

People of Parliament: Speaker

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.

Chamber	party	opposition	custodians	executed	impartial
Speaker	time	freedom of speech	members	Speaker	votes
British	followed	Deputy Speaker	king	800 years	opening
speak	authority	Standing Orders	government	leave	parliament's

Parliament operates according to a set of rules, called Standing Orders (1), and it is the Speaker's job to ensure these rules are followed (2). Although the Speaker is an elected member of parliament, usually representing a political party, as Speaker they must remain impartial (3), applying the rules equally to all the other members (4). This encourages all members to support the Speaker, no matter which political party (5) they represent. The Speaker (6) sits in a special chair, on a stage in the middle of the Assembly, between the government* (7) and the opposition* (8). *NB answers for #7 and #8 are interchangeable

The office of Speaker dates back almost 800 years (9) to the beginnings of the British (10) parliament. In those days, being Speaker was very dangerous. As the 'voice' of the parliament, the Speaker reported parliament's (11) decisions to the king. If the king (12) didn't like the decisions, the Speaker could be imprisoned or even executed (13). The Speaker still holds a most important position today and represents parliament's right to freedom of speech (14).

The Speaker presides over meetings of the parliament, formally opening (15) each session, acknowledging the traditional custodians (16) of the land, calling members when it is their turn to speak (17) or respond, and enforcing the time (18) limits. The Speaker is the one who puts questions to the House and announces the results of any votes (19) to the Chamber. If a member doesn't follow the Standing Orders, the Speaker may ask them to leave (20) the Chamber.

As spokesperson, the Speaker represents parliament in its relations with any authority (21) outside the House, including the Sovereign. It is the Speaker (22) who welcomes dignitaries from all over the world on behalf of the parliament. All of these important duties means the Speaker is often very busy and cannot be in the Chamber (23) all the time. A Deputy Speaker (24), appointed by the House and a panel of temporary speakers selected by the Speaker, support the Speaker in their role. Whenever one of the temporary speakers is presiding in the Speaker's chair, they are referred to as the Deputy Speaker.