

Index and Introduction



AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION CENTRE

Unit 7: The Australian Constitution and its three key institutions of government and how the Separation of Powers (SoP) protects democracy and the people – Years 6 and 7 - C & C Strand: Government & Democracy

Topic 6.3 & 7.1: The Australian Constitution and its three Key Institutions of Government

C&C Strand: Government & Democracy

Curriculum Year 6-the key institutions of Australia's system of government ([AC9HS6K06](#))

Curriculum Year 7 - the key features of Australian democracy and government, including the Australian Constitution, responsible parliamentary government and federalism ([AC9HC7K01](#))

Area/Questions and Takeaways:

1. What is the separation of powers?
2. How is power distributed between the three key institutions of government?
3. What does Parliament do and who does it represent?
4. What are the differences between the House of Representatives and the Senate?
5. Who comprises the Executive Government and what are their different roles?
6. What is the relationship between Parliament and the Executive Government and which is accountable to the other?
7. What is the role of the courts and how do they keep Parliament and the Executive in check?

Topic summary:

The Australian Parliament, the Executive Government and the Courts are the three key institutions of government. This topic addresses each of those institutions, how they are comprised and the nature and extent of their powers. There is introductory material about Parliament and the courts. These topics will be addressed in other units. Most importantly, this topic focuses on the least well understood branch - the Executive Government. We often talk about 'the Government', but many people are uncertain about the role of the monarch and the Governor-General in the the system of government, the difference between Cabinet, the ministry and the Federal Executive Council, and how the public service fits in. This topic breaks down all the different parts of the Executive Government and explains their roles and powers. It also introduces the concept of the separation of powers, which is dealt with in more detail in a later unit. It provides a solid foundation for students to exercise their roles as active citizens in the future.

Teacher Reference Documents (TRDs) and Activities/Lessons

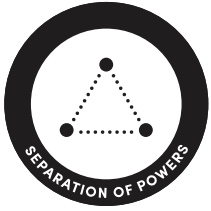
TRD 56: Separation of powers - Overview: The three institutions or branches of government

Lesson/Activities One : The Constitution and the main institutions of Government : The Parliament, the Executive Government and the Courts

Lesson/Activities Two: Keeping powers in check - A separation of powers.

TRD 57: Introducing the Australian Parliament: The Houses of Parliament (Student Resource)

Lesson/Activities three: The Houses of Parliament



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TRD 58: Parliament - the roles and powers of the houses.

Lesson/Activities Four: The Australian Parliament – the Role of Passing Legislation

Lesson /Activities Five: Classroom Parliaments

TRD 59: Who can stand for Parliament?

Lesson/Activities Six: Who can stand for Parliament?

TRD 60: Executive Power - overview including the positions and roles of who makes up the executive government. What is executive power?

Lesson/Activities Seven: Introducing the Executive Power of Australia as described in Chapter II of the Australian Constitution

TRD 61: Executive Power - The Role and Powers of the Sovereign

Lesson/Activities Eight: The Role and Powers of the Sovereign

TRD 62: Executive Power - the powers and role of the Governor-General, from cutting ribbons to dismissing governments

Lesson/Activities Nine: Executive Power – the powers and role of the Governor-General

TRD 63: Executive Power – The Powers of Ministers and Their Limits

Lesson/Activities Ten: Executive Power – The powers of Ministers and their limits

TRD 64: Executive Power - The Role of the Public Service in making Government work

Lesson/Activities Eleven: Executive Power – The role of the public service in making Government work

TRD 65: Courts - Their Role and Powers all the way through to the High Court.

Lesson/Activities Twelve: Courts – Their role and powers

Lesson/Activities Thirteen: Classroom Courts. Run your own mock trials including trial by jury.

Extension: Year 10: the role of the parliament and the High Court of Australia in protecting rights under the Constitution, common law and through federal and state laws ([AC9HC10K03](#))

Achievement Standards:

By the end of year 6 students explain the key institutions, roles and responsibilities of Australia's levels of government, and democratic values and beliefs. By the end of Year 7, students describe the key features of Australia's system of government, and the principles and features of the Australian legal system. They explain the characteristics of Australian democracy.

