



Q5 What are the strengths of the law-making process in Parliament? Select from the list below, and add in anything extra from your own knowledge.

[Empty space for student response]

- A new law has to get approval from both Houses.
- House of Lords can have time to deliberate.
- The Monarch plays a significant role.
- Party whips allow MPs the freedom to vote as they wish.
- The Public Bills committee can suggest amendments.
- There is open debate which can be viewed by the public.
- A government with a large majority will always get its policies through.
- Laws are made by elected representatives who can be held to account.
- Laws are always made in the best interest of the people and are not based in party ideology.

Case Study

The stages through which a bill must pass in both the Commons and Lords:

- First reading: The title of a bill is read out and copies of it are printed but no debate takes place.
- Second reading: A debate on the general principles of a bill.
- Committee stage: Members subject a bill to line-by-line examination.
- Report stage: A review of a bill that has been amended at committee stage.
- Third reading: The House takes an overview of the bill as finally amended - before passing it on.

Committee stage takes place in both Houses of Parliament. In the Commons, a public bill committee is usually set up to examine the bill, with the power to make amendments provided they are relevant to the bill's subject matter. Amendments and new clauses may be moved by the minister from the government department introducing the bill, the opposition spokespersons, or by any member of the committee.

Since January 2007, when public bill committees replaced standing committees, parliamentarians have also been able to receive written evidence and call witnesses to testify on the detail of legislation they are examining. Committee stage can also take place on the floor of the Commons i.e. in a committee of the whole House. This means that any member can contribute to the debate, and not just members of the public bill committee.

In the Lords, committee stage usually takes place in a committee of the whole House or in Grand Committee in the Moses Room, a large room away from the main Chamber, and rarely to other types of committee. In both Houses, a bill goes to report stage after committee stage.

Source-based question: Using the source information and your own knowledge, describe the process by which a bill passes through Parliament.

Worksheet suggested solutions

| Q1 | | True or False? |
|----|--|----------------|
| A | The 1 st reading of the potential law is printed on purple paper While it is still going through Parliament, a potential law is called a Bob. | False |
| B | The House of Commons and Lords must agree before a bill becomes an Act of Parliament. | True |
| C | For the first reading of the bill, there is no debate. | True |
| D | The 1st reading of the potential law is printed on purple paper. | False |
| E | Royal Assent is the final stage of the legislative process. | True |

| Q2 | Match the correct key term to the definition | Correct Term |
|----|--|----------------------|
| A | Stage of the legislative process where a small panel of MPs consider amendments to the proposed Bill. | Committee Stage |
| B | After this the proposed new Bill is voted on for the first time. | Second Reading |
| C | Changes that may be made particularly after scrutiny to the proposed new law. | Amendments |
| D | A form of Private Members Bill that doesn't take a large amount of time to introduce. | Ten Minute Rule Bill |
| E | Named after what it is printed on, this part of the process gives proposals for debate and discussion. | Green Paper |

| Q3 | Fill in the missing words |
|----|--|
| | <p>The first reading is the first stage of a Bill's passage through the House of Commons, it takes place without debate, first reading of a Bill can take place at any time in a parliamentary session.</p> <p>The second reading is the first opportunity for MPs to debate the main principles of the Bill. It usually takes place no sooner than two weekends after first reading, a Government minister, or MP responsible for the Bill opens the second reading debate and the Opposition spokesperson responds. The debate continues with other Opposition parties and backbench MPs giving their opinions. At the end of the debate, the Commons votes on whether it can proceed to the next stage, which is the Committee stage, where detailed examination takes place. It usually starts within a couple of weeks of a Bill's second reading, although this is not guaranteed.</p> <p>After being passed through the Committee stage, Report stage gives MPs an opportunity to debate in the Commons again, to consider further amendments which have been examined in committee. Third reading is the final chance for the Commons to debate the contents of a Bill. It usually takes place immediately after report stage as the next item of business on the same day. After this, the Bill is passed to the House of Lords who repeat very similar stages of the process.</p> |

Q4 Put the stages of the legislative process in the correct order

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    graph TD
      subgraph House_of_Commons [House of Commons]
        HC[House of Commons] --> FR1[First Reading]
        FR1 --> SR[Second Reading]
        SR --> CS[Committee Stage]
        CS --> RS[Report Stage]
        RS --> TR1[Third Reading]
      end
      subgraph House_of_Lords [House of Lords]
        HL[House of Lords] --> FR2[First Reading]
        FR2 --> SR2[Second Reading]
        SR2 --> CS2[Committee Stage]
        CS2 --> RS2[Report Stage]
        RS2 --> TR2[Third Reading]
        TR2 --> RA[Royal Assent]
      end
  
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Q5 What are the strengths of the law-making process in Parliament.

A new law has to get approval from both Houses.
 House of Lords can have time to deliberate.
 The Public Bills committee can suggest amendments.
 There is open debate which can be viewed by the public.
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Possible additional ideas:
 Significant opportunities for scrutiny
 The unelected Lords can only delay legislation by a year
 There's a variety of ways of introducing new legislation
 The doctrine of parliamentary sovereignty means that legislation can be overturned or amended in the future if necessary

Case study suggested answers

Source-based question: Using the source information and your own knowledge, describe the process by which a bill passes through Parliament.

Suggested answers:

New legislation ideas may come from the manifesto of a government, or be introduced as a Private Members Bill

Proposals may be included in Green Paper and then a White Paper

In Parliament, assuming time is allocated to the legislation, the following process should occur:

- First reading: The title of a bill is read out and copies of it are printed but no debate takes place.
- Second reading: A debate on the general principles of a bill.
 - The Opposition responds with their views
- Committee stage: Members subject a bill to line-by-line examination.
 - This doesn't occur for Consolidated Fund bills
- Report stage: A review of a bill that has been amended at committee stage.
 - This could take several days on the floor of the House, and can result in amendments from any MP
- Third reading: The House takes an overview of the bill as finally amended - before passing it on.

A similar process occurs if the bill originates in the Lords. Both houses ultimately review any proposed amendments – this can lead to a 'ping pong' process whereby bills go backwards and forwards between both houses for review of different amendments.

If the Bill passes through both houses with approval, it goes forward for Royal Assent, which is never withheld (under convention)

Money bills always start in the Commons