



# DEMOCRACY DOWN UNDER

## Cross-curricular lesson ideas

Below you will find curriculum-linked lesson ideas and student worksheets to extend students' learning from the 'Democracy down under' unit of work. The education resource materials have been designed for a national audience and are suitable for middle to upper primary students.

### English

- Students to investigate the origin of the word 'democracy'.
- Students to find definitions for the words on the '**Democracy vocabulary**' worksheet. These words all appear in the facts for students.
- Students to create a 'Democracy' word wall. This can be added to as students learn more throughout the unit.
- Students to write a persuasive piece about whether or not the legal age for voting (18 years) should be changed.
- Students to create a presentation with photos, drawings and facts about what a democracy is.
- Students to interview a local member of parliament. Devise some questions to ask them about their role.
- Students to take on the role of a representative during an election campaign and write and perform a speech about what they could offer if 'elected'.
- Students to find some examples of political satire and discuss the literary and language features of this genre.
- Students to read the student facts about democracy and government and answer the questions on the '**Democracy down under comprehension**' worksheet.



# DEMOCRACY DOWN UNDER

## Mathematics

- Federal government revenue comes mainly from income tax. Students to investigate income tax. What is it? Why do we have to pay it?
- Students to visit the 'individual income tax rates' page of the Australian Taxation Office website, select a specific income and calculate how much tax someone earning that amount would pay. Students then discuss how they would spend that money if they were in government.

## Science

- Students to consider how 'government' works in animal groups such as bees, ants, primates and meerkats. Can students describe how these groups work using government analogies?

## Humanities and Social Sciences (History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, Economics and Business)

- Using the '**Democracy KWL**' chart, students to brainstorm what they know, want to know and have learnt about Australian democracy.
- The constitution is a set of rules by which a country or state is run. Devise your own 'classroom constitution'.
- In pairs, students to create a timeline of key events in Australian Government history.
- Students to imagine they are in charge of a country and make a list of all the services they would like to provide to their citizens. Sort this list into citizen needs and wants.
- Students to research the three levels of government in Australia (federal, state and local) and what each level is responsible for. They can present their findings in a 'triarama' format (you can find instructions for making these online).
- Students to find images of the coat of arms of each state and research what they symbolise. Students could work in small groups to create a coat of arms for their classroom (or individually to create one for their family).
- Elections in Australia strive to be 'open, free and fair'. Students to discuss what they think this means and then research the role of the Australian Electoral Commission in our electoral processes.



## DEMOCRACY DOWN UNDER

- Students to explore who has the right to vote in Australia and other countries. Do they think these rules are fair? Why or why not?
- Students to create a presentation about the role of the monarch (currently Queen Elizabeth II) and/or the Governor-General in Australia. They could present their findings as that person.
- Students to find out more about the Westminster system and the Magna Carta and consider how they have influenced Australia's system of government.
- In a democratic society, citizens have rights, but with this comes responsibility. Students to make a list of what they consider to be their rights and then decide which responsibilities align with these (e.g. we have the right to free speech, but we have the responsibility to refrain from saying hateful things).
- Students work in pairs to research the 1967 referendum that gave the Australian Government the power to make laws for Indigenous Australians. Why was this such a significant step in Australian history? In which other countries have minority groups and/or women fought for their civil rights?

### The Arts (Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music, Visual Arts)

- Students to create a multimedia presentation for a candidate for an upcoming election (school committees, local council, state election or federal election).
- In small groups, students to role play three different ways in which a country can be ruled (e.g. absolute monarchy, direct democracy and representative democracy).
- Students to find some recent political ads (print or television) and critique them from the following perspectives:
  - visual layout and/or sound
  - point of view
  - genre conventions (e.g. how persuasive elements are used)
  - multimodality and editing (e.g. how do different elements work together to achieve a purpose).
- Students to discuss the role of advertising in a democratic society.



## DEMOCRACY DOWN UNDER

### Technologies (Design and Technologies, Digital Technologies)

- Students to use basic computer programming skills and applicable software to create an animation about what democracy means to them.
- Every time an election occurs in Australia, there is discussion about a computerised voting system. Students to brainstorm what this system might involve. How would it be administered? What sort of security features would it need to have?