

**Darganfod  
Dadlau  
Dewis**

—  
**Discover  
Debate  
Decide**

## **Welsh Bacalaureate–Intermediate Booklet 01–What is Politics?**



## **What is the National Assembly for Wales?**

**The National Assembly for Wales is made up of 60 Assembly Members from across Wales. They are elected by the people of Wales to represent them and their communities, make laws for Wales and to ensure the Welsh Government is doing its job properly.**

## What is Politics?



**Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it, misdiagnosing it, and then misapplying the wrong remedies.**

**- Groucho Marks, US Comedian**

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**Politics is the system we use to make, keep or change the general rules that we live under.**

**In other words, politics is the thing that decides how we live our lives!**

### **Activity 1 Strange Laws**

**Below is a list of strange laws from all over the world. Some are true, while others are false. Put a T or an F next to each law to show whether you think it's true or false.**

**(Answers on the last page)**

**Women must obtain written permission from their husbands to wear false teeth.**

**A man may be arrested for wearing a skirt.**

**Children who haven't been vaccinated against diseases such as measles and TB are banned from attending school, and becoming members of youth clubs or sports teams.**

**Before re-painting your house you must obtain a painting licence and the government's permission.**

<b>Only white lights are allowed to be displayed at Christmas.</b>
<b>People convicted of littering three times will be forced to clean the streets on Sundays wearing a bib that says, "I am a litterer."</b>
<b>Female school teachers who cut their hair into a bob will not receive any pay-rises.</b>
<b>If a tourist knocks on your door and asks to use your toilet, you must let them do so.</b>
<b>All meat sold at Supermarkets must be labelled with its farm of origin and the name and contact number of the farmer.</b>
<b>Only licensed electricians may change a light bulb.</b>
<b>People who don't take part in weekly government-run exercise classes must pay higher taxes for their health care.</b>
<b>Homeowners are responsible for clearing the snow off the pavement outside their house.</b>
<b>No one can be charged for food at an inn unless that person is, by his or her own opinion, "full".</b>
<b>Every office must have a view of the sky, no matter how small.</b>

## **Discussion Topics**

**Which of these laws is the worst in your opinion? Why?**

**Do you agree with any of these laws in principle? Why?**

## What is Government?



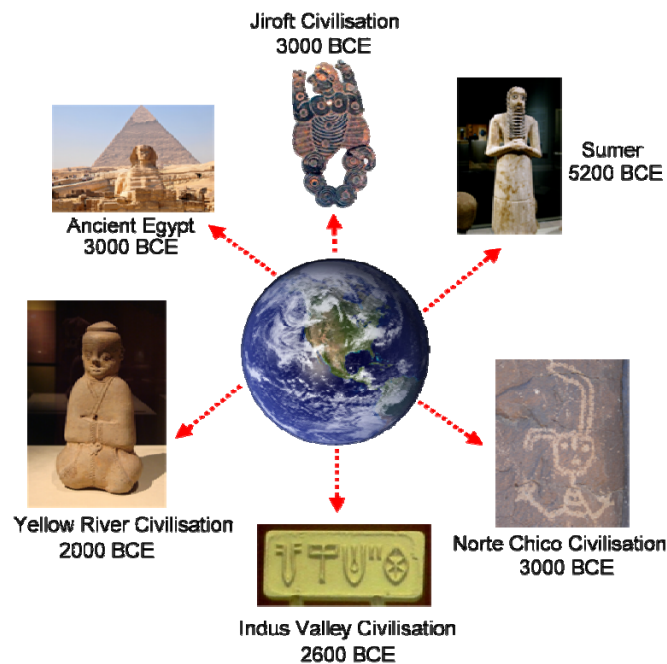
If men were angels, no government would be necessary.

James Madison, US President  
(1809-17)

2

Thousands of years ago, people lived in small, self-sufficient communities where there was no need for hierarchies or complex systems of rules.

Breakthroughs in farming changed all this. Communities grew bigger and more tightly-packed. This made it necessary to introduce a way of organising the people and their activities. A government is an organisation used by political units to exercise control and put new rules and ideas into practice. No one knows for sure when the world's first government appeared, but by the third to second millennium BC there were several city states that had developed into large governed areas.



## Anarchy

The opposite of government is anarchy. This comes from the Greek ἀναρχία anarchiā, which means 'without ruler'.

### Activity 2 Anarchy Rules!

Think about (or visit if you think being there could inspire you) any of the public places suggested below and write down some of the things that might be going on if there were no rules to control people's behaviour:

- A supermarket
- A busy stretch of road
- A football game
- A school
- A café/restaurant
- The local park
- A nightclub



### Discussion Topics

How many of you would be happy to live in a country that had no government? Why?

A lot has been said and written about in the media about the 'Nanny State'. Do you think there are any situations in life where we are governed too much and there are too many rules? Explain why you feel this way. Why do you think those rules have been put into place? Would there be any negative results from taking the rules away?

## Types of Government



**A dictatorship would be a heck of a lot easier, there's no question about it.**

**George W. Bush, US President (2001-09)**

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There are several different types of government around the world.

### Monarchy

Any country that has a king or queen.

In an absolute monarchy the highest ranking members of the royal family make the decisions.

A constitutional monarchy has a democratically-elected government as well as a king or queen, so the political power held by the royal family isn't as great.



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**(Left) Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, head of state in a constitutional monarchy.**

**(Right) King Abdullah, head of state in Saudi Arabia, an absolute monarchy.**

5





### One-Party State

A country that has only one political party.

(Left) Fidel Castro's Cuba is an example of a one-party state. No other political parties are allowed to stand for election.

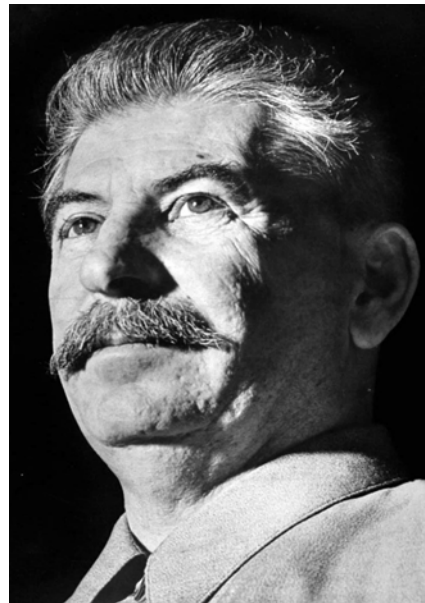
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### Dictatorship

A country where a person or political party has the power to do whatever they want, and might use force to keep control. In a military dictatorship the army is in control.



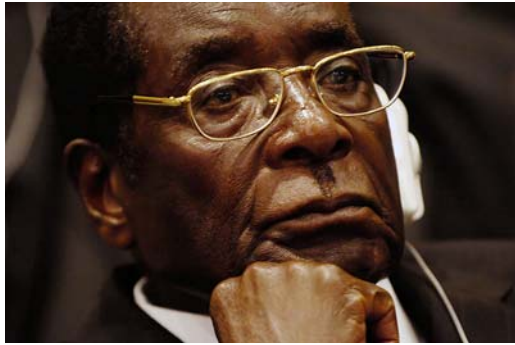
7 8



Adolf Hitler (on the left) and Josef Stalin (on the right) are among the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most infamous dictators. During their governments millions of their own countrymen were imprisoned or put to death.

Present day examples of dictatorships include Zimbabwe and North Korea.





**Robert Mugabe (left), ex-teacher and current Head of State in Zimbabwe.**

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**Kim Jong Il (right), the recently deceased 'Dear Leader' of North Korea. Official government biographers claim his birth was heralded by the appearance of a double rainbow over the mountain and a new star in the heavens.**



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### **Democracy**

**A government elected by the people. Those registered to vote get to decide who runs their country.**

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### **Transitional Government**

**It's impossible for a country to go from one type of government to another overnight, and sometimes the process can take many years. The government in place during this period is called 'transitional'.**

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**A transitional government was put in place in Iraq after Saddam Hussein was overthrown. Its job was to oversee the writing of a new constitution and to organise and hold elections for a new permanent Iraqi government.**



## Republic

A country that has no king or queen. In this case an elected president will be head of state. The USA, Russia, India, Germany and France are all examples of republics.

## Revolutionary Government

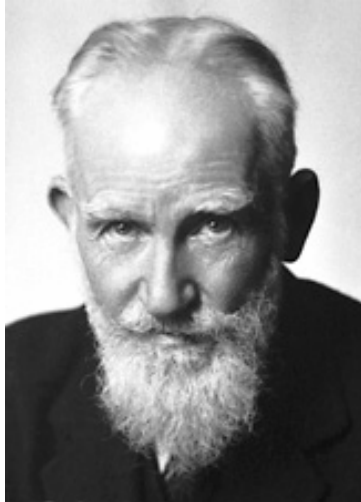
What the new ruling group is often called when a government is overthrown by force.



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What kind of government do we have in the United Kingdom?

## Democracy



**Democracy is a device that ensures we shall be governed no better than we deserve.**

**George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright and essayist**

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**Democracy is the most common form of government across the world.**

**The term comes from the Greek δημοκρατία – (dēmokratía), which means “rule of the people”.**

**There are two types:**

- Direct Democracy – when all citizens participate in policy and law-making decisions.**
- Representative Democracy – when we elect politicians to do that work for us.**

## Discussion Topics

**Which is the fairest way of deciding how we live – direct democracy or representative democracy?**

**Why isn't direct democracy always practical?**

## What is a Politician?



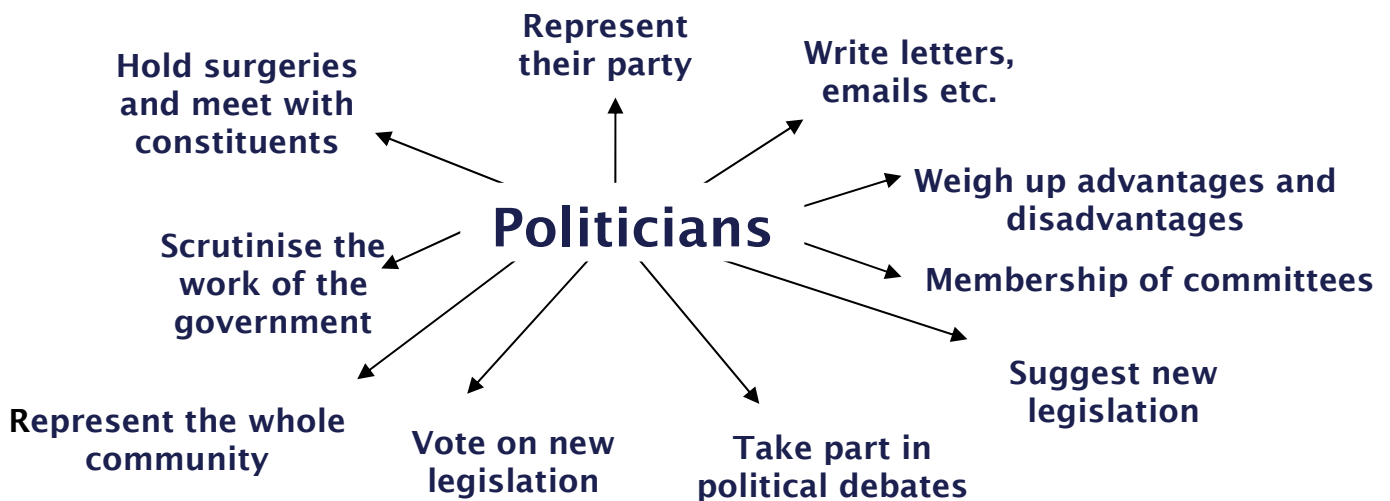
**Politics is war without bloodshed, while war is politics with bloodshed.**

**Mao Zedong, Chinese Leader (1943-1976)**

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In a democracy a politician is someone who's directly involved in the decision making process. We choose our politicians through elections, usually every four to five years.

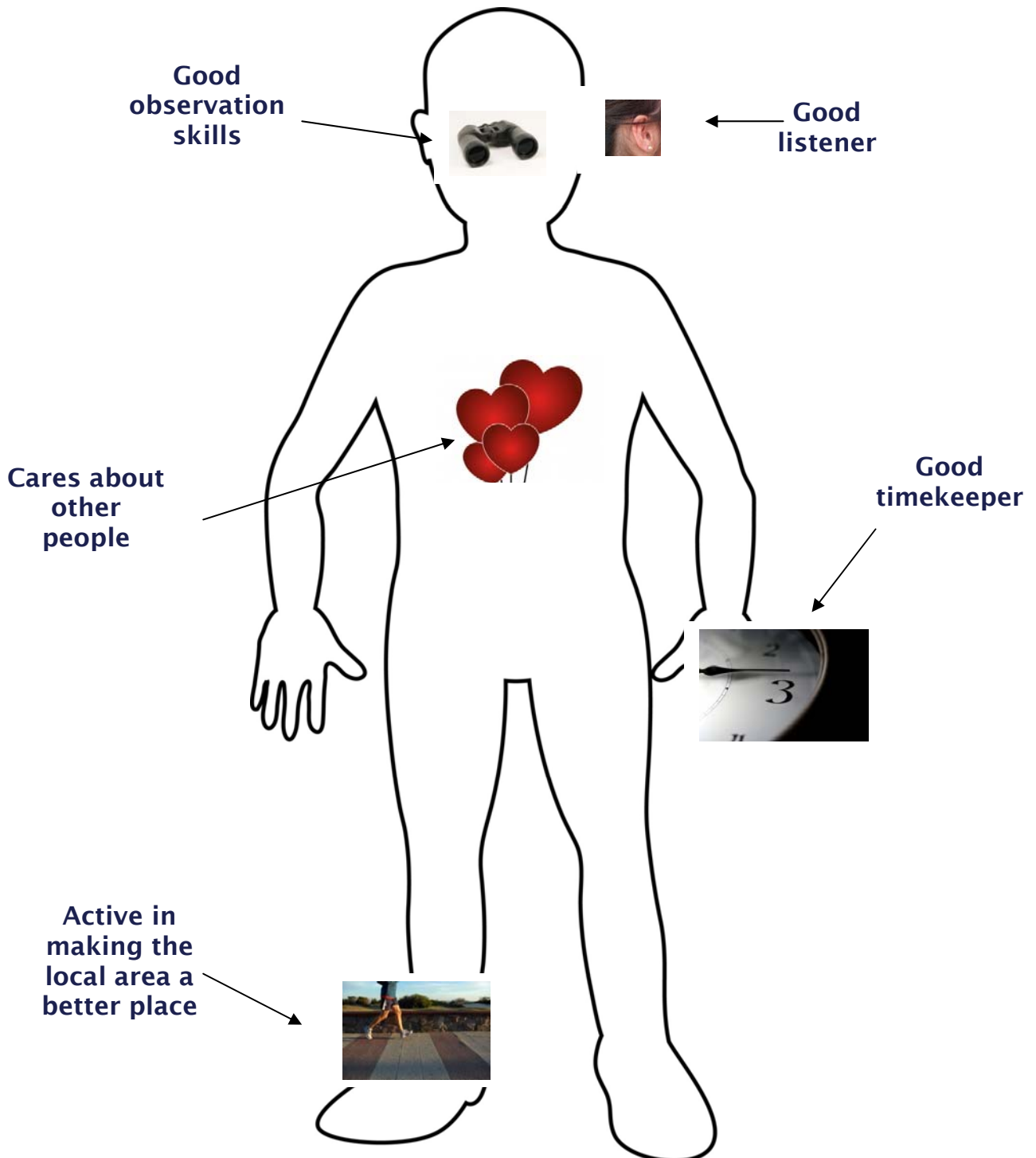
Most politicians belong to political parties. A political party is a group of people who share similar ideas on how to make things better. Those who don't belong to a political party are described as 'independent'.

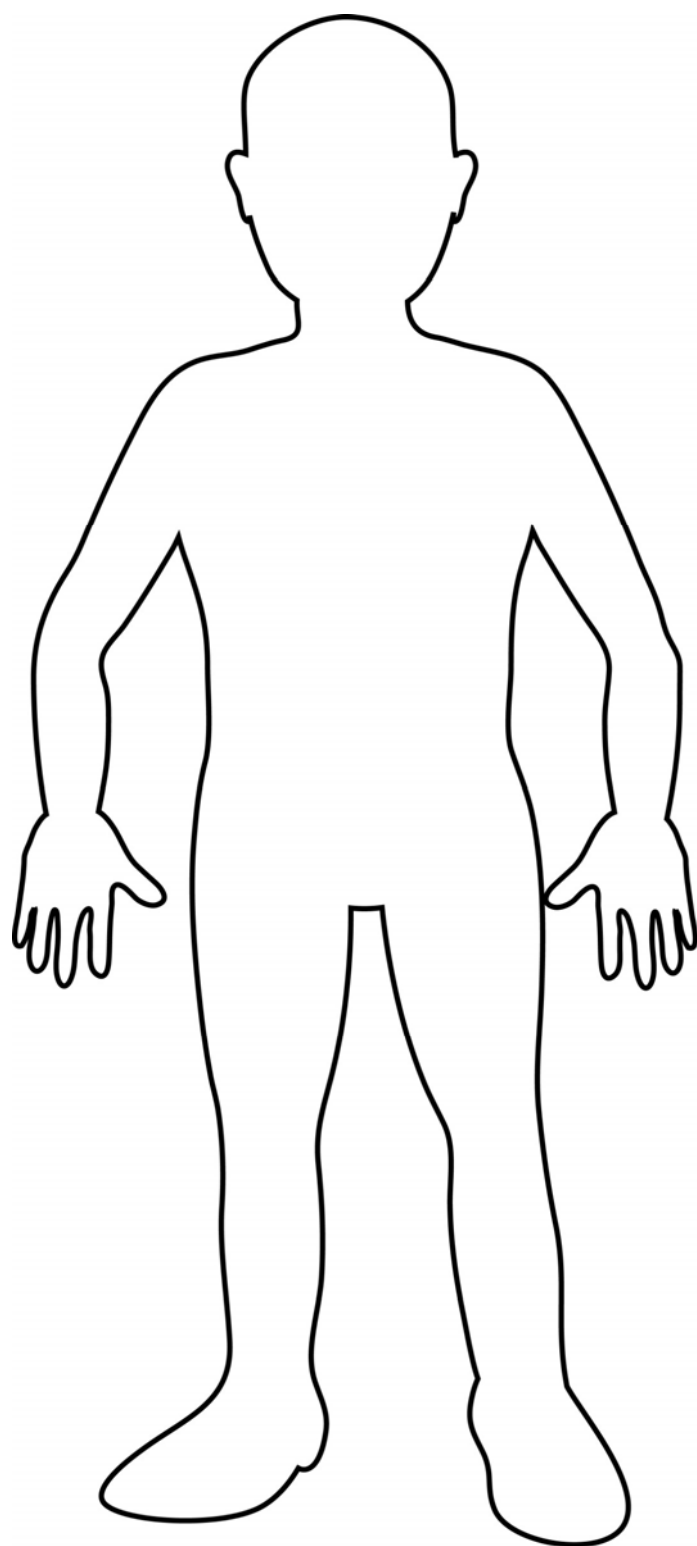


## Activity 3

### What Makes a Good Politician?

Follow the example below and add to the outline on the next page to show the kind of skills that make a good politician. You can use felt tip pens, clip art, or pictures cut from newspapers and magazines.





## Activity 4

### My Perfect World

Before an election all political parties and independent candidates publish something called a manifesto. A manifesto is a set of pre-election promises – things that they promise to do if they are elected to power.

Work in small groups to decide what you'd do if you were in charge of the country. Use the boxes to generate ideas, then write them down on the manifesto template provided. Don't forget that you'll need a name for your political party and a memorable election slogan to encourage people to vote for you. Don't forget to add some reasons next to each idea to convince people why your manifesto is the best.

All manifestos should then be read out to the rest of the group. Once this is done, use the ballot paper on the last page to vote for the party you'd like to see in government.

Possible Party Names	Election Slogan
<b>Possible Manifesto Promises</b>	

## Election Manifesto

Name of Party: \_\_\_\_\_

Our Slogan: \_\_\_\_\_

Make THREE election promises in any of the following areas:

- Environment
- Schools and Colleges
- Health Care
- Transport
- Social Justice

1. We promise to...

2. We promise to...

3. We promise to...



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales  
Pleidlais Etholaeth / Constituency Ballot**

**Pleidleisiwch dros un ymgeisydd / Vote for one candidate.  
Marciwch X mewn un blwch / Mark an X in one box.**

<b>1</b>			
<b>2</b>			
<b>3</b>			
<b>4</b>			
<b>5</b>			
<b>6</b>			
<b>7</b>			

## Answers to Activity 1 – Strange Laws

<p>Women must obtain written permission from their husbands to wear false teeth.</p> <p><b>TRUE - VERMONT, USA</b></p>
<p>A man may be arrested for wearing a skirt.</p> <p><b>TRUE - ITALY</b></p>
<p>Children who haven't been vaccinated against diseases such as measles and TB are banned from attending school, and becoming members of youth clubs or sports teams.</p> <p><b>FALSE</b></p>
<p>Before re-painting your house you must obtain a painting licence and the government's permission.</p> <p><b>TRUE - SWEDEN</b></p>
<p>Only white lights are allowed to be displayed at Christmas.</p> <p><b>TRUE - CONNECTICUT USA</b></p>
<p>People convicted of littering three times will be forced to clean the streets on Sundays wearing a bib that says, "I am a litterer."</p> <p><b>TRUE - SINGAPORE</b></p>
<p>Only licensed electricians may change a light bulb.</p> <p><b>TRUE - AUSTRALIA</b></p>
<p>People who don't take part in weekly government-run exercise classes must pay higher taxes for their health care.</p> <p><b>FALSE</b></p>
<p>Homeowners are responsible for clearing the snow off the pavement outside their house.</p> <p><b>TRUE - CANADA</b></p>
<p>No one can be charged for food at an inn unless that person is, by his or her own opinion, "full".</p> <p><b>TRUE - DENMARK</b></p>
<p>Every office must have a view of the sky, no matter how small.</p> <p><b>TRUE - GERMANY</b></p>
<p>Female school teachers who cut their hair into a bob will not receive any pay-rises.</p> <p><b>TRUE - ARKANSAS, USA</b></p>
<p>If a tourist knocks on your door and asks to use your toilet, you must let them do so.</p> <p><b>TRUE - SCOTLAND</b></p>
<p>All meat sold at Supermarkets must be labelled with its farm of origin and the name and contact number of the farmer.</p> <p><b>FALSE</b></p>

## Image Sources

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