

Scottish Parliament

Following a referendum in 1997, in which the Scottish electorate voted for devolution, the current Parliament was convened by the Scotland Act 1998, which sets out its powers as a devolved legislature. The Act delineates the legislative competence of the Parliament – the areas in which it can make laws – by explicitly specifying powers that are "reserved" to the Parliament of the United Kingdom. The Scottish Parliament has the power to legislate in all areas that are not explicitly reserved to Westminster. The British Parliament retains the ability to amend the terms of reference of the Scottish Parliament, and can extend or reduce the areas in which it can make laws. The first meeting of the new Parliament took place on 12 May 1999.

For the next three hundred years, Scotland was directly governed by the Parliament of Great Britain and the subsequent Parliament of the United Kingdom, both seated at Westminster, and the lack of a Parliament of Scotland remained an important element in Scottish national identity. Suggestions for a 'devolved' Parliament were made before 1914, but were shelved due to the outbreak of the First World War. A sharp rise in nationalism in Scotland during the late 1960s fuelled demands for some form of home rule or complete independence, and in 1969 prompted the incumbent Labour government of Harold Wilson to set up the Kilbrandon Commission to consider the British constitution. One of the principal objectives of the commission was to examine ways of enabling more self-government for Scotland, within the unitary state of the United Kingdom. Kilbrandon published his report in 1973 recommending the establishment of a directly elected Scottish Assembly to legislate for the majority of domestic Scottish affairs.

During this time, the discovery of oil in the North Sea and the following "It's Scotland's oil" campaign of the Scottish National Party (SNP) resulted in rising support for Scottish independence, as well as the SNP. The party argued that the revenues from the oil were not benefitting Scotland as much as they should. The combined effect of these events led to Prime Minister Wilson committing his government to some form of devolved legislature in 1974. However, it was not until 1978 that final legislative proposals for a Scottish Assembly were passed by the United Kingdom Parliament.

Under the terms of the Scotland Act 1978, an elected assembly would be set up in Edinburgh provided that the majority of the Scottish electorate voted for it in a referendum to be held on 1 March 1979 that represented at least 40% of the total electorate. The 1979 Scottish devolution referendum to establish a devolved Scottish Assembly failed. Although the vote was 51.6% in favour of a Scottish Assembly, this figure did not equal the 40% of the total electorate threshold deemed necessary to pass the measure, as 32.9% of the eligible voting population did not, or had been unable to, vote.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, demand for a Scottish Parliament grew, in part because the government of the United Kingdom was controlled by the Conservative Party, while Scotland itself elected relatively few Conservative MPs. In the aftermath of the 1979 referendum defeat, the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly was initiated as a pressure group, leading to the 1989 Scottish Constitutional Convention with various organisations such as Scottish churches, political parties and representatives of industry taking part. Publishing its blueprint for devolution in 1995, the Convention provided much of the basis for the structure of the Parliament.

Since September 2004, the official home of the Scottish Parliament has been a new Scottish Parliament Building, in the Holyrood area of Edinburgh. The Scottish Parliament building was designed by Spanish architect Enric Miralles in partnership with local Edinburgh Architecture firm RMJM which was led by Design Principal Tony Kettle. Some of the principal features of the complex include leaf-shaped buildings, a grass-roofed branch merging into adjacent parkland and gabion walls formed from the stones of previous buildings. Throughout the building there are many repeated motifs, such as shapes based on Raeburn's Skating Minister. Crow-stepped gables and the upturned boat skylights of the Garden Lobby, complete the unique architecture. Queen Elizabeth II opened the new building on 9 October 2004.

Whilst the permanent building at Holyrood was being constructed, the Parliament's temporary home was the General Assembly Hall of the Church of Scotland on the Royal Mile in Edinburgh. Official photographs and television interviews were held in the courtyard adjoining the Assembly Hall, which is part of the School of Divinity of the University of Edinburgh. This building was vacated twice to allow for the meeting of the Church's General Assembly. In May 2000, the Parliament was temporarily relocated to the former Strathclyde Regional Council debating chamber in Glasgow, and to the University of Aberdeen in May 2002.

In addition to the General Assembly Hall, the Parliament also used buildings rented from the City of Edinburgh Council. The former administrative building of Lothian Regional Council on George IV Bridge was used for the MSP's offices. Following the move to Holyrood in 2004 this building was demolished. The former Midlothian County Buildings facing Parliament Square, High Street and George IV Bridge in Edinburgh (originally built as the headquarters of the pre-1975 Midlothian County Council) housed the Parliament's visitors' centre and shop, whilst the main hall was used as the Parliament's principal committee room.

After each election to the Scottish Parliament, at the beginning of each parliamentary session, Parliament elects one MSP to serve as Presiding Officer, the equivalent of the speaker (currently Tricia Marwick), and two MSPs to serve as deputies (currently Elaine Smith and John Scott). The Presiding Officer and deputies are elected by a secret ballot of the 129 MSPs, which is the only secret ballot conducted in the Scottish Parliament. Principally, the role of the Presiding Officer is to chair chamber proceedings and the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body. When chairing meetings of the Parliament, the Presiding Officer and his/her deputies must be politically impartial. During debates, the Presiding Officer (or the deputy) is assisted by the parliamentary clerks, who give advice on how to interpret the standing orders that govern the proceedings of meetings. A vote clerk sits in front of the Presiding Officer and operates the electronic voting equipment and chamber clocks.

As a member of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body, the Presiding Officer is responsible for ensuring that the Parliament functions effectively and has the staff, property and resources it requires to operate. Convening the Parliamentary Bureau, which allocates time and sets the work agenda in the chamber, is another of the roles of the Presiding Officer. Under the Standing Orders of the Parliament the Bureau consists of the Presiding Officer and one representative from each political parties with five or more seats in the Parliament. Amongst the duties of the Bureau are to agree the timetable of business in the chamber, establish the number, remit and membership of parliamentary committees and regulate the passage of legislation (bills) through the Parliament. The Presiding Officer also represents the Scottish Parliament at home and abroad in an official capacity.

The debating chamber of the Scottish Parliament has seating arranged in a hemicycle, which reflects the desire to encourage consensus amongst elected members. There are 131 seats in the debating chamber. Of the total 131 seats, 129 are occupied by the Parliament's elected MSPs and 2 are seats for the Scottish Law Officers – the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor General for Scotland, who are not elected members of the Parliament but are members of the Scottish Government. As such the Law Officers may attend and speak in the plenary meetings of the Parliament but, as they are not elected MSPs, cannot vote. Members are able to sit anywhere in the debating chamber, but typically sit in their party groupings. The First Minister, Scottish cabinet ministers and Law officers sit in the front row, in the middle section of the chamber. The largest party in the Parliament sits in the middle of the semicircle, with opposing parties on either side. The Presiding Officer, parliamentary clerks and officials sit opposite members at the front of the debating chamber.

In front of the Presiding Officers' desk is the parliamentary mace, which is made from silver and inlaid with gold panned from Scottish rivers and inscribed with the words: Wisdom, Compassion, Justice and Integrity. The words There shall be a Scottish Parliament, which are the first words of the Scotland Act, are inscribed around the head of the mace, which has a formal ceremonial role in the meetings of Parliament, reinforcing the authority of the Parliament in its ability to make laws. Presented to the Scottish Parliament by the Queen upon its official opening in July 1999, the mace is displayed in a glass

case suspended from the lid. At the beginning of each sitting in the chamber, the lid of the case is rotated so that the mace is above the glass, to symbolise that a full meeting of the Parliament is taking place.

Parliament typically sits Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from early January to late June and from early September to mid December, with two-week recesses in April and October. Plenary meetings in the debating chamber usually take place on Wednesday afternoons from 2 pm to 6 pm and on Thursdays from 9:15 am to 6 pm. Chamber debates and committee meetings are open to the public. Entry is free, but booking in advance is recommended due to limited space. Meetings are broadcast on the Parliament's own channel Holyrood.tv and on the BBC's parliamentary channel BBC Parliament. Proceedings are also recorded in text form, in print and online, in the Official Report, which is the substantially verbatim transcript of parliamentary debates.

The first item of business on Wednesdays is usually Time for Reflection, at which a speaker addresses members for up to four minutes, sharing a perspective on issues of faith. This contrasts with the formal style of "Prayers", which is the first item of business in meetings of the House of Commons. Speakers are drawn from across Scotland and are chosen to represent the balance of religious beliefs according to the Scottish census. Invitations to address Parliament in this manner are determined by the Presiding Officer on the advice of the parliamentary bureau. Faith groups can make direct representations to the Presiding Officer to nominate speakers.

The Presiding Officer (or Deputy Presiding Officer) decides who speaks in chamber debates and the amount of time for which they are allowed to speak. Normally, the Presiding Officer tries to achieve a balance between different viewpoints and political parties when selecting members to speak. Typically, ministers or party leaders open debates, with opening speakers given between 5 and 20 minutes, and succeeding speakers allocated less time. The Presiding Officer can reduce speaking time if a large number of members wish to participate in the debate. Debate is more informal than in some parliamentary systems. Members may call each other directly by name, rather than by constituency or cabinet position, and hand clapping is allowed. Speeches to the chamber are normally delivered in English, but members may use Scots, Gaelic, or any other language with the agreement of the Presiding Officer. The Scottish Parliament has conducted debates in the Gaelic language.

Each sitting day, normally at 5 pm, MSPs decide on all the motions and amendments that have been moved that day. This "Decision Time" is heralded by the sounding of the division bell, which is heard throughout the Parliamentary campus and alerts MSPs who are not in the chamber to return and vote. At Decision Time, the Presiding Officer puts questions on the motions and amendments by reading out the name of the motion or amendment as well as the proposer and asking "Are we all agreed?", to which the chamber first votes orally. If there is audible dissent, the Presiding Officer announces "There will be a division" and members vote by means of electronic consoles on their desks. Each MSP has a unique access card with a microchip which, when inserted into the console, identifies them and allows them to vote. As a result, the outcome of each division is known in seconds.

The outcome of most votes can be predicted beforehand since political parties normally instruct members which way to vote. Parties entrust some MSPs, known as whips, with the task of ensuring that party members vote according to the party line. MSPs do not tend to vote against such instructions, since those who do are unlikely to reach higher political ranks in their parties. Errant members can be deselected as official party candidates during future elections, and, in serious cases, may be expelled from their parties outright. Thus, as with many Parliaments, the independence of Members of the Scottish Parliament tends to be low, and backbench rebellions by members who are discontent with their party's policies are rare. In some circumstances, however, parties announce "free votes", which allows Members to vote as they please. This is typically done on moral issues.

Immediately after Decision Time a "Members Debate" is held, which lasts for 45 minutes. Members Business is a debate on a motion proposed by an MSP who is not a Scottish minister. Such motions are on issues which may be of interest to a particular area such as a member's own constituency, an upcoming or past event or any other item which would otherwise not be accorded official parliamentary time. As well

as the proposer, other members normally contribute to the debate. The relevant minister, whose department the debate and motion relate to "winds up" the debate by speaking after all other participants.

Much of the work of the Scottish Parliament is done in committee. The role of committees is stronger in the Scottish Parliament than in other parliamentary systems, partly as a means of strengthening the role of backbenchers in their scrutiny of the government and partly to compensate for the fact that there is no revising chamber. The principal role of committees in the Scottish Parliament is to take evidence from witnesses, conduct inquiries and scrutinise legislation. Committee meetings take place on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning when Parliament is sitting. Committees can also meet at other locations throughout Scotland.

Committees comprise a small number of MSPs, with membership reflecting the balance of parties across Parliament. There are different committees with their functions set out in different ways. Mandatory Committees are committees which are set down under the Scottish Parliament's standing orders, which govern their remits and proceedings. The current Mandatory Committees in the fourth Session of the Scottish Parliament are: Public Audit; Equal Opportunities; European and External Relations; Finance; Public Petitions; Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments; and Delegated Powers and Law Reform.

Subject Committees are established at the beginning of each parliamentary session, and again the members on each committee reflect the balance of parties across Parliament. Typically each committee corresponds with one (or more) of the departments (or ministries) of the Scottish Government. The current Subject Committees in the fourth Session are: Economy, Energy and Tourism; Education and Culture; Health and Sport; Justice; Local Government and Regeneration; Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment; Welfare Reform; and Infrastructure and Capital Investment.

A further type of committee is normally set up to scrutinise private bills submitted to the Scottish Parliament by an outside party or promoter who is not a member of the Scottish Parliament or Scottish Government. Private bills normally relate to large-scale development projects such as infrastructure projects that require the use of land or property. Private Bill Committees have been set up to consider legislation on issues such as the development of the Edinburgh Tram Network, the Glasgow Airport Rail Link, the Airdrie-Bathgate Rail Link and extensions to the National Gallery of Scotland.

The Scotland Act 1998, which was passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom and given royal assent by Queen Elizabeth II on 19 November 1998, governs the functions and role of the Scottish Parliament and delimits its legislative competence. The Scotland Act 2012 extends the devolved competencies. For the purposes of parliamentary sovereignty, the Parliament of the United Kingdom at Westminster continues to constitute the supreme legislature of Scotland. However, under the terms of the Scotland Act, Westminster agreed to devolve some of its responsibilities over Scottish domestic policy to the Scottish Parliament. Such "devolved matters" include education, health, agriculture and justice. The Scotland Act enabled the Scottish Parliament to pass primary legislation on these issues. A degree of domestic authority, and all foreign policy, remain with the UK Parliament in Westminster. The Scottish Parliament has the power to pass laws and has limited tax-varying capability. Another of the roles of the Parliament is to hold the Scottish Government to account.

The specific devolved matters are all subjects which are not explicitly stated in Schedule 5 to the Scotland Act as reserved matters. All matters that are not specifically reserved are automatically devolved to the Scottish Parliament. Most importantly, this includes agriculture, fisheries and forestry, economic development, education, environment, food standards, health, home affairs, Scots law – courts, police and fire services, local government, sport and the arts, transport, training, tourism, research and statistics and social work. The Scottish Parliament has the ability to alter income tax in Scotland by up to 3 pence in the pound. The 2012 Act conferred further fiscal devolution including borrowing powers and some other unconnected matters such as setting speed limits and control of air guns.

Reserved matters are subjects that are outside the legislative competence of the Scotland Parliament. The Scottish Parliament is unable to legislate on such issues that are reserved to, and dealt with at,

Westminster (and where Ministerial functions usually lie with UK Government ministers). These include abortion, broadcasting policy, civil service, common markets for UK goods and services, constitution, electricity, coal, oil, gas, nuclear energy, defence and national security, drug policy, employment, foreign policy and relations with Europe, most aspects of transport safety and regulation, National Lottery, protection of borders, social security and stability of UK's fiscal, economic and monetary system.

Bills can be introduced to Parliament in a number of ways; the Scottish Government can introduce new laws or amendments to existing laws as a bill; a committee of the Parliament can present a bill in one of the areas under its remit; a member of the Scottish Parliament can introduce a bill as a private member; or a private bill can be submitted to Parliament by an outside proposer. Most draft laws are government bills introduced by ministers in the governing party. Bills pass through Parliament in a number of stages:

Stage 1 is the first, or introductory stage of the bill, where the minister or member in charge of the bill will formally introduce it to Parliament together with its accompanying documents – Explanatory Notes, a Policy Memorandum setting out the policy underlying the bill, and a Financial Memorandum setting out the costs and savings associated with it. Statements from the Presiding Officer and the member in charge of the bill are also lodged indicating whether the bill is within the legislative competence of the Parliament. Stage 1 usually takes place, initially, in the relevant committee or committees and is then submitted to the whole Parliament for a full debate in the chamber on the general principles of the bill. If the whole Parliament agrees in a vote to the general principles of the bill, it then proceeds to Stage 2.

Stage 3 is the final stage of the bill and is considered at a meeting of the whole Parliament. This stage comprises two parts: consideration of amendments to the bill as a general debate, and a final vote on the bill. Opposition members can table "wrecking amendments" to the bill, designed to thwart further progress and take up parliamentary time, to cause the bill to fall without a final vote being taken. After a general debate on the final form of the bill, members proceed to vote at Decision Time on whether they agree to the general principles of the final bill.

Royal assent: After the bill has been passed, the Presiding Officer submits it to the Monarch for royal assent and it becomes an Act of the Scottish Parliament. However he cannot do so until a 4-week period has elapsed, during which the Law Officers of the Scottish Government or UK Government can refer the bill to the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom for a ruling on whether it is within the powers of the Parliament. Acts of the Scottish Parliament do not begin with a conventional enacting formula. Instead they begin with a phrase that reads: "The Bill for this Act of the Scottish Parliament was passed by the Parliament on [Date] and received royal assent on [Date]".

The party, or parties, that hold the majority of seats in the Parliament forms the Scottish Government. In contrast to many other parliamentary systems, Parliament elects a First Minister from a number of candidates at the beginning of each parliamentary term (after a general election). Any member can put their name forward to be First Minister, and a vote is taken by all members of Parliament. Normally, the leader of the largest party is returned as First Minister, and head of the Scottish Government. Theoretically, Parliament also elects the Scottish Ministers who form the government of Scotland and sit in the Scottish cabinet, but such ministers are, in practice, appointed to their roles by the First Minister. Junior ministers, who do not attend cabinet, are also appointed to assist Scottish ministers in their departments. Most ministers and their juniors are drawn from amongst the elected MSPs, with the exception of Scotland's Chief Law Officers: the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor General. Whilst the First Minister chooses the ministers – and may decide to remove them at any time – the formal appointment or dismissal is made by the Sovereign.

Under the Scotland Act 1998, ordinary general elections for the Scottish Parliament are held on the first Thursday in May every four years (1999, 2003, 2007 and so on). The date of the poll may be varied by up to one month either way by the Monarch on the proposal of the Presiding Officer. If the Parliament itself resolves that it should be dissolved (with at least two-thirds of the Members voting in favour), or if the Parliament fails to nominate one of its members to be First Minister within 28 days of a General Election or of the position becoming vacant, the Presiding Officer proposes a date for an extraordinary general

election and the Parliament is dissolved by the Queen by royal proclamation. Extraordinary general elections are in addition to ordinary general elections, unless held less than six months before the due date of an ordinary general election, in which case they supplant it. The following ordinary election reverts to the first Thursday in May, a multiple of four years after 1999 (i.e., 5 May 2011, 7 May 2015, etc.).

Several procedures enable the Scottish Parliament to scrutinise the Government. The First Minister or members of the cabinet can deliver statements to Parliament upon which MSPs are invited to question. For example, at the beginning of each parliamentary year, the First Minister delivers a statement to the chamber setting out the Government's legislative programme for the forthcoming year. After the statement has been delivered, the leaders of the opposition parties and other MSPs question the First Minister on issues related to the substance of the statement.

Parliamentary time is also set aside for question periods in the debating chamber. A "General Question Time" takes place on a Thursday between 11:40 a.m. and 12 p.m. where members can direct questions to any member of the Scottish Government. At 2.30pm, a 40-minute long themed "Question Time" takes place, where members can ask questions of ministers in departments that are selected for questioning that sitting day, such as health and justice or education and transport. Between 12 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. on Thursdays, when Parliament is sitting, First Minister's Question Time takes place. This gives members an opportunity to question the First Minister directly on issues under their jurisdiction. Opposition leaders ask a general question of the First Minister and then supplementary questions. Such a practice enables a "lead-in" to the questioner, who then uses their supplementary question to ask the First Minister any issue. The four general questions available to opposition leaders are:

Of the 129 MSPs, 73 are elected to represent first past the post constituencies and are known as "Constituency MSPs". Voters choose one member to represent the constituency, and the member with most votes is returned as a constituency MSP. The 73 Scottish Parliament constituencies shared the same boundaries as the UK Parliament constituencies in Scotland, prior to the 2005 reduction in the number of Scottish MPs, with the exception of Orkney and Shetland which each return their own constituency MSP. Currently, the average Scottish Parliament constituency comprises 55,000 electors. Given the geographical distribution of population in Scotland, this results in constituencies of a smaller area in the Central Lowlands, where the bulk of Scotland's population live, and much larger constituency areas in the north and west of the country, which have a low population density. The island archipelagos of Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles comprise a much smaller number of electors, due to their dispersed population and distance from the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. If a Constituency MSP resigns from Parliament, this triggers a by-election in his or her constituency, where a replacement MSP is returned from one of the parties by the plurality system.

The total number of seats in the Parliament are allocated to parties proportionally to the number of votes received in the second vote of the ballot using the d'Hondt method. For example, to determine who is awarded the first list seat, the number of list votes cast for each party is divided by one plus the number of seats the party won in the region (at this point just constituency seats). The party with the highest quotient is awarded the seat, which is then added to its constituency seats in allocating the second seat. This is repeated iteratively until all available list seats are allocated.

As in the House of Commons, a number of qualifications apply to being an MSP. Such qualifications were introduced under the House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975 and the British Nationality Act 1981. Specifically, members must be over the age of 18 and must be a citizen of the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, one of the countries in the Commonwealth of Nations, a citizen of a British overseas territory, or a European Union citizen resident in the UK. Members of the police and the armed forces are disqualified from sitting in the Scottish Parliament as elected MSPs, and similarly, civil servants and members of foreign legislatures are disqualified. An individual may not sit in the Scottish Parliament if he or she is judged to be insane under the terms of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003.

The election produced a majority SNP government, making this the first time in the Scottish Parliament

where a party has commanded a parliamentary majority. The SNP took 16 seats from Labour, with many of their key figures not returned to parliament, although Labour leader Iain Gray retained East Lothian by 151 votes. The SNP took a further eight seats from the Liberal Democrats and one seat from the Conservatives. The SNP overall majority meant that there was sufficient support in the Scottish Parliament to hold a referendum on Scottish independence.

For the Conservatives, the main disappointment was the loss of Edinburgh Pentlands, the seat of former party leader David McLetchie, to the SNP. McLetchie was elected on the Lothian regional list and the Conservatives suffered a net loss of five seats, with leader Annabel Goldie claiming that their support had held firm. Nevertheless, she too announced she would step down as leader of the party. Cameron congratulated the SNP on their victory but vowed to campaign for the Union in the independence referendum.

A procedural consequence of the establishment of the Scottish Parliament is that Scottish MPs sitting in the UK House of Commons are able to vote on domestic legislation that applies only to England, Wales and Northern Ireland – whilst English, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish Westminster MPs are unable to vote on the domestic legislation of the Scottish Parliament. This phenomenon is known as the West Lothian question and has led to criticism. Following the Conservative victory in the 2015 UK election, standing orders of the House of Commons were changed to give MPs representing English constituencies a new "veto" over laws only affecting England.

When was the current parliament of Scotland convened

Following a referendum in 1997

What act set out the Parliament's powers as a devolved legislature

Scotland Act 1998

The legislative competence of the Parliament species what areas

in which it can make laws

To what body are certain powers explicitly specified as being reserved for

Parliament of the United Kingdom

The Scottish Parliament may legislate as it pleases as long as the powers aren't already reserved by where

Westminster

What remained an important issue in Scottish national identity for many years

lack of a Parliament of Scotland

How many hundred of years was Scotland directly governed by the parliament of Great Britain

three hundred

Why were the initial suggestions for a devolved parliament before 1914 shelved

First World War.

When was there a sharp rise in nationalism in Scotland

the late 1960s

What did Kllbrandon's report in 1973 recommend establishing

directly elected Scottish Assembly

Which sea was oil discovered in

North

What campaign did the Scottish National Party (SNP) run

"It's Scotland's oil"

What did the SNP publicly opine about the oil revenues

not benefitting Scotland as much as they should

When did Prime Minister Wilson commit to some form of devolved legislature

1974

When was the final legislative proposals for a Scottish Assembly passed

1978

Where was an elected assembly to be set up, under the terms of the Scotland Act of 1978

Edinburgh

How many of the Scottish electorate would need to for it on the referendum

majority

How did trying to establish a devolved Scottish Assembly go in 1979

failed

What percentage of the vote for a Scottish Assembly in favor of it

51.6%

What percentage of Scotland's voting population failed to actually vote

32.9%

In the range between 1980 and 1990, what did demand for grow

a Scottish Parliament

Whose control of the UK's government helped fuel a desire for a Scottish Parliament

the Conservative Party

When was the Scottish Constitutional Convention held

1989

What provided much of the basis for the structure of the Parliament in 1995

blueprint

Where has the official home of the Scottish Parliament been since 2004

Scottish Parliament Building

Who designed the Scottish Parliament building

Enric Miralles

What nationality is the architect Enric Miralles

Spanish

What shape are some of the buildings in the Parliament complex

leaf-shaped

Who opened the new Parliament building on October 9, 2004

Queen Elizabeth II

Where was Parliament's temporary home whilst the permanent building was being built

General Assembly Hall of the Church of Scotland

Where were interviews held while the parliament was in its temporary building

courtyard

What was the building vacated twice to allow for

meeting of the Church's General Assembly

Where was Parliament temporarily relocated to in May of 2000

former Strathclyde Regional Council debating chamber in Glasgow

In May 2002, where would you go to address the Parliament

University of Aberdeen

Who did the Parliament rent additional buildings from

City of Edinburgh Council

What former administrative building was used for the MSP's offices

Lothian Regional Council

What happened to the building on George IV Bridge when the Parliament was done with it

demolished

What do the former Midlothian County Buildings face

Parliament Square, High Street and George IV Bridge in Edinburgh

Which hall was used as Parliament's principle committee room

main

Who is elected to serve as the Presiding Officer at the beginning of each parliamentary session

one MSP

Who is currently speaker of the Scottish Parliament

Tricia Marwick

What type of ballot is used to elect the Presiding Officer and deputies of the Parliament

secret

How many MSPs are there

129

Who is responsible for operating the electronic voting equipment and chamber clocks

A vote clerk

Who is responsible for ensuring the Parliament works smoothly

Presiding Officer

Who sets the work agenda and allocates time in the chamber

the Parliamentary Bureau

How many seats must a political party have to be represented on the Parliamentary Bureau

five

Who represents the Scottish Parliament at home and abroad in an official capacity

The Presiding Officer

What is the seating arrangement of the debating chamber

hemicycle

Why is the seating of the debating chamber arranged as it is

encourage consensus amongst elected members

How many seats are in the debating chamber

131

How many members in the seats of the Scottish Parliament are members of the Scottish Government

2

What can the non-elected members from the Scottish Government not do

vote

What is the parliamentary mace made of

silver

Where does the gold in the parliamentary mace come from

Scottish rivers

What words are inscribed on the mace of parliament

Wisdom, Compassion, Justice and Integrity

Who presented the mac to the Scottish Parliament when it was initially opened

the Queen

What is the mace displayed in

a glass case suspended from the lid

Which month is the first in the year Parliament takes a two week vacation

April

Where do plenary meetings take place

debating chamber

Who are debates and meetings open to

the public

How much does it cost to gain entry to a parliament meeting

free

What contains a nearly verbatim of parliamentary debates

the Official Report

What day of the week does the Time for Reflection take place

Wednesdays

How long might a speaker address the members during the Time of Reflection

up to four minutes

Because speakers are drawn from across Scotland, what do they represent the balance of

religious beliefs

Who decides who gets to address the members of Parliament to share their thoughts on issues of faith

Presiding Officer

What can faith groups ask the Presiding Officer to do for them

nominate speakers

Who decides who gets to speak in the chamber debates

The Presiding Officer

What is also decided by the Presiding Officer

amount of time for which they are allowed to speak

What does the Presiding Officer try to achieve a balance of between speakers

different viewpoints

What members typically open debates

ministers or party leaders

What language other than English has the Scottish Parliament had meetings in

Gaelic

What time do the MSPs normally decide on the motions and amendments from that day

5 pm

What is heralded by the sounding of the division bell

"Decision Time"

What do MSPs who are not in the chamber when the division bell rings return to do

vote

How do members vote when there is a division

electronic consoles on their desks

How long does it take to know the outcome of a division

seconds

What can often be predicted beforehand

votes

Who normally instructs members how to vote

political parties

Who has the task of ensuring party members vote according to the party line

whips

What happens if a member doesn't vote the party line

deselected as official party candidates during future elections

What type of issues are members typically allowed to vote as they please

moral

When is the Members Debate held

Immediately after Decision Time

How long does the Members Debate last

45 minutes

Why are debates on proposed motions by an MSP conducted

not a Scottish minister

Who contributes to Members Business in addition to the proposer

other members

What does the minister who was the catalyst of the Members Business do by speaking after everyone else

winds up

Where is much of the work of the Scottish Parliament done

committee

What are committees in the Scottish Parliament compared to other systems

stronger

What is one avenue being compensated for by having committees serve such a large role

no revising chamber

Taking evidence from witnesses is one of committees' what

principal role

Where might committees meet outside of Parliament

other locations throughout Scotland

Who are committees comprised of

a small number of MSPs

What do the membership of the committees reflect

balance of parties

Different committees have what set out in different ways

functions

What type of committee is set down under the SP's standing orders

Mandatory

What session is the Scottish Parliament in

fourth

When are subject committees established

beginning of each parliamentary session

How many ministries of the Scottish government does a committee typically correspond to

one

Economy, Energy and Tourism is one of the what

current Subject Committees

What is the Scottish Parliament currently in the fourth of

Session

What is set up to scrutinize private bills submitted by party outsiders

type of committee

What topic do private bills typically have

large-scale development projects

Who decides how land or property is allowed to

be used

Scottish Government.

What kind of committee considered legislation on the development of the Edinburgh Tram Network

Private Bill

What act sets forth the functions of the Scottish Parliament

Scotland Act 1998

Who gave her royal assent to the Scotland Act of 1998

Queen Elizabeth II

What does the Scotland Act of 2012 extend

devolved competencies

What body constitutes the supreme legislature of Scotland

Parliament of the United Kingdom at Westminster

Who has the role of holding the Scottish Government to account

Scottish Parliament

Where are reserved matters stated in the Scotland Act

Schedule 5

If a matter is not specifically reserved, who is it devolved to

Scottish Parliament

Why do police and fire services fall under the purview of the

Scottish Parliament

automatically devolved

How much can the SP alter income tax in Scotland

up to 3 pence in the pound

Setting speed limits was one of the further devolutions which was conferred by what act

2012 Act

What is the name of matters outside the legislative ability of the Scottish Parliament

Reserved

Issues dealt with at Westminster are not ones who is able to deal with

Scottish Parliament

Where are issues like abortion and drug policy legislated on

Westminster

Most aspects of transport safety is a subject dealt with by whom

UK Government ministers

What may be presented to Parliament in various ways

Bills

Who may introduce new laws or amendments to laws already on the books as a bill

the Scottish Government

An MSP may introduce a bill as what

a private member

Who may also submit private bills to Parliament

an outside proposer

How do bills pass through Parliament

in a number of stages

What is stage 1 in the life of a bill

introductory

What are presented to parliament in addition to the bill itself

accompanying documents

What do statements from the PO and member in charge of the bill also indicate

whether the bill is within the legislative competence of the Parliament

Where are bills typically gestated in Stage 1

in the relevant committee or committees

If Parliament agrees in a vote to the general principle of a bill, what does it then proceed to

Stage 2

What is the final stage of a bill in the Scottish Parliament

Stage 3

How many parts does the consideration of a bill in Stage 3 have

two

What vote on a bill takes place in Stage 3

final

What type of amendments might members opposed to a bill put on the table

wrecking

When do members proceed to vote on whether they agree to the principles of the final bill

Decision Time

Who does the Presiding Officer submit the final bill to

the Monarch

Why is the final bill passed to the Monarch

royal assent

What is the minimum amount of time before a bill can go into law

a 4-week period

Who is a bill referred to for a ruling on whether it's within the powers of the Parliament

Supreme Court of the United Kingdom

What does the template for bills passed by the Scottish Parliament include

[Date]

What party forms the Scottish Parliament

hold the majority of seats

Who is elected at the beginning of each term

First Minister

Who is eligible to toss their name in the hat to be First Minister

Any member

Other than Scotland's Chief Law Officer, from whence are most ministers drawn from amongst

elected MSPs

Who makes formal appointment or dismissal decisions

the Sovereign

What day of the week are general elections held

Thursday

What month, every four years, are the ordinary general elections held on

May

Who may change the date by up to a month, on the proposal of the PO

the Monarch

How many days does the Parliament have to nominate a First Minister after a General Election

28

If an extraordinary election is held within less than six months before the date of an ordinary election, what does it do to the ordinary election

supplant it.

What enables the Scottish Parliament to scrutinize the government

Several procedures

Who can question statements the First Minister or members of the cabinet make

MSPs

What does the First Minister deliver at the beginning of each parliamentary year

legislative programme for the forthcoming year

What do the leaders of the opposition parties and other MSPs question the First Minister about

issues related to the substance of the statement

What is set aside for question periods in the debating chamber

Parliamentary time

On what day does a General Question Time take place

Thursday

Who may members direct questions towards during General Question Time

any member of the Scottish Government

What may members question the First Minister about directly during First Minister's Question Time

issues under their jurisdiction

How many general questions are available to opposition leaders

four

What is the number of Constituency MSPs

73

How many members can voters choose to represent the constituency

one

When was there a reduction in the number of Scottish MPs

2005

What is the current number of electors currently in a Scottish Parliament constituency

55,000

Why do the island archipelagos comprise a smaller number of electors

dispersed population and distance

How are the total numbers of seats allocated to parties

proportionally to the number of votes received

What method is used for tallying votes in the second vote of the ballot

the d'Hondt method

The party awarded a seat is the one with the highest what

quotient

What set is a seat added to after being allocated

constituency seats

How is the process of allocating seats repeated until all available seats have been determined

iteratively

What does being an MSP share with the House of Commons

a number of qualifications

When was the British Nationality Act passed

1981

How old must a person be to apply to be an MSP

over the age of 18

Members of which organizations are disqualified from sitting in the SP as elected MSPs

police and the armed forces

What act sets the term for judging the boundaries of sanity to which individuals wishing to sit on the SP must adhere

Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003

When the election produced an SNP majority government, what was it the first occurrence of

a party has commanded a parliamentary majority

Who did the SNP obtain 16 seats from

Labour

By how much did Labour lead Lain Gray retain East Lothian

151 votes

How many seats did the SNP take from the Liberal Democrats

eight

What did the result of the SNP majority allow a referendum be held on

Scottish independence

The loss of Edinburgh Pentlands really disappointed whom the most

the Conservatives

What was the seat of former party leader David McLetchie

Edinburgh Pentlands

What net loss did the Conservatives suffer

five seats

Who announced she would step down as leader of the Conservatives

Annabel Goldie

Who congratulated the SNP while vowing to campaign against their referendum

Cameron

What consequence of establishing the Scottish Parliament applies to Scottish MPs sitting in the UK House of Commons

able to vote on domestic legislation that applies only to England, Wales and Northern Ireland

What are MPs unable to vote upon

domestic legislation of the Scottish Parliament

What phenomenon has led to criticism

West Lothian question

What party had a victory in the 2015 UK election

the Conservative

MPs representing English constituencies can only veto laws affecting which country

England