

Power and the Constitution Online Program

Lesson Plan

The Power and the Constitution Online Program is designed specifically for Year 7 students. The program is divided into two parts in order to explore the concepts in more depth. Part A focuses on the Australian Constitution and Part B on the three arms of government and the separation of powers. Each part takes approximately 45 minutes or longer to complete.

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| Learning intentions Students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the purpose and value of the Australian Constitution. Understand the structure and roles of the Senate and the House of Representatives in the Federal Parliament. Understand the concept of the separation of powers between the three arms of government, the Legislative, Executive and Judiciary, in order to prevent an excess of power. | Outcomes At the end of this lesson, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain what the Australian Constitution is and discuss or debate the positive and negative aspects of the Constitution. Identify some of the key democratic institutions set up by the Constitution such as The House of Representatives, the Senate; the Monarchy; the Prime Minister and Cabinet; and the High Court. Identify the features of the three arms of government and why the concept of the separation of powers exists. |
| Resources required for this lesson <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smartboard or projector and screen Students personal devices e.g. laptops or tablets (optional) Internet connection Print out of background notes and information sheet from the "Additional Resources" section on our website. | |

Western Australian curriculum links

| Curriculum Code | Knowledge & Understanding |
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| Year 7 Humanities & Social Sciences (HASS) | |
| ACHCK048 | The purpose and value of the Australian Constitution. The different roles of the House of Representatives and the Senate in Australia's bicameral parliament. The concept of the separation of powers between the legislature, executive and judiciary and how it seeks to prevent the excessive concentration of power. |

Curriculum links are taken from: <https://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/teaching/curriculum-browser/humanities-and-social-sciences#year-7-syllabus>

Lesson Plan for Power and the Constitution Online Program

Part A: The Constitution

| Stage of Lesson | Time |
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| Introduction | |
| Activity 1 - Setting the Scene – Role Play The role play activity introduces the Australian Constitution and how it was given Royal Assent by Queen Victoria in 1900. As a class, students participate in the role play. There are six main characters – 1) Narrator, 2) Queen’s Guard, 3) Queen Victoria, 4) Edmund Barton (New South Wales), 5) Charles Kingston (South Australia), and 6) Alfred Deakin (Victoria). Students read out their characters lines as they appear on the screen. (The character’s name appears at the top of each speech bubble, so the students will know when to speak). Discuss with students: why was this event important to Australia? Why was the Queen involved? | 10 minutes |
| Activity 2 - Establishment of the Constitution: Knowledge Check As a whole class, in pairs or individually (with personal devices) use the multiple choice questions to revise key concepts explored in the role play. There are four multiple choice questions. | 5 minutes |
| Main Body | |
| Slide show - What was one of the main purposes of the Constitution? The slideshow discusses the purpose of the Australian Constitution and how Chapter One sets up Federal Parliament. Students can either read the slide show individually, in pairs or as a class. Discussion points to raise with students: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What places are missing on the map?: The two territories are missing – ACT and NT did not exist before 1901.• Why did the colonies want a central parliament?: To make laws for the whole country. To unite government agencies such as the defence force, postal services and immigration.• What do we already know about the Senate and House of Representatives?: 150 members in the House of Representatives and 76 Senators. There are 12 Senators per state and 2 for each territory. Government is always formed in the lower house. | 7 minutes |

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| <p>Activity 3 - The structure of the Federal Parliament</p> <p>Students can refer to the five sections and one convention in order to complete the Venn diagram activity. In this activity the buttons on the left need to be categorised as aspects of the Senate; the House of Representatives or shared aspects of both houses.</p> <p>If learning as a whole class, students can take turns to drag and drop a button where they think it belongs on the diagram. Or students can complete in pairs or individually.</p> <p>The House of Representatives has four correct buttons, the Senate has three correct buttons, and there are two shared aspects in the centre.</p> | 7 minutes |
| <p>Activity 4 - 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 three questions and answers.</p> | 5 minutes |
| Conclusion | |
| <p>Activity 5 - Advantages and Disadvantages of the Australian Constitution: Debate</p> <p>As a class read through the six statements about the Australian Constitution.</p> <p>Divide the class into groups of three and allocate one statement per two groups of three. One group argues for the statement and the other against.</p> <p>Students spend a short amount of time researching and preparing their argument. Depending on time, the students can either provide a one minute argument per group or else each student in the group provides a one minute argument, and the session is run like a debate.</p> | <p>Preparation 20 minutes</p> <p>Debate</p> <p>12 – 36 minutes</p> |

Part B: Power

| Stage of Lesson: | Time |
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| Introduction | |
| <p>Flip Cards: What is Power?</p> <p>Ask students what they think is meant by power in Australia? Who has power? As a class read through the flip cards introducing the concept of power and how it relates to the Australian government.</p> | 5 minutes |
| Main Body | |
| <p>Slide show - What Are The Three Arms of Government?</p> <p>As a class, in pairs or individually students read through the “What Are the Three Arms of Government?” slide show. Students could take notes about the main points from the slides, focusing on who makes up each arm of government, what their powers are and who chooses them.</p> <p>Extension Activity: In small groups, students choose one arm of government to investigate further. Each group should research some specific examples of who the current members of their particular arm are and any instances of being in the news. Report back to the class in a short discussion style format.</p> <p>Research Suggestions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the current Cabinet Minister's? What about the Shadow Cabinet? • How many Justices sit in the High Court of Australia? Why this number? Who are the Justices? • Do you know any High Court cases? (e.g. Tobacco Plain Packaging case, Australian citizenship case). • Has the Monarch ever opened the House of Representatives? • What Bills are being discussed in Parliament right now? • What are some recent new laws introduced by the Federal Parliament? • Have the Australian people ever been asked their opinion on a new law? (Yes- Same sex marriage plebiscite). | <p>5 minutes</p> <p>Extension 15- 30 minutes</p> |
| <p>Activity 1 - The Role and Members of the Three Arms of Government</p> <p>As a whole class or in pairs using personal devices, categorise the cards into the correct arm of government – Legislature, Executive or Judiciary. Use the prompts on the chart to place the cards correctly, “Members”, “Powers” “Chosen By”. Drag and drop the card into the correct category. Share answers with the class.</p> | 5 minutes |

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| Activity 2 - Three Arms of Government Knowledge Check As a whole class or in pairs using personal devices, use this activity to revise a few key concepts. There are three multiple-choice questions. | 5 minutes |
| Slide show - What is the Separation of Powers? As a class, follow the slides of the slideshow “What is the Separation of Powers?” | 5 minutes |
| Activity 3 - True or False Revision As a whole class or in pairs using personal devices, read the statement in the red box and decide if it is true or false. There are eight statements to categorise. If doing it as a whole class, ask students to read out each text box. Invite students up to the front to drag and drop the card onto true or false. | |
| Conclusion | |
| Power and Constitution Word Wall This activity can be used as a way to revise some of the main concepts explored in Part A and Part B of the Power and the Constitution program. Students can complete individually or if as a class ask students to provide a definition of each word. | 5 minutes |



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The Constitutional Centre of WA

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Acknowledgement of Country The Government of Western Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures; and to Elders both past and present.