

Accountability

1. Create an accountability quiz

Devise a quiz about how the Parliament keeps the government accountable. Write a list of ten questions and answers. For example, you could ask questions like 'What is Hansard?' Find a partner and take it in turns to answer each other's questions.



2. Discuss the ways in which the opposition and minor parties and Independents closely examine the work of the government

To find out more, check these links on the PEO website:

Quick Answers: Parliament and Governance
www.tinyurl.com/QA-Parl-Gov

Fact sheets:
Question Time
www.tinyurl.com/FS-Quest-Time

Senate Estimates
www.tinyurl.com/FS-Estimates

Parliamentary Committees
www.tinyurl.com/FS-Committees

Videos:
Question Time
www.tinyurl.com/QTime-video

Parliamentary Committees
www.tinyurl.com/Committees-video

3. Draw a political cartoon for a daily newspaper

Political cartoons use satire to draw attention to the actions of the Parliament. Create your own cartoon that comments on a recent event in Parliament, for example something said by a member of parliament or a new policy announced by one of the political parties.

For inspiration, look at examples in major daily newspapers or check out 'Behind the Lines: the year's best political cartoons'. Find links to the 'Behind the Lines' exhibitions on the Museum of Australian Democracy website:
www.moadoph.gov.au/websites

You can also find links to the 'Behind the Lines' exhibitions from 2003 to 2010 on the National Museum of Australia website:
www.tinyurl.com/NMA-BTL-exhibitions



4. Research the role and history of Hansard

Hansard reporters provide a written record of what is said in Parliament. Find out more about the history of Hansard and explain in your report how Hansard plays a part in keeping the Parliament accountable.

To find out more about Hansard, check these links on the UK Parliament and PEO websites:

Official report
www.tinyurl.com/UKParl-Hansard

PEO fact sheet – Records of the Parliament
www.tinyurl.com/FS-Record

5. Explore how the Parliament closely investigates the work of the government

You could watch Question Time in the House of Representatives and/or a Senate committee of inquiry.

Discuss with the class:

- What is the purpose of Question Time or a Senate committee?
- How does it work?
- Who asks the questions and why?
- How effective was it in examining the actions of the government or investigating an issue?

Compare the processes of Question Time and the Senate committee. How are they similar or different?

You can watch replays of Question Time and excerpts from House committee hearings by following this link to About the House TV on the Australian Parliament House website:

www.tinyurl.com/RepsTV

You can watch live broadcasts and recordings of Senate committees by following this link to Watch Parliament on the Australian Parliament House website:

www.tinyurl.com/Watch-APH

Follow these links on the PEO website to find out more about Question Time and Committees:

Fact sheet – Question Time
www.tinyurl.com/FS-Quest-Time

Video – Question Time
www.tinyurl.com/QTime-video

Fact sheet – Parliamentary committees
www.tinyurl.com/FS-Committees

Video – About Parliament – Parliamentary Committees
www.tinyurl.com/Coms-video

6. Research a parliamentary committee

Write a report on a parliamentary committee. Include in your report:

- the name of the committee and whether it is a Senate, House or Joint committee
- an inquiry that it is undertaking
- a summary of the terms of reference of the inquiry (what the committee is investigating)
- any recommendations made by the committee.



To find out more about committees, follow this link on the Australian Parliament House website:

www.tinyurl.com/APH-Bus-Coms

Current inquiries and recent reports are listed by subject matter and committee.

To view a committee hearing, follow this link to Watch Parliament on the Australian Parliament House website:

www.tinyurl.com/Watch-APH

7. Scrutinising the media

The media play a role in informing the public about the Parliament and keeping the government accountable. Find three news reports (in newspapers, on TV, radio or an internet news service) about an issue currently before the Parliament; for example, a report about a new bill or an announcement made by either the government or the opposition.

Compare the way this issue is covered in different types of media. Are there any differences in the way it is reported? Do you think the media can influence public opinion? If so, is this a good or a bad thing?

8. Democracy vs dictatorship

Hold a class discussion or debate to compare democracy and dictatorship. How does scrutiny of democratic leaders or dictators differ? Are there advantages or disadvantages to each system of governance?

