

Brexit Explained



(Photo credit: Marco Verch)

Beginners (A2)

What is Brexit?

Brexit means “British exit.” This refers to Britain separating from the European Union (the EU). The EU is a group of countries in Europe that work together. Britain is currently a member of the EU, but some people in the UK want to leave.

In 2016, there was a public vote about Brexit. This was called the Brexit referendum because ordinary people were given the opportunity to decide.

The government asked the British people if they wanted to *leave* the EU, or *remain* in the EU. The results were 52% for leave and 48% for remain.

How did it happen?

Before the election in 2013, the ex Prime Minister, David Cameron promised the public Brexit vote. This was because he was scared that he was going to lose votes to UKIP (a small, far-right party) in the election. Lots of UKIP supporters wanted to leave the EU, so even though Cameron

didn't personally support Brexit, he hoped people would vote for him instead of UKIP.

The Conservatives *did* win the 2015 election and the Brexit vote was organised for 2016.

What happened after the referendum?

After the referendum, David Cameron quit his job and Theresa May became the new Prime Minister. She decided that the Brexit date would be 29 March 2019.

However, the UK did not leave the EU in March as planned. This is because the government didn't agree about Brexit. Lots of different politicians had different ideas and nobody could make a decision that made everyone happy.

In July 2019, after failing to make a plan with the EU, Theresa May resigned as Prime Minister.

The new Prime Minister, Boris Johnson has recently organised another election for 12 December 2019. He hopes to win so that he can continue with his Brexit plans.

Newspapers and the media have called the December election the "Brexit election" because the result will determine what happens to the UK's relationship with the EU.