

SENIOR POLITICAL STUDIES AND DISCOVERING DEMOCRACY MATERIALS

CASE STUDY: A MATRIX LINKING DISCOVERING DEMOCRACY MATERIALS TO THE VCE POLITICAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

Aim

To demonstrate links to the Discovering Democracy materials to support VCE Political Studies.

To provide teaching and learning activities to support VCE Political Studies through the use of Discovering Democracy materials.

Section A

Matrix of the links between Discovering Democracy materials and VCE Political Studies.

Section B

Three activities that demonstrate teaching and learning activities using Discovering Democracy materials for VCE Political Studies.

Section A

The following matrix shows the links between Discovering Democracy materials and the VCE Political Studies. The table is specific to the Victorian Political Studies curriculum, however there are common topics in Political Studies curriculum across Australia. The teaching and learning activities and resources could be adapted to other states and territories curriculum.

A matrix between Political Studies and the Discovering Democracy Materials.

VCE Political Studies	Australian Reader Lower Secondary	Discovering Democracy Lower Secondary Units	Discovering Democracy Middle Secondary Units	A Guide to Government and Law in Australia	Discovering Democracy through research
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UNIT 1 SYSTEMS OF GOVT					
<i>Forms and Systems of Government</i>					
Concepts of democracy and Representative democracy		Student Activities pg 10-24 pg 7-13 Student Activities Pg 68 What is democracy and what was Australia like before we had it?	Unit: A democracy destroyed pg 73	Democracy pg 15 - 20 Australian democracy pgs 20 -26	
Non-democratic political structures monarchies dictatorships theocracies one party states	Monarchy pg 2-6			Monarchy page 3	
Similarities and differences between Aust, British and American systems			Making a Nation pg111, 112. How do you make a federation work? pg 115 - 120	Aust constitution comparison to US pgs 44,45	
<i>The Aust system of govt</i>					
Origins and structure of federal system			Making a nation pg103	The Australian Nation pg 35ff Nation Making pg 37 – 44 What sort of nation pg 50 - 55	
Responsibilities of federal state local govt Activity 1		Should People Rule? Men and Women in Political Life Pg 26	Making a nation Powers of the states and commonwealth pg120 - 123		Chapter Who represents us?
Relationship between federal, state local governments. Activity 1		Poster – The Three Levels of Government			Who represents us? 77-92

UNIT 3, THE AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM					
The structure of the Aust political system			Unit 1 Parties Control Government pg 11- 41	How the system works pg 95 – 104 Diagram Australian federal democracy pg 106	
The Aust Constitution Activity 2		General Page 26-35 Student Activities pg 55 writing a constitution		The Aust constitution pg 43- 46, 95 - 96	Referendums pg 127 - 128
Voting and elections	The 1967 Referendum pg 95	pg 26 - 35	Unit Parties Control Government		Citizens have a say Referendums
Area of Study 4 The Australian Political process				Pgs 96,97	
Political parties and pressure groups Activity 3			Unit 1 Parties Control Government page 11-41 Aust Political parties pg 22 - 24	Australian parties pg 27 - 33 -	
Politics, Issues and the Media			Getting Things done Case Study – The Franklin Tasmania pg179 - 185	Media Diversity of ownership pg 92	Video Getting things done

Section B Teaching and Learning Activities

Activity 1 Whose responsibility is it?

Link to Political Studies
Australian Political System
Federal, state and local governments.

Key Questions

- What is the structure of the federal system?
- What are the role and responsibilities of each level of government?
- What is the relationship between federal, state and local governments?

Introduction

This activity will allow students to understand the different responsibilities of local, state and federal government.

- Brainstorm what are the major issues in your local area, your state and Australia.
- As a class develop a list of these issues.
- Prioritise the issues according to their level of importance. Do this activity individually, then in a group of four and finally as a whole class develop a prioritised list.
- What difficulties did you have in developing a priority list?
- Classify the responsibility for the following areas into federal, state and local governments.

Road safety, Higher Education, School Education, Hospitals, Police, Roads, Neighbourhood safety, Kindergartens, Skateboard parks, Australian army, Trains, Rubbish collection, Property Development, The Environment, Trade, Relationships with other countries, Postal services, Parking meters.

- Add to this classification the top ten issues developed by the class.
- Develop a set of criteria for allocating roles and responsibilities to local state and federal governments.
- Discuss why the federal government doesn't manage all areas of governance.
- For some areas such as the environment the federal, state and local government each have responsibility, why do you think this is the case?
- There is no need for local and state governments today in Australia – debate this statement.
- How do governments pay for their services to the public?

The following shows how each level of government collects money to pay for their services.

Federal government – GST, Income tax

State Government – Land tax, stamp duty on home purchases, death duties

Local Government – Collect rates from property owners

- Find out who governs the area where you live in terms of local councillor, state Member of Parliament and federal Member of Parliament.
- Using the internet and local resources eg local newspapers present a one page profile on governing your local area.
- Find out the areas/ issues and policies that your local, state and federal elected member is currently working on.

Activity 2 What constitutes a constitution?

Link to Political Studies – The Australian Constitution

Key Questions

What is a constitution?

What is the role of the constitution in governing a country?

How can the constitution be changed?

- Using the terms below prepare a series of Power point or Overhead transparencies that would be used in a presentation about the Australian constitution to inform Year 10 students.

Constitution

Referendum

High Court

1901

Commonwealth and state powers

Federalism

Governor General

Constitutional reform

- What have been some decisions that the High Court has made?
- Discuss two recent decisions by the High Court – Mabo decision and Wik decision for example.
- Analyse these two decisions in the light of the powers of the High Court and a departure from British precedent.
- Using the headings below and the other resources develop 20 questions that would test student's knowledge and understanding of issues around the Constitution and federation.

The nature of the Constitution

- A brief outline of the federation debates and major reasons for federation.
- Key ideas of the Australian system of government, e.g. federalism, responsible government, representative government.
- Interpreting and amending the Constitution.

Federalism

- The growth of Federal Power: use of referenda and the role of the High Court.
- Division of power: Commonwealth power and State's rights.
- Different approaches to federalism: attitudes of political parties.

Method of resolving major constitutional issues

- Conventions
- Parliamentary processes
- Referenda
- The High Court
- Case studies e.g. the 1975 constitutional crisis
- The roles of pressure groups, committees, members of parliament, bureaucracy, the ombudsman, the media and powerful individuals, in relation to the parliamentary process.

Possible Essay Questions

1. 'The High Court has been a radical reforming institution, whereas the Australian electorate has been constitutionally conservative.'

Assess the accuracy of this statement.

2. Examine the claim that the States no longer serve a useful political function in Australia.

Activity 3

What is the role of political parties in the Australian political process?

Links to VCE Political Studies – Political parties and pressure groups

Key Questions

Who are the major parties in Australia and what values underpin the party?

Who are the minor parties in Australia and what role do they play in government?

How would political parties respond to issues?

The major political parties in Australia are the Liberal party, Australian labour party and the Democrats. Other minor parties include the Greens, Pauline Hanson's Once Nation, Grey Power and the Shooters

- Using the web sites of each of these political parties compare current policies of the major political parties in Australia.
- Read Briefing 2b (pg 25) Parties Control parliament in Stories of democracy CD to answer the following questions.
- Which parties have been labelled 'free enterprise' and which socialist'?

- Which groups of people do the Labor Party, the Liberal Party and the National Party traditionally represent? (Draw also on briefing 2a.)
- Describe at least one policy supported at any time by both Labor and the non-Labor parties that seems to be influenced by socialist ideas.
- Describe at least one policy supported in recent times by both Labor and the Liberal-National coalition that seems to be influenced by free-enterprise ideas.
- You have to present an overview of political parties in Australia to a group of visiting Canadian students. Refer Briefing 2a (pg 22) Prepare a handout that would accompany such a talk to give to the visiting students.
- Students are to work in groups and take on the role of a major or minor political party. Using the ideologies and background they are to respond to these issues according to their ideologies.
- Establishment of marine parks for Australia
- Increase in defence spending
Increase in grants to Universities and higher education
- Heroin Trials
- Mandatory detention for asylum seekers

Discovering Democracy Materials

Australian Readers Discovering Democracy, Curriculum Corporation, Carlton, Australia

Discovering Democracy Middle Secondary Units (1998), Curriculum Corporation, Carlton, Australia

Discovering Democracy through Research (2000), Curriculum Corporation, Carlton, Australia

Discovering Democracy Lower Secondary Units (1998), Curriculum Corporation, Carlton, Australia

Hirst, J (1998), *Discovering Democracy A Guide to Government and law in Australia*, Curriculum Corporation, Carlton, Australia

Discovering Democracy Video, Getting things done, Men and Women in Political Curriculum Corporation, Carlton, Australia

Poster The Three levels of Government, Discovering democracy Kit, Curriculum Corporation, Carlton Australia

Stories of Democracy CD (1998), Curriculum Corporation, Carlton, Australia

Websites

www.aec.gov.au

Australian Electoral Commission provides an excellent overview of the Australian electoral system and key aspects of it.

www.peo.gov.au

Parliamentary Electoral Office – provides good information about parliament of Australia

www.aph.gov.au Parliament of Australia provides excellent overview of the operation and organizations of the parliament of Australia – Senate, House of representatives, This week in parliament and more.