



HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW



Look at the Passage of how a Bill becomes a Law in the UK.



The proposed Bill starts in the House of Commons with the **First Reading**. The title of the Bill is announced and then the Bill is printed and given to MPs to read.

The **Second Reading** follows. A government Spokesperson or the MP responsible for the Bill opens the debate. Then the Opposition responds with its opinion of the Bill. At the end of the debate, the House of Commons votes to decide **whether** the Bill passes to the next phase or not.

The next step of the process is the detailed examination of the proposed Bill. This is called the **Committee Stage**. The committee is usually made up of 16 to 50

members. In this step MPs in the committee can look over the Bill and make proposals for changes to it. Once every clause of the Bill has been **agreed to**, it moves on to the next stage.

The Bill now goes to the **Report Stage**. This stage gives all MPs of the House of Commons a chance to speak about the Bill.

After the Report Stage, the Bill moves to its final place in the House of Commons. This is known as the **Third Reading**. During this stage, MPs can only debate about what is in the Bill. They cannot make any proposals for changes. At the end of the debate, MPs vote on the Bill. If the Bill passes, it moves to the House of Lords.

In the House of Lords the Member in charge of the Bill reads the contents of the Bill. This is the **First Reading**. Once introduced, the Bill is printed.

The **Second Reading** in the House of Lords opens the Bill up for debate. Similar to the House of Commons, the **Committee Stage** in the House of Lords examines each line of the Bill. Amendments (changes) are made and voted on. Once the Members have amended the Bill, it moves on.

The **Report Stage** is next. This gives all Members of the Lords to discuss and vote on changes. Once all Members have agreed to the changes in the Bill, it moves on to its final stage in the House of Lords.

The **Third Reading** is the final chance for Members of the Lords to discuss and change the Bill. Differently from the House of Commons, Bills can still be changed at this stage. If the Bill passes through the House of Lords without any changes, it goes directly for **Royal Assent**. If House of Lord makes changes, the Bill moves back to the House of Commons for approval.

- The House of Commons looks at any changes the House of Lords has made to the Bill. This is the **Consideration of Amendments** stage. Both houses must agree on the Bill before it can move to the next stage. When houses don't agree, the Bill goes back and forth between the houses until there is an agreement. This is called "**Ping Pong**". If two houses can't agree on the Bill, it fails.

- When a Bill has finally passed through the parliamentary stages, it must have **Royal Assent**. This means that The Monarch must agree to the Bill before it can become an Act of Parliament (law). This is only a formality; the Queen always agrees to the Bill.



GLOSSARY

whether: se.

agreed to: accettata.

Royal Assent: Approvazione Reale.



QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions.

- 1) How many members are usually in the committee of the House of Commons?
- 2) What can't House of Commons MPs do at the Third Reading?
- 3) What are "Amendments"?
- 4) What happens when the houses don't agree on the Bill?
- 5) Why is Royal Assent only a formality?

