

**Role Play**

**Augusta:**

Labour Party

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The country of Augusta just held its national elections. **Four political parties attempted to win the votes of the public – the Labour party, the Liberal party, the Conservative party, and the Libertarian party.**

Here is some necessary background about the political system in Augusta:

* **The Parliament in Augusta is made up of 120 seats**
* **To form a coalition government, a 61-vote majority is required**
* **The government is formed by the parties in the coalition and consists of 6 ministers**
* **The 6 ministers are divided among the coalition parties as agreed by them in the coalition agreement**

**The policy decisions in the government are made by the ministers by way of majority voting**. If a party has 4 ministers it means it has complete control over the acts of the government. If a party has 3 ministers it has veto power over the decisions of the government. If a party has 1 minister it has a “voice” at the table, but limited power over the decisions made.

The previous government was led by the Conservative party, which has been the governing party in Augusta for the last three elections. The Liberal party also took part in the previous coalition, led by one of the most respected leaders in Augusta’s history – a real elder statesperson. The government was formed by 61 seats of the Conservative party and 35 seats of the Liberal party, and the Conservative party controlled 5 out of 6 ministers of the government. The Libertarian party is a new party, created by the former deputy and now political enemy of the head of the Conservative party in the last days of the previous coalition, due to a personal conflict among the two. The Labour party has not been in government for a long time, and is now led by a young, less experienced, but charismatic leader. The Labour party is the most left-wing party, the Liberal party is more in the centre-left of the political map, and the Conservative and Libertarian parties are more to the right of the centre.

New Election Results

The Election Results For the Augusta Parliament Are As Follows:

**The Conservative party**

**51 seats**

**The Liberal party**

**15 seats**

**The Labour party**

 **40 seats**

**The Libertarian party - 14 seats**

The day after the elections, the pundits summarize the key insights from the election results:

* The Conservative party is the only party who can form a coalition with just one additional party.
* The poor relationship between the head of the Conservative party and the Libertarian party may lead to difficulties in forming a coalition.
* The Liberal and Labour parties, although unable to form a government alone, are in a good position to affect the composition of the final coalition.
* Even though the Liberal party was reduced to the 3rd biggest political party, their leader is still a force that many voters respect and want to see in future coalition governments.

Although the most likely coalition is one led by the Conservative party, all pundits agree that there are various possible outcomes. The potential coalition governments are highly dependent on the alliances between the individual parties and the relationships their heads of party create during the negotiation process.

The Negotiation Process

At the end of the negotiation process, either the parties sign a coalition agreement, which ends the negotiation, or don’t sign, in which case new elections are announced immediately. Importantly, an agreement does not need to be signed by all 4 parties, only by parties that among themselves hold 61 or more seats in the Augusta Parliament. In other words, individual parties do not hold a veto power over the agreement and can be excluded from the governing coalition entirely.

**The four parties negotiate over the following two issues:**

1. **Who will be the members of the new coalition**
	* To have a viable agreement, parties that together represent a majority of seats in the Parliament (61) need to agree on a new governing coalition
	* If no agreement is achieved by the end of the time given, then a new election will be held
2. **How the 6 ministers of the government will be divided among the members of the coalition**

**One outcome form for the negotiation group should be filled out by the leader of the Libertarian party.**

Role of the Labour Party

The last election produced great results for your Labour party. Your party enjoyed a boost from the poor performance of the Liberal party in the last governing coalition, helping you achieve 40 seats in the Parliament as some previously Liberal voters switched to supporting Labour.

Following the elections, you conducted a survey of your voters and obtained the following insights:

* You are constrained by what your voters prefer heading into the negotiations. Ideally, your voters would prefer that only you and the Liberal party form a coalition together. As this 2-party government is not viable (since you do not hold enough combined seats in Parliament), your voters’ desires leave you a very narrow area to navigate in. If in the end you form a government with the Conservative party, your voters will prefer the Liberal party be left out so that Labour retains its power and independent voice.
* Your voters will strongly dislike it if the Conservative party and the Libertarian party form a coalition together without any Liberal party or Labour party presence to create a more centrist government.
* Your voters will not appreciate it if you form a government with the Libertarian party unless you have a serious impact on the decisions made by that government (i.e., Labour receives many ministers).
* After years of not being in power, your voters will value very much having impact on policy matters. They will punish you harshly if you fail to translate your electoral achievement to government ministers, in other words obtaining at least 3 ministers in the upcoming government.

Given all this and your absence from the last government, you know you need to find a way to be a part of this coalition and control enough ministers to give you real power.

You are ready to take bold actions to try and form a coalition that will suit you. Going into the negotiations, your advisors urge you to be active and try to take initiative, rather than wait for offers and alliances to come to you.

Point System

As a professional politician, your success or failure in the negotiation is determined by public opinion of the actions you have taken and results you have obtained. Each party conducted a poll among their voters to gauge their opinions regarding possible results of the negotiation.

Your voters’ opinions are based on two factors:

1. Composition of the coalition formed (or not formed)
2. Number of ministers obtained by your party in the negotiation

The points below reflect changes in public opinion due to results achieved in the negotiation and are added or subtracted from your initial public opinion score of 100 points.

Composition Of The Coalition Formed

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Are you in the coalition**  | **Other parties in the coalition**  | **Points change due to public opinion**  |
| **Yes** | Conservative  | +10 points |
| Liberal, Conservative  | +5 points |
| Liberal, Conservative, Libertarian  | -10 points |
| Liberal, Libertarian  | -10 points |
| Conservative, Libertarian  | -15 points  |
| **No** | Liberal, Conservative  | -5 points |
| Liberal, Conservative, Libertarian  | -20 points |
| Conservative, Libertarian  | -25 points |
| **No Agreement**  | - | +10 points |

Number Of Ministers Obtained In The Negotiation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Negotiation outcome** | **Points** |
| You are not in the coalition/ no agreement achieved  | 0 points |
| 0 ministers | -15 points |
| 1 minister | -8 points |
| 2 ministers | -5 points |
| 3 ministers | +30 points |
| 4 ministers | +45 points |
| 5 ministers | +50 points |
| 6 ministers | +60 points |

*\*\*\* Points awarded reflect changes from your initial score of 100 points.*

*\*\*\* The points accurately reflect all voter sentiments and political support. No factors contribute to your final score in the exercise beyond the points-payoffs in the two scoring tables listed above.*

Examples Scenarios

1st Example –

**Coalition**: Labour, Liberal, Conservative

**Ministers to your party**: 2

**Points** **calculation**- Initial points 100

 Public opinion +5

 Ministers -5

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 Overall 100 (No change from initial score)

2nd Example –

**Coalition**: Liberal, Conservative, Libertarian

**Ministers to your party**: You are not in the coalition

**Points** **calculation**- Initial points 100

 Public opinion -20

 Ministers 0

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 Overall 80 (-20 change from initial score)

Calculation Sheet (optional)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Coalition** | **# of ministers**  | **Points** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
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