

The 2024 UK general election

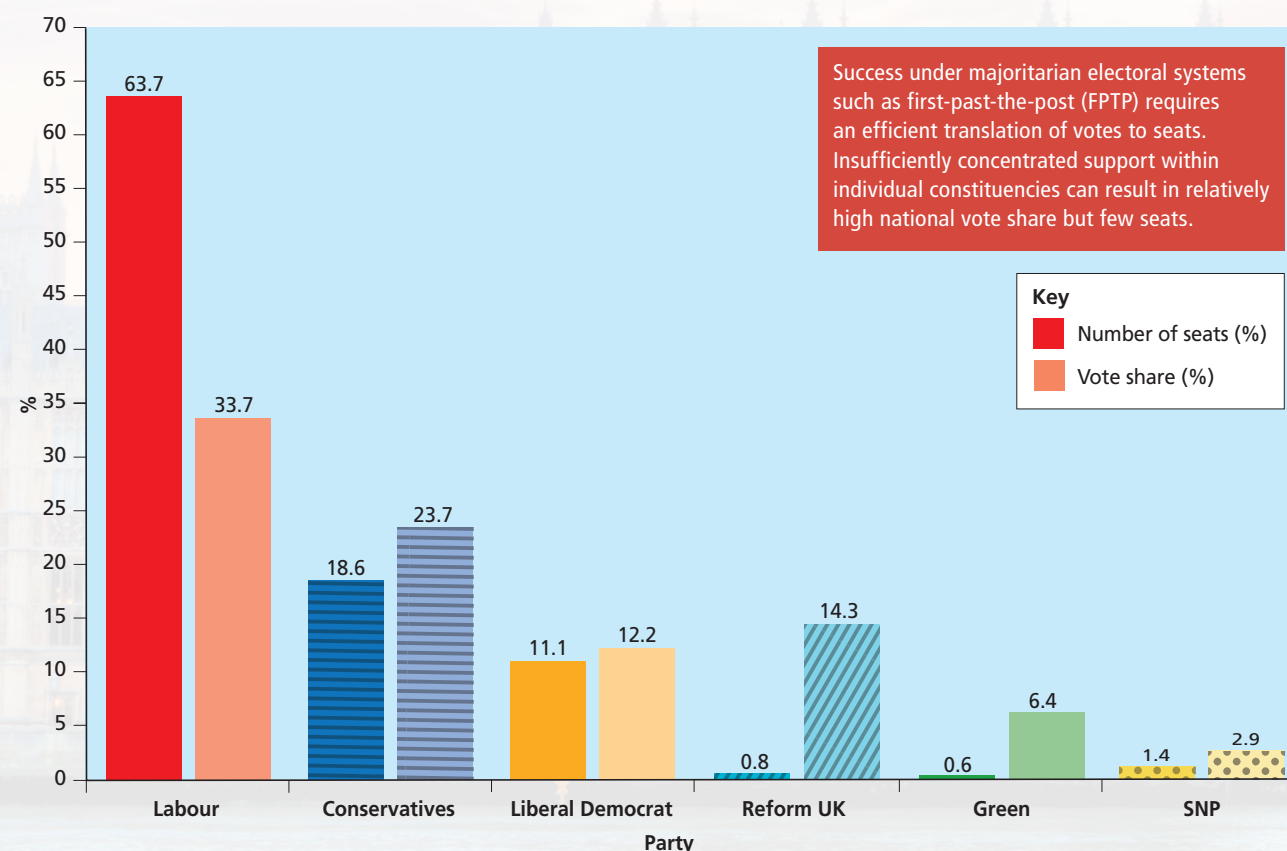


Figure 1 2024 general election: percentage of seats vs percentage of national vote share

The 2024 general election produced several results of historic significance. The Labour Party achieved its highest ever proportion of seats-to-votes, forming a government on the back of just 33.7% of the national vote. At 412, Labour's seat total is more than three times that of the Conservative's. Newly established Reform UK received 4.1 million votes (14.3%) but only 5 seats.

Some commentators referred to parties being broadly split into two camps: those who received relatively high numbers of votes but few seats (Reform, the Green Party, the Conservative Party) and those who won a lot of seats relative to their votes (Labour and the Liberal Democrats).

Box 1 2024 winners

- The **Labour Party** were the big winners of 2024. With 33.7% (9.7m) of the national vote, they secured over 63% (412) of the seats in the House of Commons. The party gained 211 seats despite their number of votes declining by more than 500,000 votes from 2019 to 2024.
- The **Liberal Democrats** are FPTP's perennial losers but 2024 saw them buck the long-term trend. While they still failed to win their fair share of the votes, their 72 seats (11.1% of the seats in the Commons) is as high a seat share as they have ever secured, from 12.2% (3.5m) of the vote.

Box 2 2024 losers

- The **Conservative Party** recorded their worst ever general election performance, with just 23.7% (121) of seats secured, based on 18.6% (6.8m) of the vote.
- For many, the biggest sub-plot to the Labour landslide was the extraordinary rise of **Reform UK**. Reform outperformed the Liberal Democrats by more than half a million votes, but won only 5 seats despite winning 14.3% (4.1m) of the vote. Reform came second place in 103 seats, 93 of which were won by Labour.
- The **Green Party** called for changes to the FPTP electoral system after their vote share of 6.4% yielded just 4 seats. Despite this electoral breakthrough (they won just one seat in 2019) they remain substantially under-rewarded.
- **Scottish National Party** leader John Swinney admitted that the party could no longer claim a mandate for a Scottish independence referendum. The party declined by 38 seats to just 9 after securing only 1.4% of the vote, less than 1 million votes.

ACTIVITIES

- 1 Which parties were the most and least efficient in translating their votes into seats in 2024? Why?
- 2 Compare 2024's result with 2019. Which parties gained and lost the most votes and why?
- 3 Research three constituency seats with the biggest swings in 2024 – to Labour, to the Liberal Democrats and to Reform UK. In these seats, which parties gained and which lost? Explain why.

Nick Gallop is editor of POLITICS REVIEW.

PoliticsReviewExtras

Download this poster at
www.hoddereducation.com/politicsreviewextras