

People of Parliament: Whips

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.

different	1789	decisions	respond	present
opposition	votes	members	report	advance
hunting hounds	order	chamber	whip	tellers

The term whip (1) comes from an English hunting expression. The 'whipper-in' was the person responsible for keeping the hunting hounds (2) together as a pack. The term was first used in parliament in 1789 (3), when a member of England's House of Commons described intense lobbying over a particular decision as a 'whipping-in' of members (4).

Both the government and opposition (5) appoint members as party whips. Whips are responsible for organising the order (6) of members who want to speak in debates. They make sure members of their party respond (7) to quorum calls and attend divisions, so that their votes (8) will be counted. During divisions they act as tellers (9), reporting their party's votes to the Speaker.

If a member wants to cast a vote that is different (10) to the vote of their party, they must advise their whip in advance (11). The whips also keep track of which members are not present (12) on the precinct or will not attend the chamber that day, so they can accurately report (13) the party's vote.

Whips often move around the chamber speaking to colleagues, the Clerks or the members (14), organising the business of the party and making decisions (15) with the whips from the opposing party.