

## Post Black-Death Parliament 1382

King Richard II has called a session of Parliament to deal with the civil unrest and revolts resulting from the loss of population due to the Black Death. The question before Parliament is: **How should authorities respond to the Black Death? The more simple question before parliament is do we hold on to our traditional society or adopt changes?** Six groups will be testifying representing various groups of English society: Religious tradition, religious change, economic tradition, economic change, political tradition, and political change. After each group testifies, King Richard II will make a decision based on the testimony and evidence presented. As individual members of Parliament you will be expected to write a letter to the King stating your support or criticism of his decision.

Each of the six groups will have four members. Each member of the team has a unique and important role in preparing for this hearing. The following roles will be assigned in each team:

1. **Historical Figure/Actor:** Portrays the character during the hearing  
**Preparation for hearing:** Research your perspective's actions and motives following the Black Death and prepare to explain your views. Work with the graphic designer to ensure your point of view is portrayed in the PowerPoint. Work with the legal council to help them create opening questions that will show you in the best possible light and with your opposition researcher to prepare critical questions of your "enemies."  
**During hearing:** You will give a 5-minute speech coinciding with the PowerPoint explaining your actions and motives, focusing on the question of tradition v. change. You will answer questions put to you from your legal council and then opposition researchers from your enemies.
2. **Legal Counsel/Lawyer:** Appears with the speaker to offer advice and assistance. You will sit beside the speaker and may pass notes, whisper advice, etc. during the hearing.  
**Preparation for hearing:** Research your perspective's actions and motives following the Black Death and work with the speaker to prepare them to explain their views. Be sure to focus on question of change v. tradition following this significant event. Work with the graphic designer to ensure your point of view is portrayed in the PowerPoint. Create 2-3 questions to ask the speaker that review the main ideas you want to present. Work with the opposition researcher to help them create critical questions of your "enemies."  
**During hearing:** You will sit beside the speaker and help them answer questions. You may whisper to them and/or pass notes back and forth.
3. **Opposition Researcher:** You will ask critical questions of the characters who disagree with your historical perspective. You show the weakness in your enemies' arguments.  
**Preparation for hearing:** Research your perspective's beliefs following the Black Death and assist the speaker and legal council to prepare opening questions for the hearing that will bring out their beliefs in the best possible light. Research the arguments of those who disagree with your perspective and prepare 2-3 critical questions for each enemy that will show them in a negative light.  
**During the hearing:** After each character has given their opening statement and had

their initial questions asked, you will ask questions of your perspective's enemies in order to expose weaknesses in their position.

4. **Graphic Designer:** You are to create a PowerPoint presentation to accompany the speech to highlight the main ideas of your perspective.

**Preparation for hearing:** Research your beliefs following the Black Death and work with the speaker and legal council to design a PowerPoint that will use text and visual images to communicate their beliefs and actions in the best possible light. Focus on change v. tradition and how your perspective sees the future of England. You should work with the opposition researcher to help them write critical questions to your perspective's enemies.

**During the hearing:** You will present your PowerPoint during the speech, advancing the slides to give visual representation to the main ideas of the speech. After the speech, you will describe your illustrations and quotes and explain how they illustrates your perspective's speech. You will sit beside your speaker and assist them in answering questions from the opposition researchers by passing notes or whispering advice. During the other testimony, you can assist the opposition researchers in asking critical questions of your enemies.

#### **Order of Hearing:**

1. Teacher calls Parliamentary meeting to order and calls first "witnesses": Political change; political tradition; economic change; economic tradition; religious change; religious tradition.
2. Speaker gives speech while graphic designer advances slides of PowerPoint.
3. Graphic artist explains quotes and illustrations in PowerPoint.
4. Legal Council for speaker asks 3 opening questions.
5. Opposition Researchers from opposing views ask critical questions. Teacher moderates.
6. Continue with historical figures until all six have gone.
7. Teacher moderates a meeting debate with students remaining in historical character.
8. King Richard II gives decision and provides reasons to support it.
9. Students step out of roles and debate the decision as individuals and how they truly feel.
10. Students write a letter to King Richard II explaining their answer to the question (regardless of assigned role) defending their view with 3-5 historical reasons.