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Important information

Accreditation period

Units 1 and 2: 1 January 2024 – 31 December 2028
Units 3 and 4: 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2028

Implementation for Units 1 and 2 of this study commences in January 2024.
Implementation for Units 3 and 4 of this study commences in January 2025.

Other sources of information

The [*VCAA Bulletin*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/news-and-events/bulletins-and-updates/bulletin/Pages/index.aspx) is the only official source of changes to regulations and accredited studies. The Bulletin also regularly includes advice on VCE studies. It is the responsibility of each VCE teacher to refer to each issue of the Bulletin. The *Bulletin* is available as an e-newsletter via [free subscription](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Footer/Pages/Subscribe.aspx) on the VCAA website.

To assist teachers in developing courses, the VCAA publishes online [Support materials](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/ausglobalpolitics/Pages/Index.aspx) (incorporating the content previously supplied in the *Advice for teachers*).

The current [*VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx) contains essential information on assessment processes and other procedures.

VCE providers

Throughout this study design the term ‘school’ is intended to include both schools and other VCE providers.

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For details, access the full [VCAA copyright policy](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Footer/Pages/Copyright.aspx) on the VCAA website.

Introduction

Scope of study

VCE Politics is the study of contemporary power, conflict and cooperation in a world that is characterised by unpredictability and constant change. In this study students investigate contemporary issues of conflict, political stability and/or change within Australia, the Indo-Pacific region and globally. They consider how national and global political actors respond to issues and crises such as national political reform, climate change, violent conflicts, human rights, sustainability and development, inequality and global economic instability. Students analyse the sources and forms of power available to these political actors and the consequences of their use. Students consider how political actors pursue their interests and the political significance of their actions in responding to national and global issues and crises. Throughout this study, students examine Australia’s place in the region and globally.

Political events and challenges are shaped and influenced by a variety of social, economic, historical, cultural, environmental, technological and psychological factors. VCE Politics assesses how political norms, perspectives, laws and interests influence governance and the operation of governments. Students develop tools for understanding these contemporary political events and challenges. They examine a number of current political systems and processes to better understand how power is used and how conflict may be resolved. They consider the values underpinning liberal democratic societies, including Australia, and assess the range of national and global challenges facing democratic norms and practice. They achieve this by analysing how the different interests and perspectives of political actors affect selected contemporary political issues and crises.

The study of VCE Politics develops students’ ability to think politically in the context of increasing global interconnectedness and the conflicts that arise as a result of tensions between political stability and change. VCE Politics focuses on contemporary issues and crises. This means examples and case studies selected for study should be ongoing or have occurred within the last 10 years. In investigating national, regional and global issues, students consider the causes and consequences of, and different perspectives on, the issues or crises; competing interests of the political actors involved; the political significance of various actors, issues and crises; and the impact of various issues and crises on political stability and/or change. Students develop the ability to construct informed analysis of political phenomena in the society, region and world in which they live, work and learn.

Rationale

VCE Politics assists students in understanding their political views and those of others. VCE Politics introduces students to the complexities of Australian society and the contemporary world. It broadens their outlook through examining how political change and decision-making happens and how power may be used. This entails understanding how political actors pursue their interests and the political significance of human agency. The study assists students in becoming informed observers of and active participants in Australia’s political system, and global citizens who are able to think critically about political issues, crises and challenges to democracy. VCE Politics provides students with opportunities to better understand their own rights, responsibilities and participation as national citizens and members of the global community, and to consider their own political agency and the ways they can contribute to participatory democracy and civic engagement.

By undertaking a range of case studies of, and inquiries into, contemporary political issues and crises, students learn to think politically. Thinking politically helps students to evaluate how political actors can address the challenges that face our national, regional and global communities today and into the future. This includes considering Australia’s interactions with other political actors and its positions on issues such as human rights, climate change and development. Students may also examine forms of conflicts such as territorial, economic, military, cultural and diplomatic conflicts.

VCE Politics develops knowledge and skills that enhance student confidence and their ability to access, participate in and contribute to society and government at all levels. The study develops critical thinking, research and inquiry skills that support students’ capacity for formal study at the tertiary level or in vocational education and training settings and the workplace. It also leads to opportunities in a range of careers, including leadership and management, local and national government, the public service, non-governmental organisations and academia. Students may also pursue occupations in government, not-for-profit organisations, and corporate and private enterprises in fields such as journalism, communications, education, law, research, international aid, diplomacy and politics. Students of VCE Politics acquire knowledge and skills that enhance their employability in all workplaces that need knowledgeable and adaptable problem-solvers who are curious and can think critically, with empathy and intercultural understanding.

Aims

This study enables students to:

* develop knowledge and understanding of contemporary politics and power in Australia, the Indo-Pacific region and in global contexts, through a comparison of different political systems and an analysis of contemporary issues and crises
* understand the interests and perspectives of key political actors, and their sources, forms and use of power, and the political significance of key political actors’ responses to challenges and contemporary issues and crises
* examine power, conflict and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region and globally, including the impact of Australia as a regional and global political actor
* understand the principles and processes of democracy through an analysis of contemporary issues facing Australia and the world
* recognise the significance of political agency possessed by political actors, including students’ appreciation of their own rights, responsibilities and opportunities to participate as citizens in a democracy and as global citizens
* understand key political concepts, including power, political actors, legitimacy, authority, conflict and cooperation, political ideology, systems and theories of government, governance, Australian democracy and democratic principles, political interests, national interest, political perspectives, nations and states, sovereignty and global interconnectedness.
* apply key political concepts to understand Australian and global political issues and crises, events, actions, decisions, interests and perspectives in an increasingly interconnected world
* develop the ability to think politically by investigating contemporary issues, asking political questions, analysing and interpreting sources, applying key political concepts, analysing causes and consequences, analysing differing political interests, analysing political perspectives, discussing political stability and change, evaluating political significance, and constructing reasoned and evidence-informed arguments.

Structure

The study is made up of four units.

* Unit 1: Politics, power and political actors
* Unit 2: Democracy: stability and change
* Unit 3: Global cooperation and conflict
* Unit 4: Power in the Indo-Pacific

Each unit deals with specific content contained in areas of study and is designed to enable students to achieve a set of outcomes for that unit. Each outcome is described in terms of key knowledge and key skills.

Entry

There are no prerequisites for entry to Units 1, 2 and 3. Students must undertake Unit 3 and Unit 4 as a sequence. Units 1–4 are designed to the equivalent standard of the final two years of secondary education. All VCE studies are benchmarked against comparable national and international curriculum.

A glossary defining terms used across Units 1–4 in the *VCE Politics Study Design* is included in the [Support materials](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/ausglobalpolitics/Pages/Index.aspx)*.*

Duration

Each unit involves at least 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction.

Changes to the study design

During its period of accreditation minor changes to the study will be announced in the [*VCAA Bulletin*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/news-and-events/bulletins-and-updates/bulletin/Pages/index.aspx). The *Bulletin* is the only source of changes to regulations and accredited studies. It is the responsibility of each VCE teacher to monitor changes or advice about VCE studies published in the *Bulletin*.

Monitoring for quality

As part of ongoing monitoring and quality assurance, the VCAA will periodically undertake an audit of VCE Politics to ensure the study is being taught and assessed as accredited. The details of the audit procedures and requirements are published annually in the [*VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx). Schools will be notified if they are required to submit material to be audited.

Safety and wellbeing

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that duty of care is exercised in relation to the health and safety of all students undertaking the study.

Employability skills

This study offers a number of opportunities for students to develop employability skills. The [Support materials](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/ausglobalpolitics/Pages/Index.aspx) provide specific examples of how students can develop employability skills during learning activities and assessment tasks.

Legislative compliance

When collecting and using information, the provisions of privacy and copyright legislation, such as the Victorian *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and *Health Records Act 2001*, and the federal *Privacy Act 1988* and *Copyright Act 1968*, must be met.

Child Safe Standards

Schools and education and training providers are required to comply with the Child Safe Standards made under the Victorian *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*. Registered schools are required to comply with *Ministerial Order No. 1359 Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises*. For further information, consult the websites of the [Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority](https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx), the [Commission for Children and Young People](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/) and the [Department of Education](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx).

Assessment and reporting

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on the teacher’s decision that the student has demonstrated achievement of the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Demonstration of achievement of outcomes and satisfactory completion of a unit are determined by evidence gained through the assessment of a range of learning activities and tasks.

Teachers must develop courses that provide appropriate opportunities for students to demonstrate satisfactory achievement of outcomes.

The decision about satisfactory completion of a unit is distinct from the assessment of levels of achievement. Schools will report a student’s result for each unit to the VCAA as S (satisfactory) or N (not satisfactory).

Levels of achievement

Units 1 and 2

Procedures for the assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision. Assessment of levels of achievement for these units will not be reported to the VCAA. Schools may choose to report levels of achievement using grades, descriptive statements or other indicators.

Units 3 and 4

The VCAA specifies the assessment procedures for students undertaking scored assessment in Units 3
and 4. Designated assessment tasks are provided in the details for each unit in VCE study designs.

The student’s level of achievement in Units 3 and 4 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework (SAC) as specified in the VCE study design, and external assessment.

The VCAA will report the student’s level of achievement on each assessment component as a grade from A+ to E or UG (ungraded). To receive a study score, the student must achieve two or more graded assessments in the study and receive an S for both Units 3 and 4. The study score is reported on a scale of 0–50; it is a measure of how well the student performed in relation to all others who completed the study. Teachers should refer to the current *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook* for details on graded assessment and calculation of the study score.

Percentage contributions to the study score in VCE Politics are:

* Unit 3 School-assessed Coursework: 25 per cent
* Unit 4 School-assessed Coursework: 25 per cent
* end-of-year examination: 50 per cent.

Details of the assessment program are described in the sections on Units 3 and 4 in this study design.

Authentication

Work related to the outcomes of each unit will be accepted only if the teacher can attest that, to the best of their knowledge, all unacknowledged work is the student’s own. Teachers need to refer to the current [*VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx) for authentication rules and strategies.

Characteristics of the study

Thinking politically

The characteristics of the study introduces the central concepts and skills that underpin the study of VCE Politics. They are an essential part of teaching, learning and assessing VCE Politics. While the political landscape is subject to constant change, students must be able to develop skills of political understanding, reasoning and civic and civil discourse, all of which form the basis of thinking politically. Thinking politically refers to the concepts and skills that are the foundation of disciplinary thinking and which students will use in the process of political inquiry. To develop political thinking, students need to develop an understanding of concepts, perspectives and political debates, and recognise their own capacity to contribute to political stability and/or change. Political thinking requires informed analysis of political phenomena in the society, region and world in which students live, work and learn.

VCE Politics requires students to understand and apply key concepts within the discipline, such as power, conflict and political stability and change. It is through the use of these concepts that students develop their own political awareness, knowledge and understanding of ideas, current events and contemporary issues and crises.

Eight characteristics underpin the study of VCE Politics. Teachers should ensure that, when undertaking the units, students develop the ability to use and apply the following concepts to assist in their investigations into, and understanding of, political phenomena. These political thinking concepts are referred to throughout Units 1–4 and are made explicit in the outcomes, key knowledge and key skills.



Figure 1: *Characteristics of the study: Thinking politically*

Undertaking political inquiry

The study of politics engages students’ curiosity and cultivates their thinking about contemporary political issues and actors. In VCE Politics, ‘contemporary’ is defined as within the last 10 years.

Through student-centred, teacher-directed political inquiry, students develop their knowledge and understanding of politics by investigating contemporary issues and crises. Students interpret and analyse various sources and media, and examine the issue of information, misinformation and disinformation so they can make evidence-informed arguments. Political inquiry entails investigating contemporary issues, asking political questions and analysing and interpreting sources of information.

Applying political concepts

Certain concepts, ideas and theoretical models are central to the discipline of politics. Students’ ability to apply these concepts and their understanding of how these concepts connect with one another, allow them to develop the ability to think politically. Key concepts include power, political actors, legitimacy, authority, conflict and cooperation, political ideology, systems and theories of government, governance, Australian democracy and democratic principles, political interests, national interest, political perspectives, nations and states, sovereignty and global interconnectedness.

Analysing causes and consequences

The analysis of causes and consequences of political issues and crises requires students to consider the factors that produce, trigger or drive the issue or crisis, as well as the impacts of actions taken in response to the issue or crisis. The causes and consequences of contemporary issues and crises are complex and multifaceted and often include combinations of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, technological and environmental factors. For VCE Politics, a broad understanding of historical causes (more than 10 years ago) is appropriate, but a deeper analysis of more immediate and short-term causes (within the last 10 years) is required. These causes must focus on their contribution to the contemporary issue or crisis. Students should recognise that the causes and consequences may be both intended and unintended. This adds depth to students’ understanding of contemporary political issues and will help students to determine the political significance of the issue or crisis and of the actors and their actions.

Identifying and analysing differing political interests

The actions of political actors are motivated by any number of interests, whether they be perceived as national or strategic interests in the case of states; economic interests in the case of transnational corporations and other global actors; or the expansion of power and influence, which is an interest common to all political actors. The interests of different political actors may be oppositional and may lead to conflict. Students must be able to identify these motivating interests in order to explain and analyse the causes and consequences of political action, the impact on political stability and change, and the political significance of the actors and their actions.

Identifying and analysing differing political perspectives

Political perspectives are the positions from which political actors see and understand their interests, including the ideologies, ideas, values and events that inform these perspectives. These perspectives may also be influenced by the social, political, economic, historical, cultural, environmental and spatial conditions and contexts in which actors are located. Students assess the reliability and usefulness of different sources of political data and analyse the impact of a variety of perspectives on political issues and crises, events and their outcomes. Students should also be aware of and engage with these diverse and competing perspectives, which give rise to different interpretations of political events, divergent interests and norm diffusion or normative rivalry. The latter concepts are often a cause of political change.

Discussing political stability and change

The concepts of political stability and political change require students to analyse how and why political actors, institutions, processes and crises change over time or why they remain the same. Politics is often found in the tension between political stability and change. There are forces working to maintain the status quo and forces working to achieve change to the status quo in any human situation. These forces can be created or harnessed by any of the range of political actors who have their own interests to pursue. Change may be fiercely resisted by these actors. Importantly, political stability is not always a desirable outcome and change can contribute to stability and/or instability. The concepts of stability and/or change are best understood as relational and multifaceted. Students develop their ability to think politically by recognising that these tensions exist, analysing those forces favouring stability and those forces encouraging change in any given issue or crisis and applying this understanding to their interpretation of political issues. So, the management of contemporary issues and crises, and challenges to that management, can contribute to political stability and/or change.

Evaluating political significance

The evaluation of political significance encompasses the concepts of political stability and change and causes and consequences. It is central to thinking politically and political inquiry. Establishing political significance requires students to develop and use criteria to make judgments about political actors, issues or crises. To reach a judgment, students analyse political stability and change and cause and consequence, analyse competing interests and differing perspectives, evaluate the effectiveness of responses and their impacts and outcomes, and assess the degree to which the interests of political actors involved in an issue were achieved.

Constructing reasoned and evidence-informed arguments

Developing well-supported, evidence-informed arguments about political issues and crises is the culmination of political thinking and inquiry. It is a creative and synthesising process grounded in and constrained by data and evidence. Students’ arguments should be based on the questions asked and the capacity to apply concepts and use knowledge and evidence to inform their argument. Constructing an argument is a critical intellectual skill through which students may demonstrate an understanding of the political dynamics and dimensions of contemporary conflicts, events, issues and crises.

VCE Politics Units 1 and 2 key skills

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Characteristics of the study** | **Unit 1 Outcome 1** | **Unit 1 Outcome 2** | **Unit 2 Outcome 1** | **Unit 2 Outcome 2**  |
| **Undertaking political inquiry** | Formulate a range of questions to investigate the sources and use of power of national political actors within Australia  | Ask a range of questions to investigate the power of global political actors  | Ask and use a range of political questions to investigate one contemporary political issue for Australian democracy | Ask and use a range of political questions to investigate one contemporary global challenge to the legitimacy and spread of democracy |
| Examine sources of information to explain the interests, perspectives and power of national political actors | Compare and interpret sources to explain the interests and perspectives of global political actors | Interpret a range of sources of information on one political issue for Australian democracy | Interpret a range of sources of information on one global challenge to the legitimacy and spread of democracy |
| **Applying political concepts** | Explain the sources of legitimacy and power of national political actors | Describe how global political actors can challenge the sovereignty of states | Explain how democratic principles are promoted, enhanced and/or undermined in Australia  | Explain how ideologies may undermine or support the acceptance of democratic values and processes |
| **Analysing causes and consequences** | Explain the causes of a contested Australian domestic political issue  | Describe the causes and consequences of global interconnectedness for global political actors | Explain the causes and consequences of one Australian political issue  | Explain the causes and consequences of one global challenge to the legitimacy and spread of democracy |
| **Identifying and analysing differing political interests** | Explain the interests of Australian political actors in a contested political issue | Explain how global political actors use power in pursuit of their interests | Analyse how different political interests impact on Australian democracy | Analyse how the interests of global actors may challenge democratic values and processes |
| **Identifying and analysing differing political perspectives** | Describe the different political actors’ perspectives on an Australian domestic political issue | Compare the different perspectives of global political actors | Explain a range of different political actors’ perspectives on one Australian political issue | Explain a range of different global actors’ perspectives on one global challenge to the legitimacy and spread of democracy |
| **Discussing political stability and change** | Explain the consequences of a contested domestic political issue for political stability and/or change in Australia | Discuss how global political actors use power to achieve political stability and/or change  | Explain how the political issue and responses to the issue contribute to political stability and/or change | Analyse how one global challenge to the legitimacy and spread of democracy has led to political stability and/or change  |
| **Evaluating political significance** | Analyse the political significance of political actors in Australian domestic politics | Evaluate the political significance of the use of power by global political actors in the pursuit of their interests | Analyse the political significance of the political issue for Australian democracy | Analyse the political significance of global political actors’ responses to one global challenge to the legitimacy and spread of democracy |
| **Constructing reasoned and evidence-informed arguments** | Construct an argument to evaluate the capacity of political actors to achieve their interests, using perspectives and evidence from sources | Construct an argument to evaluate the significance of global political actors in at least one global issue, using evidence from sources  | Construct an argument to evaluate the significance of one Australian political issue and the extent to which responses to the issue uphold democratic principles, using evidence from sources  | Construct an argument to evaluate the significance of one global challenge to the legitimacy and spread of democracy and the extent to which democratic principles are upheld, using evidence from sources |

VCE Politics Units 3 and 4 key skills

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Characteristics of the study** | **Unit 3 Outcome 1** | **Unit 3 Outcome 2** | **Unit 4 Outcome 1** | **Unit 4 Outcome 2**  |
| **Undertaking political inquiry** | Ask and analyse a range of political questions to investigate one global issue | Ask and analyse a range of political questions to investigate one contemporary crisis | Use and analyse a range of political questions to investigate how an Indo-Pacific state uses power to achieve its national interests  | Use and analyse a range of political questions to investigate how Australia acts in the region to achieve its national interests |
| Analyse and interpret a range of sources of information on one global issue | Analyse and interpret a range of sources of information on one contemporary crisis | Analyse and interpret a range of sources of information on one Indo-Pacific state and its pursuit of its national interests | Analyse and interpret a range of sources on Australia’s national interests |
| **Applying political concepts** | Assess the impact of global interconnectedness on one global issue | Discuss the drivers of conflict and cooperation in the resolution of one contemporary crisis.  | Analyse the power of one Indo-Pacific state | Evaluate the effectiveness of Australia’s cooperation with three states in the region |
| **Analysing causes and consequences** | Analyse the causes and consequences of one global issue  | Analyse the causes and consequences of one contemporary crisis | Analyse the causes and consequences of one Indo-Pacific state’s use of power and foreign policy instruments | Analyse the causes and consequences of Australia’s use of power and foreign policy instruments in the region |
| **Identifying and analysing differing political interests** | Analyse how the interests of different global actors may contribute to the causes and consequences of one global issue | Analyse the impact of political actors’ interests on the causes, course and consequences of one contemporary crisisFOR IMPLEMENTATION IN 2025 | Analyse the different national interests of one Indo-Pacific state  | Analyse the impact of Australia’s pursuit of its national interests on other regional actors |
| **Identifying and analysing differing political perspectives** | Analyse the different perspectives of global political actors on one global issue and the reasons for those different perspectives | Distinguish between different perspectives of global political actors on one contemporary crisis | Analyse different perspectives on one Indo-Pacific state’s national interests | Analyse different perspectives on Australia’s national interests and actions in the region |
| **Discussing political stability and change** | Discuss how responses by global actors and challenges to resolutions have contributed to political stability and/or change | Discuss how global actors’ responses and their ability to resolve one contemporary crisis have contributed to creating political stability and/or change | Discuss the extent to which one Indo-Pacific state has contributed to political stability and/or change in the region | Discuss the extent to which Australia has contributed to political stability and/or change in the region |
| **Evaluating political significance** | Evaluate the political significance of one global issue  | Evaluate the political significance of one contemporary crisis | Evaluate the political significance of one Indo-Pacific state’s use of power | Evaluate the political significance of Australia’s actions in the region |
| **Constructing reasoned and evidence-informed arguments** | Construct an argument to evaluate the ability of global actors to respond effectively to one issue, using evidence from sources | Construct an argument to evaluate the significance and effectiveness of global actors’ ability to respond to and resolve one contemporary crisis, using evidence from sources | Construct an argument to evaluate the significance and effectiveness of one Indo-Pacific state’s pursuit of its national interests, using evidence from sources | Construct an argument to evaluate the significance and effectiveness of Australia’s pursuit of its national interests, using evidence from sources |

Unit 1: Politics, power and political actors

In this unit, students learn that politics is about how political actors use power to resolve issues and conflicts over how society should operate. Each area of study focuses on concepts that form essential disciplinary knowledge, and which allow students to gradually build on their understanding of what it is to think politically.

Political actors are individuals such as political leaders or ordinary citizens, or organisations such as parliaments or the United Nations, who have some measure of political power and/or authority and who engage in activities that can have a significant influence on decisions, policies, public discussion, media coverage and outcomes associated with a given issue. They may be local, national, regional or global.

Political issues typically arise from the tension between political stability and change; that is, the forces or people working to maintain the status quo and the forces or people working to create change. A political issue will involve a conflict between political actors with different interests and perspectives. The issue may be resolved through cooperation, compromise or coercion, or not at all.

Power can be thought of as different kinds of capacity, for example economic or military capacity or the capacity that stems from a position or office, which gives political actors the ability to achieve their interests.

Students consider the concept of power by examining why and how political power is used, with special attention to the way national and global political actors exercise power and the consequences of that use. Students examine how power may be used by political actors in various states to achieve their interests, and they focus on a close study of a contested political issue in Australia. Students then investigate the power of global actors, who are able to use power across national and regional boundaries to achieve their interests and cooperate with other actors to solve conflicts, issues and crises.

VCE Politics is a contemporary study and focus must be on examples and case studies from within the last 10 years. These examples and case studies may need to be contextualised by a brief outline of historical causes (more than 10 years ago); however, the focus must be on the contribution of short-term causes (within the last 10 years) to the contemporary issue or crisis.

Area of Study 1

Power and national political actors

*What is the source of political power and legitimacy within a state?*

*How do political actors use power to achieve political stability and/or change within states?*

*Who are the key political actors within states and within Australia?*

*How is power legitimised, distributed and used in Australia?*

In this area of study, students are introduced to the central concepts of power and legitimacy. Power comes in different forms and arises from different sources, such as legal authority, or military, economic, diplomatic, cultural and technological capacities. This capacity can be thought of as ‘power to…’ do something. Political actors can also use power in more coercive, even illegitimate, ways that can be thought of as ‘power over…’ other political actors or ordinary people.

Students investigate the types of political actors within states including Australia, and the sources and forms of their power. Legitimacy is the belief that an institution, party or ruler has the right to exercise power. This transforms power into authority and is necessary for the maintenance of political stability and the peaceful achievement of change. Legitimacy may be democratic (for example, through elections), or non-democratic (for example, through manipulation, fear or economic performance), any of which may provide a kind of consent to being governed over. Domestic political actors may be formal political institutions such as the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, or groups and individuals outside the formal institutions of government. The sources and forms of power of domestic political actors, and their claimed legitimacy or legitimising narratives, are linked to the type of political system those domestic political actors belong to.

In this area of study, students engage with political thinking through the ideas, institutions and processes that underpin the legitimacy of the Australian system of government. Using one example of a contested political issue, students assess the political significance of the use of power by different political actors. This example may be in the context of any of the following: a state or federal election; a federal-state issue; a negotiation between political parties in the Australian parliament; a leadership contest; a community protest or movement; a judicial investigation into an issue or person; a media exposé of an issue, organisation or political actor; a national crisis or responses to a natural, environmental or man-made disaster; or another appropriate example.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to explain the sources of power and legitimacy of national political actors and analyse the political significance of Australian political actors’ use of power in a contested domestic political issue.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

* the key concepts: power, legitimacy, authority, participation, popular sovereignty, parliamentary sovereignty, federalism, responsible government, separation of powers, political interests, political perspectives, political significance and political stability and/or change
* the different types of political actors that may be involved in an issue, such as states, government leaders, institutions of global governance, political parties, media, non-government organisations, corporations, social movements, groups and individuals
* different ways of organising formal power within states, such as federalism, responsible government or the separation of executive, legislative or judicial power
* the sources of legitimacy of political actors, such as democratic processes, ideology, coercion or economic performance, and the impact of these sources on how power is exercised
* the key political actors in Australia, such as the Commonwealth and state governments, parliaments and leaders, political parties, the High Court of Australia, media, business, social movements and special interest groups
* the sources and forms of power of Australian political actors that may be involved in an issue, such as authority and office, leadership qualities, parliamentary sovereignty, popular sovereignty through elections and referenda, economic resources, and technological, military, diplomatic, social or cultural capacity
* access to power and participation in decision-making in Australia, such as through social movements, campaigns and protests and citizen power, party membership, submissions to committees, and the media
* the political significance of key Australian political actors in at least one contested political issue, including the sources and forms of their power, their perspectives and legitimising narratives about contributions to political stability and change, their competing interests and the consequences of the actions taken.

Key skills

* formulate a range of questions to investigate the sources and use of power of national political actors within Australia
* examine sources of information to explain the interests, perspectives and power of national political actors
* explain the sources of legitimacy and power of national political actors
* explain the causes of a contested Australian domestic political issue
* explain the interests of Australian political actors in a contested political issue
* describe the different political actors’ perspectives on an Australian domestic political issue
* explain the consequences of a contested domestic political issue for political stability and/or change in Australia
* analyse the political significance of political actors in Australian domestic politics
* construct an argument to evaluate the capacity of political actors to achieve their interests, using perspectives and evidence from sources.

Area of Study 2

Power and global political actors

*Which actors can act globally?*

*What makes a global political actor powerful?*

*What are the interests and perspectives of various global actors?*

*How does global interconnectedness impact on the power of global actors?*

*What is the political significance of global actors?*

In this area of study, students focus on the political actors who can move beyond and across national and regional boundaries to pursue their interests globally. This has been facilitated by the increasing interconnectedness of the world. These ‘global’ actors are predominantly states and their leaders, institutions of global governance or of regional cooperation, non-government organisations, transnational corporations of all kinds and some high-profile individuals. For the purposes of this study, global actors are defined as states, regional groupings, institutions of global governance and non-state actors. States include actors who have defined territory, permanent populations and widely recognised sovereignty. States can be organised into formal regional groupings such as the European Union, ASEAN or the Pacific Islands Forum. Institutions of global governance have global scope and states as members; they facilitate cooperation and manage relations between states, develop and enforce global rules and law, and play a part in dispute resolution. Non-state actors include any other actors on the global stage, including nations, transnational corporations, individuals, non-government organisations and illegal groups.

Since the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) placed state sovereignty at the centre of the European political system, the principle of sovereignty has been widely accepted, allowing states to become prominent global actors, unlike some nations who are at a significant disadvantage because they are not regarded as sovereign entities. States are able to use various forms of power in the pursuit of their interests in a global setting and this use can be either legitimate or illegitimate. However, the rise of other global actors, largely as a result of global interconnectedness, has challenged the power and primacy of states as political actors.

The increasingly interconnected global system influences the ability and power of all global political actors to pursue and achieve their interests. When actors share interests, they may use their power to cooperate. However, a divergence of interests between actors may lead to conflict. The actions of global political actors in the pursuit of their interests have consequences for other actors and impacts on political stability and/or change.

Students engage with political thinking through an inquiry into the power, interests and perspectives of global actors’ responses to an issue. They explain how ideology and interests can lead to a global political actor becoming involved in conflict or cooperation. They analyse the power of a variety of global political actors and examine the impact of global interconnectedness on that power, leading to an assessment of the political significance of those actors.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the power, interests and perspectives of global political actors and evaluate their political significance in at least one global issue.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

* the key concepts: power, legitimacy, sovereignty, global interconnectedness, state, nation, causes and consequences, ideology, political interests, political perspectives and political significance
* the state as a global political actor, such as powers arising from its possession of sovereignty, the state’s role of representing its citizens abroad, the state’s legitimacy and ability to use coercive power, and its relationship with other global actors
* the forms of power that may be used by global political actors to pursue their interests, such as political, military, economic, diplomatic, cultural and technological power
* the perspectives that inform global political actors’ actions of conflict and/or cooperation, such as nationalism, ideology, humanitarian concerns or global influence
* the interests of global political actors and their ability to achieve political stability or create change
* the theories that attempt to explain how global actors operate or how they should operate, such as cosmopolitanism, liberalism or realism
* the impact of global interconnectedness on the power of global actors
* the political significance of key global political actors in at least one global issue, including the sources and forms of their power, their perspectives and legitimising narratives about contributions to political stability and change, their competing interests and the consequences of the actions taken.

Key skills

* ask a range of questions to investigate the power of global political actors
* compare and interpret sources to explain the interests and perspectives of global political actors
* describe how global political actors can challenge the sovereignty of states
* describe the causes and consequences of global interconnectedness for global political actors
* explain how global political actors use power in pursuit of their interests
* compare the different perspectives of global political actors
* discuss how global political actors use power to achieve political stability and/or change
* evaluate the political significance of the use of power by global political actors in the pursuit of their interests
* construct an argument to evaluate the significance of global political actors in at least one global issue using evidence from sources.

Assessment

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks that provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study, including the key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes, should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks. Assessment must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and should be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

All assessments at Units 1 and 2 are school-based. Procedures for assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision.

For this unit students are required to demonstrate two outcomes. As a set these outcomes encompass the areas of study in the unit.

Suitable tasks for assessment in this unit may be selected from the following:

* a political inquiry
* analysis and evaluation of sources
* a multimedia presentation
* a political debate
* a political simulation
* a political brief
* extended responses
* short-answer questions
* an essay.

Where teachers allow students to choose between tasks, they must ensure that the tasks they set are of comparable scope and demand.

Unit 2: Democracy: stability and change

In this unit, students investigate the key principles of democracy and assess the degree to which these principles are expressed, experienced and challenged, in Australia and internationally. They consider democratic principles in the Australian context and complete an in-depth study of a political issue or crisis that inherently challenges basic democratic ideas or practice. Students also investigate the degree to which global political actors and trends can challenge, inhibit or undermine democracy, and evaluate the political significance of these challenges. Each area of study focuses on concepts that form essential disciplinary knowledge, and which allow students to gradually build on their understanding of what it is to think politically.

VCE Politics is a contemporary study and focus must be on examples and case studies from within the last 10 years. These examples and case studies may need to be contextualised by a brief outline of historical causes (more than 10 years ago); however, the focus must be on the contribution of short-term causes (within the last 10 years) to the contemporary issue and/or crisis.

Area of Study 1

Issues for Australia’s democracy

*To what extent does Australia have a democratic culture?*

*What are the principles, values and features that nurture Australian democracy?*

*How democratic are Australia’s political institutions and processes?*

*What are the political issues facing Australian democracy today?*

In this area of study, students analyse the operation of Australian democracy, democratic institutions and processes, and assess the political significance of challenges to democratic principles. Students investigate at least one of the issues detailed below and consider its relationship to the success of Australian democracy, the tensions and conflict between forces working for political stability and those working for change, and how the democratic rights of citizens may challenge established policies, practices and norms. This investigation requires students to broaden their knowledge of the key Australian democratic institutions and processes that operate in Australia and the ability of Australian citizens to participate meaningfully in the political system. Students engage with political thinking through an investigation into at least one of the listed options to evaluate the strength of Australian democracy and consider if reforms to Australia’s political system are appropriate or required.

In developing a course, teachers select at least one of the following political issues within Australia’s democracy to be studied in-depth.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Australia’s First Nations peoples: voice, treaty, truth
* Challenges to democratic policy-making
* Australia’s constitution
* Human rights for all: the protection of rights and freedoms in Australia
* Integrity, trust and accountability in government and politics
* Media ownership, media bias and disinformation
 | * The people’s voice: representation of all Australians?
* Women and power
* Big money and democracy
* Australia’s federal system: fractured or fit for purpose?
* Party politics, participation and partisanship
* Australia and global citizenship
 |

The VCE Politics support materials will provide detailed information on each of the political issues.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse at least one Australian political issue and evaluate the extent to which Australian democracy and democratic principles are upheld.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

* the key concepts: political culture, liberal democracy, responsible government, constitutional government, constitutional monarchy, commitment to a rules-based order
* the expression of democratic principles and practices in Australia’s political system, such as free and fair elections, human rights, accountability and transparency, rule of law, active participation, equality, and division of powers between federal and state governments
* the significance of a democratic political culture in contributing to political stability and change in Australia, such as participation in and engagement with democratic processes, trust in government, the existence of many political parties, political ideology, the acceptance of democratic values, the constitution, agreement on the validity of elections to determine government, leadership and succession, and the influence of the media
* the strengths and weaknesses of Australian political institutions and processes, such as the Constitution and constitutional monarchy, responsible government, mechanisms for accountability, federalism and the division of powers, the electoral system and representation, the public service, the rule of law and rights and freedoms
* the extent to which Australian political culture, institutions and processes promote, enhance or undermine democratic principles in relation to at least one political issue
* the interests and perspectives of political actors involved in at least one political issue.

Key skills

* ask and use a range of political questions to investigate one contemporary political issue for Australian democracy
* interpret a range of sources of information on one political issue for Australian democracy
* explain how democratic principles are promoted, enhanced and/or undermined in Australia
* explain the causes and consequences of one Australian political issue
* analyse how different political interests impact on Australian democracy
* explain a range of different political actors’ perspectives on one Australian political issue
* explain how the political issue and responses to the issue contribute to political stability and/or change
* analyse the political significance of the political issue for Australian democracy
* construct an argument to evaluate the significance of one Australian political issue and the extent to which responses to the issue uphold democratic principles, using evidence from sources.

Area of Study 2

Global challenges to democracy

*What are the challenges to the legitimacy and spread of democracy globally?*

*How politically significant are the global challenges to democracy?*

*To what extent does democracy contribute to global stability and/or opportunities for change?*

In this area of study, students analyse global challenges to the principles of democracy and assess threats to their effectiveness, legitimacy, spread and impact. Students explore at least one global issue or crisis that challenges the importance of democratic principles and consider the causes and consequences of this issue or crisis. Through their investigation, students discover the significant impact states and other global actors may have on the legitimacy and spread of democratic principles, such as free and fair elections, accountability and transparency in political processes, rule of law, human rights, equality and the separation of powers. They analyse the degree to which the interests of global actors can significantly undermine or promote these principles, especially in situations of crisis where political, economic or security needs may be prioritised over human rights or the rule of law.

Through the study of at least one option below, students evaluate the global impact of these challenges to the principles of democracy.

In developing a course, teachers select at least one of the following options to be studied in depth.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Sovereignty and the national interest
* Problems with the current rules-based international order
* Authoritarianism
* ‘Big tech’ and the media
 | * Sustainability and resource security
* State use of violence
* Populism
* Global interconnectedness
 |

The VCE Politics support materials will provide detailed information on each of the options.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse at least one global challenge to the legitimacy and spread of democracy and evaluate the political significance of this challenge to democratic principles.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

* the key concepts: International law, rules-based order, states, nations, sovereignty, liberal democracy, authoritarianism, ideology, global governance
* the principles that underlie democracy globally, such as free, fair and multiparty elections, accountability of governments to the people, transparency of decision-making, adherence to the rule of law, active participation in civic processes, political and legal equality, checks on governmental power, respect for sovereignty, economic liberalism, political liberalism and human rights and freedoms
* the ideologies that inform systems of national governance and global governance, such as democracy, liberalism, cosmopolitanism, authoritarianism, populism, totalitarianism and theism
* the main political differences between liberal democracies, illiberal democracies and authoritarian systems, such as political ideology, the separation of church and state, separation or concentration of powers, a written constitution, free and fair elections, the existence of checks on political power, the rule of law
* the institutions of global governance that reinforce the current rules-based international order, such as the United Nations, International Court of Justice, International Criminal Court, International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization
* the challenges to the legitimacy and spread of democracy globally, such as authoritarianism, illiberalism, populism, media misinformation and disinformation, cyber interference, perceived western cultural bias, and problems with the current rules-based international order
* the causes and consequences of challenges to the legitimacy and spread of democracy.

Key skills

* ask and use a range of political questions to investigate one contemporary global challenge to the legitimacy and spread of democracy
* interpret a range of sources of information on one global challenge to the legitimacy and spread of democracy
* explain how ideologies may undermine or support the acceptance of democratic values and processes
* explain the causes and consequences of one global challenge to the legitimacy and spread of democracy
* analyse how the interests of global actors may challenge democratic values and processes
* explain a range of different global actors’ perspectives on one global challenge to the legitimacy and spread of democracy
* Analyse how one global challenge to the legitimacy and spread of democracy has led to political stability and/or change
* Analyse the political significance of global political actors’ responses to one global challenge to the legitimacy and spread of democracy
* construct an argument to evaluate the significance of one global challenge to the legitimacy and spread of democracy and the extent to which democratic principles are upheld, using evidence from sources.

Assessment

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks that provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study, including the key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes, should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks. Assessment must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and should be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

All assessments at Units 1 and 2 are school-based. Procedures for assessment of levels of achievement in Units 1 and 2 are a matter for school decision.

For this unit students are required to demonstrate two outcomes. As a set these outcomes encompass the areas of study in the unit.

Suitable tasks for assessment in this unit may be selected from the following:

* a political inquiry
* analysis and evaluation of sources
* a multimedia presentation
* a political debate
* a political simulation
* a political brief
* extended responses
* short-answer questions
* an essay.

Where teachers allow students to choose between tasks, they must ensure that the tasks they set are of comparable scope and demand.

Unit 3: Global cooperation and conflict

In this unit, students investigate an issue and a crisis that pose challenges to the global community. Students begin with an investigation into an issue of global scale, such as climate change, global economic instability, the issue of development or weapons of mass destruction. Students also examine the causes and consequences of a humanitarian crisis that may have begun in one state but which has crossed over into neighbouring states and requires an emergency response. This crisis must be chosen from the areas of human rights, armed conflict and the mass movement of people. They consider the causes of these issues and crises, and investigate their consequences on a global level and for a variety of global actors.

For the purposes of this study, global actors are defined as states, regional groupings, institutions of global governance and non-state actors. States are political actors who have defined territory, permanent populations and widely recognised sovereignty. States can be organised into formal regional groupings, such as the European Union, ASEAN or the Pacific Islands Forum. Institutions of global governance have global scope, are composed of states and facilitate cooperation and peaceful relations between states, enforce global rules and law and play a part in dispute resolution. Non-state actors include any other actors on the global stage: transnational corporations; individuals; and non-government organisations such as Human Rights Watch or Greenpeace and terrorist groups or international criminal networks. Importantly, students develop an appreciation for the perspectives and interests global actors bring to contemporary issues and crises, which can be multifaceted and changeable. Students come to understand that the responses of global actors to these issues or crises may take a variety of forms, such as cooperation, disengagement and/or conflict, and they assess the degree to which these responses can effectively resolve the issue or crisis. Students consider how the actions and responses of global actors contribute to creating global and regional political stability and/or change.

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VCE Politics is a contemporary study and focus must be on examples and case studies from within the last 10 years. These examples and case studies may need to be contextualised by a brief outline of historical causes (more than 10 years ago); however, the focus must be on the contribution of short-term causes (within the last 10 years) to the contemporary issue or crisis.

Area of Study 1

Global issues, global responses

*What makes an issue global?*

*Why are global issues significant for global actors?*

*What are the causes of global issues?*

*How can global issues be resolved?*

*What are the key challenges to the resolution of global issues?*

In this area of study, students examine the causes, consequences and significance of a global issue that by its very nature transcends national and regional boundaries. Students consider the range of factors that may cause conflict, such as social, political, economic, environmental, ideological, cultural and/or technological factors. Global actors may involve themselves in a cooperative effort with other actors to attempt a resolution of the issue or they may pursue their own objectives in a way that brings them into conflict with other global actors.

Students investigate the effectiveness of the institutions available to address these issues, including international laws and the global institutions that facilitate cooperation between global actors. For the purpose of this study, international law encompasses a wide range of rules and norms that are designed to govern the actions of states in international relations, such as treaties, declarations, bilateral and multilateral agreements and even decisions made by bodies such as the United Nations Security Council. Students analyse the challenges to resolving these issues, including the different perspectives of global actors, their often-competing interests and the impact of global interconnectedness on the chosen issue.

In developing a course, teachers must select one of the following global issues to be studied in depth.

Climate change

Climate change presents policy makers with significant difficulties, some of which stem from the unprecedented level of cooperation required from global actors. The perspectives of global actors influence the degree to which they either cooperate with other actors or come into conflict. Students consider whether national interests prevail over finding solutions to global climate challenges and how other economic priorities and political factors affect its resolution.

Global economic instability

The interconnectedness of the world economy has brought with it innumerable benefits but has also increased the capacity for global economic instability, conflict and inequality. International institutions are increasingly challenged in their efforts to coordinate global economic stability in the face of multiple intersecting global social, political and environmental crises. There is an increasing tendency for economic conditions within states to have an impact on other states and global actors. Students consider whether political stability and instability is a feature related to the interdependence of the global economy.

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Development

The issue of how best to facilitate economic, social and human development of states and their citizens has been of continuing and pressing significance for global actors. Lack of development has many negative impacts on both people and the planet. Global responses to this issue are spearheaded by the unanimous adoption of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, but states have been adversely affected in their progress towards these goals by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, rising inequalities, political illiberalism and the struggle for global power by rival states.

Weapons of mass destruction

Weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, form part of the arsenal of many states. While global arms control processes seek to construct a more stable and peaceful international arena by reducing the danger these weapons pose, states retain them as a powerful option or threat to be used in times of conflict. The possession of weapons of mass destruction by state actors also raises the concern of them falling into the hands of illegal non-state actors.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the causes and consequences of a global issue and evaluate the effectiveness of global actors’ responses in resolving the issue.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

Key knowledge

* the short-term causes (within the last 10 years) of one global issue
* the impact of global interconnectedness on one issue
* the responses of global actors, including states, at least one institution of global governance and at least one non-state actor to the issue
* the effectiveness of international laws in addressing the issue and the extent to which global actors effectively respond to those laws
* the ability of global actors to respond effectively to one issue
* the challenges to the resolution of one issue
* the consequences of the issue for political stability and/or change.

Key skills

* ask and analyse a range of political questions to investigate one global issue
* analyse and interpret a range of sources of information on one global issue
* assess the impact of global interconnectedness on one global issue
* analyse the causes and consequences of one global issue
* analyse how the interests of different global actors may contribute to the causes and consequences of one global issue
* analyse the different perspectives of global political actors on one global issue and the reasons for those different perspectives
* discuss how responses by global actors and challenges to resolution have contributed to political stability and/or change
* evaluate the political significance of one global issue

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* Construct an argument to evaluate the ability of global actors to respond effectively to one issue, using evidence from sources.

Area of Study 2

Contemporary crises: conflict, stability and change

*How can we understand the nature of contemporary humanitarian crises?*

*To what extent is it possible to identify and address the causes of humanitarian crises?*

*What are the key challenges to resolving these crises and what might be the drivers for change?*

*To what extent can global actors cooperate to manage conflicts?*

In this area of study, students examine a contemporary humanitarian crisis from the area of human rights, armed conflict or the mass movement of people. These are events or series of events that threaten the safety and wellbeing of communities or large numbers of people. Although these crises typically originate from within state borders, they often have significant consequences for other states and their populations. In extreme cases, the world is faced with the necessity of responding, and global and regional actors must therefore find ways to cooperate in the search for solutions.

These humanitarian crises may be a result of ethnic, cultural or social discrimination, political challenges to the sovereignty of states or conflicts over resources, or be a consequence of global issues such as climate change or poverty. Students analyse the causes of their chosen crisis, the interests and perspectives of the actors involved, and evaluate the extent to which political stability and/or change is possible through the responses of political actors. Regional groupings may have a particular role to play in the resolution of these crises.

Examples and case studies of the chosen crisis must be of a significant scale, affect large numbers of people and be a concern for a number of states.

In developing a course, teachers must select one of the following crises to be studied in depth.

Human rights crises

Students learn that under current international human rights law, human rights are regarded as inherent, indivisible and universal, though not all states agree with this or abide by their international legal obligations to preserve and respect human rights. Human rights violations may occur as a result of conflict, discriminatory policies and practices, the interconnectedness of global actors, economic imperatives or environmental degradation.

Armed conflict

Armed conflict encompasses wars between states, violence between groups of people within states or terrorist attacks by states or non-state actors. The causes of armed conflicts may include contested sovereignty, territory or questions of cultural or political identity. Global and regional actors’ attempts to resolve these conflicts are frequently blocked by perceptions of the national interest and the interests of other actors.

Mass movement of people

The mass movement of people, both within and across borders, affects millions around the world today. Students examine possible causes for the mass movement of people, such as armed conflict over sovereignty and territory; discrimination based on race, gender, social group, nationality or culture; and economic imperatives such as loss of livelihood or environmental changes. Students analyse the different perspectives of actors in responding to this crisis, and the challenges faced by the international community in cooperating to balance national interests with humanitarian obligations.

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Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the causes and consequences of one contemporary crisis and discuss how global actors’ responses have contributed to political stability and/or change.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

* the short-term causes (within the last 10 years) of one contemporary crisis
* the different perspectives of global actors in the crisis
* the impact of political actors’ interests on the crisis
* the responses by states, an institution of global governance and/or a regional grouping and a non-state actor to the crisis
* the processes used to attempt to address the crisis, including diplomacy and international law
* challenges to resolution of the crisis
* the ability of actors to respond effectively to the crisis
* the consequences of the crisis for political stability and/or change.

Key skills

* ask and analyse a range of political questions to investigate one contemporary crisis
* analyse and interpret a range of sources of information on one contemporary crisis
* discuss the drivers of conflict and cooperation in the resolution of one contemporary crisis
* analyse the causes and consequences of one contemporary crisis
* analyse the impact of political actors’ interests on the causes, course and consequences of one contemporary crisis
* distinguish between different perspectives of global political actors on one contemporary crisis
* discuss how global actors’ responses and their ability to resolve one contemporary crisis have contributed to creating political stability and/or change
* evaluate the political significance of one contemporary crisis
* construct an argument to evaluate the significance and effectiveness of global actors’ ability to respond to and resolve one contemporary crisis, using evidence from sources.

School-based assessment

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks to provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

The areas of study and key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks.

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Assessment of levels of achievement

School-assessment Coursework

The student’s level of achievement in Unit 3 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework. School-assessed Coursework tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

Where teachers provide a range of options for the same School-assessed Coursework task, they should ensure that the options are of comparable scope and demand.

The types and range of forms of School-assessed Coursework for the outcomes are prescribed within the study design. The VCAA publishes [Support materials](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/ausglobalpolitics/Pages/Index.aspx) for this study, which include advice on the design of assessment tasks and the assessment of student work for a level of achievement.

Teachers will provide to the VCAA a numerical score representing an assessment of the student’s level of achievement. The score must be based on the teacher’s assessment of the performance of each student on the tasks set out in the following table.

Contribution to final assessment

School-assessed Coursework for Unit 3 will contribute 25 per cent to the study score.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Outcomes** | **Marks allocated** | **Assessment tasks** |
| **Outcome 1**Analyse the causes and consequences of a global issue and evaluate the effectiveness of global actors’ responses in resolving the issue. | **50** | Each of the following assessment tasks **must** be completed over Units 3 and 4:* a political inquiry
* analysis and evaluation of sources
* extended responses
* short-answer questions
* an essay.

Teachers may choose to select one or more assessment tasks for each outcome. The assessment tasks may be undertaken in any order. |
| **Outcome 2**Analyse the causes and consequences of one contemporary crisis and discuss how global actors’ responses have contributed to political stability and/or change. | **50**FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN 2025 |
| **Total marks** | **100** |  |

External assessment

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination (see [page 36](#Examination)), which will contribute 50 per cent to the study score.

Unit 4: Power in the Indo-Pacific

In this unit, students investigate the strategic competition for power and influence in the Indo-Pacific region. They consider the interests and perspectives of global actors within the region, including the challenges to regional cooperation and stability. Building on their study of global issues and contemporary crises in Unit 3, students develop their understanding of power and national interests through an in-depth examination of one state’s perspectives, interests and actions. Students must choose one state from the People’s Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of India, the Republic of Indonesia or the United States of America. Students also examine Australia’s strategic interests and actions in the region and consider how Australia’s responses to regional issues and crises may have contributed to political stability and/or change. They do this within the context of Australia’s relationships with one Pacific Island state and two other regional states.

For the purposes of this study, the Indo-Pacific is defined as the region ranging from the eastern Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean connected by Southeast Asia, including India, North Asia and the United States of America. This includes the following: Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, North Korea, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Russia, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, the United States of America, Vanuatu and Vietnam.

VCE Politics is a contemporary study and focus must be on examples and case studies from within the last 10 years. These examples and case studies may need to be contextualised by a brief outline of historical causes (more than 10 years ago); however, the focus must be on the contribution of short-term causes (within the last 10 years) to the contemporary issue or crisis.

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Area of Study 1

Power and the national interest

*How is power exercised in the Indo-Pacific region?*

*How has one selected state defined its national interests?*

*What are the challenges that inhibit the achievement of a state’s national interests?*

*How effective is the state in using power to achieve its national interests?*

In this area of study, students explore power and politics in the Indo-Pacific. Through a detailed study of ONE state in the Indo-Pacific region (China, Japan, India, Indonesia or the United States of America), students analyse its sources of power, its national interests and the actions undertaken to achieve those interests.

National interests are used by states to inform and justify domestic and foreign policy actions. They are often multifaceted and changeable, and subject to competing perspectives and interests. Students learn that although states in the Indo-Pacific vary markedly, they share common interests in the pursuit of security, economic prosperity, regional relationships and regional standing. To achieve these outcomes, states draw on their sources and forms of power and channel them through foreign policy instruments. The application of these forms of power can, at times, produce favourable outcomes for the state. However, it can also provoke reactions from other global actors, resulting in unintended consequences that challenge the pursuit of national and strategic interests.

Students investigate the actions of their chosen Indo-Pacific state and evaluate the degree to which different forms of power achieve the stated national interests. Students also examine the significant challenges that face their chosen Indo-Pacific state in the pursuit of its interests and assess the extent to which the state’s actions and its national interest outcomes contribute to political stability and change. Students evaluate the political significance of their chosen regional state and its ability to achieve its interests.

In developing a course, teachers must select one of the following states of the Indo-Pacific to be studied in depth.

* People’s Republic of China
* Japan
* Republic of India
* Republic of Indonesia
* the United States of America.

Outcome 1

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse the various sources and forms of power used by a state in the Indo-Pacific region and evaluate the extent to which it is able to achieve its national interests.

To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 1.

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Key knowledge

* the sources and forms of power used by the selected state in pursuit of its national interests, including political, economic, military, diplomatic and cultural power
* the national interests of the selected state, including security, economic prosperity, regional relationships and regional standing
* the state’s use of foreign policy instruments in the region to achieve its national interests, including diplomacy, trade and foreign aid
* the effectiveness of the state in achieving its national interests
* challenges to the state in achieving its national interests
* the consequences of at least two of the state’s national interests for other regional actors
* the extent to which the actions and national interest outcomes of the selected state bring about stability and change in the Indo-Pacific region.

Key skills

* use and analyse a range of political questions to investigate how an Indo-Pacific state uses power to achieve its national interests
* analyse and interpret a range of sources of information on one Indo-Pacific state and its pursuit of its national interests
* analyse the power of one Indo-Pacific state
* analyse the causes and consequences of one Indo-Pacific state’s use of power and foreign policy instruments
* analyse the different national interests of one Indo-Pacific state
* analyse different perspectives on one Indo-Pacific state’s national interests
* discuss the extent to which one Indo-Pacific state has contributed to political stability and/or change in the region
* evaluate the political significance of one Indo-Pacific state’s use of power
* construct an argument to evaluate the significance and effectiveness of one Indo-Pacific state’s pursuit of its national interests, using evidence from sources.

Area of Study 2

Australia in the Indo-Pacific

*How does Australia perceive its strategic and national interests in the region?*

*How does Australia go about achieving those interests?*

*What are the different perspectives on Australia’s role in the region?*

*What are the key challenges to Australia’s regional relationships?*

*How has Australia responded to regional issues and crises and what are the impacts of those responses on regional relations?*

In this area of study, students assess the impact of Australia’s policies, actions and inactions in the region of the Indo-Pacific. They investigate contemporary Australian perspectives of the national interest in terms of security, economic prosperity and regional stability, and examine different perspectives on these interests, within Australia and outside Australia’s borders. Students analyse Australia’s foreign policy responses to regional issues and crises by investigating Australia’s relations with three states, one from the Pacific Islands Forum and two other states from the wider Indo-Pacific region. Students evaluate the degree to which Australia cooperates with three states in the region. They also evaluate the effectiveness of Australia’s responses to issues of concern to the selected states, such as human rights, armed conflict, a mass movement of people, climate change, global economic instability, development issues, or weapons of mass destruction.

Outcome 2

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse different perspectives on Australia’s national interests in the Indo-Pacific region and evaluate the degree to which Australia’s pursuit of its national interests has resulted in cooperation or conflict with three states in the region.

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To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 2.

Key knowledge

* Australia’s national interests in the Indo-Pacific, including security, economic prosperity, regional relationships and regional standing
* different perspectives on Australia’s national interests in the region, internally and externally
* the forms of power used by Australia in pursuit of its national interests, including political, economic, military, diplomatic and cultural power
* Australia’s use of foreign policy instruments in the region in pursuit of its national interests including diplomacy, trade and foreign aid
* challenges to Australia’s relationship with at least one member of the Pacific Islands Forum and at least two other states from the Indo-Pacific region
* Australia’s responses to a regional issue or crisis and how these have contributed to cooperation and/or conflict with a selected state from the Indo-Pacific region
* the extent to which Australia’s actions contribute to political stability and/or change in the Indo-Pacific region.

Key skills

* use and analyse a range of political questions to investigate how Australia acts in the region to achieve its national interests
* analyse and interpret a range of sources on Australia’s national interests
* evaluate the effectiveness of Australia’s cooperation with three states in the region
* analyse the causes and consequences of Australia’s use of power and foreign policy instruments in the region
* analyse the impact of Australia’s pursuit of its national interests on other regional actors
* analyse different perspectives on Australia’s national interests and actions in the region
* discuss the extent to which Australia has contributed to political stability and/or change in the region
* evaluate the political significance of Australia’s actions in the region
* Construct an argument to evaluate the significance and effectiveness of Australia’s pursuit of its national interests, using evidence from sources

School-based assessment

Satisfactory completion

The award of satisfactory completion for a unit is based on whether the student has demonstrated the set of outcomes specified for the unit. Teachers should use a variety of learning activities and assessment tasks to provide a range of opportunities for students to demonstrate the key knowledge and key skills in the outcomes.

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The areas of study and key knowledge and key skills listed for the outcomes should be used for course design and the development of learning activities and assessment tasks.

Assessment of levels of achievement

School-assessed Coursework

The student’s level of achievement in Unit 4 will be determined by School-assessed Coursework. School-assessed Coursework tasks must be a part of the regular teaching and learning program and must not unduly add to the workload associated with that program. They must be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe.

Where teachers provide a range of options for the same School-assessed Coursework task, they should ensure that the options are of comparable scope and demand.

The types and range of forms of School-assessed Coursework for the outcomes are prescribed within the study design. The VCAA publishes [Support materials](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/ausglobalpolitics/Pages/Index.aspx) for this study, which include advice on the design of assessment tasks and the assessment of student work for a level of achievement.

Teachers will provide to the VCAA a numerical score representing an assessment of the student’s level of achievement. The score must be based on the teacher’s assessment of the performance of each student on the tasks set out in the following table.

Contribution to final assessment

School-assessed Coursework for Unit 4 will contribute 25 per cent to the study score.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Outcomes** | **Marks allocated** | **Assessment tasks** |
| **Outcome 1**Analyse the various sources and forms of power used by a state in the Indo-Pacific region and evaluate the extent to which it is able to achieve its national interests. | **50** | Each of the following assessment tasks must be completed over Units 3 and 4:* a political inquiry
* analysis and evaluation of sources
* extended responses
* short-answer questions
* an essay.

Teachers may choose to select one or more assessment tasks for each outcome. The assessment tasks may be undertaken in any order. |
| **Outcome 2**Analyse different perspectives on Australia’s national interests in the Indo-Pacific region and evaluate the degree to which Australia’s pursuit of its national interests has resulted in cooperation or conflict with three states in the region. | **50** |
| **Total marks** | **100**FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN 2025 |  |

External assessment

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year examination.

End-of-year examination

Contribution to final assessment

The examination will contribute 50 per cent to the study score.

Description

The examination will be set by a panel appointed by the VCAA. All the key knowledge and key skills that underpin the outcomes in Units 3 and 4 are examinable.

Conditions

The examination will be completed under the following conditions:

* Duration: 2 hours
* Date: end-of-year, on a date to be published annually by the VCAA
* VCAA examination rules will apply. Details of these rules are published annually in the [*VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/administration/vce-vcal-handbook/Pages/index.aspx).
* The examination will be marked by assessors appointed by the VCAA.

Further advice

The VCAA publishes specifications for all VCE examinations on the VCAA website. Examination specifications include details about the sections of the examination, their weighting, the question format(s) and any other essential information. The specifications are published in the first year of implementation of the revised Unit 3 and 4 sequence together with any sample material.