

UNIT TITLE:

Active Citizens Make a Difference

Writer/Management:

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Audience:

Upper Primary to Middle Secondary students

Purpose:

To explore how active citizens can make a real difference

Links to Curriculum:

SOSE

Discovering Democracy links

Discovering Democracy readers, CD-ROMs and
Research Manual

Active Citizens make a difference!



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Purpose:	To explore how active citizens can make a real difference
Links and resources:	<i>Discovering Democracy</i> readers, CD-ROMs and <i>Research Manual</i>
Author:	Nigel Brown and SOSE Associations Tasmania
About this unit:	A note to the student.

This unit is about what it means to *take action* on an issue

In doing this unit, you will

- Explore some issues that are important to you
- Learn about what being an active citizen means
- Learn about how **you** can make a positive difference
- Learn about how the political process works, inside and outside parliament
- Find out about some issues that are important to others
- Research some ways people have taken action in the past
- Share your views on issues with others
- Develop strategies for raising awareness of issues
- Examine ways of resolving issues

What's an issue?

Use images as stimulus material as indicated in the example below...



**(From page 40 of the
*Middle Secondary
Australian Readers
Collection*)**

1. Answer the following questions.

- a. What do you see?
- b. What do you think is happening?
- c. What do you know / feel about the situation?
- d. Using other images from the *Discovering Democracy* kit and other sources (e.g. internet), examine a range of issues via images.

2. Answer the following questions - you might wish to choose one of the images from *Discovering Democracy* suggested below, or all of them via group tasks.

- a. What do you know about this issue?
- b. What's it got to do with you?
- c. What are some questions you have about this?

Other appropriate images might include:

Middle Primary Collection – p. 13

Upper Primary Collection – p. 5, p.30, p.39

Lower Secondary Collection – p. 14, p. 16, p.24, p. 56,

Middle Secondary Collection – p. 23, p. 29, p. 38.

What issues do *you* really care about?

In this section you will

- List a number of issues of concern to you
- Explore one issue in depth, through
 - A mind map of the issue
 - An investigation/action plan based on your mind map
 - An assessment of what you have learned and consideration of further action.

3. Complete the table below.

List issues you care about. They might be

- Personal
- Local
- State
- National
- And/or global issues.

Use the sample issue as a guide...

<u>Issue</u>	<u>How It Affects Me</u>
Animal cruelty -	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Makes me angry to see animals in pain• Makes me treat <i>my</i> dog better• I give money to the RSPCA

Students could broaden their understanding of issues by

- *Submitting ideas and issues to a bulletin board (e.g. school intranet)*
- *Viewing the submissions of others on the board*
- *E-mailing others about their opinions*
- *Submitting URLs of sites where issues might be explored and/or discussed.*

Choose an issue that is important to you and complete the activities below.

4. Draw a mind map of the issue.

Student could explore an environmental issue such as the following



Students could visit inspiration.com, mindman.com to look at other mind maps, download and draw

They could do their mind map on paper, live as a shared document, or via a PowerPoint presentation

5. From your mind map, plan an investigation / action plan on the issue you have chosen - you can use the following questions as a guide for your inquiry and actions. Use the forms and follow the links to investigate and act on your issue....

Investigate

- What is the **issue**?
- What are some **key questions** I have about the issue?
- Who is **involved** in the issue?
- What information do I **have**...? What information do I **need**?
- How and where do I get more **information**?
- What are my **opinions** on this issue?
- What are some **different views** on this issue?
- What are the **political dimensions** of this issue?
- How is this issue **connected** to other issues?
- What is the role of the **media** in presenting this issue?
- What is the role of **parliament** (state and federal) in this issue?
- How will I **present** the issue?

Act

- How have others taken action on this issue in the **past** and **now**, **inside** and **outside parliament and other systems**?
- Why have some **not** taken action?
- What actions can I take?
- What are some **consequences** of these actions?
- **What** will I do and **why**?
- Were my actions **successful**?

Students can use the 'Taking Issue' section of Discovering Democracy Through Research to conduct their investigation, particularly if the issue has a strong local dimension.

They can look at examples of how others have taken action to effect change in the past – eg People Power, Getting Things Done units.

They can investigate possible action plans and decision-making models via the interactives on both Stories of Democracy and Parliament at Work, as well as the Parliament at Work website for an understanding of how they might use the political process to get things done.

They can explore how government works and the respective roles of each level of government via the CD-ROMs and the poster sets in the Discovering Democracy kit

Students are to then, either in groups or as individuals, choose an issue and develop an investigation / action plan

Investigation

What is the issue?
What are some key questions I have about the issue?
Who is involved in the issue?
What information do I have?
What information do I need?
How and where do I get my information?
What are my opinions on this issue?
What are some other opinions on this issue?
How is this issue connected to other issues?
What is the role of the media in presenting this issue?
How will I present my findings on the issue?

Action Plan!

How have others taken action on this issue in the past and now?
Why have some *not* taken action?
What actions can I take?
What will I do and why?
Were my actions successful?

Based on the nature of the investigations and actions, design a forum to share findings and a celebration of the completed projects – e.g. assembly presentations, local council displays. Class booklet or CD-ROM, video, web-based presentations.