

Scheme of Work:

UK Government.

Lesson Title:

14 - How important is the House of Lords?

Learning Objectives:

1. To be able to describe the House of Lords.
2. To be able to explain and evaluate the different functions of the House of Lords.
3. To assess the importance of the House of Lords in our democracy.

Materials needed:

PowerPoint, Post-It notes / copies of Slide 2, House of Lords history, House of Lords features and functions sheet, enlarged Slide 5 print out (for MP students), paper, scissors, glue.

Learning Task:

1. Use Slide 1 to introduce the title and learning objectives to the class.
2. Provide students with Post-it notes or a print out of Slide 2 and ask students to annotate the picture with everything that they know about the House of Lords thus far. Students should be able to comment on the composition, its relationship with the Commons and Monarch and the unelected nature. Post-it notes can be saved for later, or students can put the printed out Slide 2 aside until the end of the lesson.
3. Provide students with an overview of the reforms of the House of Lords and pose the questions on Slide 3 to the class. Students can either create written answers, or discuss with peers (or both).
4. Feedback. Discussion should focus on the fact that reform of the House of Lords continues to be a significant debate in UK politics with those (Badenoch) who opposed removing the hereditary peers, and others (Davey and Burnham) who want to end the current way the House of Lords works.
5. Provide students with a copy of the Lords features and functions. You may wish to read through these as a class to check understanding and link back to prior learning, or students can read independently. Allocate students a task on Slide 4.
6. Feedback. Discussion should focus on the extent to which the House of Lords is important to British democracy, its strengths and its limitations. You may want to use Slide 5 to get all students to engage with the opinion line, even if they did not complete the MP task.
7. Ask students to return to their print out of Slide 2, or go back to the Post-it notes from earlier. Students now add in more detail, or new facts, in a second colour to demonstrate what they now know.

8. Feedback - ask students what they now think about the House of Lords compared to when they first started this lesson(s) topics.
9. You may wish to finish on the closing question on Slide 7. The focus on this is developing an understanding of why constitutional reform is often challenging. Arguments students might include:
 1. An elected Upper House would have a democratic mandate, enabling challenge of the Commons and a fear of gridlock.
 2. Any changes to the House of Lords would require the Lords' support, or the use of the Parliament Act.
 3. Political parties cannot agree on what a replacement to the House of Lords would look like in terms of appointments, powers and relationship with the Commons.
 4. There are other, arguably, more pressing problems than House of Lords reform that take government time and attention.