Parliament as a Teaching Resource
A Guide for Lecturers

July 2013
Guide produced for project *Parliament as a Teaching Resource*, funded by the Higher Education Academy and developed in partnership with the UK Parliament’s Outreach Service.

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The contents of this guide have been produced from research conducted as part of the *Parliament as a Teaching Resource* project, analysing the use of parliamentary resources by students and lecturers, through a series of focus groups and an online survey. The authors are grateful for the very helpful support given by the UK Parliament’s Outreach Service throughout the study, as well as the House of Commons Library. We also thank Mark Stuart, University of Nottingham, for his advice and research assistance.

This guide is intended to be used by lecturers for the purposes of effectively engaging students through the use of parliamentary sources. It has been designed to be read online and so includes links to relevant parliamentary material in each section.

This guide is complemented by two other documents:
- *Case Study Portfolio: Applying Parliamentary Resources in Teaching*
- *The Referencing Parliamentary Material guide*.

Cristina Leston-Bandeira
Louise Thompson
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This guide introduces the reader to the range of resources available on the UK Parliament website (www.parliament.uk). It offers a basic overview of the types of resources available and how to access and keep up to date with this material.

The guide is intended to be of benefit to those teaching in any area of political science. It therefore includes information, resources and practical examples for those who do not research or teach in the area of British and parliamentary politics as well as more specialised material for those who do. It includes tips on how best to support students who wish to use parliamentary material, how to make use of Parliament’s Outreach Service and guidance for using and referencing parliamentary documents.

Although primarily aimed at lecturers who do not currently use Parliament’s website, this guide may still be of interest to those who are more familiar with the site and its resources. In particular, the information and guidelines on the referencing of parliamentary material should be of use to all staff and their students.

This guide is complemented by two other documents:

- The **Case Study Portfolio: Applying Parliamentary Resources in Teaching** which contains a series of detailed case studies showing how to make use of different types of parliamentary resources (including video, photographic and audio material) in lectures and seminars. Each example focuses on developing students skills of primary research, communication, critical analysis and teamwork. Detailed descriptions of teaching sessions, support material, possible adaptations and further reading are all provided.

- The **Referencing Parliamentary Material** guide, which includes detailed instructions on how to reference a wide range of parliamentary material (expanding on the referencing section included in this main guide). The guide conforms to the style of referencing used by the House of Commons Library and was completed in consultation with its staff.
The UK Parliament website houses an enormous variety of resources in a range of different formats. The most commonly used resources are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parliamentary Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bill and Legislation Resources</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The text of draft bills before Parliament, and all current and former bills can be found in the ‘Bills and Legislation’ section. Links to each individual bill provide lists of proposed amendments, bill papers and associated research briefings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Papers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A source of all documents relating to voting, legislation and proceedings. Announcements of future business, records of votes and proceedings, written questions, Early Day Motions (EDMs), European business and secondary legislation papers are all available here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Resources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A series of educational resources designed for Key Stage 2 to A Level students and their teachers but which may also be of use to lecturers. They include ‘Parliament explained’ articles, lesson plans, subject guides, online games. The ‘Find Your Way’ booklet for A Level Government and Politics may be of particular use as a simple reference point for those new to the study of British Politics and Parliament.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guides to Parliament, including House of Commons Information Office publications</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These short guides are available to download and include information about making laws, getting involved with Parliament and parliamentary questions. Some of these guides are additionally available in an ‘easy read’ format. The ‘People, Events and Places’ guides are available to download. These short guides cover people (Chancellor of the Exchequer, Leader of the Opposition etc), events (the budget, parliamentary debates) and places (Big Ben, Westminster Hall).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hansard</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The official proceedings of all parliamentary debates and committee debates, Parliamentary Questions and written statements in the House of Lords and House of Commons since 1988 are available here. Historic Hansard holds an archive of parliamentary debates from 1803.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>House of Commons Library Briefing Papers and Standard Notes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The House of Commons library produces publicly available research papers on forthcoming legislation as well as Standard Notes on topical issues and research on Parliament and the constitution. All are available to download.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>House of Lords Library Notes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The House of Lords Library also produces notes on topical issues and papers on forthcoming legislation introduced in the House of Lords.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These resources can be utilised by those researching or teaching in any area of political science. Specific examples for different subject areas are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources by Subject Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>British Politics</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comparative Politics</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Defence and Security Studies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elections, Public Opinion and Voting Behaviour</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Politics</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>European Politics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intergovernmental</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legislative Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle East Politics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Economy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Parties</td>
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<td>Political Theory and</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
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<td>Pressure Groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Administration/Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub National Politics</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Most of the resources available on Parliament’s website can be accessed with just a few clicks of the mouse. A ‘quick links’ section on the homepage provides easy access to the most frequently used pages of the site such as Hansard reports of proceedings. Other key topical resources such as news stories are also displayed prominently. The most commonly used resources are discussed below, with short explanations of how they can be used in teaching to benefit student learning.

A-Z Index

If you are searching for a page on the website but are unable to find it from the homepage, the A-Z index is an easy means of finding the information you need. A link to this section is displayed at the very bottom of the homepage. The index includes links to offices within Parliament such as the Parliamentary Archives, the Parliamentary Education Service and the Information Offices of both Houses, as well as items of parliamentary business including Hansard and select committees and other visitor and academic information.

Topics Page

The topics page can be accessed directly from Parliament’s homepage (see below) and lists all of the available resources on the website by subject area or topic. It is extremely useful if you simply wish to find out what resources parliament has in your research or teaching area. It is also useful for students when researching for seminars or assessed work as it provides a very simple and fast means of locating parliamentary material on a topic. Although this page will by no means direct students to all of the material in their subject area, it is a useful starting point, highlighting in particular recent library research papers and standard notes.
The subject areas listed are initially very broad and include communities and families, education and the European Union. However, within each of these broader categories is an extensive list of sub topics with links to recent parliamentary material including library research reports and bill briefings. The Afghanistan topics page is shown below. It is accessed by selecting ‘International Affairs’ followed by ‘Afghanistan’. It is these sub sections which will be of most use to students.

Select Committees

A select committee may be set up by either House of Parliament, or be a joint committee with members from both Houses. Most consider issues of departmental or wider governmental policy. They regularly hold evidence sessions with leading experts and outside organisations and publish respected reports. These reports provide very rich information on a very wide range of issues, which could be useful not only for research but also for teaching. It gives the opportunity, for example, to access evidence given by well-known public figures, without having to overcome the difficulties in obtaining access to them. Using the ‘quick link’ on the homepage will bring you to the main committee page.

From the main committees page (left): it is possible to choose Commons Select Committees, among others (right)
This provides access to all parliamentary committees. It also has a very useful select committee news section and a link to recent publications. To access select committees you can use the links at the bottom of the screen. They are divided into Commons, Lords and Joint select committees. If you are not sure which type of committee you wish to find, simply click on the ‘Committees A-Z’ link, which will bring up a list of all committees. Selecting one of these options such as Commons Select Committees also brings a list of committees.

Each select committee has its own mini-site (see for example the site of the Treasury Select Committee) within the parliament website. These sites are identical in format but allow each committee to list its relevant news stories, inquiries, calls for evidence and publications. Simply select the committee you are looking for from one of the lists and the mini site will be displayed. A menu bar at the left of the page allows you to move between the different committee resources. To access committee reports select the ‘publications’ tab and a list of all current publications (those published in the current parliamentary session) will be listed. A link to reports from previous sessions/years is also displayed prominently at the very top of this page.

Select committee reports are available to purchase but are free to download in PDF format. They often encompass several volumes and contain the committee’s report as well as written evidence and transcripts of oral evidence sessions. Transcripts of oral evidence sessions as well as written submissions are also available further down this publications page. The transcripts of evidence sessions are particularly useful for teaching purposes. They provide detailed accounts from expert witnesses which students can be encouraged to use as
the basis for primary research. Teaching sessions can also be modelled on this evidence taking format, with students playing the roles of select committee members and outside experts in order to develop their understanding of a topic.

Research Briefings

Research briefings produced by the House of Commons and House of Lords libraries and by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) contain highly detailed information about a very wide range of topics. They can be found through the individual library and POST pages on the website, but it is easier to do a general search using the research briefings search facility.

These research briefings are compiled by subject specialists and provide extremely useful and detailed overviews of topics. Most importantly, all of the information is presented in a neutral and nonpartisan style. They provide excellent overviews of policy areas, current legislation and topical issues and are of use to students for introductory summaries and for further research. Most briefings refer to a wide number of parliamentary sources and can be used to direct students to further material which may be of interest.

The research briefings search page (left) can be found in the ‘parliamentary business’ section of the website. The search engine allows you to select briefings by subject area (right).

The research briefings page has a search engine through which you can filter for relevant research briefings by type of document (e.g. Commons Library Research Paper or POST Note), by topic (such as defence or education) and by year.

Watch and Listen

A number of audio visual resources are available on the Parliament website. The Parliament TV section provides live feed of Chamber and committee proceedings as well as an archive section which goes back to July 2009. Short films about Parliament are also available to download. A quick link to Parliament TV can be found on menu bar inset in the middle of the homepage.
Alternatively, the website also has a ‘watch and listen’ section which provides an archive of additional educational audio visual material including video tours, short films and interviews. Students often find it beneficial to watch short clips of parliamentary debates or committee hearings as an alternative to reading the transcripts online and these clips can also be used in lectures. Those who are unfamiliar with the institution may appreciate the short films about the work of Parliament.

The resources available here include:

- Video tours of Parliament
- Podcasts about the work of Parliament
- Science in Parliament podcasts
- History of Parliament podcasts
- Interviews with MPs and Peers
- Videos for schools (such as General Election Xplained)
Search Engine

The Parliament website has its own search engine which can be used to locate resources quickly if you are unsure of where to find them. A simple search box can be found at the top of the homepage. This is useful for general information on topics which cannot be found in the A-Z or topics section. If you are looking for something more specific the ‘advanced search’ option is more useful.

Once you have used the initial search tool, an option to use the ‘advanced search’ engine will be displayed. This allows you to refine your search by content (business papers, debates and answers, committees and reports etc) and by MP or date. A short guide to using the search engine is available in the menu bar. The Parliament website hosts an enormous archive of material and thus although a valuable tool for lecturers and students, searches often return hundreds or even thousands of results. Encouraging students to make use of the filter options available in the advanced search can help to narrow this somewhat and can make locating relevant materials easier.

Educational Resources

Parliament’s education service has a wide variety of online resources about the work of Parliament. These resources have been designed specifically for schools and are therefore best suited to students who are unfamiliar with Parliament. They may still be of use in higher education teaching and can be utilised to provide a quick overview or explanation of a topic. They are a good starting point for students who need to be reminded of key parliamentary facts and information.

The types of resource available on these pages include:

- **Parliament explained** (short overviews of how Parliament works, elections, how laws are made)
- **Online games** and **whiteboard resources**
- **Printed resources** and **lesson plans** (including a reference guide for students)
The MPs, Lords and Offices section of the website contains detailed information on the composition of Parliament and the work of MPs and Lords. Every MP and Peer has a profile page in this section of the site, giving contact information, political interests and a short biography (including electoral history for MPs). Breakdowns of the membership of both Houses and of select committee membership can also be found here. It is a simple means of introducing students to the composition of Parliament. Students can be encouraged to visit the website or blog of their local MP or to ‘follow’ them on Twitter using the links provided. The website has a variety of sources relating to General Elections including library research papers and an elections and voting page which discusses the different voting systems used in the UK as well as information about parliamentary constituencies and by-elections.

Parliamentary Archives

Students undertaking historical studies will be particularly interested in material from the parliamentary archives. Making use of the material held in the archives provides students with an excellent introduction to the use of primary sources. The Archives provide access to over 3 million historical documents from the House of Commons and the House of Lords as well as other parliamentary records. The archives are also home to non-parliamentary archives, including the Charles Barry Papers, Bonar Law Papers and the Pugin Papers. Historical images can also be found here in the picture library. A small selection of images are available to view online, but for most documents it is necessary to contact the office itself to arrange to view the documents in person, or for copies to be made.

Sessional Returns

Sessional returns are produced for the House of Commons at the end of each parliamentary session. They summarise the work of parliament over aged 16 and over

- Videos about Parliament
- Subject guides and links (elections, making laws etc)

Information about MPs, Lords and elections

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Sessional Returns

Sessional returns are produced for the House of Commons at the end of each parliamentary session. They summarise the work of parliament over
each session including sittings of the House, public bills and select committee work and statistics. They provide an accurate source of facts and figures about the work of the House of Commons and its members and can be useful for students who wish to undertake primary research in their dissertations. Those with greater knowledge of the institution and who are taking British Politics or parliamentary studies modules may find it helpful to use the returns to locate specific details of legislation and the dates on which they were debated in Parliament. An archive dating back to the 1997-98 session is available and it can thus be easily used for comparative purposes.

Similar statistics regarding the work of the House of Lords and its members are also available in its archive of sessional statistics.
A
Acts of Parliament
Agenda
Advanced Search
All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs)
A-Z Index

B
Bills and Legislation

C
Chamber
Clerk of the House
Clerk of the Parliaments
Commission (House of Commons)
Committees

D
Deferred Divisions
Deposited Papers
Divisions
Draft Bills

E
Education Service

F
Facebook page
Flickr photostream

G
Glossary
Government
Governance of the House of Commons
Governance of the House of Lords
Guide to proceedings of the House of Lords

H
House of Commons Hansard
House of Lords Hansard

I
Information Offices, Commons and Lords

J
Joint Select Committees

K

L
Lords
Lords Library Notes

M
Management Board (House of Commons)
Members of the House of Commons
Members of the House of Lords
Once you have explored the resources that the Parliament website has to offer, you may wish to be kept informed about material that is added to the pages you find most useful. This will save time and **ensure that you keep up to date in your research or teaching area**. There are three ways of doing this: subscribing to the parliamentary email alert service, using RSS feeds and through the use of social media.

### Subscribing to the parliamentary email alert service

The Parliament website offers an **email subscription service** which will alert you when new material is uploaded. By registering on the central alerts page, you can tailor the alerts to those which are of particular interest to you or which are most closely connected to your research or teaching area.

Once registered, this page allows you to **choose to receive updates from individual pages of the Parliament website**. This includes individual select committee pages, library briefing papers and parliamentary news. You can cancel or amend your alerts at any time.

A link to the email alerts page can be found at the top of Parliament's homepage.
Social Media

Another excellent way of keeping up to date with parliamentary business and new resources is through social media, particularly Twitter. The official Parliament twitter account is @UKParliament, but other services within Parliament also have accounts. Following those of interest to you will provide instant updates of new parliamentary resources. Some of the twitter feeds available are listed below.

Parliament and the House of Lords also have their own Facebook pages which are updated regularly. Subscribing to Parliament’s YouTube channel, or to that of the House of Lords is another effective means of keeping up to date with parliamentary business.

Left: The UK Parliament’s twitter feed. Right: The House of Lords’ YouTube channel.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parliamentary News and Business</th>
<th>@UKParliament</th>
<th>UK Parliament</th>
<th>Parliamentary news and business including Hansard and historical/archive material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>@HouseofCommons</td>
<td>House of Commons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@UKHouseofLords</td>
<td>House of Lords</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@CommonsHansard</td>
<td>Official Report of House of Commons Proceedings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@UKParlArchives</td>
<td>Parliamentary Archives</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committees</th>
<th>@CommonsBBCom</th>
<th>Backbench Business Committee</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>@CommonsSTC</td>
<td>Science and Technology Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@CommonsEd</td>
<td>Education Select Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@CommonsEFRA</td>
<td>Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@CommonsHomeAffs</td>
<td>Home Affairs Select Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@CommonsIDC</td>
<td>International Development Committee</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Information and Engagement</th>
<th>@UKParlOutreach</th>
<th>Parliament’s Outreach Service</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>@UKParlEducation</td>
<td>Parliament’s Education Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@Parliament_Week</td>
<td>Parliament Week (annual event)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@HistParl</td>
<td>History of Parliament</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@The VictCommons</td>
<td>History of the House of Commons 1832-1868</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@visitparliament</td>
<td>UK Parliament Visitor Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@CommonsLibrary</td>
<td>House of Commons Library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Information on educational events, talks and other resources.
Using resources in teaching

The resources available on the Parliament website provide excellent research material for academics, but they can also be utilised in teaching for the benefit of students and are particularly useful in developing students’ primary research and analytical skills. Listed below are some of the common ways in which parliamentary material is currently being used by lecturers. More detailed examples covering different types of resources can be found in the accompanying Portfolio of Case Studies.

Parliamentary Resources as an illustrative tool in lectures

The simplest way to make use of parliamentary material in teaching is as an illustrative tool. This is something that can be used in seminar discussions, but is most useful as a feature of lectures. Any section of the Parliament website can be utilised in this way.

Examples include:

1. **Inserting print screens of pages in to a PowerPoint presentation:** Simply open the relevant page, press the print screen key on your keyboard and paste into a programme such as Paint. You can then edit (crop, annotate) the document before inserting it into your presentation.

2. **Showing students a short clip of a parliamentary or committee debate:** Audio material dating back to July 2009 is available on the ‘Parliament TV’ section of the website. For example, a lecture focusing on the media could show a clip of Rupert Murdoch’s oral evidence to the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee in July 2011 whilst a lecture on security strategy may wish to show a short clip of the Joint Committee on National Security Strategy’s questioning of the Secretary of State for Defence and the Director-General for Security Policy in December 2012. Clips of parliamentary questions could be used in a similar manner. A calendar of current and forthcoming parliamentary business can be accessed here or within the ‘Parliamentary Business’ section of the site.

3. **Using a photograph or scanned image from the Parliamentary Collections.** For example, a lecture on representation, elections and voting...
behaviour or women and politics may wish to show students a copy of Emmeline Pankhurst’s 1916 letter to Lloyd George enquiring as to government business. You can use the ‘Full Screen’ button to view a larger image of the document, suitable for use in a lecture theatre.

Listing parliamentary material in module handbooks

While utilising parliamentary material in lectures can be a very useful means of demonstrating issues to students, making use of the website in module handbooks or through a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE; eg. Blackboard, Moodle, WebCT, etc.) introduces students to more detailed resources than would be possible in a lecture. Material posted on a VLE also has the advantage of being immediately accessible. Depending on the type of module or the year group being taught, this material can take a general or a more specialised format.

Giving students the address of the UK Parliament homepage (www.parliament.uk) often seems like a sensible and useful thing to list in a module handbook. However, it should be remembered that students will not usually know how to access relevant material from the homepage. They are much more likely to be able to find and access relevant material if more specific references and a web link are given. A hyperlink is particularly useful if a module reading list is being uploaded onto a VLE site. Should you wish to encourage students to undertake individual research and locate this type of material for themselves, an example of the type of material which they may find useful will help (e.g. reports by the Home Affairs Select Committee).

Examples of suitable resources to place in module handbooks include:

- General Material: Links to specific pages of the Parliament website e.g. Political Economy students could be directed to the Treasury Select Committee section of the site.

- Specific Material: A specific debate, report, committee hearing or research paper on the website. This material can be discussed in detail in a teaching session. For example, Political Economy students could be directed to transcripts of the 2012 Budget Statement and the parliamentary debate that followed.

Encouraging Students to Engage with Parliamentary Material

Utilising primary parliamentary material is an excellent way of communicating fundamental political ideas and mechanisms more clearly to students. It increases the accessibility of an institution and people who can often seem remote and allows students to engage with politics as it happens. Actively involving students in the use of parliamentary resources can encourage the development their own independent research skills. For example, making use of official transcripts of parliamentary proceedings and committee
reports in seminars can **increase students' confidence and familiarity with the use of primary research material.** As such it is much more effective than relying on secondary sources in teaching.

Using parliamentary sources for the purposes of simple illustration in lectures and the inclusion of specific resources in module handbooks are two very simple means in which parliamentary material can be used effectively in teaching. But **to be most effective students should be encouraged to engage more deeply with parliamentary material and to make use of it outside the teaching session.** A wider range of detailed examples of how to use parliamentary material in lectures and seminars and encourage students to engage with this material on a much deeper level can be found in the complementary *Portfolio of Case Studies: Applying Parliamentary Resources in Teaching.*
When introducing students to this material it is **important to highlight the wide variety of resources available** on the Parliament website. It is not simply a source of research for British politics. Select committees and library research papers in particular cover policy issues relating to every government department. The website may therefore be just as useful to students studying terrorism or foreign policy as it is to students studying British Politics.

Some key things to consider are:

- It is useful to **clarify precisely what is meant by ‘parliamentary’ resources** and to distinguish this material from government or departmental websites and from popular information available from external websites such as TheyWorkForYou and ThePublicWhip. Students are often unsure of the distinction between government and parliament and may inadvertently believe that some of the external websites they are using are official parliamentary websites.

- Although some students will have visited the UK Parliament website, the vast majority will have no experience of locating and using parliamentary material. Those who have used parliamentary resources will probably have accessed it through an internet search engine. Guidance from tutors is therefore crucial in introducing students to the types of material available on the website and how to access it. This guidance could be delivered in person through a lecture or workshop. It could also work well as a handout or explanatory document uploaded onto a VLE. Parliament’s Outreach Service can also provide workshops covering the Parliament website and the different resources available which can be delivered at your university. Contact your [regional outreach officer](#) for further details.

An effective means of introducing students to locating resources on the Parliament website following a tutor or Parliament led demonstration is through a ‘treasure trail’ task. Here students are given a set of instructions written in a ‘treasure trail’ format of items that they need to find on the Parliament website. This will provide students with a basic introduction to the key pages or documents on the website and it can be adapted to cover the areas felt to
be of most use for the topic or module being studied. Examples of these treasure trails can be found in the accompanying Portfolio of Case Studies: Applying Parliamentary Resources in Teaching.

Encouraging Students to Use Primary Material in Research Projects and Dissertations

Students should be made aware of the benefits of the value of parliamentary material as a source of primary research. Making use of this material will enable them to demonstrate their primary research and analysis skills and may help them develop better quality assignments.

Utilising this primary material in their work may require more than a short introduction to using the website. More detailed sessions or workshops may be required from tutors or from Parliament's Outreach Service. Students will not simply need to know how to access primary research material, they may need to be shown how to use it in their own work. The tutor could give simple demonstrations to facilitate this or could provide students with links to research articles etc which make use of this material. Where necessary one to one support could be provided and this will allow tutors to tailor their support to the individual student and their chosen topic of research.
A wide range of support and material for Universities is available from Parliament’s Outreach Service. The service aims to increase the awareness of Parliament and encourage engagement with the public, including Higher Education institutions. The service has its own page on the Parliament website which can be found by selecting ‘get involved’ on the top menu bar. In particular Parliament’s Outreach Service provides considerable support and resources to universities. Some of these resources and services are discussed in more detail below.

**Resources for Universities Pages**

These pages of the Parliament website have been designed specifically for higher education lecturers and students.

**Open Lectures**

The outreach service organises a series of free lectures by parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. They focus on the work of Parliament and take place at locations across the UK. Recent topics have included ‘The Legislature and the Executive’ and...
‘Parliament’s Relationship with Europe’. **Recordings and written transcripts of the lectures are available on the website**, along with a list of forthcoming lectures.

**Tailored Lectures and Tutorials**

Lectures and/or tutorials can be **written and delivered by the outreach service**, covering any aspect of the work of Parliament such as select committees and parliamentary questions.

**Training Sessions**

**Training sessions can be arranged for lecturers and departments** covering the work of Parliament and parliamentary resources. These can be held at your university.

**Regional Officers**

The service has a **network of regional outreach officers**. These officers are the best point of contact should you wish for further support in using parliamentary resources. Click this link for the [contact details for Regional Officers](#).

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Contact Parliament’s Outreach Service  
T: 020 7219 1650  
E: parliamentaryoutreach@parliament.uk
Students often wish to make use of parliamentary resources in their assessed work, but are unsure of precisely how to reference this material. If students are unsure about how to reference parliamentary sources accurately they may be reluctant to make use of them for fear of being penalised in their dissertations and other assessed work.

Parliamentary material often requires a longer and more detailed reference and does not follow the usual referencing norms that students are familiar with. Some of the information required is specific to parliament, but is crucial for clear and precise referencing. Examples include:

- Dates of parliamentary sessions
- Column numbers
- HC/HL document numbers
- Other abbreviations for documents such as Standing Orders (SO) and Statutory Instruments (SI).

**Referencing Parliamentary Material: Specific Examples**

Some specific examples of how to reference parliamentary sources are listed below. For more detailed instructions, please see our Referencing Parliamentary Material guide. These have been compiled with the support and assistance of the House of Commons Library and are presented here as a guide for students. Examples are given for use in the Oxford and Harvard referencing systems.

**Acts of Parliament**

All Acts passed after 1962 are dated by calendar year. The name of the Act is italicised, but the definitive article (‘the’) is not. Section numbers can be given to refer to specific places in an Act. The first time an Act is specified the full name must be given. Thereafter it can be referred to simply by the year (e.g. the 2013 Act). When referring to a specific Act of Parliament, a capital ‘A’ should always be used.

\[\text{Oxford: } \text{The Antarctic Act 2013, (section 3).} \]

\[\text{Harvard: } \text{This can be seen in the} \]

**TOP TIP**

Be careful about your use of punctuation. Make sure capitalisation is correct and avoid using commas. Parliamentary material uses less punctuation than standard referencing.
Citing an Act of Parliament passed before 1962 is more complicated as acts were collected in volumes which correspond to the years of reigns. The format of references to pre-1962 Acts is thus slightly different.

Oxford: The *Baptismal Fees Abolition Act 1872* (35 & 36 Vict chapter 36)

Harvard: This can be seen in the *Baptismal Fees Abolition Act 1872* (35 & 36 Vict, c.36)

NB: ‘Chapter’ in this reference refers to the position of the Act in the sequence of Acts passed in the regnal year.

**Bills**

Bills are always dated by parliamentary session *not* by calendar year. Referencing follows a similar pattern to Acts of Parliament, with the same italicisation. As mentioned earlier, the bill number must be given, as bills are reprinted following each stage of scrutiny to include any amendments which have been made.

Oxford: The *Company Remuneration Bill [HL]*, Bill 6, 2012-13

Harvard: As specified in the *Company Remuneration Bill [HL]* (Bill 6, 2012-13)

As before, references to a specific bill should have a capital ‘B’. When referred to in footnotes, bills do not need a definitive article (e.g. *Company Remuneration Bill [HL]* rather than The *Company Remuneration Bill [HL]*).

**Command Papers**

*Command papers* are documents which have been written or prepared by the Government and then presented to Parliament such as White Papers and Green Papers. They are listed by calendar year. A title and number and abbreviation should be given where possible.

Oxford: *Wild Animals in Circuses 2013 Cm 8538*

Harvard: *Wild Animals in Circuses 2013* (Cm 8538)

The abbreviation used to denote a command paper changes depending on the year of the document. The abbreviations used are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1833 – 1869</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870 – 1899</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-1918</td>
<td>Cd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919-1956</td>
<td>Cmd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956 – October 1986</td>
<td>Cmd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Debates (House of Commons)**

When referencing House of Commons debates the ‘HC Deb’ abbreviation is used. The date, and column number should always be given. It is helpful to provide a volume number for debates which have taken place over a year ago and this can also be included for recent debates should you wish to do so.

**Oxford:** HC Deb 15 April 2013 vol 561 c8

**Harvard:** Russell Brown MP asked for confirmation of the phrase ‘conventional arms’ (HC Deb 15 April 2013, c8)

When referring to more than one column use ‘cc’ rather than ‘c’. You do not need to include the MP’s name in the reference. Simply refer to them directly in the preceding sentence.

**Debates (House of Lords)**

When referencing House of Lords debates the ‘HL Deb’ abbreviation is used. The date, volume and column number should be given.

**Oxford:** HL Deb 30 January 2013 vol 742 c1535

**Harvard:** Lord Soley asked for evidence of economic growth (HL Deb 30 January 2013, c1535)

When referring to more than one column use ‘cc’ rather than ‘c’. You do not need to include the Peer’s name in the reference. Simply refer to them directly in the preceding sentence.

**Debates (Westminster Hall)**

When referencing Westminster Hall debates a ‘WH’ abbreviation is used after the column number. The date, volume and column number should be given in the same way as is used when referencing other parliamentary debates.

**Oxford:** HC Deb 29 January 2013 vol 557 cc 179-205WH

**Harvard:** During the adjournment debate on RSPCA (Prosecutions) (HC Deb 29 January 2013, cc 179-205WH) ...

As before, you do not need to include the MP’s name in the reference. Simply refer to them directly in the preceding sentence.
**Early Day Motions**

Early Day Motions use the standard ‘EDM’ abbreviation followed by a reference number. The parliamentary session must also be given.

Oxford: EDM 1255 *Help for Home Buyers, 2012-13*

Harvard: John Leech tabled EDM 1255 (2012-13) welcoming the government’s housing announcement.

**Library Research Papers**

Research papers produced by the House of Commons should be listed by the names of the author/(s) rather than simply as ‘House of Commons Library’. The year of publication and the number of the research paper should be written in the YY/NN format.


Harvard: Parliamentary franchises were not unified until 1884 (Johnston 2013)

**Lords Library Notes**

Referencing of Lords Library Notes follows the same principles as House of Commons Library Research Papers.


Harvard: Reaction to the budget was discussed in a Lords Library Note (Cruse and Taylor 2013).

**POST Notes and Reports**

Notes produced by the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) do not have specific authors listed. Both types of POST document do have an identification number and this should always be given.


Public Bill Committee Debates

Public bill committee debates are referenced in a similar way to debates on the floor of the House of Commons with column numbers (where printed) given in the same way as for other parliamentary debates.

Oxford: Children and Families Bill Deb 12 March 2013 c467

Harvard: The amendment was withdrawn (Children and Families Bill Deb 12 March 2013 c467).

If the bill being referred to is clear from the text, it is acceptable to refer to ‘PBC Deb’ rather than giving the full name of the bill. If the title of the bill is very long, the bill number can be referred to instead:

Oxford: PBC Deb (Bill 131) 12 March 2013 c467

Harvard: The amendment was withdrawn (PBC Deb Bill 131 12 March 2013 c467).

Grand Committee debates in the House of Lords is referred to as follows:

Oxford: HL Deb 27 June 2012 c126GC

Harvard: Lord Bradshaw moved amendment 1 during committee stage in the House of Lords (HL Deb 27 June 2012 c126GC)

Those taking place prior to the 2002-03 parliamentary session should be written with CWH (Committee of the Whole House) after the column number.

Select Committee Reports

Here the name of the select committee should be written first, as the author of the document, followed by the document title (title of inquiry) and date. The unique identification (HC/HL) number should be given, followed by the parliamentary session in which the report has been published.

If referring to a quote within a report the paragraph number and page number should be used. References to oral evidence should refer to the question number as well as the page number. Written evidence can be quoted with the page number.

Harvard: As described by the Communications Committee (27 March 2013, HL 154: para 3) in its report on Media Convergence ...


Harvard: In its written evidence to the committee’s inquiry the Ministry of Defence (10 April 2013, HC 413 Ev 82) noted that Afghanistan was one of the poorest countries in the world.

**Standard Notes**

The author should always be given when referencing Standard Notes written by the House of Commons Library, followed by the year and reference number.


Harvard: This can be seen in the Standard Note on Health Expenditure (Harker 2013).

**Standing Orders**

Standing Orders concern the processes of Parliament and the way that it conducts its business. There are different types of standing orders; they may refer to the *House of Commons* or to the *House of Lords* and may govern public or private business.

The abbreviation ‘No’ (as in number) is used when referencing Standing Orders relating to public business but this is omitted for Standing Orders relating to private business.


Harvard: The Standing Orders (SO No 9) state that the House of Commons sits at half past two on Mondays.

**Statutory Instruments**

Also known as secondary or delegated legislation, Statutory Instruments enable provisions contained within Acts of Parliament to be brought into force without the need for a new Act. The SI abbreviation and a corresponding number are used when referencing them.
**Written Ministerial Statements**

Written ministerial statements are referenced in the same way as parliamentary debates, but the WS abbreviation is used to show that it is a written rather than an oral statement. For statements in the House of Commons this is placed after the column number (e.g. c 18WS) but for statements in the House of Lords this is placed before the column number (e.g. c WS18).

Oxford: HC Deb 15 April 2013 vol 561 c 18WS

Harvard: In a written statement to the House Chris Grayling discussed the government’s consultation on the Code of Practice for victims of crime (HC Deb 15 April 2013, c 18WS).

Oxford: HL Deb 21 May 2013 vol 745 c WS75

Harvard: Baroness Hanham gave details of the government’s planning consultation in a written statement in the House (HL Deb 21 May 2013, c WS75).

**Written Questions and Answers**

Written answers are referenced in the same manner as written statements, with the use of the ‘W’ abbreviation in the House of Commons and ‘WA’ in the House of Lords.

Oxford: HC Deb 10 April 2013 vol 560 c 1184W

Harvard: The Secretary of State for Education listed the local authorities who had signed up to the Foster Care Charter (HC Deb 10 April 2013 c 1184W).

Oxford: HL Deb 21 May 2013 vol 745 c WA39

Harvard: The Government gave details regarding the number of apprenticeships created in Greater Manchester since 2010 (HL Deb 21 May 2013 vol 745 c WA39)
Compiling a Bibliography

It is not always clear how to refer to parliamentary sources when compiling a bibliography. In particular, students are often unsure of who the ‘author’ of this material is. Examples of bibliographies are listed below.

Oxford Style Bibliography


Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, *Wild Animals in Circuses 2013* (Cm 8538)


HM Government, The *Antarctic Act 2013*.


UK Parliament,*The Renewable Transport Fuel Obligations (Amendment) Order SI 2013/816*. 

Harvard Style Bibliography


Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. (2013) *Wild Animals in Circuses 2013* (Cm 8538)


This information is available as a separate and more detailed guide – *Parliamentary Referencing: A Guide for Lecturers and Students*. 


This guide is based upon the *Parliament as a Teaching Resource* research project coordinated by Cristina Leston-Bandeira at the University of Hull with research assistance from Louise Thompson (University of Hull) and Mark Stuart (University of Nottingham). The project was funded by the Higher Education Academy and run in partnership with Parliament’s Outreach Service. The project involved a series of focus groups with politics students at three Universities which explored the research habits of students, their awareness and perceptions of parliamentary resources and their use of the Parliament website. This was later complemented by a national online survey of politics lecturers and teaching assistants.

The focus groups with university students highlighted seven key findings:

1. When preparing for essays and seminars, **students seek fast and easily searchable access to contemporary online material.** The overwhelming majority would begin by running a simple Google search and they regularly make use of Twitter and RSS Feeds to keep track of current events and use these as information sources for their academic work.

2. Despite the prevalence of online material, **students continue to pay very close attention to module reading lists.**

3. The **use of the parliament website by students at present is low and infrequent**, with most using it to obtain basic information about election results and MP profiles as well as visiting information.

4. Students are **not aware of the quantity of material available on the Parliament website**. There is a perception that unless they are researching an essay or seminar on British or parliamentary politics, the website will have little useful material for them. Many students were not aware that committee meetings were broadcast or that an archive of televised parliamentary proceedings was available to them to view and search.

5. Students **struggle to find material on the Parliament website**. They find the site confusing and difficult to navigate without assistance from their tutors. These difficulties mean that they rarely use the UK Parliament homepage, preferring to Google the information they require (such as a select committee report) rather than

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**Student perceptions towards parliamentary material**

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**Student perceptions towards parliamentary material**
searching for what they require from the homepage. This is partly a result of the website being very process orientated (arranged by parliamentary business) rather than being organised by topic. Even students taking more specialised parliament modules/degrees and who are able to find basic information and reports, have problems locating more specialised material such as information on All-Party-Parliamentary Groups and the Sessional Statistics.

6. Students **struggle to identify ‘parliamentary’ resources**. In particular, many students are not aware of parliament as an institution which is distinct from government. There is also confusion regarding those resources which have been specifically recorded or written by Parliament and those which have been compiled by outside organisations. This means that they often visit departmental websites and external websites such as TheyWorkForYou and believe that they are consulting parliamentary material.

7. Students are very open to the possibility of making greater use of parliamentary resources in their studies and **see their tutors as having an important role to play as mediators between their class and parliament**. They prefer specific resources and links to be listed in module handbooks rather than simply a note to “look through Parliament’s website” and would like to have more guidance in using parliamentary material, particularly in the first year of their degrees. This could be delivered through lectures and seminars themselves, material placed in module handbooks, welcome packs and specific ‘drop in’ sessions or workshops.

In the survey, lecturers were asked how often they visited Parliament’s website and which resources they used most frequently. We found that two-thirds of lecturers had used Parliament’s website in their teaching, with select committee reports and library research papers being the most popular sources. However, the survey also found that lecturers often struggle to locate specific resources on the parliament website and are unsure of how to utilise these sources effectively in their teaching. A small number of respondents were contacted for more detailed information about how they use parliamentary material as part of their teaching. This information has been used to inform the accompanying Portfolio of Case Studies: Applying Parliamentary Resources in Teaching.

The portfolio builds on the information and guidance presented here. It lists ten detailed examples of how the different types of resources discussed throughout this guide can be used in lectures and seminars to encourage students to develop their primary research, critical analysis, communication and team work skills. It seeks to show how parliamentary material can be very easily incorporated into teaching at all levels and in all subjects, to deepen student learning.
Images and References

1 All accessed from www.parliament.uk
2 www.parliament.uk/topics/Afghanistan.htm
3 www.parliament.uk/business/committees/
4 www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/
5 www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/energy-and-climate-change-committee/
6 www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/energy-and-climate-change-committee/publications1/
7 www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/briefing-papers/
8 www.parliament.uk/search/advanced/
9 www.parliament.uk/education/
10 www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/ms-diane-abbott/172
11 www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/transportcomms/canalsrivers/collections/scottish-commissioners-correspondence/
12 http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cession/1/1.pdf
13 https://subscriptions.parliament.uk/accounts/UKPARLIAMENT/subscriber/new?pop=t
14 https://twitter.com/UKParliament
15 www.youtube.com/user/ukhouseoflords
16 http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-12/transportforlondonhl.html
17 www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/elections/voting/womenvote/parliamentary-collections/collections-suffragettes/emmeline-pankurst-letter/
18 www.parliament.uk/get-involved/outreach-and-training/
19 www.parliament.uk/get-involved/outreach-and-training/resources-for-universities/open-lectures/the-lord-speaker-and-international-relations/