

Year 6: Civics And Citizenship



Aligned with the Australian National Curriculum



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NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS

Civics and Citizenship Knowledge and Understanding

Government and Democracy

- The key institutions of Australia's democratic system of government based on the Westminster system, including the monarchy, parliaments, and courts (ACHCK035)
- The roles and responsibilities of the three levels of government, including shared roles and responsibilities within Australia's federal system (ACHCK036)

Laws and Citizens

- How state/territory and federal laws are initiated and passed through parliament (ACHCK037)

Citizenship, Diversity and Identity

- Who can be an Australian citizen, the formal rights and responsibilities, and shared values of Australian citizenship (ACHCK038)
- The obligations citizens may consider they have beyond their own national borders as active and informed global citizens (ACHCK039)

Civics and Citizenship Skills

Questioning and Research

- Develop questions and gather a range of information to investigate the society in which they live (ACHCS040)

Analysis, Synthesis and Interpretation

- Identify over-generalised statements in relation to civics and citizenship topics and issues (ACHCS041)
- Use and evaluate a range of information to develop a point of view (ACHCS042)

Problem Solving and Decision Making

- Interact with others with respect, identify different points of view and share personal perspectives and opinions (ACHCS043)
- Work in groups to identify issues and develop possible solutions and a plan for action using decision making processes (ACHCS044)

Communication and Reflection

- Present civics and citizenship ideas and viewpoints for a particular purpose using civics and citizenship terms and concepts (ACHCS045)
- Reflect on personal roles and actions as a citizen in the school and in the community (ACHCS046)

TEACHERS' NOTES

Year 6: Civics And Citizenship is part of a series which helps teachers in Australia to implement the new Civics and Citizenship national curriculum with ease. Which part of the curriculum each activity page in this book is assessing is clearly marked at the bottom of each sheet. Students are given the opportunity to demonstrate civics and citizenship skills throughout the book. The book is divided into four sections, they are: *Government And Democracy*, *Federal Laws*, *Australian Citizens*, and *Global Citizens*.

The first section of this book helps students to understand that federation made way for a new system of government based on the Westminster system - a system of government which is still in place today. The Magna Carta and its influence on Australia's parliamentary government is explored, as is the role of the monarchy and the Governor-General in Australia's democratic system of government. As students work their way through this section they will also become familiar with the Senate and the House of Representatives located inside Parliament House in Canberra and the different roles that they play.

Government And Democracy also asks students to focus on the judicial function of our legal system which involves the settling of disputes in courts. Students will be encouraged to investigate different types of courts in Australia and identify the disputes with which they deal. The final part of the first section of this book develops students' knowledge of the three levels of government - their individual and shared roles and responsibilities.

The second section in this book investigates the stages of the passage of a bill, and clarifies where ideas for new laws emerge. The third section ensures that students are aware of the process of becoming an Australian citizen, know who is eligible to become an Australian citizen and what it means to be an Australian citizen. The experiences of people who have taken up citizenship in Australia are examined.

The fourth and final section provides students with the opportunity to think about their role as a global citizen. Global issues and how we can work together to help solve them are a focus of this section.

To demonstrate their knowledge and skills of the curriculum, students will be asked to: use their research skills, work in groups, question, sequence, experiment, create, organise, interpret and voice their opinion.

The pages in this book can be used sequentially or in no particular order. To make life even easier for the teacher, the answers are provided at the back of this book.

Federation And The Westminster System 1

The first governments and laws in Australia were those of Indigenous Australians. Before the arrival of Europeans, indigenous laws worked through the kinship system. Problems were solved quickly and punishments were given to those who did the wrong thing.

When the British came to Botany Bay they regarded Australia as terra nullius. This term means that the new arrivals believed that nobody owned the land. The rights of Indigenous Australians already living in Australia were not recognised. Their laws were ignored and the British implemented their own political and legal systems.

Australia's first European system of government consisted of a number of Governors who were appointed by the British government and responsible for making decisions in each colony. Each colony had one Governor and was self-governed. Australia at that time operated as a collection of colonies rather than one united country. After federation, the joining of the colonies, in 1901, a new system of government was developed. It was known as the federal system and was based on the British Westminster system. Some features of the Westminster system are: having a sovereign or head of state, a head of government (Prime Minister) and a lower house in Parliament.

The word federation is used to describe the joining of separate states and colonies to form one nation. Federation did not take place easily, as each colony worried about losing its identity and wanted to keep many powers. A compromise had to be reached.

Arguments for federation:	Arguments against federation:
Protection against foreign threats/ national defence.	Majority rule would favour the stronger states.
Better trade between the states.	Voting was seen as unfair and undemocratic.
National railway line.	People wanted to spend time getting the constitution right.
A stronger Australia in world affairs.	Loss of state power.
Resistance against non-European.	
The ability for Australia to govern itself.	

Some of the key players in the achievement of federation were:

Henry Parkes: often called the 'Father of Federation' he made a famous speech in 1898 supporting federation;

Sir Edmund Barton: who played an important role in developing Australia's constitution and was Australia's first Prime Minister;

Alfred Deakin: who was a great supporter of federation and Prime Minister of Australia three times.



Sir Edmund Barton and Alfred Deakin
Wikimedia Commons



Henry Parkes
Wikimedia Commons

Activity

Federation And The Westminster System 2

After reading the information on page 7, complete the questions below.

1. In your own words, describe what federation is.



2. What laws were in place before Australia was colonised?

3. What system of government was in place immediately after colonisation?

4. What system of government was in place after federation?

5. What British system of government was this new system based on?

6. Write down three features of this British system of government.

7. Write a speech using the table on page 7, which persuades an audience that federation provided a way for Australia to be better governed. In this speech you could counteract some of the arguments against federation.

The Magna Carta 1

The Magna Carta, which is Latin for Great Charter or Charter of Liberties, was a document created in 1215 in England by the feudal barons of King John of England. The feudal barons were a group of men who served the King. They presented it to the King and put great pressure on him to sign it. They created the charter to limit the King's powers and protect their privileges.



King John signing the Magna Carta.
Wikimedia Commons

The charter required the King to accept that no "freeman" could be punished except through the law of the land – a right which still exists. This meant that the King had no right to arbitrarily punish people according to his own personal will.



The Magna Carta.
Wikimedia Commons

This document is an important part of history because it led to the rule of constitutional law in the English-speaking world, including Australia. Constitutional law means that laws are made in Parliament but are generally punished by the courts. It is a document which supports fundamental democratic beliefs implemented in Australia today - that we are all innocent until proven guilty and that our punishments must fit our crimes.

The Magna Carta is a very important document which has influenced the Australian parliamentary government and our court system.

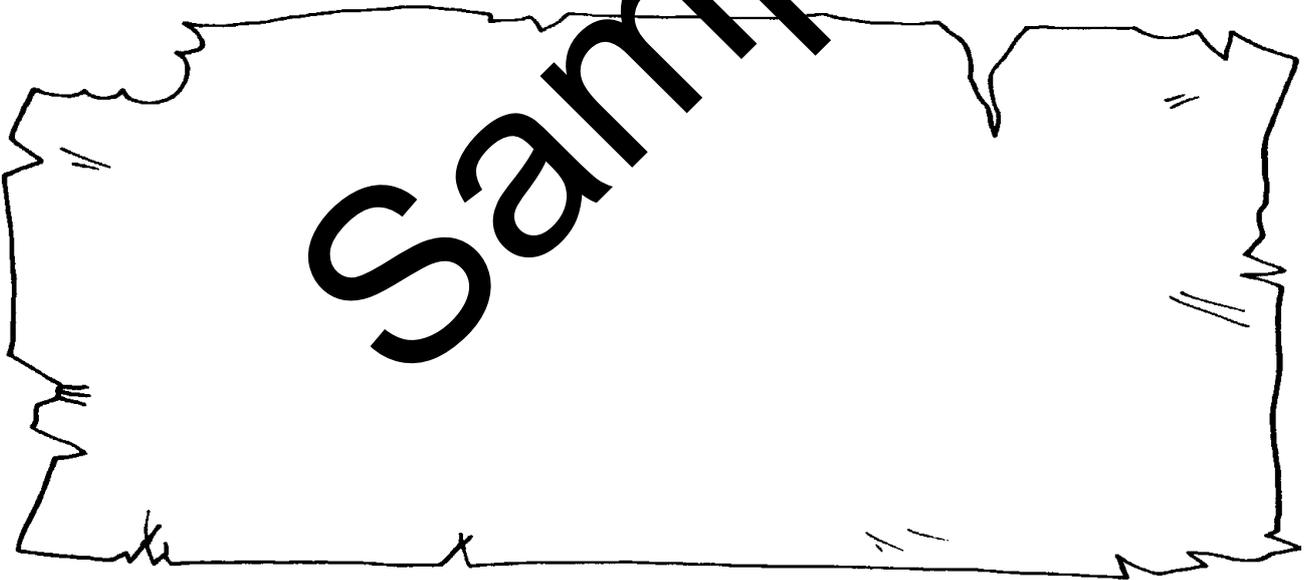
The charter is written in iron gall ink on parchment in medieval Latin and is currently held at the British Library.

Read the information on the previous page, then complete the questions.



1. In the speech bubbles write what you think the feudal baron and King John of England are saying to one another.
2. Who created the Magna Carta and when?

3. How do you think the Magna Carta expressed its main aim? Write inside the document below.



4. What are the dangers of allowing one person, such as a monarch, to punish people according to his/her own free will?
5. Why is it important that more than one person decides whether a person is innocent or guilty and determines their punishment?

The Courts 1

The law and the government systems in Australia are very much intertwined. There are three functions of our legal system:

- the legislative function (laws being made);
- the executive function (laws being carried out);
- the judicial function (laws being resolved).

The third function of government, known as the judicial function, involves the settling of disputes in courts. Not every dispute, however, comes before the formal courts of Australia. In addition to courts there are other bodies, which are designed to hear complaints and decide on issues, which are more minor. Some of these are:

- the small claims tribunal;
- the equal opportunity board; and
- the ombudsman.

Small claims tribunals typically deal with private disputes which don't involve a lot of money, e.g. the collection of small debts, evictions, disputes between landlords and tenants, etc. The ombudsman resolves disputes outside of the court system. It handles complaints and conducts investigations about actions and decisions of Australian government departments and agencies. It is free and there is an ombudsman in every Australian state and territory.

The highest court in Australia is known as the high court – it hears cases to do with the states and international laws. The higher courts in each state are also able to hear appeals from people who have already had their cases heard in the lower courts.

Divorce and separation issues, child custody issues, and domestic disputes are all dealt with in family courts.

Judges, magistrates, lawyers, and jury members are all people who you will find in a courtroom.

