of the New Zealand Parliament, King Edward VII proclaimed New Zealand a dominion within the British Empire, reflecting its self-governing status. Accordingly, the title "Dominion of New Zealand" dates from 1907.

In 1947 the country adopted the Statute of Westminster, confirming that the British parliament could no longer legislate for New Zealand without the consent of New Zealand. New Zealand was involved in world affairs, fighting alongside the British Empire in the First and Second World Wars and suffering through the Great Depression. The depression led to the election of the first Labour government and the establishment of a comprehensive welfare state and a protectionist economy. New Zealand experienced increasing prosperity following World War II and Māori began to leave their traditional rural life and move to the cities in search of work. A Māori protest movement developed, which criticised Eurocentrism and worked for greater recognition of Māori culture and the Treaty of Waitangi. In 1975, a Waitangi Tribunal was set up to investigate alleged breaches of the Treaty, and it was enabled to investigate historic grievances in 1985. The government has negotiated settlements of these grievances with many iwi, although Māori claims to the foreshore and seabed have proved controversial in the 2000s.

New Zealand is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary democracy, although its constitution is not codified. Elizabeth II is the Queen of New Zealand and the head of state. The Queen is represented by the Governor-General, whom she appoints on the advice of the Prime Minister. The Governor-General can exercise the Crown's prerogative powers, such as reviewing cases of injustice and making appointments of ministers, ambassadors and other key public officials, and in rare situations, the reserve powers (e.g. the power to dissolve Parliament or refuse the Royal Assent of a bill into law). The powers of the Queen and the Governor-General are limited by constitutional constraints and they cannot normally be exercised without the advice of Cabinet.



The New Zealand Parliament holds legislative power and consists of the Queen and the House of Representatives. It also included an upper house, the Legislative Council, until this was abolished in 1950. The supremacy of Parliament, over the Crown and other government institutions, was established in England by the Bill of Rights 1689 and has been ratified as law in New Zealand. The House of Representatives is democratically elected and a Government is formed from the party or coalition with the majority of seats. If no majority is formed a minority government can be formed if support from other parties during confidence and supply votes is assured. The Governor-General appoints ministers under advice from the Prime Minister, who is by convention the Parliamentary leader of the governing party or coalition. Cabinet, formed by ministers and led by the Prime Minister, is the highest policy-making body in government and responsible for deciding significant government actions. By convention, members of cabinet are bound by collective responsibility to decisions made by cabinet.

Judges and judicial officers are appointed non-politically and under strict rules regarding tenure to help maintain constitutional independence from the government. This theoretically allows the judiciary to interpret the law based solely on the legislation enacted by Parliament without other influences on their decisions. The Privy Council in London was the country's final court of appeal until 2004, when it was replaced with the newly established Supreme Court of New Zealand. The judiciary, headed by the Chief Justice, includes the Court of Appeal, the High Court, and subordinate courts.

Almost all parliamentary general elections between 1853 and 1993 were held under the first-past-the-post voting system. The elections since 1930 have been dominated by two political parties, National and Labour. Since the 1996 election, a form of proportional representation called Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) has been used. Under the MMP system each person has two votes; one is for electoral seats (including some reserved for Māori), and the other is for a party. Since the 2005 election, there have been 70 electorate seats (which includes, since the 1996 election, 7 Māori electorates), and the remaining fifty seats are assigned so that representation in parliament reflects the party vote, although a party has to win one electoral seat or 5 percent of the total party vote before it is eligible for these seats. Between March 2005 and August 2006 New Zealand became the only country in the world in which all the highest offices in the land (Head of State, Governor-General, Prime Minister, Speaker and Chief Justice) were occupied simultaneously by women.



New Zealand is identified as one of the world's most stable and well-governed nations. As of 2011, the country was ranked fifth in the strength of its democratic institutions and first in government transparency and lack of corruption. New Zealand has a high level of civic participation, with 79% voter turnout during the most recent elections, compared to an OECD average of 72%. Furthermore, 67% of New Zealanders say they trust their political institutions, far higher than the OECD average of 56%.

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