**Adam Brodie-McKenzie -** G'day and welcome to the first of a series of videos to introduce and support the implementation of the VCE Politics Study Design 2024 to 2028. My name's Adam Brodie-McKenzie and I'm the Curriculum Manager for Politics at the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. The purpose of this video is to help you become familiar with the VCE Politics study design. I'll identify specific characteristics of the study as well as explain the structure and how to unpack and interpret the study design, provide information about supporting materials, and introduce internal and external assessment requirements. Other videos will cover the specifics of the characteristics, more detail in the unit breakdowns, and assessment.

This introduction to the VCE politics study design is best viewed by people who are new to teaching VCE, new to teaching VCE politics specifically, and people looking for a refresher or clarification of the study design as a whole. It's important for all teachers to have an understanding of the whole study design, so take time to read and unpack, the scope of the study aims, rationale, characteristics of the study units, their outcomes, key knowledge and skills. These are the foundations on which you will build your teaching, learning and assessing programmes, and these are the foundations on which you'll attract students to the study and retain them through to Units three and four.

The foundation of VCE politics is built on the scope of the study, the rationale and the aims. Therefore, having a good understanding of these is essential. Politics is a discipline study, it's a contemporary study, and enables students to think politically, engage with the motivations and effectiveness of political actors and understand the depths and breadths of power, locally to globally. Fundamental to the study of politics is political inquiry. Essential to political inquiry is to ask political questions to investigate contemporary issues and analyse and interpret sources of information that have different interests and political perspectives, so students can construct their own arguments based on reason and evidence.

The characteristics of the study embody the discipline of politics. They underpin the outcomes, key knowledge and key skills in the study design by ensuring the development of thinking politically. Take the time to unpack the characteristics of the study and what they mean for your teaching, learning, and assessing. They're fundamental for students to demonstrate the outcomes and achieve their best in internal and external assessment. The characteristics of the study are aligned to the intent of the study, the units, the outcomes, the key skills and assessment tasks.

So, it's important to read the characteristics of the study in conjunction with developing a teaching and learning programme. Notably, the key skills for all the units directly fall from the characteristics of the study. You can see how this is represented in this table, the key skills for each outcome for each unit.

This table and the one relating to units one and two are in the VCE Politics study design, as well as a brief explanation of each of the characteristics. The support materials also significantly unpack these characteristics in detail and there is an explanatory video of the characteristics.

So, there are four units of VCE Politics, each with two areas of study. Each area of study is guided by inquiry questions. Now these questions aren't mandatory to study but can help you and your students develop political inquiry. I encourage you and your students to also develop your own inquiry questions around each area of study. It becomes obvious how quickly case studies are fundamental to VCE Politics. You must look at contemporary political issues. Contemporary is defined as within the last decade but it's also important to think about student engagement. For this reason, the closer in time and the more relevant to students, often the better for case studies. However, when students are investigating, analysing causes, these examples and case studies may need to be contextualised by a brief analysis of long-term historical causes, as in beyond 10 years. As causation is often complex and even obscure, students can briefly examine the longer-term causes in order to achieve a more complete understanding of the focus of your study.

The focus of student thinking though must remain on the cause's contribution to a contemporary case study issue or crisis. Important context from over a decade ago may be worthwhile to explore, but remember, this is not a modern history subject it's politics and politics is now. I'll now provide a brief outline of each unit and area of study. Unit one introduces power and political actors that are two fundamental terms to the study of politics. As explained in the blurb of unit one of the study design 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 have a significant influence on decisions, policies, public discussion, media coverage and outcomes associated with a given issue. They can be local, national, regional or global. Power can be thought of as different kinds of capacity.

For example, economic or military capacity or the capacity that stems from a position of office, so like a Prime Minister, which gives political actors the ability to achieve their interests. In area of study one, students explore and understand power and political actors in relation to Australian politics and domestic political issues. In area of study two, this moves to the global political arena and global political issues. Unit two has a focus on democracy like unit one, area of study one has an Australian focus, whereas area of study two is global and the global challenges to democracy. These areas of study must be explored through particular case studies listed here, particular domestic political issues in area of study one and particular global challenges to democracy in area of study two. You may want to consider student interest in determining which to study as well as consider which of these case studies is prominent at the time of studying the unit.

The support materials as well also provide more information and links to each of these case studies. Unit three has a global focus in area of study one, the focus is on one global issue. This can be climate change, global economic instability, development or weapons and mass destruction. You must explore the causes, responses by global actors and challenges to effective resolutions of this issue including the effectiveness of international laws in addressing the issue. As part of this, exploring global interconnectedness is essential. How do the actions of one state in response to climate change or weapons of mass destruction influence the issue as a whole? In area of study two, you examine a contemporary humanitarian crisis concerning human rights, armed conflict or the mass movement of people. You explore its causes, responses by global actors and challenges to the crisis' resolution. This must include different perspectives on the crisis by global actors and how processes of diplomacy and international law have attempted to address the crisis.

So, you can see that international law is relevant to both areas of study in unit three. The key difference between area of study two and area of study one, is that in area of study two you can focus on a specific case study of the crisis such as a particular war or the migration of people trying to get into or out of a particular part of the world or state. Area of study one however, must be on the issue as a whole and the global interconnectedness of the issue. In unit four, the focus turns to our region of the Indo-Pacific and the power and actions of states in that region. In area of study one, you must focus on the power of either China, Japan, India, Indonesia or the United States of America.

In area of study two, you must focus on Australia. Although the focus in each area of study is one state, regional interconnectedness is still key. As in area of study one, you must examine the chosen state's influence on stability in the region and consequences for other regional actors, as you do also for Australia in area of study two, and in area of study two, this must include at least one member of the Pacific Islands Forum. You should consider whether you want the state you choose in area of study one to have a significant relationship with Australia so you could look at one case study or regional political issue from different perspectives or whether you want to keep these distinct, it's really up to you. It's not mandatory to have studied units one and two, in order to study three and four, but you can see how beneficial it is to study them all sequentially in developing key concepts, characteristics knowledge and skills. There's potential to synthesise case studies across units.

For example, the global challenge you choose in unit two area of study two could be connected to the global crisis in unit three, area of study two and what is happening in the Indo-Pacific region in unit four. There's potential for considerable crossover across units three and four. And in unit four, the relationship between Australia and the other state you choose. The degree to which you choose to synthesise case studies is a strategic decision for you to decide.

Some students, they appreciate the synthesis as it can reduce the content to learn. While others are confused by when they're meant to use particular case studies in particular areas of study. You'll know what approach best suits your students in the classroom. So, when reading the VCE Politics design, it's important to read the whole study design not just the unit you teach. The information is organised in a cascading structure. Therefore, it assumes that when you read the key skills or the outcomes that you understand the characteristics and rationale. It assumes when you design an assessment task that you're applying all that went before in development of the assessment tasks including key knowledge, key skills and outcomes.

When reading individual units there is some really important things to remember. First, outcome statements. They're deceivingly complex in their simplicity so it's important to interrogate the intent of what they ask of your teaching and what students need to do to demonstrate satisfactory completion. Therefore, it's worth breaking down the outcome statement into its components and be able to articulate this to students. There are two outcome statements on the slide here as an example. The words highlighted in blue are the command terms, explain, analyse, evaluate. How do we want students to think about the knowledge? We want them to be able to explain how and why, analyse is breaking it down into its parts and evaluate means making a judgement about it. The other parts of the outcome statement primarily relate to key knowledge within the area of study. These words in green also highlight the connection to the characteristics, the fundamental parts of the entire study design.

So here for the first outcome, sources of power and legitimacy, connects to the characteristic of applying political concepts, political significance, relates to evaluating political significance and contested is drawn from both identifying and analysing different political interests and political perspectives, and it can be that there are parts of these statements that will address multiple characteristics. For instance, applying political concepts is peppered throughout. The outcome statement is incredibly important because it's what you must assess. Students need to be able to demonstrate a satisfactory achievement of the outcome. Explicit teaching of the key knowledge and key skills and development of quality assessment design, should allow students to demonstrate the outcome.

Next key knowledge dot points. Look at the introduction for the corresponding area of study, to see what it's asking of the key knowledge. How's it asking students to think about the knowledge? What implications does it have for your teaching and student learning? So, for example, on the left is the key knowledge for unit four, area of study one, and on the right is the paragraph explaining national interests in the area of study's introduction. You can see the characteristics highlighted in green in the introduction demonstrating their connection to the key knowledge. It complements the key skills in how students should interpret and work with the key knowledge. The key skills for each area of study will also correspond to specific key knowledge.

So, in this instance, the key knowledge and key skill relating to foreign policy instruments from unit four, area of study one, is in red. There'll always be this specificity but that's not to say that there can't be more connections between key knowledge and key skills. For example, analysing the consequence of the use of a foreign policy instrument will likely inform, the Indo-Pacific State's contribution to stability and change in the region, their power and connections to the national interests. A reminder too, that the key skills will directly connect to the characteristics of the study design and possibly more than one. Now moving on to 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.

So, you 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. Assessments must be a part of the regular teaching and learning programme and should be completed mainly in class and within a limited timeframe. All assessments at unit one and two are school based. Procedures for assessment of levels of achievement in units one and two are a matter for school decision. For units one and two, what you see are considered suitable tasks for assessment. Where teachers allow students to choose between tasks, you must ensure that the tasks you set are of comparable scope and demand.

For units three and four, it's important to recognise that school-based coursework contributes to 50% of the study score, 25% for each unit, and the external exam contributes 50%. It is also mandatory that assessment tasks for units three and four must include a political inquiry, analysis and evaluation of sources, extended responses, short answer questions and an essay. Now these don't need to be independent tasks and you can combine a number of these types of assessment in one assessment task. So, for example, short answer questions in an essay within a single SAC. The video and assessment will cover this in more detail and is recommended viewing.

When developing assessment tasks, the task design must comply with the VCE assessment Principles are valid, equitable, balanced, and efficient. The VCE assessment principles define demonstration of outcomes and levels of achievement on assessment tasks. For more information on the VCE assessment principles view the on-demand video on the VCE professional learning page VCE briefings. You can also go to the VCAA VCE assessment webpage and listen to expert teachers talk about how they address VCE assessment principles when developing school-based assessment. A reminder too, that there is a specific video and assessment for VCE Politics which is highly recommended to watch. It's also highly recommended that you read through the support materials that go into significant detail regarding planning, teaching and learning, and assessment for VCE Politics. These include sample learning activities and links to help you develop your case studies as required across the units.

So, using a combination of the study design, the support materials, and other useful information on the webpage such as this video, you should be all set to teach VCE Politics. Take the time to read the whole study, take time to look at the other videos that will focus on particular units, characteristics and assessments, and certainly contact me with any questions or clarifications.

If you do have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to contact the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Thank you so much for your time.

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