

Question Time Scorecard – 28/5/2020



We have developed a scoring system to apply to BBC Question Time guests to gain a sense of how elite each weekly panel selection is. We score each guest either 0 (non-elite) or 1 (elite) in five categories: Income, Education, Connections, Honours/Titles, Political/Economic Views. Each guest achieves an overall elite rating out of 5, which is added to the scores of the other guests then divided by the number of guests to provide an overall rating for that week's panel.

Fiona Bruce, the presenter of the show, is a key figure in terms of directing debate and allocating panellists' speaking time so is always included in the calculation for that week's show.

For more information on why we are doing this and what we mean by “elite” check out [this blog post](#).

If you'd like to get involved in the project tweet or e-mail us!

INCOME

Income is the most powerful indicator of elitism. Those with wealth have a wider range of options than those without and a vested interest (conscious or otherwise) in sustaining the economic framework that generates their affluence

Classification	0 (Non-Elite)	1 (Elite)
Criteria	Yearly salary < £68,000	Yearly salary > £68,000 OR Verified millionaire
Panel		Fiona Bruce scores 1 <i>BBC Salary for 17/18 listed as £259,9990</i>
		Helen Whately scores 1 <i>Member of Parliament (Salary £81,932)</i>
		Ian Murray scores 1 <i>Member of Parliament (Salary £81,932)</i>
		John Swinney scores 1 <i>Cabinet Member of Scottish Parliament (Salary £94,821)</i>
	Dr Layla McCay scores 0 <i>Director at NHS Confederation and Secretary of Brexit Health Alliance. Founder of Centre for Urban Design and Mental Health. Unable to specify earnings beyond speculation therefore meets criteria.</i>	
	Alex Massie scores 0 <i>Columnist for Times/ Sunday Times. Scotland Editor of The Spectator. Unable to specify earnings beyond speculation therefore meets criteria.</i>	

EDUCATION

The Sutton Trust reported in 2016 that Oxford and Cambridge recruit more students from eight independent/highly competitive schools (such as Eton) than almost 3,000 UK state schools put together. A [linked government report](#) stated that “Our examination of who gets the top jobs in Britain today found elitism so stark that it could be called ‘Social Engineering’”, with independent schools and Oxbridge a key component in this social selection.

Classification	0 (Non-Elite)	1 (Elite)
Criteria	State school attendee Non-Oxbridge higher education	Attended a private/independent school OR Attended Oxford, Cambridge or equivalent elite overseas university in top ten of Times Higher Education Rankings
Panel		Fiona Bruce scores 1 <i>Attended Hereford College, Oxford</i>
		Helen Whately scores 1 <i>Attended independent Westminster School and then Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford.</i>
	Ian Murray scores 0 <i>Meets criteria.</i>	
	John Swinney scores 0 <i>Meets criteria.</i>	
	Dr Layla McCay scores 0 <i>Unable to verify School attended so meets criteria.</i>	
		Alex Massie scores 1 <i>Attended independent boarding school Glenalmond College.</i>

CONNECTIONS

It's not what you know, it's who you know shouldn't apply in a democracy...but most would agree that it does. Many high-ranking politicians and journalists (e.g. The Millibands, the Dimblebys) are embedded in the elite through family ties or are members of private clubs whose "exclusive" status marks them out as networking hubs for the elite. Moreover, if QT guests count as friends/kin people who occupy positions of power throughout politics, business and the media this again makes them less likely to reflect common opinion or present an unbiased view of institutions in which a loved one, confidante or network acquaintance plays a key role.

Classification	0 (Non-Elite)	1 (Elite)
Criteria	No close family, friendship or networking ties to high-ranking figures in politics, business, the media or other powerful institutions	One or more close family, friendship or networking ties to high-ranking figures in politics, business, the media or other powerful institutions
Panel		<p>Fiona Bruce scores 1 <i>Father a high ranking businessman, regional managing director of Unilever (2017 turnover 53.7 billion euros)</i> <i>(source)</i> <i>Husband Nigel Sharrocks a high-ranking businessman, CEO of the marketing company Aegis Group Northern Europe which represents companies with cumulative turnover of £500 billion</i> <i>(source 1) (source 2)</i></p>
		<p>Helen Whately scores 1 <i>Wealthy donors include Charles Villiers, Lady Swire and Majid Jafar</i></p>
		<p>Ian Murray scores 1 <i>Wealthy donors include Lord William Haughey, Baroness Meta Ramsay and Lord Matthew Oakeshott.</i></p>
	<p>John Swinney scores 0 <i>No significant donors registered at time of publication. Meets criteria.</i></p>	
	<p>Dr Layla McCay Scores 0 <i>Meets criteria.</i></p>	

		<p><i>Alex Massie Scores 1</i> <i>Son of Journalist Allan Massie.</i></p>

HONOURS/TITLES

It seems fair to assume that those vested with hereditary titles such as Earl, Duke, Baronet, etc can be classed as elite. Prestigious titles bestowed by unelected bodies, such as OBEs, membership of the House of Lords and Church titles like Bishop and Archbishop, are often awarded regardless of background (e.g. OBEs to sports stars from poor backgrounds) but nonetheless suggest elite approval of these individuals – they are “vetted by the elite”.

Classification	0 (Non-Elite)	1 (Elite)
Criteria	No high-ranking hereditary title No high-ranking honour/title bestowed by an unelected body	Possesses a high-ranking hereditary title OR Possesses a high-ranking honour/title bestowed by an unelected body
Panel	<p>Fiona Bruce scores 0 <i>She does not have high-ranking title...yet!</i></p>	
	<p>Helen Whately Scores 0 <i>Only title is a democratic one: Member of Parliament.</i></p>	
	<p>Ian Murray scores 0 <i>Only title is a democratic one: Member of Parliament.</i></p>	
	<p>John Swinney scores 0 <i>Only title is a democratic one: Deputy First Minister of Scotland.</i></p>	
	<p>Dr Layla McCay scores 0 <i>Meets Criteria.</i></p>	
	<p>Alex Massie scores 0 <i>Meets Criteria.</i></p>	

POLITICAL/ECONOMIC VIEWS

It isn't entirely fair to classify someone as financially elite because they are wealthy. There are examples of financially privileged individuals who have campaigned for redistribution of wealth. Therefore, we take into account economic and political viewpoints expressed verbally or through voting patterns

Classification	0 (Non-Elite)	1 (Elite)
Criteria	Political outlook prioritises what we might call “public wealth” – redistribution of wealth, living wage, wage rises in line with or above inflation, protection or investment in public services, union and worker’s rights, nationalisation of industries	Political outlook prioritises what we might call “private wealth” – low tax rates, downsizing of state, privatisation of state services, benefit freezes or cuts, public sector pay freezes, limitation of trade union powers
Panel	<p><i>Fiona Bruce scores 0</i> <i>As a journalist she does not express strong views in this area*</i></p>	
		<p><i>Helen Whately scores 1</i> <i>“Consistently voted for more restrictive regulation of trade union activity”</i> www.theyworkforyou.com</p>
	<p><i>Ian Murray scores 0</i> <i>“Generally voted for a Banker’s Bonus Tax.”</i> www.theyworkforyou.com</p>	
	<p><i>John Swinney scores 0</i> <i>Voting records from theyworkforyou and Scottish Government website provide inadequate information on recent voting record.</i></p>	
	<p><i>Layla McCay scores 0</i> <i>Unknown political/ ideological outlook although affiliated to Brexit Health Alliance that seeks to protect NHS from Brexit impact.</i></p>	
		<p><i>Alex Massie scores 1</i> <i>Editor at The Spectator and contributes to The Times and CapX etc all of which promote Conservative values.</i></p>

*** We accept that the burden of proof for making an “elite” judgment lies with us. Therefore, when sufficiently clear evidence to classify a panellist as elite cannot be found they will be classed non-elite in that category as a default. We may, for example, strongly suspect that someone has an income above £68,000 or influential contacts but if we can’t access information that suggests this beyond reasonable doubt we will classify them as non-elite for these categories.**

Overall elite ratings (for guests and the panel as a whole):

Total Score	0	1	2	3	4	5
Corresponding Status	Not Elite	A Little Elite	Quite Elite	Elite	Very Elite	Exceptionally Elite

*Fiona Bruce scores three out of five – she is **Elite***

*Helen Whately scores four out of five – she is **Very Elite***

*Ian Murray scores two out of five – he is **Quite Elite***

*John Swinney scores one out of five – he is **A Little Elite***

*Layla McCay scores zero out of five – she is **Not Elite***

*Alex Massie scores three out of five – he is **Elite***

Combined score of panel = $3+4+2+1+0+3=13$

*Divided by no. of panellists (6) = 2.17, rounded to closest no. (0.5 rounded down the way) = **2***

***OVERALL ELITE RATING FOR THIS EDITION OF QUESTION TIME
IS:***

2 – QUITE ELITE