Petitions

Curriculum Guide:
Social Studies, Numeracy, Religious and Moral Education, Citizenship

Teaching Levels: 1, 2, 3 and 4 (P4 - S6)

Citizenship Themes:
Diversity, Equalities, Political Awareness, Media Awareness

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INTRODUCTION

This activity begins by looking at the ways people can get involved in politics and make their views known to the Scottish Parliament.

One of the ways that may not be as well known is petitioning. The rest of the activity focuses on developing a range of enquiry skills which culminates in a petition being forwarded to a relevant person.

The research sheet allows a well organised approach to preparing, researching, reviewing and reporting.

The teacher should judge whether it is more appropriate to have one petition per class or allow smaller groups to organise separate petitions.

If one petition is being submitted, a debate may be used during this activity to decide which issue to work on. The materials in Debate may be adapted for this purpose.

You might also like to look at the section on the Mace in Who, Why, What? which details the devolved and reserved matters.

Extension – this could also be used as a starting point for looking at the different levels of government and who deals with which topics.
HOW CAN YOUNG PEOPLE PUT FORWARD THEIR VIEWS TO THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT?

Think up ways you can put your views to Parliament.

Complete the flower diagram below.
Add your ideas to the petals - as many as you can!
HOW CAN YOUNG PEOPLE PUT FORWARD THEIR VIEWS TO THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT? ANSWERS

There are many ways young people could put their views to Parliament.

They could:

- Invite MSPs to the school
- Go to a MSP’s surgery
- Take part in a demonstration
- Join a pressure group
- Organise a video conference with MSPs
- Contact MSPs by letter, e-mail or phone
- Contact the relevant Parliament committee
- Set up a website and encourage MSPs to read it
- Send a petition
- Hold an event about the issue and invite MSPs along to raise awareness
HOW TO PETITION

Q. How can young people put forward their views to the Scottish Parliament?

A. Petitions! There’s nothing to stop any young person lodging a petition with the Public Petitions Committee.

Sending a petition to the Scottish Parliament is one way of getting your views across to the people who represent you and make decisions. You can also send petitions to other people too – MPs, Councillors, your Headteacher or School Council – whoever you think is best placed to take action about your petition.

So, as a class, how do you go about making a petition?

1) You need to decide on a topic or issue
   • As a group, research your issue and try to find something you would like changed and ways that it could be changed.
   • Present your issue to the rest of the class.
   • Hold a debate with the class to see which issue everyone thinks is the most important one to write a petition about.

2) Write your petition using the outlines provided
   Attach any evidence you found in your research, as this will help the person who receives your petition.

3) Think about an e-petition
   If you think people across Scotland would be interested in supporting your petition, you can put it on-line at http://epetitions.scottish.parliament.uk/

4) Gather support for your petition
   Ask the rest of the class and school to sign your petition. Remember the more signatures you have the more impact your petition will have. But don’t make up names as this discredits your petition.

5) Decide who to send your petition to
   Who you send it to will depend on the issue. If it is school based, you might want to submit it to the Headteacher or School Council. If it is a local issue, your local councillor could be the one to receive your petition. If it is a Devolved Matter, you could send it to your MSPs, if it is Reserved, you could send it to your MP.

Issues you might want to discuss
Passive smoking
Rail transport
Homelessness
Underage drinking
Vandalism
Police on the beat
Recycling
Hospital waiting lists
Renewable energy
Recreation facilities for young people
Punishment for criminals
The subject for research is:

The issues I need to look at are:

I have chosen to look at this issue more closely:

Where can I find out more about this issue?

The problems are:

Some solutions to the problems are:

Now write a report to present to the whole class. Start with an introduction – say what the issue is and why this is a problem. Then give the evidence to say why this issue is a problem. Now, give some solutions to the problem. Write a conclusion which sums up what you want people to know. Then write a petition using the form provided.
OUR SUBMISSION OF A PETITION

Title of Petition: 

We the undersigned, declare that...  
(Insert here the reasons why the Petitioner(s) is /are petitioning)

The Petitioner(s) therefore request that...  
(Insert here the request of the Petitioner(s), showing clearly what action they wish taken.)

Please enter the contact details of the Petitioner(s)

Title:  Surname:  First Name:  

Contact Telephone Number:  

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OUR SUBMISSION OF A PETITION (CONTINUED)

ADDRESS

Street: 

Town: 

Postcode: 

E-mail Address: 

Do you intend to submit a list of signatories or supporting documents? (Select all that apply):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Signatories:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Evidence:</td>
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<td>Other Evidence:</td>
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Any other relevant information:

Attach list of signatories, any supporting documents or other evidence and then submit this petition to your School Council, Headteacher, local Councillors or MSP.
OUR PETITION

WE THE UNDERSIGNED, DECLARE THAT...

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