

Forming Government Online Program

Lesson Plan

Forming Government Online Program is approximately one and a half hours long and designed specifically for Year 9 students. The program provides activities and information to develop an understanding of how Australia's political system works with a focus on Federal Parliament. The Forming Government program can be undertaken over two sessions; or select various parts to make it one session.

Learning intentions

Students will:

- Understand the structure of the House of Representatives and the Senate in Australia's Federal Parliament.
- Understand how government is formed in Australia's Federal Parliament.
- Explore the meaning of key concepts such as major, minor and micro parties, independents, the opposition, hung parliament, minority government and majority government.
- Develop an ethical understanding of how differing values impact the position of Australian political parties.

Outcomes

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain how government and the opposition are formed in Australia's federal parliamentary system and provide examples.
- Identify other key concepts and vocabulary such as minor parties and independents, and provide examples.
- Categorise political parties on a political spectrum of left to right.
- Identify their own perspective on Australia's contemporary party system and the formation of government.

Resources required for this lesson

- Smartboard or projector and screen
- Students own devices e.g. laptops or tablets (optional)
- Internet connection
- Print out of "Forming Government Activity Worksheet" (if no personal devices)

Western Australian curriculum links

Curriculum Code	Knowledge & Understanding
Year 9 Humanities & Social Sciences (HASS)	
ACHCK075	The role of political parties and independent representatives in Australia's system of government, including the formation of governments.

Curriculum links are taken from: <https://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/teaching/curriculum-browser/humanities-and-social-sciences#year-9-syllabus>

Lesson Plan for Forming Government Online Program

Stage of Lesson	Time
Introduction	
<p>Slide Show – Australia’s Government</p> <p>The slide show explains different aspects of Australia’s system of government in terms of being a liberal democracy, a constitutional monarchy, and a representative democracy. Students can either read the slide show individually, in pairs, or as a class.</p> <p>Discussion points to raise with students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the separation of powers principle and why is it important? (The idea that power should be divided into three arms so there can be checks and balances on the actions of government. It allows each arm of government to check the others and ensure they’re following the law.) • Do you think Australia’s Parliament is representative of everybody? Why or why not? (Opinion only, designed to gage existing ideas about government in Australia. Re-visit when completing Activity 5 – Reflection Questions.) 	7 minutes
<p>Activity 1 – Australia’s System of Government: Knowledge Check</p> <p>As a whole class, in pairs or individually (with personal devices) use the multiple choice questions to revise key concepts explored in the slide show. There are four multiple choice questions.</p>	4 minutes
Main Body	
<p>Slide Show – Australia’s Federal Parliament</p> <p>The slide show explains the features of Australia’s Federal Parliament, including the House of Representatives, the Senate, and the Governor-General. As a class, in pairs, or individually (with personal devices) students read through the slides by clicking on the image of each component. Draw attention to the map in the House of Representative slides, which shows how many members each state chooses.</p> <p>Once the slides for all three components have been opened, there is an additional content slide which discusses the importance of forming government.</p> <p>Students could take notes about the main points from the slides, focussing on the structure and voting method for each chamber of Parliament. Alternatively, students could be divided into groups which each focus on a single component, and report back what they learned to the class.</p>	10 minutes

<p>Activity 2 – Australia’s Federal Parliament: Knowledge Check</p> <p>As a whole class or in pairs using personal devices, use this activity to revise a few key concepts. Think-pair-share the four questions and answers.</p>	4 minutes
<p>Activity 3 – Political Parties and Forming Government</p> <p>To complete Activity 3 students will either need to download the Forming Government Activity Worksheet on a personal device or be provided a hard copy each.</p> <p>Students are to watch the short animations exploring the concepts of Political Parties, Types of Political Parties, Independents, Majority Government, Hung Parliament and Minority Government, and The Opposition and the Crossbench; and complete the first page of the worksheet by providing definitions and examples for each concept. The animations can be viewed as a whole class or individually.</p> <p>If working in pairs or small groups, students may focus on one video and report their worksheet answers back to the class. More than one worksheet answer is covered in Types of Political Parties and The Opposition and the Crossbench videos.</p>	20 minutes
<p>Activity 4 – The Political Spectrum in Australia</p> <p>Use the introductory text as a base to discuss with students what a political spectrum is. Emphasise to students that identifying where political parties best fit on a spectrum can be open to interpretation and some parties and independents can change where they sit on the spectrum to adapt to the current political climate and attempt to win votes.</p> <p>As a whole class or in pairs using personal devices students must read the information about each political party or independent and determine where they might fit on the political spectrum provided. When the slider is dragged to the correct location for each party or independent the political spectrum description will turn green. If completing the activity in pairs, run through the first few examples together as a whole class. There are 14 political parties and independents in total to sort.</p> <p>Once all students have finished the activity discuss the results with students. Encourage them to share whether the alignment or values of any of the political parties and independents surprised them.</p> <p>Extension Activity:</p> <p>In small groups students choose one of the political parties from Activity 4 to investigate further. Each group should research the origins of the party, currently elected members, and current policies.</p> <p>Groups can report back to the class in a discussion style format, or as short presentations.</p>	<p>10 minutes</p> <p>Extension 20 – 45 minutes</p>

Conclusion	
<p>Activity 5 – Reflection Questions</p> <p>Individually students consider the two reflections on page 2 of the Forming Government Activity Worksheet and write-pair-share their responses.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you think the process Australia has adopted when it comes to forming government in our Federal Parliament is fair? Why or why not? 2. Do you think political parties help to keep Australia’s democracy strong? Why or why not? <p>Thought prompts to share with students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is everyone equally represented in Australia’s Parliament? • Should the Senate have a role in forming government? • What makes a democracy strong? • Do political parties do a good job of representing people? 	15 minutes
<p>Activity 6 – Trivia Time Quiz</p> <p>As a class complete the Jeopardy-style game to revise concepts explored throughout the program. Some questions will also test students on background knowledge they might have about past and current political events.</p> <p>Divide students into groups (no more than five groups). Taking turns, each group chooses a question to answer based on the category and dollar amount, continuing until each group has answered four questions.</p> <p>If the group answers the question correctly they “win” the dollar value assigned to the question. Record the amounts earned by each group, and announce the group with the highest amount at the end as the winners.</p>	15 – 30 minutes