



Lesson plan 2: Who is in the House?

Timing: 30mins – 60mins

Resources required:

- MP fact sheets (see below)
- Paper
- Pens

Aim:

To get students to think critically about the current make up of the House of Commons and whether it needs to change to more fairly reflect the make up of the UK.

Activity notes:

Divide the students into groups and give each group one of the work sheets about MPs in Parliament (see below – all statistics are from either the House of Commons Library of the 2001 Census). If there are more groups than individual work sheets simply duplicate. Ask students to compare the figures for the House of Commons with the figures for the country as a whole (5 mins)

Ask the students to fill out the attached worksheet based on their observations of the differences/similarities between the different figures. Ask them to consider whether the differences matter and to write down why they feel the way they do. Remind of about what they learnt about the job of an MP in the previous lesson. (10 mins)

Ask each group to report back on what they discovered and explain what they think about the differences. (10mins)

Based on what they discovered in filling out the worksheets, ask students whether they think the differences could have an impact on the laws Parliament makes. If prompting is required use these examples:

- Disabled rights
- Racism
- Childcare

Does the current make up of the House mean these issues don't get discussed in as much detail/differently than they should or does it not have any affect? (5 mins)

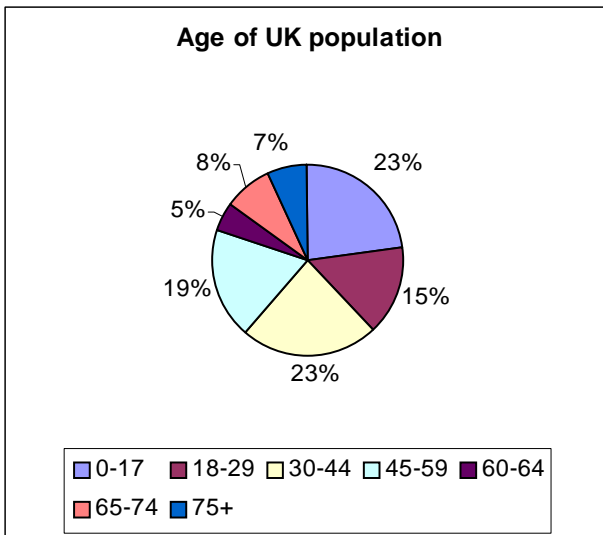
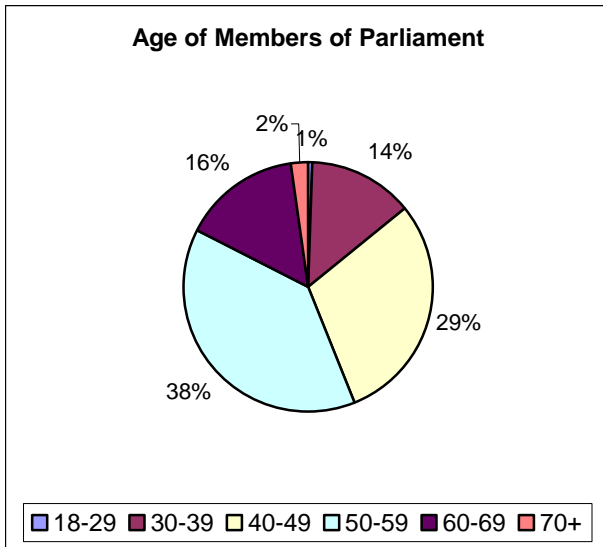
To finish off, you could go around the class and ask each group or student who, they would like to see more of in the House of Commons. (5 mins)

Extension activities:

The Y Vote Mock Elections website contains a *Build your own politician* where students can use the Y Vote Mock Election: Build your own politicians activity: www.mockelections.co.uk/voting/build-your-own-politician

Age of Members of Parliament

Compare the two charts below and answer the questions:



Which age ranges are best and worst represented in Parliament?

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Do you think this is important? What effect could this have on the laws that Parliament makes?

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With the average age of MPs being 51, do you think this is a barrier to young people in getting involved in politics?

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Do we need more young people in Parliament or do older people have the life experience necessary to do the job?

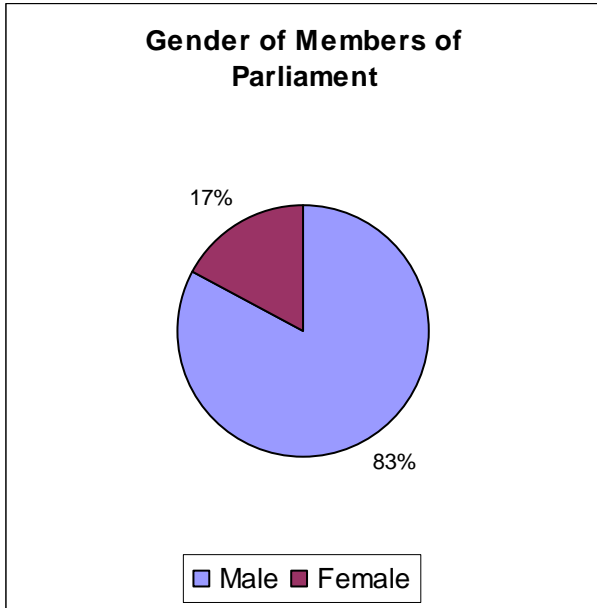
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Gender and Members of Parliament

Compare the two charts below and answer the questions:



Who is there more of in Parliament?

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Do you think this is important? What effect could this have on the laws that Parliament makes?

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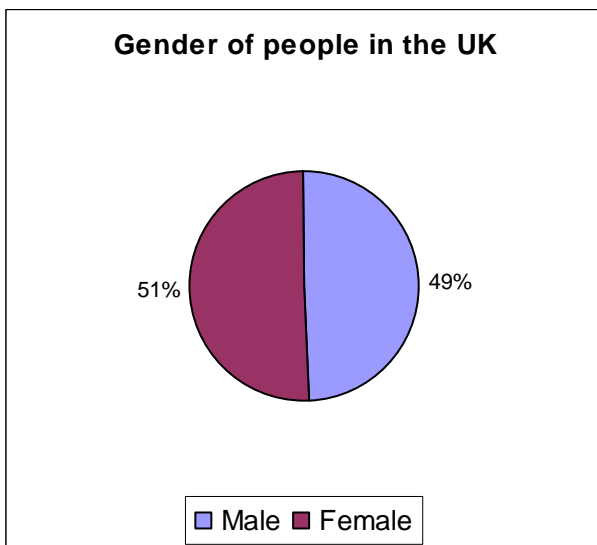
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Why do you think there are less female MPs than men?

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Do we need more female MPs or can men represent their interests just as well?

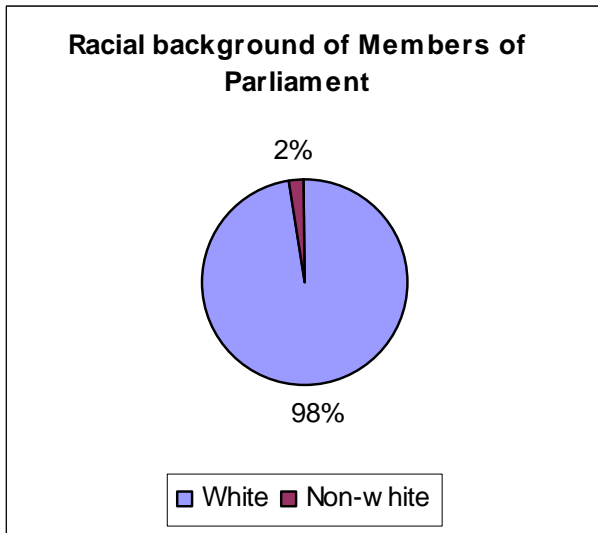
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Race and Members of Parliament

Compare the two charts below and answer the questions:



Why do you think there are less non-white MPs than white MPs?

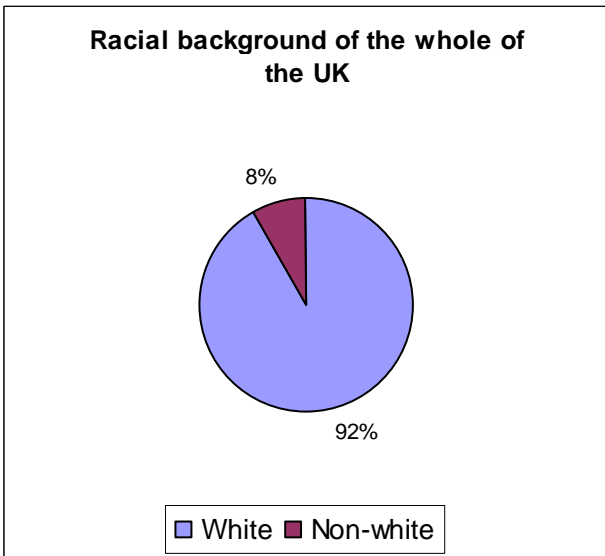
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Do you think this is important? What effect could this have on the laws that Parliament makes?

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Why do you think there are less female MPs than men?

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Do you think it is necessary that Parliament reflects the ethnic make up of the UK in order to do its work effectively?

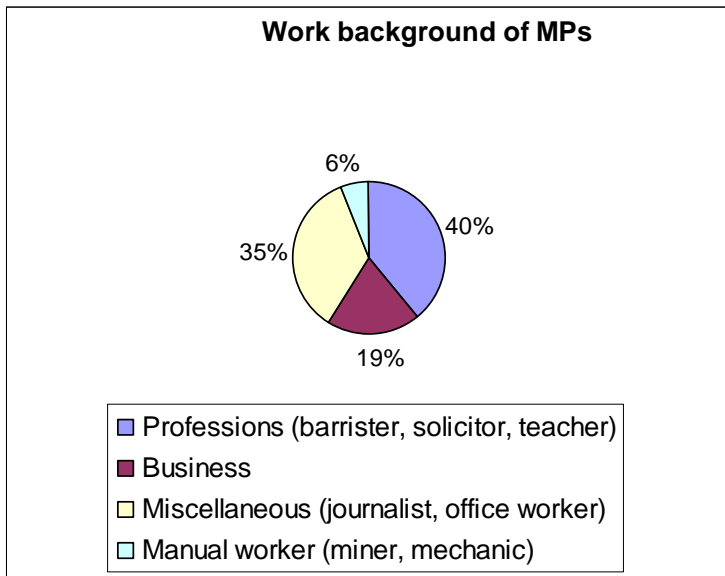
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Work experience and Members of Parliament

The below table shows the jobs MPs had before they were elected. Answer the questions about it below:



Are there any groups who you feel are under represented?

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Which professions would you like to see more of in Parliament?

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Do you think it is important that MPs come from a wide variety of professions?
If so why?

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As part of their work is making laws do you think it is important that MPs have some training in the law?

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