



Key Stage 3

Functions of the People's Majlis

Lesson Plan

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Objectives

By the end of the session, students would be able to:

- Describe the 3 main functions of the People's Majlis.
- Explain how Majlis performs check and balance to keep the Government accountable and transparent.
- Explain how Majlis is related to the lives of the people.

Curriculum Link

Social Studies Curriculum Strand 5: Governance and Citizenship (Grade 7, 8)

GC 3.1: Demonstrate understanding of the electoral process in the Maldives and the structure and functions of the government of Maldives.

Success Criteria

Students are able to:

- Describe the legislative, representative, and oversight functions of the People's Majlis.
- Explain the specific roles and mechanisms within the Majlis and how they carry out parliamentary functions.
- Identify and explain how the Majlis affects their lives.

Setting or Resources required

- Copies of the "List of Majlis functions" enough for each group of 4 or 5 students.
- Factsheet "Functions of Majlis"

Procedure

Introduction (10 minutes)

Begin the session by asking students about their understanding of what is the People's Majlis and its purpose.

Explain that all the work carried out by the People's Majlis can be categorized into 3 main functions. (Legislation, Representation and Oversight).

Explain the meanings of the 3 terms:

1. Legislation = The process of making , amending and terminating laws.
2. Representation = elected officials representing and advocating for the views and interests of the citizens.
3. Oversight = supervision or monitoring the decisions and actions of the executive government to ensure transparency and accountability.

Activity (20 minutes)

Ask the students to sit in groups of 4 or 5 and distribute the "list of Majlis functions" for each group. Their task is to accurately categorize all the given functions as either a legislative, representative or oversight function.

Teacher can go around guiding the groups while they do the task. (give 5-10 minutes for this task)

At the end of the activity, ask if they were able to categorize the functions. Was it easy and clear? What parts were difficult? Discuss to check their answers.

Go on to recap all the functions under the 3 categories referring to the "Functions of the Majlis" Factsheet.

Closure (5 minutes)

Ask students what they can recall from the list of functions of the Majlis. For each function, name whether it comes under the legislative, representative or oversight function.

Extension Activity 1

Legislative Function: Parliamentary debate simulation (45 minutes)

The goal of this activity is to provide students an opportunity to experience the idea of parliamentary debate process, allowing them to practice proposing, defending, and debating on a specific topic, similar to the legislative process in a parliamentary system.

Instructions:

Begin with a brief explanation of parliamentary debate and its significance in the legislative process. Ask for a volunteer to play the role of the Speaker of the Majlis who will be moderating the debate. Divide the students into 2 main groups to represent the MPs from Government and MPs of the opposition. (Depending on the number of students each group can be further divided into smaller groups to easily manage discussions within the group. Ideas can be discussed among smaller groups and a leader from each group can become representatives for their group)

Choose a relevant topic for debate to make a law (Eg: Teaching Islam in Dhivehi language, Banning Homework, Lowering age of voting, not limiting screen time.) Allow 10-15 minutes for participants to brainstorm ideas on their topics. Instruct participants to prepare their arguments and speeches based on their assigned roles (e.g., government or opposition).

Introduce the rules of procedure that will govern the debate.

- The Speaker will preside over the debate and has the authority to interrupt speakers when necessary.
- Each participant or group will be allocated a specific amount of time for their speeches (e.g., 2 minutes for opening statements, 1 minute for rebuttals). A timekeeper can be assigned who will signal when their time is up.
- Speaker of the Majlis to introduce the session by stating the topic of debate. The debate will start with opening statements from the government side, explaining their view of the argument. Followed by the opposition side.
- After each speech from a member, the opposing side will have an opportunity to ask questions to the speaker who just presented.
- Participants may raise 'points of order' if they believe a rule is being violated. The Speaker will decide whether the point is valid and take appropriate action.
- All participants must engage in the debate respectfully and avoid personal attacks.
- Participants should address each other by their roles (e.g., "Honorable Speaker," "Honorable Member")
- Participants are encouraged to support their arguments with evidence, facts, and examples.
- Each participant or group will have a specified time for a closing statement to summarize their position and make a final statement to persuade the audience.
- Encourage respectful and constructive feedback.

At the end of the debate, the Speaker asks all the members for a quick vote based on the arguments given by each of the teams. By a show of hands, count the number of people in favor of the argument and opposing it.

At the end of the session, take 5-10 minutes for reflection where students discuss their experiences, the challenges they faced, and what they learned from the activity.

List of Majlis functions

(Activity: Cut out the functions listed below and categorize them as Legislative, Representative or Oversight functions)

Accountability: Elected representatives are accountable to their constituents
Amendment of Existing Laws: amend existing laws to reflect changing circumstances
Approval of Key Appointments: power to confirm or approve key executive appointments, maintaining a check on important positions.
Budget Scrutiny: Parliament reviews and approves the government's annual budget
Checks and Balances: Oversight prevents the executive branch from abusing power, ensuring accountability to the legislature and the people.
Committees: Specialized committees investigate specific issues, collect evidence, hold hearings, and make recommendations.
Debate and Discussion: Parliament provides a platform for open debate and discussion on matters of national importance.
Diversity of Representation: Members from various political parties ensure a broad representation, including minority groups and diverse perspectives.
Election of Representatives: Members are elected by citizens through periodic elections, representing various constituencies.
Law Enforcement: oversee law enforcement agencies, ensuring they uphold the rule of law and protect citizens' rights.
Lawmaking: drafting, debating, and enacting laws.
Questioning and Debating: Members have the authority to question government officials about their decisions, actions, and policies.
Ratification of International Agreements:
Repeal of Outdated Laws: can abolish laws that are no longer relevant
Voice of the People: Elected representatives articulate the needs, desires, and opinions of their constituents.

Extension Activity 2

Representative Function: Voting simulation (45 minutes)

The goal of this activity is to provide students with hands-on experience of the democratic decision-making process. Through a mock voting session, students will practice the fundamentals of voting, expressing their opinions, and participating in a democratic exercise.

Materials required: Ballot box (Ballot station), Ballot paper.

Instructions:

Start with a brief explanation of the importance of democratic decision-making.

Create a sample situation or issue that will be the focus of the mock voting session.

(Eg.: "Your class has been awarded MVR.2,000 for being chosen for the best performing class this term. Your teacher says that the class itself should decide how to spend it. Some students want to use the money to have a celebration party. Some want to arrange a class trip at a nearby island. Some suggest buying new stationeries and board games to use in the class. One person wants to save it and keep to use towards the end of the year. Another wants to setup a smart board in the class. There are 30 children in your group. How will you democratically decide how to use the money?)

Assign one official as Elections Controller and one as Voting official.

Divide the students into groups to represent each perspective or opinion. (Eg; 5 different opinions in the given example). After 2 or 3 minutes of discussing within the group, one representatives from each group will present their arguments.

Open the floor for questions from the audience. Students can ask clarifying questions to better understand each opinion. After considering the arguments from all the groups, ask students to INDIVIDUALLY decide which is the best option. This will be their individual and secret decision.

Designate a ballot station in one corner of the class (with a pen to write and a box to put the ballots in) for students to cast their votes anonymously.

The Elections Controller clearly explains the options on the ballot and the voting procedure. (Before the voting, options in the ballot can be shown on a slide or written clearly and put up near the ballot station. For the given example, the following sample ballot paper may be copied and printed for all the students)

Ballot Paper	
To decide how to use the MVR.2,000 award	
A	Party to celebrate
B	Trip to nearby island
C	Buy stationeries and board games
D	Save for end of year
E	Setup smartboard in class

Extension Activity 2

Voting official distributes the ballots to each student. And each and every one casts a secret vote.

Once all the participants are done voting, the voting official opens the ballot box and count the votes for each option. You can involve some students in the counting process as independent observers and to fast-track the counting process.

Elections Controller Announces the results to the class.

At the end of the session, facilitate a discussion on the results, allowing students to share their thoughts and reactions.

Discuss what will happen if there is a tie. Discuss the implications of the decision and how it aligns with democratic principles.

Conclude the session by asking students what they learned about the democratic process, the challenges they encountered, and any insights gained