

## Peers in Schools Programme



### CONTENTS

Pre-visit resources	Page 2
Post-visit resources	Page 11
Useful links	Page 17

### ABOUT THIS PACK

This resource complements two House of Lords engagement programmes, Peers in Schools and #LordsLive, which are greatly valued by students and teachers alike:

“The Peers in Schools programme had a tremendous impact on our young people as it brought the world of politics to life for them, and I am sure this will be a moment in their educational careers that they will never forget. To have a visit from someone who works in politics and is making a difference they can understand was inspiring for every pupil in the room.”

**Secondary School Teacher, Worcestershire**

### HOW TO USE THIS PACK

The resources are divided into two main sections to be used before and after the visit or Skype session.

They are designed to be used in an adaptable manner to suit the time available, the age of the students, curriculum relevance and the teaching style. For this reason you will find more than enough material for a single lesson, both before and after the session with the member.



Peers in Schools sends members of the Lords (Peers) into schools and sixth form colleges around the UK to discuss the work of the House and take part in question and answer sessions about its role in our parliamentary democracy.

#LordsLive offers schools a Skype session with a member of the House of Lords, who they will answer students' questions and speak about their ideas about the role of the House of Lords. The target audience is students aged 14-19.

In both programmes members are keen to genuinely engage with young people, offering the opportunity for open discussion and questioning. Teachers and students report a high level of satisfaction after the sessions and members hear plenty of issues to consider.

The Resources section at the end of this pack gives links to further details of both schemes and to a short film showing the programmes in action.

# PRE-VISIT RESOURCES

## ASSEMBLY

### AIM:

To introduce your school's forthcoming Peers in Schools or #LordsLive event, enthusing students to participate fully and make the most of the programme.

### YOU WILL NEED:

Access to the PowerPoint: [www.parliament.uk/education-resources/Lords-outreach.pptx](http://www.parliament.uk/education-resources/Lords-outreach.pptx)

Access to the short film: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=-gsO2sH4Vlc&t=14s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-gsO2sH4Vlc&t=14s)

### INTRODUCTION:

The following assembly suggestions are offered as a flexible outline for you to adapt to your circumstances, such as number and age of students, time available, their prior knowledge and your personal approach to delivering assemblies. The ideas can easily accommodate student-led assemblies with different sections delivered by a variety of voices.

**NOTE:** it may be that there are more students present in the assembly than will have the opportunity to participate in the session. In this case, you could set up a system of physical or online notes, giving everyone present the opportunity to pass on their thoughts and questions to those who will participate.

1. Introduce the theme of the assembly as 'What is the House of Lords?' Ask for answers to this question or go straight to step 2 below.
2. 'Let's take a look at the reality'. Show the accompanying PowerPoint. As time may be limited, you could focus on the following slides and save the full presentation for use in the classroom.
  - 6 (Independence of thought)
  - 7 (Different backgrounds and professions)
  - 9 (What the Lords does)
  - 11 (Recent changes it has persuaded the Government to make)

**3.** Explain that, as part of this deep thinking about policy and the nature of our democracy, members of the House of Lords are open to turning the spotlight on their own role. As part of this they have developed two forms of engagement with school students, one of which is happening here on... (give details of the Peers in Schools or #LordsLive event).

**4.** Explain that over the next few days/weeks, students will need to give some thought to the questions they will ask. Show the short film as an introduction to the programme/s: URL.  
You could also read out some questions from other sessions at this point to show the range of subjects raised. Stress to your students that they can ask whatever they want, present them with some questions others have asked.

- What should the Government be doing about homelessness?
- When you are considering a Bill in the House of Lords, what's more important, the party line or the specific merits of the draft law?
- What is the biggest difference between working in the House of Commons and the House of Lords?
- What characteristics made a good member of the House of Lords?

**5.** Sum up by pointing out that, as the film demonstrates, any polite and reasonable question is allowed. The visiting peer really will want to know what they think and to hear their ideas, so encourage the students to engage in a dialogue, rather than read out a prepared question and accept the answer with polite thanks. Emphasise that they will have limited time so it is important to make their questions count.

### REFLECTION:

If you prefer to end your assemblies with a short time of reflection, you could include the following elements in this.

A time of quiet to consider:

- How fortunate we are to live in a democracy
- Sir Winston Churchill's famous quote: "It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried". So no form of democracy is in a static state of perfection – how could ours be developed?
- How could you become more democratically active?

## Quiz

### AIM:

To act as a brief and fun recap of what the students know about the role of the House of Lords in the context of the UK's democratic system.

### INTRODUCTION:

The questions combine historical and contemporary themes and are intended to help students consider what they would like to raise in the Q and A session.

Use for revision after the assembly and/or viewing of the PowerPoint at [add URL](#), or as a way of testing students' prior knowledge. There are ten multiple choice questions which you can employ in a variety of ways including:

#### Random questions for form time

Use the questions in a quick-fire unstructured fashion whenever you have a moment to fill.

#### Team quiz

Organise the class into teams. You can either:

- select the fastest responders by 'hands-up'
- ask a question of each team in turn (with points lost for an incorrect answer)
- run a more formal quiz where each team writes down their answers.

#### Homework

Set some or all of the questions for homework. In this case you may prefer to omit the multiple choice answers in order to encourage more considered research.

## QUESTIONS

1.

A key role of the House of Lords is to hold the Government to account. In the 2016-17 session, how many oral and written questions did they ask the Government?

- a) 7,380
- b) 2,034
- c) 5,021

**2.** Who was 'John Johnson' and why is he so significant in the history of Parliament and the Lords in particular?

- a) He was the first Speaker of the House of Lords
- b) This was the pseudonym of Guy Fawkes
- c) He was the first Lord to be banned for using unparliamentary language

**3.** Which of these is NOT part of the Lord Speaker's role?

- a) Presiding over business in the Lords Chamber
- b) Calling members to order and deciding who speaks next
- c) Co-ordinating outreach programmes, including Peers in Schools

**4.** Which feature of the Palace of Westminster is nearest to the House of Lords chamber?

- a) The Elizabeth Tower (which houses the clock and Big Ben)
- b) Westminster Hall
- c) The Victoria Tower

**5.** A tally stick was an old method of accounting using notches on a wooden stick. What significant effect did these have on the House of Lords in 1834, and much of the whole palace of Westminster soon after?

- a) They caught fire beneath the Lords, destroying most of the Palace of Westminster
- b) They represented a huge debt that could not be paid, bankrupting Parliament
- c) They were accidentally thrown away as scrap, meaning that no one had to pay any debts they owed

**6.** A significant part of the membership is not party political. These are the Bishops (approximately 3% of the total membership), and which other group that makes up about 22% of the membership?

- a) Life Peers
- b) Specialist Peers
- c) Crossbenchers

**7.** Which power did the House of Lords cease to have in 2009?

- a) Hearing judicial (legal) appeals from the courts
- b) Blocking legislation from the House of Commons
- c) Suggest amendments to draft Bills.

**8.** A great deal of the House of Lords' work looking at important areas of public policy takes place outside of the debating chamber in groups known as what?

- a) Discussion symposiums
- b) Select committees
- c) Lords' synods

**9.** **Who am I?**

Many members of the Lords are appointed because of their experience in a particular field. Can you figure out who the following statements are about?

I am the founder of the Big Issue Foundation and the International Network of Street Papers. I became a member of the Lords in 2015.

- a) Lord Bud
- b) Baroness Bird
- c) Lord Bird

**10.** I was a member of the GB Paralympic Team from 1988 to 2004. I have won many races and medals, including four golds at the 2000 Sydney Paralympics. My total Paralympic Medal tally is eleven gold, four silvers and one bronze. I have also won five gold, four silver and three bronze medals at World Championships and have broken thirty World Records.

- a) Lord (Julian) Thomas
- b) Baroness Grey-Thompson
- c) Baroness Jay-Thomas

## Answers

- 1.** Answer: **a**  
7,380 oral and written questions were asked in the 2016/17 session. This crucial role of the Lords allows for careful consideration and clarification of government policy. During the same period the Lords held 154 debates on topical issues and public policy.
- 2.** Answer: **b**  
This was the cover name of Guido (Guy) Fawkes, infamous for attempting to blow up the King and the House of Lords in 1605. The story of the Gunpowder Plot can be explained further using this film and lesson plan:  
[www.parliament.uk/gunpowderplotvideo](http://www.parliament.uk/gunpowderplotvideo)
- 3.** Answer: **b**  
Unlike the Commons, the House of Lords is self-regulating so the Lord Speaker guides and assists the House during debates, rather than controlling or managing it.
- 4.** Answer: **c**  
The Victoria Tower at the opposite end of the Palace of Westminster to the Elizabeth Tower, which houses Big Ben.
- 5.** Answer: **a**  
The story of this fire and the subsequent rebuilding of the Palace of Westminster can be found in this short film and accompanying resources:  
[www.parliament.uk/fireof1834](http://www.parliament.uk/fireof1834)
- 6.** Answer: **c**  
Crossbenchers are not aligned to any political party – they bring a wide range of knowledge and understanding to the work of the Lords.
- 7.** Answer: **a**  
Prior to 2009, the Law Lords sat in the House of Lords and would hear judicial appeals. This changed with the establishment of the Supreme Court which started work on October 1st 2009.
- 8.** Answer: **b**  
Select committees cover a wide range of subjects including artificial intelligence, economic affairs, high speed rail, the environment, science and technology and many others.



9.

Answer: **C**

The Big Issue founder and Editor in Chief Lord (John) Bird. His House of Lords profile can be found at:

[www.parliament.uk/biographies/lords/lord-bird/4564](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/lords/lord-bird/4564)

10.

Answer: **b**

Paralympian Baroness Grey-Thompson. Her profile can be found at:

[www.parliament.uk/biographies/lords/baroness-grey-thompson/3862](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/lords/baroness-grey-thompson/3862)

## Peers in Schools Programme



### RESEARCH

#### **AIM:**

To find out about the members of the House of Lords whom the students will be meeting.

Set students the task of finding out about the member they will meet in person or via Skype.

Biographies of all members can be found at [www.parliament.uk/lordsmembers](http://www.parliament.uk/lordsmembers)

Categories for research can include:

- full name and title
- career prior to becoming a member, and whether they still continue in this role alongside their work in the House
- when they were made a member
- party affiliation, Bishop or Crossbencher
- special interests (member's focus or area of expertise)

In the best journalistic research tradition, encourage the students to use the information on the House of Lords section of Parliament's website to instigate further searches, such as finding a link to the member's own website, if they have one.

#### **WAYS TO USE THE RESEARCH:**

a) Small groups prepare presentations (verbal or in the form of PowerPoint) for the rest of the class, each group taking a particular aspect of the research. Categories could include:

- the Peer's career outside of Parliament
- special interests
- committees to which they have contributed

b) Written reports covering the whole biography in brief and/or a specific element in more detail.

c) Preparation for an assembly, such as the one in this pack, incorporating a biography of the Members.

## Questions

**AIM:**

To consider questions the students would like to put to the Member.

**NOTE:** Members are very keen to hear directly from students, so your help is appreciated in facilitating light-touch guidance which supports developing the questions, but does not steer the content.

1.

Working individually, ask students to frame three questions:

- one about the members and their career and interests
- one about the House of Lords: its work, structure or future
- one about an important national issue (this may have a particular local relevance)

These are broad categories, so encourage the students to carefully consider the most important question for them. Which question motivates or intrigues them the most? Which do they feel passionate about? Suggest that they put themselves 'in the shoes' of the member they will talk to, make sure students check that their question is clear, focused and likely to achieve a meaningful answer.

2.

Ask students to come together in small groups to share their questions and choose the best ones. They should arrange them in the order they will be asked.

To achieve this, groups will have to develop their own democratic structure. How will they decide on the best questions, the order and any they feel they should reject? Methods to consider include:

- discussion
- more formal debate with rules and time limits
- secret ballot
- show of hands

Another option is to make the questions anonymous and have another group select them.

Stress that there may not be time for all the questions to be asked during the session, so choosing the most important and ordering them is a vital part of getting the most out of the experience.

## POST-VISIT RESOURCES

### DISCUSSION

**AIM:**

To recall the session and compare views on what was said.

Invite students to give their impressions of what they heard and saw during the visit or Skype session.

- what most impressed them?
- did any answers or views surprise them?
- did they feel their questions were answered fully?
- did any of the answers raise new questions for them?
- has the session changed their view of the role of the House of Lords?

Summarise on the board:

- the most useful aspect of the session
- the most important thing we have learned
- a new question raised by the session

Finally, ask students to consider an action they will take or an ambition they might have as a result of the session. This might be around a particular issue raised, where an action might be to join a political party or campaign, or an ambition to get more involved in politics in some career capacity and/or through further study.

POST-IT REVIEW

**AIM:**

To encourage students to write focused responses to their session using post-it notes to create a comment wall.

This quick activity is a useful way to check and condense learning following the session.

Give each student three post-it notes of different colours and/or shapes. Ask them to write a succinct comment on each:

- one thing that surprised me was...
- one thing I learnt was...
- one question I have is...

They should stick their comments to the wall or on large sheet of paper, sorted into the three categories. Encourage students to read the other comments before adding their own, thinking about grouping similar questions together.

The completed displays can be photographed and shared on the school's social media platforms and website.

One thing that surprised me was...

One thing I learnt was...

One question I have is...

## Peers in Schools Programme



## Debate

### AIM:

To focus on something that was raised during the #LordsLive or Peers in Schools session, using a formal debating structure to explore a range of views.

### INTRODUCTION:

There are many different forms of debate, from a simple 'balloon debate', where speakers are voted off in turn until one 'winner' remains, to formal debates with set rules and time limits.

The UK Parliament's Education Service has produced PDF debating resources with a range of approaches. The 'Create the Debate' and 'Get Debating' resources can be found at:

[www.parliament.uk/school-debating-pack](http://www.parliament.uk/school-debating-pack)

[www.parliament.uk/getdebating](http://www.parliament.uk/getdebating)

For a flavour of the approach to debating in the Lords you can watch the House of Lords in action on Parliament TV:

[www.parliamentlive.tv/Lords](http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Lords)

You might like to hold a debate in a style similar to one in the House of Lords.

Members debate the issues of the day and can ask government ministers to respond.

### NOTE: Some important things to remember:

- During question time in the House of Lords, Members posing questions don't actually ask them out loud in the Chamber. They are listed on a pre-published order paper. They say 'My Lords, I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name on the order paper'. The minister then responds from the despatch box.
- The House of Lords is self-regulating. The Lord Speaker does not impose order – all Members are responsible for discipline in the Chamber, or 'keeping order', and this is left to the House as a whole. Therefore, you won't hear the cries of 'Order, order' so familiar from the Commons.
- Debates in the Lords are usually conducted in a thoughtful and reflective manner with arguments firmly, but not aggressively, put forward.

### RUNNING THE DEBATE:

- 1.** Before the debate begins, choose someone to take the role of the Lord Speaker who will guide and support the debate, but not exercise a controlling authority. This is a difficult role, but one that is essential in demonstrating the different debating styles and practices of the Lords and the Commons. The 'Lord Speaker' could be a class member (or several taking turns) or you could take the role yourself.
- 2.** Set students the task of writing their question clearly and formally so that it states the issues they wish to debate in an unambiguous way. At the start of the debate the questioner uses the form of words above to initiate the debate ('My Lords, I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name on the order paper').
- 3.** You may wish to set up the room to look like the House of Lords Chamber with rows of chairs facing each other and the Speaker's chair centrally placed at one end. The politically independent crossbenches are a unique feature of the Lords. Before beginning the debate you could ask students to indicate if they are in support of the motion, against the motion or would like to be considered as cross-benchers who will make up their minds as they listen and contribute.
- 4.** Once someone has asked a question, invite anyone who has a view to respond to it.  
The biggest challenge for the students, particularly if they are debating a contentious subject, is to maintain order amongst themselves, promoting polite and rational discussion. Students should stand if they wish to speak in the debate, exercising restraint and courtesy to let others have their say.
- 5.** Once the debate has come to a natural lull, or when you have run out of time, the 'Lord Speaker' should bring the session to a close and propose the question to the House for a vote.
- 6.** Decide how the final vote will be carried out. You can either 'vote with your feet' (division) by assigning two sides of the room as 'Content' (supporting the motion) or 'Not content' (voting against the notion), or by counting hands. To be true to open democratic principles, secret ballots are not permitted.

## WRITTEN RESPONSES

### AIM:

To create a record of the session and responses to it in the form of a letter or article.

### WRITING TO REMEMBER:

Set the task of writing to thank the Member who participated in the session. As well as passing on thanks, students should:

- state their views on the session, what they found helpful
- devise a follow-up to any question they asked or were interested in
- outline any further issue or question they might wish to raise

### WRITING A FEATURE FOR THE SCHOOL:

There are many different forms of debate, from a simple 'balloon debate', where speakers are voted off in turn until one 'winner' remains, to formal debates with set rules and time limits.

Ask students to identify a method of publishing a report on the visit to the whole school. This will depend on your school's arrangements. It might be an article in a school magazine, on the school website, a report to the school council or a script for a school audio or video broadcast.

Encourage students to consider the age and experience of their readers – is this for the whole school or targeted at a particular age group?

They should consider good journalistic practice:

- fact-checking anything they are unsure about
- being clear about the difference between facts and opinion – making this distinction obvious in the report
- giving an overview of the whole event (what happened, where and when) in the first short paragraph, then adding more detail in subsequent sections

## MULTI-MEDIA RESPONSES

**AIM:**

To create a record of the session and responses to it using a variety of media.

1. Reports can be in the form of multi-media presentations - PowerPoint, audio, video or in person. They could use a combination of these, such as combining a talk with video and PowerPoint.

Audiences for these reports may include other classes, the School Council, the Governing Body or, as in the section below, the rest of the school or year in an assembly.

2. To round off the whole project, students could devise and deliver a school assembly.

Potential elements could include:

- an introduction to the role of the House of Lords
- an explanation of the session: what happened, when and where
- students' responses: what they thought of the session and what they learned
- further questions they have following the session
- actions they might take and/or encourage their listeners to take
- a time of reflection depending on the school's tradition

## Peers in Schools Programme



## USEFUL LINKS

### **PARLIAMENTS EDUCATION OUTREACH:**

[www.parliament.uk/education](http://www.parliament.uk/education)

A vast range of resources related to democracy, citizenship and parliamentary heritage

### **PEERS IN SCHOOLS:**

[www.parliament.uk/business/lords/lord-speaker/outreach-programme/peers-in-schools/](http://www.parliament.uk/business/lords/lord-speaker/outreach-programme/peers-in-schools/)

Full details of the Peers in Schools programme.

### **#LORDSLIVE:**

[www.parliament.uk/education/outreach-in-your-school/lordslive/](http://www.parliament.uk/education/outreach-in-your-school/lordslive/)

Full details of the #LordsLive programme.

### **INDIVIDUAL PEERS' BIOGRAPHIES:**

[www.parliament.uk/lordsmembers](http://www.parliament.uk/lordsmembers)

Find information about the peer your students will meet.

### **HOUSE OF LORDS HOMEPAGE:**

[www.parliament.uk/business/lords](http://www.parliament.uk/business/lords)

Links to a wealth of information about the Lords, its structure and work.

### **THE ROLE OF THE LORD SPEAKER:**

[www.parliament.uk/role-of-lord-speaker](http://www.parliament.uk/role-of-lord-speaker)

### **DEBATING RESOURCES:**

[www.parliament.uk/school-debating-pack](http://www.parliament.uk/school-debating-pack)

[www.parliament.uk/getdebating](http://www.parliament.uk/getdebating)