

## Congress & Parliament

Produced by Dr Peter Jepson and Mr. Scott  
Read & précis Chapter 5 of  
'*US Government & Politics*' by Anthony J  
Bennett before the Lecture.

## Rules ...

- Read & précis notes will be checked
- Turn off your mobile
- Raise your hand to ask a question
- Do NOT chat during a Lecture.

## Terminology

Legislative bodies often have different names:

1. Can you name some different legislative bodies?
2. Why are the two different types of recruiting legislative bodies so different in terms of validity?
3. What is wrong with a third type - an hereditary type?

## Amending constitutions

- In the USA it was necessary to amend the constitution to give women votes (1920). By comparison in the UK there was no need for a constitutional amendment - all that was needed was an Act of Parliament (1918).
- Question: Does a Parliament have the power to bind a successive parliament? Should it have such power?

## Expand your thoughts ...

In the USA a persons rights are laid down in its Constitution - which must be adhered to by the Courts and Congress.

- In the UK - the Human Rights Act of 1998 incorporates the ECHR into UK Law. David Cameron has vowed to repeal/replace that Act. Question: Are a persons rights protected as well in the UK as they are in the USA?

## Size and type ...

1. The size of legislature can vary ...
2. How big is the US?
3. How big is the UK?
4. What does bicameral and unicameral mean?
5. Can you give examples of both?

### **Break into groups ...**

- Compose a list of merits and demerits of both a unicameral and bicameral system of government (giving examples).

Place your lists on the white screen using the 'wireless keyboard'.

### **Staying in those groups ...**

- Produce a list of differences between Parliament and Congress when it comes to composition and the terms of office of each.
- It is said that the most important difference is the role of the executive branch. What does he mean by this and why is it so important?

### **Break into pairs ...**

Each pair (maximum three) shall present to class one of the below areas ...

1. The legislative functions of Parliament & Congress (highlighting differences).
2. The oversight of the executive in both.
3. The different models of representation and how committees relate in each.
4. The role of political parties and/or members.

### **Some questions to be answered/considered ...**

1. Why are Parliament and Congress considered to be poles apart in their relationship between the lower and upper house?
2. Why is the Senate considered to be a political powerhouse?
3. Why is the Lords so weak?
4. What similarity exists between Senate and Lords?

### **Discussion time ...**

- Break up into three small groups. Each student member of the group then draws out of a hat a number (out of a selection of 1-8) which relates to one of the essay questions on page 221 of '*US Govt & Politics*'. The student then leads a discussion within their group on that topic.
- A member of each group finally summarises each of the discussions for the whole class.