

Law and the media: Civics and citizenship

Strand

Time, Continuity and Change

Culture and Identity

Systems, Resources and Power

Core learning outcomes

Time, Continuity and Change

TCC 5.1 Students use primary and secondary evidence to identify the development of ideas from ancient to modern times.

TCC 5.3 Students collaborate to locate and systematically record information about the contributions of people in diverse past settings.

Culture and Identity

CI 5.5 Students express how dominant and marginalised identities are constructed by media and other influences.

Systems, Resources and Power

SRP 5.1 Students evaluate the relationship between an ecological system and a government and/or an economic system.

SRP 5.3 Students use a structured decision-making process to suggest participatory action regarding a significant current environmental, business, political or legal issue.

SRP 5.4 Students report on the main features and principles of legal systems in Australia.

Purpose and overview

Students examine the history and development of the principles underlying Australia's legal system by using primary and secondary evidence to identify the development of ideas from ancient to modern times. Students learn about governments and the law, identify how laws are made in Australia and explore the roles of constitutions, parliament and courts.

Students analyse the contributions people in diverse past settings have made to Australia's current legal system, and explore Australia's current system of law and Indigenous laws and customs.

Students develop understandings about how dominant and marginalised identities may be constructed by the media and the law.

Students discuss and design a media campaign to take action and influence the outcome of an environment issue.



Phases (Minimum time recommended: 12 hours)	Activities	Core learning outcomes	Assessment opportunities
1. Exploring: The law (approximately 3 hours)	1. The need for law 2. Ancient law 3. Systems of law 4. Law, media and identity 5. Development of law	TCC 5.1 CI 5.5 SRP 5.4	Table illustrating systems of law Discussion Newspaper article
2. Researching: People and the law (approximately 1 hours)	6. Influencing change 7. Contributions of people	TCC 5.3	Presentation
3. Analysing: Australian legal systems (approximately 4 hours)	8. Australian law, courts and powers	SRP 5.4	Report
4. Making judgments: The law and the environment (approximately 4 hours)	9. A case study: An environmental issue 10. Participatory action	TCC 5.3 CI 5.5 SRP 5.1 SRP 5.3	Report Media campaign

Assessment

The assessment opportunities outlined are examples of how to assess students' demonstrations of the identified learning outcomes. As often as possible, negotiate assessment with students and support a variety of ways of demonstrating the learning outcomes. Reflect with students on evidence gathered when making judgments about their demonstrations of learning outcomes. Some students may require more time and/or other contexts in which to demonstrate these learning outcomes. Other modules may provide such time and/or contexts and the 'Levels 1 to 6 module learning outcomes maps' in the *Years 1 to 10 Studies of Society and Environment Sourcebook Guidelines* can be used to identify these modules.

Assessing learning outcomes at different levels

Activities in this module are designed primarily for students working towards demonstrations of Level 5 learning outcomes. Some assessment opportunities may be used to decide whether students are demonstrating the learning outcomes at levels before or after Level 5. To guide judgments about students' demonstrations of learning outcomes consider whether students are:

- working towards demonstrations of the Level 5 learning outcomes
- demonstrating the Level 5 learning outcomes
- demonstrating the Level 5 learning outcomes and working towards Level 6 learning outcomes.

Learning outcomes in the syllabus at Level 4 and Level 6 could provide a guide for teacher judgments. Studies of Society and Environment learning outcomes are organised so that there is a progression of concepts and processes within a strand. For example, the progression from SRP 4.4 to SRP 5.4 to SRP 6.4 involves increasing sophistication and complexity particularly related to the concept of *citizenship and government* and the process of *communicating*, though neither of these is exclusive of other concepts and processes. The elaborations provide specific content examples of how the concepts and processes may be levelled from Levels 1 to 6. See the Queensland School Curriculum Council website at www.qscc.qld.edu.au for more information.

Using this module

This module provides a framework for using the Curriculum Corporation's *Discovering Democracy Secondary Kit* materials. This kit consists of a range of materials that support civics and citizenship topics. These materials will assist students to develop the knowledge and skills they need to become effective and responsible citizens. The materials were distributed to every school in Australia.

Although it is not essential to complete the activities in the order in which they are presented, this sequence will develop understanding and provide opportunities for students to demonstrate the core learning outcomes.

Background information

Terminology

In this module students have opportunities to become familiar with and use the following terminology:

cabinet	courts	legislation
civil law	criminal law	local government
common law	equality	parliament
Commonwealth Government	fair trial	precedent
constitution	Federal Government	State Government
	High Court	statute law

School authority policies

Be aware of and observe school authority policies that may be relevant to this module.

Equity considerations

Activities take place in a supportive environment. They provide opportunities for students to increase their understanding and appreciation of equity through valuing cultural diversity and challenging inequities. Activities encourage students to:

- appreciate ways that democracy protects cultural diversity
- critique democratic practices.

Some students with disabilities may need assistance with some activities. Advice should be sought from their support teachers.

It is important that these equity considerations inform decision making about teaching strategies, classroom organisation and assessment.

Links

Studies of Society and Environment

This module is one of a suite of modules for Levels 1 to 6. See the Queensland School Curriculum Council website at www.qscc.qld.edu.au for more information.

This module has conceptual and process links to the following modules:

- Level 4: *Colonisation: Resources, power and exploration*
- Level 4: *Our rights: Origins of Australian democracy*
- Level 4: *Influences on me: Global media and identity*
- Level 5: *Talkin' 'bout my generation: Youth cultures*
- Level 6: *Potentials of democracy: Civics and citizenship*

Other key learning areas

Activities may offer opportunities for planning across key learning areas. However, it is important that the integrity of the key concepts, organising ideas and processes within key learning areas is maintained.

Evaluation of a unit of work

After completion of units of work developed from this module, collect information and make judgments about:

- teaching strategies and activities used to progress student learning towards demonstrations of core learning outcomes
- opportunities provided to gather evidence about students' demonstrations of core learning outcomes
- future learning opportunities for students who have not yet demonstrated the core learning outcomes and to challenge and extend those students who have already demonstrated the core learning outcomes
- the extent to which activities matched needs of particular groups of students and reflected equity considerations
- the appropriateness of time allocations for particular activities
- the appropriateness of resources used.

Information from this evaluation process can be used to plan subsequent units of work so that they build on, and support, student learning. The evaluated units of work may also be adapted prior to their reuse. For further information, refer to the 'Curriculum evaluation' section in the sourcebook guidelines.

Activities

Phase 1 Exploring: The law

Core learning outcomes emphasis: TCC 5.1, CI 5.5, SRP 5.4

Students use primary and secondary sources to explore law from ancient to modern times and how the media presents news items involving legal issues.

Focus questions:

- Why are laws needed?
- How have the ideas related to law developed from ancient to modern times?
- What are the legal systems that have existed throughout time?
- How have legal procedures changed throughout time?
- What is the historical background to Australia’s law system?

Activity 1 The need for law

Discuss laws that relate to everyday activities, such as living as part of a community, going to school.

Support materials and references

Assist students to explore the need for laws by completing appropriate activities from the ‘Law’ section of *Discovering Democracy: Lower Secondary Units*.

Activity 2 Ancient law

Discuss definitions of primary sources and secondary sources.

Explain that historians and other social scientists test the reliability or representativeness of the sources they use. Discuss with students how to consider the reliability or representativeness of a variety of sources they might use to investigate laws.

Support materials and references

Ask small groups of students to explore ancient laws from a range of cultures. (Refer to ‘Ancient law’ in the ‘Law’ section of *Discovering Democracy: Lower Secondary Units* for primary sources of Hammurabi’s Code and the Ten Commandments.)

Activity 3 Systems of law

Use a variety of sources (including ‘What are the sources of Australian law?’ in the ‘Law’ section of *Discovering Democracy: Lower Secondary Units*) to discuss a number of legal systems. Ask students to collate information about the features of these systems in a table. Discuss how these systems may influence the construction of individual and group identities. Consider an aspect of legal systems, such as legal procedures.

Legal procedure	Problems which may exist with procedure
Customary law	
Inquisitorial method	
Adversarial process	
Capital punishment	

Activity 4 Law, media and identity

Ensure students understand that their perceptions of law and legal procedures are influenced by:

- the sources from which they have gained their information and understanding
- the current social values of, and the type of, media communicating the information
- their own background and experiences with the law and legal procedures.

Ensure students are able to analyse information presented by the media to identify dominant opinions or viewpoints. Students need to be aware of bias and stereotypes and how presentation of dominant opinions and/or viewpoints may marginalise groups not represented by such viewpoints.

Assist students to analyse a media article or news footage involving a legal issue and different values held by people and/or groups. Use the following questions to analyse the article or footage:

- What systems of law are represented?
- What are the reasons for each system of law?
- How do you feel about these systems of law? Why?
- What is the view of the author/producer of the article/footage? What evidence supports your opinion?
- Are biases, stereotypes or marginalisations occurring in the report? If so, how is this being done?

Support materials and references

Read and discuss 'Aboriginal/customary law' in the 'Law' section of *Discovering Democracy: Lower Secondary Units*. Use information in this section to assist students to investigate and discuss how dominant and marginalised identities are constructed by the media and the law (CI 5.5).

Activity 5 Development of law

Ask students to write a newspaper report on the development of law from ancient to modern times. This should use the key elements of the newspaper report genre. The report should refer to:

- a particular element of the law — morality, custom, religious belief, personal liberty, a smooth-running society, privilege or protection of persons and property
- sources that provide information about these laws
- how this law can be used to dominate and marginalise various people and groups.

Phase 2 Researching: People and the law

Core learning outcomes emphasis: TCC 5.3

In this phase, students research the contributions various people have made to the development of legal systems.

Focus questions:

- How can people make positive contributions to legal developments?
- Who has contributed to legal developments?
- What have these people achieved?

Activity 6 Influencing change

Assist groups of students to search through various newspapers for articles about individuals or groups who have influenced the law or legal processes. Students discuss and analyse these articles and respond to the following questions:

- What activities have these individuals or groups been involved in?
- What law did they want to influence?
- How successful have they been?

Discuss the articles and students' answers to the questions. Assist students to create a definition of 'political activity'.

Activity 7 Contributions of people

Support materials and references

Ask groups of students to research at least three individuals or groups who have influenced the development of laws. The individuals and groups chosen must be from different eras and places (refer to the section 'Men and women in political life' in *Discovering Democracy: Lower Secondary Units*). Ensure students use a structured information-gathering tool such as a table or chart to compile their research (this table is to be submitted with their presentation). Headings on the table may include:

- name
- dates
- activity related to the law or political process
- achievements
- future activities.

Each group is to present its findings to the rest of the class. The presentation may take the form of a multimedia display, a creative performance, a seminar presentation or any other negotiated presentation genre.

Conference with students about their ability to locate, share, analyse and record information, and work collaboratively to develop their presentations.

Phase 3 Analysing: Australian legal systems

Core learning outcomes emphasis: SRP 5.4

In this phase, students analyse and report on concepts such as the historical background to Australia's parliamentary system, statute and common law and the hierarchy of courts.

Focus questions:

- What is the 'separation of powers' and what is its purpose?
- What is the historical background to Australia's parliamentary system?
- What is the Australian constitution and what purpose does it serve?
- What is the difference between statute law and common law?
- What levels make up the hierarchy of courts in Australia and what is the role of each level?

Activity 8 Australian law, courts and powers

Review students' understandings of law and explore the origins of Australian law and how laws are made and changed.

Support materials and references

Provide a variety of primary and secondary sources that refer to Australian law, including sections from *Discovering Democracy: Lower Secondary Units*, and assist students to analyse them.

Students prepare an information report on some of the main features and principles of the Australian legal system. Negotiate which aspects of this topic students will include in their report — for example, separation of powers, Australian constitutions, common law, statute law, courts, fair trial.

Phase 4 Making judgments: The law and the environment

Core learning outcomes emphasis: TCC 5.3, CI 5.5, SRP 5.1, SRP 5.3

Students use a case study of an environmental issue to evaluate the role of government in the preservation of the environment. Students use a structured decision-making process to suggest appropriate participatory action regarding a significant current environmental issue.

Focus questions:

- What is the background to the issue/debate?
- How did citizens and environmental groups use the media during the campaign about the issue?
- What action can be taken to support a current environmental issue?

Activity 9 A case study: An environmental issue**Support materials and references**

Discuss with students a case study of an environmental issue. Assist students to locate primary and secondary sources to investigate the issue.

The Tasmanian World Heritage Area (refer to the 'Getting things done' section of *Discovering Democracy: Middle Secondary Units*) may be an appropriate environmental issue for students to investigate.

Assist groups of students to synthesise information from a range of sources, make judgments, determine consequences and suggest alternative solutions as they analyse:

- the background to the issue
- the main features of the issue and the debate surrounding it
- actions that citizens took about the issue
- actions taken and/or decisions made by the government
- media coverage of the issue
- media influences on public opinion.

Each group is to present its findings to the rest of the class and discuss the action that was taken in relation to the issue.

Activity 10 Participatory action**Resource 1**

Discuss with students an environmental issue that is receiving media attention. Introduce the assessment item (Resource 1). Explain the task and assist students as necessary. Model formal meeting procedures and the processes involved in the development of a media campaign and assist students to complete the assessment task.

Assessment: Media campaign**Resource 1**

Core learning outcome This assessment task will give you the opportunity to demonstrate the following core learning outcome:

SRP 5.3 Students use a structured decision-making process to suggest participatory action regarding a significant current environmental, business, political or legal issue.

Task In a group, you are to adopt the role of a stakeholder group (an interested party) in a current environmental issue that has featured in the media. You are to develop a media campaign to influence the outcome of the issue. The issue must have a significant legal element or scope to involve government decisions about legislation. You may choose to represent any group that is involved in the issue. For example, the issue 'Mining in a National Park' could involve State and Federal Governments, the mining company, the trade union representing the miners, environmental groups and political parties.

Conditions The assessment task has three parts:

Oral (Meeting)	15 minutes
Written (Campaign outline)	250 words
Campaign materials	one A4 page

1. Assign specific roles to each group member and use a structured decision-making process to decide what action you will take as part of the media campaign. Your campaign must involve a formal meeting that should be conducted 'in role'. The meeting will be observed by your teacher, who will be checking that you do the following:
 - select or allocate roles (chair, minute-taker)
 - set an agenda
 - keep records
 - make decisions on standing orders/meeting procedure
 - use an inclusive decision-making process
 - ensure all members of the group participate in the meeting
 - communicate the meeting decisions.
2. Design a media campaign that clearly outlines the participatory action that can be taken to influence the outcome of the issue. It is important that the participatory action developed from this process involves the use of the media to further the aims of the group, addresses the environmental, governmental and legal issues and proposes a solution to the issue selected. You are required to develop a written outline of the campaign.
3. Develop sample materials to be used in this participatory action — for example, a speech to a particular audience, a script for a television or radio advertisement, a pamphlet to be used in a letterbox drop or a media release (refer to source 2, extract 6, p. 191 in *Discovering Democracy: Middle Secondary Units* or the Internet home pages of political parties for samples of media releases).

Support materials and references

Alexander, D. & Rouen, M. 1999, *Heinemann SOSE for Queensland Book 1*, Heinemann, Port Melbourne, Vic.

Curriculum Corporation 1998, *Discovering Democracy Kit*, Curriculum Corporation, Carlton, Vic.

Currie, S. & Cameron, D. 1990, *Your Law: A Course in Legal Studies*, Thomas Nelson, South Melbourne, Vic.

Estensen, M. 1995, *Understanding Ancient Worlds*, Science Press, Marrickville, NSW.

Gibbs, R. 1996, *The Aborigines*, 4th edn, Longman, Melbourne, Vic.

Kenman, S. 2000, *SOSE Civics for Queensland*, Jacaranda, Milton, Qld.

McCauley, D., Brown, P. & Mills, M. 2000, *SOSE for Queensland 1: Studies of Society and Environment*, Jacaranda, Milton, Qld.

McCauley, D., Brown, P. & Mills, M. 2001, *SOSE for Queensland 2*, Jacaranda, Milton, Qld.

Nicholson, J. 1998, *Who's Running This Country?: Government in Australia*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW.

Saunders, C. 1998, *It's your Constitution: Governing Australia Today*, Federation Press, Leichhardt, NSW.

Websites

(All websites listed were accessed in April 2002.)

Australian Federation of Societies for Studies of Society and Environment.
www.pa.ash.org.au/afssse

Curriculum Corporation, *Discovering Democracy*. www.curriculum.edu.au/democracy

Queensland Law Society. www.qls.com.au

The Society has published a number of excellent modules specifically related to Studies of Society and Environment core learning outcomes.

This sourcebook module should be read in conjunction with the following Queensland School Curriculum Council materials:

Years 1 to 10 Studies of Society and Environment Syllabus

Years 1 to 10 Studies of Society and Environment Sourcebook Guidelines

Studies of Society and Environment Initial In-service Materials

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