

The houses of Parliament

1. Create a Parliament quiz

Devise a quiz about the two houses of Parliament. Write a list of ten questions and answers. For example, you could ask questions like ‘What is the colour of the Senate chamber?’ Find a partner and take it in turns to answer each other’s questions.



2. Create a model of the House of Representatives or Senate chamber

Make a model of one of the chambers. Include labels to show where important people sit in the chamber (see pages 10–11 in *Get Parliament*). You could also indicate where your federal member sits in the House of Representatives or where one of your state or territory senators sits in the Senate.

For information about the chambers, check these fact sheets on the Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) website:

House of Representatives
www.tinyurl.com/FS-HoR

Senate
www.tinyurl.com/FS-Senate

You can find images of the two chambers in the PEO’s Image Library:
www.tinyurl.com/PEO-Images

To view the seating plans for the House of Representatives and Senate, follow these links to the Australian Parliament House website:
www.tinyurl.com/HoR-SeatPlan www.tinyurl.com/Sen-Seatplan

For a virtual tour of the House and the Senate, follow this link:
www.tinyurl.com/APH-virtual-tour

3. Symbols of the Parliament

Each chamber has important symbols such as the Mace, Black Rod and Despatch Boxes. Draw or make a model of one of these, and include information about its history and significance.

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



Mace:

PEO fact sheet – Mace:
www.tinyurl.com/FS-Mace

PEO Image Library – House of Representatives:
www.tinyurl.com/Images-House

and scroll down to ‘Chamber’.

Black Rod:

PEO fact sheet – Usher of the Black Rod:
www.tinyurl.com/FS-BlackRod

PEO Image Library – Senate:
www.tinyurl.com/Images-Senate

and scroll down to ‘Chamber’.

Despatch Box:

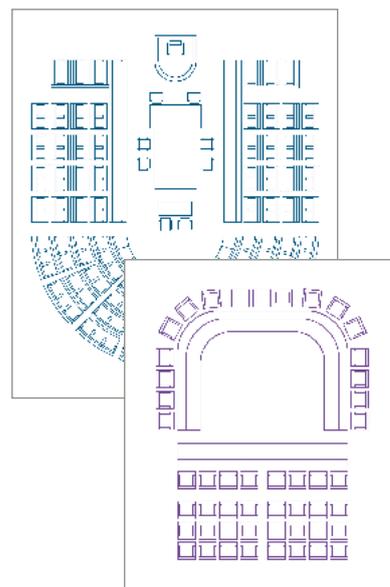
PEO fact sheet – Despatch Box:
www.tinyurl.com/FS-DespatchBox

You could also check Signatures of Oz:
www.tinyurl.com/PEO-Kidsview

4. Design your own chamber

Imagine you are an architect who has been asked to design a new chamber for either the House of Representatives or the Senate. The current chambers are modelled on the British Parliament; however, you might like to dispense with tradition and create a completely new look for the Australian Parliament.

Justify your design and explain what it symbolises about our Parliament.



5. List five interesting facts about one or more of the non-elected officers in either chamber

Check out these links on the PEO and Australian Parliament House websites:

PEO fact sheets
www.tinyurl.com/ParIFS

Parliament NOW Who's Who
www.tinyurl.com/PEO-ParINOW

Quick Answers: People in Parliament
www.tinyurl.com/QA-People-In-Parl

Senate Briefs:
The Clerk of the Senate
www.tinyurl.com/SB15-Clerk

Usher of the Black Rod
www.tinyurl.com/SB16-Usher

House of Representatives Infosheet 21:
The Clerk and other officials
www.tinyurl.com/Infosheet21

6. The Speaker and the President

Investigate the role of the Speaker and the President. What does each involve? Write a report that includes information about how they are chosen and the history of the position.

Check out these PEO fact sheets:
The Speaker of the House of Representatives
www.tinyurl.com/FS-Speaker

The President of the Senate
www.tinyurl.com/FS-President

You could also check these links on the Australian Parliament House and UK Parliament websites:
www.tinyurl.com/APHspeaker
www.tinyurl.com/APHpresident
www.tinyurl.com/UKparlspeaker

7. Is the Senate still the states' house?

The drafters of the Australian Constitution wanted all states to have equal representation in the Senate to make sure that the federal Parliament was not dominated by states with larger populations. Does the Senate just represent the states and territories or does it have a broader role? Are senators more likely to vote with their party rather than with their state or territory?

Check out this PEO fact sheet on Political Parties:
www.tinyurl.com/FS-Pol-Parties

and this Senate brief on the Role of the Senate:
www.tinyurl.com/SenBrief10



8. Compare and contrast the two chambers in the Australian Parliament and the British Parliament

You may like to focus on some or all of the following:

- the composition of each chamber
- chamber colours
- officers in the chamber such as the Clerks, Usher of the Black Rod and Serjeant-at-Arms
- some of the traditions or practices we have adopted from the British Parliament and whether it is important that these traditions be maintained.

To begin your research, check these links on the PEO website:

Closer Look: A short history of Parliament
www.tinyurl.com/CL-ParlHistory

Fact sheets
www.tinyurl.com/ParIFS

You can also find more information by exploring other sections of the PEO and UK Parliament websites:
www.peo.gov.au
www.parliament.uk

