

Activity 1 - Crunching Numbers

First, let's take a look at the figures for the '**Brexit**' **Referendum of 23 June 2016**. UK voters voted by 52% to 48% to leave the European Union.

The figures below are based on polling carried out by the polling organization [YouGov](https://yougov.co.uk/?stay) (<https://yougov.co.uk/?stay>) in its final poll before the vote took place. [The polling sample was then weighted to reflect the final result:](https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/oxmidrr5wh/EUFinalCallReweighted.pdf) https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/oxmidrr5wh/EUFinalCallReweighted.pdf

Non-voters are not included in these figures. The table distinguishes between different levels of educational attainment amongst Remain and Leave voters.

	Remain (%)	Leave (%)
GCSE or Below	30	70
A Level	50	50
Higher below Degree	48	52
Degree	68	32
Other/ Don't Know	45	55
ALL Not Degree	41	59

Source: YouGov, 2016.

Task 1

1. What do you notice about these figures? Which group was most likely to support the Leave campaign? Which group would be most likely to support 'Remain'? How would the result have differed if the vote had excluded people with a university degree?

How do these findings relate to other factors that help explain voting behaviour? The following [article](https://yougov.co.uk/news/2016/06/27/how-britain-voted/) from YouGov explores the Brexit result not just with reference to education, but also to previous voting behaviour, and to age: <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2016/06/27/how-britain-voted/>

2. How did age affect the way people were likely to vote? What might this imply about the figures we have for educational attainment? Which party were 'Remain' voters

most likely to have voted for in 2015? How about 'Leave' voters? Is this what you would expect?

If we dig a little deeper, we can take some other factors into consideration. [Here](#) are the full results of YouGov's survey:

https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/oxmidrr5wh/EUFinalCallReweighted.pdf

You will find additional data on gender, social grade or class (from the highest AB to the lowest DE), household income, and the degree to which voters habitually pay attention to politics.

3. Was there a significant difference in the voting behaviour of male and female voters? Were voters of a higher social grade more likely to vote for Remain or Leave? How about those in the lower social grades? What difference did household income make? Were voters who considered themselves politically engaged more or less likely to vote to Leave?

Now let's compare these results with those of the recent **UK general election, held on 8th June 2017** under the first-past-the-post system.

The overall results were as follows:

	Seats	Percentage of Vote (%)
Conservative Party	317	42.38
Labour Party	262	40.03
Scottish National Party	35	3.04
Liberal Democrat Party	12	7.37
Democratic Unionist Party	10	0.91
Sinn Féin	7	0.74
Plaid Cymru	4	0.51
Green Party	1	1.63
Independent	1	0.05
Speaker of the House of Commons	1	0.11
Other (including UKIP)	0	2.33

Once again, YouGov has produced figures (based on surveys conducted 9-13 June 2017) that allow us to see how the parties' support correlates with different levels of educational attainment.

	Percentage of Sample (%)	Education Level		
		Low (GCSE or below)	Medium	High (Degree or above)
Conservative Party	44	55	45	32
Labour Party	41	33	39	49
Liberal Democrat Party	8	5	7	11
Scottish National Party	3	2	4	4
Plaid Cymru	0	0	0	0
UK Independence Party	2	3	2	1
Green Party	2	1	1	2
Other	1	1	1	1

Source: YouGov, 2016

Task 2

1. Which parties enjoyed a higher vote share amongst those with low educational qualifications? Which parties enjoyed a higher vote share amongst those with high educational qualifications? Can you see in any patterns in the results?

Now have a look at YouGov's further breakdown of the results:

<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/06/13/how-britain-voted-2017-general-election/>

Pay particular attention to the figures for age, both for voting behaviour, but also for turnout.

2. What correlation can you see between age and voting behaviour? Which party benefits most from the youth vote? Which party receives more vote from those of retirement age? Which age groups are most likely to vote?
3. Was social grade (or class) an important factor in this election? What about employment status? Was there a gender divide between the parties?

Task 3

The following [article](#) looks at the way in which voters' **political allegiances have shifted between 2015 and 2017**, and asks whether the Brexit Referendum had a noticeable impact on the way people voted in 2017: <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2017/06/22/how-did-2015-voters-cast-their-ballot-2017-general/>

1. Which party in 2017 was most attractive to those who had voted 'Leave'? Which parties attracted most of their support from 'Remain' voters?
2. Can you see a pattern in the voting behaviour of voters with low educational attainment and voters with high educational attainment?

Task 4

By way of comparison, have a look at [these figures](#) for the **US presidential election of 2016**: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_2016#Voter_demographics

1. Which political party benefits most from the votes of those with low levels of educational attainment? Which party benefits most from the votes of those with high levels of educational attainment.
2. What other factors strike you as particularly important in explaining voting behaviour in the US election?
3. What differences and similarities with the data for recent British elections can you identify?