



# What Happens in Parliament?

## Student Activity Booklet

Helping Students Understand The Functions of Parliament



Copyright © 2019 Parliament Civic Education Unit,  
National Parliament of Solomon Islands, All Rights Reserved.





# What Happens in Parliament? Student Activity Booklet

Helping Students Understand The Functions of Parliament



# What Happens in Parliament?

## Student Activity Booklet

Helping Students Understand The Functions of Parliament

### Contents

Activity 1.	What Happens In Parliament after a General Election? .....	1
Activity 2.	Solomon Islands National Parliament Seating Arrangement .....	2
Activity 2.1	Solomon Islands National Parliament Seating Arrangement .....	3
Activity 3.	The Four Functions of Parliament .....	5
Activity 4.	Standing Select Committees .....	6
Activity 5.	The Lawmaking Process .....	7
Activity 5.1	The Lawmaking Process .....	8
Activity 5.2	The Lawmaking Process .....	9
Activity 6.	Political Manifestos and Policy Statements .....	10
Activity 7.	Preparing Bills for Parliament / A Legislative Scheme .....	12
Activity 8.	Structure of a Bill .....	15
Activity 8.1	Structure of a Bill .....	16
Activity 9.	Passing a Bill – A Role Play - Comprehension Questions .....	17
Activity 9.1	Passing a Bill - A Role Play – Key Terms Definition Task .....	19
Activity 9.2	Passing a Bill – Write your own Play .....	20



## What Happens in Parliament after a National General Election?

### ACTIVITY 1

Every four years Solomon Islanders' go to the polls in a general election to elect the representatives that they want in Parliament for the next four years.

While the Members in Parliament change the procedures and processes of Parliament do not. Following a national general election there are important steps that must be followed.

**Your Task** | Create a timeline showing the immediate events that happen in Parliament after an election. Use the summaries below to create this timeline, write the summaries in the correct order in the boxes around the image of Parliament.

The election is by secret ballot and conducted by the Governor General

First meeting of Parliament

Appointment of the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministers, this is known as the Cabinet

Members elect a Deputy Speaker

Members elect a Speaker, the Speaker is not a member of Parliament

Members elect the Prime Minister

Parliament is now ready to function

1

2

3

7

4



6

5



## ACTIVITY 2

# Solomon Islands National Parliament Seating Arrangement

While the Members of Parliament might change, the seating arrangement in Parliament or the House does not. Government, Opposition and Independent MP's always occupy the same seats, as do Parliamentary officers.

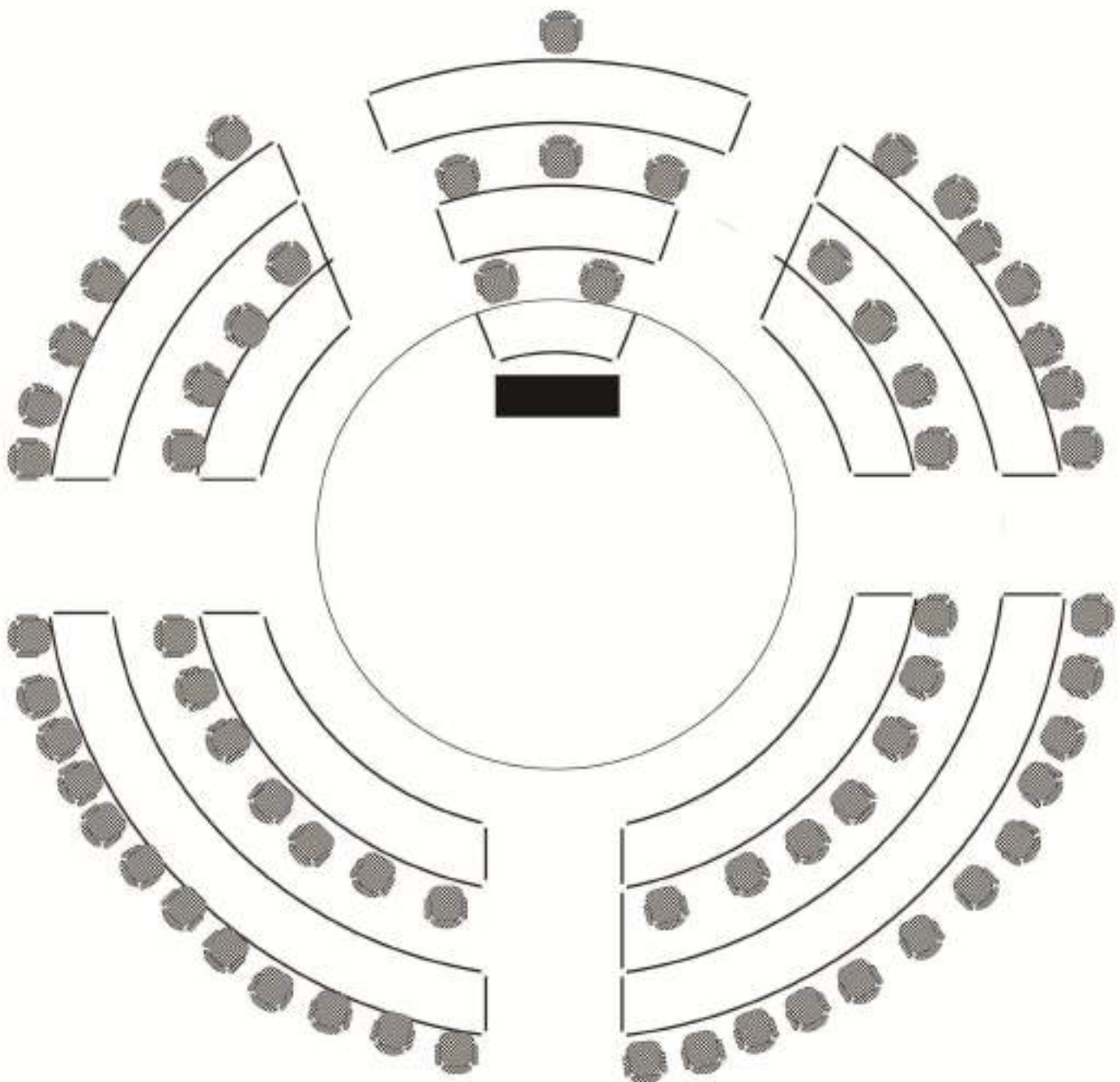
**Your Task** | Below is a birds eye view of Parliament. Using the below words label and locate where they are located in the House of Parliament.

The Speaker  
Independent Seats  
Leader of the Opposition

Clerk  
Prime Minister  
Audio Technician

Government Seats  
Attorney General  
Mace

Opposition Seats  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Leader of the Independents



# Solomon Islands National Parliament Seating Arrangement

## ACTIVITY 2.1

While the Members of Parliament might change, the seating arrangement in Parliament or the House does not. Government, Opposition and Independent MP's always occupy the same seats, as do Parliamentary officers.

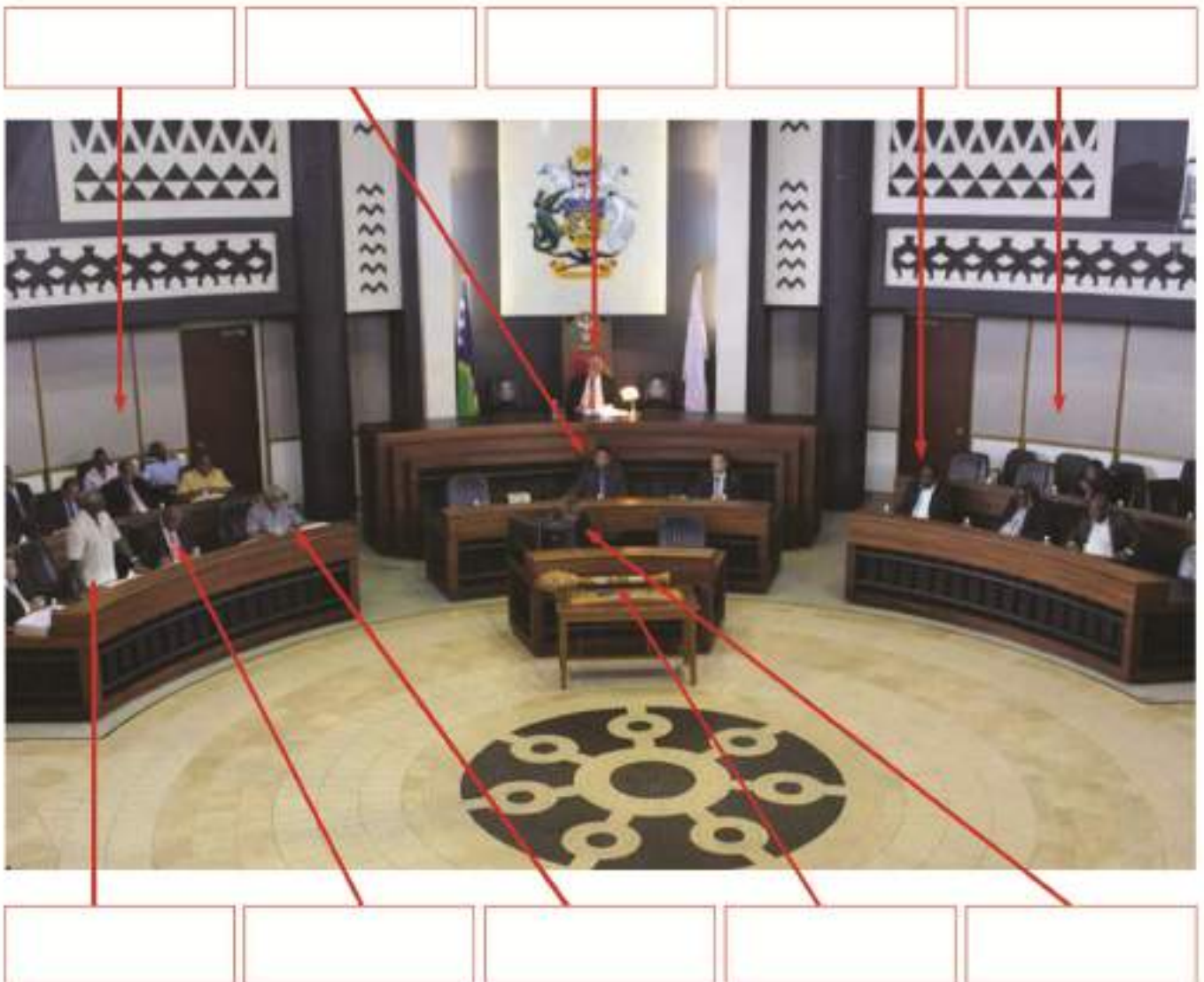
**Your Task** | Below is a view of the Parliament Chamber facing the Speaker (this is the front of the Chamber). Using the below words label and locate where they are located in the House of Parliament.

The Speaker  
Prime Minister  
Leader of the Opposition

Clerk  
Attorney General  
Audio Technician

Government Seats  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Mace

Opposition Seats





## ACTIVITY 2.1 (cont)

# Solomon Islands National Parliament Seating Arrangement

**Your Task** | Below is a view of the Parliament Chamber facing away from the Speaker (this is the back of the Chamber). Using the below words label and locate where they are located in the House of Parliament.

Public Gallery

Government MP's

Indepent MP's

Mace

Leader of the Independents



# The Four Functions of Parliament

## ACTIVITY 3

Parliament has four core functions under the Westminster System. These functions are (1) represent the people, (2) to make laws, (3) to scrutinize the executive or government and (4) to approve government finances (budget).

**Your Task** | In the speech bubbles around the Chamber brainstorm as many examples as you can to show how the four functions of Parliament exist and impact on Solomon Islander's every day lives.

**1. Ways that the people are represented**

**2. Some of the laws that Parliament have made**



**3. The ways that Parliament scrutinizes the Government and Opposition**

**4. Things that Parliament pay for and have approved to be built or created**

**Your Task** | Complete the comprehension questions below:

1. How many Standing Select Committees are there?

.....

2. Are Standing Select Committees a permanent part of Parliament or exist only when a Member of Parliament requests that one be formed?

.....

.....

3. Describe the work that Standing Select Committees do.

.....

.....

.....

4. Write down the names of the two Committees that are responsible for the Government's finances and public spending.

.....

.....

.....

5. Which Committee would advise on matters concerning the maintenance of National Parliament buildings?

.....

.....

6. If a constitutional change was proposed, which Committee might conduct an investigation into this change?

.....

.....

7. In 2018 there was a drug shortage at the National Referral Hospital, which Committee would investigate this to ensure that it does not happen again?

.....

.....

.....

8. Describe three ways that the Education and Human Resources and Training Committee might have an impact on your life.

.....

.....

.....

9. Which Committee might explore if Solomon Islands should increase its Royal Solomon Islands Police Force?

.....

.....

10. Write down the Committees that have not been explored in the questions above and write down what these Committee do.

.....

.....

## The Lawmaking Process

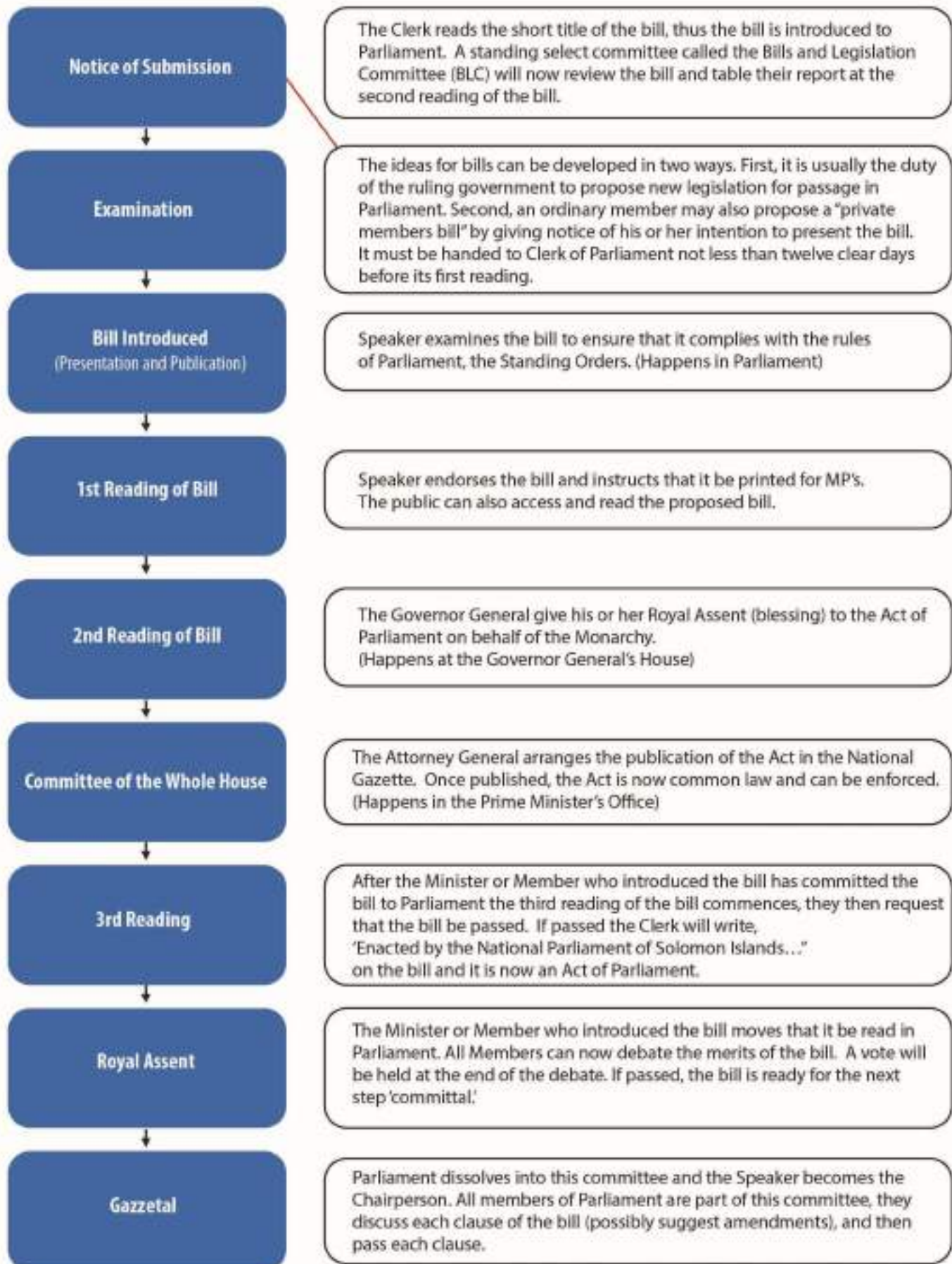
### ACTIVITY 5

**Your Task** | Use Supporting Document three, 'The Law Making Process,' to fill in the boxes below with the correct name of each law making step and write the corresponding information about each step next to it.

↓	
↓	
↓	
↓	
↓	
↓	
↓	



**Your Task** | Match each step of the law making process (on the left hand side of the page) to the correct description on the right hand side of the page. The first one has been done for you.



## The Lawmaking Process

**Your Task** | Use Supporting Document Three and Student Activity Five to complete this task. The below information is not in the right order, your task is to put it in the right order. To do this you could cut these information boxes out and arrange them in order or use Student Activity Five and write the correct information on this page.

1st Reading of Bill

The ideas for bills can be developed in two ways. First, it is usually the duty of the ruling government to propose new legislation for passage in Parliament. Second, an ordinary member may also propose a "private members Bill" by giving notice of his or her intention to present the bill. It must be handed to Clerk of Parliament not less than twelve clear days before its first reading.

Royal Assent

Speaker examines the bill to ensure that it complies with the rules of Parliament, the Standing Orders. (Happens in Parliament)

Bill Introduced  
(Presentation and Publication)

The Governor General give his or her Royal Assent (blessing) to the Act of Parliament on behalf of the Monarchy.  
(Happens at the Governor General's House)

Notice of Submission

The Minister or Member who introduced the bill moves that it be read in Parliament. All Members can now debate the merits of the bill. A vote will be held at the end of the debate. If passed, the bill is ready for the next step 'committal.'

2nd Reading of Bill

The Clerk reads the short title of the bill, thus the bill is introduced to Parliament. A standing select committee called the Bills and Legislation Committee (BLC) will now review the bill and table their report at the second reading of the bill.

Committee of the Whole House

After the Minister or Member who introduced the bill has committed the bill to Parliament the third reading of the bill commences, they then request that the bill be passed. If passed the Clerk will write, 'Enacted by the National Parliament of Solomon Islands...'  
on the bill and it is now an Act of Parliament.

3rd Reading

Parliament dissolves into this committee and the Speaker becomes the Chairperson. All members of Parliament are part of this committee, they discuss each clause of the bill (possibly suggest amendments), and then pass each clause.

Examination

Speaker endorses the bill and instructs that it be printed for MPs. The public can also access and read the proposed bill.

Gazzetal

The Attorney General arranges the publication of the Act in the National Gazette. Once published, the Act is now common law and can be enforced.  
(Happens in the Prime Minister's Office)



A political manifesto is usually described as the platform or ideas of the political party and its candidates. When the political party wins a general election and leads the government, the political party's manifesto becomes the foundation of the policies of the ruling government.

Once in government, the government launches its national policy statement. This document sets out the principles which the government considers to be important in terms of the direction it wants to take in running the country. For instance, a government which prioritises education, health and national security will usually state these three areas as the first three priorities in the government's national policy statement.

**Your task** | Create your own political manifesto and policy statement. Use the tasks below to help.

For this task you might like to pretend that you are either creating a manifesto and policy statement for the Solomon Islands or for your own school and the issues that you face and are important to you.

***Your Political Manifesto***  
***(Your Key Message)***

I believe...

***Your Policy Statement***  
***(The Actions)***

These are the things that I will introduce and implement that will help me create my political manifesto.....

## United Democratic Party Launches Manifesto

13 October 2014 | By DANIEL NAMOSUAIA

<http://www.solomonstarnews.com/index.php/news/natioal/item/13691-united-democratic-party-launches-manifesto>

### **UNITED Democratic Party (UDP) has launched its manifesto and party logo over the weekend.**

The launching highlighted some of the party's key principles and vision heading forward in contesting the upcoming general elections. Party President Sir Thomas Ko Chan said the party's key message is equity, justice and peace for the country. He said all party members and supporters believe that in order to have a prosperous Solomon Islands, the three concepts of equity, justice and peace are the three pillars. Sir Chan said the county has a bright future and the party believes inclusiveness, partnership, transparency, accountability and Law as the corner stone to this country's bright future.

"I look forward to our great nation and people to fulfil our dreams and follow the path of hard work and honest labour in providing greater opportunities from the land, sea and the sky," Sir Chan said. He said although this country can achieve this, there is still much work left to be done to make it a success for the country.

Sir Chan stressed that those people who have given their support for this party have seen the importance of registering this party with its key principles to respond to this nations call to register the party as provided under the new Political Parties Integrity Bill 2014. "UDP is all about an independent and sovereign Solomon islands. More importantly it is about the people...it is about every individual and citizen, every family and household, every village and hamlet in all provinces and their aspirations, their sense of value and ownership of their resources," Sir Chan added. He said it is about the people and government and its institutions that must be owned by the people and being responsive to their needs and aspirations. Sir Chan stressed that UDP is about building, re-organising and developing the country and its society, organising different values, customs and traditions in the way that everyone respects and give due regard to those of their fellow countrymen.

He said UDP will be working closely with all liked minded political parties and others who share the common desire to work for better and prosperous Solomon Islands. "This country belongs to everyone and working together in the true spirit of partnership and putting the interest of the country first and foremost can bring tangible benefits and deliver positive results for people of this country."

He further stressed that UDP's motto of equity, justice and peace are high moral values which the party believes in. "Equity for provinces, justice for the people and peace to the nation," Sir Chan added. United Democratic Party for social reform and economic advancement is a party formed from two former major political parties merging together. The Reform and Democratic Party (RDP) and the Independent Democratic Party (IDP).





Once the government decides on their top priorities they will then begin the process of exploring how legislature can be changed. In these instances Cabinet normally directs the relevant Ministry or department to begin investigating why and how such legislative changes can be turned into a reality.

Technical officers conduct this research, Cabinet then receives a report from these officers and if they agree with their recommendations, they will employ a Legal Drafter to draft the legislative scheme. A legislative scheme forms the skeleton of a bill and suggests how various legal rules and authorities can interact to create a bill that has the best chance of passing as an Act of Parliament.

**Your task** | Take on the role of Technical Officers and Legal Drafters. Choose from one of the bills below and complete the tasks set below.

**Parliamentary Bills (These have been passed already)**

- Family Protection Bill, 2014
- Police and Transport Legislation, Alcohol Testing 2016
- Constitution Amendment, Dual Citizenship 2018

**Possible Parliamentary Bills (These do not exist)**

- Compulsory attendance of school
- Compulsory voting in the general election
- Create your own proposed bill that you would like to see turned into a law

*Write down the bill that you have decided to explore*

*Write down your thoughts as to why this bill should be considered*

## Preparing Bills for Parliament

### ACTIVITY 7 (cont)

As part of their investigation, the Parliamentary Officers interview and speak to people who have an interest, are concerned by and are connected to the issues around the proposed bill, these individuals or groups are known as **stakeholders**.

Your next task is to think about the possible stakeholders related to your bill and write down their interest in getting this bill passed as an Act of Parliament. To help you understand this concept, an example of a stakeholder and their view has been given below.

<b>Stakeholders</b> <i>See if you can come up with at least four stakeholders.</i>	<b>Their interest in the bill.</b> <i>Why would they want it to pass?</i>
<i>An example of a stakeholder linked to the Family Protection bill, 2014 is the:</i>  <i>- National Council of Women</i>	<i>- They want this bill to pass. They are interested in this bill because they see the impact that domestic violence has on women and families</i>

Now that you have thought about the possible stakeholders who have an interest in this bill write down any further questions that the Parliamentary Officers might now ask and will need to find the answers to before they submit their report to Cabinet, who will then pass it to the Legal Drafter to write the draft bill.

**Final evaluation** | Now that you have considered the issues and concerns that are linked to this proposed bill complete the below Positive, Minus and Interesting task. In an effort to get Parliament to pass this bill, imagine that you are the Legal Drafter who is highlighting all the possible issues that are related to the bill so the Minister presenting it can be as prepared as they can be when they are questioned by the Opposition in Parliament.

<i>Positives</i>	<i>Minuses</i>	<i>Interestings</i>

**Note to teachers:** This task could be completed individually, in pairs or in groups. It could also be presented in poster form, a research project or presented as a debate with two opposing sides; a government and opposition side.

## Structure of a Bill

When writing a bill the Legal Drafter must follow specific rules when writing it. These rules are stated in the National Parliament of Solomon Islands Standing Orders and are located in the 'Procedure on Bills' chapter. This student activity explores the expected structure that a Legal Drafter must follow to present a bill to Parliament.

**Your task** | Match and write the definitions written in the boxes below to the correct term at the bottom of this page.

*A statement at the beginning of the bill setting out the vision and background to it.*

*Make up the substance of the bill and set out the actual rules to be enacted*

*An easy way for people to reference the bill*

*Appears at the end of a bill. It is only needed if the bill has many technical rules and requires extra information to be explained*

*A statement explaining the objectives, reasons and purpose of the bill*

*A formal statement declaring that Parliament has considered and passed the bill*

*States the basic purpose of the bill*

Preamble:

.....

.....

.....

Long Title:

.....

.....

.....

Short Title:

.....

.....

.....

Enactment Formula:

.....

.....

.....

Clauses:

.....

.....

.....

Schedule:

.....

.....

.....

Explanatory Memorandum:

.....

.....

.....



Every bill that is written and discussed in Parliament must be written to meet specific guidelines.

These guidelines are set out in the National Parliament of Solomon Islands Standing Orders, 'Procedures on Bills' chapter. By exploring an actual bill this student activity shows students the guidelines that need to be followed.

**Your task** | Below are the specific aspects that must be included in a bill that is presented to Parliament. Using the below words, label the bill showing each aspect.


Short Title

Long Title

Enactment Formula

Signature of Attorney General

3




## FAMILY PROTECTION ACT 2014

**(NO. 15 OF 2014)**

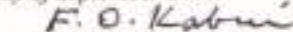
*PASSED by the National Parliament this twenty seventh day of August 2014.*

*(This printed impression has been carefully compared by me with the Bill passed by Parliament and found by me to be a true copy of the Bill)*



*Tavasi Sanga (Mrs)*  
*Clerk to National Parliament*

**ASSENTED** to in Her Majesty's name and on Her Majesty's behalf this twenty second day of September 2014.



*Sir Frank Utu Ofagioro Kabui*  
*Governor-General*

*Date of Commencement: see section 1*

**AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE PROTECTION OF FAMILIES FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND TO PROMOTE THE SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.**

**ENACTED** by the National Parliament of Solomon Islands.

## Comprehension Questions:

After students have read the Passing a bill Role Play (Support Document Five), get them to complete the following questions.

1. Write down the title of the bill that is being discussed in the play.

.....

.....

2. What is the title of the person commending the bill to Parliament and which Ministry completed the research and report to prepare the bill for Parliament?

.....

.....

.....

3. Write down what the new bill proposes.

.....

.....

.....

4. The Minister states that they, 'Commend the bill to the House,' describe what the word 'commend' means.

.....

.....

.....

5. Who speaks after the Minister commends the bill to the House?

.....

.....

.....

6. Write down the sentence in the play where the Speaker asks the House's (MP's) opinion of the bill.

.....

.....

.....

7. Complete the grid below to show who voiced their opinion in this debate and what their opinions were.

Person who spoke	Their point of view (opinion)	Reasons given for their opinion

## ACTIVITY 9 (cont)

Person who spoke	Their point of view (opinion)	Reasons given for their opinion

8. At the end of the play has the bill been passed?

.....

9. Describe what will happen to the bill now. What is the next step in the law making process?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

### Extension Questions

These questions ask students to reflect on the law making process from chapter 1 of the Teacher Reference Booklet.

10. Explain if the Speaker would have seen this bill before it was presented to Parliament.

.....  
.....  
.....

11. In the law making process what is the name of the step where the Members of Parliament get a copy of the bill to explore?

.....  
.....  
.....



## Key Terms Definition Task:

After students have read the Passing a bill Role Play (Support Document Five), get them to write down the definitions of the key terms below.

Sergeant at Arms

Speaker of Parliament

Clerk

Minister

Members of Parliament

Bill

Opposition MP's

Independent MP's

Government MP's

Chamber

Mace

Second Reading

Committee of the Whole House

**Your Task** | Write your own script of a bill being read in Parliament for the second time. Before you begin, you might need to brainstorm a law (or even a new school rule), that you would like to create and then reflect on the arguments for and against this proposed bill. This brainstorm should then form the basis of your script and the arguments used by your fictional Members of Parliament.

Use the brainstorm section below to help you formulate your ideas and then begin to write your play on the next page.

Law Brainstorm:

The Law I have chosen to discuss:

Arguments 'FOR' the Law

Arguments 'AGAINST' the Law

**Bill:**

Write down the law that you have created and will be read in Parliament for the second time.

.....  
 .....  
 .....

Write down the Minister who will be commending your law to the House

.....

**Roles:**

Below are a list of roles that you will need to include in your script. Fill in the specific details of individual Members and the Minister who will be commending the bill to Parliament.

1. Sergeant at Arms
2. Speaker of Parliament
3. Clerk
4. Minister of.....
5. Opposition Leader
6. Member for.....
7. Member for.....

Below is the script for your play. Some of the details have been included for you, however, you will need to fill in the specific member's titles and their arguments about the bill.

**Beginning:**

**Directions:**

- o Sergeant at Arms announces the Speaker's entry to Parliament.

**Sergeant at Arms:** "Honourable Members, the Speaker".

**Directions:**

- o Sergeant at Arms leads the Speaker into the Chamber, they place the Mace on the stand while the Speaker goes up to his/her seat and they wait.
- o Everybody stands.
- o The Speaker bows to the members on the right side (members bow), they bow to the members on the left side (members bow), and everybody sits down.
- o Clerk announces the bill.



**The Clerk:**

"Bills, Second Reading. The.....

*(Write Your bill here)*

**The Speaker:**

"I call on the Minister of ..... who is in charge of the bill to give his/her opening remarks on the The.....bill.

*(Write Your bill here)*

**(Mover of the bill)**

Minister of .....

"Thank you Mr/Madam Speaker, first of all I want to thank the Government for allowing this bill to be tabled in Parliament. Also I would like to thank all my staff at the Ministry of .....for their hard work in putting this bill together."

Honourable members, this bill.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**The Speaker:**

"Members, the floor is now open for debate. I call on the Leader of Opposition."

**Directions:**

- o Leader of Opposition rises from his/her chair

Leader of Opposition: "Thank you Mr/Madam Speaker. ....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**Directions:**

- o Leader of the Opposition sits
- o Member for .....rises from his/her chair

**The Speaker:** "I call on the member for....."

"Member for .....: "Thank you Mr/Madam Speaker.

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**Directions:**

- o The member for ..... sits
- o Member for ..... rises from his/her chair

**The Speaker:**

"I call on the member for ....."

"Member for .....: "Thank you Mr/Madam Speaker.

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**[Students now vote for the Bill]**

**The Speaker:** "Honourable members, I will now put the question. The question is that the ".....

....."  
 ....."  
 ..... be now read a second time. *(Write Your bill here)*

All those in favour say, "Aye"

All those against say, "No"

I think the "Ayes" have it. [Pause] The "Ayes" have it.

The "....." has therefore been read a second time

*(Write Your bill here)*

and stands committed to the Committee of the Whole House."

**Directions:**

- o All stand.
- o The Speaker bows to members on the right side (members bow) and then bows to members on the left (members bow) and the Speaker leaves

**Meeting ends**



## NOTE

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes, filling the majority of the page below the 'NOTE' header.



## NOTE

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.



