

2-8 NOV 19

#UKPW

# UK PARLIAMENT WEEK

NETWORK OF SIKH ORGANISATIONS EDITION

HAVE  
YOUR  
SAY



## Welcome to UK Parliament Week!

Whether you're planning a one-off event or a whole week of activities, this book is full of creative, adaptable ideas to help your group explore the work and role of the UK Parliament. From starting a conversation to debating the big issues, this is a great opportunity to ask questions, think critically and engage with the UK Parliament on issues that matter to you!

And with schools, museums, libraries, faith communities and youth organisations representing every constituency across the United Kingdom, you'll be part of a UK wide conversation about our democracy and our UK Parliament.

### Get social

Follow @YourUKParl on Twitter and share your activities using our hashtag #UKPW

### Give us your feedback

After your UK Parliament Week activities, please visit [smartsurvey.co.uk/s/UKPW19](https://smartsurvey.co.uk/s/UKPW19) to fill out our quick survey. Your feedback will help planning for future UK Parliament Weeks!

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# WHAT IS THE UK PARLIAMENT?

The UK Parliament is formed of two Houses. Together they combine the local perspectives of MPs in the House of Commons, with the experience and expertise of members of the House of Lords.



## What is the House of Commons?

Made up of 650 Members of Parliament (MPs), the House of Commons is the elected chamber of the UK Parliament. Each MP, elected by the public, serves a different local area (a constituency) in the UK. MPs split their time between working in the House of Commons and working in their constituency. They represent the views of their political party and their constituents (even those who didn't vote for them).

In the House of Commons, MPs from all parties debate, question and scrutinise the work of the Government.

Find out more about the House of Commons and the work of MPs at [www.parliament.uk/mps](http://www.parliament.uk/mps)

## What is the House of Lords?

Members of the House of Lords come from all walks of life. They have different social, political and professional backgrounds and bring their specialist knowledge and independent experience from their careers outside of Parliament.

Most members are appointed as Life Peers and while many do have a political background, others have worked as doctors, soldiers, scientists, writers, judges, lawyers and police officers.

Many members are also involved with charitable, voluntary and civil society organisations and a significant number of members, the crossbenchers, are non-party political.

Find out more about the House of Lords at [www.parliament.uk/lords](http://www.parliament.uk/lords)

## The main work of the UK Parliament is to...

- Make and shape laws (legislation)
- Check and challenge the work of Government (scrutiny)
- Debate the big issues that can affect us all (representation)



## What is the UK Government?

After a general election, the political party that wins the most seats in the House of Commons forms the Government. The leader of the winning party becomes the Prime Minister and chooses a team of MPs and members of the House of Lords to form the Government.

If no one party wins the election it is called a 'hung Parliament'. If this happens, two or more parties might agree to form a coalition government.

The Government is responsible for running the UK and deciding how taxes are spent. The role of the UK Parliament is to scrutinise the work of the Government through questions, debates and select committees.

## What does democracy mean?

The word democracy has its origins in two Greek terms – demos (people) and kratia (rule by) and translates as 'rule by the people'.

The UK is a **representative democracy**. This means that citizens choose representatives to make decisions on their behalf. Your representative is your local MP.

Although relatively rare in UK politics, we also have examples of **direct democracy**. This means citizens make decisions for themselves, rather than elected representatives making decisions on their behalf. An example of direct democracy is a referendum.

Find out more about the work and role of the UK Parliament at [www.parliament.uk/about](http://www.parliament.uk/about).

## What is Devolution?

The UK Parliament has 'devolved' or transferred some powers to the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly. The devolved legislatures have the power to make laws on issues such as education and health.





During any week in the UK Parliament, MPs and members of the House of Lords will scrutinise, question and debate a wide range of issues. Some debates focus on international issues and deal with topics that affect the whole world. Other debates will explore local topics and MPs will draw on the experiences of people living in the communities they represent.

### Activity: What matters to you?

The objective of this activity is not to take sides or try to convince someone of your way of thinking. It's an opportunity to discuss topics collaboratively and listen to different ideas.

You can choose to discuss one (or all) of the issues presented on the **discussion cards**. During the discussion try noting down ideas on a large sheet of paper which can then be shared with another group. Use the prompts on each card to help get discussions started and to support critical thinking around an issue.

#### Ask...

- Is the issue important to you? If so why?
- What change would you like to see?
- What do you think the UK Parliament should do about this issue?

### Take it further

Challenge your group to prioritise the issues they've discussed, ordering them from the most important to the least. There are no right or wrong answers here. Hopefully this exercise will prompt discussion about how difficult it can be to prioritise some issues over others.

Consider how MPs and members of the House of Lords debate, question and scrutinise the Government on multiple issues every week.

Look at [calendar.parliament.uk](http://calendar.parliament.uk) to explore all the different issues being raised in Parliament.

### Adapt the activity for your group

Use the blank cards to focus the discussion on issues that are relevant to the age or interest of your group.

**Go younger by...** focussing on local issues or topics related to school such as...

- Homework should be optional
- All schools should have a uniform
- Learning a musical instrument should be free but compulsory
- Testing shouldn't take place in primary schools

### Tackle the big issues like...

- Climate change
- Hate crime
- Equality of opportunity
- Fake news
- Green energy

### Did you know...

Before debates take place in the Chamber there are often 'digital discussions' on social media or meetings to gather opinions. These discussions enable MPs to hear many different points of view which helps to inform the debates.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Is this important to you? Why?<br/>What change do you want to see?</p> <hr/> <p><b>Reduce the voting age in UK general elections to 16</b></p> <hr/> <p>What do you want the UK Parliament to do?</p> | <p>Is this important to you? Why?<br/>What change do you want to see?</p> <hr/> <p><b>Tackle homelessness. Everyone should have a safe place to live</b></p> <hr/> <p>What do you want the UK Parliament to do?</p> |
| <p>Is this important to you? Why?<br/>What change do you want to see?</p> <hr/> <p><b>Improve mental health services</b></p> <hr/> <p>What do you want the UK Parliament to do?</p>                      | <p>Is this important to you? Why?<br/>What change do you want to see?</p> <hr/> <p><b>Put an end to knife crime</b></p> <hr/> <p>What do you want the UK Parliament to do?</p>                                      |
| <p>Is this important to you? Why?<br/>What change do you want to see?</p> <hr/> <p><b>Make public transport free for under 18s</b></p> <hr/> <p>What do you want the UK Parliament to do?</p>            | <p>Is this important to you? Why?<br/>What change do you want to see?</p> <hr/> <p><b>Reduce single-use plastics in food packaging</b></p> <hr/> <p>What do you want the UK Parliament to do?</p>                   |
| <p>Is this important to you? Why?<br/>What change do you want to see?</p> <hr/> <p>What do you want the UK Parliament to do?</p>   | <p>Is this important to you? Why?<br/>What change do you want to see?</p> <hr/> <p>What do you want the UK Parliament to do?</p>  |
| <p>Is this important to you? Why?<br/>What change do you want to see?</p> <hr/> <p>What do you want the UK Parliament to do?</p>   | <p>Is this important to you? Why?<br/>What change do you want to see?</p> <hr/> <p>What do you want the UK Parliament to do?</p>  |

# DEBATE

Debates in the House of Commons and the House of Lords are formal discussions on a specific topic or proposal. They enable different points of view to be voiced and some end with a vote to decide whether members are in favour of a proposal. You can watch parliamentary debates in person or on [parliamentlive.tv](https://www.parliamentlive.tv)

## Speak Out! Hold a debate for UK Parliament Week

Debating is a great way to share different and opposing opinions on an issue, without descending into an argument! And although your whole group may not end up agreeing, they will each have had the opportunity to form an opinion, share ideas and to listen to opposing points of view which could make them think differently about an issue.



## Activity: Four Corners Debate

- Label the four corners of the room; strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.
- Share a statement with the group and ask them to walk to the corner which best reflects their opinion.
- Once everyone has chosen a corner, give groups a few minutes to talk about the topic. Ask them to come up with the top two reasons why they chose that corner.
- Ask each corner to share their top reasons with the wider group. Repeat with another statement.

### Four Corners Ideas

- Animals should not be used for entertainment e.g. zoos
- All schools should be mixed (boys and girls)
- Workplaces should reward employees who walk or cycle to work
- Public transport should be free for anyone in full-time education

## Activity: Circle Debate

Split your group in two to form an inner and an outer circle. Everyone on the inside is paired with someone on the outside; they face each other. The inner circle argues in favour of the issue outlined in the question, while the outer circle argues against it.

Pose the first question to the whole group and give everyone a moment to form their ideas. Then begin the five-minute debate with pairs arguing for and against.

Now rotate the circles: the outside circle moves one space to the right, so they are standing (or sitting) in front of a new person and repeat the process with a new debate question.

## Circle Debate Ideas

- Should mobile phones be banned in schools?
- Should supermarkets only sell fruit and vegetables in biodegradable packaging?
- Should politics be a compulsory subject in schools?
- Should voting be mandatory?
- Should social media platforms alert users when they exceed daily time limits, depending on their age?



## Activity: Chamber style debate

Debates can help your group explore diverse viewpoints, investigate important issues and develop critical thinking skills.

### Get ready to debate

Before you hold your debate provide time for your group to explore the debate topic and gather information. Encourage your group to consider both sides of an argument. It will challenge them consider some of the different points of view that may be presented and find ways to refine, develop and defend their own points!

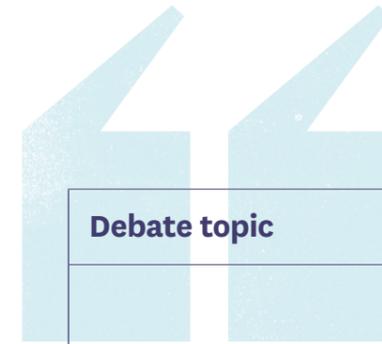
Use the debate planner to record reasons for and against the topic being debated. Include facts or evidence for each reason to build your argument.

### Take it further

Debates in the House of Commons and the House of Lords are livestreamed. Video your debate and use it to develop reporting skills by creating a news report.

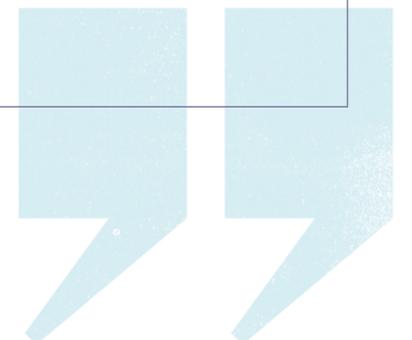
## Set up your debating Chamber

1. Arrange your space to replicate either the House of Commons or the House of Lords. Create a space for your Speaker or Lord Speaker. Make one side of the chamber the Government and the other the Opposition. (Remember in the House of Lords, crossbenchers sit across the Chamber).
2. The debate starts with the Speaker or the Lord Speaker asking the question to be debated.
3. Then a speaker for the government argues in favour of the idea.
4. Continue the debate with a speaker from the opposition arguing against the idea being debated.
5. Take turns to present different viewpoints moving from one side of the Chamber to the other.
6. Make sure speeches are short, to the point, and reflect points made by other speakers.
7. When everyone has had an opportunity to speak, draw the debate to a close.
8. The Speaker or Lord Speaker reminds the group of the question being debated asking 'All those in favour say Aye; all against say No' (content/ not content for the Lords).
9. If the vocal vote is clear, the Speaker will announce 'The Ayes have it, the Ayes have it' or 'The Noes have it, the Noes have it'.
10. If the vote sounds close, vote with your feet. Physically divide moving to one side of the room or the other to be counted as Aye or No votes.



|              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| Debate topic |                 |
| Reasons for  | Reasons against |
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| Debate topic |                 |
| Reasons for  | Reasons against |
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Voting is one of the simplest ways to participate in our democracy. It's how people across the UK decide who will represent their local area (a constituency) in the House of Commons.

### Activity: Hold an election

In the UK, a general election usually takes place every five years to elect MPs to the House of Commons.

Hold your own election on an issue relevant to your group. Use the UK Parliament Week Ballot Box and copy the ballot papers so everyone can cast their vote.

Once your group have voted, count the votes and discuss the results.

**Keep it simple by...** Voting on an issue or choice.

Younger groups could vote for which story to hear or which film to watch. Older groups may use their vote to decide which charity to fundraise for or to decide on an issue they would like to raise with their MP.

**Take it further by...** Voting for a representative.

Hold a mock election with different candidates, canvassing on different issues. Before the election, candidates explain the reasons why they think you should vote for them. Your group could create manifestos and deliver speeches to persuade people to vote for them.

### Activity: Vote with your feet

When MPs and members of the House of Lords vote in Parliament, they vote with their feet! They physically divide and walk through one of two voting lobbies to cast their votes. In the Commons they vote "Aye" or "No", and in the Lords "Content" or "Not Content".

- Make one side of the room the "Ayes" and one side the "Noes".
- Warm up with some fun starters to divide group opinion. (*Dogs are better than cats, Tea is better than coffee, salt and vinegar crisps are better than cheese and onion etc*).
- Next, introduce issues relevant to your group and ask them to cast their votes with their feet. (*Homework should be optional, travel companies should not increase prices in school holidays, voting in a general election should be at a weekend*).



### Did you know...

- 1872 The Ballot Act introduced voting in secret
- 1918 The first women gained the vote
- 1929 Women and men voted on equal terms in a general election for the first time
- 1969 The voting age was reduced from 21 to 18

## Ballot Paper

Place an 'X' in one box only

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## Ballot Paper

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## Ballot Paper

Place an 'X' in one box only

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# QUESTION

UK Parliament Week is a chance to empower your group to think critically, question, challenge, influence and engage with the people that represent them.

## Activity: The Big Questions Challenge

Choose a challenge question to get your group discussing why voting matters. Remember there are no right and wrong answers to these questions, but they will encourage critical thinking around rights and responsibilities

### What happens if someone changes their mind after they've voted?

Once a ballot has been cast it cannot be uncast. However, people can and do change their minds on ideas – that's why general elections in the UK are (usually) held every five years, to enable everyone to continue to be part of decision making.

### How much should people find out about a candidate before voting?

Nobody can be forced to research the candidates or issues presented at an election. However, this is an opportunity to reflect on the idea that big decisions take time and consideration. Put it in context: If you were choosing to buy a laptop, which subjects to take for GCSEs/Highers, or how to travel to a new destination – would you research online or ask other people for their opinions first?

### What if someone's unhappy with the result of an election but doesn't think politics is for them?

Voting is a collective democratic act and politics touches every aspect of our lives, from the food we eat to the clothes we wear. Look at what's on in Parliament ([calendar.parliament.uk](http://calendar.parliament.uk)) to see all the different issues being raised and discussed.



## Activity: Talk to the people that represent you!

UK Parliament Week is a great opportunity to talk to the people that represent you. You could invite a local councillor, a mayor or a member of a devolved administration to come and speak to your group about their job.

You can also invite your local MP to come and talk to your group during UK Parliament Week.

### Top tips for organising your MP visit

#### Before

- Find your MP's contact details at [findyourmp.parliament.uk](http://findyourmp.parliament.uk)
- Invite your MP to visit your group.  
Either send an email with the subject heading 'UK Parliament Week Visit Invitation' or a letter to their constituency address.
- Suggest a variety of times and dates (remember MPs can be very busy!)
- Once confirmed, spend some time as a group thinking about the kinds of questions you want to ask during the visit.

#### During

- You can ask your MP about their job, what motivated them to become an MP or about issues that are important to them.
- Ask your MP to do something!  
It could be as simple as tweeting a picture from your meeting. If you've highlighted a specific issue or campaign, perhaps your MP could raise awareness of it, by writing a blog on their website or asking a question in Parliament.
- Make sure you have a fun activity planned for after questions – your MP can stay and chat or even take part!

#### After

- Share your quotes and photos on social media with @YourUKParl using the hashtag #UKPW

#### Take it further...

Publicise your meeting in newsletters and the local press.



# ENGAGE

The Network of Sikh Organisations (NSO) is a registered charity no. 1064544 that links more than 130 UK gurdwaras and other UK Sikh organisations in active cooperation to enhance the image and understanding of Sikhism in the UK

## Engaging effectively with the parliamentary process

The Network of Sikh Organisations (NSO) is delighted to be an official partner to UK Parliament Week because we understand the importance of positive engagement and active participation in the democratic process. We may feel strongly about certain issues such as Brexit or the Credit Crunch, but how do we best empower ourselves to get involved in the political process itself?

As Sikhs our core values are consistent with democracy and we believe UK Parliament Week 2019 will not only provide a timely reminder of those shared principles such as equality, tolerance and human rights for all, but also provides a moment to reflect on how individuals and gurdwaras can best explore and engage with the democratic process today.

## Let's talk about active participation in democracy

Last November we held a successful event in the House of Lords, in which Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP, former councillor Gurpal Viridi and strategist and former civil servant Mandip Sahota addressed an audience in ways to better engage with the parliamentary process. This year we aim to build on this by encouraging gurdwaras up and down the country to host local events to continue this important conversation. As part of this year's festival we are especially keen on getting younger people involved from across the community in order to harness their enthusiasm and activism to improve civic engagement whilst providing them with insights into the democratic process and how best to be a part of it.

As a minority faith community, we must ask ourselves what active participation in the democratic process looks like and how engaging with local councillors and MPs is vital for those wanting to influence public policy. It's important for us to understand the various ways in which we can engage and influence democracy, from writing petitions, lobbying MPs, through to giving evidence to parliamentary committees or even standing for election yourself.



NETWORK OF SIKH ORGANISATIONS  
UNITY IS STRENGTH

I urge you all to get fully involved in understanding, strengthening and improving the democratic process in this country, in a way that is consistent with Sikh teachings.

Director Lord Singh



Gurpal Viridi, Mandip Sahota and Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi MP

## Activity: Design your ideal representative

Use the template on page 17 to design your ideal representative. Write about the qualities, skills and experiences you think a person might need to be good at representing others.

To help, you could research inspiring people who have represented the views and needs of others through history and the present day. What skills and qualities did they have?

Think of examples of real-life representatives or politicians who you admire? You may want to consider the following:

- Which of their achievements do you consider most important?
- Why are they inspirational?
- How have they shown true leadership?
- What areas of policy did they influence?

### Take it further:

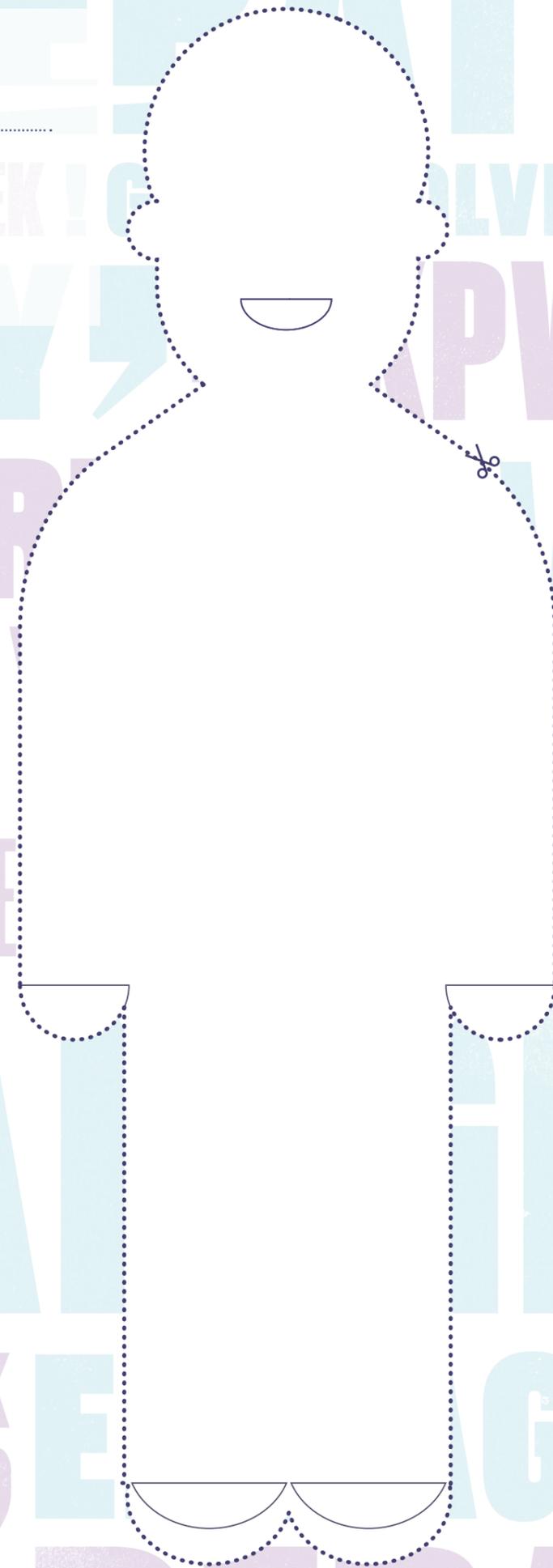
Are the drawings representative of your group, your community, society?  
Do they challenge gender stereotypes?

We want young Sikhs to effectively engage with the UK Parliament”

Hardeep Singh, Deputy-Director,  
Network of Sikh Organisations

### Activity: Design your ideal representative

Decide whether your representative is an MP, a member of a devolved administration, a role within the Sikh community or even you in the future!



### Activity: Vote for me!

Imagine you are running for election as an MP.  
How would you persuade people to vote for you?

Research issues that are important to you and write about them in the rosette.  
Explain what you would do to improve or change if you were elected and why people should vote for you.



# CAMPAIGN

If you think something is unfair, needs to be improved or changed, then you can do something about it. Speak to your MP, submit evidence to a select committee or start a petition!

## Creating positive change

In the 18th century, anti-slavery campaigners (abolitionists) raised awareness through petitions and boycotts of slave-grown sugar. In the 19th century a petition over three miles long, was delivered to the House of Commons by the Chartists, the first mass movement representing the working classes. Then in the 20th century, the suffrage movement campaigned for and achieved votes for women.

### Activity: What will you change?

Use the campaign planning cards to help your group develop their ideas for a campaign about an issue that is important to them.

#### Define

What is it that you want to raise awareness of or change? Is it a local issue or a global issue? Is it something you have personal experience of? Why is it important?

#### Form

Form your message. What do you want to say to people? How will you catch their attention? Why is your issue important? What do you want them to do: sign a petition, email their MP, attend an event?

#### Gather

What information can you gather about the issue? Are there facts or evidence that support your campaign? Who is responsible for the issue, who should you be talking to?

#### Share

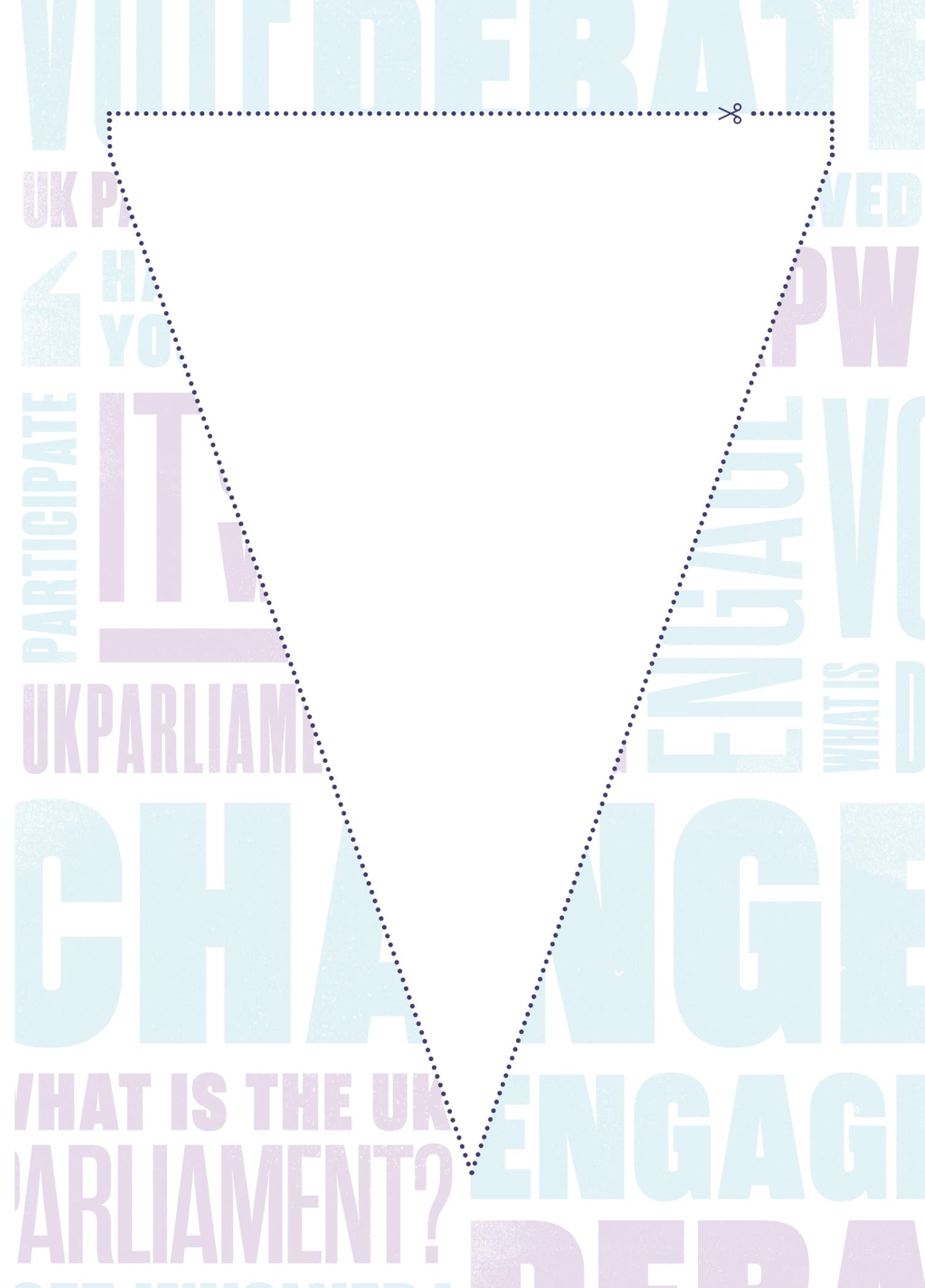
Share your campaign through posters, talks and on social media. If it's an issue that the UK Parliament is responsible for you could start an e-petition at [petition.parliament.uk](http://petition.parliament.uk)

#### Explore

Are other people raising awareness of a similar issue? Are any groups campaigning on the same theme? Could you work together? What do you want to achieve – what are the possible solutions?

#### Create

Raise awareness of your campaign or an issue important to you by designing your own bunting flag. Add your personalised flags to your UK Parliament Week bunting to highlight the issues your group is talking about.



# ACT

Learn something new, start a conversation, vote, ask questions and share your knowledge this UK Parliament Week!!

## UK Parliament Week in your pocket.

The UK Parliament Week Pocket Book is a fun 'cut-out and keep' record of all the inspiring activities your group takes part in during UK Parliament Week. Encourage your group to use the blank spaces to write notes or thoughts about the different activities they take part in and to design an eye-catching front cover.

At the end of the book, each member of your group should think about what UK Parliament Week has inspired them to do or find out next. They can write a UK Parliament Week Pledge to remind them "It starts with you!"

1. Fold the Pocket Book sheet in half lengthways



2. Then fold it in half widthways



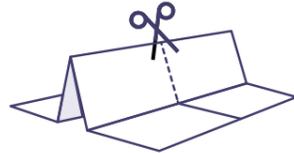
3. Then fold in half widthways again.



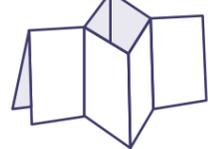
4. When you unfold the paper it will have 8 equal rectangles.



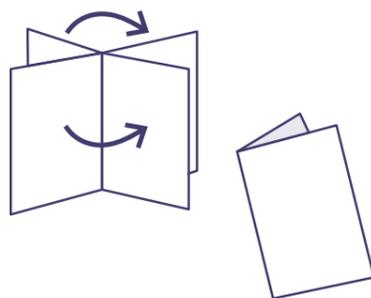
5. Cut a slit from A to B – fold the paper up in a point to make this easier.



6. Unfold, then fold lengthways. Push the end towards the centre.



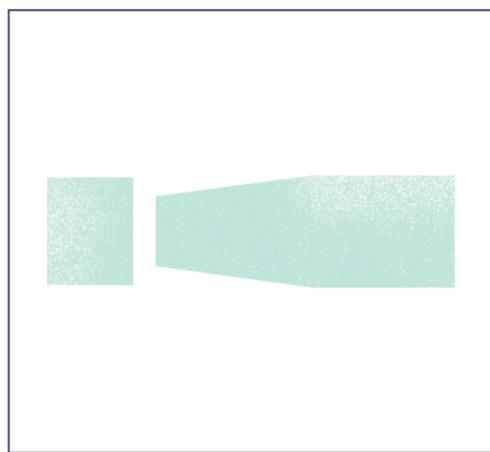
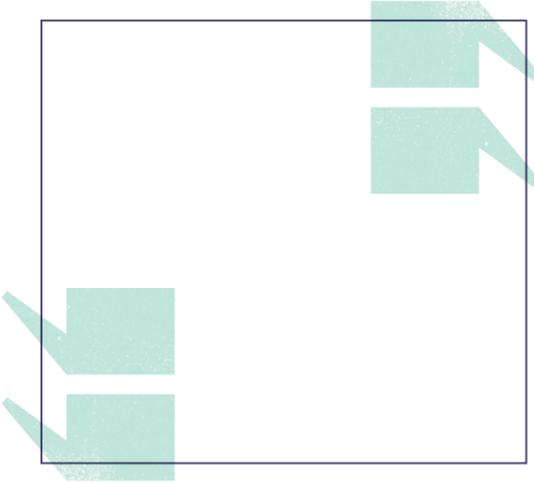
7. Fold the pages together. Your UK Parliament Week Pocket Book is ready to use!



UK Parliament Week has inspired me to...

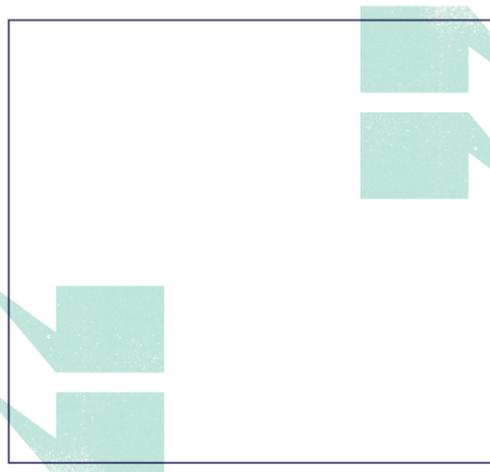
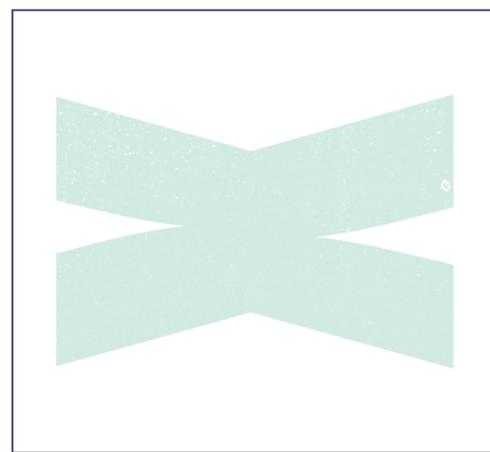


I shared my knowledge with someone new



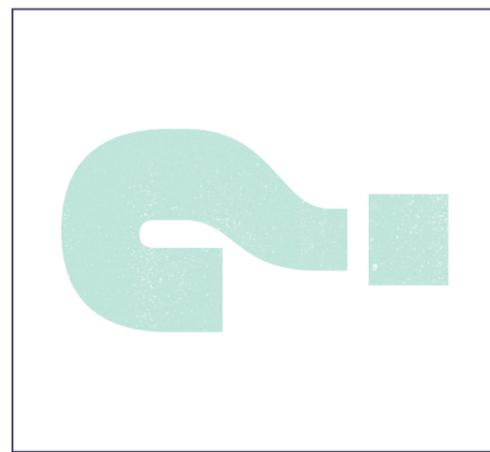
I learnt something new about the UK Parliament

I voted. My voice my vote!



I started a conversation about an issue that is important to me

I asked questions to find out more





Mix and match questions to create a quiz that's the right level for your group or if you're feeling confident, why not try them all!

## Getting started...

1. During an election people place their votes in a box. What is the name of the box?

- A voting box
- An election box
- **A ballot box**

It is almost 150 years since voting in secret was introduced at elections (The Ballot Act 1872). Use the ballot box in your UK Parliament Week kit to vote on issues important to you.

2. How old do you need to be to vote in a UK general election?

- 16 years old
- **18 years old**
- 21 years old

It's 50 years since the voting age was lowered from 21 to 18 in 1969. Some people argue that the voting age for general elections should be lowered further to 16 years old. What do you think?

3. What is an idea for a law called?

- A Bob
- A Ben
- **A Bill**

An idea for a new law or a change to an existing law is called a Bill. A Bill must be debated and discussed in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Only when both Houses agree can it become a law or an Act of Parliament.

4. Who must sign a Bill to make it a law?

- The Prime Minister
- The Speaker
- **The Monarch**

When both Houses of Parliament agree on a Bill then it is signed by the Monarch (the King or Queen). This is called 'Royal Assent'. Although the Monarch has the right to refuse Royal Assent, the last time this happened was with Queen Anne over 300 years ago!

## Gathering speed...

5. What is a vote in Parliament called?

- **A Division**
- A Participation
- A Revision

Votes in Parliament are called divisions. MPs or Peers 'divide' by walking through one of two lobbies to cast their vote. In the House of Commons MPs vote either "Aye" or "No", and in the House of Lords votes are cast as "Content" or "Not Content".

6. When the House of Commons is sitting, on what day do Prime Minister's Questions take place?

- Monday
- **Wednesday**
- Friday

Taking place every Wednesday, Prime Ministers Questions (PMQs) is one of the most well-known events in the parliamentary week. But in fact, MPs and members of the House of Lords have lots of opportunities to ask questions to government ministers throughout the week in the chambers and in writing.

7. Sometimes a Bill will move between the House of Commons and the House of Lords before a final version is agreed. What is this stage informally referred to as?

- To me to you
- Table tennis
- **Ping pong**

This stage is informally called 'ping pong' as a Bill goes back and forth between the two Houses while they consider each other's amendments and changes. When both Houses agree, the Bill receives Royal Assent and becomes a law.

## Racing ahead...

8. What name is given to members of the House of Lords who are non-party political?

- **Crossbenchers**
- Backbenchers
- Bicamerals

Crossbench Peers are not members of political parties. They have that name because they sit on the benches that cross the Chamber of the House of Lords.

9. During Oral Questions, MPs who have submitted a question can ask a further, related question. What is that question called?

- An additional question
- A complementary question
- **A supplementary question**

A supplementary question enables members of the Commons and the Lords to ask the Government a more detailed question, building on the theme of the question they submitted. It can be a useful element in their scrutiny toolkit!

10. After a select committee publishes a report, how long does the Government have to respond to the committee's recommendations?

- **60 days**
- 100 days
- 1 year

The Government usually responds to a committee report within two months. Select committees are an important part of the work of UK Parliament because their members work across party lines to find solutions to complicated problems.

# IT STARTS WITH YOU



**1** Peer is another name for a member of ...?

The House of Lords

**2** How many MPs are elected to the House of Commons?

650

**3** In 1919 the first female MP took her seat in the House of Commons. What was her name?

Nancy Astor

**4** What do we remember, remember on the 5th Nov?

The Gunpowder Plot

**5** Some members of the House of Lords are not members of political parties. What are they called?

Crossbenchers

**6** What is an idea for a new law called?

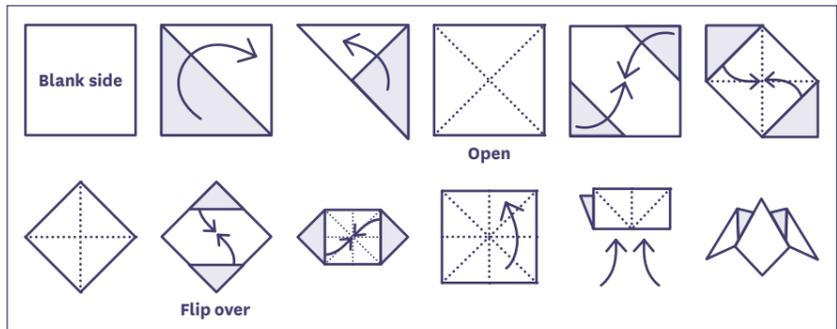
A Bill

**7** How old do you need to be to vote in a general election?

18

**8** What rang out for the first time in 1859?

Big Ben



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