

# People of Parliament: Clerks at the Table

## Cloze Passage

Read through the following passage and select the word or phrase from the table that best fits in each space. You can use each word or phrase only once.

government	14th	House of Commons	Assent	read and write	petitions
Standing Orders	left	Members of Parliament	elected	Speaker's	English
authenticity	safely	Table of the House	1860	parliament	knowledge

The Clerk of the Parliament makes sure that parliament (1) runs smoothly and effectively. The Clerk is Head of the entire Parliamentary Service and provides advice to the Speaker and Members of Parliament (2). This requires an excellent knowledge (3) of all parliamentary laws, procedures and Standing Orders (4), which are the rules of parliament. Unlike the Speaker, the Clerk is not an elected (5) Member of Parliament but a permanent public officer appointed to the role. There have only been 11 Clerks of the Parliament since 1860 (6).

The Clerk is responsible for the recording of all parliamentary proceedings, the distribution and tabling of Bills, notice papers, reports and petitions (7), and for making sure all the Parliament's documents are stored safely (8). When a Bill gets passed, before it goes to the Governor for Royal Assent (9), the Clerk must certify its accuracy and authenticity (10).

The office of Clerk of the House began with the early English (11) Parliament. The earliest recorded appointment of a clerk to the House of Commons (12) was in 1363. Just like today, clerks at that time were responsible for ensuring that all procedures of Parliament were properly recorded. This obviously required the ability to read and write (13), which were not common skills in 14th (14) century England.

The Clerk of the Parliament is supported by a team of clerks at the table. When Parliament sits, you will see two Clerks sitting at the Table of the House (15), directly in front of the Speaker. The Clerk sits on the Speaker's (16) right, on the government (17) side of the Chamber. The Deputy Clerk sits on the Speaker's left (18).