

General Election Assembly

Teacher notes



Background

There will be a General Election on Thursday July 4th 2024.

Use these notes to support delivery of the attached General Election Assembly slide pack. Use the suggested prompt questions to get your students talking.

Slide 2:

The House of Commons

The House of Commons is the part of Parliament we are probably most familiar with as we are used to seeing its green benches on the news.

It is the **democratically elected** part of Parliament which means that we, the British public, are responsible for choosing who works in it.

Prompt: What does democracy mean?

It means 'rule by the people'. In the UK we have a representative democracy, where the people vote for one individual to represent us in Parliament.

Slide 3:

Constituencies

There are 650 constituencies across the UK, so 650 MPs are elected. Constituencies vary in physical size, but each contains around 70-75,000 voters.

MPs represent everyone in their constituency – whether you voted for them or not, or if you aren't eligible to vote yet, they are your representative in Parliament.

Prompt: What does it mean to represent people? What do you think an MP's roles are?

MPs work at UK Parliament in London for some of each week and in their constituencies for the rest. MPs hold 'surgeries' where their constituents can speak to them in person about issues that matter to them. MPs can be contacted by telephone and email too. While helping to make laws and question the government at Parliament, they also work for their constituents.

Slide 4:

Manifestos

Most MPs belong to political parties. The party with the most MPs elected in the House of Commons forms the government. The government is separate from Parliament and runs government departments and decides how to spend public money. One of Parliament's roles is to check and challenge the work of the government.

Prompt: Do students recognise these political party logos?

Slide 5:

Campaigning

People who want to become MPs (candidates) try to persuade members of the public to vote for them.

Prompt: How might candidates campaign for votes?

Slide 6:

Preparing to vote

Any British citizen over the age of 18 can vote (so long as they're not in prison or a member of the House of Lords). You have to register to be on the **electoral roll** which you can do from age 16, and you need to take photo ID to the polling station.

If you won't be able to get to your polling station on election day, you can register for a postal vote or proxy vote instead (where someone you trust can vote on your behalf).

Slides 7 & 8:

Voting

Everyone has a local polling station near their home where they can cast their vote.

Prompt: Do you know where polling stations local to your school are?

Slides 9 & 10:

First Past the Post

Other voting systems sometimes involve voters indicating more than one preference or ranking candidates; rounds of voting where candidates are eliminated; or choosing a group of candidates in proportion to how many votes each party received.

Prompt: What are the pros and cons of First Past the Post voting?

First Past the Post is a simple process for voters. It often leads to two main parties being represented.

Slide 11

MPs

In the House of Commons, MPs are responsible for:

- Representing their constituents
- Debating new laws or changes to existing laws, and the big issues of the day
- Checking and challenging (scrutinising) the government

Slides 12, 13 & 14

The government

The largest party in the House of Commons forms the government. The leader of this party becomes the Prime Minister, and they choose other MPs (or members of the House of Lords) to lead each government department. These are called ministers.

Ministers go to Parliament regularly to answer questions about their government departments' work from other MPs. There are committees at Parliament, called select committees, which follow the work of each government department.

Some issues, such as education or transport, are devolved to national parliaments and assemblies in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Slide 15:

Marginal seats

In the 2017 election, some constituencies had very slim margins between the top two candidates.

You can find out more about the results of the most recent election in 2019 [here](#).
