

Mathematics Level 7

Chapter 2 — Skills: investigating, evaluating, participating and communicating

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Growing good questions to investigate issues

Chapter 2 — Skills · Section 2A · Sub-strand: Investigating contemporary civics and citizenship issues · Book: Civics and Citizenship 3

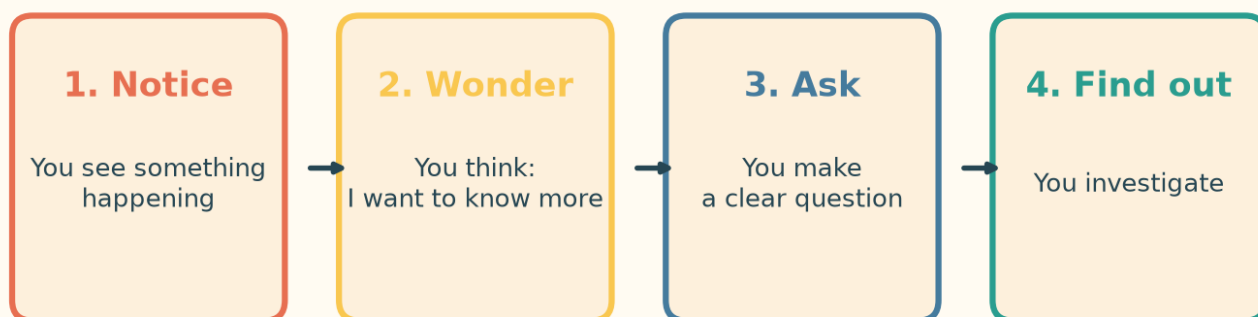
Curriculum trace. Owns VC2HC4S01 (Levels 3 and 4). **Draws on** VC2HC4S01 .E01 and VC2HC4S01 .E02. This section takes its ideas from Section 1B (questions about decision-making) and Section 1G (questions about people participating in communities).

Learn together

Words in this section. The Victorian Curriculum 2.0 (VCAA) uses the words *political*, *legal*, *civic* and *contemporary*, and it does not spell out what they mean in Year 3. This section uses them like this: a **political** question is about a decision — who will decide, and how; a **legal** question is about rules and laws; a **civic** question is about our community and how people take part; **contemporary** means happening now, or in your recent memory, in places you know. Grown-ups sometimes use these words in other ways. In this section, we use them this way.

Step 1 — Notice and wonder. Your teacher reads out a note: “*The bins in the yard were full after lunch all week.*” That is something happening at our school — an **issue**. An issue is something happening that people notice and think about. With your class, say one thing you wonder about the bins. Your teacher writes your questions on the board.

From noticing to finding out



Example: The bins are full after lunch. -> Why are the bins so full?

Four-step path from noticing to finding out: notice, wonder, ask, find out

Step 2 — New words.

- A **question** is what you ask when you want to know something.
- To **investigate** means to find out about something. When you investigate, you ask, look and read to find out.
- To **develop** a question means to grow it and make it better.

Teacher: read the note slowly, twice. Accept every question at Step 1 without judging it.

Step 3 — Three kinds of questions. Questions about an issue come in three kinds.

Three kinds of questions

About a decision

Who will decide?
How will they decide?

(political)

About rules and laws

What is the rule?
Is it fair?

(legal)

About our community

Who can help?
How can we take part?

(civic)

Three cards of question kinds: about a decision (political), about rules and laws (legal), about our community (civic)

Sections 1B, 1D and 1G of this book look at deciding, at rules and laws, and at taking part. Those three ideas give us our three kinds of questions.

Step 4 — Question starters. Six little words start most good questions: who, what, where, when, how, why.

Question starters

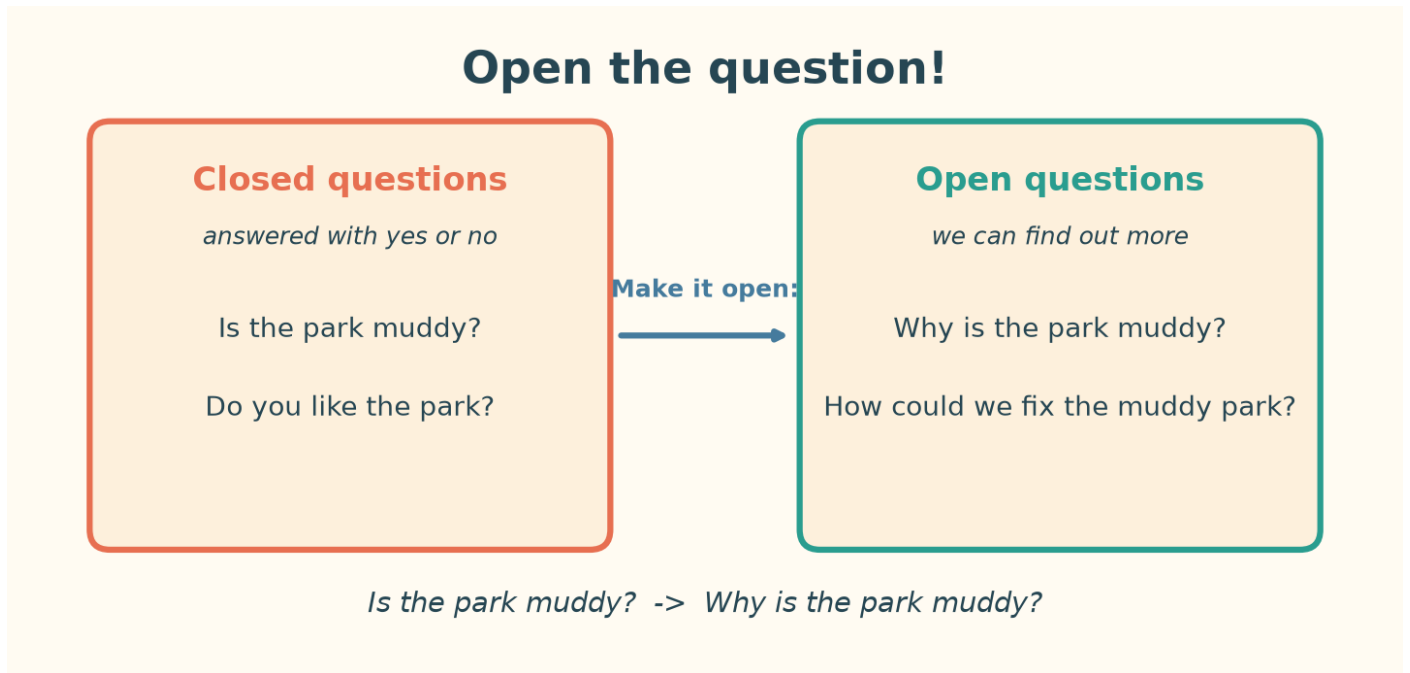
Our issue: the crossing near our school

Starter	Question
Who ...?	Who helps children cross safely?
What ...?	What time is the crossing busiest?
Where ...?	Where is the safest place to cross?
When ...?	When does the crossing guard work?
How ...?	How can we cross safely?
Why ...?	Why do we need a crossing?

Table of question starters who, what, where, when, how, why with example questions about the crossing near our school

With a partner, use a starter to finish a question about the full bins. Say it out loud, then write it down.

Step 5 — Grow your question.



Closed questions become open questions: Is the park muddy? becomes Why is the park muddy?

- **Open it.** A closed question is answered with yes or no. It does not help you find out much. An open question does. Make it open: “*Is the park muddy?*” becomes “*Why is the park muddy?*”
- **Make it clear.** A clear question says just what you want to find out. “*What about the park?*” is not clear. “*Why is the park muddy after rain?*” is clear.
- **Keep an open mind.** A good question does not pick the answer first. “*Why is the new crossing a bad idea?*” already says it is bad. “*What do people think about the new crossing?*” keeps an open mind. Both sides get a fair go.

Is your question ready?

☐

Is it clear what we want to find out?

☐

Can we find an answer -- ask, look, or read?

☐

Is it about the issue?

☐

Does it keep an open mind? It does not pick the answer.

Checklist with four tick boxes: is your question ready?

Step 6 — Wonder wall. In pairs, pick one issue at your school or in your local area. Write one question about it on a card and put it on the class wonder wall. Then, as a class, sort the wall into the three kinds: decision, rules and laws, community.

Worked examples

Example 1 — with help (VC2HC4S01.E01)

The issue: **Our local council might build a new playground near our school.** (The **council** is the group of people who make decisions for our local area. Section 1C looks at the council and what it does.)

Working

This issue is about a decision.

Who will decide where the playground goes?

How will the council ask people what they want?

What play equipment will children want?

Why

So we ask decision questions (the political kind).

Question 1 — about the decision.

Question 2 — about the decision.

Question 3 — about the decision.

Grow one question: *What play equipment do Year 3 students at our school want in the new playground?*

Now it is clear, and we can find out — we can ask our Year 3 friends!

Three different questions about the same decision, and one grown bigger and clearer.

Worked example 1: questions about a decision

The issue: Our local council might build a new playground near our school.

Questions we could ask (all about the decision):

Who will decide where it goes?

How will the council ask people what they want?

What play equipment will children want?



Develop one question

What play equipment will children want?



What play equipment do Year 3 students at our school want in the new playground?

Now it is clear, and we can find out -- we can ask Year 3!

Worked example 1 model: the council playground issue, three decision questions, and one developed question

Example 2 — with help (VC2HC4S01.E02)

The issue: **People near our school want to look after the local park.** Some of those people are **volunteers** — people who help without being paid.

Start with a wonder: *How do people help the park?*

A good start, but it is small and fuzzy.

Develop it: *What jobs do people in our community do to look after the local park?*

Now it says just what we want to find out.

What kind is it?

It is about people taking part in their community (the civic kind).

Can we find an answer?

Yes — we can ask a volunteer, and we can look at the park on a clean-up day.

That is the second skill in this section: describing a question about people taking part in their community, and saying why it is a good one.

Worked example 2: a question about people taking part

The issue: People near our school want to look after the local park.

Start with a wonder:

How do people help the park?



Develop the question:

What jobs do people in our community do to look after the local park?



Why is this a good question?

It is about people taking part in their community.

We can find the answer by asking and by looking.

Worked example 2 model: the park care issue, a first wonder grown into a clear question about people taking part

Practice questions

With help

Q1. Use this chart. Sort the six question cards: three go under *About a decision*, three under *About people taking part*. Write each card in its place.

Sort the questions

About a decision	About people taking part

Question cards:

Who will choose the new library books?	How many people come to the park clean-up?
How will our class decide the garden's name?	What jobs can families do at the school fair?
Will our teacher pick the winning picture?	Why do people help at the crossing?

Sorting chart with two sides, blank spaces, and six question cards to sort

Q2. The issue: **Our school wants to start a vegetable garden.** Use two question starters (who, what, where, when, how, why) to write two questions about the *decision*.

Q3. These questions are closed. Make each one open.

- (a) Is the library open at lunch?
- (b) Do you like the new playground?
- (c) Are dogs allowed in the park?

Q4. These questions are not clear. Fix each one so we know just what to find out.

- (a) What about the bins?
- (b) The park?
- (c) When?

Q5. Circle the questions we can find an answer to (by asking, looking or reading).

- (a) What time does our library open?
- (b) Is blue the best colour?
- (c) Who helps at the crossing in the morning?
- (d) Which ice cream is the nicest?

Q6. Pick one issue below. Write one question of each kind about it: a decision question, a rules-and-laws question, and a community question.

- (a) Our class is choosing a name for the vegetable garden.
- (b) People are talking about a rule for dogs in the park.
- (c) There is a clean-up day at the local park.

On your own

Q7. Think of one issue at your school or in your local area. Write three questions about it: one about the decision, one about rules and laws, one about people taking part.

Q8. Pick your best question from Q7 and grow it. Make it open, make it clear, and keep an open mind. Then write down one person or place you could ask to find out the answer.

Q9. The swings are busy at lunch. Mia asks: “*Who decides how we share the swings?*” Tom asks: “*How could we make lunchtime play fair for everyone?*” Both questions are good. Say what each question could help us find out.

Q10. Swap your question from Q8 with a partner. Check it against the checklist figure from Step 5. Tell your partner one thing that is strong about the question, and one way to grow it.

Answers

Q1. About a decision: *Who will choose the new library books?* · *How will our class decide the garden's name?* · *Will our teacher pick the winning picture?* About people taking part: *How many people come to the park clean-up?* · *What jobs can families do at the school fair?* · *Why do people help at the crossing?*

Q2. Answers will be different. Examples: *Who will decide where the garden goes?* · *What will we grow in the garden?* Both are about the decision.

Q3. Examples: (a) *When is the library open?* (b) *What do you like about the new playground?* (c) *Where in the park are dogs allowed?*

Q4. Examples: (a) *When are the bins emptied?* (b) *Why is the park muddy after rain?* (c) *When does the crossing guard work?*

Q5. (a) and (c) — we can find those answers out. (b) and (d) ask what someone likes best, so there is no one answer to find.

Q6. Answers will be different. Example for (c): decision — *Who will decide where the clean-up starts?*; rules and laws — *What is the rule about litter in the park?*; community — *How can our class take part in the clean-up day?*

Q7. Answers will be different. Check: three questions, one of each kind, all about one issue.

Q8. Answers will be different. Check against the checklist: open, clear, about the issue, keeps an open mind, and one person or place named to ask.

Q9. Mia's question helps us find out *who decides* — the person or group that makes the decision about the swings. Tom's question helps us find out *fair ways to share* — ideas the whole class could try and talk about. Two good questions can look at the same issue in different ways.

Q10. Answers will be different. A strong check names one strong point and one way to grow, using the checklist.

Finding and sorting information from sources

Curriculum: Victorian Curriculum 2.0 Civics and Citizenship, Levels 3 and 4. Owns VC2HC4S02. Draws on VC2HC4S02.E01, VC2HC4S02.E02, VC2HC4S02.E03 and VC2HC4S02.E04.

The big idea. When something is happening now and people care about it, we can find out about it. We look in more than one place, pick the parts that help, sort them into groups, and then we can tell people about the issue so they understand it too.

New words

These words are used a lot in this section.

- **contemporary** (say: kon-TEM-puh-ree) — happening now, or just a little while ago. In this book, a contemporary issue is one you can see around you now — at your school, or near your home.
 - **issue** — something that is happening that people care about. People can talk about it and try to help.
 - **source** — a place where information comes from. A person you ask is a source. A book is a source. A sign, a photo and a website are sources too.
 - **information** — things you find out. **Data** is information that is numbers, like when we count things. **Ideas** are what people think.
 - **select** — to pick the parts you need and leave the rest.
 - **organise** — to sort things into groups so they make sense.
 - **describe** — to tell about something in words, so other people can picture it.
-

Teaching sequence — finding out about an issue

Teacher-led discussion and activities. Talk about each step before moving on.

Step 1 — Spot an issue

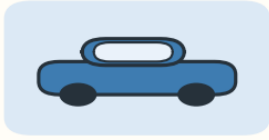
Ask: *What is happening around us now that people care about?* Let students share. Look for school and local ideas, not far-away ones. Show the three cards below.

Explain: each card is an **issue** — something that is happening that people care about. Each one is happening now. That is what makes it a **contemporary** issue.

Teacher note: at this level, VCAA frames “contemporary” as within the students’ recent memory and local experience — school and local issues, not partisan politics. The Victorian Curriculum uses the word without defining it, so this book states its working sense (in the New words box): an issue students can see around them now. Every task in this section is answerable on that working sense alone.

What is an issue?

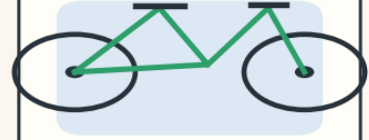
**An issue is something that matters to people.
People can talk about it and try to help.**



Many cars go too fast
near the school gate.



Rubbish is left on the
grass after lunch.



There are not enough
bike racks at school.

Each one is an issue. Each one is happening now.

Diagram titled “What is an issue?” with a meaning strip and three example issue cards — many cars go too fast near the school gate, rubbish is left on the grass after lunch, and there are not enough bike racks at school

Step 2 — Look at your sources

Ask: *How could we find out about our issue?* Students will say: ask someone, look in a book, look at a sign. Show the five source cards. Each one is a **source** — a place where **information** comes from.

Explain the three kinds of good bits we collect:

- **Information** — things we find out. *There is a crossing at the big gate.*
- **Data** — numbers we count. *We counted 18 cars in ten minutes.*
- **Ideas** — what people think. *Cars should slow down.*

Where can information come from?



Each one is a source. A source is where information comes from.

Diagram titled “Where can information come from?” with five source cards — ask people, books, signs and posters, photos, and websites with an adult — and a strip saying each one is a source

Step 3 — Select what helps

Say: *Not everything we find is about our issue.* Show the sort below. Some cards are about our issue. Some cards are not. We keep the bits that are about it, and we leave the rest.

Activity: read out card ideas for the gate issue. Students give a thumbs-up to keep a card and a thumbs-down to leave it. Ask: *why does this card help? Why does that one not help?*

Selecting: pick what helps

Our issue: cars go too fast near our gate.

About our issue ✓

A teacher saw many cars at the gate

We counted 18 cars in ten minutes

Dad says it is hard to cross

Not about it

The library has new books

It is cold today

Keep only the bits that are about your issue.

Diagram titled “Selecting: pick what helps”, with the issue “cars go too fast near our gate” and two trays — cards about our issue and cards not about it

Step 4 — Organise the good bits

Show the empty plan. Say: *Now we put our good bits into groups.* The four boxes are:

1. **What is the issue?**
2. **Who does it touch?**
3. **What do people say?**
4. **What could we do?**

As a class, put each kept card into its box. Counting cards and what-we-found cards go in box 1 or 2. People’s ideas go in box 3. Helping ideas go in box 4.

Our issue plan

Put your good bits into the four boxes.

What is the issue?

Who does it touch?

What do people say?

What could we do?

Fill in the boxes. Then you are ready to describe your issue.

Empty plan titled “Our issue plan” with four boxes — what is the issue, who does it touch, what do people say, what could we do

Step 5 — Link what you know

An issue never sits on its own. It links to things we know about. Show each picture and ask its question:

- *Does our issue touch a law?* (Remember: a **law** is a rule for everyone. A **rule** can be for just one group.) Our gate issue touches a law — the law that says cars must go slowly near schools.
- *Does it link to a decision?* Someone decided something. Did everyone get a say, or did one person decide alone?
- *Which communities does it touch?* (A **community** is a group you belong to — like your family, your class, or your school.) Sort them into groups — the ones at school, and the ones near school.
- *Which rights and responsibilities does it touch?* Rights say what people should have. Responsibilities say what people should do.

A law about our issue



The law says:

Cars must go slowly near schools
when children are arriving
and leaving.

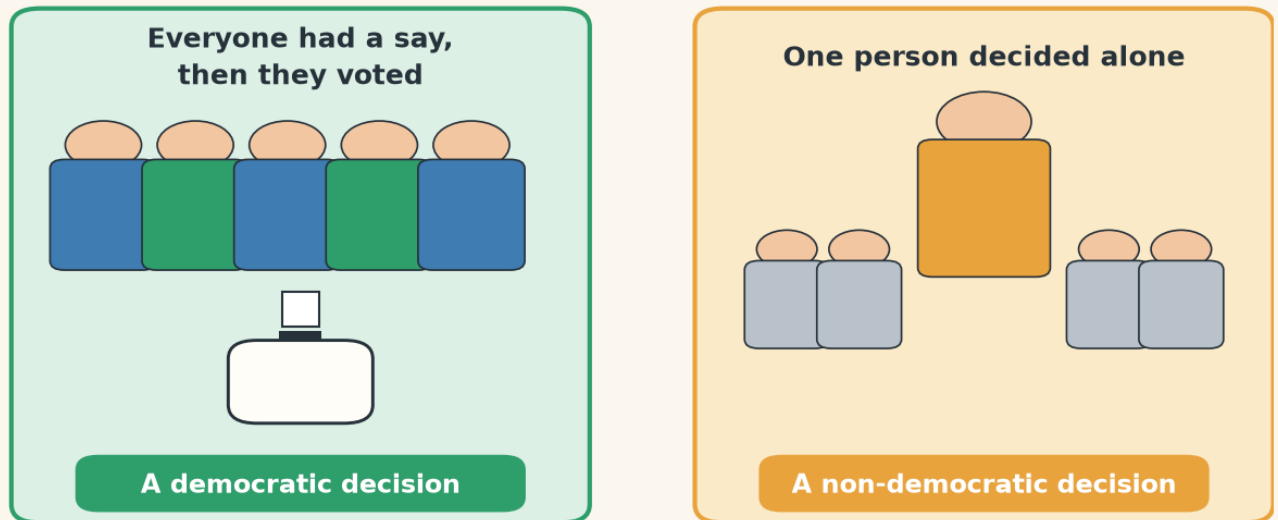
**This law is for every driver.
It keeps children safe.**



Diagram titled “A law about our issue” showing a yellow 40 km/h diamond sign and a card saying the law is that cars must go slowly near schools when children are arriving and leaving

Teacher note: the sign card is this book’s own drawing of the real Victorian school speed limit sign. In Victoria, the speed limit in a signed school zone is 40 km/h during the times on the sign — commonly near 8:00–9:30 am and 2:30–4:00 pm on school days (VicRoads, School zones, vicroads.vic.gov.au; Road Safety Road Rules 2017 (Vic)). Sign times vary by location; check the signs at your school. Use this only as an example of a law an issue can touch — how road laws are made is later-year content and is not taught here.

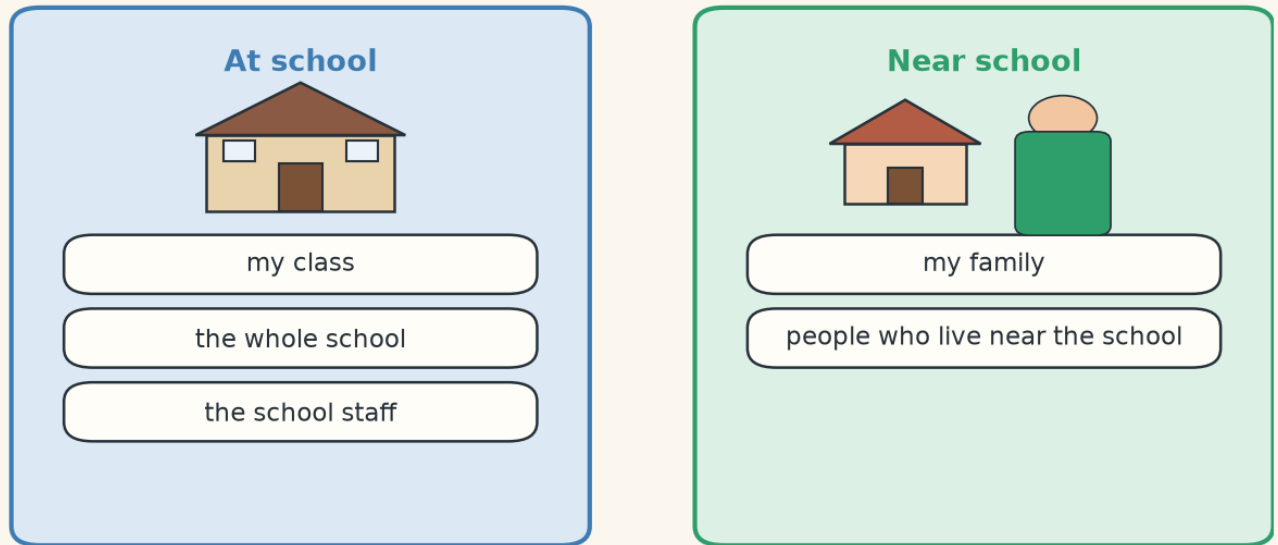
Two ways to decide



In a democratic decision, everyone gets a say.

Diagram titled “Two ways to decide” — one panel shows everyone having a say and then voting, labelled a democratic decision, and one panel shows one person deciding alone, labelled a non-democratic decision

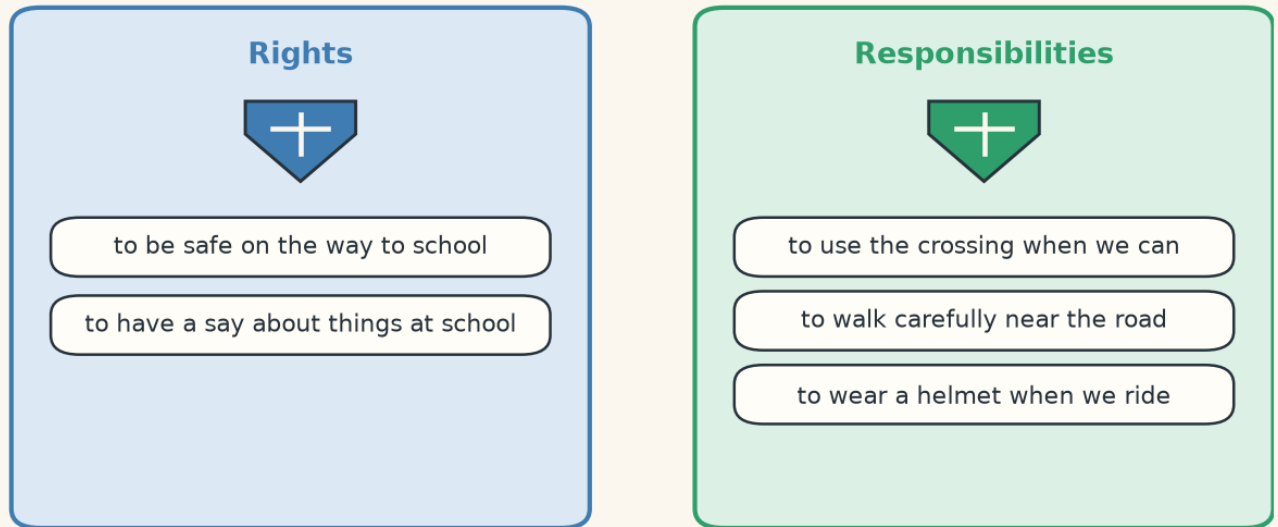
Sorting the communities in our issue



One issue can touch many communities.

Diagram titled “Sorting the communities in our issue” with two groups — at school (my class, the whole school, the school staff) and near school (my family, people who live near the school)

Sorting rights and responsibilities in our issue



Rights say what we should have. Responsibilities say what we should do.

Diagram titled "Sorting rights and responsibilities in our issue" with a rights side — to be safe on the way to school, to have a say about things at school — and a responsibilities side — to use the crossing when we can, to walk carefully near the road, to wear a helmet when we ride

Step 6 — Describe the issue

When the plan is full, you can describe your issue. Say it in four parts: what it is, who it touches, what people say, and what could be done. Listen to this model, said slowly:

Our issue is that many cars go too fast near the school gate in the morning. It touches students, families and people who live near the school. People say it is hard to cross, and that cars should slow down. There is a law that says cars must go slowly near schools. We could make a poster and ask the school to help.

Activity: in pairs, students describe the gate issue to each other in their own words, using the four parts.

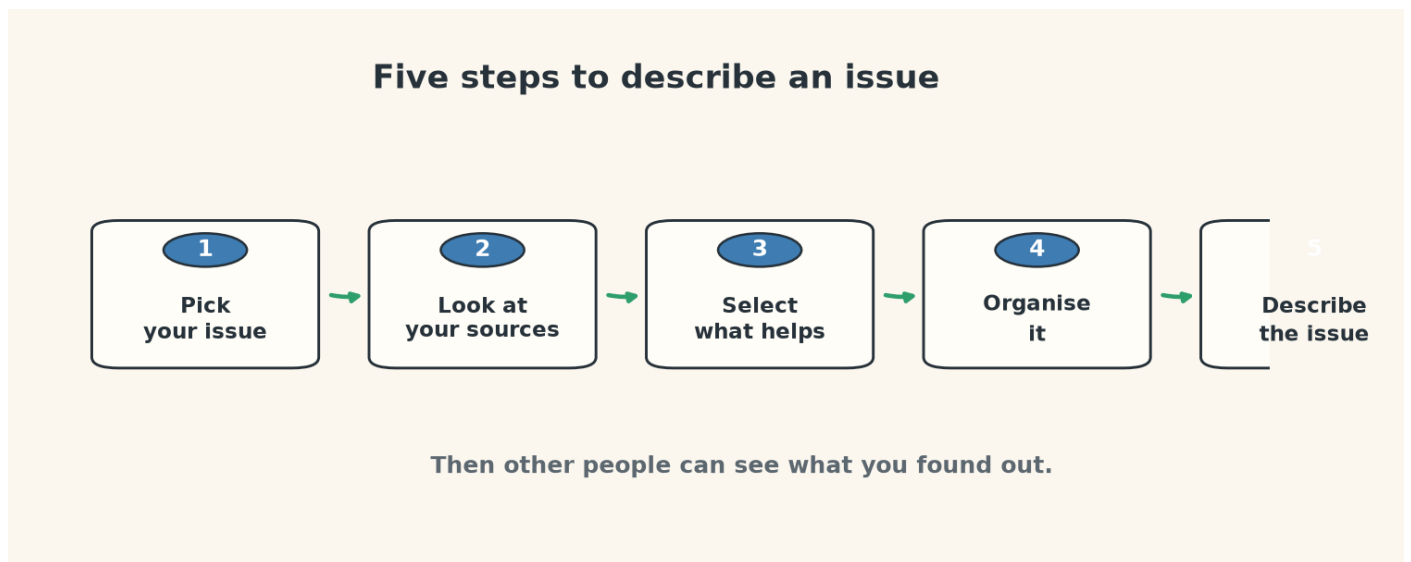


Diagram titled “Five steps to describe an issue” — 1 pick your issue, 2 look at your sources, 3 select what helps, 4 organise it, 5 describe the issue

Worked examples

Example 1 — with help

Room 5 at Wattle Grove Primary School picked the gate issue. Here is what they did at each step, and why each step helps.

Step	What Room 5 did	Why it helps
1 Pick the issue	They picked one issue: cars go too fast near the gate.	One issue is easier to look at than many.
2 Look at sources	They asked the yard teacher, counted cars, and looked at the road signs.	More than one source gives more good bits.
3 Select	They kept cards about cars and the gate. They left cards about the library and the weather.	The bits that are not about the issue get in the way.
4 Organise	They put their good bits into the four boxes of the plan.	Sorted bits are easy to find when you describe the issue.
5 Describe	They said the four parts out loud, in their own words.	Then other people can picture the issue and help.

The plan they made is below. It is a good model for your own plan.

Our issue plan

cars near our gate

What is the issue? Many cars go too fast near the school gate in the morning.	Who does it touch? Students, families and teachers. People who live near the school.
What do people say? “It is hard to cross.” “Cars should slow down.”	What could we do? Make a poster. Ask the school to help. Use the crossing.

Room 5, Wattle Grove Primary School

Model issue plan titled “Our issue plan — cars near our gate”, filled in by Room 5 at Wattle Grove Primary School with a sentence in each of the four boxes

Example 2 — with help

Room 2 at Riverbend Primary School looked at a different issue: *rubbish is left on the oval after lunch*. They linked what they knew, like Step 5.

Link	What Room 2 found
The issue	Rubbish is left on the oval after lunch.
A law it touches	There is a law that says you must not drop rubbish. Dropping it is against the law, not just messy.
A decision it links to	Room 2 voted to run a clean-up day. Everyone had a say, so it was a democratic decision. If one person had picked the jobs for everyone, it would have been a non-democratic decision.
The communities it touches	My class, the whole school, and the school staff — and the families who play on the oval on the weekend.
Rights and responsibilities	The right to a clean, safe place to play. The responsibility to put our rubbish in the bin.

Then Room 2 described their issue: *Our issue is that rubbish is left on the oval after lunch. It touches everyone who plays there. People say the oval looks yucky and that birds eat the scraps. There is a law that says you must not drop rubbish. We voted to run a clean-up day, and we made a poster too.*

Teacher note: in Victoria, dropping litter is an offence under state environment-protection law and under local council local laws (Environment Protection Act 2017 (Vic); EPA Victoria, epa.vic.gov.au), and fines can apply. Fine amounts change, so do not quote an amount to students. Use this only as a second example of a law an issue can touch.

Practice questions

With help

Q1. Use the new words. Finish each sentence.

1. A *source* is ...
2. To *select* means ...
3. *Data* is ...

Q2. Put a tick next to the things that are sources. Leave the others blank.

- asking the yard teacher
- a book from the library
- a sign on the road
- a made-up story

Q3. Our issue is *rubbish is left on the oval after lunch*. Put a tick next to the cards that are about this issue, and a cross next to the ones that are not.

- The bin near the oval was full at lunchtime.
- We found 23 wrappers on the grass.
- The library opens at nine.
- The yard teacher saw paper on the oval.
- It is my birthday next week.

Q4. Here are four good bits about the oval issue. Write each one in its box of the issue plan: *what is the issue*, *who does it touch*, *what do people say*, or *what could we do*.

1. Rubbish is left on the oval after lunch.
2. Students and the school staff.
3. “It looks yucky, and birds eat the scraps.”
4. Put up a poster and add one more bin.

Q5. Draw a line to link each community to its group, like the sorting picture.

Community	Group
my class	at school · near school
my family	at school · near school
the school staff	at school · near school
people who live near the school	at school · near school

Q6. Sort these cards into rights and responsibilities, like the sorting picture.

- to be safe on the way to school
- to wear a helmet when we ride
- to have a say about things at school
- to use the crossing when we can

On your own

Q7. Think of one issue at your school or near your home that is happening now. Write it as one sentence.

Q8. Name two sources you could use to find out about your issue. Say what each one could tell you.

Q9. Fill in the empty issue plan for your issue. Put at least one good bit in each of the four boxes.

Our issue plan

Put your good bits into the four boxes.

What is the issue?

Who does it touch?

What do people say?

What could we do?

Fill in the boxes. Then you are ready to describe your issue.

Empty plan titled “Our issue plan” with four boxes — what is the issue, who does it touch, what do people say, what could we do

Q10. Use your plan to describe your issue in three or four sentences. If you can, link it to a law, or to a decision and how it was made.

Think hard

Some people say: *When you describe an issue, tell everything you found out — even the bits that are not about the issue. Then people know it all.*

Other people say: *Tell only the bits that are about the issue. Then people can understand it fast.*

Talk about both sides. Then say what you think, and give your reasons.

Teacher note: mark the reasoning, not the side a student picks. A student who argues either side with reasons and examples has done well. The strongest answers notice that selecting is part of describing well: we keep the bits that help people understand, but we never leave out a bit that would change what the issue means.

Answers

Example answers. Your words can be different.

Q1. 1. A source is a place where information comes from. 2. To select means to pick the parts you need and leave the rest. 3. Data is information that is numbers, like when we count things.

Q2. Sources: asking the yard teacher ✓, a book from the library ✓, a sign on the road ✓. Not a source: a made-up story — it is made up, not found out.

Q3. About the issue: the bin was full ✓, we found 23 wrappers ✓, the yard teacher saw paper ✓. Not about it: the library opens at nine ✕, my birthday ✕.

Q4. 1 → what is the issue. 2 → who does it touch. 3 → what do people say. 4 → what could we do.

Q5. My class → at school. My family → near school. The school staff → at school. People who live near the school → near school.

Q6. Rights: to be safe on the way to school; to have a say about things at school. Responsibilities: to wear a helmet when we ride; to use the crossing when we can.

Q7. Check that the sentence names one issue happening now, like “the taps in the yard drip all day” or “there is no shade over the sandpit.”

Q8. Examples: ask the office staff — they can tell you how long it has been happening; look at a photo — it shows what it looks like; count — that gives data.

Q9. Check that each of the four boxes has at least one good bit, and that the bits are about the student’s issue.

Q10. Check that the describing uses the four parts — what it is, who it touches, what people say, what could be done — and that any link to a law or a decision makes sense.

Think hard. Example: I think we should tell the bits that are about the issue, so people understand it fast. But we must not leave out bits that change what it means. If we found out the bin was full, that bit matters, because it changes what we could do. So we select, but we select carefully.

Institutions: what they are and why they matter

For teachers — curriculum trace. Victorian Curriculum 2.0 Civics and Citizenship, Levels 3 and 4 band; strand Skills, sub-strand Evaluating democratic institutions and systems. Content description **VC2HC4S03**. Draws on elaborations **VC2HC4S03.E01** and **VC2HC4S03.E02**. Elaboration ids are linkage keys, not a teaching order (TOC D7). Per the TOC §3 integration table this section draws its substance from Chapter 1: the local government and its services (1C) and democratic decision-making (1B). The institution described is local government — at this level, the institution this section names is the council (TOC §3). No parliament, courts, three levels of government or electoral-system detail is taught here (TOC D10).

The big idea. An institution is a group that keeps doing an important job for lots of people. Our council is an institution. We can describe it: what it does, how it decides, and why it matters.

New words

These words are used a lot in this section. Each one is defined before we use it.

- **institution** (say: in-stuh-TOO-shun) — a group that keeps doing an important job for lots of people. Your school is an institution. Your council is an institution too.
- **civic** (say: SIV-ik) — about the people in a community and the things they share. The council is a *civic* group: it does a big job for everyone in its area.
- **democratic** (say: dem-uh-KRAT-ik) — a way of deciding where everyone can have a say. In a democratic group, people vote to choose who decides, and people can share their ideas.
- **councillor** (say: KOWN-suh-ler) — a person chosen by the people to make decisions at the council. You met this word in Section 1C.

About the word institution. The word *institution* can mean other things too. In this section, *institution* means a group that keeps doing an important job for lots of people. The other meanings are not used here.

This section uses three describing words: *political*, *legal* and *civic*.

- *political* — about how decisions are made for all the people.
- *legal* — about laws.
- *civic* — about the people in a community and the things they share.

Our council is a civic and political institution. In this section, we describe it.

Teaching sequence — describe an institution

Teacher-led discussion and activities. Talk about each step before moving on.

Step 1 — What is an institution?

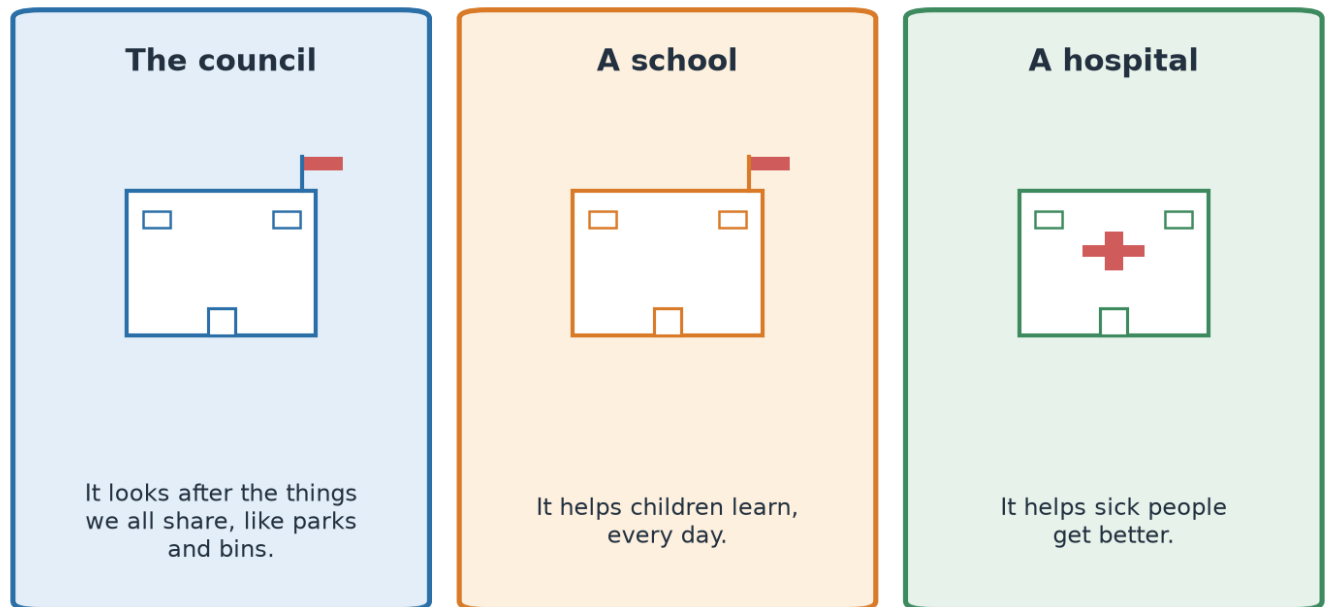
Ask: *Who looks after the parks, the bins and the library in our area?* Let students share ideas. Guide them to the answer: the council.

Say: the council is a group. It has one big job it keeps doing — looking after the things we all share. A group like that is called an **institution**. Your school is an institution too.

Show the picture below. Talk about each card: the council, a school and a hospital. Each one is a group that keeps doing an important job for lots of people.

What is an institution?

An institution is a group that keeps doing an important job for lots of people.



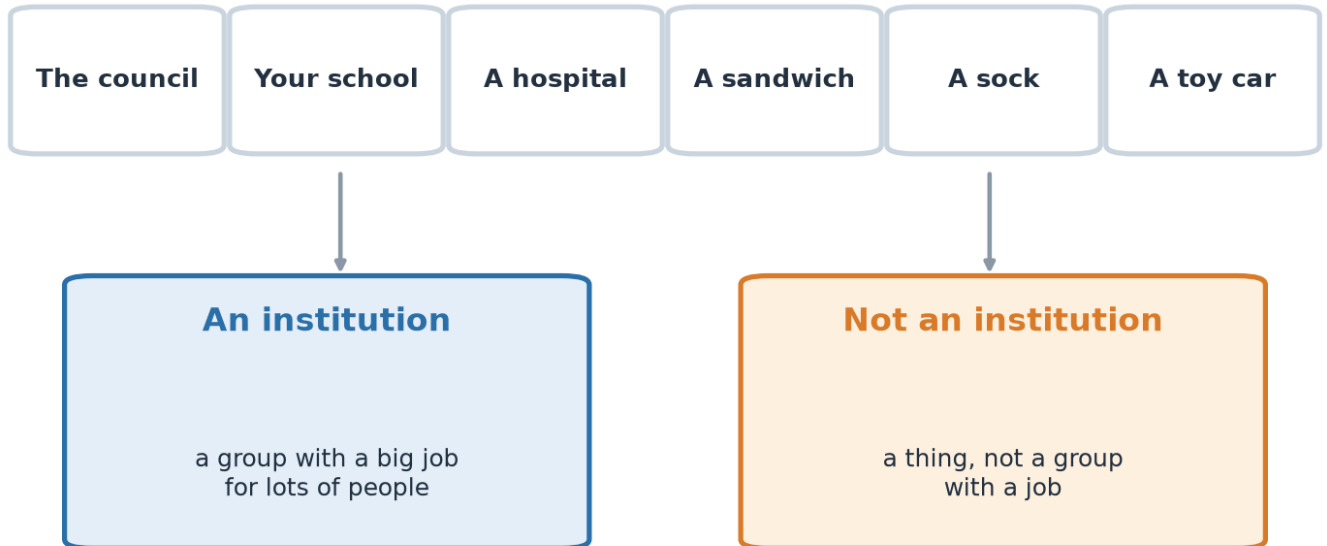
Each one is a group with a big job it keeps doing.

Three cards showing institutions — a council, a school and a hospital — each with a short line about the big job it keeps doing for lots of people

Activity: students sort the cards in the picture below into two piles — *An institution* and *Not an institution*. Ask: *How do you know?* Guide students to the test: an institution is a group that keeps doing a big job for lots of people. A sandwich, a sock and a toy car are things, not groups with a job.

Sort the cards

Is it a group that keeps doing a big job for lots of people?



Draw a line from each card to its pile.

Six sorting cards — the council, your school, a hospital, a sandwich, a sock and a toy car — and two piles labelled “An institution” and “Not an institution”

Step 2 — The four-part frame

Say: to describe an institution well, tell four things. Show the frame below and read the four parts out loud together.

1. **Name it.**
2. **What does it do?**
3. **How does it decide?**
4. **Why does it matter?**

Describe an institution

To describe it well, tell four things.

1

Name it.

What is it called?

2

What does it do?

Tell the jobs it does.

3

How does it decide?

Tell how people choose, and who decides.

4

Why does it matter?

Tell why it is important.

Use all four parts when you describe an institution.

A poster of the four-part frame: name it, what does it do, how does it decide, and why does it matter

Warm-up: practise Part 1 together. Ask: *What is the name of the council in our area?* Write it where everyone can see.

Teacher note: find the name of your local council before the lesson so it is ready to share. Any Victorian council works. The frame is the skill; the council is the example.

Step 3 — A model text

Show the model text below. It describes the Borough of Queenscliffe — a real, small council by the sea in Victoria. Read it aloud. Then students find the four parts: *Which sentence names it? Which sentence tells what it does? Which sentence tells how it decides? Which sentence tells why it matters?*

A model description

The Borough of Queenscliffe — a real, small council by the sea in Victoria

The Borough of Queenscliffe is a small council by the sea.

It runs bins, parks, paths and events for its area.

People vote to choose five councillors, and the councillors decide together.

It matters because it looks after the things everyone shares,

and everyone can have a say.

 Name it  What does it do?  How does it decide?  Why does it matter?

Each sentence does one part of the frame.

A model text of four sentences describing the Borough of Queenscliffe, with each sentence colour-coded to one part of the frame: name it, what it does, how it decides, and why it matters

Talk about: *How do you know which sentence belongs to which part?*

Step 4 — How is the council democratic?

Ask: *Who chooses the councillors?* Guide students to: the people, by voting.

Say: that is what **democratic** means. In Section 1B you saw what makes a decision democratic: everyone can have a say, and people can vote. The council works the same way. Show the picture below and read each tick together.

- People vote to choose the councillors.
- Councillors talk and listen before they decide.

- Everyone in the area can use their voice.

What makes the council democratic?

In a democratic group, everyone can have a say.



People vote to choose the councillors.



Councillors talk and listen before they decide.



Everyone in the area can use their voice.

Democratic means everyone can have a say.

A chart titled “What makes the council democratic?” with three ticks: people vote to choose the councillors, councillors talk and listen before they decide, and everyone can use their voice

Ask: *What if one person chose all the councillors? Would that be democratic? Why not?*

Step 5 — Why does it matter?

Ask: *What if there were no council?* Let students share ideas (the rubbish would sit in the streets, the parks would break, no one would fix the playground, no one would listen to ideas).

Show the picture below. The council matters because:

- it runs the services we all share, like bins, parks and libraries;
- the people choose who decides for them;

- everyone can use their voice and have a say.

Why does the council matter?



When we describe an institution, we tell why it matters.

A spoke diagram titled “Why does the council matter?” with three spokes: it runs the services we all share, the people choose who decides, and everyone can use their voice

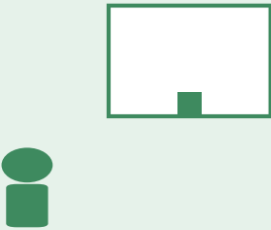
Say: when we describe an institution, we tell why it matters. That is the last part of the frame.

Same job, different size. Councils come in different sizes. The Borough of Queenscliffe is very small: about 3,300 people and five councillors. The City of Casey is very big: about 365,000 people and twelve councillors — one for each of twelve parts of the area. But both councils do the same kind of job: they look after the things everyone shares, and the people choose who decides. Show the two cards below.

Same job, different size

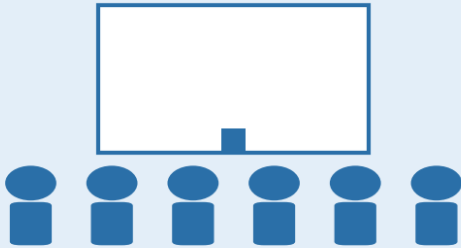
Both are councils. The people choose who decides in both.

Borough of Queenscliffe
a small council by the sea



About 3,300 people
Five councillors

City of Casey
a big council near Melbourne



About 365,000 people
Twelve councillors

Small or big, a council looks after the things everyone shares.

Two fact cards side by side: the small Borough of Queenscliffe with about 3,300 people and five councillors, and the big City of Casey with about 365,000 people and twelve councillors, showing that both do the same kind of job

Worked examples

Example 1 — with help: describe the Borough of Queenscliffe

The Borough of Queenscliffe is a small council by the sea in Victoria. It is the only borough left in Australia — a *borough* is a kind of council area. About 3,276 people live there (counted in 2021). Five councillors decide for the area; they were chosen at the council election on 26 October 2024. Use the four-part frame to describe it. Follow the steps.

Part of the frame	What we write
Name it	The Borough of Queenscliffe — a small council by the sea.
What does it do?	It runs bins, parks, paths and events for the area. It looks after pets too.
How does it decide?	People vote to choose five councillors. The councillors meet, talk and decide together.
Why does it matter?	It looks after the things everyone shares, and everyone can have a say.

✓ Check: each part of the frame has an answer. That is how we describe an institution.

Example 2 — with help: why is the City of Casey’s council important?

The City of Casey is a big council in the south-east of Melbourne. About 365,239 people live there (counted in 2021) — more people than any other council in Victoria. Twelve councillors decide for the area, one for each of twelve parts of the area. They were chosen at the council election on 26 October 2024. Match each reason to why it matters.

Reason	Why it matters
The council runs libraries, pools, parks and bins.	Everyone shares these services.
People vote to choose the councillors.	The people choose who decides for them.
Councillors listen to what people say before they decide.	Everyone can use their voice.

✓ Check: each reason tells why the council matters. The people choose the councillors, and the councillors look after the things everyone shares.

Practice questions

Practice with help

Q1. Fill in the blanks. Use the words in the box: *institution · councillors · democratic · services*.

- (a) A group that keeps doing an important job for lots of people is called an _____.
- (b) The people chosen by the vote to make decisions at the council are called _____.
- (c) A way of deciding where everyone can have a say is called _____.
- (d) The things the council runs for everyone, like parks and libraries, are called _____.

Q2. Sort the cards. Draw a line from each card to *An institution* or *Not an institution*.

Card

The council	An institution / Not an institution
Your school	An institution / Not an institution
A hospital	An institution / Not an institution
A sandwich	An institution / Not an institution
A sock	An institution / Not an institution
A toy car	An institution / Not an institution

Q3. Match each sentence about the City of Casey to the part of the frame it belongs to. Draw a line.

Sentence	Part of the frame
The City of Casey is a council in the south-east of Melbourne.	Why does it matter?
It runs libraries, pools and parks for everyone.	Name it
People vote to choose the 12 councillors.	How does it decide?
Everyone shares the services, and everyone can have a say.	What does it do?

Q4. Put these steps in order, from 1 to 4. They tell how to describe an institution well.

- () Say why it matters.
- () Name the institution.
- () Say how it decides.
- () Say what it does.

Q5. Tick (✓) the three sentences that tell why the council is important.

- The council looks after parks we all share.
- The people choose the councillors by voting.
- The council makes the sun come up each day.
- The council runs the bins for everyone.
- The council decides what you eat for dinner.

Q6. Finish the sentence with one idea: *Our council is important because ...*

Practice on your own

Q7. Name the council in your area. Write one service it runs. (Your teacher can help you find the name.)

Q8. Write two sentences about how the council in your area decides things. Use the words *vote* and *councillors*.

Q9. Write two reasons why your council is important.

Q10. Use the four-part frame to write about the council in your area. Draw a picture too. The frame below can help.

My council

Use the four-part frame. Write about the council in your area.

1	Name it _____
2	What does it do? _____
3	How does it decide? _____
4	Why does it matter? _____

Draw a picture of one service your council runs, too.

A blank four-part frame titled “My council” with a line to write on for each part: name it, what does it do, how does it decide, and why does it matter

Reasoning prompt

Q11. Two friends talk about who should decide things for the area.

Sam says: *One person should decide everything. It is fast.*

Tina says: *The councillors should decide together, after they listen to the people.*

Both sides say what they think.

- (a) Write one good thing about one person deciding.
 - (b) Write one good thing about councillors deciding together after they listen.
 - (c) Which way is democratic? Why do you think so?
-

Answers

Q1. (a) institution · (b) councillors · (c) democratic · (d) services. **Q2.** Institution: the council, your school, a hospital · Not an institution: a sandwich, a sock, a toy car. **Q3.** Name it — *The City of Casey is a council in the south-east of Melbourne.* · What does it do? — *It runs libraries, pools and parks for everyone.* · How does it decide? — *People vote to choose the 12 councillors.* · Why does it matter? — *Everyone shares the services, and everyone can have a say.* **Q4.** Order: Name the institution (1) → say what it does (2) → say how it decides (3) → say why it matters (4). **Q5.** Tick: the council looks after parks we all share · the people choose the councillors by voting · the council runs the bins for everyone. **Q6.** Example: ... it looks after the parks we all share. **Q7.** Answers will be different. Example: the City of Ballarat; it runs the library. **Q8.** Example: People vote to choose the councillors. The councillors meet and decide together. **Q9.** Example: it runs the bins; it looks after the parks. **Q10.** Answers will be different. A good answer has all four parts: the name, what it does, how it decides and why it matters. **Q11.** (a) Example: it is fast, with no waiting. (b) Example: everyone can have a say, and more ideas are heard. (c) Example: councillors deciding together after they listen, because everyone can have a say and choose who decides.

Fully-worked solutions

Q1. The sentence in (a) talks about a group with a big job for lots of people → *institution*. The people chosen by the vote to decide are *councillors* (b). A way of deciding where everyone can have a say is *democratic* (c). The things the council runs for everyone are *services* (d).

Q2. Ask: is it a group that keeps doing a big job for lots of people? The council, your school and a hospital all are — they are institutions. A sandwich, a sock and a toy car are things, not groups with a job — they are not institutions.

Q3. Read each sentence and ask which part of the frame it answers. The first sentence tells the name → *Name it*. The second tells what the council runs → *What does it do?* The third tells how the councillors are chosen → *How does it decide?* The fourth tells why it matters → *Why does it matter?*

Q4. Think about what must come first. You name the institution before you say more about it (1). Then you say what it does (2). Then you say how it decides (3). Last, you say why it matters (4).

Q5. Ask: does the sentence tell something real the council does that helps people? The parks, the vote for councillors and the bins are all real and help people — tick those three. The council does not make the sun come up, and it does not decide what you eat for dinner — leave those two.

Q6. Start with one real reason from the *Why does it matter?* part of the section: it runs the services we all share, the people choose who decides, or everyone can use their voice. Any one of these completes the sentence.

Q7. Step 1: find the name of your local council with your teacher. Step 2: think of one service it runs near you — a library, a park, bins or a pool. Write the name and the service.

Q8. Build the answer in two parts. Part 1 says how the councillors are chosen: people vote. Part 2 says what the councillors do: they meet, talk and decide together. Both sentences use *vote* and *councillors*.

Q9. Think of two things the council does that help people. For each one, that is a reason it is important. For example: it runs the bins, and it looks after the parks. Two reasons like these make the answer.

Q10. Use the four-part frame one part at a time. Part 1: the name of your council. Part 2: what it does — one or two services. Part 3: how it decides — people vote, and the councillors decide together. Part 4: why it matters — one reason. Draw a picture of one service to go with it.

Q11. Step 1: stand on each side in turn. For Sam, think about what is good about one person deciding: it is fast, and there is no waiting. For Tina, think about what is good about councillors deciding together after they listen: everyone can have a say, and more ideas are heard. Step 2: ask which way is democratic. A democratic way lets everyone have a say and lets people choose who decides. That is Tina's way, because the people vote for the councillors and the councillors listen before they decide.

Sources (for teachers)

Curriculum: Victorian Curriculum 2.0, Civics and Citizenship, Levels 3 and 4 band, content description VC2HC4S03 and elaborations .E01–.E02 (VCAA export retrieved 2026-07-29; codes cross-checked in VC2_AS-CD-Elab_29-07-2026.csv and data/vc2_books/civics_3-4.json).

Term note: VC2 uses the word *institution* but does not define it. Per `CONTESTED_TERMS.md` Rule 1, this section states that and adopts an operational definition (a group that keeps doing an important job for lots of people). No other meaning is used.

Real-world facts (all verified 2026-08-25):

- Borough of Queenscliffe: five councillors; population 3,276 (2021 Australian census); the only borough left in Australia; on the Bellarine Peninsula, south-east of Geelong, Victoria — Wikipedia, “Borough of Queenscliffe”, retrieved 2026-08-25.
- City of Casey: population 365,239 (2021 Australian census), Victoria’s most populous council; 12 wards, one councillor for each ward; election held 26 October 2024; in the outer south-east of Melbourne — Wikipedia, “City of Casey”, retrieved 2026-08-25.
- Carried from Section 1C’s verified sources: 79 local councils in Victoria; council elections held every four years, most recently 26 October 2024; each council has between 5 and 12 councillors (Local Government Act 2020 (Vic), s 3).

Reaching agreement together: consensus and deliberation in the classroom

Chapter 2 — Skills · Section 2D · Sub-strand: Participating in civic processes · Book: Civics and Citizenship 3

Curriculum trace. Owns VC2HC4S04 (Levels 3 and 4). **Draws on** VC2HC4S04 .E01, VC2HC4S04 .E02 and VC2HC4S04 .E03. This section takes its ideas from Section 1B (what makes a good, fair decision) and Section 1D (rules and laws, and rules in our classroom). The band's achievement standard expects students to work out outcomes together by talking, listening and agreeing.

Words we use

Words in this section. The Victorian Curriculum 2.0 (VCAA) uses the words *consensus* and *deliberation*, and it does not spell out what they mean in Year 3. This section uses them like this: **deliberation** is talking together calmly and carefully before we decide — we listen to every idea and every reason. **Consensus** is a decision that everyone in the group can agree to. No one loses. Everyone can go along with the pick. Grown-ups sometimes use these words in other ways. In this section, we use them this way.

We also use words we have met before: an **issue** is something happening that people notice and think about (Section 2A); a **decision** is a pick (Section 1B); a **rule** is a guide made by a group for that group, and a **law** is a strong rule made by the government for everyone (Section 1D).

Learn together

Teacher-led discussion and activities. Consensus and deliberation are done, not read — most of this section is talking, listening, and agreeing together.

Step 1 — A noisy problem. Your teacher reads a note: “*The floor near the art table is messy after lunch. Paper and glue bits are all over the floor.*” That is an **issue** in our classroom. What can we do about it? Two things could happen.

- We could all talk at once, shout, and say it is someone else's job. That is noise. It is not thinking, and no one gets a turn.
- Or we could talk about it calmly. One voice at a time. We listen to every idea and every reason, and we look for a pick that everyone can agree to.

The second way has a name. It is called **deliberation**.

Two ways to talk about an issue



Two ways to talk about a messy floor. The left panel shows arguing: everyone talks at once, no one listens, and nothing gets fixed. The right panel shows deliberation: one person speaks, the others listen, ideas and reasons go on the board, and the class finds a pick everyone can agree to.

Step 2 — Two new words.

Two new words



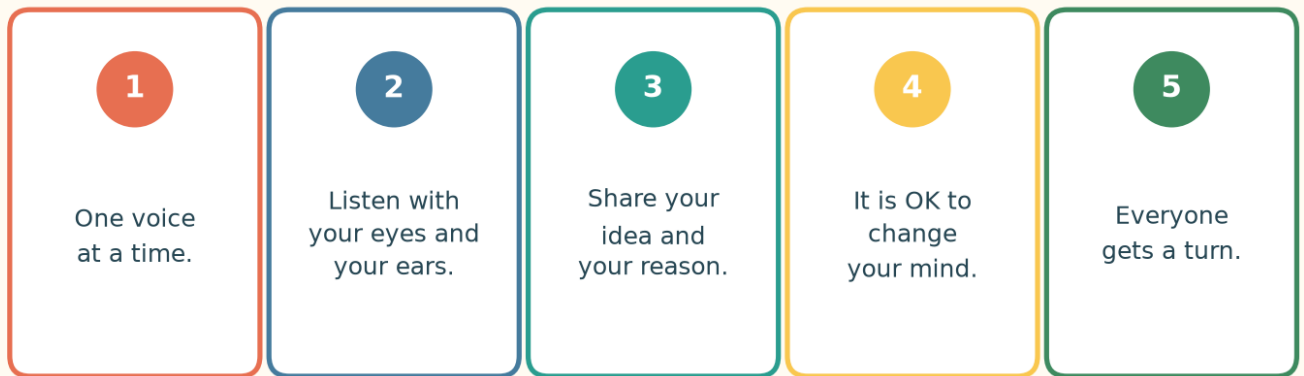
Deliberation is the talking and the thinking. Consensus is the agreeing.

Two word cards. Deliberation means talking together calmly and carefully before we decide, listening to every idea and every reason. Consensus means a decision that everyone in the group can agree to, so no one loses and everyone can go along with the pick.

- **Deliberation** is the talking-and-thinking part.
- **Consensus** is the agreeing part.
- **Building consensus** is how we get there: we work together, step by step, until the whole group can agree.

Step 3 — The rules for deliberation. Deliberation works when everyone follows the same rules.

Our rules for deliberation



Five ground rules for deliberation: one voice at a time; listen with your eyes and your ears; share your idea and your reason; it is OK to change your mind; everyone gets a turn.

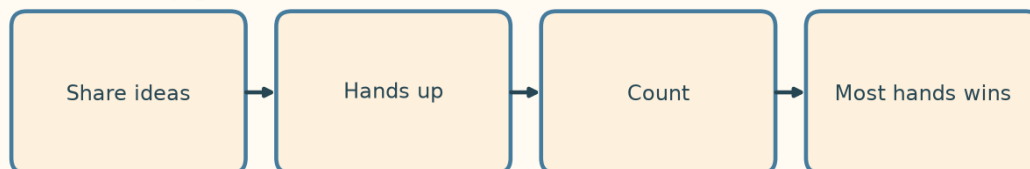
Practice run: deliberate a tiny issue — “Should story time be inside or outside today?” Ask students to use each rule once. Stop and name the rule each time they use it.

Step 4 — A vote is not the same as consensus. In Section 1B, our class learned one fair way to decide: a **vote**. Everyone gets a say, every vote counts the same, and the pick with the most votes wins. That is the **democratic** way, and it is quick and clear. But in a vote, one pick wins and the other picks lose.

Consensus is a different path. No one counts hands. We keep talking, listening and fixing the idea until everyone can agree to it. It can take longer — but no one loses, and everyone can go along with the pick.

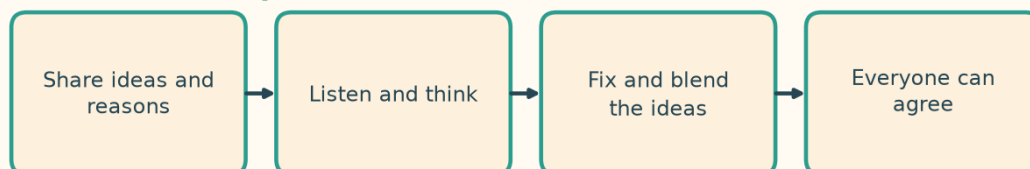
Two paths to a decision

The voting path



Quick and fair — but one pick wins, and the other picks lose.

The consensus path



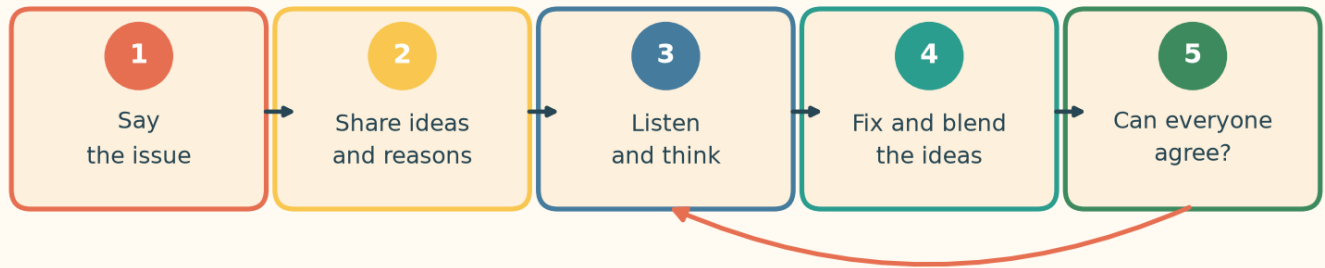
Slower — but no one loses, and everyone can go along with it.

Two paths to a decision. The voting path: share ideas, hands up, count, and the pick with the most hands wins. It is quick, but one pick wins and the others lose. The consensus path: share ideas and reasons, listen, fix and blend the ideas, and keep going until everyone can agree. It is slower, but no one loses.

Some picks are small and quick — “Which game do we play first?” A vote is a good way. Some picks we all have to live with every day — a classroom rule. Then consensus is a good way, because everyone can go along with it.

Step 5 — How a class builds consensus. There are five steps.

How to build consensus



If someone cannot agree yet, go back to Step 3 and listen some more.

Three ticks on the consensus check? You built a consensus.

Five steps to build consensus: 1 say the issue, 2 share ideas and reasons, 3 listen and think, 4 fix and blend the ideas, 5 ask: can everyone agree? If someone cannot agree yet, go back to step 3 and listen some more.

Step 5 is the big one. If someone still cannot agree, the group goes back to Step 3. We listen some more, and we fix the idea again. We keep going until the whole group can agree.

When the group agrees, run the consensus check.

The consensus check



Did everyone get a say?



Can everyone agree to the pick?



Do we all know what to do next?

Three ticks? Your consensus is ready.

A consensus check with three questions, each with a tick box: Did everyone get a say? Can everyone agree to the pick? Do we all know what to do next? If all three get a tick, the consensus is ready.

Step 6 — Now we try it. Pick one issue card. Run the five steps together as a class. Finish with the consensus check. If you get three ticks — your class built a consensus.

Three issues in our classroom

Issue 1

The floor near the art table is messy after lunch.

Issue 2

It is too noisy to read in the quiet corner.

Issue 3

There is only one ball for everyone at recess.

Pick one issue. Build a consensus about it.

Three classroom issue cards: the floor near the art table is messy after lunch; it is too noisy to read in the quiet corner; there is only one ball for everyone at recess.

Teacher note: keep the issue small, local and real to your classroom. At this level, VCAA frames contemporary issues as within the students' recent memory and local experience — school and classroom issues, not partisan politics. The class may not reach consensus on the first try. That is part of the learning: going back to Step 3 is how consensus-building works.

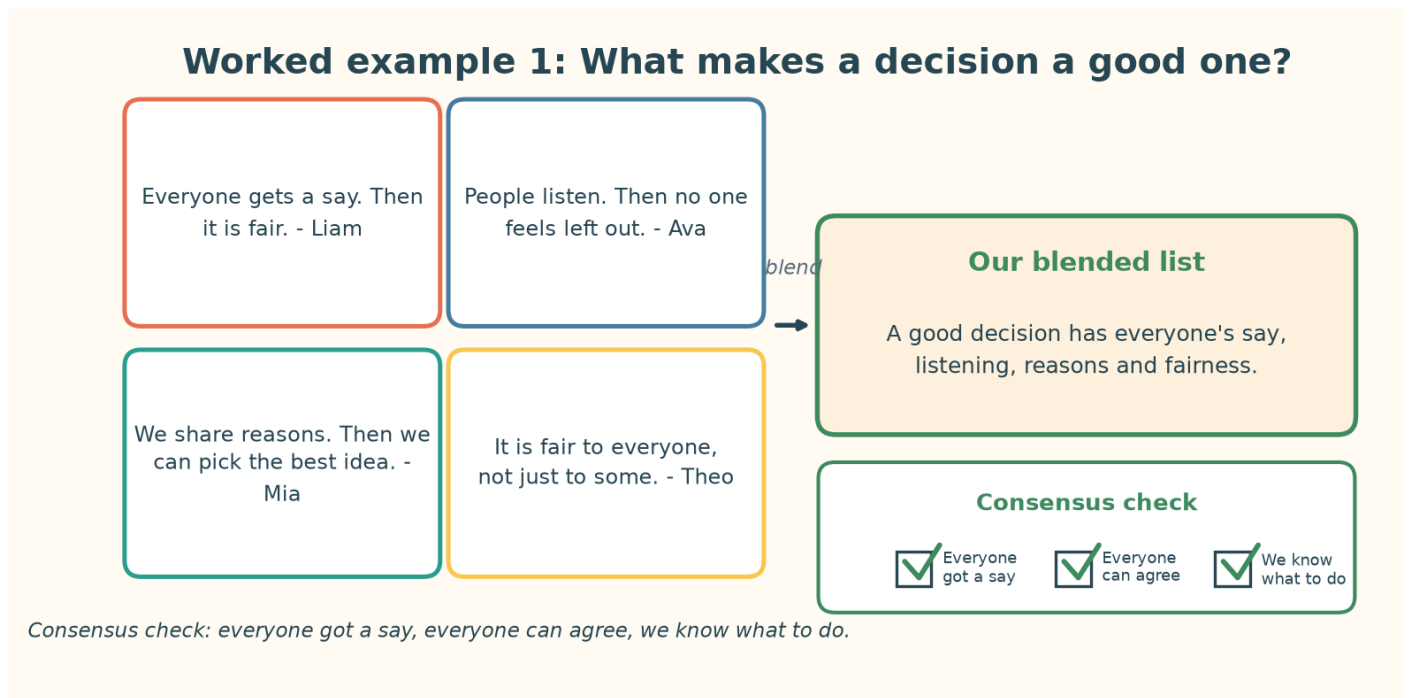
Worked examples

Example 1 — with help (VC2HC4S04.E01)

What makes a decision a good one? Room 8 at Gum Tree Primary School deliberated this question. Here is what they did at each step.

Step	What Room 8 did	Why it helps
1 Say the issue	The class asked one question: <i>What makes a decision a good one?</i>	Everyone thinks about the same question.
2 Share ideas and reasons	Liam said: "Everyone gets a say. Then it is fair." Ava said: "People listen. Then no one feels left out." Mia said: "We share reasons. Then we can pick the best idea." Theo said: "It is fair to everyone, not just to some."	Every idea comes with a reason, so the class can think about it.
3 Listen and think	The class heard each idea twice.	Hearing an idea twice helps us really hear it.
4 Fix and blend the ideas	The class put all four ideas into one list: a good decision has everyone's say, listening, reasons, and fairness.	The blended list is better than any one idea on its own.
5 Ask: can everyone agree?	The teacher asked the check question. Every hand went up.	Now the class has consensus.

Room 8 ran the consensus check too: everyone got a say, everyone can agree, and everyone knows the list. Three ticks.



Worked example 1 model: the question “What makes a decision a good one?” with four idea cards — everyone gets a say, people listen, we share reasons, it is fair to everyone — blended into one list, and a consensus check with three ticks.

Grown-ups deliberate too. In Victoria, the **council** is the group that makes decisions for the area where you live (Section 1C). Before a council makes a big decision — like a new park or a new playground — it asks local people what they want, and it listens to their ideas and reasons. A law in Victoria says every council must have a written plan for how it asks and how it listens (Local Government Act 2020). Deliberation first, decision second — the same steps Room 8 used.

Teacher note: the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic) requires every council to develop and maintain a community engagement policy — its written plan for engaging the community in decision-making. What the band’s achievement standard asks — working out outcomes together — is met here at classroom scale.

Example 2 — with help (VC2HC4S04.E02 and VC2HC4S04.E03)

Rules and laws, and one rule of our own. Room 2 at Riverbend Primary School did two consensus jobs.

Job 1 — What is a rule, and what is a law? The class got four cards.

- Put your hand up to speak.
- Wear a helmet when you ride a bike.
- Dogs and cats must be on the council’s pet list.
- Walk with quiet feet inside.

The class deliberated with two questions: *Who made it? Who has to follow it?*

Card	Who made it?	Who follows it?	Rule or law?
Put your hand up to speak.	Our class	Our class	Rule
Wear a helmet when you ride a bike.	The government (Road Safety Road Rules 2017, Vic)	Everyone who rides	Law
Dogs and cats must be on the council’s pet list.	The government (Domestic Animals Act)	Everyone with a dog or cat	Law

Card	Who made it?	Who follows it?	Rule or law?
	1994, Vic)		
Walk with quiet feet inside.	Our school	Our school	Rule

A **rule** is made by a group, for that group. A **law** is made by the government, for everyone. After talking it through, everyone in Room 2 could agree — consensus, with three ticks on the check. This is Section 1D’s rule-and-law line, decided together.

Job 2 — One new classroom rule. Room 2 had an issue: *it is too noisy during reading time*. Two ideas came up: “No talking at all,” and “Quiet talking is OK.” Some students could not agree to “no talking at all” — sometimes we need to ask for help. The class went back to Step 3, listened, and fixed the idea: *“In reading time we use quiet voices. If we need to talk, we step outside.”* Now everyone could agree. The rule went up on the wall — a rule the whole class helped make, so the whole class can go along with it.

Worked example 2: rules and laws, and one rule of our own

A rule - for our group

Put your hand up to speak.

Walk with quiet feet inside.

A law - for everyone

Wear a helmet when you ride a bike.

Dogs and cats must be on the council's pet list.

Our new class rule, agreed by everyone

Issue: it is too noisy during reading time.

First ideas: no talking at all / quiet talking is OK.

Fixed idea: In reading time we use quiet voices. If we need to talk, we step outside.

Can everyone agree? Yes - consensus.

Worked example 2 model: two trays labelled rule, for our group, and law, for everyone, with four cards sorted into them, and below them a consensus card for a new class rule with the issue, two first ideas, the fixed idea, and three ticks.

Practice questions

With help

Q1. Use the words in the box to finish each sentence. Each word is used once.

consensus · deliberation · agree · reason

- _____ is talking together calmly and carefully before we decide.
- In deliberation, we share our idea and our _____.
- When we build consensus, we look for a pick that everyone can _____ to.
- When the whole group can agree to a pick, the group has reached _____.

Q2. Put a tick next to the things that show good deliberation. Leave the others blank.

- waiting for your turn to speak
- talking over your friend
- listening to a new idea
- sharing a reason for your idea
- picking the first idea and not listening to any more
- looking at the person who is speaking

Q3. Number the steps for building consensus from 1 to 5.

_____ Ask: can everyone agree?

_____ Share ideas and reasons.

_____ Say the issue.

_____ Fix and blend the ideas.

_____ Listen and think.

Q4. Use the sort chart. Put each card in the right box: *a rule, for our group* or *a law, for everyone*.

- Wear a helmet when you ride a bike.
- Put your hand up to speak.
- Dogs and cats must be on the council's pet list.
- Walk with quiet feet inside.

Sort the cards: rule or law?

A rule - for our group		A law - for everyone	

Wear a helmet when you ride a bike.	Put your hand up to speak.	Dogs and cats must be on the council's pet list.	Walk with quiet feet inside.
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An empty sorting chart with two boxes — a rule, for our group, and a law, for everyone — with blank spaces for four cards.

Q5. Vote or consensus? Read each story. Write **V** for a vote and **C** for consensus.

- (a) The class puts up hands. Soccer gets the most hands. Soccer wins.
- (b) The class keeps talking and fixing the idea until everyone can agree to the rule.
- (c) 15 students want chips, 7 want fruit. Chips wins the count.
- (d) No one counts hands. The class listens, shares reasons, and agrees together.

Q6. Look at the consensus check figure. Write the three questions you ask at the end of building consensus.

On your own

Q7. Pick one issue in your classroom. Write it in one sentence. Then write two ideas that could help, and one reason for each idea.

Q8. Write one classroom rule that you think everyone in your class could agree to. Then write why everyone could agree to it.

Q9. Your friend says: “*Consensus is just a vote where everyone votes the same.*” Use what you know to answer your friend.

Q10. Think of a time when you changed your mind because someone gave you a good reason. Write or draw what happened.

Think hard

Some people say: “*Voting is the fair way to decide. Everyone gets one hand, the count is done in the open, and it is quick. The pick with the most hands wins.*”

Other people say: “*Keep talking until everyone can agree. A vote makes winners and losers, but consensus leaves no one out.*”

Talk about both sides with your class. Then say what you think, and give your reasons. When is a vote the better pick? When is consensus the better pick?

Teacher note: mark the reasoning, not the side a student picks. A strong answer finds good points on both sides — a vote is quick, clear and fair when the group needs a pick now (which game first?); consensus takes longer, but everyone can go along with the decision, which matters for rules the class lives with every day. Both sides are tested with the same questions, and a student may land on either side and reason well.

Answers

Example answers. Your words can be different.

Q1. (a) Deliberation. (b) reason. (c) agree. (d) consensus.

Q2. Good deliberation: waiting for your turn to speak ✓; listening to a new idea ✓; sharing a reason for your idea ✓; looking at the person who is speaking ✓. Not good deliberation: talking over your friend; picking the first idea and not listening to any more.

Q3. Ask: can everyone agree? = 5. Share ideas and reasons = 2. Say the issue = 1. Fix and blend the ideas = 4. Listen and think = 3.

Q4. A rule, for our group: *Put your hand up to speak; Walk with quiet feet inside.* A law, for everyone: *Wear a helmet when you ride a bike; Dogs and cats must be on the council's pet list.* The laws were made by the government and are for everyone; the rules were made by our class or school and are for our group.

Q5. (a) V — hands were counted, and the most hands won. (b) C — the class kept talking until everyone could agree. (c) V — the count decided. (d) C — no hands were counted; the group agreed together.

Q6. Did everyone get a say? Can everyone agree to the pick? Do we all know what to do next?

Q7. Answers will be different. Check: one issue, two ideas, and one reason for each idea. Example: issue — the floor near the art table is messy after lunch; idea 1 — put a box for paper scraps next to the art table, so scraps have a home; idea 2 — take two minutes before home time to tidy together, so no one tidies alone.

Q8. Answers will be different. Check: the rule is one that most students could go along with, and the reason says why. Example: “We share the balls at recess, taking turns” — everyone gets a go, so everyone can agree.

Q9. Example: In a vote, we count hands, and the pick with the most hands wins — even if some people picked something else. In consensus, we keep talking, listening and fixing the idea until everyone can agree. There is no count and no winner — everyone just finds a pick they can all go along with. So consensus is not a vote; it is a different way to decide.

Q10. Answers will be different. Check: the student names a real change of mind, and the change came from someone else's reason. Example: I wanted to play soccer every recess. My friend said some students do not like running games, so they would have no game. Then I agreed to two kinds of play at recess.

Think hard. Example: I think both ways are good, but for different picks. A vote is quick and fair when we need a pick now, like which game to play first — the most hands win, and everyone knew the count. Consensus is better for a rule we all live with every day, because no one loses and everyone can go along with it. So our class votes for quick picks and builds consensus for our rules.

Sources (for the teacher)

- **Curriculum:** Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0, Civics and Citizenship, Levels 3 and 4 band: content description VC2HC4S04 and its elaborations .E01–.E03 — codes from the VCAA export retrieved 2026-07-29; cross-checked against VC2_AS-CD-Elab_29-07-2026.csv. The curriculum is the scope authority for this section (SOURCE_USE Rule 1). The band achievement standard's skills sentence — students reaching outcomes together by deliberating and building consensus — is the pitch authority.
- **Deliberation in Victorian local government:** the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic) requires every council to develop and maintain a community engagement policy — a written plan for how the council engages its community in decision-making. Used in Example 1 as the real-world parallel to classroom deliberation.
- **Law cards:** Road Safety Road Rules 2017 (Vic), rule 256 — everyone who rides a bike must wear a bicycle helmet (the same law taught in Sections 1A and 1D); Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic) — dogs and cats must be registered with the local council from 3 months of age, phrased here as “on the council's pet list” as in Section 1C.

- **Scope discipline:** how councils and parliaments make laws is Levels 5–10 content (D10) and is not taught here; the Act is named only as an example that grown-ups in Victoria listen before they decide.
- All classroom scenarios (Room 8, Room 2, Gum Tree Primary School, Riverbend Primary School) are original to this book; school names are invented. No publisher material was used (SOURCE_USE Rules 3–4).

Describing an issue with sources and subject words

Curriculum: Victorian Curriculum 2.0 Civics and Citizenship, Levels 3 and 4. Owns VC2HC4S05. Draws on VC2HC4S05.E01 and VC2HC4S05.E02.

The big idea. We already know how to find out about an issue. Now we tell people about it. A good description has three parts: it tells the issue, it uses ideas from sources, and it uses the words we know from this subject. When we describe an issue well, other people can picture it — and help.

Words we know

This section has no new words. It uses the words we already learned in this book. Each word below has a short note to help you remember the meaning. The word wall shows the whole set.

From Chapter 1:

- **right** (1E) — something every person should have.
- **responsibility** (1E) — something you should do.
- **community** (1E) — a group you belong to.
- **law** (1A, 1D) — a rule made by the government. It is for everyone.
- **rule** (1D) — what a group agrees to do. It can be for just one group.
- **democratic** (1B) — when everyone in the group has a say in the decisions.
- **decision** (1B) — the thing you pick.
- **vote** (1B) — a way to show your pick.
- **council** (1C) — the people picked to decide for an area and look after services.
- **local government** (1C) — the work the council does for an area.

From *Finding out about an issue* (2B):

- **issue** — something that is happening that people care about.
- **source** — a place where information comes from.
- **describe** — to tell about something in words, so other people can picture it.

These are the special words of this subject. Using them helps us say big things in few words.

The words we know

right something everyone should have	responsibility something you should do	community a group we belong to	law a rule for everyone	rule what a group agrees on
democratic everyone has a say	decision the thing you pick	vote a way to show your pick	council the people picked to decide for an area	local government the council's work for an area
issue something people care about source where information comes from describe to tell about in words				



words from Chapter 1



words from Finding out about an issue

Word wall showing the thirteen words we know from this book, each on its own card with a short meaning

Teacher note: VC2HC4S05 asks for subject-specific terminology — that is exactly this set: every word here was defined at first use in Chapter 1 (1A–1E) or in 2B; per the chapter note (TOC §3), 2E introduces no new terms, it consolidates them. Every task in this section is answerable on these stated meanings alone.

Teaching sequence — telling people about an issue

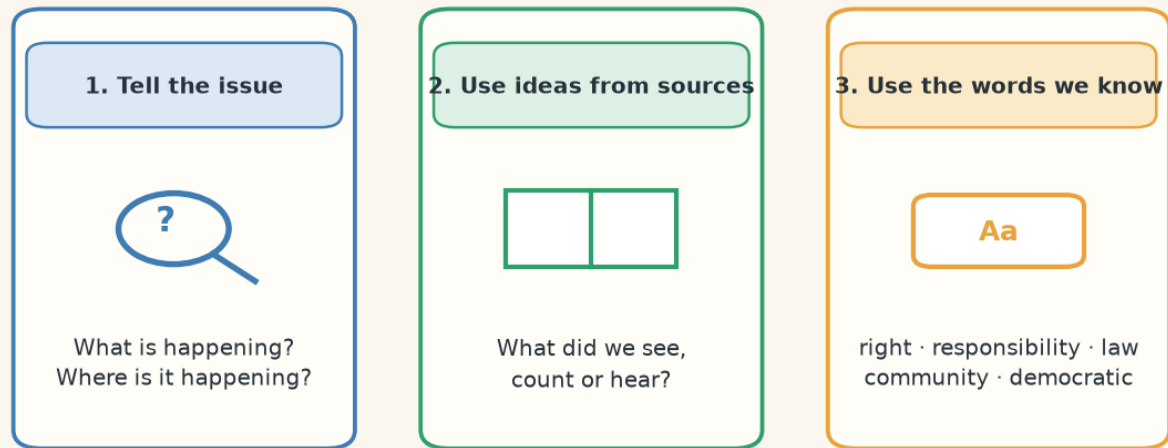
Teacher-led discussion and activities. Talk about each step before moving on.

Step 1 — What are we doing today?

Ask: *We found out about issues. What did we do?* (We picked an issue, looked at sources, picked what helps, and sorted it into groups.) Say: *Today we do more. We describe an issue — we tell people about it, so they can picture it and help.*

Show the three parts and name them.

A good description has three parts



Then other people can picture the issue — and help.

Diagram titled “A good description has three parts” with three cards — tell the issue, use ideas from sources, and use the words we know

Step 2 — Say it two ways

Read the left card out loud, then the right card. Ask: *Which one tells you more? Which words do we know?*

Explain: both cards are about the same issue — litter at Green Gums Park. The right card uses the words we know. The same few words say big things: a right, a law and a responsibility, all at once. That is why the words we know make a description stronger.

Two ways to say the same issue

With plain words

There is litter at the park.

It is bad.

With the words we know

Our issue is litter at
Green Gums Park.

Everyone has the right to
enjoy a clean park.

There is a law that says we
must not drop litter.

Everyone in the community has a
responsibility to put litter in the bin.

The words we know in this sentence:

issue

right

law

community

responsibility

Same issue — but the words we know tell us more.

Two cards saying the same issue two ways — one with plain words, and one using the words we know, with the words we know shown as small cards below

Activity: in pairs, students read both cards out loud, then find and point to each word we know in the right card.

Step 3 — Two ways to show your description

Say: *You can show your description in two ways.*

Way 1 — a poster of rights and responsibilities. Show the model poster. Read it together: the issue line, the rights side, the responsibilities side, and the sources line. Ask students to find the words we know in it.

A model poster — rights and responsibilities

Look after Green Gums Park

Everyone's right. Everyone's responsibility.

Our issue: litter is left on the grass after lunch.

Rights

Everyone has the right to enjoy a clean park.

We have the right to play in a safe park.

Responsibilities

We put our litter in the bin.

We help pick up litter if we see it.

From our sources: we counted 18 pieces of litter after recess.

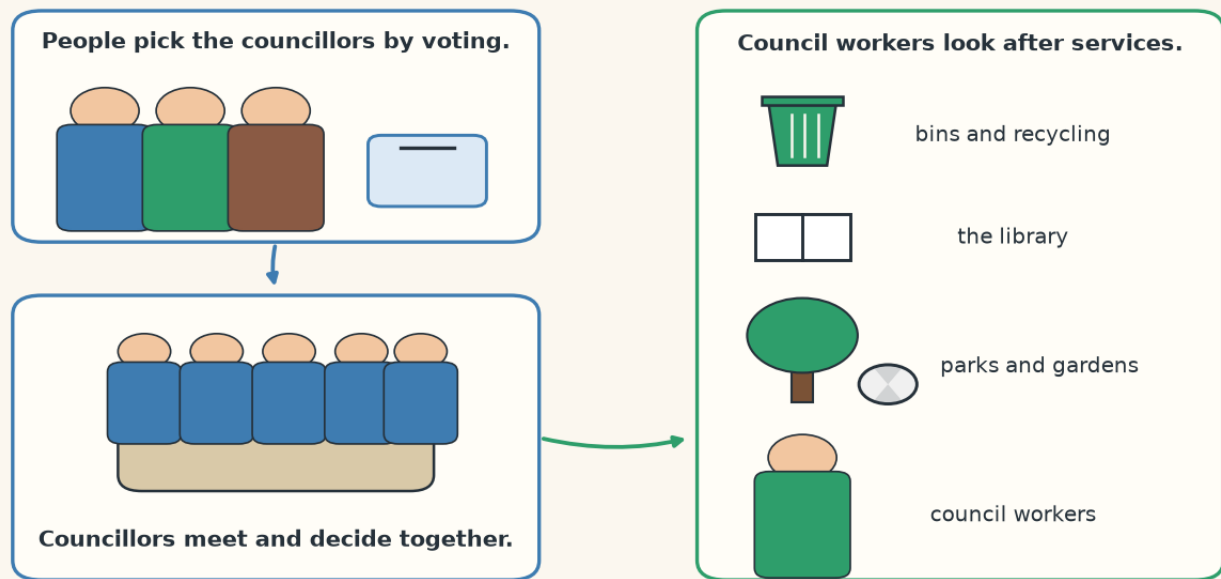
There is a law that says we must not drop litter.

Room 6's poster

Model poster titled “Look after Green Gums Park” with the issue line, a rights side, a responsibilities side and a sources line, made by Room 6

Way 2 — a picture that shows local government at work, or a picture of people who help their community. Show both model pictures. The labels in each picture use the words we know. Under each picture there is a short description of three or four sentences.

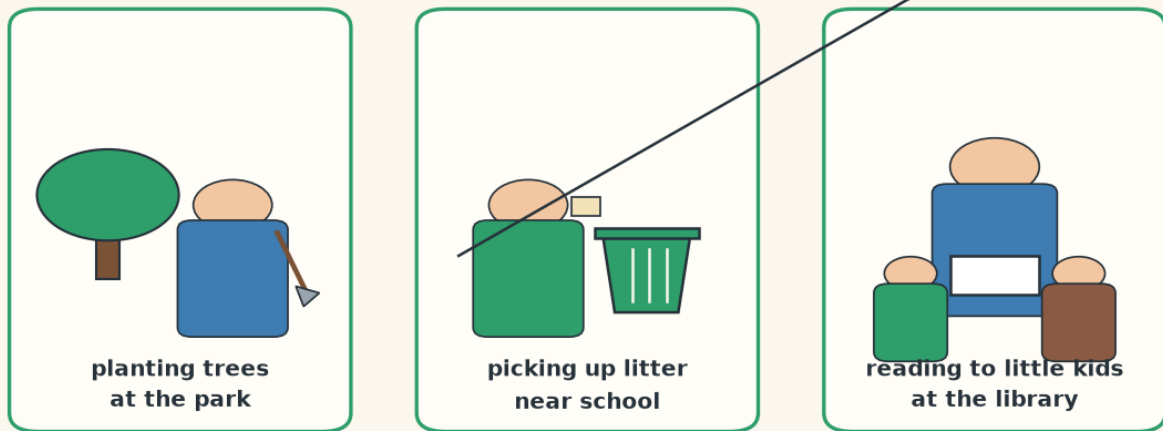
A picture of our council at work



**The people pick the council. The council decides together.
That is a democratic way to look after our area.**

Labelled picture of local government at work — people pick the councillors by voting, councillors meet and decide together, and council workers look after services

People who help their community



**People help their community in many ways.
Their help makes our places better for everyone.**

Three pictures of people who help their community — planting trees at the park, picking up litter near school, and reading to little kids at the library

Ask: *Which way would you pick?* Students may pick either way. Both count for the task today.

Teacher note: the rights on the model poster are child-friendly takes on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted 20 November 1989; Australia agreed to it on 17 December 1990 — for example, the right to rest and play, Article 31, and a safe, clean place to grow up, Article 24; UN Treaty Collection, treaties.un.org, retrieved 2026-08-25). The law line is real too: in Victoria, dropping litter is against the law (Environment Protection Act 2017 (Vic); EPA Victoria, epa.vic.gov.au, retrieved 2026-08-25), and each council makes local laws for its own area. The council facts match 1C and the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic): people pick the council by voting every four years, and each council has 5–12 councillors. Keep it to this — how the levels of government fit together is Levels 5 and 6 content (D10).

Step 4 — Plan your own

Show the empty plan. As a class, talk about what goes in each box. Students pick one issue that is happening now, at their school or near their home.

My poster or picture plan

1. My issue

What is happening that people care about?

2. My sources

Where can I find out?
What can I see, count or ask?

3. The words I will use

Pick from the words we know.

4. My description

Tell it in three or four sentences.

Empty plan with four boxes — my issue, my sources, the words I will use, and my description

Step 5 — Make it, then check it

Students make their poster or their picture, and write the description under it. Then they run the check strip.

Our description check

☐	Did I tell the issue?
☐	Did I use an idea from a source?
☐	Did I use at least two words we know?
☐	Do my words match my poster or picture?

If every box gets a tick, you described your issue well.

Check strip with four boxes — did I tell the issue, did I use an idea from a source, did I use at least two words we know, and do my words match my poster or picture

Worked examples

Example 1 — with help

Room 6 at Red Box Primary School made a poster about litter at Green Gums Park. Here is what they did, and why each step helps.

Step	What Room 6 did	Why it helps
1 Pick the issue	They picked one issue: litter is left on the grass after lunch.	One issue is easy to tell about.
2 Get ideas from sources	They counted 18 pieces of litter after recess. They took a photo. They asked a council worker.	Ideas from sources show what is really happening.
3 Pick the words we know	They picked five: issue, right, law, community, responsibility.	These words say big things in few words.
4 Make the poster	They wrote the rights side and the responsibilities side, like the model poster.	The poster shows the issue and what everyone can do.
5 Describe	They wrote their description under	Then anyone can picture the issue

Step	What Room 6 did	Why it helps
	the poster — the model poster above is theirs.	and help.

Read the poster's description out loud, as four sentences: *Our issue is litter at Green Gums Park. Everyone has the right to enjoy a clean park. There is a law that says we must not drop litter. Everyone in the community has a responsibility to put litter in the bin.*

Example 2 — with help

Room 9 at Coolibah Primary School picked Way 2. They drew a picture of their council at work.

Part of the picture	What Room 9 drew	Words they used
How the council is picked	People in their area putting votes in a box	vote, council
What the council does	Five councillors around a table, deciding together	councillors, decision, democratic
What the council looks after	A rubbish truck, the library, and the park	services, local government

Then they wrote their description under the picture: *Our picture shows our council. The people in our area pick the councillors by voting. The councillors meet and decide together. This is a democratic way to decide. The council looks after services like bins, the library and the parks. This is our local government at work.*

Teacher note: Room 9's facts match 1C — in Victoria, people pick their council by voting every four years (the last council election was on 26 October 2024), and each council has between 5 and 12 councillors (Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)). Red Box Primary School, Coolibah Primary School and Green Gums Park are made-up names for this book; the council, the law and the rights are real.

Practice questions

With help

Q1. Use the word wall. Finish each sentence.

1. A *right* is ...
2. A *responsibility* is ...
3. A *source* is ...
4. To *describe* means ...

Q2. Draw a line to match each word to its meaning.

Word	Meaning
law	everyone has a say
democratic	the people picked to decide for an area
issue	a rule for everyone
council	something people care about

Q3. Here is Room 6's description again: *Our issue is litter at Green Gums Park. Everyone has the right to enjoy a clean park. There is a law that says we must not drop litter. Everyone in the community has a responsibility to put litter in the bin.* Put a tick next to the words we know that you can find in it. Leave the others blank.

- issue
- right
- law
- community
- responsibility
- vote

Q4. Room 6 got ideas from sources. Put a tick next to the cards that give an idea from a source about the issue, and a cross next to the ones that do not.

- We counted 18 pieces of litter after recess.
- The park has a big old tree.
- The bin was full at lunchtime.
- My favourite food is pasta.

Q5. Match each right to the responsibility that looks after it, like the model poster.

Right	Responsibility
to enjoy a clean park	we help pick up litter if we see it
to play in a safe park	we share the space and take turns
to use the park with others	we put our litter in the bin

Q6. Here are four good bits about the park issue. Write each one in its box of the plan: *my issue, my sources, the words I will use, or my description.*

1. litter, right, law, community, responsibility
2. We counted the litter, and we took a photo.
3. Litter is left on the grass at Green Gums Park after lunch.
4. Our community has a responsibility to keep the park clean.

On your own

Q7. Think of one issue that is happening now, at your school or near your home. Write it as one sentence. Then write two words we know that you will use about it.

Q8. Name two sources you could use to find out about your issue. Write what each one could tell you.

Q9. Fill in the empty plan for your own poster or picture. Put something in every box.

My poster or picture plan

1. My issue What is happening that people care about?	2. My sources Where can I find out? What can I see, count or ask?
3. The words I will use Pick from the words we know.	4. My description Tell it in three or four sentences.

Empty plan with four boxes — my issue, my sources, the words I will use, and my description

Q10. Make your poster or your picture, and write your description under it. Then run the check strip. Tell a partner about your issue, using your words.

Think hard

Some people say: *When we describe an issue, we should use the words of our subject. They say big things in few words, and everyone in our class knows them.*

Other people say: *When we describe an issue, we should use plain words only. Then anyone can understand, even if they have not learned the words of our subject.*

Talk about both sides. Then say what you think, and give your reasons.

Teacher note: mark the reasoning, not the side. A student who argues either side with reasons and examples has done well. The strongest answers notice both sides can be right at once: use the words we know, because they say more — and say what they mean, or use plain words with them, so anyone can follow. That is what the model poster does: it uses right, law and responsibility, and it shows the plain facts too.

Answers

Example answers. Your words can be different.

Q1. 1. A right is something every person should have. 2. A responsibility is something you should do. 3. A source is a place where information comes from. 4. To describe means to tell about something in words, so other people can picture it.

Q2. Law → a rule for everyone. Democratic → everyone has a say. Issue → something people care about. Council → the people picked to decide for an area.

Q3. Ticks: issue, right, law, community, responsibility. Blank: vote — the word vote is not in the description.

Q4. Ticks: we counted 18 pieces of litter; the bin was full at lunchtime. Crosses: the big old tree (true, but not about the issue); my favourite food (not found out, and not about the issue).

Q5. To enjoy a clean park → we put our litter in the bin. To play in a safe park → we help pick up litter if we see it. To use the park with others → we share the space and take turns.

Q6. 1 → the words I will use. 2 → my sources. 3 → my issue. 4 → my description.

Q7. Check that the sentence names one issue happening now, and that the two words we know fit it — like “the taps in the yard drip all day”, with the words community and responsibility.

Q8. Examples: ask the office staff — they can tell you how long it has been happening; count it — that gives you numbers; take a photo — it shows what it looks like.

Q9. Check that every box of the plan has something in it, and that the bits are about the student’s own issue.

Q10. Check that the description tells the issue, uses an idea from a source, and uses at least two words we know — and that the words match the poster or the picture.

Think hard. Example: I think we should use the words we know, because they say big things fast — one word like responsibility says a whole job. But we should say what the words mean too, so anyone can follow. The model poster does both, so everyone in our town can understand it.