

# Who is in the House of Lords? Teachers' Pack

## This pack contains:

1. 'Who is in the House of Lords?' – Key topics and questions
2. 'Nominate a Peer' activity – Instructions and worksheets
3. 'What do people know about members of the House of Lords?' – Instructions and debate cards
4. Background information:
  - Who is in the House?
  - How do you become a member?



# Who is in the House of Lords?

 30 minutes

## Animation

Explore who sits in the House of Lords, the routes into the House, and the pros and cons of an appointed House.

### Step 1

Gauge your students' prior knowledge and understanding by asking a few key questions:

- What do you think of when you hear the word 'Lord'?
- Who do you think sits in the House of Lords and how do they get there?
- What qualities might a member of the House of Lords have?
- The House of Lords is appointed, not elected. What does this mean?

### Step 2

Watch the 'Who is in the House of Lords?' animation, which introduces the House of Lords with a focus on who sits in the House and their routes in, as well as how this process has changed over time:

[youtu.be/urwQuL4pQmg](https://youtu.be/urwQuL4pQmg)

### Step 3

Encourage your students to share their thoughts on the film:

- Did the make-up of the House match your expectations?
- Did anything surprise you about the various routes into the House?
- Did you agree or disagree with the pros and cons of an appointed House?
- What do you think of now when you hear the word 'Lord'?

### Optional extension activities

- Run the 'Nominate a Peer' activity (full instructions and worksheets below) to give students the opportunity to consider who they might nominate for the role this will also support the class to explore the challenges and opportunities faced by the panel when considering nominations
- Alternatively, go straight to the 'What do people know about members of the House of Lords' video to spark further debate about the membership of the House of Lords and use the debate cards in this pack to get your class talking: [youtu.be/qF-ZfxqhG7Q](https://youtu.be/qF-ZfxqhG7Q)

# Nominate a peer

 60 minutes

This activity will help your students look in more detail at how members of the House of Lords, also known as 'peers', are appointed to the House of Lords. They will also consider how people's interests and concerns are represented in the House.

More information on the current make-up of the House is included in the Background Information in this pack.

## Learning aims:

- To introduce the practice of nomination and appointment in the House of Lords
- To appraise the benefits and challenges of having an appointed House
- To work effectively in a group
- To use presentation skills to present ideas to the class

## Learning outcomes

### Must (all)

- Understand how peers are nominated and appointed into the House of Lords
- Understand the difference Between appointment and election
- Work in groups to nominate a new peer

### Should (most)

- Have expressed their own opinions to others through discussion and debate

### Could (some)

- Have empathised with other people's points of view

## Classroom instructions

### Step one

Discuss as a group how peers are appointed to the House, referring to the 'Who is in the House of Lords' video if necessary.

Consider the different types of peerages available – political peers, life peers, hereditary peers, bishops and archbishops:

- What does each type of peerage bring to the House?
- Are there any trade-offs or downsides to each type?

### Step two

In small groups, ask your students to discuss the peers introduced in the Background Information at the back of this Pack.

They should make a short list of attributes of each peer and pick out those which generate a positive impact to the House and to society as a whole.

Alternatively, have your students research members' experience and background independently at [members.parliament.uk/members/lords](https://members.parliament.uk/members/lords).

### Step three

Reflecting on what they've learned, ask each group to choose someone they would like to nominate as a life peer from their school, community or public life.

Use these questions to challenge thinking:

- what would this person bring to the House of Lords?
- what is their key area of experience or knowledge that they are known for?
- would you trust them to make or check laws?
- what are their key attributes?
- what could be problematic?

### Step Four

Distribute the 'Nominate a peer' worksheet and the criteria the House of Lords Appointments Commission applies when considering nominees, found in the Background Information at the end of this Pack.

Make sure they consider the criteria to ensure their nomination has a good chance of being considered.

### Step Five

Ask each group to present their nomination to the class. Take a general vote to see who proved the most popular choice.

If you have time, discuss why some were felt more suitable – was it because of their experience, skills, background or some other reason?

### Nominate a peer – Statement of Support

Create a statement of support for your chosen person, outlining why they would make a good peer and make an effective contribution to the work of the House of Lords. The criteria on the next page will help.

Support your nomination by including a key major achievement of the nominee and ensure that you highlight their relevant skills and experience.

We, the undersigned, choose to nominate \_\_\_\_\_  
to become a new member of the House of Lords.

Signed:

# HOUSE OF LORDS APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION

## Selection criteria

The House of Lords Appointments Commission seeks to recommend people who have:

- the ability to make an **effective and significant contribution** to the work of the House of Lords;
- a record of **significant achievement** within their chosen way of life;
- the willingness to **commit the time necessary** to make an effective contribution to the work of the House of Lords;
- some understanding of the **constitutional framework**, including the place of the House of Lords, and the skills and qualities needed to be an effective member of the House;
- demonstrate **outstanding personal qualities**, in particular, integrity and independence;
- a strong and personal commitment to the principles and **highest standards of public life**;
- **independence from any political party**; and
- **residency in the UK** for tax purposes.

## Step One

Watch 'What do people know about members of the House of Lords?' (approx. 2 mins) to hear the opinions of the public on the 'Who' of the House of Lords and inspire discussion and debate in the classroom.

But watch out! While much of what the public says is factually correct, some common misconceptions are stated – can your students spot them?

## Step Two

Pose the key questions on the next page to your class to inspire debate. Use the information below, which includes the correct answers, to direct the discussion. You can run this activity as a class or divide into pairs or small groups.

Debate cards can be shared out so that each group explores a different point and can then present their opinions back to the class for further discussion.

### 1. What kind of person becomes a Peer?

The answer: This is a subjective question and one you can consider in debate. See the debate cards on the following pages.

There is no requirement that any nominated or appointed peer must have studied law or have experience of law-making to become a member of the House of Lords. Peers who have previously been a member of the House of Commons will have had experience of law-making as part of their job as an MP.

Stretching questions:

- What qualities are important for people who make and shape laws?
- What might you contact a Peer about? You can find various ways to contact them at:  
[parliament.uk/business/lords/whos-who-in-the-house-of-lords/get-in-touch-with-a-member](https://parliament.uk/business/lords/whos-who-in-the-house-of-lords/get-in-touch-with-a-member)

### 2. What backgrounds do peers come from?

The answer: Peers come from all walks of life and experiences. Look at some of the biographies on the House of Lords website to consider some current members, and discuss the kinds of people you think they are:  
[parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/lords](https://parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/lords).

You can also find out more about members of the House of Lords by following their activity on social media at: [lordsdigitalchamber.co.uk](https://lordsdigitalchamber.co.uk).

Stretching questions:

- Is it important to have peers from a range of backgrounds?
- How might the House of Lords raise the number of female members?

### 3. How do you become a peer?

The answer: Peers are appointed rather than elected. Two events changed the way members of the House of Lords are appointed. These were:

- the House of Lords Act 1999, which ended hereditary peers' right to pass membership down through family; and
- the introduction of the House of Lords Appointments Commission.

There are now a number of routes to becoming a member and all are outlined in the Background Information.

Stretching questions:

- What are the pros and cons of having an appointed House?
- How might an election for membership of the House of Lords work in practice? Consider possible constituency links (peers are not currently linked to constituencies), costs, political affiliations etc.

<p>What kind of person is a peer?</p>	<p>What qualities are important for people who make and shape laws?</p>	<p>What might you contact a peer about?</p>
<p>What background do peers come from?</p>	<p>Is it important to have peers from a range of backgrounds?</p>	<p>How might the House of Lords raise the number of female members?</p>
<p>How do you become a peer?</p>	<p>What are the pros and cons of having an appointed House?</p>	<p>How might an election for membership of the House of Lords work in practice?</p>

# Background information

## Who's in the House?

The Lords currently has around 800 active members, commonly called 'peers', who can take part and vote in any business of the House (an overview is included below or you can find the most up-to-date information online).

There are three different types of peers: life peers, bishops and elected hereditary peers. Unlike MPs, the public do not elect the Lords. The majority are appointed by the Monarch on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, or by the House of Lords Appointments Commission.

## The three main groups

### Life Peers

Around 700 members are appointed for their lifetime by the Queen. Their titles are not passed on to their children. Any British, Irish or Commonwealth citizen who is a UK resident and taxpayer over the age of 21 is eligible to be nominated or can apply to become a member, through the independent House of Lords Appointments Commission.

### Elected Hereditary Peers

The House of Lords Act 1999 ended the right of most hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House. 92 remain having been chosen by the House itself.

### Archbishops and Bishops

26 Church of England archbishops and bishops sit in the House. When they retire their membership of the House ends and is passed on to the next most senior bishop.

### Lords by party/group and type of peerage

Party	Life Peers	Elected Hereditary Peers	Bishops & Archbishops	Total
Conservative	188	46		234
Labour	175	4		179
Liberal Democrat	91	3		94
Crossbench	152	31		183
Bishops			26	26
Other	53	7		60
<b>Total</b>	<b>659</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>776</b>

### Lords by party/group and type of peerage

Party	Men	Women	Total
Conservative	172	62	234
Labour	123	56	179
Liberal Democrat	61	33	94
Crossbench	139	44	183
Bishops	21	5	26
Other	52	8	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>568</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>776</b>

# Background information

## How do you become a member?

Members of the House of Lords are appointed by the monarch on the advice of the Prime Minister.

## Role of the House of Lords Appointments Commission

The House of Lords Appointments Commission is an independent body established in 2000. The Commission is made up of seven people, including four members of the Lords and three non-political members who are independent of the government.

The Commission recommends individuals for appointment as non-party-political life peers. It also vets nominations for life peers, including those nominated by the UK political parties, to ensure the highest standards of propriety. Members can be nominated by the public and political parties. Once approved by the prime minister, appointments are formalised by the monarch.

## How a member is appointed

It normally takes several weeks from the time a potential new member is announced, by the government or the House of Lords Appointments Commission, to their actual appointment.

Before anyone becomes a member, a title has to be agreed and the Letters Patent and writ of Summons documents must be prepared.

Letters Patent are issued by the monarch and create a life peerage. Recipients become members when Letters Patent are sealed. They can then be written to at the House of Lords, using their new title of Lord or Baroness. They cannot sit or vote until their 'introduction'.

The writ of Summons calls the member to the House and acts as their 'entry ticket'. A new writ is issued for every member at the beginning of each Parliament (after a general election). A writ accompanies the Letters Patent for a new member.

## Becoming a member of the Lords

An introduction, a short ceremony lasting about five minutes, takes place at the beginning of business. There are normally no more than two introductions a day in the Lords. Each new member has two supporters (sometimes from their party or group).

An oath of allegiance must be taken by all members before they can sit and vote in the House. Members take the oath on introduction, in every new Parliament and on the death of a monarch.

The first speech of a newly introduced member is called their maiden speech. This takes place during a debate and is marked with respect by the House. The following speaker will congratulate and welcome the new member. Maiden speeches are short and non-controversial.

Find out more about the appointment process at:

[parliament.uk/business/lords/whos-in-the-house-of-lords](https://parliament.uk/business/lords/whos-in-the-house-of-lords).

# Background information

Meet some members of the House of Lords

## Lord Alli



Party/group: Labour

Subjects of interest: Human rights, young people, media

Current and past jobs:

- Chief Executive of TV company Silvergate Media
- Chair of online fashion retailer ASOS
- President of the National Youth Theatre.

## Lord Paddick



Party/group: Liberal Democrats

Subjects of interest: Crime, justice, law, housing

Current and past jobs:

- Candidate for London Mayor
- Deputy Assistant Commissioner for the Metropolitan Police
- Deputy High Court judge

## Baroness Grey-Thompson



Party/group: Crossbench

Subjects of interest: Sport, culture and the arts

Current and past jobs:

- Board member of the BBC
- Chair of UKactive, a charity promoting active lifestyles
- Paralympic athlete

## Baroness Warsi



Party/group: Conservative

Subjects of interest: Asylum, immigration, communities, faith

Current and past jobs:

- Shadow government minister for community cohesion
- Solicitor
- Assistant to John Whitfield MP