

Evaluate the view that the House of Lords is in need of further reform (30)

- Remember – this is asking you to evaluate the weaknesses AND strengths of the HOL as it is...
- You must mention the reforms (1999) that have already taken place (briefly at start).
- The example uses lots from the US (not necessary) – try to use your own examples.
- THINK: What limitations are there to the HOL as it is? Is it acceptable that we have a large number of undemocratically chosen legislators? Is how they are chosen fair? Open to corruption? How does this link to accountability? BUT... What is positive about the HOL? What would be lost if it were reformed? Are Peers 'freer' than MPs to scrutinise government? Why? If we had a fully elected second chamber would we end up with a 'mirror' house? What is problematic about that?

Intro – where are we at now in terms of reform? What needs to happen now?

- The [House of Lords Act 1999](#) moved to [abolish](#) most [hereditary peers](#) and make it easier for people of merit in a range of fields to be chosen to sit as Life Peers. This undoubtedly enhanced representation and helped to shift the Lords away from being dominated by Conservatives; indeed, there is now no Tory majority in the Lords. This makes the Lords a [more effective check on the power of the Commons](#).
- [Reform needed](#): However, critics argue that as an unelected House it still lacks sufficient legitimacy. Some argue that Parliament as a whole will not be an effective and credible institution without its further reform.
- [Reform not needed](#): Others are concerned an elected second chamber would pose the danger of merely becoming a 'mirror image' of the Commons and would therefore lose its power to hold the executive to account.

Points that agree

- An elected House of Lords would be [more democratic](#), and could be more descriptively [representative](#).
- However the House of Commons does not fare much better even though it is elected.
- The regular appointment of new life peers has also led to the House becoming unmanageably large.
- However...it is possible that by holding elections, the Lords would lose its current variety of expertise.
- The House of Lords is currently [too weak](#)-it can only delay, rather than block, the government's bills
- However...a stronger House of Lords could also lead to gridlock (an elected second chamber is the danger that it could become a 'mirror image' of the Commons)
- The appointments process for Life Peers has been accused of encouraging corruption
- However...the House of Lords Appointments Commission did reject several of Tony Blair's nominees

Points that disagree

- The 1999 reforms have already improved the party balance and independence of the House of Lords
- However ... the reforms were only ever intended to be the first in a two – part process
- Peers have already become more defiant, and more willing to break with unwritten conventions
- However ... this creates a need for reforms that clarify the powers and relationship of the two Houses

Conclusion

- Answer the q:
- Have reforms gone far enough?
- Although the HOL is undemocratic due to its unelected nature... do its benefits outweigh the drawback it has?
- Does it need further reform? Why?
- What should replace the hereditary peers?
- Should it be partially elected / selected? Fully elected?