MID TERM REVIEW

Political parties:

Try to remember one party and if you can one politician name for a : far right, right, centrist, left and far left party

It's not mandatory to have primary elections in French political parties.

Any politician and citizen can create a party and run for presidency.

In the presidential election, if a party scores at least 5% of the votes, it gets refunded for its campaign.

- The amount of money spent in the campaign is limited in both rounds. In 2007 Nicolas Sarkozy cheated and exceeded the limit. Moreover he got illegal funds from Gadhafi the Libyan dictator: he was sentenced to jail for this in 2025.

- Marine Le Pen was sentenced to prison (then to wear an electronic tag) for misusing public funds to finance her European deputies. As she appealed the decision, she could run without the tag.

Powers:

-To vote, there are 3 conditions: to be 18 years old, be French and sign up to be on the voting rolls.

-The executive power belongs to the president **AND** the Prime minister.

-The president is elected for 5 years and can do another term. After 2 consecutive terms, he must wait 5 years without running for presidency, to run again. Before 2000, the president's term was 7 years.

-To run for presidency, you need to be French, at least 23 years old and have 500 endorsements/ signatures from politicians.

-Emmanuel Macron was the youngest president ever elected (39 years old)

-France never had a female president

-When someone goes and vote but does not chose any candidate, it's said he/she has "voté blanc" but these votes are not counted.

- If a French citizen does not vote, he/she is not fined.

-The Prime minister is **NOT** elected but appointed by the president. He/she must belong to the party which holds a majority in the Assemblée Nationale. The president can chose anyone within the party even if he/she has never held any office in the past.

-The legislative power belongs to the Parliament, which is composed of 2 chambers: The National Assembly **AND** the Senate.

- The Senate is elected by the deputies, the members of the departmental council and the members of the regional council. It's an indirect election

-When passing laws, the final vote is in the National Assembly composed of 577 deputies and elected for 5 years in the « Legislative elections », (elections législatives)

-The governement (PM and ministers) can enforce a law without passing It in the Parliament: It's called the « blocked vote »

-BUT if the deputies think it's a bad law, they can vote and overthrow the governement: the law is cancelled and the president must appoint another prime minister: It's called « voter une motion de censure(= censorship)

-When the president and the Prime minister are from different parties, it's called COHABITATION

It can only happen today if the president dissolves the National assembly. It happened in 1997 and more recently in 2024

-When the president dies or resigns, a new election is organized. The president of the Senate takes over as a provisional president. In the 5th republic , De Gaulle resigned in 1969 and GEORGES POMPIDOU died in 1974

-Try to remember **3 of the president's power**

-About local powers remember the names of the 3 COLLECTIVITES TERRITORIALES: Communes, departments and regions.

They have been implemented with the 1982 DECENTRALIZATION ACT

For each, try to give **2 powers:** one of the most simple to remzember is to refer to education: the commune deals with nursery and primary schools, the department deals with middle schools and the region deals with high schools.

About justice:

-try to remember 2 common points and 2 differences with the US system

-The court which judges the worst crimes is " la cour d'assises". It's the only one having 9 jurors, who are chosen randomly from voting rolls.

-There is a specific court to judge disputes between employers and employees called the "prudhommes court"

- Death penalty was abolished (1981) and It used to be the guillotine

-Life imprisonment does not really exist: the max is 30 years without parole **but the State can after oppose any claim for release on parole this is why there are some French serial killers in jail after serving a 30-year sentence.**

-Judges are public servants but they are theoretically independent for their decisions

-Who was Robert Badinter and what was he known for? He was a Jewish attorney from Paris who stood up for abolishing death penalty. He was then minister of Justice in 1981 and abolished It. His other " crusades" were: improving conditions of inmates in French prisons, stop punishing homosexuality as an offense.

-When did homosexuality stop being an offense before the law? In 1981, thanks to Badinter

-What was the Outreau trial about? It was about a so-called pedophile ring . But the two couples who organized It lied about how many people were involved and 10 people were kept in jail while being innocent.

-What weaknesses within the French judicial system did It reveal? Children were « manipulated » during their interview by policemen who guided their answers. Presumption of innocence was not respected. The judge in charge was young (32) and unexperienced. It was then decided that: Kids'interviews were to be filmed; that protective custody could not exceed 6 months when there were no real evidence against a suspect, for complex cases, 2 judges had to be in charge.

<u>In class, I have referred to:</u>

The minimum wage: the SMIC (1400 euros)- I've said public servants are called fonctionnaires- Our longest president was Mitterrand: he served two 7-year terms (total 14 years from 1981 to 1995). Our 5 th republic dates from 1958, It's not the longest. The longest was the 3rd one : 70 years (from 1870 to 1940). Many would like the end of the 5th republic and call for a 6th rezpublic (example: Jean Luc Melenchon) because they consider the president has too much power.

I've explained that the fact the president has too much power comes from the fact CHARLES DE GAULLE designed the 5th republic for himself in 1958.