

Parliament and Elections: Part 2

Every vote makes a difference

CLASSROOM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Political parties

What is a political party? Why do many candidates belong to a political party? Can a candidate *not* belong to a political party and still be elected to Parliament? Ask students, as an extension activity, to research the different political parties in Australia.

Ballot paper

Show the class a ballot paper from a past election. Discuss the features, shape and size. Encourage the students to design and make their own ballot paper for a class election. Make sure they understand the type of voting system they wish to use. Have the class vote for the best ballot paper and use it to select your next class or sports captain!

**Democracy Rules BLM 1 pg 116, CD-ROM Teachers Toolbox Conducting Elections*

Newspaper reporters

Divide the students into pairs. Ask them to find a newspaper article related to the forthcoming federal election. Have the students use the article to compose a list of questions that they, as reporters, would like to ask the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition or some other member of the federal Parliament about his or her beliefs about a matter.

**Democracy Rules BLM 7 pg 79*

Act it out

Select some students to role-play different government Ministers, for example, the Minister for Health, Education, or Finance. Choose a 'reporter' to interview the 'Minister' about their portfolio.

Research

Have students research the following features of the parliamentary chambers. Ask each student to select a topic and research facts to share with class.

- The Mace
- The Clerk
- The President
- The Speaker
- The Sergeant-at-Arms
- The Black Rod.

The parliamentary chambers

Provide the students with an outline plan of both the House of Representatives and the Senate. For the House of Representatives, ask each student to mark the positions of the Government, the Opposition, the Speaker, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the Ministers, the Shadow Ministers and the Sergeant-at-Arms. For the Senate, ask students to mark the President, the Clerk, the Hansard reporter, the Usher of the Black Rod, the Leader of the Government and the Leader of the Opposition. Students may also add minor parties and Independents.

Budget time

Ask the students to work in small groups to decide on allocations of money for the departments listed below. Each group must put the departments in order from 1 (having the biggest budget) to 14 (having the smallest budget). Each group must then explain to the other groups why they chose this order of allocation.

- Transport
- Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Environment
- Communications
- Education
- Tourism
- Family Services
- Health
- Employment
- Finance
- Trade
- Agriculture
- Defence
- Immigration.

Democracy Rules the School

Looking for ideas to stimulate your students' interest in the election process? Look no further than *Democracy Rules*, a new electoral education resource developed by the Australian Electoral Commission and recently delivered to all primary and secondary schools.

Democracy Rules uses investigations that stimulate students by connecting with broader themes such as participation, representation and developing democracies.

Democracy Rules comprises a print-based resource for teachers and a fun, interactive CDROM for students. The resource is aligned with the *National Statements of Learning for Civics and Citizenship*.

With the federal election likely to occur in the second half of 2007, there is no better time to introduce *Democracy Rules* into your classroom.

If you can't locate the resource in your school, email education@aec.gov.au. Also, for lots more, check out our website www.aec.gov.au

Students can meet the 'Professor' and many other lively characters in the *Democracy Rules* interactive CDROM

