

ISA PROJECT

CLASSROOM TO CHAMBER

A Comparative Study of Legislative Processes



Nigeria



UK



Romania



India

Understanding Parliamentary Systems



What is Bicameralism? Bicameralism?

A **bicameral legislature** consists of two chambers or houses that participate in the legislative process. This system is designed to provide **checks and balances**, ensure thorough scrutiny of legislation, and represent different interests within society.



Key Principle: Two chambers create a "dual key" system where legislation must pass through multiple levels of review before becoming law.



Our Four Nations

1

Nigeria

Senate + House of Representatives

2

United Kingdom

House of Commons + House of Lords

3

Romania

Senate + Chamber of Deputies

4

India

Rajya Sabha + Lok Sabha

Parliamentary Structures at a Glance



NIGERIA

 National Assembly

Chambers: Senate (Upper) + House of Representatives (Lower)

System: Presidential Democracy

Key Feature: President can veto bills, but National Assembly can override with 2/3 majority



UNITED KINGDOM

 UK Parliament

Chambers: House of Lords (Upper) + House of Commons (Lower)

System: Parliamentary Democracy

Key Feature: House of Commons has ultimate supremacy; Royal Assent is largely ceremonial



ROMANIA

 Parliament of Romania

Chambers: Senate + Chamber of Deputies (Equal Powers)

System: Semi-Presidential Democracy

Key Feature: Full bicameralism with mediation committees for disagreements



INDIA

 Parliament of India

Chambers: Rajya Sabha (Upper) + Lok Sabha (Lower)

System: Parliamentary Democracy

Key Feature: Lok Sabha has supremacy on Money Bills; President has limited veto power

The National Assembly

Structure

Senate

Upper Chamber

109 Members

House of Representatives

Lower Chamber

360 Members

Both chambers form the **National Assembly**, empowered by Section 4(1) of the 1999 Constitution to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the federation.

The Stage Process

1

Bill Introduction

2

First Reading

3

Second Reading

4

Committee Stage

5

Report Stage

6

Third Reading



Key Features

- ✓ **Presidential Assent:** President has 30 days to sign or veto
- ✓ **Veto Override:** National Assembly can override with 2/3 majority in both chambers
- ✓ **Public Hearings:** Committees conduct hearings for stakeholder input
- ✓ **Harmonization:** Conference Committee resolves differences between chambers

The Mother of Parliaments

Structure

House of Commons

Elected Members

650 MPs

House of Lords

Appointed/Hereditary

~800 Members

The UK Parliament is the **supreme legislative authority**, comprising the Monarch, House of Commons, and House of Lords. It can make or unmake any law, and no body can override its legislation.

The Legislative Journey

1

First Reading

Title read

2

Second Reading

Main debate

3

Committee Stage

Detailed scrutiny

4

Report Stage

Further amendments

5

Third Reading

Final debate

6

Royal Assent

Becomes law



Unique Features

- ★ **Parliamentary Ping Pong:** Bill shuttles between chambers until agreement
- ★ **House of Lords:** Unelected revising chamber with limited veto power
- ★ **Parliament Acts:** Commons can override Lords after one year delay
- ★ **Royal Assent:** Formality – last refusal was 1708

Post-Communist Bicameralism

Structure

Senate

Upper Chamber

136 Senators

Chamber of Deputies

Lower Chamber

330 Deputies

Romania's Parliament, re-established after the 1989 Revolution, operates a **functional bicameral system** where chambers have specialized roles. The 2003 constitutional revision introduced differentiated competencies between the Senate and Chamber of Deputies.

Legislative Procedure

1

Legislative Initiative

2

Committee Review

3

Plenary Debate

4

Chamber Vote

5

Mediation (if needed)

6

Promulgation



Distinctive Elements

-  **Constitutional Court:** Reviews laws for constitutionality before promulgation
-  **Mediation Committee:** 7 Senators + 7 Deputies resolve differences
-  **Presidential Re-examination:** President can return law once for reconsideration
-  **Specialized Chambers:** Different chambers lead on different bill types

The World's Largest Democracy

Structure

Rajya Sabha

Council of States

245 Members (elected by states)

Lok Sabha

House of the People

543 MPs (directly elected)

India's Parliament, established under the 1950 Constitution, reflects its **federal structure**. The Rajya Sabha represents states' interests while the Lok Sabha represents the people directly. The President is the constitutional head.

Types of Bills

Ordinary Bills

General legislation – both houses equal

Money Bills

Financial matters – Lok Sabha dominance

Financial Bills

Taxation & expenditure – Lok Sabha only

Constitutional Amendments

Special majority + state ratification



Notable Features

- Rs Money Bill Privilege:** Only Lok Sabha can introduce; Rajya Sabha has limited powers
- Rs Joint Sitzings:** President can convene joint session to resolve deadlocks
- Rs Special Majority:** Constitutional amendments need 2/3 majority + half of states
- Rs Standing Committees:** Detailed scrutiny by subject-matter experts

Common Features Across All Four Systems



Bicameral Structure

All four nations maintain **two-chamber parliaments** that provide dual scrutiny of legislation. This structure ensures that bills undergo comprehensive review from different perspectives before becoming law.



Multi-Stage Reading Process

Each system employs a **structured reading process** (typically 3 readings) that allows for progressive scrutiny. Bills move from introduction to detailed examination, and finally to approval.



Committee Scrutiny

All parliaments utilize **specialized committees** for detailed examination of bills. These committees conduct line-by-line analysis, invite expert testimony, and propose amendments.



Public Participation

Each system provides mechanisms for **public input** through committee hearings, consultations, and stakeholder engagement. This ensures legislation reflects citizen needs.



Inter-Chamber Agreement

All four systems require **concurrence from both chambers** before a bill becomes law. Differences are resolved through mediation, joint sessions, or extended debate.



Executive Involvement

The **head of state** plays a formal role in the final stage through assent/promulgation. While largely ceremonial in some systems (UK), it can be substantive in others (Nigeria, Romania, India).

Key Differences Across the Four Systems

NIGERIA Presidential	UK Parliamentary	ROMANIA Semi-Presidential	INDIA Parliamentary
👑 Upper Chamber Composition & Power			
Senate: Elected (109 members). Co-equal with House on most bills.	House of Lords: Appointed/hereditary (~800). Can only delay, not block.	Senate: Elected (136). Full equal powers with Chamber of Deputies.	Rajya Sabha: Elected (245). Limited powers on Money Bills.
🔨 Executive Veto Power			
Strong Veto: President can veto, but 2/3 majority in both houses can override.	Ceremonial: Royal Assent is automatic. Last refusal was in 1708.	Moderate: President can request one re-examination but must eventually sign.	Limited: President can return bill once. If passed again, must assent.
🤝 Deadlock Resolution			
Conference Committee: Joint committee harmonizes differences between chambers.	Commons Prevails: Parliament Acts allow Commons to override Lords after one year.	Mediation Committee: 7+7 members try to reach compromise. Joint session if needed.	Joint Sitting: President can convene joint session to resolve disagreements.
💰 Money Bill Procedures			
Must originate in House of Representatives. Senate has co-equal powers.	Must originate in Commons. Lords cannot amend or reject Money Bills.	Joint session decides on budget matters. Both chambers debate together.	Must originate in Lok Sabha. Rajya Sabha has only 14 days to respond.

Key Insights & Democratic Principles



Representation

Bicameral systems ensure **multiple layers of representation** – whether geographic (states), demographic (population), or expertise-based.



Checks & Balances

Two chambers create a **self-correcting mechanism** that prevents hasty legislation and protects minority interests from majority tyranny.



Deliberation

Multiple readings and committee stages ensure **thorough scrutiny**. Each stage serves a distinct purpose: principle, detail, and final review.



Transparency

Public hearings, published debates, and committee reports ensure **accountability**. Citizens can track legislation and hold representatives responsible.



Federalism

In federal systems (Nigeria, India, Romania), upper houses represent **state/provincial interests**, ensuring national laws respect regional diversity.



Historical Context

Each system reflects its **unique history**: UK's evolution from monarchy, Nigeria's post-military transition, Romania's post-communist rebirth, India's anti-colonial struggle.