

GET TO KNOW THE HOUSE OF COMMONS



PARLIAMENT | PARLEMENT
CANADA

Q: What is the House of Commons?

A: It's one of three parts of Parliament.

The House of Commons is where Canada's elected representatives meet to discuss important issues and make new laws.

The other parts of Parliament are the Monarch (the King or Queen, who is represented in Canada by the Governor General) and the Senate. To become a law, a bill has to be approved by all three parts.

Q: Who sits in the House of Commons?

A: A total of 338 Members of Parliament (or MPs) sit in the House.

Every MP represents a particular part of Canada, called a constituency (or riding). During an election, the citizens who live in a riding vote to choose who will be their MP.



Constituencies are based on population, not size. The smallest one in Canada is only 9 km², while the largest is over 2 million km²!

Can you guess where these two constituencies are found?

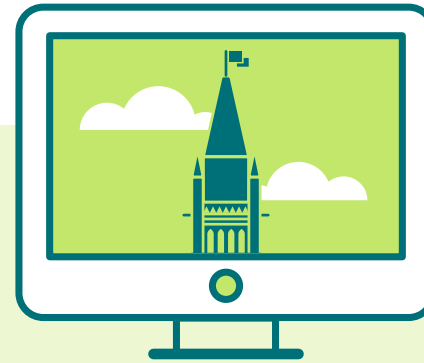
Answer: Montreal (Papineau) and Nunavut (the whole territory is one riding)

Q: What do MPs do?

A: They have many responsibilities, including making laws.

MPs are always very busy. In addition to debating and voting in the House of Commons, they help the people in their constituencies, work in committees, go to meetings, talk to the media, and much more.

MPs can come from many different backgrounds. They may be lawyers, teachers, farmers, athletes or even students. Any Canadian citizen aged 18 or older can run in a federal election.



NOT SURE WHO YOUR MP IS?

Go to ourcommons.ca and enter your postal code to find out.

Q: How do I contact my MP?

A: You can contact your MP by phone, email or letter, or through social media.

MPs are always happy to hear from the people in their constituencies. If you have a question, or an idea that you want to share, get in touch!

Q: Who's in charge of debates and votes in the House of Commons?

A: The Speaker, who acts as a referee when the House is in session.

The Speaker's job is to make sure that all the rules and traditions of the House of Commons are followed. Although the Speaker usually belongs to a political party, he or she is neutral and treats all MPs equally.



The Speaker sits in the biggest chair in the House of Commons.

Q: Why is the House of Commons green?

A: Green is the colour of the British House of Commons.

Our parliamentary system is based on the British one, and we've borrowed many of its traditions. The House of Commons in London has been decorated in green for over 300 years.

Did you know that there is a mythical beast at the House of Commons? This West Block gargoyle is an original stone carving in the neo-Gothic style.



Q: Where does the Prime Minister sit?

A: In the front row, with other Government MPs.

Most MPs belong to political parties – groups with similar ideas about how the country should be run. Usually the party with the most MPs forms the Government, and its leader becomes the Prime Minister. All other parties (and any independent MPs) are called the opposition. The Prime Minister sits to the right of the Speaker, in the 11th seat.



There's no limit to how long someone can be Prime Minister in Canada. Can you name our longest-serving Prime Minister?

Answer: William Lyon Mackenzie King was Prime Minister for 21 years and 154 days.

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Contact us if you have any questions:

info@parl.gc.ca
1-866-599-4999

Information Service
Parliament of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A9

Produced by: