



EXAMPLES
BREXIT produced a number of good examples of backbench MP's forcing the Government to reconsider their Brexit proposals. In fact the power of the backbenchers was so strong due to the lack of a government majority that they held Brexit in limbo for months.

They rejected several Government 'deals'
They also added their own acts of Parliament such as the Benn Act which forced the government of the time to stop a No deal Brexit.

MP's spend more than half their time working on legislation. The Commons is the busiest legislative chamber in the world.

MP's can become involved in this through various ways.
They can **DEBATE** legislation
They can propose **AMENDMENTS**
They can become involved in **Public Bill committees** which scrutinise legislation on a line by line basis.
They can **VOTE** for, against or abstain on a bill.

PRIVATE MEMBERS BILLS:
These provide a chance for legislation to be introduced by any backbench MP

MP's can put forward their suggestions at the start of a parliamentary session. These may be selected by ballot. Generally 20 are chosen but in reality the top three or the only ones given any chance. They are given time to debate on Fridays. Most need the support of government to get passed. However, the executive have used PMBs as a vehicle to introduce more controversial bills into UK law

EXAMPLES
MURDER ACT; this banned the death penalty in the UK in the 1960's
ABORTION ACT; this was introduced by David Steele MP and passed abortion law into the UK

Public bill committees fulfill the legislative role.
They help scrutinise and draft legislation adding amendments to enhance the bills. These are later voted on. They are mostly tightly controlled by the Whips and the Executive can also have control over this area.

SELECT COMMITTEES
Most MPs serve on committees.
Departmental Select committees are used to investigate government departments and hold them to account
They can help to hold the minister to account.
They can call for persons and papers .. Which allow for the calling of witnesses or key documents to provide insights into public policy

Chairs are chosen by Parliamentary ballot of all backbench MP's
Each committee has 11 members. All have to be backbench MPs .
Their membership is also chosen by ballot from within their own parties.
Committee members of each committee are highly regarded for picking up expertise.
Their inquiry reports usually lead to further debate in Parliament and new policy or legislation.

Committees can also hold inquiries on key issues
EXAMPLES:
Inquiries into the use and safety of drones,
Inquiry into phone tapping by several UK media outlets.

PUBLIC BILL COMMITTEES
Involved in producing legislation and scrutinising on a line by line basis.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
This is the oldest Committee and is responsible for making sure public money is collected and used in an effective way. It is always chaired by an Opposition MP. It is one of the most important and recognised posts in Parliament.

KEY EXAMPLES
Inquiry into tax dodging at key companies in the UK such as Starbucks, Google and Amazon.

2) LEGISLATE

1) REPRESENT



THE ROLE OF AN MP

3) SCRUTINY

COMMITTEES

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

MINISTERS QUESTIONS
30 minutes are set aside for a Minister to answer questions
Departments are questioned each week. 2 on Monday and two on Tuesday
Those wanting to ask a question have to **table a question** prior to the session. **Names are selected by a random ballo...**

PRIME MINISTERS QUESTIONS (PMQ's)
This is the highlight of the Parliamentary week and easily the most reported event.

It lasts **30 minutes every Wednesday at midday.**
It allows MP's the chance to hold the Prime Minister, as spokesperson for the Government, to account.

Those wishing to ask a question must put their name on an Order paper which is then put into a lottery to be asked in a random order by the Speaker. It is also possible to 'catch the eye of the Speaker' through 'bobbing' - standing and sitting before the PM answers.

The Leader of the Opposition is allowed 6 questions and two from other key Opposition parties. The Speaker tends to be as fair as possible in representation.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATES
These are 30 minute **debates at the end of the parliamentary day.** They are used to put forward specifically **constituency issues.**
Ministers have to be present to answer questions.

Traditionally MPs have the job of holding the government to account.

They can do this :
- Through debates
- PMQ's
Select and public bill committees
Ministers questions
Voting for or against bills

EMERGENCY DEBATES
An MP can request that an emergency debate be held on a specific issue requiring 'urgent consideration'

This has to be agreed with the Speaker however and due to the pressures of time in the Commons this is increasingly rare.

An MP is elected to serve a **CONSTITUENCY** following an election.
650 MP's were voted to represent each of the UK's 650 constituencies.
They are voted to be representatives of that constituency and not simply delegates pushing through what the locals want. They are supposed to represent everyone in their constituency, not just those that voted for them.

Most MP's devote Friday to constituency issues. They meet their constituents at **SURGERIES** which may be in their offices or somewhere local and central like a library.

Voters can hold MP's accountable by removing them at election times
Most MP's owe their place to those who selected them as candidates. There are many **safe seats** in England and Wales and few MP's can gain seats as an independent. Many MP's appear to act independently. In fact most are tightly controlled by the party through the **WHIP.**



LOCAL TROUBLE SHOOTER
All MP's play an important role in trouble shooting within their communities. They may tackle anti social behaviour or car crime and try to allocate resources to tackle these.

Some MP's have represented constituents wrongly accused of crimes; some give support to major local issues. For example Steve Rotherham MP supported a local mothers campaign to have the law changed over lorry tyre safety after her son was killed in an accident.

Ian Paisley worked to bring a successful conclusion to the closure of Wrightbus, a major bus manufacturer in Ballymena (his constituency) He worked with unions and bidders for the company to produce a rescue bid by JCB industrialist Joe Bamford.

INTEREST GROUPS
Many MP's are also representatives of various pressure and interest groups. This can range from environmental groups such as Friends of the Earth or WWF to Justice groups like Amnesty International. Some support trade unions or Business organisations like the CBI.

Some may support local groups such as Opposition groups to Heathrow airport expansion which was supported by Local MP at the time, Zac Goldsmith (against the policy of his own party who supported the redevelopment)

PRIME MINISTERS QUESTIONS (PMQ's)
This is the highlight of the Parliamentary week and easily the most reported event.

It lasts **30 minutes every Wednesday at midday.**
It allows MP's the chance to hold the Prime Minister, as spokesperson for the Government, to account.

Those wishing to ask a question must put their name on an Order paper which is then put into a lottery to be asked in a random order by the Speaker. It is also possible to 'catch the eye of the Speaker' through 'bobbing' - standing and sitting before the PM answers.

The Leader of the Opposition is allowed 6 questions and two from other key Opposition parties. The Speaker tends to be as fair as possible in representation.



ADJOURNMENT DEBATES
These are 30 minute **debates at the end of the parliamentary day.** They are used to put forward specifically **constituency issues.**
Ministers have to be present to answer questions.



REMEMBER:
Lagan School Rocks!