

QUESTION TIME IN THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT

ANALYSIS

When you visit Question Time in the South Australian Parliament you will view Ministers of the Government being asked questions by Opposition Members of Parliament, Minority Party members of Parliament, Independent Members of Parliament and Members of Parliament from their own party.

The Minister is unlikely to know what the questions from the Opposition, Minority Party members and Independent Members will be. The Minister will know the issues of the day and expect certain areas to be questioned but they will be questions without notice. Responsible Government is in action where a Minister is called to account to the Parliament their or their department's actions.

The Minister will know what questions are going to be asked by Members of their own party and will be prepared to answer these questions.

The media report Question Time and this includes written press, radio and the TV cameras. You will be able to watch when they are most active in reporting what is being said.

Question Time is an exciting time in Parliament and a critical analysis of some of the questions and answers will assist you to understand the processes involved. This will include parliamentary, political, public relations and media attention processes.

- A week before your visit you should analyse the media and find out what you think may be the topics that are likely to be brought up during Question Time in the South Australian Parliament.
- Who asked the first question? Why do you think it was that particular position that asked the first question?
- In your opinion did the Government Minister answer the question to the satisfaction of the Member who asked it? Why do you think this?
- How do questions differ when they are asked from a backbencher from the Government?
- In your opinion did the Government Minister answer the question from the Government Backbencher in sufficient detail? Why do you think this?

- Do the media seem interested in questions asked by Government backbenchers? Why do you think they are, or are not interested in these questions?
- We often refer to the term responsible government – do you think Question Time is responsible government in action? Why or why not?
- Do some Ministers seem to be asked more questions than other Ministers? Why do you think this occurs?
- At the end of your visit do you think there were some consistent themes coming out in the questions from the Opposition? Why do you think this occurred?
- Visit the Legislative Council and observe if there are any differences in the Question Time procedures and “tone” when there are only two Ministers.

FEDERAL PARLIAMENT QUESTION TIME



The ABC shows the Federal Parliament Question Time each day of sitting at 2 pm one House and 12 midnight the other House.

Students could compare the similarities and differences between the State and Federal Parliament Question Time sessions or this could make a good introductory session before visiting the South Australian Parliament so students know what to look for when they come to visit. It is difficult to explain to your students once they are in the public gallery watching as silence must be observed in the galleries.