



VOCABULARY

Parliament Education: Student Resource

Parliament is a space that uses words you may not be familiar with. To help support your learning about Parliament and to prepare you for your visit, here are some key words.

backbench MP - a member of Parliament (MP) in Government that is not a minister.

bill - a draft of a proposed law presented to Parliament for discussion.

Cabinet - the committee of senior ministers responsible for government policy also known as the Executive.

Clerk of the House - the main advisor to the Speaker and the House on specialist parliamentary procedure.

coalition - a temporary alliance between political parties to form a Government.

debate - To formally discuss a bill or issue, with MPs presenting different views before a decision is made.

election - a formal and organised choice by vote of a person for a political office.

electorate - the people in an area of New Zealand who are entitled to vote.

Executive - the branch of government responsible for putting laws into effect.

Government - the group of people that have a majority and propose most of the new laws.

hold to account - making someone accept responsibility and provide explanations for actions and decisions.

Member of Parliament - a person elected to the national legislative body.

Minister - An MP in charge of policy decisions for a specific area, like health or education.

monarch / sovereign - the head of state such as a King or Queen.

Opposition - the parliamentary party / parties not in government. Their job is to hold the government to account.

Parliament - a group of elected representatives who make laws.

party - a group that takes part in elections and attempts to form / take part in a government.

policy - An idea or plan of action put forward by a political party or government to address an issue or achieve a goal.

press - group of journalists who cover the news.

represent - to act or speak for someone in an official capacity, such as an elected Member of Parliament.

scrutiny - critical observation or examination.

Sitting Day - when members of Parliament assemble in the House to discuss and decide parliamentary business.

Standing Orders - the rules of procedure for the House and its committees.

taxes - a compulsory contribution to state revenue set by the government on income, goods, services and transactions.

The House - The elected members of Parliament who represent New Zealanders and make the country's laws.

The Speaker - the impartial chair of the House elected by fellow members of Parliament.

vote - a formal indication / expression of choice.

Whip - an MP of a political party appointed to maintain discipline, attendance and cast votes for members.



ROOMS IN PARLIAMENT

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Select Committee

Rooms like this one are where proposed laws are discussed and scrutinised by MPs from both sides of the House. It is also where members of the public can have their say on issues of the day. Select committees can consult on and review proposals for months.



Debating Chamber

This is where the Members of Parliament (usually there's 120 of them) meet to debate, scrutinise and vote on the work of the Government. The Speaker acts like the referee and the House is split into two sides - Government and Opposition.



Beehive Theatrette

This is the press conference room where Ministers speak about decisions they've made at Cabinet and issues facing the country. The media asks questions to find out important information and details to inform the public so that they know what is going on.



Public Gallery

From the public galleries, you can watch MPs as they answer questions, debate issues and vote on legislation. The gallery facing the Speaker is reserved for official guests, while the gallery behind the Speaker is where members of the press sit.



QUESTION TIME

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If you visit Parliament when the House is sitting, you and your students can watch from the public gallery.

Question Time is one of the highlights of a sitting day, as Government and Opposition MPs debate actions of the Government.

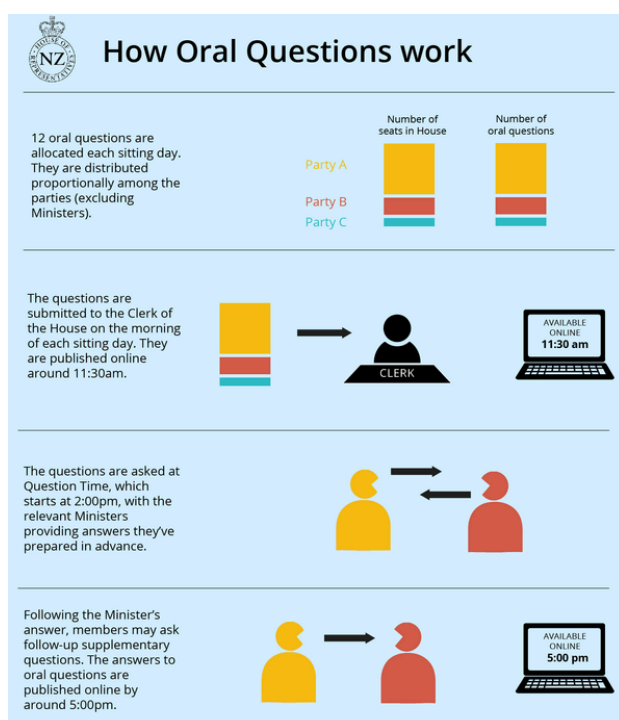
Here is a quick guide to help you and your students prepare for your visit.



What is Question Time?

On most days when the House sits, Question Time is the first major item on the agenda. One of the main functions of Parliament is to pass and change laws. Question Time gives MPs on both sides of the House the opportunity to ask questions to explore issues and hold the Government to account.

The front bench of MPs on the Government side are the Ministers. These are the people responsible for running the country. For example, there is the Minister of Finance, Minister of Education, Minister of Health and Minister for the Environment. Questions are mostly directed at these Ministers. Friendlier questions, known as patsy questions, are asked by Government MPs called backbenchers. Tougher, more hostile questions are asked by the Opposition MPs.



How oral questions work

There are 12 oral questions each sitting day, which are distributed proportionally among the parties in Parliament according to how many members (excluding Ministers) they have in the House. The oral questions for the day are submitted to the Clerk of the House between 10am and 10:30am. This gives the relevant Ministers a few hours to prepare a reply.

MPs can follow up an answer with supplementary questions – which the Ministers will not have been notified of. Members need to make sure any supplementary questions link directly to the original oral question.



WRITING LINKS

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Research shows that more authentic tasks will support intentional writing for students (McCutcheon 1988). Using your Parliament visit provides a tangible purpose for your students' writing. They need to know that writing can be used for a variety of purposes, and that we write with this in mind.

Persuasive writing

A piece of persuasive writing can be written in the first person. Often, the writer will use inclusive language to get the audience on their side. For example:

We must... For the sake of **our** future...

The writer may use a personal story or emotive language too as well as evidence (facts and data) that support their argument. Here introductory phrases help to signpost this, e.g: *For example... To illustrate... For instance... The evidence is clear...*

Ideas for persuasive writing linking to Parliament

1. A letter to your MP about an issue affecting your school, local community or wider.
2. An opinion piece on New Zealand's Parliament.
3. A persuasive argument outlining why 10-year-olds should be allowed to vote.
4. Why *you* would make a great representative in the House.

Report writing

Many reports use precise and technical language specific to the topic in question. For example, a report on the Debating Chamber may include words such as *Hansard*, *Gallery* and *Clerk of the House*. Historical and scientific reports use the third person. When recounting a personal experience, the writer can use the first person.

Report writers use transition words to connect ideas e.g. *First... In addition... In particular... To conclude...*

Ideas for report writing linking to Parliament

1. The history of New Zealand's Parliament
2. The Government and the role of Ministers.
3. The role of elect committees in the law-making process.
4. Research a Prime Minister and write a report about their contributions to New Zealand.
5. The role of the Opposition and media in Parliament.

Recount writing

This text type is about a past event or experience, usually in chronological order.

1. Write about your visit to Parliament