HANDOUT 9: Model Parliament

In this simulation you will take on the role of a Member of Parliament and have an opportunity to take on leadership roles like Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Party Whip or join the Shadow Cabinet. The government will have the task of passing six pieces of legislation while the opposition will attempt to block, amend or defeat as many bills as possible.

Step 1: Party Roles

Once you have joined your party, there are a few tasks that must be organized prior to the opening of Parliament.

1. Choose a leader (Prime Minister, Leader of The Opposition, Party Leader). This should be done by nomination. Each party member writes down the name of a candidate (other than themselves) that they feel would do the best job of leading the party. After all votes are cast, a simple majority is all that is needed to elect a leader.

2. Assign secondary roles, including Party Whip, ministers, critics and backbenchers. All party members must have a specific role with specific legislative responsibilities.

3. Legislative Proposals. All party members now need turn their attention to the six pieces of legislation that will be brought forward in the House during First Reading. Your specific responsibilities depend upon your role. Cabinet Ministers and Critics will be required to present speeches on proposed legislation. Junior Ministers and backbenchers will only present speeches if the Minister is absent, but they must prepare a speech, print a copy and hand it to the Speaker of The House (teacher).

4. Prepare your clothing and make arrangements to dress in time for class. All Members must dress formally for Parliament.

Step 2: Opening of Parliament

The opening of Parliament includes:

1. Swear in all members. Members will rise one at a time, introduce themselves, and be sworn in by the Speaker of The House.
2. The Speaker reviews the rules of the House of Commons (rules of conduct and order).
3. The Prime Minister introduces cabinet ministers and Opposition Leader introduces shadow cabinet.