



LESSON PLAN

MOCK PRESS CONFERENCE

Recommended for Grade 10 - 11 students
Duration: Approximately 90-120 minutes

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Refer to the [Education Kit](http://www.ola.org/en/visit-learn/teach-learn-play) for teachers on the Legislative Assembly website www.ola.org/en/visit-learn/teach-learn-play. Students should have an understanding of Government and official opposition and traditional forms of media. To review the roles of the Members of Provincial Parliament (MPP) and the political affiliation of the current MPPs, go to the following link: www.ola.org/en/members

LEARNING GOALS

This lesson plan is designed for students to learn about the role of journalists and how political parties interact with media during press conferences. By assuming the various roles in a press conference, students will engage in discussions on government accountability and the role of media.

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION: GETTING STARTED (15 minutes)

- Recall the role of government and the official opposition in the democratic process. How might each use the media as a political tool?
- Discuss the need for press conferences. When they are used, how, where and why?
- Discuss the role of the media at a press conference. What types of media would attend a press conference at the Legislature?
- What is bias and does it exist in media? How might this change how different media outlets report the same issue?
- Where do students get their news? How is social media different from traditional media outlets?
- What current political issues are being discussed in the news and by the media?

INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

The focus of the press conference can be based on a topic brought forward during discussion or can be on proposed legislation (past or present), selected by the teacher or as a class. Current bills can be found at:

www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/current

Divide the class into 4 groups and print off the activity sheet below to distribute to the class. Students will belong to one of the four following groups:

- Journalist group A (traditional media - tv and radio)
- Journalist group B (social media, online news)
- Government Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs)
- MPPs of the Official Opposition

Review the topic of the press conference and **the role** of each group to ensure students understand expectations for the activity. In their groups, students will need to determine key responsibilities about the role and prepare a minimum of 3 questions or answers based on their role in the press conference.

PRESS CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

(15-20 minutes)

After preparation, it is time to hold the mock press conference. Members of the government will be the first to stand in order to field questions from both groups of journalists. Subsequently, the members of the official opposition will stand in order to field questions from both groups of journalists. Time permitting, government and opposition members can make closing statements regarding their position on the debated piece of legislation.

CONSOLIDATION/GROUP DISCUSSION

(5-10 minutes)

- Do press conferences make the government accountable? (If so, how?)
- Can a press conference really affect government policy?
- What was effective about the class' press conference?
- What could have been done to make the press conference more effective?



ACTIVITY SHEET

MOCK PRESS CONFERENCE

GOVERNMENT MEMBER

A press conference is an interview given to journalists by a prominent person or people in order to make an announcement or answer questions. You will be assuming a role and responding to or asking questions regarding government legislation.

TOPIC OF PRESS CONFERENCE:

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ROLE: MEMBER OF GOVERNMENT

The government is the political party that has the most elected members in the House. If a Government has a majority, the bills it proposes will likely become laws. Government members often use press conferences to **promote** the legislation they are passing and explain why it will benefit their electorate.

What kinds of questions do you think you may get from a journalist or a reporter? Consider questions that may be supportive or critical of your stance and write down at least 3 talking points to help you respond to their questions.

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OPPOSITION MEMBER

A press conference is an interview given to journalists by a prominent person or people in order to make an announcement or answer questions. You will be assuming a role and responding to or asking questions regarding government legislation.

TOPIC OF PRESS CONFERENCE:

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ROLE: MEMBER OF THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

The official opposition, also known as His Majesty's Loyal Opposition, is the largest opposition party represented in the Legislature (party with second most seats in the House). Their role is to hold the government accountable and to **criticize** legislation that their party disagrees with. The opposition can use press conferences to explain to the electorate why they disagree with government policies.

What kinds of questions do you think you may get from journalist? Consider questions that may be supportive or critical of your stance against the government and write down at least 3 talking points to respond to these questions.

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JOURNALIST A

A press conference is an interview given to journalists by a prominent person or people in order to make an announcement or answer questions. You will be assuming a role and responding to or asking questions regarding government legislation.

TOPIC OF PRESS CONFERENCE:

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ROLE: JOURNALIST A

A journalist is a person who collects, writes, or distributes news or other current information to the public. **Your news agency tends to be in favour of the legislation passed by the government.** What questions do you want to ask both government and official opposition members? Write down at least 3 questions you would like to ask during the press conference.

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JOURNALIST B

A press conference is an interview given to journalists by a prominent person or people in order to make an announcement or answer questions. You will be assuming a role and responding to or asking questions regarding government legislation.

TOPIC OF PRESS CONFERENCE:

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ROLE: JOURNALIST B

A journalist is a person who collects, writes, or distributes news or other current information to the public. **Your social media posts/blog/web outlet can be in favour of OR critical of the legislation passed by the government.** What questions do you want to ask both government and official opposition members? Write down at least 3 questions you would like to ask during the press conference.

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