

RU EU? Teaching Support Materials

Support Material for Teachers

The Brexit Scenario



The Brexit Scenario with the RUEU? Game

The fluctuating commitment of EU citizens and EU member states to membership of the European Union has increasingly posed challenges to the European Union in recent years and there has been a lack of development of a sense of European-ness among several member states and their citizens (although to varying degrees) (Leith & Soule, 2012; Leith & Sim, 2015).

Recently these difficulties have been most evident with Brexit, the referendum vote by UK citizens in June 2016 to leave the EU. Following the Brexit referendum, an issue that had previously seemed to be relatively uncontentious suddenly emerged as a very difficult, highly emotional and conflictual problem for which there was no easy negotiated solution. This resulted in the formal withdrawal of the UK from the EU in January 2020. The citizens of the UK, after a period of transition, will cease to be member citizens of the EU at the end of December 2020.

The varying levels of commitment to the EU are underpinned by such concepts as European identity, the perceptions and attitudes that European citizens have to the EU itself, and their allegiances to other forms of identity, such as national, regional or local. Identity has become an important construct in recent times and it refers to the deep-rooted qualities, beliefs and attitudes that define a person and that can influence an individual's behavior. In the Brexit scenario of the RUEU? Game students will have a chance to interview representatives of the two opposing camps that existed around the ideas of leaving the EU. The so called 'remainers' and the 'leavers' are there to be interviewed and players will ask them specific questions about what they regard as the most important issues. Each player will also be able to observe discussions that are more informal and make measured decisions about which statements they agree with and find informative.

Classroom Questions for Consideration

Once students have played, you can consider the following questions in a classroom setting:

1. What were the arguments put forward by the Leave and Remain camps of the Brexit argument?
2. Why did individuals support Leave/Remain – what factors motivated their support?
3. Will the exit of the UK mean other member states may leave the EU?

References to support investigation of the Scenario

- Leith, M. S., & Soule, D. (2012) *National identity and Political Discourse in Scottish Politics*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Leith, M. S., Sim, D., Van Der Zwet, A., & Boyle, E. (2019). What does Brexit Tell Us about Our Understanding of European Identity? *The Political Quarterly*, 90(3), 559-564.
- Hobolt, S. B. (2016). The Brexit vote: a divided nation, a divided continent. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(9), 1259-1277.
- Carl, N., Dennison, J., & Evans, G. (2019). European but not European enough: An explanation for Brexit. *European Union Politics*, 20(2), 282-304.