



## Index and Introduction



## AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION CENTRE

### Unit 5. Australian identity, federation and the Constitution including the intentions of the framers

#### Topic 6.1: How and why the Australian Constitution came to be

C&C Strand: Citizenship, Identity & Diversity

Curriculum Year 6- HASS/ History: Significant individuals, events and ideas that led to Australia's Federation, the Constitution and democratic system of government ([AC9HS6K01](#))

#### Area/Questions and Takeaways

1. Get to know the framers of the Constitution. Why did they campaign for federation?
2. What did the framers think was essential to go into the Constitution?
3. What type of things did the framers compromise on, and why?
4. What important things did the framers leave out of the Constitution?
5. What omissions might we now want to change by holding a referendum?
6. What measures were taken to encourage the less populous states to join federation as 'original States'?
7. Why were the people asked to approve the Constitution at referendums in the different colonies?
8. Why was the Constitution passed by the British Parliament, instead of an Australian institution?
9. Why were some groups not included in the process of drafting the Constitution and what difference did this make?

#### Topic Summary and Goals:

Students explore Australia's path to Federation through an examination of key people and events, such as Henry Parkes, Edmund Barton, Alfred Deakin, George Reid, John Quick, the Tenterfield Oration, the Corowa Conference and the referendums held in the colonies between 1898 and 1900. They explore, for example, how the United States of America's model of federalism (the Washington system) contributed to the ideas for Andrew Inglis Clark's first draft of the Constitution and how the Swiss idea of a referendum influenced others, such as Kingston and Deakin. They understand the different influences on the Constitution.

Students understand that some of the framers came from disadvantaged backgrounds, being child labourers with little education, but managed to raise themselves up and gain the skills and knowledge they needed to make a major contribution to Australia. Students also recognise, however, that many voices were not heard during the process of writing the Constitution, including those of Indigenous Australians and migrants from diverse backgrounds, and that the influence of women was very limited. Students are able to compare such a lack of consultation with processes today for constitutional reform.

Through exploring the transformation of colonies into a federated Australia, students discover the importance of a representative democracy and the significant role of the people in voting in elections and referendums. They understand the types of compromises that were made by the framers, to ensure that the people in the less populous States felt comfortable that they would not be overridden by the more populous States and that their rights would be protected through equal representation in the Senate.

Students also learn how the making of the Constitution had a political foundation, in the votes of the people in referendums, and a legal foundation, in its passage by the British Parliament. Students appreciate why the framers of the Constitution were so determined that nothing of substance in the Constitution should be changed by the British and how relieved they were once the Constitution was passed after a decade of work.

Through role-playing key characters such as Barton, Deakin, Griffith, and Parkes, students research their characters and use actual quotes from these leaders to argue specific points through debates and speeches to be presented by the students to their class mates.



**AUSTRALIAN  
CONSTITUTION  
CENTRE**

## Teacher Reference Documents (TRDs) and Activities/Lessons

**TRD 29:** The Tenterfield Oration

**TRD 30:** Henry Parkes (NSW): The 'Father of Federation'

**TRD 31:** Edmund Barton (NSW) : From quelling cricket riots, to commanding the Constitutional Convention

**TRD 32:** Alfred Deakin (Vic) and the fight to give people a say

**TRD 33:** Samuel Griffith (Qld): The man behind the words

**TRD 34:** Charles Kingston (SA) and the right for all adults to vote

**TRD 35:** Andrew Inglis Clark (Tas) and the lost bill of rights

**TRD 36:** John Forrest (WA): the champion of Federation from the West

**TRD 37:** John Quick (Vic) and the plan that revived Federation

**TRD 38:** George Reid (NSW) and the Yes-No politics of referendum success

**TRD 39:** Henry Bournes Higgins (Vic) and freedom of religion

**TRD 40:** Robert Garran (NSW) and the fight against 'fake news' in the referendums on the Constitution

**TRD 41:** Patrick Glynn (SA): The man who put God into the Constitution

**Lessons/Activities One, two and three:** 'Meet the Makers' : framers and writers of the Australian Constitution. Discover their role and ideas and contributions through the second half of the eighteenth century.

**TRD 42:** Overview of how the Constitution came to be

**TRD 43:** Getting the British to pass the Constitution

**TRD 44:** Why is the Constitution in a British Act of Parliament?

**TRD 45:** The failure of the 1898 referendum in New South Wales to approve the Constitution

**TRD 46:** Success of the 1899 referendum to approve Federation and the Constitution

**Lesson/Activities Four:** Words into action: Drafting the Constitution

**Lesson/Activities Five:** What were the incentives for the colonies to join as a nation? What a state to be in!

**TRD 47:** Making the Constitution - Where were the women?

**TRD 48:** Making the Constitution - Where were Indigenous Australians and people from different ethnicities?

**Lesson/Activities Six:** Silent voices and discrimination: Where were the women, Indigenous Australians and people from different ethnicities?



**AUSTRALIAN  
CONSTITUTION  
CENTRE**

### **History Achievement Standard:**

By the end of Year 6, students explain the roles of significant people, events and ideas that led to Australian Federation, democracy and citizenship. Students can explain the significance of an event/development, an individual or group. Analyse information or sources for evidence to determine their origin and purpose and to identify different perspectives. Students develop texts, particularly narrative recounts and descriptions. In developing these texts and organising and presenting their information, they use historical terms and concepts, and incorporate relevant sources.

**Extension:** Year 9 - understanding the aims of the founding fathers prior to Federation in writing the Australian Constitution, including the need for compromise ([AC9HC9K01\\_E1](#)) See Unit 12, topic 9.2, Federalism v Westminster system.