



# Making laws with a case study of tax



This sequence is intended as a framework to be modified and adapted by teachers to suit the needs of a class group.

## Resources needed

- What is Parliament? – Video
- Making a law – Video
- Poster evaluation – Worksheet
- Forming government and the role of political parties and independents – Visualiser
- Sugar tax Bill – Visualiser
- Writing paragraphs about Law, society and political involvement – Model

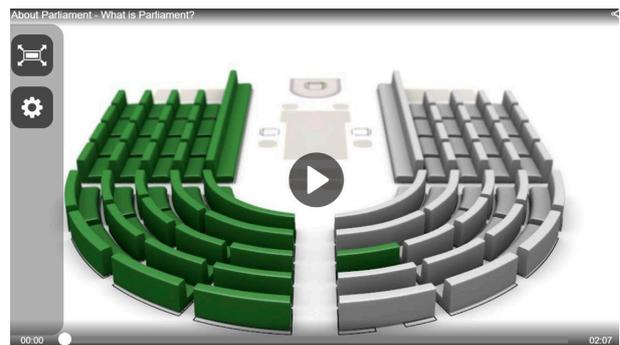
## Suggested activity sequence

### Part A: Exploring the nature of representative democracy

- 1 Pose the question: What does the term 'democracy' mean?
- 2 Explain that the systems of government in Australia have their origins in Ancient Greece where the male citizens of Athens had equal political rights, freedom of speech, and the opportunity to participate directly in the political arena.
- 3 Describe the difference between a direct democracy and a representative democracy, that is, that systems in which all citizens have a right to vote on a government decision is called a 'direct democracy', while modern democratic systems have developed to be 'representative democracies'. In a representative democracy, citizens vote for a member of a parliament who will represent their interests and make laws on their behalf.
- 4 Play: This video outlines the structure and key functions of the Australian Parliament.

### What is Parliament?

Go to [peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/introducing-our-parliament/what-is-parliament/](http://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/introducing-our-parliament/what-is-parliament/)



- 5 Students complete a *See-Think-Wonder* visible thinking routine.
- 6 As a class, discuss the following question: Should members of a parliament represent the values of the community who elected them? Why?



- As students share their thoughts and views, record them on the board.
- Students refer to *Writing paragraphs about law, society and political involvement – Model* to write a paragraph describing the responsibilities of members of parliament to represent the community who elected them and why people should be informed when they vote.

## Part B: Exploring how parliament works

- Display and explain the information on the *Forming government visualiser* to introduce the formation of government and the role of political parties and independents.
- Invite students to write short definitions of the terms explored on the visualiser:
  - major parties
  - minor parties and independents
  - majority government
  - the opposition
  - hung parliament
  - minority government.
- Explain that the Australian Parliament and most state and territory parliaments are bicameral, meaning that they have an upper house and a lower house. In general, the lower house prepares and moves legislation (Bills) and the upper house reviews the legislation.
- Play: This video provides an overview of the law making process of the Australian Parliament.

### Making a law

Go to [peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/how-parliament-works/bills-and-laws/making-a-law/](https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/how-parliament-works/bills-and-laws/making-a-law/)



- As a class, read and talk through elements of the *Poster evaluation tool*.
- Students design and publish a poster to explain the law-making process.
- Hold a class 'poster session' where students use the poster evaluation tool to provide feedback on other students' posters.



## Part C: Participating in a mock parliament on a sugar tax Bill

- 1 Advise students that they will be part of a 'House of Representatives' in the classroom and will conduct a 'first reading' debate of a Bill designed to apply a sugar tax on all sugar-sweetened non-alcoholic beverages.
- 2 Use the Sugar tax Bill – Visualiser to present the scenario to the class. Discuss the fact that in this case, there is a minority government, so both the government and the opposition must convince the cross-benchers of their position if they want to win the debate.
- 3 Divide the class as follows:
  - independents – two students
  - minor party (TPP) – three to four students
  - split the remaining students equally between the government (AWP) and the opposition (AKP).

**Refer** to The Parliamentary Education Office's *Make a law: House of Representatives* if you want to replicate the parliamentary process.

- 4 Students refer to the *Student instructions* to guide their preparation of speeches.
- 3 Party members consult and draft speeches. Members of each party research information relevant to their case and assist with the preparation of speeches.

When the teacher support is necessary, questions, documents and links are provided to scaffold students' research.

- 6 Speeches are presented to Parliament by a member of each party.

**Encourage** students to nominate to be the spokesperson and then for party members to vote on who will speak on their behalf.

- 7 Following the House of Representatives first reading debate, the Speaker conducts a vote of members.
- 8 Speaker announces the decision of the House to either pass the first reading or not.
- 9 Discuss what other steps the Bill needs to go through to become a law.
- 10 *Think-pair-share:* Would the outcome (including amendments to the Bill) have been different if the:
  - government held a majority
  - cross-bench voted differently.
- 11 Students individually write an explanation of the significance of a parliamentary majority, a hung parliament and minority government to passing laws. Encourage them draw on their experience of their hypothetical parliamentary debate.