Lesson plan

**Topic**: Politics – the role of politicians  
**Level**: E3-L1 / Int 1-Int 2 / B1-B2 (with differentiated reading tasks for lower levels)  
**Time**: 2 hours

**Aims**
- to develop vocabulary related to the political system in the UK  
- to develop the ability to listen for and process information about the role of MPs  
- to give reading practice within the topic of ‘Contacting an MP’  
- to develop the ability to compose a letter or email to an MP

**Introduction**
This lesson enables students to identify national and local MPs, explore the role of MPs in the UK’s political system, find out how to contact a local MP and practice contacting them. This lesson uses materials from the NIACE ‘Citizenship for ESOL Learners’ pack and resources from the Politics section of the ESOL Nexus website.

**Tip** – You should find up-to-date information for the flashcards in Resource A. You can paste photos into the flashcard template and cut up before they are given to students. More information about this topic and photographs of politicians can be found at [http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/](http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/).

The NIACE Citizenship for ESOL materials used in this lesson can be downloaded at: [http://www.niace.org.uk/projects/esolcitizenship/Home-Eng.htm](http://www.niace.org.uk/projects/esolcitizenship/Home-Eng.htm)  
(Section 2 ‘Parliament and the electoral system’.)

**Procedure**

**Warmer (5 mins) - to generate interest and establish the topic**
- Before class starts, put pictures (e.g. Houses of Parliament, Big Ben, House of Commons etc) around the room. Relevant images can be found on pages 33 and 34 of Section 2 ‘Parliament and the electoral system’ of the NIACE Citizenship materials.  
- As students enter the room, encourage them to circulate and note down anything they know about each picture.  
- Ask the students to return to their seats. Elicit feedback about what each picture shows. Elicit the topic of the lesson i.e. ‘government’ and ‘MP’ (elicit ‘Member of Parliament’) then write these words on the whiteboard and check students understand these terms.

**Task 1 – Who’s Who? – identifying MPs (10 mins)**
- Hand out cut up flashcards (Resource A) one card per student and set a 5 minute time limit. Tell students they must form groups of three by matching together the name, job role and photo of a politician. If there are less than 18 students in your class, you could just hand out one set of cut up Resource A cards to each pair and tell them to match all the cards together.  
- Conduct feedback to check flashcards are correctly matched and draw attention to local and national nature of MPs’ work. This prepares students for ideas and vocabulary they will encounter in the listening comprehension.

**Task 2 – Vocabulary – to prepare for listening task 3 (10 mins)**
How your MP can help you!

- Ask the students if they know any other vocabulary related to ‘government’ and note it on the whiteboard.
- Put students in pairs. Hand out worksheet (Resource B) and tell students to match the words and definitions. Set a time limit of 5 minutes for this activity. At the end of the 5 minutes, briefly check the answers to the activity and correct any errors. Ask students if any of the words they thought of in Task 2 are on the list.

**Differentiation**
There are three versions of this worksheet contained in Resource B. Version B1 matches word to definition (E3), Version B2 matches jumbled word to definition (E3), Version B3 provides just the definitions so students must provide the words (L1).

**Task 3 – What is the role of an MP – listening comprehension (25 mins)**
- Ask students if they know what the role of an MP is. Elicit that an MP represents the people in his or her constituency and votes on the laws of the country.
- Tell the students they are going to watch a video and they should find the answer to this question: ‘How do the MPs vote?’
- Play the video at [http://esol.britishcouncil.org/politics/what-role-mp](http://esol.britishcouncil.org/politics/what-role-mp) (Task 1 ‘Watch the video’). Replay if students find it challenging. Elicit the answer to the question.
- Watch video again and complete the matching and true / false activities which accompany the video either on interactive whiteboard or download printable version (Resource C). Play video again as necessary.

**Differentiation**
- Print out the transcript document (Resource D) for weaker listeners to follow.

**Task 4 – Contacting an MP - reading for information (25 mins)**
- Using the photo of local MP from task 1, ask students: Has anyone ever met their MP, asked their MP for help or been to a surgery (explain if necessary)? Do you know how an MP could help you?
- After some general feedback, ask students if they know how to contact their MP?
- To practise scanning for information, ask students to read the worksheet and find which political party Hywell Francis belongs to. Tell students to raise their hand as soon as they have found the answer. Encourage students to scan for the answer, not to read every word.

*Answer:Labour*

**Differentiation**
- Put students into groups according to their reading ability and give each student an appropriate worksheet from pages 42 to 44, which are at E2 and below.

**Extension / homework**
- Hand out the research task on page 45 and tell students they should use the internet to find the answers to the questions. Write this web address on the whiteboard, where students can find information: [http://findyourmp.parliament.uk/](http://findyourmp.parliament.uk/). They need to enter their postcode.
- Monitor as students complete the research task (Entry 3+) and provide content-based feedback if students need it.
- Round up the activity by asking groups to feedback information they found out.
Task 5 – Writing to your MP (25 mins)

- Put students in pairs and ask them to think of reasons why they might contact their MP. See Answer Section for suggestions.
- Briefly feed back ideas and check that students understand why and how their MP can help them.
- Tell students that they are going to write a letter or email to their local MP, explaining their problem and requesting help.
- Hand out copies of the writing frame on page 55 of the NIACE ‘Parliament and the electoral system’ materials. Ask students for suggestions of suitable sentences to fit in each box, to check their understanding of how to use the frame. If students need more support, write the class suggestions on the whiteboard/flip chart/OHT to build up a class-generated letter.
- Set a 15-minute time limit for the students to write their own text (or copy the class-generated letter) and monitor while students complete the activity.

Differentiation

- Page 56 provides a model letter which can be cut up and ordered and can be used to support students with weaker literacy skills.

Cooler – ‘Back to the Board’ vocabulary recall game (10 mins)

- Ask a volunteer student to come and sit at the front of the room, facing the class, so they can’t see the whiteboard.
- Write a piece of vocabulary from the lesson onto the whiteboard. Tell the class to call out clues to help the student at the front of the class guess the word on the board. Encourage the class to give helpful clues, but of course they mustn’t say the actual word on the board, or parts of it.
- When the student at the front has guessed the word, repeat with other students. This game can also be a competition if you divide the class into two teams and have a student from each team at the front of the class. The first student to correctly guess the word earns a point for their team.

Extension activities / Homework

- For an extra activity in class or as homework, ask students to read the video transcript from task 3 and highlight any collocations they find around political terms e.g. scrutinise legislation, take part in a debate.
How your MP can help you!

Answer key

Task 1 – Who’s Who?
The answers will depend on the politicians who are currently in post.

Task 2 – vocabulary – definition matching
A - 4, B - 8, C - 6, D - 1, E - 9, F - 2, G - 5, H - 3, I – 7

There are 650 constituencies in the UK with approximately 68,175 voters in each. A large city will have many constituencies, whereas a rural constituency may cover a large geographical area. As the concept of constituencies can be confusing, showing the students a map may help with clarification. More information can be found here: http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/elections-and-voting/constituencies/

Task 2 – vocabulary extension task
Suggested answer: All the words on the vocabulary worksheet apart from ‘Cabinet’ and ‘Shadow Cabinet’ are spoken in the video.

Task 3
Suggested answer: They walk into one of two rooms. One of the rooms is for "yes" and one of them is for "no". Someone counts up how many people went into each room and then gives the result to the Speaker of the House, who announces it to everyone.

Resource C

True or Flase: 1 - F, 2 – T, 3 – T, 4 – F, 5 – F, 6 – F, 7 – T

Task 5
Suggested answer: MPs generally provide help with matters related to Central Government e.g.

- Tax problems involving the Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise Departments, e.g: self-employed person or small business having a problem with the Tax Office.
- Problems with the Department of Health - hospitals, the National Health Service, eg: waiting unacceptably long for necessary treatment, a case of medical negligence.
- The Department for Work and Pensions: Pensions and National Insurance, eg: a problem with pension entitlement.
- Immigration, which is dealt with by the Home Office, eg: visa refusals/appeals, unacceptable delays in processing of Asylum Seekers claims.
- Matters including school closures and grants, which are administered by the Department for Education, also eg: not being able to find a school place for a child.

For further information on MPs and parliament, go to http://www.parliament.uk/
https://www.gov.uk/