



# Main functions of the Legislative Council

## Objectives

By the end of the session, students will be able to recognize the main functions of the Legislative Council and better understand how the work of the Legislative Council affects members of the public.

## Overall duration

60 minutes

## Activity 1 – Focus: Powers and functions of the Legislative Council

- Commence by asking students about the articles of the Basic Law that they are familiar with;
- Go through with students Article 73 of the Basic Law, which stipulates the powers and functions of the Legislative Council; and
- Conclude the functions of the Legislative Council with three main functions [enact laws; approve public expenditure; and monitor the work of the Government].

### Time needed:

5 minutes

### Online resources:

- Quick Information*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → [Quick Information](#)
- Legislative Council in Brief*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand → [Legislative Council in Brief](#)
- The Basic Law (Chapter IV Political Structure—Article 73)*  
[www.basiclaw.gov.hk/en/basiclaw/index.html](http://www.basiclaw.gov.hk/en/basiclaw/index.html)

## Activity 2 – Focus: Enact laws

- Ask students to list laws that they are familiar with;
- Introduce the terms "bill" and "ordinance";
- Split your class into groups. Ask each group to choose one law and discuss the following:
  - Why was the law made?
  - Why is the law essential?
- Ask the question: "who make the laws?" [legislative proposals may be introduced by the Government or Legislative Council Members into the Legislative Council, and pass through three readings at Legislative Council meetings];
- Give examples of laws passed by the Legislative Council and briefly explain their objectives [see the long title stated in the Ordinance, i.e. "An Ordinance to..."];

- (f) Select a few bills [see exhibition panels on "Enact laws" and "Law-making process" under the "Education" section of the Legislative Council Website] and prepare cards each showing the date on which a bill went through a stage of the law-making process (e.g. First Reading, Bills Committee);
- (g) Split your class into groups. Have each group match the date cards with the various stages of the law-making process; and
- (h) Ask groups to compare the length of time taken for the bills to go through the law-making process and which stage took the longest time. Discuss findings.

**Time needed:**

20 minutes

**Online resources:**

- (a) *Quick Information*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → [Quick Information](#)
- (b) *Legislative Council in Brief*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand → [Legislative Council in Brief](#)
- (c) *Animations and videos*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand → [Animations and videos](#)
- (d) *Exhibition panels*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand → [Exhibition panels](#)
- (e) *PowerPoint slides*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Teach → [PowerPoint slides](#)
- (f) *Bills*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → LegCo Business → Council → [Bills](#)

**Activity 3 – Focus: Approve public expenditure**

- (a) Ask students to role-play a situation. Three students will work as a group to draw up a budget for the class Picnic Day (a template is given as follows) and one of them will present the budget to the rest of the class to seek their support. The class will then vote on the budget;

**Situation**

As members of the organizing committee of the Picnic Day, you are preparing a budget which requires the majority of the class to agree in order to proceed. You may fill in the following template to complete the budget.

**Budget**

**Date (DD/MM/YY)** : \_\_\_\_\_

**No. of participants** : Whole class

**Place** : \_\_\_\_\_

**Budget** :

**Item****HK\$****Income**

(a) Reserve fund of the class \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Activity fee \_\_\_\_\_

**Expenditure**

(a) Entrance fee (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Materials for games (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

(c) Transportation \_\_\_\_\_

(d) Gift \_\_\_\_\_

(e) Food and drink \_\_\_\_\_

(f) Others \_\_\_\_\_

**Total :** \_\_\_\_\_

- (b) After the presentation, the class votes on the budget;
- (c) After the voting, ask a few students to give reasons for their decisions. For those who oppose, ask them to suggest amendments to the budget; and
- (d) Make reference to the above budgeting process, introduce the Budget of the Government and explain the role of the Legislative Council in relation to the approval of the Budget [the preparation of the estimates of the Government's revenue and expenditure for the upcoming financial year is the responsibility of the Financial Secretary while the approval of the Budget rests with the Legislative Council]. Compare the role-play case with the budgetary process of Hong Kong, e.g. compare the roles of "the organizing committee of the Picnic Day" with "the Government", "students voting to make decision" with "Legislative Council Members".

**Time needed:**

15 minutes

**Online resources:**

(a) *Quick Information*

Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → [Quick Information](#)

(b) *Legislative Council in Brief*

Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand → [Legislative Council in Brief](#)

- (c) *Animations and videos*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand → [Animations and videos](#)
- (d) *PowerPoint slides*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Teach → [PowerPoint slides](#)
- (e) *Budget website of the Government*  
[www.budget.gov.hk](http://www.budget.gov.hk)

#### Activity 4 – Focus: Monitor the work of the Government

- (a) Make use of the database on the Legislative Council Website to prepare a list of contemporary issues currently being discussed at Legislative Council meetings (e.g. through questions raised and/or motions moved by Members) and/or the Legislative Council committees (e.g. Bills Committees, Panels). Select a few video footages of the relevant meetings to illustrate the discussion process; and
- (b) Use the above contemporary issues to demonstrate how the Legislative Council monitors the work of the Government [(i) raising questions and moving motions for debate at Council meetings; (ii) considering the Director of Audit's reports on the Government's accounts and the results of value for money audits by the Public Accounts Committee; and (iii) monitoring and examining government policies by Panels].

#### Time needed:

15 minutes

#### Online resources:

- (a) *Quick Information*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → [Quick Information](#)
- (b) *Legislative Council in Brief*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand → [Legislative Council in Brief](#)
- (c) *Animations and videos*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand → [Animations and videos](#)
- (d) *PowerPoint slides*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Teach → [PowerPoint slides](#)
- (e) *Issues in particular policy areas*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Teach → [Issues in particular policy areas](#)
- (f) *Committees*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → LegCo Business → [Committees](#)
- (g) *Webcast*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → [Webcast](#)

## Conclusion

Ask students a few questions to test their understanding of the main functions of the Legislative Council. A few sample questions are given as follows:

- (a) Which article of the Basic Law stipulates the powers and functions of the Legislative Council? [Article 73]
- (b) What are the main functions of the Legislative Council? [enact laws; approve public expenditure; and monitor the work of the Government]
- (c) What procedure must a bill go through for its passage by the Legislative Council? [three-reading procedure]
- (d) Who is responsible for the First Reading of a bill? [Clerk to the Legislative Council]
- (e) Name a few Legislative Council Panels/committees. [see the Legislative Council Website]

### Time needed:

5 minutes

### Online resources:

- (a) *Quick Information*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → [Quick Information](#)
- (b) *Committees*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → LegCo Business → [Committees](#)

## Extension activities

Extend classroom teaching to the Legislative Council by:

- (a) Participating in a guided tour of the Legislative Council Complex to enhance students' understanding of the work of the Council. For details, please visit the "Visiting" section of the Legislative Council Website at [www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk); and
- (b) Observing a Council meeting (usually held on Wednesdays while the Council is in session) at the Public Gallery of the Legislative Council Chamber. Please call 3919 3399 for seat reservation.



# Law-making process

## Objectives

By the end of the session, students will better understand how a bill is scrutinized and passed by the Legislative Council, and the role of Legislative Council Members in the legislative process.

## Overall duration

Two 45-minute sessions

## Session 1

### Activity 1 – Focus: What are laws?

- (a) Split your class into groups;
- (b) Ask students to list out the rules in various places [assign each group with one place, e.g. "school", "classroom", "playground", and "library"] and suggest a new rule for the place;
- (c) Each group presents its suggestion and explain what problems the suggested rule will solve;
- (d) Ask the question: "what is the name that we give 'rules' that are in place in Hong Kong?"; and
- (e) Whole class discussion: students list laws that they are familiar with.

### Time needed:

15 minutes

### Online resources:

- (a) *Bills*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → LegCo Business → Council → Bills

### Activity 2 – Focus: How laws are made?

- (a) One of the functions of the Legislative Council is enacting laws. Make use of the animation under the "Education" section of the Legislative Council Website to give students a general introduction;
- (b) Ask students to name the stages of the law-making process;
- (c) Further introduce the law-making process using a diagram of the process and examples of bills passed;
- (d) Identify a few bills [see exhibition panels on "Enact laws" and "Law-making process" under the "Education" section of the Legislative Council Website] that students may be interested in and state the dates on which the bills were introduced into and passed by the Council; and
- (e) Select one bill and ask students to discuss "what would be the consequences if the Legislative Council had not made the law?".

### Time needed:

20 minutes

**Online resources:**

- (a) *Legislative Council in Brief*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand  
[Legislative Council in Brief](#)
- (b) *Animations and videos*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand →  
[Animations and videos](#)
- (c) *Exhibition panels*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand →  
[Exhibition panels](#)
- (d) *Bills*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → LegCo Business → Council → [Bills](#)

**Activity 3 – Focus: Voting on bills**

- (a) Ask students where they prefer to go on the next Picnic Day. Write their suggestions on board;
- (b) Ask students how they prefer to make the decision [randomly select a student to decide; select a few (two to three) students to decide for the class; discuss until a consensus is reached; majority rule]. Ask students to explain their preferences;
- (c) Ask the question: "what form of decision making does the Legislative Council use for passing bills?" [majority rule]; and
- (d) Compare the procedures for voting on bills introduced by the Government and individual Members.

**Time needed:**

10 minutes

**Online resources:**

- (a) *Legislative Council in Brief*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand →  
[Legislative Council in Brief](#)
- (b) *PowerPoint slides*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Teach →  
[PowerPoint slides](#)

**Session 2****Activity 4 – Revision: Law-making process**

- (a) Revise the law-making process with students; and
- (b) Ask students to name in sequence the different stages of the law-making process.

**Time needed:**

5 minutes

**Online resources:**

- (a) *Exhibition panels*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand →  
[Exhibition panels](#)
- (b) *PowerPoint slides*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Teach →  
[PowerPoint slides](#)

**Activity 5 – Focus: Role-play on law-making process**

- (a) Refer to DIY role-play on the law-making process under the "Education" section of the Legislative Council Website. Follow the instructions and choose a mock bill and its corresponding script to go through the law-making process;
- (b) Select a President of the Legislative Council, a Clerk to the Legislative Council and a public officer;
- (c) Divide the rest of the class into Members returned by (i) the Election Committee; (ii) functional constituencies; and (iii) geographical constituencies through direct elections [(i) Members returned by the Election Committee broadly represent different sectors and classes of the community; (ii) Members returned by functional constituencies represent sectors which are substantial and important to the development of the community; and (iii) Members returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections represent different territories of Hong Kong]. Students may work in groups and decide which constituency they represent;
- (d) Brief students on the rules of role-play which have been set out in reference to the Rules of Procedure of the Legislative Council;
- (e) Brief students on the stages of the law-making process that are to be covered during the role-play [to simplify the activity, proceedings of committee of the whole Council are not covered in the script];
- (f) Allow time for groups to prepare their speeches and determine their position. Students are encouraged to express their own views freely in accordance with the roles of stakeholders they represent, not just following scripts; and
- (g) After the role-play, ask students to research and identify bills that are currently undergoing the three-reading procedure at the Legislative Council.

**Time needed:**

40 minutes

**Online resources:**

- (a) *PowerPoint slides*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Teach →  
[PowerPoint slides](#)
- (b) *DIY role-play on the law-making process*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Teach →  
[DIY role-play on the law-making process](#)
- (c) *Bills*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → LegCo Business → Council → [Bills](#)



## Extension activities

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- (a) Participating in a guided tour of the Legislative Council Complex to enhance students' understanding of the work of the Council. For details, please visit the "Visiting" section of the Legislative Council Website at [www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk); and
- (b) Observing a Council meeting (usually held on Wednesdays while the Council is in session) at the Public Gallery of the Legislative Council Chamber. Please call 3919 3399 for seat reservation.



# How do Members perform their duties?

## Objectives

By the end of the session, students will be able to identify how Legislative Council Members perform their duties and better understand the main items of business dealt with at a Council meeting, the Legislative Council committee system, and the Redress System.

## Overall duration

60 minutes

## Activity 1 – Focus: How do Members perform their duties?

- (a) Commence by listing the powers and functions of the Legislative Council as provided for in Article 73 of the Basic Law. Conclude the functions of the Legislative Council with three main functions [enact laws; approve public expenditure; and monitor the work of the Government];
- (b) Show examples of daily work of a Legislative Council Member [see exhibition panel on "What Members do" under the "Education" section of the Legislative Council Website]; and
- (c) Discuss how Legislative Council Members perform their duties in order to deliver the functions of the Legislative Council [by attending Council meetings; participating in the work of the Legislative Council committees; handling complaints from the public; and taking part in liaison activities].

## Time needed:

10 minutes

## Online resources:

- (a) *Legislative Council in Brief*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand → [Legislative Council in Brief](#)
- (b) *Animations and videos "Learning about the Legislative Council (animation)"*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand → [Animations and videos](#)
- (c) *Exhibition panels*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand → [Exhibition panels](#)
- (d) *LegCo today*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → About LegCo → The Legislative Council → [LegCo today](#)
- (e) *The Basic Law (Chapter IV Political Structure—Article 73)*  
[www.basiclaw.gov.hk/en/basiclaw/index.html](http://www.basiclaw.gov.hk/en/basiclaw/index.html)

## Activity 2 – Focus: Attend Council meetings

- Show a photograph of the Legislative Council Chamber and ask the questions: "what meetings are held in the Chamber?", "when are the meetings held?", and "who attend the meetings in the Chamber?";
- By making reference to Agenda of a Legislative Council meeting, ask students to name the main items of business dealt with at a Council meeting;
- Ask students to deliver the following speeches as if they were Legislative Council Members attending a Council meeting;

### Speech One

President, I speak in support of the Air-conditioning System Control Bill. Many students and teachers agree that during the cooler days in autumn and winter, it is indeed unnecessary to turn on the indoor air-conditioning systems in schools. Actually, all we need to do is open the windows after turning off the air-conditioning system of the classroom. In addition to allowing air ventilation and bringing in fresh air for teachers and students, so doing can also save energy and help to achieve environmental and economic effects.

### Speech Two

President, a small increase in radioactivity was observed in the reactor cooling water at Daya Bay Nuclear Power Station earlier this year. Following the disclosure of the incident by the media, one of the shareholders of the nuclear power station, issued a statement stating that the incident was "a minor operational incident" with no impact on public safety, public health or the environment. As the incident was not significant enough to be classified as belonging to any of the levels under the International Nuclear Event Scale adopted by the International Atomic Energy Agency, it was not necessary to activate the reporting system. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council: when and through what channel the Government learnt about the aforesaid incident; how the Government has assessed the impact of the incident.

### Speech Three

President, while I appreciate the Government's efforts to improve cross-border air pollution in the past, it must do more to alleviate the problem, i.e. polluting vehicles and power plants as well as inadequate alternative energy sources. At present, the regional monitoring network system operated by Guangdong and Hong Kong governments tackles the level of pollution, but not the source of the pollution. The most important thing is to reduce the pollutant emission and to develop alternative energy sources. In view of this, I support the motion.

- After the speeches, ask the class whether the speeches are made under "Questions", "Bills" or "Members' Motions" [Speech One: Bills; Speech Two: Questions; Speech Three: Members' Motions];
- Ask students to suggest items that they would like to discuss at a Council meeting, e.g. to debate merits of a new bill, ask the Government to provide information on the work of the Government, debate issues concerning public interest;

- (f) List the suggestions and draw up a mock Council meeting agenda; and
- (g) Conclude how Legislative Council Members perform their duties at Council meetings [by raising questions on the work of the Government; enacting laws; and debating issues concerning public interest].

**Time needed:**

20 minutes

**Online resources:**

- (a) *Legislative Council in Brief*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand → [Legislative Council in Brief](#)
- (b) *Exhibition panels*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand → [Exhibition panels](#)
- (c) *PowerPoint slides*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Teach → [PowerPoint slides](#)
- (d) *Schedule of Council meetings*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → LegCo Business → Council → Council meetings → [Schedule](#)

**Activity 3 – Focus: Participate in the work of Legislative Council committees**

- (a) Introduce the Legislative Council committee system [see "Committees" under the "LegCo Business" section of the Legislative Council Website];
- (b) Introduce what roles Members perform through the committee system [scrutinizing bills and subsidiary legislation; examining and approving public expenditure; and monitoring the work of the Government]; and
- (c) State a few issues concerning public interest and ask students what Panels/committees will handle the issues. Examples are given as follows [for reference only. Teachers are advised to see the Legislative Council Website for contemporary issues discussed by Panels/committees]:

Issue	Panel/committee
1. To monitor the implementation progress of measures to enhance the quality of the coastal waters of Victoria Harbour	Panel on Environmental Affairs
2. To scrutinize a bill in detail	Bills Committee
3. To scrutinize and approve a public expenditure proposal put forward by the Government	Finance Committee
4. To consider the Director of Audit's Report on the accounts of the Government	Public Accounts Committee

**Time needed:**

15 minutes

**Online resources:**

- (a) *Legislative Council in Brief*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand → [Legislative Council in Brief](#)
- (b) *PowerPoint slides*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Teach → [PowerPoint slides](#)
- (c) *Committees*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → LegCo Business → [Committees](#)

**Activity 4 – Focus: Handle complaints from the public**

- (a) Introduce the Legislative Council Redress System, including the roles of Duty Roster Members [see *Legislative Council in Brief* on "How does the Legislative Council handle complaints from the public" under the "Education" section of the Legislative Council Website];
- (b) Illustrate the operation of the Redress System using examples of complaint cases handled under the System [see "Redress System—Statistics of cases" under the "LegCo Business" section, and the chapter on Redress System in "The Legislative Council—Annual reports" under the "About LegCo" section of the Legislative Council Website]; and
- (c) List a few contemporary issues and ask students to play the role of Duty Roster Members who should also decide to which Legislative Council committees the issues are to be referred. Examples of issues referred by Duty Roster Members to the Legislative Council committees in the past are given as follows:

Subject	Panel
1. Issues relating to formulation of homeless-friendly policy	Panel on Welfare Services
2. Policy issues relating to home learning support for cross-boundary students	Panel on Education
3. Issues relating to unemployment support measures	Panel on Manpower
4. Policy issues relating to animal welfare	Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

**Time needed:**

10 minutes

**Online resources:**

- (a) *Legislative Council in Brief*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand → [Legislative Council in Brief](#)
- (b) *Animations and videos*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand → [Animations and videos](#)
- (c) *PowerPoint slides*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Teach → [PowerPoint slides](#)

- (d) *Redress System*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → LegCo Business → [Redress System](#)
- (e) *LegCo annual reports*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → About LegCo →  
The Legislative Council → [Annual reports](#)

## Conclusion

Discuss: how is the work of Legislative Council Members related to members of the public?

### Time needed:

5 minutes

## Extension activities

Extend classroom teaching to the Legislative Council by:

- (a) Participating in a guided tour of the Legislative Council Complex to enhance students' understanding of the work of the Council. For details, please visit the "Visiting" section of the Legislative Council Website at [www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk); and
- (b) Observing a Council meeting (usually held on Wednesdays while the Council is in session) at the Public Gallery of the Legislative Council Chamber. Please call 3919 3399 for seat reservation.