

Teaching notes

Year group	Year 10
Key concepts	l.l.a.; l.l.d.
Range and content	c.; e.
Curriculum opportunities	b.

Outcomes

Students understand the difference between Parliament, Government and the Cabinet.
 Students are aware of the stages involved in passing a new law.
 Students extend their knowledge about current cabinet members and their recent actions.

Resources

You will need:

- a copy of the worksheet on pp.3-5 below for each student
- (optional) the PowerPoint downloadable from www.citizenshipteacher.co.uk
- internet access before the lesson to check for the latest information
- (optional) internet access in class for interactive versions of activities 3 and 6, available on www.citizenshipteacher.co.uk.

Starter

Show students the picture on the first slide of the PowerPoint and ask them:
 ‘What does this picture show? What role does this place play in how the UK is run?’

Suggested answer: the Houses of Parliament or the Palace of Westminster in London. The House of Commons and the House of Lords are found there and it is where new laws are debated and passed. The clock on the right is known as Big Ben, though technically this is the name of the bell, not the clock or the tower.

Activity 1: Parliament or Government?

Show students the information on the second slide of the PowerPoint or on the worksheet below. Ask them to explain the difference in their own words. Make sure they are able to rephrase key terms such as ‘scrutinise’, ‘approve’, ‘amending’ and ‘abolishing’.

Activity 2: The Cabinet

Show students slide 3 of the PowerPoint. This list was correct on 29 January 2013. An up-to-date list of cabinet members can be found from the following sites:

- www.parliament.uk: Her Majesty’s Government, MPs, Lords and offices, Government & Opposition, Her Majesty’s Government
www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/government-and-opposition/her-majestys-government/
- www.number10.gov.uk: The Coalition, The Cabinet
www.number10.gov.uk/the-coalition/the-cabinet/

Encourage students to update the table throughout the course as their knowledge increases and the information changes.

Activity 3: Parliament, Government and the Cabinet in more detail

Give students the gap-fill activity from p.4 below.

You can check the exact number of MPs in the current parliament via www.parliament.uk, About Parliament, FAQs: www.parliament.uk/about/faqs/.

Answers:

The House of (1) **Commons** is made up of approximately (2) **650** Members of Parliament, also known as (3) **MPs**. Members are elected by the people in a (4) **General Election**. The political party which wins the most 'seats' (has the largest number of MPs) forms the (5) **Government**. The Leader of the winning party is asked by the (6) **Queen** to form a government; the Leader becomes (7) **Prime Minister** and appoints the (8) **Cabinet**; the Cabinet is made up of the Secretaries of State, who are the people appointed to run the (9) **Departments of State**.

You could use the interactive Clozer whizzy on www.citizenshipteacher.co.uk for plenary feedback or for a review in a future lesson.

Activity 4: How a law is passed

Ask students to read the information on p.5 below. You may need to explain some of the key terms in bold, such as 'draft', 'implemented' and 'come into force'.

Students could work in pairs to draw their flow diagram summarising the information.

A good example of a flow diagram can be found on www.parliament.uk: About Parliament, How Parliament Works, Passage of a Bill: www.parliament.uk/about/how/laws/passage-bill/.

Activity 5: A Constitutional Monarchy

From the information that the UK is run by both a government and a king or queen, students may be able to work out what 'constitutional monarchy' means.

Suggested answer (see slide 4 of the PowerPoint):

A constitutional monarchy is a form of government in which a king or queen is the **Head of State** (the official head of the country), but an elected government has most of the real power.

Students won't be able to work this out from the lesson, but it could also be worth pointing out:

The **constitution** is the set of rules limiting the monarch's power. In the UK, these rules are based on unwritten convention rather than a written document, but they are **binding** (have legal force) nonetheless.

Activity 6: Sorting summary

As a follow-up plenary or starter the next lesson, students could do the interactive task on www.citizenshipteacher.co.uk, sorting the information into the correct parts of the Venn diagram.

Suggested answers:

Parliament	Government	Government and Cabinet	Cabinet
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• elected by the people• approves/rejects Bills• Westminster• Lords + Commons• about 650 MPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• currently around 140 MPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• chosen by the PM• 10 Downing Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• about 20 MPs• the most important committee

Worksheet

Activity 1: Parliament or Government?

Read the definitions of Parliament and Government. Explain the difference between them in your own words.

Parliament

Parliament is the name given to the **House of Lords** and the **House of Commons**, both of which are large **chambers** in the **Palace of Westminster**.

Members of Parliament come from different political parties and their role is to **represent** the people and to **scrutinise** the work of the Government. Both houses must **approve** a new law before it can be **passed**.

Government

Government is the name given to a smaller group of politicians from the party with a **majority** in the **general election**.

Typically just one party has the majority, but at the moment we have a **coalition government** of Conservatives and Liberal Democrats.

The Government is responsible for **amending laws**, making new ones and **abolishing** old ones; they **set the rate of taxes**, plan the **budget** and pursue the **policies** they talked about during their **election campaign**.

Activity 2: The Cabinet

The most important **committee** in government is called the Cabinet. The prime minister selects its members and chairs their meetings.

Look at the list of Cabinet members that your teacher will give you.

Copy the table below and see how much of it you can complete.

Cabinet member I have heard of	Current job title	Recent news stories involving this person

As the course progresses, keep coming back to this table and see if you can add more details.

Activity 3: Parliament, Government and the Cabinet in more detail

The paragraph below has some key terms missing. Can you guess any of them?

The House of (1) is made up of approximately
 (2) Members of Parliament, also known as
 (3) Members are elected by the people in a
 (4) The political party which wins the most 'seats' (has the
 largest number of MPs) forms the (5)
 The Leader of the winning party is asked by the (6) to form a
 government; the Leader becomes (7) and appoints
 the (8) ; the Cabinet is made up of the Secretaries of State, who are
 the people appointed to run the (9)

Now fill in the gaps with the words from the box.

Prime Minister	650	Departments of State	General Election
Government	Queen	Commons	Cabinet
			MPs

Activity 4: How a law is passed

On the next page, there is a description of how laws are made.

Your task is to draw a flow diagram to summarise the text.

- You should use as much subject specific terminology as you can.
- It will take you several attempts to get the 'flow' in the right order; the challenge is to get all the information into the right place and all on one side of a piece of paper.
- It may help you to add drawings of what is happening at each stage of the flow diagram.

Why do you think there are so many stages to making a new law?

Activity 5: A constitutional monarchy

The United Kingdom is a **constitutional monarchy**.

In pairs, think about what you know about how the country is run and try to write a definition of 'constitutional monarchy'.

NB A 'monarch' is a king or queen.

How a law is passed

The Cabinet decides on the priorities for making new laws. A minister and his/her employees put together a **draft** of the new law, known as a **Bill**.

The Bill is taken to the **House of Commons**, where it gets a **first reading**. There is no discussion of the Bill at this point – it is for information only and this is the first time members of the **Opposition** (MPs who are not part of the Government) will have heard it. It will also be recorded by journalists who may report on the Bill's progress.

The next time the Bill is brought to the House of Commons is known as the **second reading**, after which there is a general debate. There is no time limit for this debate. All MPs can contribute suggestions, ask questions and raise objections in order to represent the views of their **constituents** (the people who voted for them to represent their local area).

After the second reading, the Bill continues to the **committee stage**. The **Public Bill Committee** is normally made up of 18 to 25 politicians whose job it is to go through each part, or **clause**, of the Bill in very fine detail. They can recommend changes and call on expert advice to assist them with their suggestions.

The **third reading** is the final debate in the House of Commons where the Committee present their thoughts and recommendations for the House to hear.

The Bill then goes to the **House of Lords**. The process here follows a very similar pattern to the readings in the Commons, except that the committee stage takes place in the House of Lords and all Lords are able to make suggestions and recommendations. If there are no changes, then the Bill moves to the next stage, but if the Lords do make recommendations, the Bill has to go back to the Commons. If the Commons want to, they can make changes based on the Lords' recommendations, or they can send the Bill straight back to the Lords. The Lords can delay a Bill but they cannot stop it.

The final stage is **Royal Assent**. The Queen gives her agreement and the Bill becomes Law. This is just a ceremonial stage – in practice, the Queen does not stop a Bill becoming Law. The Queen has a weekly meeting with the Prime Minister, so would already know what the Bill is and would have expressed her opinions as part of that process.

Once it receives Royal Assent, the law can be **implemented** immediately, or a date can be set when the law will **come into force**.

