



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

SP-ingo!

Words and Definitions

Abstain	To vote neither for nor against
Bill	Set of proposals that might become a law
Candidate	Someone standing for election
Chamber	Large debating hall where MSPs meet
Clerks	People who organise the business in Chamber and Committees
Coalition	An arrangement between more than one political party or group
Committee	Groups of MSPs from different parties who meet to deal with specialised topics
Constituency	Local area. There are 73 in Scotland
Debate	Discussion between MSPs that may lead to a vote
Decision Time	When MSPs vote on whether they agree on a Bill or not
Democracy	“rule by the people”, in other words everyone in the country should have a say in what happens; a free choice in who they want in charge of the country
Devolution	Transfer of certain decision making powers from a central government to a regional government. For example from London to Scotland
Devolved Matters	Topics the Scottish Parliament can make decisions and laws about
Election	When people over the age of 18 get the chance to vote to choose people in charge of the country
Electoral Register	List of people who can vote
First Minister	The leader of the Scottish Government
Inquiry	When a Committee investigates



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Laws	The rules deciding what can and can't be done in a country
Legislation	Any written law
Mandatory	Required by law
Manifesto	Document produced by political parties which explains their policies
Minority Government	A government formed by a party who does not have the support of over half the seats in the Parliament to vote with them
Motion	A statement that can be debated and voted on in the chamber
Official Report	A record of everything said and decided in Parliament
Parliament	A group of elected representatives that debate and decide new laws
Petition	A collection of signatures to let the Parliament know the people want something to change
Policies	Ideas and proposals that different parties have for changing or improving things
Presiding Officer	The person who makes sure business of Parliament is conducted properly, on time and within the rules
Proportional Representation	A way of counting votes in an election that links the number of MSPs to the percent of votes in the election
Referendum	When a government wants to find out what the people think about a particular subject and ask them to vote on it
Region	8 areas in Scotland from which 7 MSPs are elected from a list
Reserved Matters	Policies still decided at UK level
Scottish Government	The body in Scotland who take charge of important areas of policy and put forward new Bills
Scrutiny	When the Parliament examines the work of the Scottish Government in detail