Before reading the text, think about the following questions:
What do you know about the current political situation in the UK?
What do you know about the former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair?

Listening Comprehension / Text

Tony Blair was British prime minister from May 1997 to June 2007 and leader of the Labour party, one of the United Kingdom’s three main political parties, from July 1994. Aged 43 at the time of his 1997 victory, Blair was the youngest person to become British prime minister since the early nineteenth century and under his leadership Labour won three general elections in a row for the first time ever.

As a teenager Blair attended a private school in Scotland, and a few years ago Blair’s biographer went there to speak to his former teachers. It would appear Blair was less popular as a student than as a politician: apparently the teachers said the young Blair ‘was a complete pain in the neck, and they were ’very glad to see the back of him’. He was actually so badly behaved in his final term that he was nearly expelled.

After leaving school Blair studied law at Oxford University, where he spent most of his spare time singing and playing guitar in a rock band. One of his colleagues was a young woman called Cherie Booth, who he married in 1980. They now have a daughter and three sons. The youngest son, who was born in 2000, was the first child to be born in Downing Street in 150 years.

Blair is closely associated with the changes to Labour policies that have taken place over the last fifteen years, and he invented the name ‘New Labour’ in order to emphasize how the party has been modernized. Blair supported most of the foreign policies of US president George W Bush after the terrorist attacks of 11th September 2001, and controversially sent British forces to participate in the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Form some questions about Tony Blair using the following question words:

Example: When? When did he become leader of the Labour Party?
Where? ........................................................................................................................................
Who? ........................................................................................................................................
How long? ...................................................................................................................................
What? ...........................................................................................................................................

General Telephone Class
Student’s Copy
**Language Practice**

Look at the following extract from the text:

*After leaving* school Blair studied law at Oxford University, where he spent most of his spare time singing and playing guitar in a rock band.

In English, we use *before / after + gerund*. This is different in Spanish as you use the construction *después + infinitive*. Be careful! It is a common mistake for Spanish people to make.

**Examples:**  Before leaving home, he switched on the alarm.  
What did you do after leaving university?

Read the sentences below and join them together using the above construction.

**Example:**  He had breakfast and then he went to work.  
*Before going to work, he had breakfast.*

1. He went over the report to check for mistakes and then handed it in to his boss.
2. We paid off the mortgage on the house and then decided to move.
3. We looked at all the CV’s then we came up with a shortlist of possible candidates.
4. They came to an agreement and then they drew up the contract.
5. We spent a lot of time setting up the meeting but they called it off at the last minute.
6. I took my coat off and hung it up on the peg.
7. He leaves work. He finds it difficult to wind down and switch off.
8. I thought carefully about what I was going to say. I made the phone call.

**Discussion**

✔ What do you know about the former Spanish President, Mariano Rajoy.

✔ What % of the population normally vote in the General Elections? Do you think that voting should be obligatory?

✔ How do you decide who you will vote for in an election?