

Parliament Week: 31 October – 6 November 2011

Background

The very first Parliament Week is launched on the 31 October 2011. This is an exciting opportunity to explore the work and role of Parliament and, through the theme of **'Stories of Democracy'**, encourage learners to see how decisions made in Westminster have an impact on their lives.

Resources and ideas

www.parliamentweek.org

twitter @Parliament_Week

Clearly there are possibilities to involve learners of all ages, including post-16 learners, in activity during Parliament Week. Further below we set down some of the resources and projects suitable for various ages which you can use to support your activity (**particular thanks to Lee Jerome, London Met University, for putting these together**). We start off, however, with ideas specifically aimed at post-16 learners.

Ideas for work with post-16 learners

- Link your work on **learner voice**, including elections for your SU/parliament/learners' forum, to the work of the Westminster Parliament. Use the LSIS resource pack ***Listening to learners?*** to help. Available at: <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/242762#listen>
- Do some work around public speaking skills and link this to Parliament Week. Show film clips of effective historic speeches given in Parliament. See: http://news.bbc.co.uk/democracylive/hi/historic_moments/default.stm
- Do some exploring your own community. Get learners to find out who their local MP is and invite one or more of them in for a Q and A session on young people's issues: a local issue of concern; EMA; HE fees; their views on votes at 16 etc. Ask the MP to take up an issue you all agree is important.
- Make an exhibition advertising Parliament week and have a campaign to encourage students who are 16 and over to register to vote. Of course they can't vote until they are 18 but it means they will be entered into the system and will receive publicity etc. about elections. http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/how_do_i_vote/registering_to_vote.aspx
- Enter one of the competitions below - although they say they are for schools e.g. Schools Question Time, post-16 providers can enter as well.
- Use some of the activities written especially for post-16 learners from the LSIS Post-16 Citizenship Support Programme:
 - Time to vote: citizenship and the elections (Citizenship News supplement, [November 2009](#))
 - Voting and elections ([March 2005](#))
 - Winner takes all? Exploring 'first past the post' and 'alternative vote' voting systems ([June 2010](#))

Other activities on topical issues are available at:

<http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=242818>

Some other activities and projects your learners can get involved with:

Stories of Democracy: Making a Difference

Parliament's Education Service and FILMCLUB have produced a short film for Parliament Week 2011, featuring interviews with several key politicians and young FILMCLUB ambassadors. Focusing on their varying personal experiences, the film will encourage young people across the UK to think about how they can help make a difference and create their own stories of democracy. The film will be available on Parliament's Radiowaves network from mid-October: www.radiowaves.co.uk/parliament

That's not all – young people themselves have an opportunity to contribute. The Parliament Radiowaves network will feature content from young people in the form of blogs, photos, films and podcasts, and is open for any young person to upload their own. Prizes will be on offer for the best responses.

UK Youth Parliament Debate in the House of Commons Chamber

On the 4 November, members of the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) will gather from all parts of the UK to debate and vote on the top five topics from their manifesto. Chaired in the House of Commons Chamber by Mr Speaker, the Rt Hon John Bercow MP, the debate will be broadcast live on the BBC Parliament channel. You can look at the topics under discussion on the UKYP website: www.ukyp.org.uk

You could hold your own debate in the same week (supporting resources are available on Parliament's Education website at www.parliament.uk/education). Also, why not enter the BBC Schools Question and Answers competition? See below.

Hansard Society Young People's Question Time

Monday 31 October, 2011, 6.30pm, Houses of Parliament

The Hansard Society is hosting a special event in Parliament to encourage young people to put their questions to a cross-party panel of MPs, chaired by Krishnan Guru-Murthy (Channel 4 news). The event is free to attend and open to all young people.

To register, email hans_admin@hansard.lse.ac.uk or phone 020 7438 1216.

Parliament and schools resource

A joint resource pack, from Parliament's Education Service and the Hansard Society to prepare students for a visit from either an MP or a member of the House of Lords. It can be used as a complete scheme of work or as individual activities. A downloadable version is available at: www.parliament.uk/education-resources/parliament-and-schools-pack.pdf

or email citizenship@hansard.lse.ac.uk

Picturing Democracy

This national photography project encourages people to take a picture that commemorates an historical event or person that contributed to the development of democracy, or an image that represents a modern story of democracy in the UK.

www.flickr.com/groups/picturingdemocracy

MyUK

MyUK is a new interactive educational activity, produced by Parliament's Education Service, with the award-winning games studio, Preloaded. This creative resource allows players to take charge of Britain as the prime minister and to choose and pass new laws, customise their country and pursue their own vision of the UK. Teacher support materials are available on Parliament's education website.

www.createmyuk.org

Schools Question and Answers

A new development to the Schools Question Time competition, run by the BBC Question Time team, BBC Radio 4, Institute for Citizenship and Parliament's Education Service, is an opportunity for students to run their own question time webcast, broadcast live on the BBC website or host an edition of BBC Radio 4's 'Any Questions?' at their school. All the details are available at www.parliament.uk/education/in-your-school

Why not use Parliament week as a focus for encouraging the students to enter a debate into the competition?

Operation Black Vote (OBV) provides a valuable website with an accessible summary of how parliament works, plus lists of black politicians, with links to their websites. The organisation also visits schools so may be able to provide a guest speaker.

www.obv.org.uk

There is a more detailed overview of how parliament works on the **parliament website**. This website includes a considerable amount of detail but is worth combing through for some of the information leaflets, for example a very useful and accessible short booklet called 'Getting Involved with Parliament' provides links to other useful websites and explanations about how individuals can make themselves heard.

www.parliament.uk/about/how

They Work for You is a useful website, enabling students to find out about the work of their MP, their voting record and current business in parliament.

www.theyworkforyou.com