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**LSEMUN 2026**

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

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**Rules of Procedure**

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*Prepared for LSEMUN 2026, hosted at the London School of  
Economics and Political Science by the LSESU United Nations Society.*

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27-29 March 2026



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## Introduction to the House of Commons

Welcome to the House of Commons Specialised Committee. The House of Commons is a very unique type of committee in the Model UN circuit, unlike a General Assembly committee where you are representing a country and resolutions passed may not be binding, here you are portraying a Member of Parliament (MP) and any bills passed are legally binding laws. Each Member of Parliament represents a region called a constituency, there are 650 of these in the UK and all of them have an MP.

The House of Commons has a unique seating pattern as well, with the Government and Opposition sitting on opposite sides of the room. This seating will also be simulated at the House of Commons. The front seats, or the **frontbench**, of each respective side are where Government Ministers, Cabinet Members, Shadow Cabinet Members and Party Leaders will generally sit. On the rows behind them, non-Cabinet or Shadow Cabinet members will sit, these are known as **backbenchers**.



## Section I: Conduct in the House

### I. Parliamentary Language and Conduct

- A. Personal remarks about other members of the House will not be tolerated nor will abusive or insulting remarks, such language will be asked to be withdrawn by the Speaker,
- B. A failure to comply with an order for a withdrawal of a remark could lead to the member being named,
  - 1. The naming of a member is set out in Standing Order No.44 that 'That such Member be suspended from the service of the House'.
- C. It is not considered unparliamentary language to accuse another member of lying only if it forms the basis of a substantive motion.
- D. Members cannot do the following:
  - 1. Accuse other Members of deliberate misrepresentation or lying,
  - 2. Use abusive language that will likely create disorder,
  - 3. Criticise the conduct of other MPs unless on a substantive motion to that effect,
  - 4. Refer to alleged views of the Royal Family,
  - 5. Refer to matter awaiting adjudication by the Courts,
    - a) Unless the Speaker has specifically agreed to waive the House's sub judice resolution.
- E. Should a member of the House act in a way deemed by the Speaker to be a disorderly manner they shall also be named.
- F. The Chair may impose time limits on speeches in order to give as many Members as possible the opportunity to contribute to a debate,
  - 1. Even if time limits are not imposed, you should speak with reasonable brevity and be mindful of others.
- G. Whether seated in the Chamber or standing behind the Chair or elsewhere, you must take care that your private conversation or observations on debate do not disturb proceedings or make it difficult to hear whoever is speaking.
- H. The House has agreed to the use in the Chamber of hand-held electronic devices provided that they cause no disturbance and are not used in such a way as to impair decorum,
  - 1. You may use electronic devices in place of paper notes in debate and may consult them when you are not speaking.
- I. The privilege of freedom of speech in debate allows MP's to conduct their debates without fear of outside interference, this freedom should be exercised responsibly.
- J. A Member should not cross the line of sight between the Speaker and the Member who has the floor or, at Question Time, between a Member asking a question and the Minister responding to him or her;



- K. When the Chair stands, all other Members should resume their seats and be silent;
- L. To table a motion that is on the Order Paper or the Speaker has indicated that your motion will be selected an MP must rise and state “*Mr Speaker I beg to move...[either ‘the name of the motion’ or ‘the motion in my name on the Order Paper’]*”
- M. After speaking, Members should, as a matter of courtesy, remain in the Chamber at least for the next two speeches.

## II. Addressing other MPs and the Speakers

- A. You should always bear in mind Erskine May’s advice in ‘Parliamentary Practice’ that “good temper and moderation are the characteristics of parliamentary language”.
- B. While in the House of Commons, all members must address the House via the Speaker. Direct communication between MPs is not in order.
- C. You should face the Speaker when addressing the House. It is discourteous to turn your back on the Speaker.
- D. As a Member of Parliament you may refer to fellow Members through the following terminology:
  - 1. ‘My Honourable Friend’, should be used to refer to Members on the same side of the house as yourself;
  - 2. ‘The Honourable Member for [constituency]’, should be used to refer to Members on the opposite benches;
  - 3. You may also use ‘The Honourable Member Opposite’ when it is clear to whom you are referring;
  - 4. Also note that:
    - a) Privy Counsellors are ‘right honourable’;
    - b) Ministers may be referred to by office or as ‘the Minister’:
      - (1) For example, ‘The Secretary of State for Defense’ or ‘The Chancellor of the Exchequer’;
    - c) ‘Learned’ (for KCs) and ‘gallant’ (for those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces) have largely fallen out of use;
    - d) The House of Lords may be referred to as “the House of Lords” – there is no requirement to call it “the other place”;
  - 5. MPs attract the attention of the Speaker by standing up briefly every time the next MP is about to be called. They may only speak if they have been called to do so by the Speaker.



### III. Interventions

- A. An intervention is when you make a comment during another MP's speech. You can try to intervene on another MP by rising slightly, trying to catch the MP's eye and asking them to give way;
1. The other MP is under no obligation to give way to an intervention;
    - a) If they make it clear they do not intend to give way then you must resume your seat;
  2. You cannot intervene on another intervention, you may only intervene on a speech;
  3. Interventions should be brief and relate to the subject of the speech. The Speaker is likely to call you to order if your intervention is too long;
    - a) Particularly where there are time limits in operation, you should be conscious of the impact of multiple interventions on the chances of others getting the opportunity to participate;
  4. As a matter of courtesy, you should not intervene immediately after arriving in the Chamber, and you should remain for a reasonable time after intervening;
  5. You should not intervene in the following speeches:
    - a) A maiden speech;
    - b) Ministerial Statements;
    - c) Personal Statements.



## Section II: The Order Paper

- I. The Order Paper, also known as the Order of Business, is published each sitting day and lists the business of the House and business for sittings in Westminster Hall. It shows items such as questions, motions, business, notices of committees, announcements and lists of future business. For the purposes of the Simulation, the Order Paper shall be published each morning and made available for all Members to view.
- II. The first business on the Order Paper will be Prayers, this will not be simulated fully in the House of Commons and instead will simply be an opportunity for Members to mark and take their seats prior to the start of debate. Prayers will begin when the Mace is placed upon the central table.
- III. The Order Paper will set out the timings for every debate and motion that has been granted by the Speakers. Changes will be made to the Order Paper as the day goes on.



## Section III: The Swearing In

- I. Upon arrival in the House of Commons Chamber, MPs will be asked if they wish to give an affirmation in lieu of oath and will be sworn in as Members of Parliament
- II. For those giving the oath this will be recited as:
  - A. *I swear by Almighty God that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God*
- III. For those giving an affirmation this will be recited as:
  - A. *I solemnly, sincerely, and truly declare and affirm, that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, her heirs and successors, according to law*
- IV. The Swearing In shall be done in the order of:
  - A. The Father of the House
  - B. Cabinet Ministers
  - C. Shadow Cabinet Ministers
  - D. Privy Counsellors
  - E. Other Ministers
  - F. Other Members in order of seniority by length of service
- V. MPs who undergo a by-election must retake their oath or affirmation.



## Section IV: Roles Within The House

### I. The Leader of the House of Commons

- A. The Leader of the House of Commons is responsible for delivery of the government's legislative programme and chairs the Parliamentary Business and Legislation Cabinet Committee
- B. In collaboration with the Chief Whip, the Leader of the House of Commons coordinates the business of the House of Commons and makes a weekly Business Statement to the House.
- C. In the simulation, the Leader of the House must inform the Speakers of any changes they wish to make to the proposed timetable on behalf of the Government, including motions, statements or the introduction of bills.

### II. Lord Chancellor

- A. The Lord Chancellor is one of the most ancient offices of state and today is held in conjunction with the role of Secretary of State for Justice. The Lord Chancellor previously held judicial roles but today is primarily ceremonial. The Lord Chancellor does however, hold a role in the State Opening of Parliament by presenting the Queen's Speech to the Queen.

### III. Whips

- A. Whips are MPs appointed by political parties within the House in order to inform and organise their own Members of Parliament. Their primary responsibility is to ensure that MPs within their party vote according to party policy.
- B. Party Whips and the Leader of the House of Commons will often negotiate behind the scenes to set out a timetable for Parliamentary business.
- C. The Whips will often act as the Tellers in the event of a Division.

### IV. Father of the House

- A. The Father of the House is a title given to the longest serving male member of the House of Commons. If two or more members were sworn in on the same day then whoever's name appears first in Hansard is selected.
- B. The only formal duty of the Father of the House is the presiding over of the election of the Speaker. This is *Not* simulated in our House of Commons.
- C. The Father of the House may also be called upon to move or speak on matters of a ceremonial nature in the House.



## Section V: The State Opening of Parliament

- I. Each session of Parliament begins with the State Opening of Parliament. This includes the King’s or Queen’s Speech (also known as the Gracious Speech), which outlines the legislation the government intends to introduce in the following session. Despite its name, the speech is written by the government and approved by Cabinet, but it is delivered by the Monarch from the throne in the House of Lords. The Queen’s Speech is held at the beginning of the parliamentary session, for the purposes of the simulation it will be held on Friday evening to officially open debate. The Queen’s Speech shall be drafted by the Government Minister’s, its contents should include any legislation that the Government wishes to introduce and debate during the simulation.
- II. Before the speech, MPs are summoned to the bar of the House of Lords by Black Rod.
  - A. The Speakers will call for the doors to the Chamber to be closed,
  - B. The Black Rod will knock on the doors until they are opened by the Speakers,
  - C. The Black Rod will enter the Chamber and state,
    1. *Black Rod: “Mr Speaker, the Queen commands this Honourable House to attend Her Majesty immediately in the House of Peers.”*
  - D. The Black Rod will remove the Mace from the central table,
  - E. The Speakers will then lead the procession to the Lords, followed by the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition, Ministers and other Members.
- III. The Lord Chancellor takes a printed copy of the Gracious Speech from a “Purse” and, on bended knee, hands it to the Queen, who is seated on the throne.
  - A. The Monarch then reads the speech, beginning with the words: *“My Lords and Members of the House of Commons.”*
- IV. The Queen’s Speech is normally received in silence and usually closes with the words:
  - A. *“Members of the House of Commons, estimates for the public services will be laid before you. My Lords and Members of the House of Commons, other measures will be laid before you. I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels.”*
- V. Upon finishing his speech, the Queen hands it back to the Lord Chancellor and leaves the Lords Chamber in the same procession in which the Monarch entered.
- VI. A motion for “an Humble Address” (also known as the Loyal Address) in reply to the Queen’s Speech is moved in each House by supporters of the government. Traditionally, these opening speeches are light-hearted and have featured jokes and anecdotes along with any discussion of policy.



- A. The Humble Address is moved by two government backbenchers. One of them should be a long-serving member as the mover, the other a newer MP as the second.
- B. The government will select two backbenchers to be the mover and second and must inform the Speakers of who these will be.
- C. The Speaker will call on the mover and seconder by stating “*I now have the privilege to call [mover] to move, and [second] to second, the Address.*”
- D. The mover shall rise and state
  1. “*I beg to move, That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, as follows: Most Gracious Sovereign, We, Your Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, of the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Majesty for the Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.*”
  2. The mover shall then commence their speech.
- E. The Speaker shall then call the seconder to speak, after whom the following will be called: the Leader of Opposition, the Prime Minister, Leader of the Liberal Democrat’s, followed by the floor being opened to all MPs.



## Section VI: Bills

In a House of Commons committee, Members and the Government are able to introduce Bills. A bill functions as the equivalent of a Draft Resolution and Working Paper.

### I. Formatting of a Bill

A bill in the House of Commons has a very specific format that must be followed closely.

#### A. Short title of a Bill

1. The short title is the title by which a bill is known during its passage through Parliament.
2. It must describe the content of the bill in a straightforwardly factual manner.
3. An argumentative title or slogan is not permitted.

#### B. Long title of a Bill

1. The long title of a Bill is the wording at the start of a Bill that begins 'A Bill to...' and then lists its purposes.
2. The content of the Bill must be covered by the long title and if the content of the Bill changes before it is passed the long title may also need to be changed.

#### C. Repealing

1. The first section of any bill, if it repeals previous legislation, must refer to the legislation it is repealing and state simply that it has been repealed.
2. **Extent and commencement**
  - a) Bills must make reference in their final section as to where the bill extends.
  - b) Bills must clear when commencement of the bill will be, meaning when it comes into force.
3. **European Convention on Human Rights**
  - a) All bills must make clear whether its provisions align with the UK's membership of the European Convention on Human Rights.

### II. First Reading

- A. The First Reading sees the formal introduction of the bill to the House and takes place without debate as it's typically a formality;
- B. The First Reading may occur at any point during parliamentary session;
- C. The short title of the Bill will be read aloud;



### III. Second Reading

- A. The Second Reading of a bill sees the first formal debate take place on the main points and principles of the bill;
- B. The relevant Government minister sponsoring the bill, or alternatively the MP that is responsible for the bill, will open the Second Reading through stating:
  - 1. *Minister: “Mr Speaker, I beg to move, that the Bill now be read a Second time.”*
    - a) The Minister will then commence their speech on the bill;
    - b) The Minister will typically conclude their speech when they say “*I commend this bill to the House*”;
  - 2. Once the relevant Government minister has spoken, the relevant Shadow Minister will commence their speech;
  - 3. Other backbench MPs will also be able to speak on the bill following the Shadow Minister’s speech as well as other Government and Shadow Ministers;
- C. At the end of the debate, the Commons decides whether the Bill should be given its second reading by voting, meaning it can proceed to the next stage;
- D. It is possible for a Bill to have a second reading with no debate - as long as MPs agree to its progress;

### IV. Committee and Report Stage

#### A. Committee Stage

- 1. The Committee stage will occur outside of the House of Commons while ordinary business continues.
- 2. The Committee will scrutinise the bill line by line during the Committee Stage and may call experts and Ministers for questioning on specific sections.
- 3. All MPs may propose amendments to the bill here but they can only be motioned by members of the Committee.
- 4. The Chair of the Committee may select amendments to be considered which are voted on solely by the members of the committee,
  - a) If a bill is amended during this stage it will be reprinted as amended before the Report Stage.

#### B. Report Stage

- 1. Report stage, also known as Consideration, is an opportunity for the whole House to consider what has been done during the committee stage;
- 2. A reprinted bill will be presented prior to the Report Stage if it has been amended at Committee Stage;



3. The Report Stage begins with the MP responsible for the bill stating, “*I beg to move that this report be now received.*”
4. MPs can propose further amendments at the Report Stage.
5. There will be no Report Stage for Ballot PMBs as they will be considered by the Committee as a Whole House;
6. There’s no need to write to the Speaker in advance to take part in the report stage. If you want to speak, stand up when the previous MP has finished and try to catch the Speaker’s eye;
7. Once all the amendments have been dealt with, the report stage is over and the bill moves to third reading;

## V. Third Reading

- A. The Third Reading is the final period of debate on a bill within the House,
- B. The Third Reading cannot begin until both the Committee and Report Stage have been completed, but will begin immediately once the Report Stage concludes,
- C. Debate on the Bill is usually short, and limited to what is actually in the Bill, rather than, as at second reading, what might have been included,
  1. This stage begins in a similar manner to the Second Reading;
  2. Amendments cannot be made to a Bill at third reading in the Commons;
  3. At the end of the debate, the House votes on whether to approve the third reading of the Bill;

## VI. Royal Assent

- A. Royal Assent is the Monarch's agreement to make the Bill into an Act and is a formality,
- B. When a Bill has completed all its parliamentary stages in both Houses, it must have Royal Assent before it can become an Act of Parliament (law),
  1. In the Simulation, Bills will automatically pass through the House of Lords once passed through the Commons and automatically receive Royal Assent and become laws;
- C. The legislation within the Bill may commence immediately, after a set period or only after a commencement order by a Government minister,
  1. A commencement order is designed to bring into force the whole or part of an Act of Parliament at a date later than the date of the Royal Assent;
  2. If there is no commencement order, the Act will come into force from midnight at the start of the day of the Royal Assent;
  3. The practical implementation of an Act is the responsibility of the appropriate government department, not Parliament.



## Section VII: Private Members' Bills

Private Members' Bills (PMBs) are public bills introduced by MPs and Lords who are not government ministers. As with other public bills their purpose is to change the law as it applies to the general population.

- I. To introduce a bill in the House of Commons a Member needs to provide its short title (by which it is known) and its long title (which describes briefly what it does). A complex text is not necessary with some PMBs never published in full.
  
- II. An MP can introduce a Private Members' bill in the House of Commons in one of three ways: the Ballot, the Ten Minute Rule and Presentation:
  - A. **The Ballot:**
    1. Ballot bills have the best chance of becoming law, as they get priority for the limited amount of debating time available,
    2. The names of Members applying for a bill are drawn in a ballot,
      - a) In the Simulation, Members applying for a bill can put their name forward by submitting it to the Speakers when directed to do so,
      - b) The Speakers will draw the ballot at various times throughout the conference.
    3. Ballot Bills will pass through all of the same stages as Government Bills except for the Committee and Report Stage which shall be sat as an individual committee of the Whole House.
  - B. **Ten Minute Rule:**
    1. Ten Minute Rule bills are often an opportunity for Members to voice an opinion on a subject or aspect of existing legislation, rather than a serious attempt to get a bill passed,
    2. A Member can inform the Speakers of their intention to make a Ten Minute Rule speech,
      - a) Ten Minute Rule speeches will have lower priority than all other bills.
    3. During a Ten Minute Rule bill, the Member speaking may only give a speech of up to ten minutes (for the purposes of the Simulation this speech may only be five minutes long),
      - a) An opposition speech may be heard in a similarly short speech.
    4. There will be a vote on the introduction of a Ten Minute Rule bill in one of the following ways:
      - a) There is no speech opposing the bill, suggesting that no one wants to vote against it, and the bill is introduced without a vote,



- b) There is a speech against the bill and MPs shout “No” when the Speaker puts the question that leave be granted to bring it in. This results in a vote,
        - c) There is a speech against the bill but MPs don’t object when the Speaker puts the question, and the bill is introduced without a vote.
    - 5. If the vote is in favor or no vote takes place, then the bill can be considered to have passed its First Reading and is introduced,
      - a) Ten Minute Rule bills will rarely proceed to Second Reading and will not do so in the Simulation.
    - 6. If the vote is against the bill, it can’t be introduced and goes no further.
  - C. Presentation:**
    - 1. Presentation bills rarely become law and so will not be simulated in the House of Commons.
- III. Private Members Bills will be automatically considered by a committee of the Whole House for amendments.**



## Section VIII: Committees

- I. The Committee stage occurs between the Second and Third Reading of a Bill and allows for further scrutiny of the bill to occur. In the House of Commons a Public Bill Committee is created to scrutinise a particular bill, this is separate to a Select Committee. For the purposes of the Simulation, there shall be one single Committee to scrutinise any Government bills debated.
- II. The Committee members shall be selected at the beginning of session following the Queen's Speech and first Prime Minister's Questions.
- III. The process for the selection of Committee members is as follows:
  - A. Backbench MPs may put themselves forward by submitting a self-nomination to the Speakers,
  - B. There shall 2 Committee Members from the Government Benches and 2 Committee Members from the Official Opposition Benches, and 1 Committee Member from the Other Opposition,
  - C. The House as a whole will vote for the Committee members in a secret ballot.
- IV. The Chair of the Committee will come from the party of Government and will be voted for in a secret ballot following the announcement of the Committee members.
- V. Committee members may call experts in the field to speak before the Committee and the relevant Government Minister as well as the relevant Shadow Minister for the bill in question.
  - A. Committee members should inform the Speakers when they wish to call any experts or Government Ministers for arrangements to be made,
- VI. When the Committee is hearing oral evidence, Members need not stand to speak and may refer to MPs and witnesses by name.
- VII. When the Committee is examining the text of the bill, Members must observe the same speaking rules as in the Chamber.
- VIII. Where necessary, a Committee of the Whole House will scrutinise a bill.
  - A. For the House of Commons, all Private Members Bills will be considered by a Committee of the Whole House.
  - B. A Committee of the Whole House will consider and vote for amendments to bills.



## Section IX: Amendments

- I. Amendments to Private Members Bills shall automatically be considered to be put before a committee of the Whole House.
- II. Amendments to motions that are limited to 250 words shall not bring the word count of the motion above that limit.
- III. Amendments may be tabled to the Speakers at any point after the First Reading and may not be introduced once the committee of the Whole House has begun.
- IV. For the purpose of PMBs, Amendments may only be introduced during the committee of the Whole House.
- V. A committee of the Whole House takes place in the main chamber and allows for all MPs to take part in the debate and to vote on the contents of the bill.
- VI. When in the committee of the Whole House, the Speakers should be referred to as either “Chair”, “Mister/Madam Chair”, or “Mister/Madam Deputy Chairman” as they are acting instead as the Chairman of Ways and Means.
- VII. An amendment should do one of the following:
  - A. Leave out words
  - B. Replace words with other words [leave out...and insert...]
  - C. Add words
- VIII. In a committee of the whole House, the Speaker and either Deputy Speaker shall have the power to select the amendments, new clauses or new schedules to be proposed.
- IX. The Speaker may call upon the proposer of an amendment in a committee of the Whole House to give an explanation of the object of the amendment.
- X. An MP may choose to withdraw an amendment after debate by stating, “*I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.*”
- XI. When an amendment has been moved, the question to be proposed thereon shall be, “*That the amendment be made.*”



## Section X: Voting Procedure

### I. Divisions and Lobbies

- A. When a vote is held the Speaker in the Commons asks Members to call out whether they agree or not by asking “*Question put...[question on the Order Paper]. As many of that opinion say, Aye. To the contrary No*”. The Speaker will then judge whether there is a clear result.
  1. If a clear result can be determined, the Speaker will then state,
    - a) “*The Ayes have it, the Ayes have it.*” or,
    - b) “*The No’s have it, the No’s have it.*”
  2. If a clear result cannot be determined, the Speaker will then call for a ‘division’ by announcing to ‘clear the lobbies’.
- B. The main form of voting in the House of Commons is known as a ‘division’. Members vote by walking through either an Aye (yes) or a No lobby. Their names are recorded as they file past the clerks and are then counted by the Tellers,
  1. The Aye lobby will be to the right of the Speaker's Chair,
  2. The No lobby will be to the left of the Speakers’ Chair.

### II. Tellers

- A. Tellers are appointed to verify the count when there is a division in the Commons or the Lords and to report the result back to the House.
  1. The Tellers are often Party Whips.
- B. For the purpose of the Simulation, two Tellers will be required in total, one for each lobby.
- C. The Tellers will ensure there is a fair count.
- D. The Tellers will report the result of the vote back to the Speakers
  1. Teller A: “*Ayes to the right...(number)*”
  2. Teller B: “*No’s to the left....(number)*”

### III. Tied Voting

- A. If the vote is tied in the Commons the Speaker has the casting vote.
- B. The Speaker casts his vote according to what was done in similar circumstances in the past

### IV. Quorum

- A. Quorum in the House of Commons stands at 40, including the Speaker and the Tellers, in accordance with Standing Order No.41. For the purpose of the Simulation, the Quorum will stand at 5, including the Speaker. This means that there must be 4 MPs present in the House of Commons Chamber for a vote to occur.



## Section XI: Motions and Debates

### I. Adjournment Debates

- A. Adjournment debates may commence when the Speaker calls a government whip to move the motion 'That this House do now adjourn'
- B. An adjournment debate is a way in the Commons of enabling a debate to take place but without a question which the House must then decide
- C. There is a half-hour adjournment debate at the end of each day's sitting, for the purposes of the House of Commons this period will be ten minutes
- D. MPs will apply for an adjournment debate to the Speaker who will select the debate
- E. Adjournment debates are an opportunity for individual backbench MPs to raise a particularly issue close to them and receive a response from a present Minister
- F. A Minister will respond to the MP that raised the adjournment debate
  - 1. The MP who raised the adjournment debate may not respond to the Minister

### II. Substantive Motions

- A. A motion will be considered as substantive if it calls for action or expresses an opinion, these differ from neutral motions that just ask for consideration of a topic and allow MPs to discuss an issue.
- B. Most substantive motions are tabled by the Government, and by Opposition parties in Opposition day debates.
- C. In the House of Commons, backbenchers will not be able to table substantive motions.
- D. Only amendments that the Speaker selects can be discussed and decided on by the House.
- E. At the end of the debate, the House will be asked first to decide whether to agree to any amendment(s), and then whether to agree to the motion (as amended, if it's been amended).

### III. General Debates

- A. General debates consider neutrally worded motions that usually begin, "*That this House has considered*".
- B. General debates allow MPs to debate a subject without committing the House to having an overall opinion or pursuing a course of action
- C. General debates cannot be amended and can only be voted for or against
- D. General debates begin with the Minister responsible for it moving the motion



1. Once the Minister has concluded their speech will call the question “*That this House has considered...*”
- B. The Speaker will usually call a frontbencher from the official Opposition, a backbencher from the Government side, and a frontbencher from the third largest party to make speeches next. The Speaker will then seek to call MPs from each side of the House in turn.

#### IV. Early Day Motions

- A. Early Day Motions (EDMs) are used to put on record the views of individual MPs or to draw attention to specific events or campaigns. Topics covered by EDMs vary widely.
  1. By attracting the signatures of other MPs, they can be used to demonstrate the level of parliamentary support for a particular cause or point of view.
- B. Ministers and Whips will not typically sign EDMs.
  1. Speakers and Deputy Speakers will also not sign EDMs as they are required to remain impartial.
- C. EDMs have a strict format. Each one has a short title, for example, 'Internet Gambling', and a sentence no longer than 250 words detailing the motion,
  1. EDMs must begin with “*That this House*”,
  2. EDMs will be formed of a single sentence that may be divided by semicolons into clauses.
- D. Members must submit Early Day Motions to the Speakers with signatures prior to the start of the House rising for the first debate of the day.

#### V. Prayer Motion

- A. A prayer motion can be used by members of either House to object to a statutory instrument.
- B. A motion seeking to overturn a negative instrument will include the wording: 'That a humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that [the instrument] be annulled'.
- C. Prayer motions will typically be introduced as an Early Day Motion in the House of Commons.

#### VI. Programme Motion

- A. A programme motion can be used by the government to timetable a Bill's progress through the House of Commons by setting out the time allowed for debate at each of its stages.
- B. The motion is found under Standing Order No. 83A(7).
- C. The motion is usually put forward for agreement immediately after a Government Bill has passed its Second Reading.



- D. This motion can set out the time for how long proceedings in the Committee of the Whole House, Consideration of amendments, and Third Reading will last.

## VII. Carry-over Motion

- A. A carry-over motion allows a Public Bill to continue its progress from one parliamentary year (session) into the next.
  - 1. This can be used if a General Election is called in order to keep the bill being worked on within the Chamber.
- B. In accordance with Standing Order No.80(A), a Minister may table a Carry-over motion by giving notice to the Speaker that if the bill is not finalised before the end of session it can be carried over into the next.
- C. If the carry-over motion is moved before the Committee has concluded its findings, the Committee must present the bill as amended to the Speakers and suspend its sittings immediately.

## VIII. Point of Order

- A. A point of order is an appeal to the Chair or Speaker for clarification or for a ruling on a matter of procedure in the House of Commons.
- B. The MP must explain their reasons for believing the rules of the House have been broken and the Speaker decides whether it is a valid point of order or not.

## IX. Ending of Debate

- A. A debate will end when it has run out of time or there are no more speakers.
- B. Time limits may be set on debate through the use of Programme Motions. Debates in Opposition Days have been given a set time limit for the Simulation.
- C. Motions and debates may end early through closure.
- D. Closure is the question of “*That the question now be put*”.
- E. Any member can move for closure by rising and stating “*Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the question now be put*”.
- F. The Speaker has discretion on whether to accept closure depending on if they feel the motion has been debated enough.
  - 1. If the Speakers accept the closure then the debate will immediately conclude.



## Section XII: Statements and Questions

### I. Ministerial Statements

- A. Ministerial statements are a way for Ministers to bring an important matter to the attention of the House, often at short notice
- B. Government Ministers may make oral statements to Parliament which usually address major incidents, government policies or actions
- C. After making a statement the Minister responds to questions on its topic from MPs
- D. Fifteen minutes will be allocated for any Ministerial Statements
- E. Ministerial Statements may only be made after Prime Ministers Question's

### II. Personal Statements

- A. Other statements are occasionally made, for example, by an MP who has resigned as a Minister or wishes to correct an error in a statement they have made to the House of Commons
- B. Resignation statements may typically be appointment viewing and widely attended
- C. Personal statements may only be made with the consent of the Speaker
- D. Personal statements may only be made after Question Time
- E. Personal statements are heard without interruption, there are no questions, and the Speaker does not take points of order on them

### III. Urgent Questions

- A. An urgent question requires a government minister to come to the House of Commons Chamber and give an immediate answer without prior notice
- B. An MP can apply to the Speaker for an urgent question if they think a matter is urgent and important, and there is unlikely to be another way of raising it in the House
- C. The Speaker must approve an application for an Urgent Question which will occur immediately at the conclusion of Question Time

### IV. Prime Minister's Questions

- A. Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) is amongst the most watched of the weekly events in Parliament and is held every Wednesday at noon. For the purposes of the Simulation it will take place once per day.
- B. MPs will have an opportunity prior to each PMQs to submit their questions to the Speakers, they must do so when indicated in order for their question to be selected on the Order Paper.



- C. In accordance with Standing Order No. 21(2), no questions shall be taken more than one hour after the House sits.
- D. In accordance with Standing Order No. 22 (1), notice of questions must be given to the Speaker by Members in writing in a form determined by the Speaker.
- E. The first backbench MP on the Order Paper shall stand and say, 'Number One, Mister Speaker,' to begin PMQs;
  - 1. The Prime Minister will respond to this with their schedule for the day;
    - a) *The Prime Minister: "This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall have further such meetings later today"*
  - 2. The same backbench MP will then ask their first question to the Prime Minister who will respond;
- F. The Leader of the Opposition will then ask six questions (for the purpose of the Simulation this will be three questions), and the Prime Minister will respond;
- G. The leader of the third-largest party in the House will then ask the Prime Minister one question, and the Prime Minister will respond;
- H. There will then be space for four additional questions from backbench and opposition MPs;
- I. Questions shall alternate between the Government and Opposition benches, beginning with the Government;
- J. Should the Prime Minister be unavailable for Prime Minister's Questions they can delegate responsibility for it to their Deputy Prime Minister or other senior Cabinet Member;
  - 1. In this case, the Opposition will typically put forward their own Deputy Leader or other senior Shadow Cabinet Member to ask questions;

## V. Question Time

- A. Taking place at the end of the second day or Saturday of debate, this is inspired by the weekly *BBC Question Time* and allows MPs to answer questions on their party's policy
- B. One MP from each Party will be chosen to participate in Question Time, Party Leaders must inform the Speakers who this is twenty minutes before Question Time begins



## Section XIII: Opposition Day

In accordance with the House of Commons Standing Order No.14, there are 20 days in each parliamentary session that are made available to the Opposition as Opposition Days. These are allocated as 17 days to the Leader of the Official Opposition and 3 days to the leader of the second largest opposition party and will share the time with the other opposition parties;

- I. Opposition Day motions will be considered to be Substantive Motions
- II. For the purpose of the Simulation, the time will be allocated as follows:
  - A. The Leader of the Official Opposition will receive an allocated 1 hour for debate;
  - B. The leader of the second largest opposition party and other minor parties will receive an allocated 30 minutes for debate;
- III. The time allocated for Opposition Days will be announced by the Speakers through the daily Order Paper;
- IV. At the beginning of an Opposition Day, an Opposition frontbencher speaks first, and begins by moving the motion, saying *“I beg to move the motion standing in my name on the Order Paper”*;
- V. If the Government has not tabled an amendment to the Opposition’s motion, the Speaker proposes the question and the House proceeds to debate the motion. A minister will usually make the next speech.
  - A. The Speaker will usually call a frontbencher from the official Opposition, a backbencher from the Government side, and a frontbencher from the third largest party to make speeches next.
- VI. If the Government has tabled an amendment to the Opposition’s motion, and the Speaker has selected it (the Speaker will tell the House whether that is so at the beginning of the debate), a minister makes the next speech, and opens by saying, *“I beg to move the amendment in my name on the Order Paper”*.
- VII. Outcomes of votes in an Opposition Day are not considered to be legally binding but instead represent the will of Parliament.



## Section XIV: Party Politics

As Members of the House of the Commons, MPs not only represent their constituency but also their political party. Party Politics is an important aspect of Parliament and Government and the following rules apply to our simulation.

- I. Cabinet/Shadow Reshuffles may occur at any time but the Prime Minister/Leader of the Opposition must inform the Speakers when they are occurring and of any changes made to MPs portfolios and roles.
  - A. Third Parties may also reshuffle by reassigning Spokesperson roles and by designating a specific MP as a Spokesperson on a particular issue.
- II. All Parties have their own specific rules governing how their leaders are chosen and removed
  - A. **Labour Party**
    1. A Leadership Contest will be triggered if 20% of the MPs select a single candidate to stand. For the purpose of the simulation, this number is 30%. The MPs must submit this list to the Speakers and the candidate must consent to stand.
    2. A contest will begin on a timetable set by the Speakers.
    3. The nominated candidate will automatically be on the ballot paper.
  - B. **Conservative Party**
    1. The Conservative Party's Leadership Contests are governed by the internal 1922 Committee. A Leadership Contest will be triggered if 15% of MPs write a letter to the 1922 Committee requesting a Leadership Contest, in the case of the simulation this must be 25% and must be submitted to the Speakers.
    2. A contest will begin on a timetable set by the Speakers.
    3. Any Conservative MP can be put forward as a candidate but must reserve nominations from a proposer and a seconder for their name to be on the ballot paper.
    4. Once all candidates are nominated, voting rounds will occur until there is only one candidate left who will become Party Leader.
  - C. **Liberal Democrats**
    1. A Leadership Contest will be triggered if the Party Leader resigns or a majority of Liberal Democrat MPs vote in a no confidence vote. Nominees will then require 10% of Liberal Democrat MPs support to be on the ballot paper, for the purpose of the simulation this will be 20%.
    2. Leadership Contests are held under Single Transferable Vote and secret ballot.



#### **D. Reform**

1. Under Reform's Constitution, a Leadership Election may only be called if 50% of MPs call for one. This can only be triggered if there are more than 100 Reform MPs. For the purpose of the simulation, this number is 10 MPs.

#### **E. Other Parties**

1. Other Parties, including the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish Parties, as well as the Green's, do not require their Leader to be an MP. Your Party holds themselves to Collective Leadership.



## Section XV: Cabinet Meetings

Cabinet Meetings are held by the Prime Minister at Downing Street on a weekly basis. In our simulation, there will be one Cabinet Meeting held per day. The Shadow Cabinet can also meet at this time. Additional Cabinet Meetings may be held by the Prime Minister informing the Speakers.

- I. Cabinet Meetings may be up to 20 minutes in duration.
  - A. Additional Cabinet Meetings may be 10 minutes in duration.
- II. The daily Cabinet Meeting will be held at the start of the committee session. In the first session this will be after the Swearing In and before the Queen's Speech.
- III. Only Cabinet Ministers may attend the meetings, Junior Ministers (Under-Secretary's or Ministers) may not attend.
- IV. Cabinet Meetings allow MPs to make decisions on policy and plan for the day's debate. The creation of Policy Statements/Statutory Instruments should typically be discussed during this time.
- V. The UK Government operates under "Collective Responsibility" within the Cabinet. Therefore all agreements made within the Cabinet, Ministers must support publicly even if they privately disagree.



## Section XVI: Ministerial Policy Statements/Statutory Instruments

Cabinet Ministers hold the unique position of being both part of the legislature and the executive branches of government, allowing them to enact and dictate policy within their departments through Statutory Instruments or Directions. In the House of Commons, we simulate this through Policy Statements.

- I. Policy Statements may be written by any Cabinet Minister, but only by Cabinet Ministers and must be submitted directly to the Speakers for approval.
- II. A Policy Statement may only pertain to the specific area of a Minister's Department and the Minister must specify under law they are enacting the Policy Statement through.
- III. A Policy Statement should be addressed directly to the Permanent Secretary of a Government Department for them to fulfill the policy.
- IV. A Policy Statement should outline what it is the Minister wishes to achieve and what methods they are using to do so.
- V. Ministers should wait until Policy Statements have been accepted by the Speakers to make any formal announcements on policy and this should be done via a statement to the House.
- VI. A Statutory Instrument must be approved by Parliament through either Affirmative or Negative procedure. In this simulation only Made Negative procedure will be used and the Speakers will determine if a Policy Statement requires this. Under Made Negative procedure, the Policy Statement/Statutory Instrument will have been signed by the Minister and become law automatically unless objected to. The objection must come within a set time announced by the Speaker.
- VII. Objections to a Policy Statement/Statutory Instrument come through any MP presenting a prayer motion with the following wording "*That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty praying that the [name of statutory instrument] be annulled*"
- VIII. Prayer Motion objections are rarely debated unless signed by a significant number of MPs or moved by the Official Opposition and the last occasion a Statutory Instrument was annulled by the House of Commons was in October 1979.
- IX. If a motion to annul a Policy Statement/Statutory Instrument is agreed to then it is no longer law. It must be noted this has not happened since October 1979.
- X. It should be noted by delegates that acceptance of a Policy does not necessarily mean it is successful. Policy Statements should be detailed, the greater the level of detail the higher the likelihood of success and the lower the chance that the government will be embarrassed.
- XI. **Chancellor of the Exchequer**



- A. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is the head of HM Treasury and therefore in control of all Government finances. As such, any Policy Statements that require the use of financial support must receive the approval of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.
- B. Any Policy Statement that does not include the support of the Chancellor may fail to be enacted.
- C. The Chancellor will be allocated a specific pot of finance that they can allocate to departments that require it for Policy Statements. Not all Policy Statements or Ministers may receive funding from the Chancellor.



## Section XVII: Brexit Specific Rules

### I. Negotiations

- A. Negotiations between the UK and EU will be an important mechanic of this year's House of Commons. The UK Government will be able to request negotiation time with the EU by informing the Speakers. When this is granted they should send their Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union and may send other Ministers if necessary.
- B. The Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union will act as the UK's Chief Negotiator for the simulation.
- C. Opposition parties may also meet with the EU to outline their policies and proposals for negotiations should an election occur.
- D. When multiple parties have requested a negotiation, then the Government will be preferred and receive the negotiation time.
- E. Negotiations may last for no longer than 10 minutes and once per hour for the Government. Opposition meetings with the EU may only occur once every two hours per party.
- F. Any Brexit Deal negotiated should be voted on first by the Cabinet before it is presented to Parliament.

### II. Summits

- A. The Government may also undertake a summit with the EU once per day.
  1. Should a new Government come to power, they may also undertake a summit even if one has already occurred
- B. Summits will last 15 minutes in duration.
- C. During a Summit, less specific policy proposals may be discussed but it is an opportunity for the Government and EU to be seen negotiating.

### III. Meaningful Vote

- A. The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 set out that the UK Government must seek explicit parliamentary approval for any deal that is reached between the Government and EU negotiators.
- B. The Government is unable to ratify any agreement they make without winning a meaningful vote.
- C. If the Government and EU reach an agreement, the Government must present the following before a meaningful vote occurs:
  1. a statement that a political agreement has been reached;
  2. a copy of the negotiated withdrawal agreement;
  3. and a copy of the framework for the future relationship,
- D. The Speakers may also determine that scrutiny of the deal takes place in a Committee depending on timetable.



- E. A motion to move a deal must be brought by a Minister of the Crown (a Cabinet Minister) and must bring both the withdrawal agreement and framework of the future relationship. It is not enough for a motion to simply approve an agreement on its own.
- F. Only once a meaningful vote passes will the Government be able to introduce a Withdrawal Agreement Bill.

#### **IV. No Deal**

- A. If no deal is reached between the Government and EU, or the House rejects the deal then Parliament can scrutinise and express views on what actions the Government should take next.
- B. In this situation, the Government should make a statement about ‘how it proposes to proceed’.
- C. A Minister must move a motion ‘in neutral terms’ in the Commons to the effect that the House has considered the statement. This does not have any direct legal effects.



## Section XVII: Elections

### I. By-Elections

- A. A MP may be called upon to resign from their position by recall petition or due to misconduct in the House.
- B. Upon such a situation, if the MP were to resign an immediate by-election would be held for that constituency.
- C. MPs' characters and party may change when a by-election is held.

### II. General Elections

- A. The Fixed Term Parliaments Act of 2011 remains in force during this simulation.
- B. The FTPA set out that General Elections are to be held in five year intervals, with the election day to be on the first Thursday of May in every fifth year.
- C. The FTPA sets out two methods through which an early General Election may be called:
  1. If a motion for an early general election is agreed either by at least two-thirds of the whole House or without division; or
  2. if a motion of no confidence is passed and no alternative government is confirmed by the Commons within 14 days (within 1 hour for the purpose of the simulation)
- D. If a General Election is called, Parliament will be dissolved.
- E. A carry-over motion may be presented by the Government to ensure that their bill can continue after the election.
- F. While Parliament is dissolved, MPs and Parties will be allowed a period of campaigning by the Speakers.
- G. MPs and Parties will be given time, to be determined by the Speakers, for the creation of Manifestos outlining policies and proposals.
- H. Party Leaders will attend a Leaders Debate where they will give a 1 minute opening statement each.
  1. They will then be asked questions and will each have 30 seconds to respond
  2. Following all questions being answered, Leaders will be given 1 minute for closing remarks
- I. Upon the conclusion of the General Election, there shall be another State Opening of Parliament and the committee will resume as normal.
- J. MPs' characters and party may change when an election is held to reflect the result of the election.



### III. Selection of a new Prime Minister

- A. Should the Party of Government select a new Party Leader then the outgoing Leader must resign as Prime Minister to the Queen. The new Leader must request to form a Government in the Queen's name.
- B. The outgoing and incoming Leaders may make speeches of 2 minutes each in total duration "outside Downing Street" to explain their reason for leaving or their plan for Government.
- C. A State Opening is not held when a new Leader becomes Prime Minister.

### IV. Coalitions

- A. In the event of a Hung Parliament, where no single party has the required seats to form a Majority Government, then coalitions may be formed to create a Government.
- B. In the event of a Hung Parliament, the Prime Minister prior to the election stays in power and will be given the first chance to form a government.

### V. Votes of Confidence

- A. It is a core convention of the UK's constitution that the Government must be able to command the confidence of the House of Commons.
  1. If a Government loses a confidence vote in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister will be expected either to resign, or to request a dissolution of Parliament from the Queen.
    - a) Dissolution will trigger a General Election.
- B. A confidence defeat for a Government could lead to a request for a dissolution of Parliament, as an alternative to the resignation of the Government.
- C. Under the Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Act 2022, confidence motions do not have a statutory effect and the Government may remain in place.



## Section XVIII: Standing Orders

### I. List of Important Standing Orders of Note

- A. No. 5- Affirmation in lieu of oath
  - 1. Every person returned as a Member of this House may make and subscribe a solemn affirmation in the form prescribed by statute instead of taking an oath.
- B. No. 7- Seats not to be taken before prayers
  - 1. No Member's name shall be affixed to any seat in the House before the hour of prayers; and the Speaker shall give directions to the doorkeepers accordingly.
- C. No. 8- Seats secured at prayers
  - 1. Any Member having secured a seat at prayers shall be entitled to retain the same until the rising of the House.
- D. No. 22- Notices of questions, motions and amendments
  - 1. Notices of questions shall be given by Members in writing to the Table Office in a form determined by the Speaker.
- E. No. 25- Periodic adjournments
  - 1. When a motion shall have been made by a Minister of the Crown for the adjournment of the House for a specified period or periods, the question thereon shall be put forthwith and may be decided at any hour, though opposed.
- F. No. 26- Orders of the day to be read without question put
  - 1. Upon the Speaker's direction, the Clerk shall read the orders of the day, without any question being put.
- G. No. 27- Order of disposing of orders of the day
  - 1. The orders of the day shall be disposed of in the order in which they stand upon the paper, the right being reserved to Her Majesty's Ministers of arranging government business, whether orders of the day or notices of motion, in such order as they think fit.
- H. No. 38- Procedure on divisions
  - 1. If the opinion of the Speaker or the chair as to the decision of a question is challenged he shall direct that the lobby be cleared.
  - 2. Not more than two minutes from this direction he shall put the question again, and, if his opinion is again challenged, he shall announce the names of tellers.
  - 3. After the lapse of at least eight minutes from the direction to clear the lobby he shall direct that the doors giving access to the division lobbies be locked
- I. No. 39- Voting
  - 1. A Member may vote in a division although he did not hear the question put.



2. A Member is not obliged to vote
- J. No. 40- Division unnecessarily claimed
1. The Speaker or the chair may, after the lapse of two minutes, if in his opinion the division is unnecessarily claimed, take the vote of the House, or committee, by calling upon the Members who support, and who challenge, his decision, successively to rise in their places; and he shall thereupon, as he thinks fit, either declare the determination of the House or committee, or name tellers for a division.
- K. No. 41- Quorum
1. If there is less than quorum for a division then the business will stand until the next sitting of the House.
- L. No. 42- Irrelevance or repetition
1. The Speaker, or the chair, after having called the attention of the House, or of the committee, to the conduct of a Member who persists in irrelevance, or tedious repetition either of his own arguments or of the arguments used by other Members in debate, may direct him to discontinue his speech.
- M. No. 42A- Sub Judice
1. The Speaker, or the chair, may direct any Member who breaches the terms of the sub judice resolution of the House to resume his seat.
- N. No. 43- Disorderly conduct
1. The Speaker, or the chair, shall order any Member or Members whose conduct is grossly disorderly to withdraw immediately from the House for the remainder of that day's sitting.
- O. No. 44- Order in debate
1. Whenever a Member shall have been named by the Speaker, or by the chair, immediately after the commission of the offence of disregarding the authority of the chair, or of persistently and wilfully obstructing the business of the House by abusing the rules of the House or otherwise, then if the offence has been committed by such Member in the House, the Speaker shall forthwith put the question, on a motion being made, 'That such Member be suspended from the service of the House'; and if the offence has been committed in a committee of the whole House, the chair shall forthwith suspend the proceedings of the committee and report the circumstances to the House; and the Speaker shall on a motion being made forthwith put the same question as if the offence had been committed in the House itself.
- P. No. 46- Power of the Speaker to adjourn House or suspend sitting
1. In case of grave disorder arising in the House the Speaker may, if he thinks it necessary to do so, adjourn the House without



putting any question, or suspend the sitting for a time to be named by him.

Q. No. 47- Time limits on speeches

1. The Speaker may announce that he intends to call Members to speak in a debate, or at certain times during that debate, for no longer than any period he may specify



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