

Lesson brief - London Democracy

This lesson will teach students the key political structures with executive powers in London, ensuring that they can identify and explain concepts such as borough councils, constituencies and the Greater London Authority (GLA). Students also have various exercises to practise their knowledge and demonstrate ability to access this information in the future.

Lesson objectives

At the end of the lesson, students will:

- Be able to explain the differences between London boroughs and London constituencies
- Understand what the responsibilities of London borough councils are
- Understand how to find your local council and councillors online
- Understand how councillors are elected
- Identify and explore London-based issues with an action-based approach, using their newly acquired knowledge of local political structures

Resources:

- Slideshow – London Democracy
- Projector and speakers for videos
- Felt tip pens
- Access to the internet

Suggested Lesson Plan: 1 hour



Learning / Presentation - Objectives and London context

Slide 1-2

Using the text on the slide, outlined the learning objectives of the lesson to the students.

The learning objectives are the following:

- Be able to explain the differences between London boroughs and London constituencies
- Understand what the responsibilities of London borough councils are
- Understand how to find your local council and councillors online
- Understand how councillors are elected
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Slide 3

Explain the context of London. Reiterate the importance of the fact that as a big and diverse city, London has a variety of different demographics living within a wide area. This means that we have to consider what differing areas need, dependent on their demographic makeup e.g. private renters vs high density of offices.

The example used in this slide is Westminster being different from Barnet as a borough. This is because Westminster holds various political entities e.g. Parliament, alongside key tourist attractions e.g. Buckingham Palace. It has a high level of tourist foot traffic compared to Barnet which is a highly condensed housing area.

Activity - Naming London boroughs

Slide 4

Present the students with the question 'What London boroughs can you name?'. Reiterate that there are 32, and that some of the students can name their own borough in which they live in, as an example.

During this activity, you can have the students raise their hands in a class-wide discussion and list all of the activities on the board as you go along. You could alternatively have the students go into groups and write as many boroughs as they can, enabling collaborative learning practices.

The full list of boroughs: Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Camden, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Kingston upon Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond upon Thames, Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth, Westminster

Slide 5

Once the students have given their examples of boroughs, move onto this slide. It has a map illustrated with the names of all the London boroughs. In the Notes section of the slide, you will also see a list of all the boroughs, which you can use to fact-check the students' answers.

This slide also mentions the City of London – explain, as a fun fact for the students, that it is not a borough, but a mini-city in its own

right. The City of London has its own Lord Mayor and police force, even though it is geographically placed in the centre of London.

Finish this slide by outlining that London boroughs are run by London borough councils.

Activity - What do London borough councils do?

Slide 6

Now that the students understand what boroughs look like in a geographical context, they need to understand the political element.

Divide the students into small groups (approximately 3-4 students) and ask them to think about and discuss what they think borough councils are and what they do. Ask them to come up with at least 3 examples. Give them 2-3 minutes for this task, but be prepared to allocate more time if needed.

When the time is up for the task, get the students (one person from each group) to tell the rest of the class what they decided on.

Learning / Presentation - Borough Councils

Slide 7

Outline to the students the key areas of work and responsibilities on the board, that borough councils do.

Slide 8

Get the students to think about governance - who is in charge of borough councils? Explain to the students about council elections, that they occur every 4 years and that councillors can be either independent or representative of a political party. Outline that these

boroughs are further divided into wards - with 2 – 3 councillors voted in each ward.

This is demonstrated by a map of Southwark borough on the right side of the slide, showing the division into wards.

Activity- Do you know your local Council?

Slide 9

Ask students to search for the local council, using the link provided for in the presentation.

For this section, it is important that students have access to technology which can provide them with internet search capabilities.

Give the students 3-5 minutes for this task. When they have their answers, get the students to think - did they know what borough they live in, or is this a surprise?

Activity - Boroughs vs Constituencies

Slide 10

Start this slide with a refresh of what the students have learnt about boroughs e.g. the number and what they do.

On this slide, the students can see a comparison of the boroughs (top right) to the constituencies (bottom right). This is a good way for the students to see how constituencies are even smaller than boroughs.

Ask the students what they think a constituency is? Is it new to them?

Slide 11

On this slide, the image of the constituencies is far larger than the previous slide. Define and explain what a Member of Parliament (MPs) is and that they are voted into power every 5 years in a general election to take their seat in the UK Parliament, also known as Westminster.

Activity - Do you know your local MP?

Slide 12

Ask students to search for their local MP, using the link provided in the presentation.

For this section, it is important that students have access to technology which can provide them with internet search capabilities.

Give the students 3-5 minutes for this task. When they have their answers, get the students to think - did they know who their MP was, or is it a surprise? Did they ever contact their MP?

Learning / Presentation- Learning GLA and Mayor of London

Slide 13

Outline and define what the Greater London Authority (GLA), including the difference between the Mayor of London and the London Assembly, and their respective duties.

Activity - Who is the Mayor of London?

Slide 14

Ask the students, who is the Mayor? Do they know any previous Mayors of London? This should take no more than 1-2 minutes. You can however, extend this to discuss what they know about

these Mayors, how did they find out about them? E.g. social media, newspaper, TV, discussion with family and friends, etc.

Activity - Can you think of any local issues affecting London?

Slide 15

Ask the students to go into groups of 3-4 students and discuss some issues that they think happen in London. Make the students think about London as an urban city, a city of diverse demographics, but also a city which has a large tourist industry.

If the students are struggling with coming up with topics, you can suggest some of the following themes: pollution, recycling, housing, transport, cycling lanes, parks, safety, youth services, etc.

Give the students 5-10 minutes to do this activity. Once they are finished, get one member of the group to present the issues that they came up with.

Note: You can extend this activity by asking students to come up with solutions to these issues, transform the template into a PowerPoint and present it to the class in the next lesson.

Activity - Pick an issue and create an action plan

Slide 16

On this slide are 3 different issues affecting a resident of London. Ask the students to either pick one, or look at all the issues. Outline to students that they will have to report the issue to the relevant political structure. Get them to explain their choice.

To extend this activity, you can ask the students to think about whether they have ever been affected by any of these issues?