

# A tale of two constituencies

A constituency is the geographical area that each Member of Parliament represents. There are 659 constituencies in the UK.

The constituents (the people in the constituency) elect their MP to the House of Commons by voting for the candidate who they think will do the best job.

Each constituency in the UK is different and the people in it will want different things from their MP. For example, people living near Heathrow Airport might complain to their MP about the noise pollution from planes. However, for people in Aberystwyth, mid-Wales, this is unlikely to be a big problem!

## Task

In this task you need to compare two constituencies: Conwy, a rural constituency in North Wales, and Coventry, an urban constituency in the Midlands. You need to find out the different issues which bother constituents from each place. You might discover that they are concerned about the same issues.

The ten questions below are issues that constituents might see their MP about. Using [www.election-maps.co.uk](http://www.election-maps.co.uk) decide where the people in the questions below might come from. The answer might be Conwy, Coventry or it might be both. You must give the reasons for your answers.

## How to

You can work in pairs to find out about these constituencies.

- Type [www.election-maps.co.uk](http://www.election-maps.co.uk) and enter the site.
- For Conwy, click on *Parliamentary Constituency* and type in *Conwy*. Choose *Conwy Co.* On the overview map click on the town of Bethesda. On the main map zoom out as far as you need to find the information.
- For Coventry, click on *Parliamentary Constituency* and type in *Coventry*. Choose *Coventry South Boro.* This time, type the postcode *CV2 4FX* in the box above the overview map.
- One of the pair can look at Conwy; the other person can look at Coventry.

An example of how to write down your answers is shown below; although you can write your own if you want to.

- Example question: Which constituents would be most concerned with the rising cost of hay for sheep feed?
- Example answer: The constituents in Conwy would be most concerned about the rising price of hay. This is because it is a rural area and many people work as farmers. If they cannot afford to feed their animals they might have to sell them and as a result could lose their jobs. People in Coventry are not likely to be farmers because most of the land has been built on.

In class be prepared to give your answer and the reasons for it. Remember, you might have a different answer to somebody else, but the important point is to be able to argue your case.

1. The residents in this constituency are very concerned about water quality and want the sea and beaches cleaned up. Which constituency?
2. Which MP might get complaints about young people hanging round street corners at night?
3. An elderly gentleman who writes to his MP to complain about bad street lighting might be from where?
4. The time it takes for an ambulance to arrive might be longest in which constituency?
5. Money gets spent on tourists rather than local people is a common complaint where?
6. The MP does a sponsored walk to raise money for The Mountain Rescue. In which constituency?
7. This constituency is very proud of its facilities which include the leisure centre, museums, shops and offices. Which constituency?
8. In which one of the two areas might the MP have to speak more than one language?
9. Which constituency is likely to have the best transport links for cars, buses and trains? What problems might this cause?
10. This constituency is densely populated (lots of people living in a square kilometre). Which constituency?



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