

Teacher's notes

Law is about shaping and sustaining a civil and safe society, for example it is against the law to take other people's money, or it against the law to drive over the speed limit. These laws are designed to keep us safe and make life as fair as possible – these rules are agreed and passed by our Parliament which is made up from

- The Queen
- The House of Lords
- The House of Commons

There are different stages in parliament that a proposed bill has to go through.
House of Commons

- First reading – introduce the bill to MPs
- Second reading – explain the rule and answer questions
- Committee stage – MPs can examine the proposal
- Report stage – suggested changes to the rule can be made
- Third Reading – MPs decide if they want the rule to progress

House of Lords

- First reading – the new rule/ bill is introduced
- Second reading – discuss and debate the proposed rule
- Committee Stage – Lords can examine and contribute to any amendments
- Report Stage – another chance to make changes
- Third reading – last chance for discussion and any final amendments

Royal assent

This is the process that parliament must follow, in order for an introduced bill to become law. You may want students to act out this process to help students to see that it is a lengthy process and should be a democratic one. E.g. royal assent could be approval from the head teacher.

Students often feel that rules/ laws are unfair or unjust, but this is often because it does not suit their lifestyles or they do not see the need for the law/ rule. It is important to break it down and get students to consider

- Why the law/ rule is there
- What would happen if it were not there
- What is the process of creating a law

- Why do we need new laws
- What would happen to our society/ community if there were no rules
- How would we live,/ feel

Exploring the different stages of law, from why a law/ rule has been proposed to whether it becomes law. This will show students how complex an issue it is and often highlight its importance.

For example, speed limits – Some people do not like them as they spoil their fun, but why are they there? Answer – to save lives
What happens if you break the speed limit/ law? You can be fined, lose your license or face jail.

The process of what is law, how and why laws are created and consequence of breaking them should be looked on as a holistic approach, for students to fully understand its importance.

Applying the process to school or community structures will help to understand its purpose.

Following the link below will lead you to a clear and concise document that fully explains every aspect of parliament should you and your students wish to explore parliament further.

<http://www.explore.parliament.uk/>