



Index and Introduction



AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION CENTRE

Unit 12: Federalism v Westminster Year 9 - C & C Strand: Laws & Citizens

Topic 9.2: Federalism v Westminster

Year 9 – Key people, events and ideas in the development of Australian self-government and democracy, including, the role of founders, key features of constitutional development, the importance of Britain and Western influences in the formation of Australia's system of government and women's voting rights. (ACDSEH090) (Revise topics 6.1 and 6.2).

Year 9 - Understanding the aims of the founding fathers prior to Federation in writing the Australian Constitution, including the need for compromise ([AC9HC9K01_E1](#)) (Revise topics 6.1 and 6.2).

Achievement Standard:

By the end of Year 9, students refer to key events and the actions of individuals and groups to explain patterns of change and continuity over time. They analyse the causes and effects of events and developments and make judgements about their importance. They explain the motives and actions of people at the time. Students explain the significance of these events and developments over the short and long term. They explain different interpretations of the past.

Students sequence events and developments within a chronological framework, with reference to periods of time and their duration. When researching, students develop different kinds of questions to frame a historical inquiry. They interpret, process, analyse and organise information from a range of primary and secondary sources and use it as evidence to answer inquiry questions. Students examine sources to compare different points of view. When evaluating these sources, they analyse origin and purpose, and draw conclusions about their usefulness. They develop their own interpretations about the past. Students develop texts, particularly explanations and discussions, incorporating historical interpretations. In developing these texts and organising and presenting their conclusions, they use historical terms and concepts, evidence identified in sources, and they reference these sources.

Key Questions:

1. What is a federal system and how is power distributed between the Commonwealth and the States?
2. What happens when Commonwealth and State laws conflict?
3. How does Australia's federal system balance the desire not to discriminate against States against the need to help States that are disadvantaged?
4. How are governments formed and what principle of the Westminster system underlies government formation?
5. What powers does the Senate have over supply and why is this important?
6. Who scrutinises how governments spend public money?

Revision Units and topics:

Unit 5 Topic 6.1. How the Australian Constitution came to be: Australian identity, federation and the Constitution including the intentions of the framers.

Unit 6 Topic 6.2. Introducing different elements in the Australian Constitution, Westminster influences and the covering clauses and Preamble. Comparing the Australian Constitution-making process.

Topic Summary:

This topic explains critical aspects of how the system of government works in Australia. First, it explains the federal system and how power is distributed between the Commonwealth and the States. In particular, it looks at the Commonwealth's exclusive and concurrent powers and what happens when Commonwealth and State laws conflict. Second, it explains how governments are formed and what happens when there is a hung Parliament. Third, it explains the crucial role of money in the system of government - how it is collected, where it is kept, how it is released to the Executive Government and how its expenditure is authorised and scrutinised. While this may sound boring, it goes to the heart of how Government operates and it is also key to understanding political crises, such as the Whitlam dismissal.

Teacher Reference Documents and Lessons/Activities:

- **TRD 103: Why federalism was chosen and how power is distributed**
 - **Lesson/Activities One:** The fairness of federalism and democracy in Australia
- **TRD 104: Federalism - What topics can the Commonwealth legislate about?**
- **TRD 105: Federalism - What if State and Commonwealth laws conflict?**
- **TRD 106: Federalism - Exclusive powers of the Commonwealth**
 - **Lesson/Activities Two:** Commonwealth power versus State power
- **TRD 107: Federalism - When is Discrimination Against States or Their Residents Prohibited?**
- **TRD 108: Finances - How do financial relations between the Commonwealth and the States work?**
 - **Lesson/Activities Three:** Federalism – discrimination v support
- **TRD 109: The principles of the Westminster system of responsible government**
- **TRD 110: The formation of government: Introducing responsible government and representative government (Student Resource)**
- **TRD 111: The formation of government: Introducing responsible government and representative government (Teacher Resource)**
- **TRD 112: The formation of Government in a hung Parliament**
 - **Lesson/Activities Four:** The Westminster system and the formation of government
- **TRD 113: The Senate and control over money bills**
- **TRD 114: The Senate, supply and the Whitlam dismissal (Student resource)**
- **TRD 115: The Senate, supply and the Whitlam dismissal (Teacher resource)**
 - **Lesson/Activities Five:** The Senate, supply and the dismissal of the Whitlam Government
- **TRD 116: Finances - How do Governments raise money and where do they keep it?**
- **TRD 117: Finances – Who oversees the raising and spending of public money?**
 - **Lesson/Activities Six:** Money, money, money – how Governments get it and spend it

