



# 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?
  - Who will be affected by the law?
- (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) Back in their groups. Ask students to discuss "what would be the consequences if the Legislative Council had not made the law?";

- (f) Give examples of laws passed by the Legislative Council, briefly explain their objectives [see the long title stated in the Ordinance, i.e. "An Ordinance to..."] and the dates the bills went through the various stages of the law-making process;
- (g) Identify two or three bills currently being debated/recently debated at the Legislative Council. Lead a discussion about "why and how were the bills introduced?", "who will be affected?", and "what is their current status?"; and
- (h) Ask students to vote on the bills.

**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) Introduce the Budget of the Government;
- (b) Split your class into groups. Ask each group to choose one item set out in the Budget [see [Budget website of the Government](#)] that they disagree most and discuss how they would amend it. Ask each group to explain the reasons of the proposed amendment;
- (c) Ask the class to vote on each proposed amendment. The amendment(s) is(are) considered accepted if the majority of the class votes for it;
- (d) Ask the question: "who approve 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];
- (e) Explain the role of the Legislative Council in relation to the approval of the Budget. Show a video footage of the Financial Secretary delivering the annual Budget Speech outlining the Government's budgetary proposals at a Legislative Council meeting and Members scrutinizing the proposals at a special meeting of the Finance Committee; and

- (f) Other activity ideas (may be conducted in a separate session): Elect a student as the public officer and assign the rest of the class to play the role of Legislative Council Members. The public officer formulates a financial proposal (e.g. to provide a subsidy of \$XXX for each secondary student to buy his or her own tablet computer) and makes a speech to explain the purpose of the financial proposal. Legislative Council Members may speak in favour of or against the proposal and then vote on it.

**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) *Webcast*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → [Webcast](#)
- (f) *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

Make use of the "FAQs" under the "Education" section of the Legislative Council Website to test students' understanding of the main functions of the Legislative Council.

### Time needed:

5 minutes

### Online resources:

- (a) *FAQs*  
Legislative Council Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)) → Education → Understand → Facts and FAQs → [FAQs](#)

## 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.