

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, follow these links:

www.aph.gov.au/house/work/index.htm

and check the links under ‘House Chamber Seating Plan’.

www.aph.gov.au/Senate/work/

and check the links under ‘Senate Chamber Seating Plan’.

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:

Mace:

www.peo.gov.au/students/fss/fss11.html

www.peo.gov.au/multimedia/library/hor.html
and scroll down to ‘Chamber’.

Usher of the Black Rod:

www.peo.gov.au/students/fss/fss04.html

www.peo.gov.au/multimedia/library/senate.html
and scroll down to ‘Chamber’.

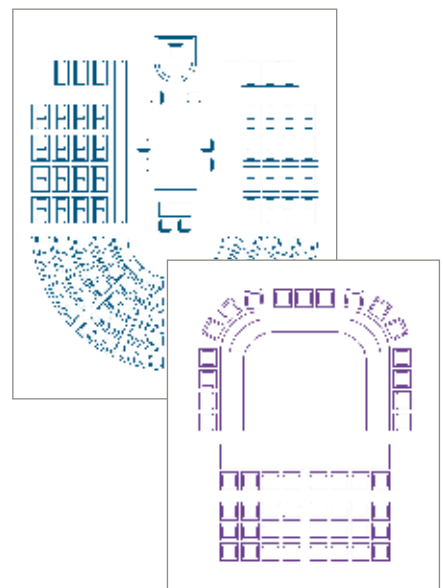
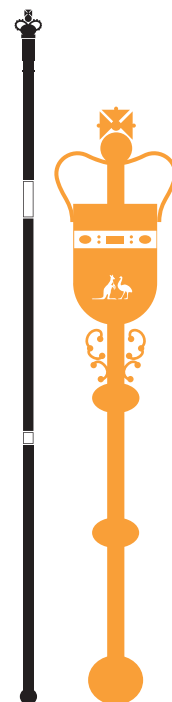
www.aph.gov.au/senate/pubs/briefs/brief16.htm

Despatch Box:

www.peo.gov.au/students/fss/fss02.html

You could also check Parliamentary Treasures—
Signatures of Oz:

www.peo.gov.au/kidsview/parltreas/



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:

www.peo.gov.au/students/fss

www.peo.gov.au/students/now_parl.html

www.peo.gov.au/faq/faq_9.html#9_8

www.aph.gov.au/senate/pubs/briefs/brief15.htm

www.aph.gov.au/house/info/infosheets/is21.pdf

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 links:

www.peo.gov.au/students/fss/fss30.html

www.peo.gov.au/students/fss/fss16.html

www.aph.gov.au/house/members/index.htm and select 'Infosheet No.3: The Speaker' and 'The Speaker of the House of Representatives, 2nd Edition'

www.aph.gov.au/Senate/senators/index.htm and select 'The President of the Senate'.



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 these links:

www.peo.gov.au/students/fss/fss22.html

Australian Parliament House: Senate Briefs

www.aph.gov.au/senate/pubs/briefs/brief10.htm



8. Compare and contrast the two chambers in federal 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 out these links:

www.peo.gov.au/students/cl/history.html

www.peo.gov.au/students/fss/index.html

You will also find more information by exploring other sections of the PEO website.

You could also check the UK Parliament website:

www.parliament.uk/