

Rationale

A deep understanding of Australia's federal system of government and the liberal democratic values that underpin it is essential in enabling students to become active and informed citizens who participate in and sustain Australia's democracy.

The Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship provides students with opportunities to investigate political and legal systems, and explore the nature of citizenship, diversity and identity in contemporary society. Emphasis is placed on the federal system of government, derived from the Westminster system, and the liberal democratic values that underpin it such as freedom, equality and the rule of law. The curriculum explores how the people, as citizens, choose their governments; how the system safeguards democracy by vesting people with civic rights and responsibilities; how laws and the legal system protect people's rights; and how individuals and groups can influence civic life.

The curriculum recognises that Australia is a secular nation with a multicultural, multi-faith society and a Christian heritage, and promotes the development of inclusivity by developing students' understanding of broader values such as respect, civility, equity, justice and responsibility. It acknowledges the experiences and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their identities within contemporary Australia. While the curriculum strongly focuses on the Australian context, students also reflect on Australia's position and international obligations and the role of citizens today, both within Australian and in an interconnected world.

Through the study of civics and citizenship, students can develop skills of inquiry, values and dispositions that enable them to be active and informed citizens; to question, understand and contribute to the world in which they live. The curriculum also offers opportunities for students to develop a wide range of general skills and capabilities, including an appreciation of diverse perspectives, empathy, collaboration, negotiation, self-awareness and intercultural understanding.

The Civics and Citizenship curriculum aims to reinforce students' appreciation and understanding of what it means to be a citizen. It explores ways in which students can actively shape their lives, value their belonging in a diverse and dynamic society, and positively contribute locally, nationally, regionally and globally. As reflective, active and informed decision-makers, students will be well placed to contribute to an evolving and healthy democracy that fosters the wellbeing of Australia as a democratic nation.

Year 8 Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 8, students analyse features of Australian democracy, and explain features of Australia's democracy that enable active participation. They recognise different types of law in Australia and explain how laws are made. They identify the diverse belief systems in Australia and analyse issues about national identity and the factors that contribute to people's sense of belonging.

When researching, students develop a range of questions to investigate Australia's political and legal systems and critically analyse information gathered from different sources for relevance. They explain different points of view on civics and citizenship issues. When planning for action, students take into account multiple perspectives, use democratic processes, and develop solutions to an issue. Students develop and present reasoned arguments on civics and citizenship issues using appropriate texts, subject-specific language and concepts. They identify ways they can be active and informed citizens in different contexts.

Aims

The Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship aims to ensure students develop:

- a lifelong sense of belonging to and engagement with civic life as an active and informed citizen in the context of Australia as a secular democratic nation with a dynamic, multicultural, multi-faith society and a Christian heritage
- knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the values, principles, institutions and practices of Australia's system of democratic government and law, and the role of the citizen in Australian government and society
- skills, including questioning and research; analysis, synthesis and interpretation; problem-solving and decision-making; communication and reflection, to investigate contemporary civics and citizenship issues and foster responsible participation in Australia's democracy
- the capacities and dispositions to participate in the civic life of their nation at a local, regional and global level and as individuals in a globalised world.

Key Ideas

Through their learning in each subject or sub-strand, students develop knowledge and understanding relating to broader enduring ideas that underpin the Humanities and Social Sciences in the Australian Curriculum, which are represented in varying ways across the subjects. The key ideas are outlined below:

Who we are, who came before us, and traditions and values that have shaped societies

Students explore their own identity, Australia's heritage and cultural diversity, and Australia's identity as a nation in the world. They examine the significance of traditions and shared values within society.

How societies and economies operate and how they are changing over time

Students learn about Australian society and other societies in the world, both past and present; and how they function socially, culturally, economically and politically. Students examine developments that have resulted in or are bringing about change.

The ways people, places, ideas and events are perceived and connected

Students are provided with opportunities to explore different perceptions of people, places, ideas and events. They develop an understanding of the interdependent nature of the world and the interrelationships within and between the natural environment, human communities and economies. They explore how people, ideas and events are connected over time and increasingly interconnected across local, national, regional and global contexts.

How people exercise their responsibilities, participate in society and make informed decisions

Students examine how individuals and groups have participated in and contributed to society past and present. They examine the rights and responsibilities of individuals and groups over time and in different contexts. They develop an understanding of the need to make decisions, the importance of ethical considerations and being informed when making decisions, the processes for decision-making and the implications of decisions that are made for individuals, society, the economy and the environment.

Year 8 Level Description

The Year 8 curriculum provides a study of the responsibilities and freedoms of citizens and how Australians can actively participate in their democracy. Students consider how laws are made and the types of laws used in Australia. Students also examine what it means to be Australian by identifying the reasons for and influences that shape national identity.

The civics and citizenship content at this year level involves two strands: civics and citizenship knowledge and understanding, and civics and citizenship skills. These strands are interrelated and have been developed to be taught in an integrated way, and in ways that are appropriate to specific local contexts. The order and detail in which they are taught are programming decisions.

Key inquiry questions

A framework for developing students' civics and citizenship knowledge, understanding and skills at this year level is provided by the following key questions:

- What are the freedoms and responsibilities of citizens in Australia's democracy?
- How are laws made and applied in Australia?
- What different perspectives are there about national identity?

**HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES-
CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP**

Structure
 In the Australian Curriculum, the Humanities and Social Sciences learning area comprises five subjects: F–6/7 Humanities and Social Sciences, and Years 7–10 History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship and Economics and Business. In all five subjects, the curriculum is organised into two broad interrelated strands: knowledge and understanding, and inquiry and skills.
 In the F–6/7 Humanities and Social Sciences curriculum, history, geography, civics and citizenship and economics and business are presented as sub-strands of the knowledge and understanding strand. In these years, students are introduced to history and geography from Foundation Year, civics and citizenship in Year 3 and economics and business in Year 5. In Years 7–10, the curriculum is organised by subject. In Years 9 and 10, student access to Geography, Civics and Citizenship and Economics and Business will be determined by school authorities or individual schools.

Year 8 Content Descriptions

Civics and Citizenship Knowledge and Understanding	Civics and Citizenship Skills
<p>Government and democracy The freedoms that enable active participation in Australia’s democracy within the bounds of law, including freedom of speech, association, assembly, religion and movement.</p> <p>How citizens can participate in Australia’s democracy, including use of the electoral system, contact with their elected representatives, use of lobby groups, and direct action.</p> <p>Laws and citizens How laws are made in Australia through parliaments (statutory law) and through the courts (common law).</p> <p>The types of law in Australia, including criminal law and civil law, and the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customary law.</p> <p>Citizenship, diversity and identity The values and beliefs of religions practised in contemporary Australia, including Christianity.</p> <p>Different perspectives about Australia’s national identity, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, and what it means to be Australian.</p> <p>How national identity can shape a sense of belonging in Australia’s multicultural society.</p>	<p>Questioning and research Develop a range of questions to investigate Australia’s political and legal systems.</p> <p>Identify, gather and sort information and ideas from a range of sources.</p> <p>Analysis, synthesis and interpretation Critically analyse information and ideas from a range of sources in relation to civics and citizenship topics and issues.</p> <p>Problem-solving and decision-making Appreciate multiple perspectives and use strategies to mediate differences.</p> <p>Use democratic processes to reach consensus on a course of action relating to a civics or citizenship issue and plan for that action.</p> <p>Communication and reflection Present evidence-based civics and citizenship arguments using subject-specific language.</p> <p>Reflect on their role as a citizen in Australia’s democracy.</p>