



TEACHER GUIDE

STUDENT-LED CIVICS & CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

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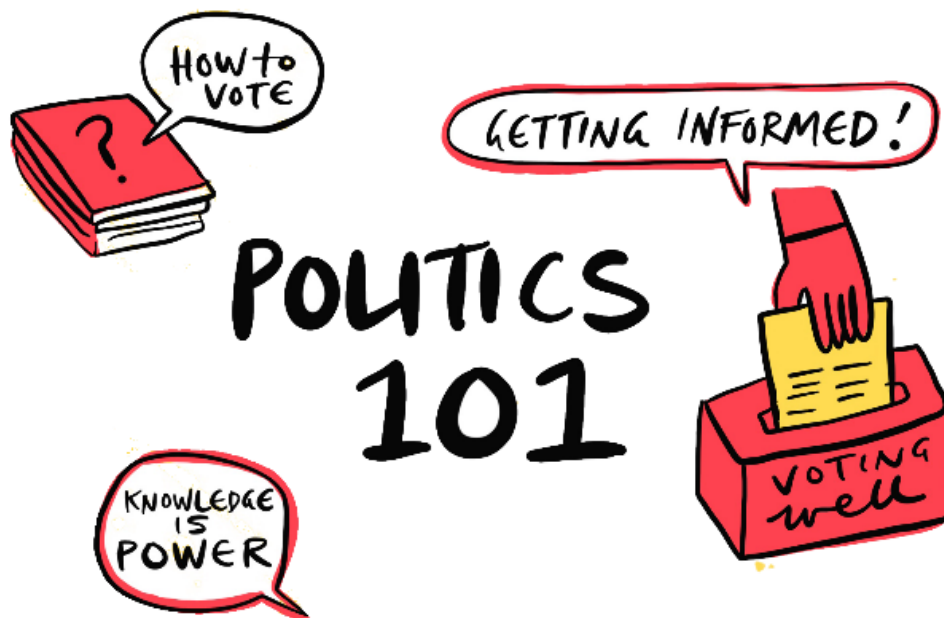
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STUDENT FOREWORD

At Victorian Student Representative Council's (VicSRC) student-led event [Congress 2019](#), Victorian secondary students voted Politics 101 as one of the top action priorities for VicSRC to work on. We felt that we were not learning the things we needed to know to become active and informed citizens.

VicSRC formed a working group of students from across Victoria who, with the support of VicSRC staff, collaborated with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) to help solve this issue and create student-led civics and citizenship resources. These resources were created by students, for students, and focus on five topics chosen by us:

- policy
- voting
- citizenship
- media
- active civic participation.

We consulted with education organisations, principals, teachers and students to gather ideas and feedback. We also collaborated with professionals to create the animations and interviewed students and experts to help other students to understand these topics. We are proud of the work we have done and feel that this is an important project. We believe that young people's understanding and passion for civics and citizenship is critical to the future of our communities. We hope that these resources inspire your students to take action in their school and community.

Rumaan Baryalai

VicSRC Civics and Citizenship Student Working Group

VicSRC Student Executive Advisory Committee member 2019–2020

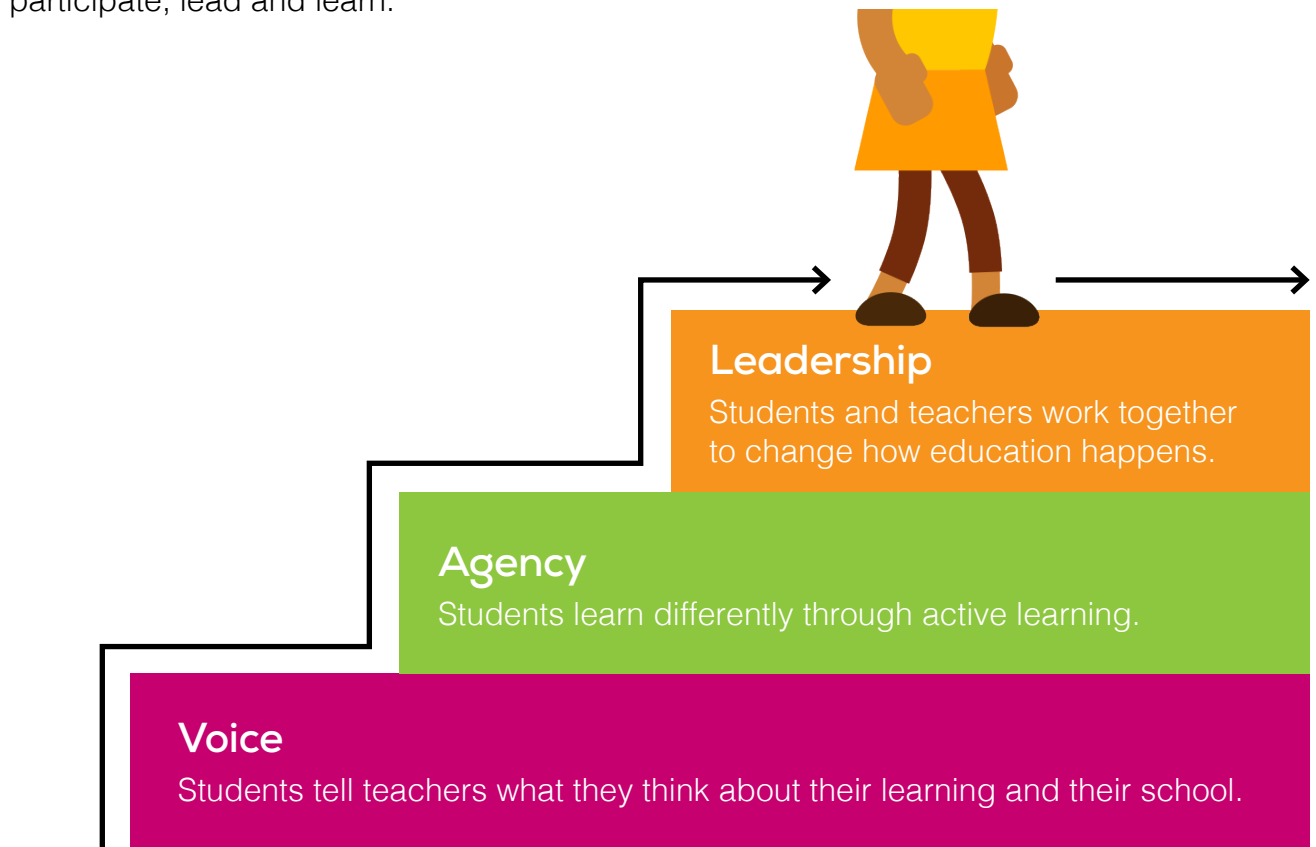


About this guide

The teacher guide is designed for teachers to support student-led civics and citizenship activities that are aligned to the Victorian Curriculum Civics and Citizenship Levels 3–10. These student-led activities can be incorporated into your teaching and learning program.

STUDENT VOICE, AGENCY AND LEADERSHIP

Students have unique perspectives on learning, teaching and schooling, and they should have the opportunity to actively shape their own education. Student voice, agency and leadership includes students contributing to decision-making processes and collectively influencing outcomes. Student voice, agency and leadership allow students to engage, participate, lead and learn.



These resources have been created by students, for students, to support student voice, agency and leadership in classrooms and schools and encourage student-led education practices. The creation of these resources is an example of how students and educators can work in partnership to support teaching and learning in schools.

- Voice: Students expressed their opinions that more support for civics and citizenship education was necessary.
- Agency: Students determined which topics they felt the resources should cover and the method that would be used in teaching and learning.
- Leadership: Students worked collaboratively with education professionals to create the resources.



Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO)

‘All students are empowered to learn and achieve, experiencing high quality teaching practice and the best conditions for learning which equip them with the knowledge, skills and dispositions for lifelong learning and shaping the world around them.’

– Victoria’s vision for learning, Department of Education and Training (DET), 2018

Enabling student voice, agency and leadership through the curriculum actively supports DET’s FISO Dimension ‘Empowering students and building school pride’ and Essential Element #4 ‘Student voice, agency and leadership in own learning activated so students have positive school experiences and can act as partners in school improvement’ (DET, 2015).

For more information on student voice, agency and leadership go to:

- [Student voice practice guide \(Amplify\)](#), a teaching guide by the Victorian Department of Education and Training
- [Student Voice & the Education State](#), which has strategies for teachers and students created by VicSRC
- [Student Voice Hub](#), which hosts student blogs, discussion forums and resources
- [Victorian Student Representative Council](#), which has programs and professional development to assist your school to empower student voices.

Tips to support authentic student-led learning

The most effective support teachers can provide students to empower them to have agency over their learning is to create time and space for this to occur. Some students may not have had the opportunity to lead their own learning, and for this to happen authentically, teachers should ensure the following conditions are enabled:

- access to information
- opportunities for peer mentoring
- permission to make and learn from mistakes
- appropriate time to explore learning through different activities.

TEACHING CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP

Here are some of the challenges teachers have identified in teaching civics and citizenship as well as some tools to assist in navigating these challenges.

Unfamiliarity with topics within the Civics and Citizenship Curriculum

We recommend looking through the following resources to refresh your knowledge:

- [Passport to Democracy](#) from the Victorian Electoral Commission
- [Parliament of Victoria Education Zone](#)
- [Australian Electoral Commission](#)
- [Parliamentary Education Office](#)
- [Museum of Australian Democracy](#)
- [Victoria Law Foundation](#).

Concern around facilitating unbiased discussions about politics

We recommend you focus on the development of critical analysis and critical thinking skills to encourage understanding of diversity in Australian politics. [DET's Literacy Teaching Toolkit](#) and [Project Zero's Thinking Routines Toolbox](#) can help you with this.

Difficulty in relating concepts in the Victorian Curriculum Civics and Citizenship Levels 3–10 to students' everyday experiences

These resources are specifically designed to relate civics and citizenship concepts to students' experiences at school and in their community. We encourage you to take the time to read through this guide and review the activities in the resources to ensure students have the opportunity to apply their learning in real life.

HOW TO USE THESE RESOURCES

The curriculum links and tips matrix (pp. 10–16) provides an overview of the topics addressed in these student-led resources and their alignment to the Victorian Curriculum Civics and Citizenship Levels 3–10. Each resource covers a particular curriculum band (two levels) of Victorian Curriculum Civics and Citizenship. Each topic aligns to parts of the achievement standards and specific content descriptions. This will support teacher planning. The matrix also provides some useful tips for teachers and additional resources.

Each topic area in a resource should take your class approximately three lessons to complete and includes activities to assist you to scaffold the work with your students. The topics are designed to build on the knowledge and skills learned in the previous topic.

Topics addressed in these resources are:

| Levels 3 & 4 | Levels 5 & 6 | Levels 7 & 8 | Levels 9 & 10 |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Voting | Policy | Policy | Policy |
| Citizenship | Voting | Voting | Voting |
| Active civic participation | Citizenship | Citizenship | Media |
| | Active civic participation | Active civic participation | Active civic participation |

These resources are designed for students to use themselves, with support from you. You can take a student-led approach to civics and citizenship by supporting students to lead themselves, a small group or the class through watching, reading, discussing and taking action.

Watch: Short documentary films (five minutes) explaining the topic and featuring the stories of students and experts.

Read: Texts designed to provide students with the necessary background to tackle the topic.

Discuss: Questions for your students to discuss in groups that prompt reflection on what they have watched and read. The questions will get them thinking about the topic and making connections between this and their prior knowledge and experiences.

Take action: Activities for the students to complete that link the topic to opportunities in their school or community. These can be done as a group or individually. These activities are designed to encourage your students to:

- tackle challenging questions
- conduct their own research and form their own opinions
- make a genuine and authentic impact with their work
- have agency in their learning
- reflect on what they have learned
- develop their work using feedback from peers, teachers and the community.

LEVELS 3 & 4 RESOURCE: VICTORIAN CURRICULUM CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP LINKS AND TIPS

| Topic | Link to achievement standard | Content descriptions | Take action activity | Tips for teachers | Helpful additional links and resources |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|--|---|
| Voting | Explain how decisions can be made democratically. | <p>Identify features of government ... and describe key democratic values. (VCCCG001)</p> <p>Identify how and why decisions are made democratically in communities. (VCCCG002)</p> | Doing direct democracy: Work together to use a democratic process to make a decision about your class or school. | Democracy takes time. Leave enough time for your students to lead the activity and fully explore it. | Parliamentary Education Office provides a definition of democracy, the ideals that underpin a democratic society and the four key ideas of Australian Democracy. The Democracy page provides more information. |
| Citizenship | Describe factors that shape a person's identity and sense of belonging. | Describe the different cultural, religious and/or social groups to which they and others in the community may belong. (VCCCC007) | Creating art about community: Create a piece of art that explains the communities that you belong to. | This could be an individual activity done in collaboration with the art teacher and displayed for the whole school to see and engage with. | 8 Ways is a pedagogical framework designed to enable teachers to include Aboriginal perspectives in their work through Aboriginal learning techniques. Your identity map is a quiz that helps students and educators to identify their cultural standpoint. |
| Active civic participation | Describe how people participate in their community as active citizens. | Investigate why and how people participate within communities and cultural and social groups. (VCCCC006) | Investigating participation: Find out how people participate in their local community. | This activity could be a student-led project to inform the whole school about ways to participate in the local community. | What is Active Citizens? is a great introductory YouTube video from the British Council Active Citizens. |

LEVELS 5 & 6 RESOURCE: VICTORIAN CURRICULUM CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP LINKS AND TIPS

| Topic | Link to achievement standard | Content descriptions | Take action activity | Tips for teachers | Helpful additional links and resources |
|---------------|---|---|--|--|--|
| Policy | Identify various ways people can participate effectively in groups to achieve shared goals. | Investigate how people with shared beliefs and values work together to achieve their goals and plan for action. (VCCCC016) | Shaping policy together: Work together to create a proposal to change one of your school policies. | This activity can be done individually, in small groups or as a whole class. | The Primary Schools' Parliamentary Convention enables students to discuss and debate social and legal issues that affect them. Head to the National Curriculum Services Victorian Students Parliamentary Program page for more information on how to involve your school in the program. |
| Voting | Explain the importance of the electoral process. | Identify and discuss the key features of the Australian electoral process. (VCCCG010) Identify the roles and responsibilities of electors and representatives in Australia's democracy. (VCCCG011) | Democracy at school: Explore how democratic your school is. | Make sure the principal and school leadership team know you are doing this activity and that students may be approaching them. Help school leadership to engage with the students. | Democratic values from the Victorian Parliament Education Zone is a lesson plan for Levels 5 & 6. For further information about voting and democracy, see Victorian Electoral Commission's Passport to Democracy resource. |

LEVELS 5 & 6 RESOURCE: VICTORIAN CURRICULUM CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP LINKS AND TIPS

| Topic | Link to achievement standard | Content descriptions | Take action activity | Tips for teachers | Helpful additional links and resources |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|--|---|
| Citizenship | <p>Identify the values that underpin Australia's democracy.</p> <p>Explain what it means to be an Australian citizen.</p> | <p>Identify who can be an Australian citizen and describe the rights, responsibilities and shared values of Australian citizenship and explore ways citizens can participate in society. (VCCCC014)</p> | <p>What makes an Australian? Create your own version of the Australian citizenship test.</p> | <p>Be aware that difference of opinions on culture and identity can be challenging for students to discuss. Facilitate the conversation around shared Australian values (see Home Affairs website for Australian values) to support your students with this.</p> | <p>As explained in the Levels 3 & 4 links and tips matrix, Your identity map from 8 Ways is a quiz that helps students and educators to identify their cultural standpoint.</p> |
| Active civic participation | <p>Identify various ways people can participate effectively in groups to achieve shared goals.</p> <p>Analyse contemporary issues and use evidence to support a point of view about civics and citizenship issues.</p> <p>Identify possible solutions to an issue as part of a plan for action.</p> | <p>Investigate how people with shared beliefs and values work together to achieve their goals and plan for action. (VCCCC016)</p> | <p>Solving issues: Work together to identify an issue in your school (or community) that you think needs to be fixed and to find a potential solution.</p> | <p>To support your students to work through this activity, use leading questions to help elicit the answers they need.</p> | <p>Kids Thrive have examples of the projects their students have undertaken to support their community.</p> |

LEVELS 7 & 8 RESOURCE: VICTORIAN CURRICULUM CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP LINKS AND TIPS

| Topic | Link to achievement standard | Content description | Take action activity | Tips for teachers | Helpful additional links and resources |
|--------------------|--|---|--|---|---|
| Policy | <p>Analyse features of Australian democracy, and explain features that enable active participation.</p> <p>Identify ways they can be active and informed citizens, and take action, in different contexts.</p> | <p>Explain how citizens can participate in Australia's democracy, including the use of the electoral system, contact with their elected representatives, use of lobby groups, interest groups and direct action. (VCCCG020)</p> | <p>Shaping policy together: Work together to create a proposal to change one local government or state government policy.</p> | <p>The activity requires that students engage with school leadership or an elected representative to discuss the proposed changes. Be prepared to explain to these groups the nature of the student's activity.</p> | <p>The Secondary Schools' Parliamentary Convention enables students to discuss and debate social and legal issues that affect them. Head to the National Curriculum Services Victorian Students Parliamentary Program page for more information on how to involve your school in the program.</p> |
| Voting | <p>Analyse features of Australian democracy.</p> | <p>Explain how citizens can participate in Australia's democracy, including the use of the electoral system, contact with their elected representatives, use of lobby groups, interest groups and direct action. (VCCCG020)</p> | <p>What's your preference? Run two elections to compare preferential and first-past-the-post election methods.</p> | <p>Ask school leadership if there is a decision pending that would benefit from student input to help validate the election results and enable students to experience democracy in action.</p> | <p>The Museum of Australian Democracy has some helpful ideas about democracy from different perspectives on their Defining Democracy page.</p> |
| Citizenship | <p>Analyse issues about national identity in Australia and the factors that contribute to people's sense of belonging.</p> | <p>Identify how values can promote cohesion within Australian society, including the values of freedom, respect, inclusion, civility, responsibility, compassion, equality and a 'fair go'. (VCCCG025)</p> | <p>Mapping values: Australia's identity is based on the values we all agree to uphold. Analyse how your school identity is based on Australian values.</p> | <p>Be aware that difference of opinions on culture and identity can be challenging for students to discuss. Facilitate the conversation around shared Australian values to support your students with this.</p> | <p>There is more information about our shared values at the Australian Government's Department of Home Affairs Australian Values website.</p> |

LEVELS 7 & 8 RESOURCE: VICTORIAN CURRICULUM CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP LINKS AND TIPS

| Topic | Link to achievement standard | Content descriptions | Take action activity | Tips for teachers | Helpful additional links and resources |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|---|--|
| Active civic participation | Identify ways to be active and informed citizens, and take action, in different contexts. | Explain how citizens can participate in Australia's democracy, including the use of the electoral system, contact with their elected representatives, use of lobby groups, interest groups and direct action. (VCCCG020) | Solving issues: Work together to identify an issue in your school (or community) that you think needs to be fixed and to find a potential solution. | This learning activity asks students to identify an issue in their school or community and to develop and evaluate strategies for change. If a community focus is adopted, you may need to introduce students to the roles of local government and local members of parliament. | Youth Affairs Council Victoria (YACVic) developed a handbook to help young people create change in their community . |

LEVELS 9 & 10 RESOURCE: VICTORIAN CURRICULUM CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP LINKS AND TIPS

| Topic | Link to achievement standard | Content descriptions | Take action activity | Tips for teachers | Helpful additional links and resources |
|---------------|---|--|---|---|---|
| Policy | Evaluate features of Australia's political system, and identify and analyse the influences on people's electoral choices. | Discuss the role of political parties and independent representatives in Australia's system of government, including the formation of governments, and explain the process through which government policy is shaped and developed. (VCCCG028) | Mapping politics: Imagine that you are preparing to vote in a federal election and you need to find out which political party's policies match up with your opinions. | Discussing political parties can be challenging. Facilitate the discussion to focus on critical thinking and analysis rather than opinions. | Learn about political parties and how federal elections work from the Parliamentary Education Office. |
| Voting | Evaluate features of Australia's political system. | Discuss challenges to and ways of sustaining a resilient democracy and cohesive society. (VCCCC036) | Who gets to vote? Run a mock election to explore how excluding groups of people from voting impacts resilient democracy. | Support your students to recognise the importance of voting by making the mock election an event. | Australia has an interesting democratic history, which is explained in Judith Brett's engaging book <i>From Secret Ballot to Democracy Sausage – How Australia got Compulsory Voting</i> (Text Publishing, 2019). For further information about voting and democracy, see the Victorian Electoral Commission's Passport to Democracy resource. |

LEVELS 9 & 10 RESOURCE: VICTORIAN CURRICULUM CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP LINKS AND TIPS

| Topic | Link to achievement standard | Content descriptions | Take action activity | Tips for teachers | Helpful additional links and resources |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| Media | Identify and analyse the influences on people's electoral choices. | Analyse how citizens' political choices are shaped, including the influence of the media. (VCCCG030) | Real vs fake: Pick an issue that you are passionate about and create a piece of media that could be persuasive to other students at your school. You're going to make two versions of your piece of media – one real, one fake. The real one will persuade your audience of the factual truth and your fake news piece will try and persuade them of a not-so-factual truth. | This can be a contentious topic and it may not be simple or possible for students to fully recognise real and fake news. Facilitate discussions to focus on critical thinking and analysis rather than whether the content is true or not. | ABC Education has resources to assist students to develop media literacy . |
| Active civic participation | Evaluate a range of factors that sustain democratic societies and analyse ways they can be active and informed citizens in different contexts, taking into account multiple perspectives and ambiguities. | Discuss challenges to and ways of sustaining a resilient democracy and cohesive society. (VCCCC036) Discuss how and why groups, including religious groups, participate in civic life. (VCCCC037) | Go out and participate! Research your local community to see what you could do to actively participate. | We encourage you to talk about your own experiences of active participation, either currently or historically. Encourage school leadership to promote the opportunities your students have researched through whole school communications (like a school newsletter or website). | Social Education Victoria developed the Make Change Happen Project to give students an opportunity to work on a student-led change project in their school, local community or even globally. There are some useful templates and teacher checklists as well as some great examples of student-led projects on their website. |

