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WELCOME TO THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER

Welcome to the Palace of Westminster



The **Palace of Westminster** is the meeting place of the [House of Commons](#) and the [House of Lords](#), the two houses of the [Parliament of the United Kingdom](#). Commonly known as the **Houses of Parliament** after its occupants, it is also known as the 'heart of British politics'. The Palace lies on the north bank of the [River Thames](#) in the [City of Westminster](#), in central London.

Its name, which derives from the neighbouring [Westminster Abbey](#), may refer to either of two structures: the *Old Palace*, a [medieval](#) building complex [destroyed by fire in 1834](#), and its replacement, the *New Palace* that stands today. The palace is owned by the monarch in right of [the Crown](#) and, for ceremonial purposes, retains its original status as a royal residence. The building is managed by committees appointed by both houses, which report to the [Speaker of the House of Commons](#) and the [Lord Speaker](#).



**It's also called the Houses of Parliament.
It consists of three parts: the Royal Apartments (*gold*),
the House of Lords (*red*) and the House of Commons
(*green*).**



We are now in the Chamber of the House of Lords, where the seats are red.



The House of Lords It is also called the Parliament Chamber, because every year when the Queen comes to open Parliament, all three parts of Parliament come together here for the Queens Speech.



In fact, its not really the Queens Speech, because she doesn't write it. The Government writes it for her. In the speech the Queen tells Parliament about the Governments plans for the next year.



The Throne. When the Queen gives her speech, she sits on the throne. It is behind the big red cushion.



The Woolsack. It is the big red cushion. There is wool inside it. It's a part of a very old tradition which started in the 14th century. It symbolized the importance of wool to the British economy at that time.

The person who usually sits on the Woolsack is the Lord Chancellor. He presides over the House of Lords.



The Speaker is the person who presides over the House of Commons.

In the House of Commons. The distance between these two red lines is two swords lengths. In the old days when MPs used to carry swords, it was dangerous if they got angry with each other. So these two lines are here to remind MPs that they shouldn't start a fight, and they can't go over this line when they are speaking in a debate.



The Westminster Hall This is the oldest part of the Palace of Westminster. The walls were built in 1097.

Thanks for your attention!