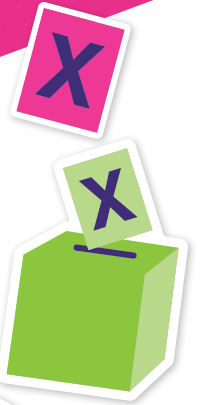


WHAT DO THE SPEAKERS DO?



QUICK DEFINITION

The Speakers of the House of Commons and the House of Lords chair daily business in the Chambers. Their roles differ as debates in each Chamber are chaired in different ways.

Both the House of Commons and the House of Lords select a Member to be the 'Speaker' in each Chamber. This person then takes on the role of chairing daily business.

They cannot take part in debates and must be politically impartial.

They don't do exactly the same job, as debates in each Chamber are chaired in different ways. Watch a debate in each House with your class to see the Speakers at work and compare their roles.

You can find debates online at parliamentlive.tv. Use the information below to talk through the differences.

WHAT DOES EACH SPEAKER DO?

The Speaker, House of Commons

No MP can speak in the Chamber unless called by the Speaker, who chairs debates, sets time-limits on speeches and interrupts if necessary.

The Speaker selects which amendments to bills or motions can be debated. The Speaker gives permission for urgent questions and emergency debates.

The Lord Speaker, House of Lords

The Lord Speaker chairs daily business, but any member can speak in debates or suggest amendments to bills. The Lord Speaker doesn't select members to speak.

All members are in charge in the Chamber. There are agreed rules outlining how they should work, and any member can point out when another may not be following the rules.





MEET THE SPEAKER



Sir Lindsay Hoyle is the Speaker of the House of Commons and has been in office since 2019. He is also the MP for Chorley.

What does your job as Speaker of the House of Commons involve?

"Most people know me as the person who sits in the House of Commons chamber deciding who should speak in debates, while maintaining discipline with the refrain 'Order! Order!'"

But few people know that the Speaker also chairs the House of Commons Commission – which is the employer of all the staff, such as doorkeepers, catering, security, librarians, and all of the people who work with me in the Speaker's Office.

I take a leading role when distinguished foreign visitors are invited to address both Houses of Parliament – and represent the House at great ceremonies of State, such as the funeral of Her Late Majesty the Queen; visits by King Charles III, his Coronation, jubilees, and at conferences elsewhere, such as the meeting of Commonwealth Speakers.

The Speaker is politically impartial and a staunch defender of the rights of the House."

What top skills would someone need to do your job?

"You need to be observant to spot who is bobbing to get my attention in the Chamber to ask a question, speak or to intervene with a Point of Order – and it helps to have a good memory to remember the names of all 649 MPs. Thankfully, I do have a secretary and assistant secretaries to help me with both.

A good sense of humour helps, especially to diffuse tension and angry exchanges – and diplomacy is essential. There is always going to be heat in the Chamber – but I try never to let it boil over. It can be rowdy and loud – but that does not mean we cannot be respectful and treat each other with courtesy.



I try to keep our sessions to time. Not only is it bad manners to run late, but it also messes up meetings outside the Chamber and shift patterns and breaks for the people who support us, such as doorkeepers, clerks, catering staff and security.

While the role of Speaker suggests I speak a lot, it is also important to listen – and I try to make myself accessible. Since my election in 2019, I have made it my mission to walk the floor, to meet new MPs and our staff, to show an interest in their work, to find out about their needs and what more we could do to make their lives better."



Do you need qualifications or specific experiences to do your job?

"Well, you need to be an MP to be elected as Speaker – but there are no formal qualifications. It helps if you have been a career backbencher and you are a committed constituency MP, like me, because you know the pressures of the job and therefore you can champion the cause of your colleagues and be their spokesperson."

Describe what you love most about your job.

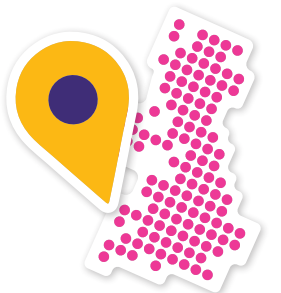
"I felt like I hit the jackpot when I was elected in 1997 as the MP for my hometown of Chorley, because it is where I was born, brought up and went to school – and it is where my family live. I also enjoy trying to make a difference and improve the lives of my constituents. But to also have been elected Speaker of the House of Commons by my peers, is the icing on the cake. I am a parliamentary man to my bones, and I am very lucky to work with so many amazing politicians and staff in the heart of democracy and in such a beautiful and historic building."

What are your hobbies outside of work?

"Whenever I get any downtime, I like to spend it with my wife Catherine, daughter Emma, and my grandchildren Sophia and Austin.

Catherine and I are massive animal lovers and over the years have shared our lives with a menagerie of pets, all named after big political heavyweights, including: Maggie, the tortoise, Boris, the parrot, and Attlee, our American Maine Coon cat, who is not only our mouser in chief, but can also be found patrolling the corridors of power, ready to get rid of any pests – of the four-legged variety.

As an avid sports fan, I was honoured to be appointed President of Rugby Football League this year, but I also enjoy following football and cricket."





MEET THE LORD SPEAKER



Lord McFall of Alcluith is the Lord Speaker. He has been in the post since 2021.

What does your job as Lord Speaker involve?

"I preside over debates in the House of Lords, sitting on the Woolsack – which is a great big bright red cushion stuffed with wool, introduced by King Edward III 700 years ago in recognition of the country's most valuable product of those times. I can't tell Lords what to say, but I help make sure debates are carried out properly.

I represent the Lords at big ceremonial occasions like the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II and the visits of King Charles III to Parliament.

And I act as an ambassador for the House, telling the public – especially young people – all about the work we do. Since becoming Lord Speaker in 2021, I've visited Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to help build good working relationships between their parliaments and assemblies and Westminster.

I also play a role behind the scenes in Westminster, leading discussions about the administration and security of the House of Lords, as well as the maintenance and renovation of the historic Palace building where we work."

What top skills would someone need to do your job?

"The first essential is a commitment to work for the common good. Growing up in Dumbarton, in Scotland, I learnt the importance of community and the aspiration to make the world fairer. Those values still drive my work today.

You also need an ability to listen. As Lord Speaker, I am not allowed to express political views. But I need to listen to all sides of any argument and take all of them on board. A lot of the House of Lords' work involves finding a compromise agreement that everyone can live with.



You need an open mind. The best laws are made when people with different views are able to debate and discuss freely – and are ready to change their minds when others expose flaws in their plans. I am always keen to hear new opinions and fresh ideas, and they help me do my job better.

You need to be able to behave with dignity and composure when the television cameras are on you (and when they aren't!) I always remember that I am representing the whole House of Lords and I don't want to let them down.

And you need to be willing to wear some pretty peculiar outfits! In my day-to-day work, I wear a silk gown, a wing-collar shirt and white bands round my neck instead of a tie. For big events, like the Opening



of Parliament, I have knee-breeches, stockings and a ceremonial gown covered with gold braid."

Do you need any qualifications or specific experiences to do your job?

"No. The great thing about the House of Lords is that we bring together people from all sorts of backgrounds, who each offer their own special expert knowledge and experience of life.

Some people think you have to be rich or aristocratic to be in the Lords, but that's not true. We have judges and scientists, soldiers and sportspeople, doctors and nurses, human rights campaigners and film-makers, businesspeople and trade unionists, all sitting on the famous red benches and helping make sure that laws are considered from every angle.

Some of them are professors who are world-leaders in their studies, but some have no academic qualifications at all. I was a school-teacher before entering Parliament. What they have in common is the fact that they have been chosen to help produce the laws which govern our country."

Describe what you love most about your job.

"I love the chance to listen to some of the finest minds in our country talking with real understanding and insight about fascinating issues of all kinds – whether it is war or climate change, our hospitals, police and prisons, family life, space exploration or the future of the Internet.

I love feeling that I am helping to ensure that changes to the law which will affect the everyday lives of people all over our country are introduced after full and proper consideration and thought."

What are your hobbies outside of work?

"I am a family man, and nothing makes me happier when I am not at work than going back home to Dumbarton to be with my wife, our four children and our grandchildren. I take great pride in the town where I grew up and still live – my official title Lord McFall of Alcluith comes from old name for Dumbarton, the "rock of the Clyde".

I am a keen golfer, hillwalker, and runner. I only stopped running marathons in 2010, when I was 66 years old. In 1988, I ran the London Marathon in 3 hours, 8 minutes and 24 seconds - the third fastest time for a parliamentarian at the time.

I enjoy listening to podcasts. If I wake up early, I'll often go for a walk with my headphones on, picking up new ideas and hearing what other people have to say about the world.

I love sports, particularly football, and try to find time to watch matches on TV."

