



# 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

- (a) Commence by asking students about the articles of the Basic Law that they are familiar with;
- (b) Go through with students Article 73 of the Basic Law, which stipulates the powers and functions of the Legislative Council; and
- (c) 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:

- (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) *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

- (a) Ask students to list laws that they are familiar with;
- (b) Introduce the terms "bill" and "ordinance";
- (c) 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?
- (d) 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];
- (e) 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.