Parliament

1. What are the three main functions of parliament?

Legislative/Scrutiny/representation

1. What is the legislative process in the House of Commons?

Green Paper/ White Paper/First Reading/Second reading and vote /Committee Stage/Third Reading and vote then sent to Lords for same process/ping pong/Royal Assent

1. What is a vote of no confidence and when was it last used?

Vote by the whole House of Commons. Last successfully used in 1979 against Callaghan’s labour gov. Both May and Johnson won confidence motions

1. What are backbenchers?

MPs who are neither in the cabinet or shadow cabinet

1. What are frontbenchers?

Government minsters or shadow cabinet members

1. What is the role of the speaker?

Neutral, in charge of parliamentary proceedins. E.g Urgent Questions

1. Why was John Bercow seen as a controversial speaker

Seen to be pro remain during Brexit debates and allowing too many amendments to EU Withdrawal Bill

1. What is a whip and what are they responsible for?

An MP responsible for enforcing party discipline

1. What is meant by an MP having the whip withdrawn?

An MP who has the whip withdrawn is unable to sit as member of their party. It can be restored but is not always. Corbyn

1. What is the role of the opposition?

To hold the gov to account and present an alternative gov

1. What are the four types of peers in the HL?

Hereditary, Life. Lords Spiritual, People’s peers

1. What is the King’s Speech?

Speech by the King written by PM outlining gov programme for the year ahead

1. What powers limit the Lords – 3 please

Parliament Act, Commons Financial Privilege, Salisbury Convention

1. The Commons has supreme legislative power. True/False – Parliament does.
2. What is a select Committee?

Bi partisan committee subject to balance rule that scrutinises work of a gov dept

1. How did the Wright reforms change these committees?

Made chairs and members to be elected by HC rather than appointed by whips, increased pay , set up Primary Liaison Committee

1. What remains a weakness with Select Committees?

Enforcement power, no power of subpoena, resources, occasional lack of bipartisanship

1. What is a public bill committee?

HC Committee that scrutinises legislation

1. What is the strength of public bill committees?

Often members are experts, can get advice from experts on legislation

1. What is the weakness of public bill committees?

Whipped and balance rule means dominated by gov. Means any amendment by PBC will likely have gov support and will likely have been consulted

1. What is the Primary Liaison Committee

Select Committee made up of chairs of all select committees which scrutinises PM

1. What is the standards and privileges committee and why was it important in Johnson’s resignation

Committee that investigates conduct of minsters and MPs. Deeply critical of partygate

1. Give an example of a select committee holding government to account effectively?

Home Affairs Select Committee Amber Rudd, Treasury Select Committee ( Mel Striude chair) on Kwarteng budget, Hunt and Hancock Health Select Committee

1. What is the key strength of the Lords legislative function?

Less partisan, experts, no gov majority in Commons, more independent than Commons

1. What is its key weakness?

Power limited by Parliament Act, Salisbury Convention and Commons Financial Privilege

1. What is parliamentary ping pong?

Bill going backwards and forwards between Lords and Commons

1. Why are governments unlikely to be defeated in the Commons. Give an example from both Johnson and Blair

Gov majority. Blair not defeated in 8 years, Johnson able to overturn all of Lords amendments to EU Withdrawal deal

1. What is a three line whip

The strongest form of party discipline prior to a parliamentary vote

1. On what did Truss initially call a three line whip claiming but then back down?

Fracking

1. Give three ways in which the Commons fulfils its representative function well. Think different models of representation.

Constituency surgeries, asking questions, following delegate model of representation on Brexit, improving descriptive representation, groups of like minded MPs joining together NRG

1. Give three ways in which Commons fails to fulfil its descriptive representative function effectively?

FPTP hinders democratic representation, doctrine of the mandate and trustee model of representation, groups esp women underrepresented

1. Give two other ways in which Parliament fails to fulfil its representative function?

Lords unelected, over representation of graduates, private school ( Con Party)

1. What impact has social media had on representation?

Positive – made it easier for MPS to connect with voters.

1. Give three strengths of parliament’s legislative function?

PBCs have experts and can invite opinion from experts, Lord’s expertise helps amendments particularly on Human Rights or Housing ( Lord Best). Legislation can be shaped to match representational deficits

1. Give three weaknesses of its legislative function?

Dominated by gov with majority, very few private member’s bills, legislation passes through rather than passed by parliament

1. What are urgent questions?

Can be raised by an MP and agreed to by Speaker if considered to be matter of serious public concern. If granted minister must attend HC that day to answer question

1. Give three strengths of PMQs

Combative atmosphere, televised, PM does not know questions

1. Give three weaknesses of PMQs

Generates more heat than light, Punch and Judy Politics, PM can evade questions, too short, planted questions

1. Why may the Lords be better at performing its scrutiny function than the Commons?

Independent, appointed for life, patronage powers less powerful, addresses secondary legislation which Commons does not

1. Counter argue your answer to 39.

Less direct lines of accountability. E.g No Lords equivalent to PMQs/Select Committees requiring gov ministers to attend, Lords televised rarely

1. Why might the Lords be better at performing its legislative function than the Commons

Less partisan, expertise, weak patronage powers

1. Give three functions of backbenchers

Scrutiny, representative, legislative

1. What is the backbench business committee and how has it strengthened the representative function of the Commons?

Set up by Wright Reforms to coordinate back bench business in House over see e petitions etc. Made the gov more accounatble

1. What is the payroll vote?

Around 100 MPs bound by CMR have to vote with the gov. Gives advantage to any gov vote