VCE Politics   
Units 1 and 2: 2024–2028; Units 3 and 4: 2025–2028

Unit 2 Area of Study 1

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| Option | Outline | Resources |
| **Australia’s First Nations peoples: voice, treaty, truth** | Students may inquire into the degree to which First Nations peoples’ voices have been considered by and can influence parliament; the ongoing inequalities and disadvantage suffered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders peoples; past and present barriers in society and representation in the Australian political system; the legacy of the civil rights movements past and present; the effectiveness of Reconciliation, ideas and questions about self-determination, sovereignty, governance and constitutional recognition; the significance of political leadership and policy development, as seen today from within First Nations peoples’, political representation and representative bodies, such as community-controlled organisations, federal organisations, Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs), the First Peoples’ Assembly of Victoria and Treaty in Victoria, the Yoorook Justice Commission, the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the perspectives of and comparisons with other First Nations Peoples, locally, regionally and internationally.  Suggested Inquiry questions are:  A. How democratic is the process for achieving constitutional recognition and representation of First Nations peoples?   * The referendum process * The nature of the debate, parliamentary and otherwise * Adequate opportunities for all perspectives to be included? * Media reporting   B. What are the challenges to First Nations Peoples achieving ‘voice, treaty and truth’?   * Historical and continuing impacts of colonisation * Diversity of interests and perspectives within First Nations’ communities * Partisanship * Misinformation and bias * Perceptions of fairness / unfairness   C. What is the significance of First Nations peoples achieving voice, treaty and truth on a federal level in Australia?   * Impact of a constitutionally prescribed right to be consulted on the First Nations peoples * Impact(s) of a possible treaty on the relationship between First Nations Australians and settler Australians * Impacts of a Makarrata Commission (supervision of agreement-making)   D. How would a First Nations Voice to Parliament and a Makarrata Commission for treaty and truth telling impact Australian democracy?   * Effect on sovereignty * Effect on equality and participation * Effect on accountability | * [The Uluru Statement of the Heart](https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement/) * [National Indigenous Australians Agency: 2023 Referendum on a Voice](https://www.niaa.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/referendum-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-voice) * [South Australia Voice to Parliament](https://www.agd.sa.gov.au/aboriginal-affairs-and-reconciliation) * [First Peoples Treaty Victoria](https://www.firstpeoplesvic.org/) * [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/un-declaration-rights-indigenous-peoples-1) |
| **Challenges to democratic policy-making** | Students may inquire into the extent to which Australia’s policy-making process is able to ensure representation, accountability and provide equal opportunities for participation; one domestic policy chosen from areas such as education, health, the environment, immigration or the economy; the factors that influence the formulation of the policy and its passage into law; the contributions of political actors; and the challenges to democratic policy-making, such as the influence of private and partisan interests or financial political constraints and the political significance of those challenges.  Suggested inquiry questions are:  A. Is the Australian domestic policy-making process sufficiently democratic?   * Is it transparent? * Is it free from pork-barrelling, logrolling and ‘jobs for the boys’? * Is it equally accessible to a variety of community groups and interested parties? * Is accountability ensured and if so, how? * Where are the weak points in the general process?   B. Using an example of one domestic policy, what are the challenges to its emergence as a democratically created and effective policy?   * Is it representative of a number of different perspectives? * What were the key influences on its formulation? * Did it represent a compromise rather than being passed on its merits? * Are there any barriers to successful implementation of the policy?   C. Could Australia’s policy-making process be made more democratic and more effective?   * Impact of petitions, protests, media, interest groups, experts * Opportunities to make submissions to parliament * Financing the new policy – opportunities and pitfalls | * [Department of PM&C: Domestic Policy](https://www.pmc.gov.au/domestic-policy) * [Who are Australia’s major think tanks?](https://www.govconnex.com/insights/who-are-australias-major-think-tanks) * [The Conversation: Articles on Australian lobby groups](https://theconversation.com/au/topics/australian-lobby-groups-28197) * [OECD: Eight ways to institutionalise deliberative democracy](https://www.oecd.org/gov/open-government/eight-ways-to-institutionalise-deliberative-democracy.htm) |
| **Australia’s constitution** | Students may inquire into issues and contradictions within Australia’s constitution, such as the powers of the Governor-General; the reliance on unwritten rules and traditions, including the role of Cabinet and the Prime Minister; recognition of First Nations Peoples; the question of whether Australia should remain a Constitutional Monarchy or become a Republic; the mechanisms for changing the constitution; the adequacy of rights protection; and possibilities for constitutional reform.  Suggested inquiry questions are:  A. Is Australia’s constitution suitable for the 21st century?   * Its structure and key provisions * Are there sufficient guarantees of democratic practice, including rights within the constitution? * Role of the High Court of Australia * The referendum process   B. Should we become a Republic?   * Powers of the Governor-General * Strengths and weaknesses of our constitutional monarchy * Possible strengths and weaknesses of an Australian Republic   C. Should the powers of the Prime Minister be codified?   * Powers of the Prime Minister * Constraints on prime ministerial power   D. Should constitutional accountability mechanisms be strengthened?   * Constitutional ways of holding the executive and the legislative branches to account * Possible accountability reforms | * [BTN: Why does Australia have a constitution?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TK-Ih5Vzvg) * [Australian Constitution Centre](http://www.australianconstitutioncentre.org.au/) * [PEO: The Australian Constitution](https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/how-parliament-works/the-australian-constitution/) * [PEO: Rights in Australia](https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/how-parliament-works/system-of-government/rights-in-australia/) * [PEO: Referendums and Plebiscites](https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/having-your-say/elections-and-voting/referendums-and-plebiscites/) * [PEO: Why are we a constitutional monarchy?](https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/your-questions-on-notice/questions/why-are-we-a-constitutional-monarchy/) * [Australian Republican Movement](https://republic.org.au/) * [Australians for a Constitutional Monarchy](https://norepublic.com.au/) |
| **Human rights for all: the protection of rights and freedoms in Australia** | In this option, students explore the strengths and weaknesses of rights protection in Australia. In comparison to many other countries, Australians’ rights are well protected by an independent judiciary and the common law, as well as by rights contained in our Constitution, certain statutory mechanisms and our adherence to international human rights law. But are these systems adequate in the face of current and future challenges?  Suggested Inquiry questions are:  A. To what extent do current mechanisms for the protection of rights and freedoms in Australia effectively protect the full range of human rights and freedoms?   * The scope of Constitutional protections * The accessibility and adequacy of Common Law protections * Parliamentary and statutory protections * The significance of Australia’s adherence to international human rights law * Different perspectives on the rights of Australian citizens under the law * Examining examples of human rights protections within Australian states, such as the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities   B. Is there sufficient protection in the practice of the rights of minorities or particular groups?   * Indigenous disadvantage * Gender inequalities * Rights and freedoms of younger people * Refugees, migrant groups and asylum seekers   C. Is Australia’s national interest in conflict with human rights?  Border security  Climate change  National security laws and individual civil rights  D. Should Australia have a constitutional Bill of Rights?   * Possibilities for reforming the constitution * Pros and cons of constitutional versus statutory protections | * [PEO: Rights in Australia](https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/how-parliament-works/system-of-government/rights-in-australia/) * [Australian Human Rights Commission](https://humanrights.gov.au/education) * [Human Rights Watch: Australia](https://www.hrw.org/asia/australia) * [Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities](https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/legal-and-policy/victorias-human-rights-laws/the-charter/) |
| **Integrity, trust, and accountability in government and politics** | In this option, students assess whether our politicians are sufficiently accountable to the people. Students may inquire into the extent of social and political trust in Australian government institutions; political integrity and the mechanisms by which politicians and governments are made accountable to the people and the effectiveness of those mechanisms; the level of corruption in Australian political institutions, processes and practices; and the validity of Commonwealth and state integrity commissions.  Suggested inquiry questions are:  A. How important is it that citizens trust their governments?  Consensus, legitimacy and the Rule of Law  Kinds of trust – social and political; confidence in institutions and leaders  Surveys of ‘trust’ in democratic societies  B. How accountable should our politicians be to the people and what should this mean in practice?  Different meanings of accountability  Different standards of accountability  Different perspectives on accountability of the Australian government, such as the Commonwealth Parliament’s standing orders, the Public Service, an NGO like the Refugee Council or the courts  Case studies of government accountability or lack of accountability to the people  C. How effective are the current mechanisms for keeping governments accountable to the people?  Parliamentary privilege and individual ministerial responsibility  Party discipline and executive dominance of the legislature – agenda, committees, question time  Judicial independence and political interference  The impact of interest groups and media power on accountability  The impact of ‘Big Government’ (the growth in the role of government especially in welfare and economic management) on accountability  Independent electoral commissions, statutory authorities and anti-corruption commissions  D. Is corruption a problem in Australian state and federal governments?  Rorting and pork-barrelling  Nepotism, bullying and ‘Jobs for the boys’  Party pre-selection, electoral funding, political donations, political advertising and campaign techniques  Undermining of accountability institutions  Freedom of information laws, censorship of charities and advocacy groups | * [OECD: What drives trust in government?](https://www.oecd.org/governance/trust-in-government/) * [AG: Anti-corruption](https://www.ag.gov.au/integrity/anti-corruption) * [Transparency International: Australia](https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/australia) * [APH: Corruption and integrity issues](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BriefingBook46p/IntegrityIssues) * [Victorian Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC)](https://www.ibac.vic.gov.au/) * [ABC News: Corruption](https://www.abc.net.au/news/topic/corruption) |
| **Media ownership, media bias and disinformation** | In this option, students examine the ability of the media in Australia to facilitate accountability and transparency. Citizens need open government and unbiased information in order to be able to hold our elected representatives to account. The media performs a crucial role in the selection, shaping and dissemination of political information, whether via traditional forms, such as public broadcasters, commercial newspapers, television and radio, or newer forms such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Snapchat. Students develop an understanding of the limitations of political journalism and the impact of media forms on the transmission of accurate information.  Suggested Inquiry questions are:  A. To what extent does the media enhance Australian democracy?  Citizen journalism  The 24-hour news cycle  Platforms for political spin and disinformation  Opinion polls and political impacts  Censorship, whistle-blowers and freedom of speech  Case studies  B. To what extent is independent political journalism possible?  Concentrated media ownership  Commercial interests and imperatives: infotainment  Challenges for the public broadcaster – financial, legal and cultural  Case studies  C. Is this a post-truth age?  Sources of misinformation and bias  Weakness of the watchdogs – accountability institutions  Cyber threats and global agendas  Case studies | * [Disinformation and Misinformation](https://www.internationalcybertech.gov.au/our-work/security/disinformation-misinformation) * [ABC: Questioning Media](https://www.abc.net.au/education/media-literacy/questioning-media) * [ACMA: Media interests snapshots](https://www.acma.gov.au/media-interests-snapshot) * [USC Media and political bias](https://libguides.usc.edu.au/help-evaluating/bias) * [Reporters Without Borders: Australia](https://rsf.org/en/country/australia) * [The Conversation: Articles on media bias](https://theconversation.com/au/topics/media-bias-16618) |
| **The people’s voice: representation of all Australians?** | Students may inquire into the extent to which all Australians are represented and can participate meaningfully in decision-making, through examining areas such as the meaning and aims of representation; the representation of minorities and majorities; the mechanisms by which representation is achieved; the degree to which federal, state and territory parliaments effectively represent all Australians, and the impact of compulsory voting, opinion polling and political parties on representation; the extent of opportunities for participation; inequalities in political power and decision-making; and possible reforms to achieve greater representation and participation.  Suggested inquiry questions are:  A. What should be the aims of representation?  Models of representation: trustee, delegate, party mandate and descriptive / microcosmic representation and the advantages and disadvantages of each  Positive and negative impacts of different voting systems:   * Single Member Plurality / First Past the Post – (USA, Canada and UK House of Commons). * Second Ballot System (France and some other presidential systems). * Alternative Vote / preferential voting (Australian House of Representatives and most lower houses of state parliaments) * Mixed Member Proportional (New Zealand, Germany and others) * Single Transferable Vote / Proportional Voting (Republic of Ireland and the Australian Senate among others).   The impact of opinion polls and parties on the representativeness of Australian elections  Anomalies and deficits in the representation of Australians  B. Is compulsory voting more democratic than voluntary voting?  Impacts on election results  Impacts on representativeness  Comparative case studies  C. How can the voice of all Australians be heard?  Opportunities for participation in politics  Inequalities in political power and decision-making  The role of technology in developing participation  Possible reforms to enable more equal and equitable representation and participation | * [Global Democracy Index](https://www.unesco.org/en/world-media-trends/global-democracy-index) * [PEO: Elections and Voting](https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/having-your-say/elections-and-voting/) * [Definitions of Voting Systems](https://www.ecanz.gov.au/electoral-systems/definitions-voting-systems) * [TED-Ed: Which voting system is the best?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaxVCsnox_4) (video) * [The Guardian: The 47th parliament is the most diverse ever – but still doesn’t reflect Australia](https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/jul/25/the-47th-parliament-is-the-most-diverse-ever-but-still-doesnt-reflect-australia) |
| **Women and power** | Students may inquire into the challenges to the achievement of gender equality in Australia and the world, such as past and present barriers in society and the Australian political system; cultural norms and practices that contribute to inequality; ideas of feminism and equality, parliamentary and party inequality, strategies through which to advocate for and act on gender equality issues, party quotas; women in political leadership, media representation of women and international cases studies.  Suggested inquiry questions are:  A. Is political equality between men and women important?  Areas of inequality of power  Impacts of inequality of power, including on representation, human rights, active participation and policy / legislative effectiveness  B. What are the challenges to the achievement of gender equality in politics?  Structural constraints on women’s advancement in politics  Social and cultural constraints on women’s power  Diversity of interests and perspectives in what needs to change | * [Workplace Gender Equality Agency](https://www.wgea.gov.au/) * [Australia’s 47th Parliament features new, more diverse faces](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-05-23/federal-parliament-new-diverse-representatives/101092182) * [The Conversation: The missing women of Australian politics](https://theconversation.com/the-missing-women-of-australian-politics-research-shows-the-toll-of-harassment-abuse-and-stalking-168567) * [Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments](https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking?month=12&year=2022) * [SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/) * [World Economic Forum: Diversity and inclusion](https://www.weforum.org/topics/inclusive-design/) * [Human Rights Watch: Women’s Rights](https://www.hrw.org/topic/womens-rights) * [Women for Election](https://wfe.org.au/) |
| **Big money and democracy** | In this option, students investigate the impacts of big money on the democratic process. Money influences much more than the outcome of elections. It affects policy-making and laws as well as contributing to worsening inequality in Australian society. Students may inquire into the impacts of corporate lobbying and economic pressure on the democratic process, such as political donations; advertising and campaign funding of political parties; the activities of professional lobby groups; powerful interest groups and the media, and the impact of economic imperatives on inequality and national security.  Suggested inquiry questions are:  A. How does money influence elections?  Election advertising and campaign funding  Sectional interests using funds to influence policies pre and during the election  Public funding of elections and campaign disclosure rules  Lack of caps on political donations to political parties  B. How does money influence policies and laws?  Professional lobby groups and powerful interest groups  Media influence  C. How does money affect national security?  Foreign investment and trade interests  Foreign interference laws  Data analytics and cyber threats  D. Does inequality impact human rights and trust in Australian democracy?  Income and wealth inequality in Australia  Taxation laws, tax avoidance and wealth distribution  Social Security  Unemployment and underemployment | * [AEC Transparency Register](https://transparency.aec.gov.au/) * [Grattan Institute: Electoral funding](https://grattan.edu.au/news/heres-who-funded-the-2022-election/) * [Big Deal (Apple TV+ 2021)](https://tv.apple.com/au/show/big-deal/umc.cmc.1jx5jr6s37ujrolngkt6zd2c0) * [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/international-organisations) |
| **Australia’s federal system: fractured or fit for purpose?** | Australia adopted a ‘Washminster’ system – a combination of the Westminster system of bicameral parliamentary government and the federal system of the United States, which aims to protect the rights of the states through a Senate. There are a number of advantages of federations. But there are also claims that our Federal system has limitations. Students may inquire into issues associated with Australian federalism, such as its constitutional and legal underpinnings; the funding and responsibilities of state governments compared with the federal government; the suitability of federal or state governments to manage challenges such as poverty and disadvantage; ‘natural’ disasters or climate change; and the impact of federalism on democracy.  Suggested inquiry questions are:  A. How is federalism set up in the Australian constitution?  The division of powers and section 51  The Senate  Other mechanisms  The historical justifications for federalism  B. How are state and federal governments funded?  Direct and indirect taxation, including the GST  Influence of the High Court  The ‘National Cabinet’  C. Which level of government is better equipped to manage challenges such as poverty and disadvantage, ‘natural’ disasters or climate change?  Advantages and disadvantages of federalism  D. How does the federal system impact Australian democratic values, institutions and processes?  Impact of federalism on political parties, elections, human rights and community finances  Cooperative federalism or conflict, buck-passing and blame-game | * [National Museum of Australia: Federation](https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/federation) * [Australian Constitution Centre: Federalism](http://www.australianconstitutioncentre.org.au/federalism.html) * [PEO: Division of Powers](https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/your-questions-on-notice/questions/how-does-the-constitution-divide-powers-of-the-government-and-how-were-the-state-responsibilities-derived/) * [National Cabinet](https://federation.gov.au/national-cabinet) * [APH: About the Senate](https://www.aph.gov.au/about_parliament/senate/about_the_senate) |
| **Party politics, participation and partisanship** | As is the case in many modern democracies, the operation of Australia’s political system is dominated by political parties. The two major political parties, the Australian Labor Party and the Liberal-National Coalition, although often claiming to be a ‘broad church’ are in fact quite narrow in their representation of society and quite strict in their expectation of party loyalty. How has the two-party system impacted Australia’s democracy? Minor parties and independents are on the rise in Australian politics, perhaps as a result of disenchantment with the major parties. Students may inquire into the impacts of political parties on democracy, such as the influence of political parties and the two-party system on representation, accountability, participation and on the effectiveness of legislation and the federal system; the extent to which parties impact on political leadership, and their contribution to partisanship in Australia; and the rise of minority parties and independents and the implications of this for Australian democracy.  Suggested inquiry questions are:  A. How does the two-party system impact on Australian democracy?  Opportunities for representation  Control of preselection  B. What is the significance of minor parties?  Who do they represent?  How are they represented?  How much power do they have?  What are the reasons for their growth or decline?  C. What are the impacts of party discipline?  Representation  Accountability  Law-making  Federalism?  D. Do parties encourage participation?  Opportunities for participation such as membership, standing for office, enabling agenda setting and public discussion  The rise of independents, minor parties and social movements in the face of the dominance of the two major parties  E. Is Australian politics too partisan?  Move towards the middle ground  Subsuming of disparate ideologies / candidates under a major party platform  Examination of various case studies | * [AEC Register of Political Parties](https://www.aec.gov.au/parties_and_representatives/party_registration/Registered_parties/) * [PEO: Political Parties](https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/parliament-and-its-people/people-in-parliament/political-parties/) * [Women for Election](https://wfe.org.au/) * [The Conversation: Preselection and parachuting candidates](https://theconversation.com/preselection-and-parachuting-candidates-3-reasons-parties-override-their-local-branch-members-despite-the-costs-180125) |
| **Australia and global citizenship** | Students may inquire into the extent to which Australia acts as a responsible international citizen through contributing to the resolution of global issues, such as climate change, refugees, poverty, armed conflicts or human rights breaches and the way in which we – the ‘lucky country’ - are perceived by other states and political actors.  Suggested inquiry questions are:  A. Are Australia’s national interests balanced with it global citizenship obligations?  Adherence to international laws, including human rights laws  Contribution to global and regional issues, climate change  B. How is Australia perceived in the global community in terms of its global citizenship? | * [DFAT: International Relations](https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations) * [Soft power 30: Australia](https://softpower30.com/country/australia/) * [Lowy Institute Asia Power Index](https://power.lowyinstitute.org) * [HRW: Australia](https://www.hrw.org/asia/australia) |

Unit 2 Area of Study 2

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| Option | Outline | Resources |
| **Sovereignty and the national interest** | Students may inquire into the impacts of states prioritising their own sovereignty and interests to the detriment of the interests of other actors or of global frameworks supporting human rights and the rule of law and the degree to which these frameworks are able to regulate the actions of states.  Suggested inquiry questions are:   1. How does the concept of the sovereignty of states impact upon the legitimacy and spread of democracy?   Does sovereignty contradict the notion of a cosmopolitan global community?  Is national interest a legitimate justification for state action?  Are ‘sovereignty’ and ‘national interest’ only effective tools for the most powerful states?  Do sovereign states, including democracies, have the right to be undemocratic?  Are the concepts of sovereignty and national interest a recipe for inevitable conflict?   1. What is more important – popular sovereignty or state sovereignty?   Justifications for different types of governments – absolute monarchies, theocracies, state socialism, republics and more  Why should people rule themselves?   1. How can sovereignty and / or the concept of national interest undermine free and fair elections, accountability and transparency, the rule of law and human rights and freedoms? 2. How do complex notions of sovereignty enhance or complicate the national interest?   The relevance of colonialism, hegemony and/or recognition to understanding sovereignty  The debates and discussion that ‘sovereignty was never ceded’ within Australia | * [Types of Sovereignty](https://www.studysmarter.us/explanations/geography/migration-and-identity/sovereignty/) * [Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy: Sovereignty](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sovereignty/) * [CFR Education: Sovereignty explained](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0EggqmMixig) (video) * [China and sovereignty](https://decodingchina.eu/sovereignty/) * [UN: Responsibility to Protect](https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.shtml) |
| **Problems with the current rules-based international order** | Students may inquire into the use and abuse of power by states within institutions of global governance, such as the ability of powerful states to use institutions of global governance for their own advantage; accusations of structural and cultural bias; the costs of these actions to the legitimacy and spread of democracy; and calls for reform to these institutions.  Suggested inquiry questions are:  A. To what extent are institutions, structures and processes that support the rules-based order performing their intended function?  The aims and functions of various IGOs, such as the UN, the IMF, the ICC, the G7 and the WTO  The effectiveness of various structures and frameworks within these institutions, such as the General Assembly and the Security Council, the International Court of Justice, the [subsidiary organs of the UN](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/21-00054e_un_system_chart_11x8.5_4c_en_3p.pdf), the IMF, the World Health Organization or the World Bank Group,  Rules, laws and norms, such as the Human Rights framework treaties, the responsibility to Protect, UNSC Resolutions  Enforcement of the rules-based order  B. How democratic is the rules-based order itself?  Power within the institutions  Accountability of the supporting institutions  Equality within the supporting institutions  Financing of the institutions  C. Do the existing institutions of global governance encourage the legitimacy and spread of democracy?  Do they validate democratic principles through their programmes, norms and laws?  Are they capable of fostering democratic institutions and processes in nations and states?  How are they regarded by their member states, non-member states, and other global actors?  D. Do global actors support or undermine the rules-based order?  The significance of the national interest of states  Violations of territorial sovereignty  State and non-state terrorism  Lack of regulation of TNCs  The contributions of NGOs   1. Does the rules-based order need reform?   Proposed reforms of the rules-based order  Willingness of states to act in the interest of the rules-based order  Is the rules-based order still a relevant system? | * [Strategic context: The rules-based international system](https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/atlantic-council-strategy-paper-series/strategic-context-the-rules-based-international-system/) * [GMF: What is the liberal international order?](https://www.gmfus.org/news/what-liberal-international-order) * [The Interpreter (Lowy Institute): But what does “rules-based order” mean?](https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/what-does-rules-based-order-mean) * [Asialink: Perspectives: ‘Rules-Based’ Order in the Post-Unipolar World](https://asialink.unimelb.edu.au/stories/rules-based-order-in-the-post-unipolar-world) * [CFR: China’s Approach to Global Governance](https://www.cfr.org/china-global-governance/) * [Debate: China and the Rules-Based Order (Lowy Institute)](https://interactives.lowyinstitute.org/features/china-rules-based-order/) * [Financial Times: Is there such a thing as a rules-based order?](https://www.ft.com/content/664d7fa5-d575-45da-8129-095647c8abe7) (podcast) |
| **Authoritarianism** | Students may inquire into the rise of authoritarianism globally, the extent to which authoritarian states are increasing their influence and challenging the legitimacy and spread of democracy, and the impact of democratic states ‘backsliding’ on democratic principles.  Suggested inquiry questions are:  A. How do authoritarian regimes participate in the global arena?  Participation in institutions of global governance  Alliances and blocs of authoritarian regimes  The interaction between democratic and authoritarian regimes  B. To what extent do these authoritarian regimes undermine the spread and legitimacy of democracy?  The use of quasi-democratic practices by authoritarian states to appear democratic  The retreat of democracy in the face of economic or security challenges  Justifications of undemocratic actions / processes based on sovereignty and national interest  The relationship between populism and authoritarianism  C. Can authoritarianism be present in democracies?  The meaning of authoritarian?  Degrees of authoritarianism  Has the world become more or less democratic over the last 10 years? | * [Freedom House: The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule](https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2022/global-expansion-authoritarian-rule) * [ECPR: International Dimensions of Authoritarian Rule](https://ecpr.eu/Events/Event/SectionDetails/571) |
| **‘Big tech’ and the media** | Students may inquire into the impacts of information, misinformation and disinformation; news media as entertainment; the lack of accountability and transparency of ‘Big tech’, state laws versus big tech and the impact of ‘Big tech’ and the media on democratic processes such as elections.  Suggested inquiry questions are:  A. How have the media and ‘Big tech’ assisted the spread of democratic principles globally?  The ‘democratisation’ of information  The immediacy of news  Choice of news organisations, depending on views  B. In what way does the media and ‘Big tech’ pose a challenge to democratic principles?  Information, misinformation and disinformation  State laws versus ‘Big tech’  The interests of the owners of ‘Big tech’  C. How has at least ONE ‘Big tech’ company had an impact on global politics?  Media and / or ‘Big tech’ impact on significant elections and electoral processes  Support for, or criticism of, specific causes  Reporting on conflict zones  D. How does the media and/or ‘Big tech’ impact personal freedom, privacy and agency?  The digital footprint of the individual citizen  Storage and ownership of content  Access to personal information and cyber-threats | * [Big Tech, Big Government: The Challenges of Regulating Internet Platforms](https://www.nationalaffairs.com/big-tech-big-government-challenges-regulating-internet-platforms) * [MIT: Generative AI risks concentrating Big Tech’s power. Here’s how to stop it.](https://www.technologyreview.com/2023/04/18/1071727/generative-ai-risks-concentrating-big-techs-power-heres-how-to-stop-it/) * [Australia takes the international lead in social media regulation](https://www.socialmedialawbulletin.com/2022/02/australia-takes-the-international-lead-in-social-media-regulation/) * [Amnesty Internatiional: Myanmar: Facebook’s systems promoted violence](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/09/myanmar-facebooks-systems-promoted-violence-against-rohingya-meta-owes-reparations-new-report/) * [Disinformation and Misinformation](https://www.internationalcybertech.gov.au/our-work/security/disinformation-misinformation) |
| **Sustainability and resource security** | Students may inquire into the need for global sustainability, the actions of states in pursuing or undermining sustainability, the impacts of food and energy insecurity on human rights and the rule of law; decisions made by global actors when pursuing resource security, and the impact on democratic processes of access to / ownership of finite resources  Suggested inquiry questions are:  A. How does global interconnectedness impact on the sustainable use of resources?  The activities of mining, agricultural and energy transnational corporations  The impact of global supply chains on human rights and the rule of law  The impact of global interconnectedness on ownership of land and water resources  Lack of global redistribution mechanisms  B. What are the likely impacts of resource insecurity on democratic processes and practices?  The influence of economic liberalism and free market principles on equity and inequality  Impacts on political stability and governance | * [UN Sustainable Development Goals](https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIrMzAnafG_gIV0Ud9Ch11GgC5EAAYAiAAEgLzmfD_BwE) * [Our World in Data: How do CO2 emissions compare when we adjust for trade?](https://ourworldindata.org/consumption-based-co2#additional-information) * [Climate Council: Land Carbon: No substitute for action on fossil fuels](https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/land-carbon-report/) * [RESET: The Social and Environmental Impact of Mobile Phones](https://en.reset.org/knowledge/ecological-impact-mobile-phones) * [Nature Sustainability: The importance of resource security for poverty eradication](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41893-021-00708-4) |
| **State use of violence** | Students may inquire into the direct or indirect use of violence by states and the threat this poses to the legitimacy and spread of democracy, the human rights implications of state violence, and the capacity of global frameworks to help resolve the violence.  Suggested inquiry questions are:  A. Why do states use violence, externally and internally?  National security, economic or territorial issues  Disputed legitimacy  Secessionist movements  Racism / cultural discrimination  B. How do states’ use of violence undermine the legitimacy and spread of democracy?  Impacts on human rights and the rule of law  Inability of the international community to respond to state terrorism  C. How do democracies respond to these challenges?  Global frameworks for cooperation  Diplomacy and negotiation  Punitive sanctions | * [Global Peace Index](https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/#/) * [CFR: Understanding intrastate conflict](https://world101.cfr.org/how-world-works-and-sometimes-doesnt/conflict/understanding-intrastate-conflict#:~:text=Definition%3A%20Conflicts%20involving%20the%20police,those%20from%20a%20minority%20group.) * [Our World in Data: War and Peace](https://ourworldindata.org/war-and-peace) * [Amnesty International: Armed Conflict](https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/armed-conflict/) * [Geneva Academy: Today’s Armed Conflicts](https://geneva-academy.ch/galleries/today-s-armed-conflicts) * [Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect](https://www.globalr2p.org/) * [PolicyEd: Why Nations Go To War](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTiYHyKbX1E) (video) * [ICRC: What are the Rules of War?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwpzzAefx9M) (video |
| **Populism** | Students may inquire into how democracies can shift towards populism, the individual leaders who represent populism, and the way in which they attract and maintain popular support and the impact of this movement on the legitimacy and spread of democracy and democratic principles worldwide.  Suggested inquiry questions are:  A. What is populism with relation to democracy?  Different forms of populism  How do populist politics differ to mainstream politics?  The populist view of state sovereignty  B How does populism undermine the legitimacy and spread of democracy?  The criticisms of internationalism by populist leaders  The combination of nationalism and populism in Western democracies  The relationship between populism and authoritarianism  Attitudes of populist leaders to global issues such as people movement and climate change | * [The Conversation: What actually is populism? And why does it have a bad reputation?](https://theconversation.com/what-actually-is-populism-and-why-does-it-have-a-bad-reputation-109874) * [Populism is reshaping our world](https://youtu.be/ekc5EAPPPgk) (video) * [The Conversation: How Donald Trump’s populist narrative led directly to the assault on the US Capitol](https://theconversation.com/how-donald-trumps-populist-narrative-led-directly-to-the-assault-on-the-us-capitol-153277) * [The Atlantic: Populism is meaningless](https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2020/03/what-is-populism/607600/) |
| **Global interconnectedness** | Students may inquire into the impact of global technology, global capitalism and consumerism on the legitimacy and spread of democracy, such as cyber interference in elections, the monopoly of global media power, how global supply chains impact on human rights, and the increasing power of transnational corporations and how this affects the capacity for participatory democracy.  Suggested inquiry questions are:   1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of global interconnectedness?   Technology promotes and enables global communication  The relationship between global interconnectedness and sovereignty  Diversity and monopolies in commerce   1. Is it important for states to have domestic capacity to supply its citizens?   Cost of goods made domestically versus imports  Supply chain fragility   1. Are transnational corporations more powerful than states?   Examine value of top transnational corporations and how they compare to different states  How transnational corporations use global interconnectedness to strengthen their power   1. Does interconnection and interdependence promote global peace?   The relationship between free trade and peace  Look at contemporary examples where interdependence has strengthened or weakened relationships between states  The importance of free movement of trade, particularly shipping lanes   1. How does global interconnectedness strengthen and weaken effective responses to global crises?   Examine a particular issue or case study, such as climate change or the pandemic | * [Our World in Data: Research and data to make progress against the world's largest problems](https://ourworldindata.org/) * [Our world in data: Trade and Globalisation](https://ourworldindata.org/trade-and-globalization) * [Global flows: The ties that bind in an interconnected world](https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/global-flows-the-ties-that-bind-in-an-interconnected-world) * [The new global monopolies](https://www.intelligentinvestor.com.au/investment-news/the-new-global-monopolies/152395) |