



## Democracy in the EU

### Learning objective

Learn how laws get made in democracies and the role citizens can play in the law making process.

### Success criteria

Describe the role of political parties in a democracy

Describe the role of parliament

Describe how democracy works elsewhere, e.g. in the European Union

***This will take at least two lessons.***

### Introduction to learning

Get the class to vote by secret ballot on some topic of the day.

Get them to choose the topic as a class.

If short of ideas, suggest

Shorter holidays at Christmas and Easter and longer holidays in the summer.

Reducing the voting age to 16.

Banning the sale of cigarettes in shops

Use a box for the votes. Appoint two tellers to count the votes and declare the result. This is the heart of a democratic system of government.

### ***Challenge and extension activities***

Before the class votes, get one student to propose the motion, another to oppose. Just a few words on each side.

### Main body of lesson

#### Political parties

Name a political party in the UK. Do you know what it stands for?

Get the class to name the main five, Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, UKIP, Green. List on the board.

Work in pairs to produce a short phrase or two to describe one of the parties. Let the pairs choose the party.

Go through the list on the board, asking for a description. Where there is none, work out one with the class.

To the class: Why do you have political parties?

Represent the interests of the people  
Form a government

### ***Challenge and extension***

One or more of these tasks. Which parties form the government?

*Provide information.*

Government in this country is at two main levels, local and central or national government.

There are also parish councils in many areas with very local responsibilities.

In small groups decide what sort of laws they think (give one example) are made by the local Council  
by Parliament.

### ***Challenge and extension***

In small groups decide what sort of laws they think (give one example) are made in Europe

### ***Support activities***

Try and get a local councillor to come to the class or to a school assembly and say what he/she does.

## ***Second part of the topic in a separate lesson***

### **Learning objective**

Learn the role of Parliament

### **Success criteria**

Describe what happens at a general election  
Describe and act out how laws get made  
Describe how laws are made in Europe

### **Introduction to the learning**

In pairs. Describe everything you know about what happens at a general election.

Ask each pair in turn for one thing that happens. List on the screen. Prompt answers where there are gaps.

What is the purpose of a general election?  
How often does it take place?  
Who has the right to vote?  
Where do people vote?  
How does a candidate get elected?

*Continue in your pairs*

What happens after the elections take place?

The majority party forms a government.

On its own or with another party as a coalition

The prime minister in waiting goes to see the Queen who appoints him/her.

Making laws

Take one of the laws suggested earlier and track its progress through the Houses of Parliament in very simple terms.

Use class discussion to refine it into a simple proposal for a new law.

Use role play.

Take two sets of small groups. One to represent the House of Commons and the other to represent the House of Lords. Link one Commons group to one Lords group. Give each some time to consider the draft law and then time to exchange their suggestions for changing it and come to an agreed position.

Get representatives of the paired groups to present the new law. Get the class to debate/ ask questions and then vote by show of hands in this case.

Provide information on a worksheet

Government proposes changes to an existing law or proposes a new law in the form of a Bill  
Parliament debates draft Bill through various stages. May propose changes to the Bill at each stage.

Draft Bill goes to the House of Lords to go through same stages.

Lords may make some changes.

Commons and Lords accept each other's changes

Bill goes to the Queen to get Royal Assent and becomes an Act of Parliament, official name for a new law.

### ***Challenge and extension activities***

Go to Parliament website and identify the stages a Bill has to go through to become law. Say just a word or two about each stage:

First and Second Readings, Committee stage, Report stage, Third Reading.

Go to the *citizensofeurope* website and identify the three bodies that make European law: The Commission that drafts the law, and the Parliament and the Council of Ministers that debate and pass the law. Say a word about each body.

### **Feedback and assessment**

Teacher observation of work in pairs, groups, and in role play

### **References**

Department for Education

Citizenship programmes of study, 2013

[UK Parliament: Making laws](#)

[Citizens of Europe - a short guide to the EU](#)