The UK Parliament is made up of three parts – the House of Commons, the House of Lords and the Monarch (the King or Queen).

The Palace of Westminster is another name for the Parliament buildings because Kings and Queens used to live here. The last Monarch to do this was King Henry VIII.

For more information about Parliament and the services we offer to young people and schools go to www.parliament.uk/education or telephone 020 7219 4496.

can you find?

**Westminster Hall**
The carved angels high up in the roof. More than 800 tonnes of wood was used to create the roof beams.

**St Stephen's Hall**
The crack in the blade of the sword on the statue of Falkland. On the foot, you will see a broken spur. This is where a suffragette (a woman campaigning for the right to vote) chained herself to the statue as a protest and had to be cut free.

**Members’ Chamber**
The Dispatch Box where MPs lean when they are talking in the House. The box contains a number of holy books.

**Robing Room**
The original Palace burnt down in 1834. When it was rebuilt Queen Victoria was on the throne and her initials, VR, are throughout the Palace.

**Royal Gallery**
The artist who created the two biggest paintings didn’t sign his works. Instead, he painted a glass into them somewhere.

**Princes’ Chamber**
The symbols for England, Scotland and Ireland are dotted around this Chamber.

**Lords’ Chamber**
The Woolsack which is the seat of the Lord Speaker. It is a large cushion of wool covered in red cloth. It is stuffed with wool brought from around the Commonwealth.

**Central Lobby**
Some leeks, which are a national emblem for Wales. This is the mid-point between the Lords and the Commons chambers. It is also where people can come to meet or ‘lobby’ their MP.

**Members’ Lobby**
The mark on the door where Black Rod bangs to gain entry to the Commons.

**Members’ Chamber**
The Dispatch Box where MPs lean when they are talking in the House. The box contains a number of holy books.
The House of Lords meets Monday to Thursday during the parliamentary year. The Speaker in the Lords is elected by MPs to act as the chairperson. He or she can offer advice but, unlike the Speaker in the House of Commons, does not decide who speaks next or select topics for debate.

**What does the House of Lords do?**

- **Legislation** – improve and make new laws
- **Scrutiny** – check the work of Government by asking questions and debating decisions
- **Representation** – speaking for and on behalf of members of the public

Members of Parliament (MPs) divide their time between Westminster and the area they represent, known as their constituency. They hold meetings or ‘surgeries’ where members of the public can come to them to discuss any questions or problems they might have. An MP is elected to represent all the people living in their constituency known as constituents, whether they voted for them or not.

The Commons SpeakerThe Speaker sits on the large raised chair at the top of the House of Commons. The Speaker is elected by MPs to act as the ‘chairperson’. He or she will choose who speaks during debates and keep order in the chamber.

**How do you become an MP?**

The UK is divided into 650 constituencies. Each constituency has about 100,000 people living in it (of which around 70,000 are old enough to vote). You can become an MP by standing for one of the political parties that concern you in debates in the House of Commons. There are many different committees working on any day:

- **Committees**

Committees can be on legislation (Bills) but sometimes they may also be discussing general topics of interest or other issues taking place.

**A typical Commons working day**

- **Questions**
  - An hour in which one or more Government ministers answer questions from MPs. On Wednesday the questions are all for the Prime Minister.

- **Statements**
  - Sometimes a Government minister will need to make a statement on an important issue. If so, this will happen straight after question time.

- **Statements**
  - The main business of the day will often be a debate on a Bill at one of its stages through Parliament.

- **Debates**
  - These can be on legislation (Bills) but sometimes it is an opportunity for the MPs to discuss an important issue.

- **Committees**
  - As in the Lords, there are lots of committees in the Commons. MPs from all parties are asked to sit on these committees to discuss specific topics.

**Making Laws**

In order for laws to be made, a Bill (idea for a new law) has to be agreed by both the House of Commons and the House of Lords before it is passed to the Monarch for its final go-ahead or ‘Royal Assent’.

- **Debates**
  - Discussions on a wide range of subjects affecting the country are held every week. There are also short debates (up to 1.5 hours) on current issues.

By 1870 the main business of the day was beﬁlled with short debates (up to 1.5 hours) on current issues.

**When did the House of Lords start?**

- **14th century** – the Lords begin to sit in settings from which they can see the Commons.
- **1558** – the House of Lords stops meeting during Elizabeth I’s Commonwealth.
- **1649** – the Lords begin to sit in the House of Commons during Oliver Cromwell’s Commonwealth.
- **1660** – the House of Lords starts meeting again.
- **1911 and 1949** – Bills to become Acts without the House of Lords approval.

**How do you become a Peer?**

- **Life Peers**
  - Chosen because of their expertise to discuss issues in the UK. The majority of Lords are Life Peers, chosen by the Monarch (not representing a party) but some are elected and known as Crossbenchers.

**What do the House of Lords do?**

- **Legislation** – improve and make new laws
- **Scrutiny** – check the work of Government by asking questions and debating decisions
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**Committees**

There are lots of committees set up to discuss specific subjects. They are made up of peers from all parties who are selected because of their expertise in that area. There are often many different committees working on any day:

- **Committees**

Committees can be on legislation (Bills) but sometimes they may also be discussing general topics of interest or other issues taking place.