The Article 50 notification explained in sticky notes

Now Article 50 has been invoked, the UK has two years to reach an agreement with the EU. With the help of sticky notes, Joelle Grogan explains what happens next.

The UK Prime Minister sent a Letter officially notifying the European Council of the UK’s intention to leave the EU under Article 50 Treaty on European Union (TEU).

The European Council (the heads of government of the EU Member States, but now without the UK Prime Minister) will draw up a Negotiation Mandate (or guidelines for what has to be negotiated).

In a Summit (a meeting of all the heads of government), the UK and the EU will agree an outline of how the Brexit negotiations will work.

Negotiations for the withdrawal of the UK from the EU will cover the ‘exit’ issues of rights of EU and UK residents, Gibraltar, the Northern Irish Border, and the financial settlement.
The **Financial Settlement** will cover any debts owed by the UK to the EU, or any money it has previously agreed to pay to the EU budget.

During the negotiations, a **Transition Arrangement** covering a large number of areas will be made for after Brexit.

The future relationship between the UK and EU will be separately negotiated.

Article 50 negotiations end with a draft Withdrawal Agreement. To be "ratified" or become law, the Agreement will need a qualified* majority of the European Council, and a simple majority of the European Parliament to vote in favour of it.

It is unclear whether the UK Parliament will also vote on it.

*(An EU qualified majority means at least 72% of the remaining 27 Member States, which represent 65% of the EU's population)

If the Withdrawal Agreement includes areas over which the EU shares responsibility with Member States, then all of the EU-27 (the EU Member States without the UK) must give their approval to the Agreement before it can be ratified.

Under Article 50 TEU, negotiations must be finished within 2 years. The UK will continue to be an EU Member, and EU law will continue to have effect until then.

If a longer period is needed to negotiate, then each of the EU-27 must agree to extend the deadline.
If there is no agreement after 2 years, and no extension, then the UK will no longer be an EU Member, and EU law will cease to have effect in the UK.

This would create significant confusion, as it is unclear what law would then apply, and the barriers that UK citizens and businesses may then face.