MP

Approach: One to one
Focus: How MPs are selected and what they do.
Resources: 3 photographs.

Level: Year 8

Questions/instructions:

Put photo 1 (group of MPs) in front of student.

These people are members of parliament. Sometimes they are called MPs.

	% responses y8
1. How do people get to be an MP?	
build reputation with public, electorate	8
build reputation with political party	6
win party nomination	2
win position through election:	
mentions both "a" and "b" below	1
a. win most votes in electorate	3
b. be high enough on party list	1
vague notion of being elected	41
Overall understanding: strong	1
moderate	11
weak	88

Put photo 2 (group of MPs in debating chamber) in front of student.

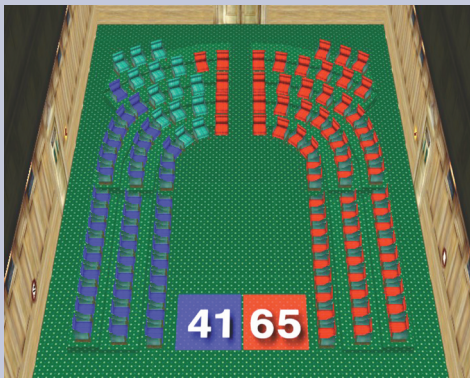This is a photo of the MPs in parliament.

	% responses y8
2. Try to tell me the most important things MPs do when they are meeting in this room.	
discuss/debate what is good for county	63
discuss/debate proposed laws	15
vote on proposed laws	3
discuss and vote on budget details	7
celebrate good news, react to bad news	4
try to build or damage political reputations	3
Overall understanding: strong	0
moderate	15
weak	85

Put picture 3 (party seats in debating chamber) in front of student.

This is a diagram of the seats in parliament.

	% responses y8
3. Try to explain what this diagram tells us.	
PROMPT: What do you think the different colours mean?	
Representation:	
colours represent parties (including idea of government and opposition parties)	9
just says colours represent different parties	41
Seats:	
shows how many seats each party has and therefore who is government/coalition	6
shows how many seats each party has	33
Votes: mentions that seats represent potential votes *(more seats, more votes)*	7
Overall understanding: strong	4
moderate	25
weak	72

Commentary:

The results show that, by Year 8, only a small percentage of students have a reasonably clear understanding of how MPs are elected and what they do.