



Tithe an
Oireachtais
Houses of the
Oireachtas

Lesson Plan: The Everyday Work Of The Seanad

Junior Cert/Cycle CSPE: This lesson will work best if the lesson on the Dáil is completed previously

Learning Intentions:

At the end of this lesson students will

1. Understand the running order of a typical day in the Seanad
2. Know what happens when these terms appear: Commencement Matters, Cathaoirleach, Order Paper and Public Engagement
3. Appreciate the work of members of the Oireachtas inside and outside the chambers

Key Skills: Communicating, Working With Others, Managing Information and Thinking

Resources:

<http://beta.oireachtas.ie/>

<http://beta.oireachtas.ie/?tab=seanad>

<http://beta.oireachtas.ie/en/oireachtas-tv/video-archive/seanad-videos/?datePeriod=dates&fromDate=03/07/2017&toDate=25/07/2017>

http://learning.educatetogether.ie/pluginfile.php/13096/mod_resource/content/4/A%20Brief%20Guide%20to%20How%20Your%20Parliament%20Works.pdf

<http://beta.oireachtas.ie/en/visit-and-learn/teachers-and-students/cspe-videos/> (Seanad Éireann)

You might also look at the video from December 6th 2016 which can be found on

<http://beta.oireachtas.ie/en/oireachtas-tv/oireachtas-tv-productions-archive/> by putting the date into the calendar.

Introduction:

At the beginning of the lesson ask the students to recap on the key terms such as Dáil, TD, Seanad etc. (These terms can be found in the glossary section <http://beta.oireachtas.ie/en/visit-and-learn/glossary/>)

Then either individually or in groups what do they think a Senator does during his or her day? How do these answers compare with those from the previous class on the Dáil? Display these answers on the board.

Development: Go to the first website you will use <http://beta.oireachtas.ie/?tab=seanad> and ask how many senators there are. Then go through the make up of the Seanad on <http://beta.oireachtas.ie/en/members/>. Scroll down to

the section just underneath the map and ask the students what they think the Cathaoirleach does. Name the Cathaoirleach and spend a little time going through their profile. Draw students attention to the different panels, universities and Taoiseach's nominees: ask them how this is different to the way TDs are elected. Then go through the Seanad schedule. Ask the students to pick out one or two things that will be happening over the next few days. Ask them to suggest what they think Commencement Matters are and check the answer on how your parliament works p.15. Ask them to note what time the Seanad starts and finishes. Ask them what they think of the start time. Go through the layout of the day. Ask the students to pick out one or two items of interest on any day that is listed on <http://beta.oireachtas.ie/?tab=seanad>

Then go to the committees' site <http://beta.oireachtas.ie/en/committees/> and ask them to note what time they start at (the students might remember from the lesson on the Dáil). Then ask what committee deals with each of the following: Hospitals, Farming and Historical Monuments. Pick any other committee and see what members are involved in it and focus in particular on the Senators. Then go back to the committees' site <http://beta.oireachtas.ie/en/committees/> and see what committee is meeting on the day you are looking at it. Look at the detailed schedule and have a short discussion around what the class thinks might be under discussion. Then see if it is televised on Oireachtas TV (<http://beta.oireachtas.ie/en/oireachtas-tv/>) and watch a minute or two of it. Scroll down towards the end of this page <http://beta.oireachtas.ie/> and see if there is any news or any committee looking for submissions from the public. This leads on then to the question of public engagement. Ask the students what they think public engagement is. Then go to p.16 of how your parliament works to see how the answers compare.

Conclusion: To conclude the lesson ask the students to explain: Commencement Matters, Cathaoirleach, Order Paper and Public Engagement. Ask the students to imagine that they are a member of Dáil Éireann and to prepare a typical day in the life for the next class. This might help

<https://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/housesoftheoireachtas/contentassets/documents/Day-in-the-Life-EN.pdf> or this from the Northern Ireland Assembly

http://education.niassembly.gov.uk/years_11_12/mla_for_a_week/activity If you have time you could show this video detailing the inside of the Seanad Chamber <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZ3380gN1wE>

Follow Up Activity: Another class could be spent looking at the issues around the vote to abolish the Seanad. A starting point might be <https://www.rte.ie/news/2013/1005/478505-referendum-count/> You could then look at a debate around retaining or abolishing the Seanad