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## **Title: The Origins and Implications of Brexit**

### **Grade 11: CPC3O – Politics in Action: Making Change**

#### *Units:*

- B: Foundations of Political Engagement
- C: Policy, Politics, and Democratic Change

### **Grade 12: CGW4U/C – World Issues: A Geographic Analysis**

#### *Units:*

- B: Spatial Organization: Relationships and Disparities
- D: Interaction and Interdependence: Globalization
- E: Social Change and Quality of Life

**DESCRIPTION:** The Brexit vote is a major political development not only for the United Kingdom (UK), but for Europe and the World. The underlying Euroscepticism and xenophobia in both, the lead-up to and the aftermath of the vote highlight current issues within the UK and European Union (EU). This lesson plan will outline the origins of the Brexit vote, why the ‘Vote Leave’ camp won, what happens next, and what it all means for Canada’s relationship with the EU and our closest European ally, the UK, including implications for the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA).

**TIME:** 75 minutes but can be shortened to 50 minutes by omitting the fourth activity.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

- Analyze the historical relationship between the UK and the EU
- Explain the benefits of EU membership for the UK
- Highlight the reasons why the UK called for a referendum on EU membership
- Compare the rhetoric of the ‘Vote Leave’ and ‘Vote Remain’ campaigns
- Identify who were more likely to vote Leave or vote Remain
- Explain the process by which the UK can leave the EU
- Discuss the most important issues to be negotiated between the UK and the EU
- Assess the practice of using referenda to make key political decisions
- Examine the implications of Brexit for the EU and Canada
- Consider the broader issue of growing Euroscepticism within the EU
- Deliberate potential solutions for Brexit and repress Euroscepticism

## **MATERIALS:**

- Teacher’s Guide
- Teacher’s Attachment
  - A. Background to Brexit
  - B. Key Definitions
- Handouts for Students
  - 1. Campaign tactics of Vote Leave and Vote Remain
  - 2. Article exercise
  - 3. Legitimacy of referenda
  - 4. The role of Euroscepticism (optional for shorter classes)

**PROCEDURE:** Outlined in Teacher’s Guide

## **ASSESSMENT:**

- The teacher may wish to grade the students’ answers Handouts 1, 2, 3, and (optionally) 4
- The teacher may grade students on a mock Brexit negotiation or presentations on different stakeholders in the negotiations

**EXTENSION:** Note possible extensions of the project for students who are interested in further exploration.

## **Teacher's Guide**

The following guidelines are here to assist in delivering the material in this lesson plan. They are meant to have a certain amount of flexibility, to account for the amount of time available in the class, offer the option of one or two more classes or of more classroom or homework-based work.

### **PROCEDURE:**

1. **Begin by asking students about their current knowledge of Brexit.** Ask if they know what it means and why it is happening. and Use this time to explain very generally what Brexit is for those students who do not know what it is. (5 minutes)
2. **Teachers lead students in the Opening Discussion on the EU and Brexit.** For this, refer to Teacher's Attachment A on the brief history of the UK, the EU, and the Brexit vote. (20 minutes)
  - Some of the key concepts to highlight at this point are:
    - The UK's relationship with the EU before the Brexit vote
    - Prime Minister Cameron's promise for a Brexit referendum
    - The tactics utilised by the Vote Leave and Vote Remain campaigns
  - To help students understand the campaign, show images of posters used by Vote Leave or Vote Remain and discuss their strategies.
  - Have students watch short clips of David Cameron (Vote Remain) and Nigel Farage (Vote Leave) answer questions and attempt to convince the population to vote in the referendum. Video can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=baCwRZ7Fbvc>
  - Give students Handout #1 to complete. Ask students based on the information they have seen so far used in the campaign, if they would vote to leave or remain in the EU.
3. **Discuss the results of the Brexit vote.** Use the Teacher's Handout to find information on who were more likely to vote Leave as well as voter turnout for the referendum. (10 minutes)
  - Show students a map of the Brexit results and highlight which regions voted to leave or to remain along with demographics
  - Have students in groups list reasons why people would vote to leave instead of voting to remain.

4. **Hold a brief discussion on the process of leaving the EU.** Explain Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, which gave the UK the option to leave the EU. Give students Handout #2 and have them read the article. Ask students what the most pressing issues are for the negotiations. (10 minutes)
  - To help students understand this, ask them to imagine a process by which Ontario or Québec would leave Canada and the resulting complications.
  - Have students list ways Canada might be affected by the Brexit vote.
  - Ask students to complete the questions on Handout #2 for homework.
5. **Have students debate whether referenda are appropriate for making important political decisions.** Explain the benefits and drawbacks to a referendum. (10-15 minutes)
  - Discuss the role “fake news” had in the campaign and allegations of Russian interference leading up to the referendum.
  - Ask students if the British population were making an informed choice or not.
  - Bring up examples of referenda in Canada’s history, such as Québec’s vote on whether to leave Canada in 1995.
  - Give students Handout #3 to fill out and discuss.
6. **(OPTIONAL FOR LONGER CLASS TIME) Define “Euroscepticism” and have students identify its role in Brexit.** Refer to Teacher’s Handout A and B for definitions and examples. (20 minutes)
  - Show students tables and charts which show the level of Euroscepticism not just in the UK but across the EU. Ask students why Euroscepticism exists within the EU and why it is on the rise.
  - Have students debate why certain political parties desire for their countries to leave the EU, as well as the perceived benefits of leaving the EU.
  - Discuss the recent Eurozone and migrant crises within the EU and their role on levels of Euroscepticism.
  - Have students complete Handout #4, or if there is not enough time, give it to them for homework.
7. **Students may wish to look at these fun links for more information:**
  - Brexit explained through a cartoon: <https://www.vox.com/2016/6/24/12025514/brexit-cartoon>
  - 13 Things You Didn’t Know About Brexit: <https://www.politico.eu/article/brexit-negotiation-issues-worrying-the-european-parliament/>
8. **Possible Final Assignment:**
  - Mock Brexit Negotiations: Have students pick a key figure in the Brexit negotiations and play that character in a mock negotiation. Give students time to research and prepare for the roleplay. Instruct them to negotiate solutions for important Brexit issues, such as trade and immigration, while remaining in their chosen roles. The roleplay can be carried out in multiple classes if need be.