

## Resource 1—A second day in the life of Penelope Primrose

“Uh, oh.”

I stumble out of my room on uncoordinated legs, my eyes sore from staring too long without blinking at my long fingernails.

“Mum!” I call out, because it turns out that I’m *still* body swapped with my mum, Pamela Primrose, Member for the ACT Legislative Assembly. I spent all of yesterday dealing with Legislative Assembly business while my mum tried hard not to trip over my shoelaces or get called on in maths class.

Mum walks out of her room rubbing her eyes, not even looking remotely happy to be in my awesome glow-in the dark Hufflepuff pyjamas.

“I was afraid of this,” she says. “The curse should be reversed at any time today.” She nudges the soccer ball beside my bed with her foot and narrowly avoids falling. “But it looks like I’ll have to go to school, so do you feel up to going to work?”

“Yes, but are you sure you should go to school?” I frown at the ball, then at her not-very-graceful feet. “You know I usually have a kick around for soccer at lunch.”

“Yes, don’t worry. I’m meeting with Rex Rosen at recess to get some pointers.” She shoos me out the door and I’m on my way.

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We have a morning **party room meeting for our party, the Play party.**

“How are you, this morning?” asks Sam Spencer, the Member of the Legislative Assembly who I campaigned with yesterday.

“I’m as well as I can be.”

Before he can say anything further, the Chief Minister of the ACT, Jarrod Jenkins speaks up.

“Today there’s going to be a vote in the Chamber about a change to the Domestic Animals Act.”

Andrea Acquamarine, our party whip, stands behind her seat. A party whip is someone in our party who makes sure we know what votes are coming up in the chamber as well as how we’re all voting. As we’re all part of the Play Party we’ve already discussed and made a decision on how we feel about the change to the Domestic Animals Act.

“This change will introduce compulsory cat registration in the ACT. Registration will help in placing lost cats back with their owners and assist in encouraging early de-sexing of cats, resulting in less unwanted, dumped or feral cats.”

We all nod because our party has a strong position that we as a community need to care for our cats, as we do for our dogs by registering them.

**We agree as a party that we will all be voting YES on the Domestic Animals (Cat Registration) Amendment Bill regarding compulsory cat registration.**

The bells are ringing which tells us it's time for our day in the Chamber. We all walk from our meeting room, down the stairs and into the Chamber.

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When the bells stop ringing, we all stand up behind our chairs and wait and then the Deputy Clerk/Serjeant-at-Arms, Vera Vonguard enters the Chamber with the Assembly Mace over her right shoulder.

"Members, the Speaker," she announces.

The Speaker stands at her desk. "I acknowledge that we are meeting on the lands of the Ngunnawal people, the traditional custodians. I respect their continuing culture and the unique contribution they make to the life of this area. I would ask members to stand in silence and pray or reflect on their responsibilities to the people of the Australian Capital Territory."

Then, once we sit, it's time to present petitions for the day.

The Clerk says, "The following petition has been lodged by for presentation: By Ms Primrose, from 602 residents, requesting the Assembly change the Footpath Safety Laws to ensure damaged footpaths are fixed within one week.

The terms of this petition will be recorded in Hansard and a copy referred to the appropriate Minister.

**Petition received.**

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We're debating the **Domestic Animals (Cat Registration) Amendment Bill**. This bill will make it compulsory for all cats to be registered.

The Clerk of the Assembly announces the bill. The Minister for Transport and City Services, Ms Delia Dracken, announces:

"I am pleased to discuss this bill which is based on laws by the Victorian State government that local councils have been implementing. This law has been effective in helping reunite lost cats with their owners, as well as keeping down the population of feral cats. I thank Members for their support and interest in this bill."

It's later in the day and **it's time for a vote**. The bells are ringing, Sam Spencer had better hurry up, he only has 4 minutes to get here or he will be locked out of the Chamber.

The Speaker puts the question to all of us – "Members, should this bill be agreed to? All those in favour say Yes."

I, (along with the rest of my party), say “Yes” along with members from some other parties. The Speaker asks, “To the contrary, No”, the opposition party members say “No”.

“The Yeses have it,” the Speaker announces. “The bill is agreed to.” **The bill has passed with a majority.** That means that more than half of the Members have voted yes to the bill.

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Now it’s 2.00 - **Question Time, when Members can ask the Government at least two questions about activities that are happening in Canberra.** Everyone gets to ask a **Minister** two questions.

When it’s my turn, I say, “My question is for the Minister for Education,” I say. “Physical education at many primary schools in the ACT is required to be at least 25 minutes per day. My question is, why can’t the requirement be higher – around 45 minutes or one hour a day? Many studies show that this would improve student concentration in class.”

The Minister for Education rises and says, “Thank you Madam Speaker and I thank the Member for the question. We are looking at ways to increase the amount of exercise required in a school day. There are a number of subjects that have certain specific requirements as well and it is a careful balance. The answer is – we’re trying to see how to make it higher, if we can.”

**Now I can ask a second question** – on that same subject.

“Can the Minister for Education explain why there isn’t more soccer in physical education in schools?”

The Minister rises again and says, “The Education Directorate wants children in the ACT to be exposed to a number of sports, including soccer. If we change the requirements and focus more on soccer, then children will not get to play other sports that they might find fun.”

I look around the room. Anyone can ask a third question but it has to be on sport in schools.

A member of the Frisbee party is chosen by the Speaker. “Can the Minister for Education discuss the importance of multi-sport exposure in childhood and its long-term benefits?”

“Of course. A recent study found that “A multi-sports approach to elementary school PE contributes to the development of children's physical fitness and goal orientations, which support engagement in physical activity.” This study confirms that playing numerous sports is good for children.”

There are several other questions and before I know it, Question time is over!

There are still some important issues to be dealt with this afternoon.

Hopefully this body swap wears off today. Tomorrow is our official soccer practice and I’m anxious to be back in my own body and ready to have some fun.

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I wake up after a good night's sleep, stretch my legs and wriggle my toes. And they ARE my toes! My feet, my legs. My mum stumbles into my room with a big grin on her face and wriggles her painted red nails in my face. We both whoop for joy.

I am so happy to be me again, but there is also a part of me that felt so good to be a part of decision making and passing laws in the ACT. But for now, I am off to school and soccer!