

**Lesson:** Who can influence the making of an Act of Parliament?

**Year group:** Year 10/11

**Resources:**

- PowerPoint - downloadable from [www.teachitcitizenship.co.uk](http://www.teachitcitizenship.co.uk)
- Resource 1 - The trio that makes UK laws
- Resource 2 - Bills, bills, bills: card sort
- Resource 3 - Legislation process: what stage am I?
- Resource 4 - Is the legislation process democratic?
- Prize for the winning team

**Objectives:**

- Describe the three main bodies in charge of making legislation.
- Explain what a bill is.
- Explain the seven stages of making a statute and compare a private bill with a public bill.

**National curriculum** -----

Key concepts: 1.1d; 1.3c  
Key processes: 2.1a; 2.2b  
Range and content: c; e  
Curriculum opportunities: b; c

**Lesson overview** -----

Students will gain an understanding and knowledge of how a legal bill passes through the different stages of the UK legislation process to become an Act of Parliament.

**Definition/ concepts** -----

- A **bill** is a proposed law; it is under consideration by the legislature.
- The **legislature** consists of the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The Queen also falls under this arm of the state. This is the trio for passing laws in the UK.
- **Parliament** consists the House of Lords and the House of Commons
- An **Act of Parliament**, also known as a **statute** or **primary legislation**, is a bill which has been approved by the Queen (by **Royal Assent**).

**Starter** -----

- In pairs, students discuss the following questions (see **slide 1 of the PowerPoint**):  
1. **What is a law?**

**Suggested answer:** laws are like rules; students might develop this and say that a law is a set of rules which govern the behaviour of a person/citizen.

2. Give some examples of rules which apply in various everyday situations.

**Suggested answers:** football rules, class rules, house rules, computer games and their restrictions ...

3. Why do we have laws?

**Suggested answer:** to maintain order and peace; to protect us from harm, abuse or injury; to enforce our rights as humans and as citizens of our country.

4. What do you think would happen if we did not have any laws in the UK?

**Suggested answer:** there would be chaos; people would do what they want, when they want - criminal and civil offences would increase dramatically; democracy would no longer exist.

- Students work in pairs to write a definition for the word 'law', and then compare it with the next pair's definition. As a class they decide what elements of the definitions are the most important and write an improved definition. They can then compare with the following dictionary definition (see **slide 2 of the PowerPoint**):

**Dictionary definition:** a rule, usually made by a government, that is used to order the way in which a society behaves.

Cambridge Dictionaries Online: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/> accessed 26/02/13

## Main activities

### Activity 1 The trio which makes UK laws

- Show students **slide 3 of the PowerPoint** and ask them to select which three main bodies they believe make laws in the UK. When the students feed back, ask them to explain their choices.
- Give out the information sheet entitled 'The trio which makes UK laws' and get students to complete the descriptions with the names of the correct bodies.

**Answers:**

1. the House of Commons
  2. the House of Lords
  3. the Queen.
- Ask students to write a short definition explaining what the three bodies are and how they work together to make a law.

**Suggested answer (see slide 3 of the PowerPoint):** Laws are made by the legislature, which is the House of Commons and the House of Lords. All new laws have to be approved by the Queen.

### Activity 2 Bills, bills, bills: card sort

- Ask students, 'What is a bill?' and display some recent examples (see slide 4 of the PowerPoint).

## Legislation: the law-making process

The official Parliament website <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/> shows bills which are currently before Parliament.

- Students write a sentence on what a bill is. This will be reviewed in the final stage of the activity.

**Suggested answer** (see slide 4 of the PowerPoint): A bill is a proposal for a new law which is being discussed by the legislature.

- Explain that there are different types of legal bill and that this exercise explores the differences.
- Assign students the number 1 or 2 and pair up the 1s with the 2s, sitting back to back. Give the 1s the description of a bill and give the 2s the images.
- The 2s describe what they can see and the 1s choose which description best fits each picture, without telling their partner what they have chosen.
- The 1s then read the description one by one to their partner, who decides whether s/he has put the pictures in the correct order.

**Suggested answer:**

Private bills: b (a private house with 'Keep out' and 'No entry' signs)

Public bills: a (a road and park)

Private members' bills: d (a pub, but with drinks affecting individuals)

Hybrid bills: c (a 'Liger' - a mixture/hybrid of a lion and a tiger)

- Together, the pair then review their definition of what a bill is and improve on it. They should include how many types there are, the names of the different types with a brief description of each one and a sentence to sum up what a bill is.

**Suggested answer** (see slide 5 of the PowerPoint): A bill is a proposal for a new law which is being discussed by the legislature. There are four different types of bill: private bills, public bills, (private) members' bills and hybrid bills. Private bills only affect a specific area or group of people; public bills affect the whole country and are introduced by the government; members' bills are introduced by a specific group in the House of Commons; hybrid bills are public bills which affect a particular person or organisation.

### Activity 3 Legislation process: what stage am I?

- Split the class into small groups (three or four).
- Give one student in each group a sticky note to write a team name and stick it on the board.
- Give each group a pack of the stages. Ask the groups to try to order the titles first and then to match the descriptions to the titles. If you have internet access in class, they can check their answers on the Parliament website:

<http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/laws/passage-bill/>

The fastest team to sort the cards correctly and have the order approved by you wins a point.

**Answer:**

Green Paper: h

White Paper: i

## Legislation: the law-making process

First Reading: c

Second Reading: e

Committee Stage: a

Report Stage: d

Third Reading: b

Ping Pong: f (then c, e, a, d, b again, in the House of Lords)

Royal Assent: g

- Hand out or display the quiz questions (see **slide 6 of the PowerPoint**). Alternatively, a stronger class could write their own quiz questions in teams and then swap questions with another team.
- The teams win a point for each question they answer correctly and the team with the most correctly answered questions wins an extra point.
- A team prize for the overall winners can be awarded at the end of the lesson.

### Activity 4: Is the legislation process democratic (= fair)?

- Hand out **Resource 4: Is the legislation process democratic (= fair)?**
- In pairs, students discuss whether each key area is democratic or not and why.
- Elicit answers and encourage discussion. Fill in the matrix on the whiteboard (**slide 7 of the PowerPoint**) with students' ideas.

### Plenary

- Label two boxes, envelopes or tables, one with 'I understand this' and the other with 'I need more work on this'.
- Give each student four slips of blank paper and ask them to jot down one point from the lesson on each slip. They should write some things that they have understood and some that they would like to know more about or do more work on, but they do not have to write something on all four pieces of paper.
- You can then take in the two sets of slips and use them to plan future work on this topic.

Resource 1 - The trio that makes UK laws

Complete the three boxes below with the names of the correct law-making bodies.

Parliament consists of the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Parliament is known as the **legislature** and the supreme law-making body is the House of Commons. Royal Assent must be given before a law can be passed.

.....  
This body is elected by the public using the First Past the Post electoral system. It consists of the government (or **the executive**), **the opposition** and other political parties.

.....  
The members of this body are not elected; they are appointed by the Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister.

.....  
Under the Royal Assent Act of 1967, the monarch needs to approve a bill before it can become an Act of Parliament.

Resource 2 - Bills, bills, bills: card sort

**Private bills**

This type of bill applies to a particular individual, group or company. It only affects a particular area or group in a community.

Example: London Local Authorities Bill (passed 2012)

**Public bills**

These bills affect the whole country and are proposed by the government.

Example: Academies Bill (passed 2010)

**Private members' bills**

Private members' bills (or **Members' bills**) are introduced by MPs or Lords who are not government ministers.

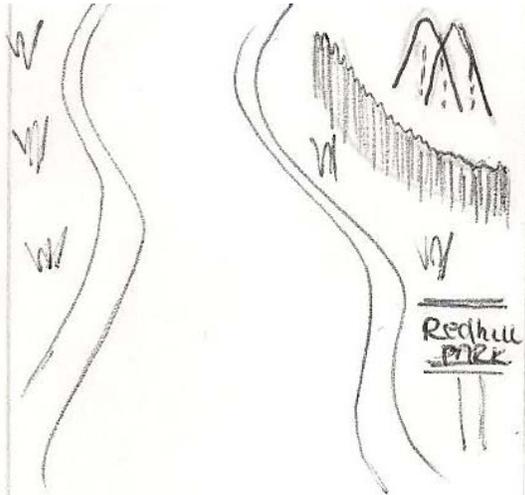
Example: Abortion Bill (passed 1967)

**Hybrid bills**

These affect the general public and the private interests of a particular person or organisation.

Example: Dog Control Bill (brought 2011; not passed)

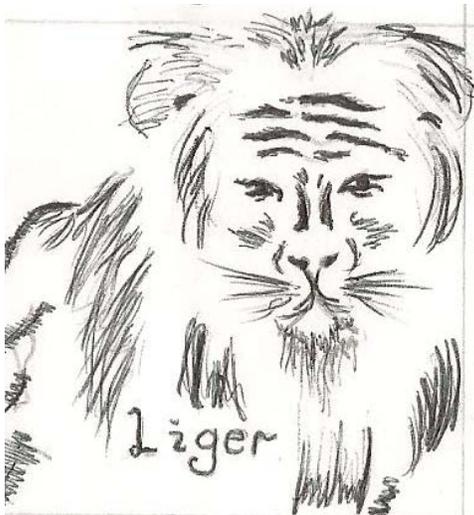
a.



b.



c.



d.



Resource 3 - Legislation process: what stage am I? -----

Second Reading	First Reading	Third Reading
Report Stage	Committee Stage	Green Paper
White Paper	Ping Pong	Royal Assent
<p>a.</p> <p>The bill is now examined by the standing committee, which usually consists of 16 to 30 Members of Parliament.</p>	<p>b.</p> <p>This is the final reading of the bill. There may be a short debate and a vote on any final changes to be made. The bill is then said to have 'passed through the house'.</p>	<p>c.</p> <p>The title of the bill is read out by a member of Parliament who is sponsoring it. There is no debate at this stage. After this, the bill is published as a House of Commons paper.</p>
<p>d.</p> <p>The standing committee then reports back to the House of Commons with any changes and a vote is taken.</p>	<p>e.</p> <p>This is usually the most decisive stage of the bill. The whole house debates on the bill. If there is a <b>division</b> (= a difference of opinions), a vote is called; Members of Parliament walk through a door entitled <i>aye</i> (= yes) or a door entitled <i>no</i>.</p>	<p>f.</p> <p>Once the bill has passed through the House of Commons, it is sent to the other chamber (the House of Lords) where the same process, from the first reading to the third reading, is applied.</p>
<p>g.</p> <p>Once the bill has been accepted by both houses, the Queen gives approval. The Bill then becomes an Act of Parliament.</p>	<p>h.</p> <p>This is an initial document to stimulate discussion among the key people affected by the bill. It contains a general proposal for reform and is issued by the government.</p>	<p>i.</p> <p>This document is a more detailed proposal, produced after the initial consultation.</p>

Resource 4 - 'Is the legislation process democratic (= fair)?'

	The Queen	The House of Lords	The House of Commons	The different readings of the bill	The whole law-making process
democratic					
not democratic					