**VICTORIAN STUDENTS’ PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAM (VSPP) 2025:**

**PRIMARY SCHOOL CONVENTION**

**Topic**

*Should voting be compulsory in Australia?*

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| **TEACHER RESOURCE** |

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## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

The pre-convention activities and resources provided to support the VSPP are **suggestions** only.

They have been developed to help students prepare for the Primary School Convention to debate this topic in more detail.

The pre-convention activities and resources provided can be completed independently of each other at the teacher’s discretion and choice. This means the teacher may choose to do **one**, **some**, **or all** of the activities to help build students’ knowledge and to prepare them to be active participants in the Convention.

In using these suggested pre-convention activities and resources, teachers should make themselves aware of the content contained and the complexity of it to ensure it is appropriate for their student cohort within the school context.

Teachers should plan for appropriate support to prepare their students for the Primary School Convention by adapting, updating, extending, or removing activities (including task instructions) and any resources contained in this pack.

Students are ***not*** expected to complete all activities prior to participating in the Convention, nor are they expected to complete all post-convention activities.

## CONTEXT OF THE TOPIC

The debate about whether voting should be compulsory in Australia is often considered during an election year as voters go to the polls to determine who will be the next Prime Minister of Australia or the next Premier of Victoria. Compulsory voting has been a feature of Australian democracy since 1924 when it was introduced to address declining voter turnout after World War 1. This means that all eligible Australian citizens over the age of 18 are required to vote by law in federal, state and local elections Since its implementation Australia has consistently achieved high voter turnouts often exceeding 90%. The debate around compulsory voting in Australia highlights key issues of representation, active citizenship and the balance between civic responsibility and personal freedom of choice. There is still significant public support with 70% of those surveyed in favour of compulsory voting. Some advocates for reform believe that voluntary voting is a better option emphasising the need for improved voter education rather than people going through the motions of voting informally to avoid a fine. This debate question includes historical precedents, as well as strong arguments about civic responsibility versus a person’s freedom to choose. In fact, former US President Barack Obama praised Australia’s compulsory voting system during a speech in 2015 while discussing how to increase voter participation in the United States, which often has a much lower turnout than Australia.

## LINKS TO THE CURRICULUM v2.0

The topic for this Convention strongly aligns with Level 5 and 6 of the Civics and Citizenship Strands of the F-10 Victorian Curriculum Version 2.0.

It introduces students to the key values underpinning Australia’s democratic system of government, learning about representative democracy and voting processes in Australia. It allows them to address key questions such as what is democracy in Australia, why voting in a democracy is important and what it means to be an Australian citizen providing a framework to develop students’ knowledge, understanding and skills.

Civics responsibility is a core element of the Civics and Citizenship curriculum encouraging students to actively engage with their community. The curriculum emphasises the importance of participation in civic processes

Participating in this debate will help them to understand the importance of compulsory voting and how their votes when they turn 18 will contribute to shaping government policies that will affect their lives and communities. Students develop their critical thinking skills to be active, and informed citizens who question, understand and contribute to the community and the world we live in.

**Achievement standard – Levels 5 and 6**

**By the end of Level 6, students can:**

* explain the values and features of Australia’s democratic institutions and systems, including the three levels of government and electoral systems
* explain the different meanings of citizenship and the roles and responsibilities associated with different kinds of citizenship
* develop questions to investigate civics and citizenship issues, using different sources
* explain reasons to participate in democratic processes and deliberate on issues that affect their communities.
* use knowledge and different perspectives from sources to explain contemporary civics and citizenship issues.

**Level 5 & 6 Content Descriptions**

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| **Knowledge****Government and Democracy**Code: VC2HC6K01*Students learn about the features of the Australia’s democratic institutions and systems, including representation in government and electoral systems.* **Elaboration:*** discussing the meaning of democracy, the importance of the key values of Australian democracy and how students apply democratic concepts in familiar contexts
* examining the secret ballot, compulsory voting and preferential voting as key features of Australia’s democracy
* Recognising the role of independent electoral commissions, such as the Australian Electoral Commission or the Victorian Electoral Commission, in administering elections that are open, free and fair

**The link to the topic:**Australia’s democratic structure is based on the principles of representative democracy, the right to vote and fair and transparent elections. Citizens are able to elect members of parliament who best represent their point of view to then make decisions on their behalf. A key element that supports this democratic process is compulsory voting which ensures high participation rates and greater acceptance of elected governments. By requiring all eligible citizens over the age of 18 to vote, Australia’s electoral system promotes the idea of fair representation as an election result will more likely reflect the wishes of the majority. However, the discussion around compulsory voting also raises issues about the freedom of choice and whether individuals should be obligated to participate in this democratic process. Students need to consider both the arguments supporting compulsory voting in Australian elections and the arguments against to enable them to gain a better understanding of this topic preparing them to become active citizens in the community.  |

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| **Knowledge** **Government and Democracy**Code: VC2HC6K02*Students learn about the values, principles and institutions that underpin Australia’s democracy.***Elaboration:*** explaining the influence of the Westminster system in Australia’s democracy
* investigating democratic institutions like parliament, the electoral commission and the independent judiciary
* examining the relationship between these values, such as the rule of law upholding equality or the importance of free and fair elections for participation

**The link to the topic:**Australia’s democracy is founded on key values and principles such as equality, fairness, freedom, andparticipation, which are supported by strong democratic institutions like parliament, the electoral commission, and an independent judiciary. These values guarantee that all citizens have an equal opportunity in determining how the country is governed. Compulsory voting is closely linked to these democratic values, especially the principle of participation. By making voting a legal obligation, Australia guarantees that elections represent the voices of as many citizens as possible, which promotes equality and fairness in decision-making. It further emphasizes that voting is not merely a right, but a civic duty that supports representative democracy. On the other hand, some individuals in the community argue that compulsory voting undermines the democratic value of freedom, particularly the freedom to choose not to participate in the voting process. This highlights an important debate within Australia’s democracy which students will need to consider. How to balance the rights of individuals with what can benefit the whole of the community. The question then of whether voting should be compulsory is linked to the values and institutions that support Australia’s democratic framework. |

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| **Skills****Investigating contemporary civics and citizenship issues**Code: VC2HC6S02*Students learn to locate, select and organise information, data and ideas from different sources to explain a contemporary issue.***Elaboration:*** explaining the democratic values relevant to a contemporary issue
* summarising how citizens have worked together to achieve a civic goal in relation to a contemporary issue

**The link to the topic:**A contemporary issue in Australian democracy is whether voting should remain compulsory. Data from the Australian Electoral Commission shows that compulsory voting leads to consistently high levels of voting participation. With over 90% of eligible voters voting election results reflect the views of the majority of voters. Supporters of compulsory elections claim that this promotes political equality as it allows participation from different social and economic backgrounds. However, those opposed to compulsory voting say that is does not allow freedom of choice and can result in voters making uniformed voting decisions. In other countries like the USA where voting is voluntary, turnout can be as low as 60% raising concerns about fair representation. Students need to consider the conflict between civic responsibility and individual preferences in a democracy as part of their investigations into a contemporary issue given that it is a Federal election year.  |

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| **Skills****Evaluating democratic institutions and systems**Code: VC2HC6S03*Students learn to explain the key values and features of democratic institutions and systems.***Elaboration:*** describing how the process of elections demonstrates the principles of free and fair elections, participation and/or representation

**The link to the topic:**The process of elections in Australia reflects the basic democratic principles of free and fair elections, participation and representation. In Australia elections take place through a clear, transparent and independent system that guarantees that all eligible citizens can vote freely without fear of pressure or intimidation. The principle of participation is supported by compulsory voting which means that all eligible citizens over 18 must vote in state and federal elections. This system means that the elected government reflects the view of the majority of people. Those who oppose compulsory elections argue that it should be a choice if people want to vote rather than be forced or risk a fine. Australia’s system of compulsory elections is seen by many in the community as strengthening democracy as it promotes fairness, inclusivity and accountability.  |
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| **Skills****Participating in civic processes**Code: VC2HC6S05*Students learn to deliberate about an issue that affects their communities.***Elaboration:*** discussing different communities’ responses to a contemporary issue and deciding which community they agree with and why

**The link to the topic**Some communities in Australia strongly support compulsory voting as they believe that it ensures that election results reflect the views of the majority of voters and such strengthen democracy. Others argue that voting should be a matter of personal choice and that forcing individuals to vote can result in uninformed participation. Students need to consider if compulsory voting does encourage civic responsibility allowing citizens to be more involved in this democratic process. There are many examples of countries that do not have compulsory elections leading to low participation rates, so decisions are being made by limited groups in the community. Compulsory voting in Australia does promote broader involvement of the community and holds governments more accountable to voters if they want to remain in power at the next election.  |

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| **Skills****Participating in civic processes**Code: VC2HC6S06*Students learn to explain reasons to participate in democratic processes.***Elaboration:*** role-playing an election or electing a classroom representative and explaining how participating in elections is important for upholding democratic values
* examining how active citizenship achieves a civic goal
* explaining how deliberation and negotiating an outcome are forms of democratic participation

**The link to the topic**Participating in democratic processes is a significant civic skill. Students can investigate this by simulating elections, helping them to understand how voting upholds democratic principles such as fairness and representation. They can also analyse how active citizenship, like campaigning for a particular cause can lead to change. Engaging in discussions and negotiating results teaches students that democracy involves discussion and compromise—not just voting. A central question in Australian democracy is whether voting should be compulsory. While it assists in guaranteeing every individual's voice is acknowledged, some argue it should be an individual decision and choice rather than forced on to those who 18 and are eligible to vote.  |
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| Skills**Communicating**Code: VC2HC6S07*Students learn to explain contemporary civics and citizenship issues using ideas, knowledge and perspectives from different sources***Elaboration:*** creating a pamphlet or poster to describe a recent policy on a contemporary issue
* presenting a speech on why they should be elected as a leader, drawing on democratic values and active citizenship

**The link to the topic**The debate on compulsory voting in Australia is a relevant contemporary issue because it involves democratic values like equality, participation, and responsibility. Students can create a speech or presentation about compulsory elections to show their understanding of democracy and active citizenship. Students can consider the importance of equal participation or the right of choice whether to participate and articulate their opinions in a range of settings and tasks utilising their civic knowledge and own viewpoint.  |

**Critical and Creative Thinking Levels 5 and 6**

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| **Reasoning**Code: VC2CC6R01*Students learn about ways to identify, structure and communicate an argument that uses sub-arguments leading to a main conclusion.***Elaboration:*** exploring stimulus texts to identify an overall conclusion and the reasons given to support it, and identifying arguments given in support of each of these reasons; for example, identifying that a media text concludes that volunteering is a positive way to contribute to the local community for 3 reasons: it promotes belonging, saves resources and develops skills, and identifying the arguments given in support of each of these reasons
* constructing a point of view that is justified by a range of reasons and then considering which reasons could be unpacked further and argued for

**The link to the topic**Through completion of the pre- and post-convention activities, and attendance and active participation in the Convention students will continue to develop their critical thinking skills as they consider whether elections should be compulsory in Australia. This topic allows them to explore arguments supporting compulsory elections and arguments against it to enable them to understand the democratic process in Australia. Students will be able to break down complex information to small parts through analysis and evaluate the sources, arguments and evidence provided for this Convention. They can draw their own conclusion about the topic and explain whether in their opinion voting should be compulsory in Australia. |

## LEARNING INTENTION FOR THESE STUDENT ACTIVITIES:

**By the completion of these activities students will be able to:**

* Understand the concept of compulsory voting, its historical context and importance for democratic participation
* Investigate different viewpoints on whether voting should be compulsory in Australia
* Develop a personal opinion using reasoning and evidence and be able to articulate this through public speaking and debating skills
* Work collaboratively with other students to discuss ides, complete individual and group tasks and contribute to meaningful discussions about this topic
* Engage in critical thinking by analysing different viewpoints of this topic as well as real world examples

## SUCCESS CRITERIA FOR THESE STUDENT ACTIVITIES:

**Students will be able to:**

* Accurately explain what compulsory voting is and its historical origins in Australia
* Identify and evaluate multiple arguments both supporting and opposing compulsory voting in Australia
* Actively participate in the debate on this topic providing valid arguments during the Convention
* Present their ideas clearly and effectively through the completion of the pre- and post-convention activities
* Justify their opinion on whether they support or oppose compulsory elections using relevant facts, evidence and examples drawn from the Convention

## Activity 1: Introductory Activities

### Activity 1a: Australian Elections and Politics – General Knowledge Quiz

**Learning Intentions**

* We understand Australia’s electoral system and the role of citizens in the democratic process of government.

**Success Criteria**

* I can answer the quiz questions correctly.

**Task Instructions:**

**1. Read each of the questions and circle the correct answer.**

**2. Share with the rest of the class.**

**CORRECTED RESPONSES ARE HIGHLIGHTED BELOW:**

**1. What is the name of the leader of Australia.**

1. **Prime Minister**
2. Governor
3. King
4. Governor

**2. How often are federal elections held in Australia?**

1. Every 2 years
2. **Every 3 years**
3. Every 4 years
4. Every 10 years

**3. What is the minimum voting age in Australia?**

1. 15 years old
2. **18 years old**
3. 21 years old
4. 25 years old

**4. The two houses of the Commonwealth Parliament are:**

1. House of Lords and the Legislative Assembly
2. House of Commons and the Senate
3. **House of Representatives and Senate**
4. Legislative Council and the government

**5. Who is allowed to vote in Australian elections?**

1. Only people born in Australia
2. Anyone who lives in Australia
3. Only police officers and judges
4. **All Australian citizens over 18 years of age**

**6. What happens if an eligible Australian citizen does not vote in an election?**

1. They get a prize
2. Nothing
3. **They may have to pay a fine**
4. They get another chance to vote

**7. Who is the leader of the state government?**

1. The governor
2. **The premier**
3. The mayor
4. the governor general

**8. Victorian State elections are held every**

1. Year
2. Every 2 years
3. Every 3 years
4. **Every 4 years**

**9. What year did Australia hold it first federal election?**

1. **1901 – the elections followed Federation**
2. 1925
3. 1945
4. 2025

**10. Which is the body that is responsible for conducting a federal election in Australia?**

1. The Parliament of Australia
2. The High Court of Australia
3. The Prime Minister’s Office
4. **The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)**

**11. What is compulsory voting?**

1. Voting that requires citizens to vote for only the major parties
2. **A legal requirement for eligible citizens to participate in elections or face penalties**
3. Voting that means participation only during federal elections
4. An optional voting system where citizens can choose whether to vote or not

**12. What role do political parties play in Australian elections?**

1. They only organise public debates
2. **They provide candidates for elections and develop policies**
3. They supervise the counting of votes
4. they control media coverage during election campaigns

**13. The primary document that outline the rules for elections in Australia is**

1. **The Australian Constitution**
2. The Electoral Act
3. The Commonwealth Electoral Commission Guidelines
4. The Political Parties Registration Act

**14. Which of the following is NOT a major political party in Australia?**

1. Liberal Party
2. Australian Greens
3. National Party
4. **Tea Party**

**15. Who is Australia’s Head of State?**

1. The Prime Minister
2. The Governor-General
3. **The King of the United Kingdom - Australia is a constitutional monarchy**
4. The President

### Activity 1b: The Language of Compulsory Voting - Vocabulary Builder

**Learning Intentions**

We understand and are able to use key vocabulary related to elections.

**Success Criteria**

I can match the vocabulary words related to elections with their correct definitions.

**Task Instructions:**

**1. You will be divided into groups of 3-4 and given a set of vocabulary words and definitions.**

**2. Match the words with their correct meaning.**

**3. This is a timed activity so the first team to correctly match the vocabulary wins.**

**4. Your teacher will review the vocabulary to prepare for the rest of this unit of work.**

**SAMPLE RESPONSE**

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| **Word** | **Definition**  |
| **INDEPENDENTS** | Members of the Australian parliament who do not belong to a political party |
| **ELECTORATE** | Geographical area represented by a member of parliament or senator also referred to as a seat |
| **BALLOT PAPER** | Piece of paper listing candidates in an election on which voters can record their choices |
| **LEGISLATION** | The process of making laws |
| **MAJORITY** | More than half of a group often used to decide outcomes in elections based on what most people want |
| **COMPULSORY** | Something that is required or mandatory like laws that everyone must follow |
| **RIGHTS** | Freedoms and entitlements that individuals have like freedom of speech |
| **GOVERNMENT POLICIES** | The actions taken or not taken by governments to focus on issues in society |
| **VOTER** | Person who has the right to vote in an election |
| **DEMOCRACY** | System of government where the people have the power to make decisions directly or through elected representatives  |
| **PARTICIPATION** | Taking part in activities, especially civil matters like voting or community events |
| **OBLIGATION** | A duty or commitment a person has towards others or society which can be legal e.g. paying taxes or moral like helping those in need |
| **CIVIC** | Connected to duties and responsibilities of being a citizen in a community |
| **VOTING** | Choosing someone or something in an election by marking a ballot paper |
| **CAMPAIGN** | Organised effort by candidates and political parties to convince voters during an election to vote for them through speeches, advertisements, and public appearances |
| **FEDERAL** | A system of government that joins several states and a central government |
| **POLITICAL PARTY** | Organisation that represents specific ideas or interests and wants to have it members elected to parliament |
| **CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY** | A king or queen is head of state but has limited power |
| **MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT** | Person who has been elected to represent their electorate in the House of Representatives |
| **PREFERENTIAL VOTING** | Voting system that make it compulsory for voters to mark a preference for every single candidate on the ballot paper |
| **RESPONSIBILITY** | The duty to act correctly and consider the wellbeing of others including participating in duties like voting |
| **OPINION POLL** | A large group of chosen people to fill in a survey to show what they think about a topic |
| **SENATE** | One of the two houses of the Australian Parliament, where Senators are elected to represent their state or territory |
| **CANDIDATE** | Person standing for election to Parliament hoping to win the majority of votes in their electorate |
| **DONKEY VOTE** | A type of ballot where voters rank candidates in the order they appear on the ballot, without considering their actual preferences (listed as 1,2,3 etc) |
| **CONSTITUENTS**  | An individual citizen or voter represented by a politician within an electorate whether at the local, state or federal level |
| **INFORMAL VOTE** | A ballot paper that has been filled out incorrectly |

### Activity 1c: Unpacking Elections, Government and Voting – Comprehension Activity using the resources provided on the Parliament of Victoria website

**Learning Intentions**

* We understand the basic concepts of elections, the structure of government and the voting process in both Australia and Victoria.

**Success Criteria**

* I can write a summary that includes important information about elections and correctly answer a range of questions on Victoria’s system of government demonstrating my understanding of how elections work.

**Task Instructions:**

**1. Work on your own or in a pair to complete this activity.**

**2. For Task 1 summarise the key points made in the video clip.**

**3. For Task 2 complete the four activities as you watch the video clip – your teacher may decide to show some or all of the clips relating to elections, government and voting**

**4. For Task 3 refer to your teacher’s instructions to complete the tasks in relation to the Representation and Democracy Unit.**

**3. Share your answers with the rest of the class.**

**SAMPLE RESPONSES**: **(answers may vary)**

#### Task 1: Video 3 - How Parliament’s Elections Work (4.43 minutes)

Click on the link to watch the video and summarise the key points it makes about elections in Victoria.

[**Parliament of Victoria Explain - PoV**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5fKPJPFqPho)

**Summary of key points:**

* Elections in Victoria are held every 4 years
* The Victorian Parliament is made up of 128 members – 88 in the Legislative Assembly (Lower House) and 40 members in the Legislative Council (Upper House)
* Each of the 128 members represents one district or electorate
* Victorian citizens over the age of 18 who are eligible to vote, will vote for the candidates of their choice on election day
* The Legislative Assembly uses a preferential voting system which means the candidate with over 50% of the vote will win
* The Legislative Council uses a proportional system of voting where Victorians can vote for the political party they support, or individual candidates and the votes get distributed until the candidate who reaches the required quota wins

#### Task 2: From Westminster to Spring Street (20.30 minutes)

**Teacher’s Note:**

**You can elect to show the whole video clip or snippets depending on your preferences. The timings indicate where the relevant information can be found in relation to each of the four elements.**

[**From Westminster to Spring St - PoV**](https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/teach-and-learn/Resources/from-westminster-to-spring-st)

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| **1. INTRODUCTION - What is a functioning democracy? (2 minutes)**(i.e., where people have the right to choose who will make decisions on their behalf in parliament)**True or False:**In a functioning democracy:1. the people’s needs are considered **TRUE**
2. the government does not provide services like health and schools **FALSE**
3. society has a voice **TRUE**
4. the government of the day is not accountable or responsible to the people who vote **FALSE**
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| **2. EVOLUTION NOT REVOLUTION (10 minutes)****Fill in the missing blank:**1. Victoria is part of **a federation of states and territories.**
2. Each state/territory has its **own governing body.**
3. The Federal government looks after **areas that affect all of Australia while the states/ territories look after their own needs within their borders.**
4. Victoria is a constitutional monarchy, so the head of state isthe **King who is represented by the Governor of Victoria**.
5. Victoria is a representative democracy so **Australian citizens over the age of 18 have the right to vote.**
6. The rule of law means that **no one is above the law, including members of parliament.**
7. The Victorian parliament, just like the federal parliament, **is based on the Westminster system**.
8. On the 1st of July 1851 Victoria became a state **separated from New South Wales.**
9. The Victorian gold rush of the 1850’s **brought wealth and more people to the state.**
10. In 1856 all **adult males won the right to vote.**
11. The Legislative Council of Victoria was set up and did three important things for Victoria:
12. **The Legislative Council wrote the Constitution of Victoria**
13. **Invented the secret ballot for voting**
14. **Started the building of Parliament house at the top of Spring Street**
15. The 20th Century evolution or development of the Parliament of Victoria included: (list 3 examples)
* **Reduction in the role of the Crown**
* **Women gained the right to vote**
* **The age limit for voting is lowered to 18**
* **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are given the right to vote**
* **Political parties become more important**
* **State elections are fixed and held every 4 years from 2003**
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| **3. ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT (2.30 minutes)****Complete the information in each square:**People elect the Victorian Parliament every **four years**The **Executive** is the body that administers/managers the law and includes both the **Premier** and **Cabinet**Parliament makes laws through the:**Legislative** **Legislative****Assembly** **Council** |

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| **4. THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNOR (2.30 minutes)**List some of the things the governor of Victoria does in their role as the King’s representative:The governor has:**Ceremonial duties** – opening of parliament, attending dawn service for Anzac Day, swearing in Supreme Court judges**Constitutional duties** – gives royal assent or approval for any bill to become law in Victoria**Reserve powers** – just like the Governor General of Australia the Victorian governor can dismiss the premier if he/she has lost the confidence of the Victorian parliament |

Task 3. Representation and Democracy Unit

**Teacher’s Instructions:**

* Open the link for the [Parliament of Victoria’s Representation and Democracy Unit](https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/teach-and-learn/Resources/representation-and-democracy)
* The following three activities are available as part of the downloadable PDF

**STUDENT ANSWERS WILL VARY FOR ACTIVITY 1 & 2**

**Activity 1- Direct Democracy**

Five statements are provided for students to consider and then vote ‘yes’ or ‘no’ depending on their thoughts and opinions

Once they have voted you can use the continuums provided to enable students to rate their responses and share their reasons with the rest of the class

**Activity 2 – Representative Democracy**

Students are given the opportunity to consider and compare direct and representative democracy on Page 10 of the [Parliament of Victoria’s Representation and Democracy Unit](https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/teach-and-learn/Resources/representation-and-democracy)

There is an explanation of each on the following pages (i.e. Pages 11 & 12 of the [Parliament of Victoria’s Representation and Democracy Unit](https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/teach-and-learn/Resources/representation-and-democracy) )

They can consider the four questions listed on this page and share their thoughts through written answers or a class discussion

**Extension Activity**

**SAMPLE RESPONSE**

Students can match the scenario to the actions (using the letters for the actions) based on the six ways listed on Page 10 of the [Parliament of Victoria’s Representation and Democracy Unit](https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/teach-and-learn/Resources/representation-and-democracy) of how individuals can have a say.

**Scenarios:**

1. Jane’s big sister just turned 18 and voted for the first time to help choose a new prime minister. **B**
2. Jake joins a peaceful protest to save the local skate park from being removed. **A**
3. Jill signs her name on a petition to keep healthy food in the school canteen. **D**
4. Jack and his class invite their local member of parliament to the school to talk about making

 the roads safer. **C**

1. Jody’s class writes a letter to a government inquiry about the use of mobile phones in schools. **E**
2. James runs for school captain and gives a speech about his ideas on how the school can be better. **F**

**Actions:**

**A.** Take part in a protest **B.** Vote in an election **C.** Meet with a local MP **D.** Sign a petition **E.** Contribute to an inquiry
**F.** Stand for elected office

## Activity 2: Historical Perspective –Timeline Activity

**Learning Intentions**

* We understand the historical context of voting rights in Australia including milestones and struggles various groups have faced to gain the right to vote.

**Success Criteria**

* I can list significant events in the history of voting rights in Australia.

**Task Instructions:**

**1. Refer to the link your teacher has allocated to you to and create a timeline of important events related to the history of voting in Australia for Task 1. Include at least six key dates on your timeline.**

**2. Refer to your dictionary or the Internet to define the two key terms that relate to the right to vote – representative parliamentary democracy and suffrage.**

**3. Task 2 has a radio interview that provides some points in favour of and against compulsory voting. Listen to the program and answer the questions that follow.**

**4. Class discussion about the key milestones leading to compulsory voting in Australia.**

**SAMPLE RESPONSES (the design of the timeline can be the student’s choice)**

#### Task 1: Timeline links

**[Australia voting history in action – AEC](https://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/25/theme1-voting-history.htm)**

[**History of Voting – ABC Bend the News**](https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/history-of-voting/13849266) **(4m 20s)**

[**History of Voting, Simple! – Kids News**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=treTjJpXt-o) **(4m 36s)**

**Timeline of Voting Rights in Australia**

**1854 1894’s 1901 1924 1962 1973 1984**

 **Eureka Stockade** **Women’s**  **Federation** **Compulsory** **Aboriginal** **Voting** **Australian**

\*Miners gain the **Suffrage Voting** **& Torres age Electoral**

right to vote Women gain introduced Strait reduced **Commission**

\*Secret ballotthe right to vote **Islanders** to 18 years set up

introduced in South Australia win right to of age

 vote

**a. Define the term representative parliamentary democracy.**

 A representative democracy refers to a system where voters elect or choose candidates to carry out the business of government on their behalf. Enrolling and voting is a both a right and a responsibility of each Australian citizen.

 **b. Define the term ‘suffrage’.**

The right to vote for politicians to represent you in government.

#### Task 2: What if Wednesday: What if we ditched compulsory voting?

**Click on the link below and listen to the radio program which makes some valid points about compulsory voting. You may have to listen to it at least twice. Then answer the questions that follow:**

[**What if Wednesday: What if we ditched compulsory voting? ABC Radio Melbourne**](https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/melbourne-drive/what-if-wednesday-compulsory-voting/103909966) **(13 minutes)**

1. **Why was compulsory voting introduced in 1924?**

Because of the decline in the number of people voting after World War One.

1. **How many counties have compulsory voting around the world today?**

25 countries

1. **List two arguments that Professor Timothy Lynch makes opposing compulsory voting.**
* Denies the democratic right of people to choose whether they want to vote or not
* Does not provide for stable government
* Would make candidates work harder to win votes in in election if it was voluntary
1. **List two arguments that Kevin Bonham makes in favour of compulsory voting.**
* No real strong arguments in favour of change
* You can still cast an informal vote if you do not want to vote in the election
* Still have choice – get name crossed off and lodge an informal vote
* Helps promote a culture of fairness
* Promotes political awareness for citizens as they have to have some knowledge to vote

## Activity 3: Election Court – Discussion Activity

**Learning Intentions**

* We understand the concept of compulsory voting, what it means for democratic participation and the arguments for and against its implementation.

**Success Criteria**

* I can provide arguments for and against compulsory voting.

**Task Instructions:**

**1. The classroom is turned into a court room with students each given a role to play:**

 **Prosecution (presenting arguments for compulsory voting)**

 **Defence (presenting arguments against compulsory voting**

 **Judge – controls proceedings**

 **Jury – rest of the class who will listen to the arguments and record these on the worksheet provided**

 **\*\* students can use props, charts to help support their case**

**2. Each side presents evidence and arguments on whether voting should be compulsory.**

**3. Jury retires to deliberate/think and decide who presented the stronger arguments.**

**4. Complete the table by cutting, sorting and pasting the arguments for and against compulsory voting presented in the election court.**

**5. Reflect on the discussion points raised and write your opinion about compulsory elections and share with the rest of the class.**

**Introduction by Judge to the election court:**

Compulsory voting in Australia has been a topic of significant debate since its introduction in 1924. Understanding the arguments for and against this system is important for informed discussions about its future. The jury will be required to listen to both the prosecution and the defence before they come to a unified opinion about whether it should be compulsory.

**Sort the following Arguments into P (prosecution’s case** **arguments FOR compulsory voting) and D (defence’s case arguments AGAINST compulsory voting):**

**Cut and paste into the table on page 17.**

|  |
| --- |
| **Takes Away Freedom** - Some people believe that making everyone vote is unfair because it takes away their right to choose. In a free country, people should be allowed to decide if they want to vote or not. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Everyone Has a Say-** Voting is something all adults should do, just like paying taxes or helping out on a jury. When everyone votes, it makes sure every voice is heard, and everyone gets a fair say in how the country is run. |

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| **Some People Don’t Care About Voting**- Forcing people who don’t care or don’t know much about the election to vote doesn’t really help. They might just choose randomly, which doesn’t lead to good decisions. |

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| --- |
| **Lots of Extra Work and Money-**Making sure everyone votes takes a lot of time, effort, and money. The government has to check who voted and send fines to people who didn’t, which some people think is a waste. |

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| --- |
| **More People Vote -** In Australia, because voting is compulsory (that means you have to do it), almost everyone votes. This helps democracy work well because lots of people are involved in making big decisions. |

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| **Less Extreme Ideas** - When lots of people vote, political parties have to think about what most people want. This helps stop extreme or harmful ideas from becoming too powerful. |

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| **Not Real Freedom**-Some people say that in a truly free country, people should get to decide if they want to vote or not. Forcing everyone to vote doesn’t feel like real democracy to them. |

|  |
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| **Learning About Politics -** Because everyone has to vote, more people take time to learn about the issues and the people running for government. This helps them make better choices**.** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Fair Rules for Everyone -** Governments have to listen to all voters, not just a few. This means the rules they make are more likely to help all kinds of people in different communities. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Stronger and More Trusted Government-** When a lot of people vote, the government is chosen by most of the country. This makes it stronger and more trusted, because more people helped pick it. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Fairer Government -** When more people vote, the government that gets chosen speaks for more of the population. That means the rules and laws they make are fairer and help more people in the community**.** |

|  |
| --- |
| **People Might Not Know Enough**- If people have to vote but don’t really understand the choices, they might just guess or fill in the form the wrong way. This can mess up the results of the election. |

|  |
| --- |
| **Protest Votes**-When people are made to vote but don’t like any of the choices, they might ruin their vote on purpose to show they’re unhappy. This means their vote doesn’t count properly. |

**SUMMARY OF THE PROSECUTION AND DEFENCE’S CASES**

|  |
| --- |
| **ARGUMENTS FOR COMPULSORY VOTING:** |
| * **Everyone Has a Say-** Voting is something all adults should do, just like paying taxes or helping out on a jury. When everyone votes, it makes sure every voice is heard, and everyone gets a fair say in how the country is run.
* **More People Vote -** In Australia, because voting is compulsory (that means you have to do it), almost everyone votes. This helps democracy work well because lots of people are involved in making big decisions.
* **Fairer Government -** When more people vote, the government that gets chosen speaks for more of the population. That means the rules and laws they make are fairer and help more people in the community**.**
* **Less Extreme Ideas** - When lots of people vote, political parties have to think about what most people want. This helps stop extreme or harmful ideas from becoming too powerful.
* **Learning About Politics -** Because everyone has to vote, more people take time to learn about the issues and the people running for government. This helps them make better choices**.**
* **Fair Rules for Everyone -** Governments have to listen to all voters, not just a few. This means the rules they make are more likely to help all kinds of people in different communities.
* **Stronger and More Trusted Government-** When a lot of people vote, the government is chosen by most of the country. This makes it stronger and more trusted, because more people helped pick it.
 |

|  |
| --- |
| **ARGUMENTS AGAINST COMPULSORY VOTING:** |
| * **Takes Away Freedom** - Some people believe that making everyone vote is unfair because it takes away their right to choose. In a free country, people should be allowed to decide if they want to vote or not.
* **People Might Not Know Enough**- If people have to vote but don’t really understand the choices, they might just guess or fill in the form the wrong way. This can mess up the results of the election.
* **Some People Don’t Care About Voting**- Forcing people who don’t care or don’t know much about the election to vote doesn’t really help. They might just choose randomly, which doesn’t lead to good decisions.
* **Lots of Extra Work and Money-**Making sure everyone votes takes a lot of time, effort, and money. The government has to check who voted and send fines to people who didn’t, which some people think is a waste.
* **Protest Votes**-When people are made to vote but don’t like any of the choices, they might ruin their vote on purpose to show they’re unhappy. This means their vote doesn’t count properly.
* **Not Real Freedom**-Some people say that in a truly free country, people should get to decide if they want to vote or not. Forcing everyone to vote doesn’t feel like real democracy to them.
 |

**Individual Reflection:**

**SAMPLE RESPONSE: (ANSWERS WILL VARY)**

In my view compulsory voting is necessary in Australia to ensure a greater turnout of voters so that there is stronger representation of different groups in Parliament. I believe it is our civic responsibility to vote, and it makes us more aware of current political issues so we can engage with our communities. Australia has one of the most well organised voting systems in the world with multiple ways to vote to ensure that everyone has the right to vote. (postal voting, early voting, mobile voting or attending a polling station on the day)

## Activity 4: Map Activity – Where is Voting Compulsory – Think Pair Share Activity

**Learning Intentions**

* We understand the concept of compulsory voting and how it differs globally.

**Success Criteria**

* I can locate information on a world map about countries that have compulsory voting and countries that do not.

**Task Instructions:**

**1****. In pairs study the world map on the link provided.**

**2. Complete the table by identifying three countries that have compulsory (mandatory) voting and three that do not and providing additional information about each. (your teacher may allocate different countries or continents to ensure there is variety)**

**3. Share your information with another pair of students and then as a group of 4 students select one student to share your group’s finding with the rest of the class.**

**4. The extension activity requires you to look at the voting data for the last two Federal elections and answer some question about what you observe or notice.**

**Click on either link below:**

[**Countries with Mandatory Voting 2025 – World Population Review**](https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-with-mandatory-voting)

[**Compulsory Voting – International IDEA**](https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/voter-turnout-database/compulsory-voting)

**SAMPLE RESPONSE: (ANSWERS WILL VARY)**

1. **Countries that have compulsory or mandatory voting**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Country** | **Population**  | **Additional information about elections** |
| 1. **Brazil**
 | [212.7 million (2025)](https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/brazil-population/)  | * Exemptions or excused from voting for ages 16 to 18 and anyone over 70, as well as those far away from home on election day (must be pre-approved) or who cannot read
 |
| 1. **Australia**
 | [26.9 million (2025)](https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/australia-population/) | * Exempt from voting if travelling overseas, due to illness, religious objection, if seasonal workers, anyone without a fixed address, and those not registered to vote
* Australia has a fine of $20 for those that do not comply with mandatory voting laws.
 |
| 1. **Luxembourg**
 | [679,715 (2025)](https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/luxembourg-population/) | * Voluntary for those over the age of 75 and for citizens who are away from their municipality or city on the day of the elections
 |

1. **Countries that do not have compulsory or mandatory voting**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Country**  | **Population**  | **Additional information about elections** |
| 1. **United States of America**
 | [347.1 million (2025)](https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/us-population/) | * Georgia and Virginia had legal provisions for imposing fines for not voting in the 18th century; North Dakota (1898) and Massachusetts (1918) amended their constitutions to allow for compulsory voting, but these states never passed statutes/laws to implement it.
* Participating in voting is voluntary across all states of America
 |
| **2. Fiji**  | [932,718 (2025)](https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/fiji-population/) | * Fiji abandoned compulsory voting in 2014
* According to the Fijian Constitution, every citizen who is 18 years or older has the right to be registered as a voter, but it is not compulsory to be on the voters' register
 |
| **3. Cyprus**  | [1.3 million (2025)](https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/cyprus-population/) | * Practiced from 1960 to 2017
* Cyprus abandoned compulsory voting in 2017 to encourage people to vote because they wanted to not because they had to
* The shift to voluntary voting has led to lower voter turnout and a shift in support towards smaller and newer political parties
 |

### Extension Activity – Comparison of Voting Data for the last two Federal elections

**The two links provided have data about the number of people in each state who voted in the 2022 and 2025 Federal elections. Refer to this data to answer the questions and then reflect on what the information is suggesting.**

**Australian Electoral Commission Data:**

[**Turnout by State 2022 Federal Election – AEC**](https://results.aec.gov.au/27966/Website/HouseTurnoutByState-27966.htm)

[**Turnout by State 2025 Federal Election – AEC**](https://tallyroom.aec.gov.au/HouseTurnoutByState-31496.htm)

**1. Has there been an increase or a decrease in the number of voters over the last three years? Give a reason for this change.**

There has been a decrease in the number of voters as the percentage that turned up to vote was 89.92 in 2022 and 86.74 in the 2025 Federal election. Reasons for the decrease in voters include:

* Voters do not think their vote will make a difference, so they do not bother to vote
* Forgetting to lodge a vote
* Lack of awareness of how voting works for 18-24 year olds
* People willing to pay the fine rather than vote
* Misinformation online reducing trusts in the voting process

**2. Compare the voting statistics for Victoria and write a sentence about what you observe or notice.**

There was a decrease in the number of voters in Victoria over the three year period with 90.59 % voting in 2022 and 87.82 voting in the recent May Federal election in 2025.

**3. Which state had the highest percentage of voter turnout for both elections? Can you think of a reason why this state has a higher rate of voters than other states**?

 **The state of Tasmania has maintained over 90% turnout of voters for both elections which is the highest for any state in Australia**. Possible reasons for this include:

* Higher civic engagement and a strong sense of civic duties which means more Tasmanians turn out to vote
* Older population who tends to be more consistent in turning up to vote
* A smaller population compared to the other states that may be more interested in politics
* Tasmania has the same number of Senators (12) as larger states so this influences or encourages them to vote at each election

**4. When compulsory voting was introduced in 1924 and up until 2022 the turnout of voters was 90% and above. For the last two elections this has not been the case. Can you think of two reasons why this has happened?**

* **Greater mistrust of politics and politicians**
* **Covid would have affected the turnout of voters in 2022**
* **People do not want to be forced to vote through a compulsory election system**
* **The fine for not voting is very low**
* **Lack of interest in politics and community engagement**

**Reflection: (Student answers will vary)**

**Based on this data what do you think would happen if voting was not compulsory in Australia?**

Based on this trend of less people voting now I think that there would be less people continuing to vote if voting was not compulsory in Australia. Opinion is divided about whether it should be compulsory or not and some people resent being forced to vote when they prefer not to. Others may not be happy with the current leaders of the major political parties so the choice not to vote could be seen as a reaction to them or their political parties. Some voters may think that important issues like climate change or the cost of living have not been key issues in election campaigns, so they have decided not to vote as a protest.

## Activity 5 – Media Analysis - Newspaper Article Comprehension Activity

**Learning Intentions**

We understand what compulsory elections are and the different viewpoints and political opinions about this topic through an analysis of newspaper articles.

**Success Criteria**

I can find the main reasons for and against compulsory voting in the media.

**Task Instructions:**

**1.** **You will be allocated a newspaper article to read.**

**2. Answer the questions that follow based on your article.**

**2. Share your information with the class and the teacher who will list the key points raised in in each article on the board about whether voting should be compulsory.**

**SAMPLE RESPONSES: Answers for the arguments for and against compulsory voting will vary**

#### Article 1: A history of compulsory voting in Australia

[**A history of compulsory voting in Australia (and why we are so good at elections) – ABC News**](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-01/compulsory-voting-federal-election-the-good-bits-of-politics/10825482)

1. **Decide if the following statements are TRUE or FALSE after reading the article.**
2. Australia was the first nation to give women the right to stand for Parliament. **TRUE**
3. Australia adopted compulsory voting in 1901 . **FALSE – was not until 1924 that it was compulsory**
4. The main aim of compulsory voting is to create a fair and accessible electoral system. **TRUE**
5. People would still vote in an election if voting was not compulsory. **FALSE – some people would just not vote if they did not have to especially if they were unhappy with the major political parties and their policies**
6. Compulsory voting makes it easier for independents and new members of both parties to run for office when voting is required. **TRUE**
7. **Complete the following sentences using information for the article:**

 **One argument** **in favour** of compulsory elections is that they:

Creates a fair and accessible electoral system, that everyone can participate in

**One argument against** compulsory elections is that:

 It is an infringement or breach of a citizen’s liberty or the right to choose

#### Article 2: Why does Australia have compulsory voting?

[**Why does Australia have compulsory voting? SBS News**](https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/why-does-australia-have-compulsory-voting/a839p5mbk)

1. **Decide if the following statements are TRUE or FALSE after reading the article.**
2. After World War One there were less people voting. **TRUE**
3. Voting in the 1925 election increased to over 91%. **TRUE**
4. Indigenous Australians have always been allowed to vote in elections. **FALSE – it was not until 1962 that all indigenous Australians could vote in federal elections**
5. Nothing will happen to those citizens who decide not to vote. **False as they can be fined $20 for not** **voting**
6. Former United States President Barack Obama praised the compulsory voting system that Australia has. **TRUE**

 **2. Complete the following sentences using information for the article:**

**One argument** **in favour** of compulsory elections is that:

Data and research show that people are in favour of compulsory voting

**One argument against** compulsory elections is that:

 The system encourages ill-informed voting and will increase the number of "donkey" votes

#### Article 3: Compulsory voting in Australia is 100 years old

[**Compulsory voting in Australia is 100 years old. We should celebrate how special it makes out democracy – The Conversation**](https://theconversation.com/compulsory-voting-in-australia-is-100-years-old-we-should-celebrate-how-special-it-makes-our-democracy-234801)

1. **Decide if the following statements are TRUE or FALSE after reading the article.**
2. Britain, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America have compulsory voting. **FALSE- they are all have a voluntary voting system**
3. Above 90 per cent of the population will vote in Australian elections. **TRUE**
4. People do not support compulsory voting in Australia. **FALSE -opinion polls show that over 70% of people surveyed do in fact support compulsory voting**
5. Australia has been described at the most voter friendly country in the world because its citizens have to vote**. TRUE**
6. Low turnout of voter usually happens in remote areas of Australia. **TRUE**

 **2.** **Complete the following sentences using information for the article:**

**One argument** **in favour** of compulsory elections is the:

Higher turnout of voters compared to those countries that have a voluntary system of voting

**One argument against** compulsory elections is the:

Denial of individual choice

#### Article 4: From secret ballot to democracy sausage

[**From secret ballot to democracy sausage – La Trobe University**](https://www.latrobe.edu.au/news/articles/2018/opinion/from-secret-ballot-to-democracy-sausage)

1. **Decide if the following statements are TRUE or FALSE after reading the article.**
2. Voting is compulsory in only 19 of the 166 electoral democracies in the world today. **TRUE**
3. The penalty for not voting in Australia is $50. **FALSE – it is $20**
4. Another feature of Australian election is that voting occurs on a Saturday. **TRUE**
5. Australia uses a preferential voting system. **TRUE**
6. South Australian women were the first women in the world to gain the right to vote in 1894. **FALSE - they were second after New Zealand**
7. **Complete the following sentences using information for the article:**

**One argument** **in favour** of compulsory elections is:

Support for compulsory voting among Australians is consistently high

**One argument against** compulsory elections is that:

Many people argue that compulsory voting is undemocratic, authoritarian, and more of an infringement or breach of an individual’s rights

#### Article 5: Compulsion Emboldens Democracy

[**Compulsion Emboldens Democracy: A Deep-dive into Australia’s Mandatory Voting – Harvard International Review**](https://hir.harvard.edu/compulsion-emboldens-democracy-a-deep-dive-into-australias-mandatory-voting/)

**1. Decide if the following statements are TRUE or FALSE after reading the article.**

1. Since the introduction of compulsory voting Australia has had more than 90% of eligible voters show up to vote. **TRUE**
2. In Australia voting traditionally happens on Sundays. **FALSE- it is always held on a Saturday**
3. Polling booths across Australia have stand for local groups to sell snacks. **TRUE**
4. Another feature of the Australian voting system is early voting . **TRUE**
5. Australians do trust our political and democratic processes. **TRUE**

**2. Complete the following sentences using information for the article:**

**One argument** **in favour** of compulsory elections is that:

Voter fraud is very low because of methods like digital cross referencing so one vote per person is allowed.

**One argument against** compulsory elections is:

While it may work in Australia it may be hard to implement the same process in other countries.

#### Article 6: Your vote matters: Here are several reminders for the upcoming May polls

[**Your vote matters: Here are several reminders for the upcoming May polls – Seniors Discount Club**](https://seniorsdiscountclub.com.au/threads/your-vote-matters-here-are-several-reminders-for-the-upcoming-may-polls.72616/?utm_source=campaign-monitor&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=daily-newsletter)

1. **Decide if the following statements are TRUE or FALSE after reading the article.**
2. Voting in elections is a civic duty. **TRUE**
3. Australians are only allowed to vote once in an election. **TRUE**
4. The only way to vote in an Australian election is to go to a polling station on a Saturday. **FALSE- citizens can register for a postal vote, or attend an early voting centres**
5. There are no excuses allowed by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) for people who do not vote in an election. **FALSE - AEC will consider valid and sufficient reasons such as absence from Australia during elections, religious reasons**
6. Voting is a legal obligation for every citizen over the age of 18. **TRUE**
7. **Complete the following sentences using information for the article:**

**One argument** **in favour** of compulsory elections is that:

Voting is a civic duty

**One argument against** compulsory elections is that:

The Australian Electoral Commission must spend time and money to cross check electoral rolls to ensure that every eligible citizen has only voted once in a federal election

## Activity 6: Four Corners Activity – Discussion Activity

**Learning Intentions**

* We understand different perspectives on compulsory voting in Australian elections.

**Success Criteria**

* I can identify key arguments for and against compulsory voting and listen to the viewpoints of other students.

**Task Instructions:**

**Teachers:**

**1. Introduce the activity by telling students that in Australia voting is compulsory which means that every adult must vote, or they may be fined.**

**2. Explain that they will hear different statements and they need to decide how much they agree or disagree with this statement.**

**3. Point out the four corners of the room labelled: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree**

 **(signs have been provided)**

**4. Instruct student to move to a corner based on how they feel about the statement that you have read out aloud.**

**5. Present each statement one at a time and ask students to move to the corner of the room that best represents their opinion.**

**6. Ask a student from each corner to explain why they chose that position.**

**7. Summarise the key points from the different student perspectives and present to the whole class.**

**\*\*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS ACTIVITY CAN BE DONE AT THE START OF THIS UNIT AND THEN AGAIN AT THE END TO SEE IF STUDENTS HAVE CHANGED THEIR MIND DURING THE COURSE OF THIS LEARNING UNIT.**

**Materials Needed:**

* Four signs: **Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree** (place in each corner of the room)
* A list of statements related to voting
* Sticky notes for students to write down their thoughts

**Statements:**

* **“Voting should be a choice, not a rule.”**
* **“Compulsory voting makes elections fair.”**
* **“People who don’t care about voting shouldn’t have to do it.”**
* **“If voting wasn’t compulsory, fewer people would vote, and that would be a problem.”**
* **“Even if voting is compulsory, people should be able to submit a blank vote if they don’t like any candidates.”**
* **Voting is a civic duty and support democracy**
* **Compulsory voting encourages political education and awareness since people know they need to make a choice**
* **Democracy is about freedom so forcing people to vote goes against the idea of free choice**
* **Compulsory voting does not guarantee meaningful participation – it just means more people turn up to vote**
* **Compulsory voting leads to more donkey votes or informal voting so it should be voluntary not forced**

 **Sample Summary of the key points raised during this activity: Student answers will vary**

Compulsory voting leads to increased voter turnout resulting in a more representative electorate. This higher participation helps ensure that election outcomes reflect the choices of a larger group of people making the democratic process fairer. Australia has consistently achieved over a 90% turnout rate at elections compared to lower much lower rates in other countries which have a voluntary voting system. Compulsory elections promote a more civic commitment as citizens see voting in an election as both as a right and a responsibility which encourages them to be more active and informed about Australian politics.

## POST CONVENTION ACTIVITIES

### Activity 1: Mock Election

**Learning Intentions**

* We understand how elections work in a democratic system through my participation in this mock election.

**Success Criteria**

* I will participate in the voting process by casting my vote based on the arguments presented at the Convention.

**Task Instructions:**

**Teachers:**

**1. Create voting stations around the classroom to ensure student confidentiality while voting.**

**2. Nominate a student to speak for and another against compulsory voting in Australia and give them 3 minutes to present their arguments to their constituents or the class.**

**3. Use the ballot paper provided to enable students to vote in the designated polling booths.**

**4. The two speakers can act as electoral officials and tick of each student before issuing a blank ballot paper.**

**5. Place the completed ballots in ‘yes’ or ‘no’ piles and count them.**

**6. Announce results and have a debrief session about student experiences.**

**7. Extension Activity 1 – students can go to** [**Build a Ballot**](https://www.buildaballot.org.au/) **and complete the survey to see how they would have voted at the last Federal election.**

**8. Extension Activity 2 – once everyone has voted, a bar or pie chart could be constructed to show the results in a graphical representation.**

**Ballot Paper**
**GENERAL ELECTION**

***Instructions:***
Mark **one box only** by clearly writing a **✓** or **✗** in the box of your choice.

**Question:**
Do you agree that voting in elections should be compulsory in Australia?

⬜ **Yes**
⬜ **No**

### Activity 2: Poster Activity – Visual Presentation

**Learning Intentions**

We understand the arguments for and against compulsory voting in Australia and can express our opinion through a visual representation.

**Success Criteria**

I will create a visually appealing poster with arguments that clearly show my position on this topic. (either in support of **or** opposing compulsory voting)

**Task Instructions:**

**1. Use a bold statement on the poster paper that clearly shows your opinion. Alternatively, you could use a digital platform like Canva to create your poster.**

**Examples:**

 **\*Voting should be compulsory in Australia as it strengthens our democracy**

 **\*Voting is a civic right that should be upheld by everyone over 18**

 **\*Voting promotes active citizens and better engagement with our political system**

**OR:**

 **\*Voting should not be compulsory; it should be a choice not a duty**

 **\* Voting should be a right not an obligation**

 **\* You should not be forced to vote if you do not want to**

**2. Include three clear points to support your point of view.**

 **For compulsory voting you could include:**

 ***Fair representations as everyone has a voice***

 ***Civic duty to vote to be an active citizen of this country***

 ***Less risk of extreme groups gaining power because of low voter turnout***

 **Against compulsory voting:**

 ***Freedom of choice for people who can then decide if they want to vote or not***

 ***Leads to uninformed voting as some people do not know what the issues are or vote just to avoid a***

 ***fine***

 ***Enforcement issues as need time and resources to chase the citizens who did not vote***

**3. Add relevant images or graphics to support your arguments.**

**4. Present your poster to the class and explain your point of view.**

**Student answers will vary**

### Activity 3: Exit Ticket – Reflection Activity

**Learning Intentions**

* We understandthe concept of compulsory elections in Australia and its importance.

**Success Criteria**

* I can clearly explain my point of view based on whether voting should be compulsory in Australia.

**Task Instructions:**

**1. Reflect on the Convention you have participated in, the pre- convention activities and complete the Exit Ticket.**

**2. Share your thoughts and opinions with another student- How were they similar? How were they different?**

**3. Share one of your points with the rest of the class and consider the opinions of other students.**

**What is an exit ticket?**

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|  **Exit Ticket – Should voting be compulsory in Australia?**1. What did you learn about compulsory voting from participating in the Convention and completing the pre-convention activities. ✍️ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_2. What is your position on this topic? Why? ✍️ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_3. Did the debate change your opinion? Why or why not? ✍️ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_4. What part of this topic did you enjoy or find interesting? Why? ✍️ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_5. What is one question you still have about voting, democracy, or elections? ✍️ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

An exit ticket is a brief assessment tool used at the end of the debate session to assess students' understanding, reflections, and opinions regarding this topic of whether elections should be compulsory in Australia.

## ADDITIONAL TEACHER REFERENCES:

You may find these resources helpful to unpack the topic as you prepare for the Convention with your students.

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| **Suggested Resource** | **Overview** |
| [Find out what the REAL problem with compulsory voting is in Australia! YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHGlq2IaySk) **(1.11 minutes)** | Short video clip that highlights some issues against compulsory voting |
| [How compulsory voting works in Australia – BBC News](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx20gy2lz4go)  | Recent article with some valid points about why people vote in Australia.  |
| [Voting in Australia – AEC pdf](https://education.aec.gov.au/teacher-resources/files/voting-in-australia.pdf)  | Excellent resource provided by the AEC about voting – can be a stand-alone class where students go through the booklet to understand Australia’s voting process.  |
| [Why is voting compulsory in Australia – Info Sheet Queensland Government](https://www.ecq.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/28233/info-sheet-why-is-voting-compulsory-in-Australia-v1.2.pdf)  | Brief and clear information sheet on compulsory voting |
| [Why do we have compulsory voting? Fact Sheet – Civics Australia](https://civicsaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Factsheet_21.pdf)  | Another information sheet on compulsory voting |
| [What is preferential voting and how does it work in Australian elections – Voting 101 – YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eC_QqArDDiQ) **(3.43 minutes)** | Video clip explaining our system of preferential voting |
| [Voting should not be compulsory – YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eC_QqArDDiQ) **(7.20 minutes)** | Panel discussion on whether compulsory voting should be dumped – some interesting arguments against compulsory voting presented by different members of the panel  |