

Parliament Topic Sheet

Topic	Content	Understood?		
		Red	Amber	Green
Structure of Parliament	How Parliament is structured and what powers the different institutions have. * House of Commons Composition * House of Commons Powers * House of Lords Composition * House of Lords Powers * Do not mention the monarch *			
Functions of Parliament	The different purposes that Parliament has and how effective it is at carrying out its roles. * Legislation * Representation * Scrutiny and Oversight * Recruitment and Training of Ministers * Legitimacy *			
How representative is Parliament?	Whether Parliament effectively reflects the population of the United Kingdom. You should also think about whether this should be changed. * Social Class * Gender * Ethnicity * Age * Education * Sexual Orientation * Employment *			
How well does Parliament scrutinise the Government?	Whether Parliament is able to effectively hold the Government to account. Bear in mind the reforms of Parliament that have been proposed/introduced. * Prime Minister's Questions * Ministers Questions * Select Committees * Debates and Ministerial Statements * Opposition * Written Questions and Letters *			
The Legislative Process	The different stages a bill must go through to become law. • The interaction between the Commons and the Lords during the legislative process, including the Salisbury Convention.			
The Powers of the House of Lords				
The Powers of the House of Commons				
Which is more powerful the Commons or the Lords?				

Key Questions:

Evaluate the view that Parliament is able to fulfil its functions.

Evaluate the view that the House of Lords is now more effective than the House of Commons.

Evaluate the view that backbench MP's are able to carry out their duties effectively.

Evaluate the view Select Committees are the most effective form of scrutiny.

Key Vocabulary:

Parliament	This is the collective name for the Houses of Commons and Lords where our laws are made.
House of Commons	This is the only directly elected house and where MP's sit. This is the supreme law making body.
House of Lords	This is chiefly an appointed house with some hereditary peers remaining. Its role is to advise the Commons.
Confidence and Supply	The House of Commons is expected to be able to supply the government with its confidence through a majority. This could be done between two parties.
Salisbury Convention	This is the convention that the House of Lords will not challenge legislation that is in the governing Party's manifesto. This was not applied under the coalition.
Parliamentary Privilege	This is the idea that members of Parliament are free to say what they like without being prosecuted.
Legislative Bills	This is a bill that seeks to introduce a new law.
Public Bill Committees	This is a Parliamentary committee that look at a bill in detail in order to make any necessary amendments.
Backbenchers	These are members of Parliament who are no part of the government or shadow government.
Select Committees	These are Parliamentary Committees made up of 11 MP's that shadow a government department.
Opposition	These are MP's and Lords that are not part of the governing Party. The second largest Party in the Commons will be the Official Opposition.
Cross Bencher	This is a member of the House of Lords who does not belong to a particular political party.
Front Bencher	These are members of Parliament who are part of the government so sit on the front bench.
Shadow Government	This refers to the official opposition who are expected to form a government in waiting.