

The image features the flag of the European Union, which consists of a blue field with twelve five-pointed gold stars arranged in a circle. The flag is shown waving, with folds and ripples in the fabric. The text "European Union" is overlaid in the center in a white, serif font.

European Union

# History of the European Union

- The EU began in the 1950's. It was called the European Economic Community.
- Six countries (Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Belgium) were the founding members.



# History of the European Union

- In 1973, Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom joined.
- In 1981 Greece joined.
- Spain and Portugal joined in 1986.



# History of the European Union

- In 1992 a treaty formed the European Union as we know it today.
- Austria, Finland and Sweden all joined the EU in 1995.



# History of the European Union

The Czech Republic,  
Estonia,  
Cyprus,  
Latvia,  
Lithuania,  
Hungary,  
Malta,  
Poland,  
Slovenia  
and Slovakia  
joined in 2004.



- In 2007 Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU.
- This makes a total of 27 countries which are EU members today.



# What does the EU do?

- The EU works hard to promote tolerance, respect and understanding of all cultures and ethnic groups.
- The EU has brought stability and economic growth to all of its member countries.



# What does the EU do for us?

- Because of the EU we can travel freely between member countries, food is safer, the environment is greener, we can study abroad and cheaper air travel are just some of the benefits.



# Introduction of the Euro

The Euro was introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2002.

On that day the Euro replaced the currencies of 12 EU countries.

(Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Greece and Ireland).





# Why doesn't the UK use the Euro?

The UK was one of a few member countries who decided not to change their currency. One reason is that the British Pound is a strong currency. Another reason is that switching to the Euro gives the UK less control over things like interest rates.



# The EU Flag

The flag of Europe is 12 golden stars on a blue background. It was designed in 1955 and adopted by the EU in the 1980's.



# What Is Brexit?

Every day, we hear the term 'Brexit' on the television, radio, in newspapers and on news websites. But what is Brexit?



The word Brexit comes from putting two words together:

British

Exit



But what  
is Britain  
exiting?

## Did You Know...?

Joining parts of two words together to make a new word is called a '**portmanteau**'. Other examples are smog (smoke and fog) and motel (motor and hotel). This is different from a **compound noun**, which is made from whole words (e.g. starfish).

# How Did This Happen?

In 2016, voters in the UK were asked to vote to remain (stay in) or leave the European Union. This kind of vote is called a referendum.



The idea to have a referendum about the UK's EU membership was David Cameron's, leader of the Conservative Party. In 2013, he promised a referendum if his party won the next General Election.

In 2015, the Conservatives won the General Election and the referendum was set for 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016.



What were the results of 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016?



# The Brexit Referendum

## The Results:

Total Number of Votes: 33,551,983

Turnout: 72.2%

Spoiled or blank ballots: 25,359



Remain: 16,141,241 (48.11%)

Leave: 17,410,742 (51.89%)



50%

There was huge variation; people voted differently depending on their age, their education, where they lived and their national identity.



# What Happened Next?

Cameron resigned because he supported 'remain'. In July 2016, Theresa May became the new Prime Minister. On 29<sup>th</sup> March 2017, she triggered Article 50, starting the two year countdown for leaving the EU. No country had ever done this before.



Theresa May and other officials worked for two years to secure a deal with the EU to plan what would happen after Brexit. The withdrawal agreement was 599 pages long! It was agreed by the 27 members and by the Government. However, crucially, it was not agreed by the UK Parliament; it was voted on - and rejected - three times.

The final vote was on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019 - the date that Brexit was originally supposed to happen. May's deal was defeated again. She resigned and the Conservative Party chose Boris Johnson to take over as leader. Queen Elizabeth II accepted her resignation and made Johnson Prime Minister on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019.



What has Boris Johnson done?

# What Has Boris Johnson Done?

In 2016, the current Prime Minister and Conservative leader, Boris Johnson, voted to leave the EU.

Johnson did not want Brexit to be delayed again. He intended for Brexit to happen on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019, even if it meant leaving without any kind of deal. This was controversial; MPs did not want a 'no deal' Brexit.

On 28<sup>th</sup> August 2019, Boris Johnson advised the Queen to prorogue, or suspend, Parliament, for five weeks. This means MPs would not attend the Houses of Parliament nor make any decisions. There were many demonstrations and protests in cities around the UK. On 24<sup>th</sup> September, Lady Hale, president of the Supreme Court, ruled that this was unlawful. MPs returned to debate.



What happened then?

# What Happened Then?

After the ruling, many of the opposition leaders criticised Boris Johnson. Jeremy Corbyn said in a speech at his Labour conference that Johnson should 'consider his position and become the shortest-serving PM there's ever been'. Brexit Party leader, Nigel Farage, called prorogation 'the worst political decision ever'.

Most of the opposition parties wanted an extension to Article 50 (to delay Brexit past 31<sup>st</sup> October) and to avoid a 'no deal' Brexit. This is known as the 'Benn Act'.

Boris Johnson negotiated a deal with the EU. It was a little different from Theresa May's. Parliament would not agree with it (his party – the Conservatives – did not have a majority) so Brexit was delayed until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

A snap general election was held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2019 and, as Boris Johnson hoped, the Conservatives gained a huge majority (365 seats out of 650).

In early January 2020, it took just 3 days for the new Parliament to approve the Withdrawal Agreement Bill (330 to 231). All 330 votes in favour were Conservative. The UK will stop being part of the EU on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020.



# What Are the Reasons to Leave?

**Immigration:** Many voters felt that the UK would be in a better position to control who enters the country if it left the EU.

**Sovereignty:** Some 'leave' voters believe that decisions about the UK should be made in the UK and not be controlled by laws passed in Europe.

**Identity:** Some voters in the UK reportedly feel less 'European' than citizens in other EU countries.

**Age:** Experts believe that the over 65s were a key group of voters who voted to leave the EU.



The majority  
voted to leave.  
Why is it  
taking so long?



# Why Has Brexit Taken so Long?

It has taken over three years to discuss how the UK will leave. The UK has been part of the EU for nearly 46 years so leaving is very complicated!

Without a majority, both Theresa May and Boris Johnson struggled to get MPs to agree on when or how to leave the EU.

However, after the general election, the deadlock was broken and Johnson's deal was approved by 330 Conservative MPs and thus agreed.



What is the Withdrawal Agreement Bill that MPs voted on?





# What is the Withdrawal Agreement Bill?

Theresa May's Draft Withdrawal Policy from November 2018 originally set out many rules about how the UK would leave the EU. After her resignation, Boris Johnson made a new agreement. This was not agreed either. Then the Conservatives achieved a comfortable majority in the general election in December. MPs debated the bill in early January and it was approved.

The Draft Withdrawal Agreement is now the Withdrawal Agreement Bill. It will now pass to the House of Lords to be discussed.

There will be a transition time for 11 months until December 2020. The UK will no longer be a member of the EU after 31<sup>st</sup> January. However, during this time, the UK will carry on following its rules and giving it money. At the same time, discussions will be held to negotiate a future trade deal and other issues between the UK and the EU.

Critics say this transition time is not long enough to secure a deal.

## What Is In the Withdrawal Agreement Bill?

- It states that the whole of the UK will leave the EU customs union so that the UK can make deals with other countries in the future.
- It describes how the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (which will stay in the EU) will work. In practice, things won't be checked at that border. The actual checks will be made between Great Britain and the island of Ireland and goods will be checked as they enter Northern Ireland.
- It says that UK citizens in the EU, and EU citizens in the UK, will keep their rights after Brexit. People are also free to move to live and work between the EU and the UK during the transition period.
- It shows exactly how the UK will make the 'divorce bill' payments to the EU. Most of it will be paid by 2022, but some payments will continue into the 2060s.



## What Is Different?

- The revised Bill rules out any transition extension. The transition will start on 1<sup>st</sup> February and end on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.
- Any extension to the time of paying money to the EU is also ruled out.
- Parliament will now longer be able to have its say in the government's talks with the EU. Boris Johnson won't have to report to MPs about the progress of the talks anymore.
- A section to protect employment rights has been removed.
- A commitment to reunite refugee children entering the UK with families living in the country is no longer a legal promise.
- New policies in farming, fishing and immigration will be introduced to get ready for life outside the EU after December 2020.



# LO: To understand the term Brexit.

Choose one of the following activities to complete about Brexit

- Draw a timeline of key events connected to the history of the EU/Brexit
- Write down a list of advantages and disadvantages of Britain leaving the EU
- Write down your thoughts on leaving the EU, how it will affect you or your family, what are your worries or hopes?