

Mathematics Level 7

Chapter 3 — Skills: investigating, evaluating, participating and communicating

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Asking good questions about issues happening now

Teaching sequence (for the teacher)

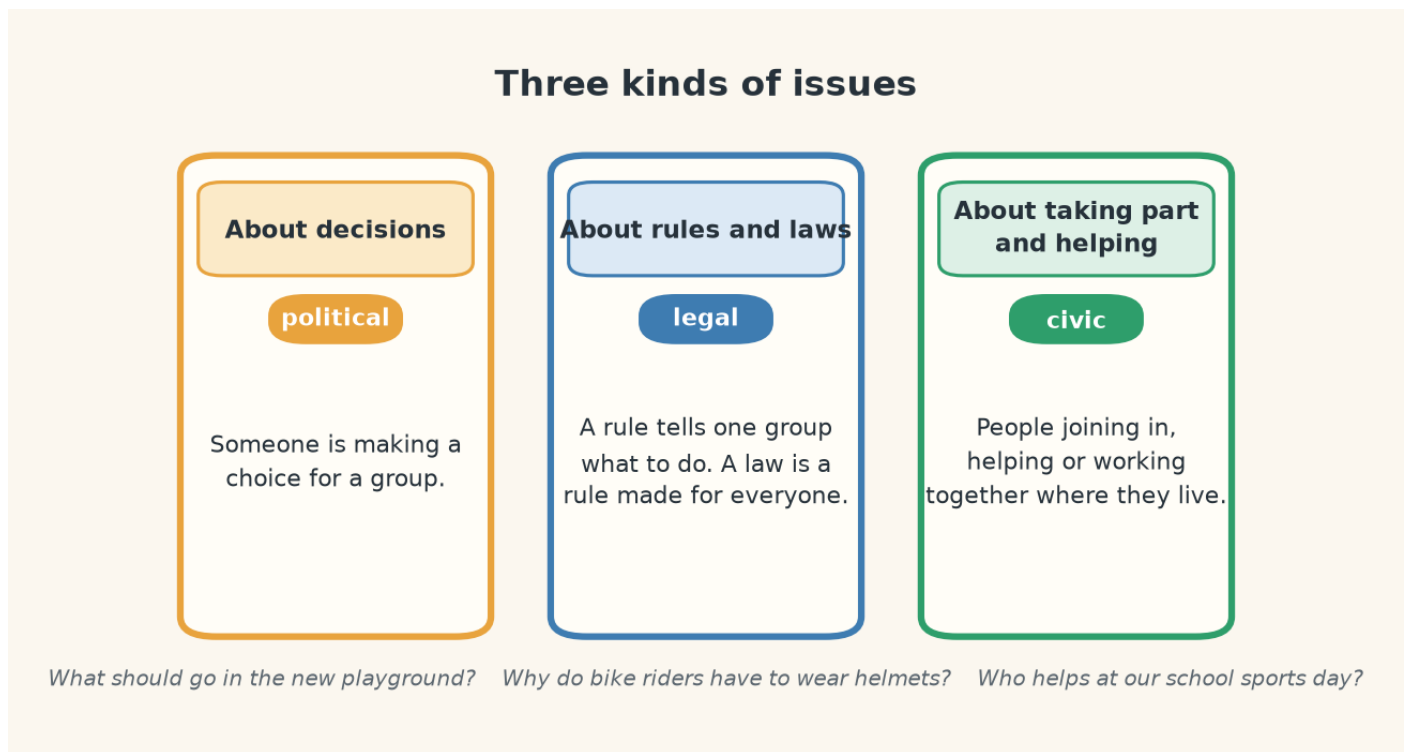
- **Curriculum links.** This section owns VC2HC4S01 (Skills; Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0, Civics and Citizenship, Levels 3 and 4 band; VCAA export retrieved 2026-07-29) and draws on elaborations .E01 (questions about an issue that connect to a decision) and .E02 (a question about how people take part in communities) — codes only; VC2 wording not reproduced. Assessed against the Levels 3 and 4 achievement standard for this code; the standard’s wording is not reproduced here. No §2A exclusion touches this CD; it is taught in full.
 - **Place in the book.** First section of Chapter 3 (Skills). It draws on the Knowledge sections 1B (how communities decide — one person, or the whole group) and 2D (participating and contributing in communities), per the chapter plan in TOC §3, and its output — each student’s question list — is the entry point for Section 3B (selecting and organising information to describe an issue happening now). Students pose questions here; they do not investigate or answer them yet.
 - **Contested terms (house rule).** The curriculum uses *political*, *legal* and *civic* without defining them; they are broad words that people use in different ways. The student-facing word box fixes the one sense this section reasons with — *political* = about decisions made for a group, *legal* = about rules and laws, *civic* = about people taking part and helping — and students reason inside those fixed senses. No position on any live issue is taken or assessed here: the skill under construction is asking, not answering, and questions are marked on their quality as questions, never on the view behind them.
 - **Scale.** Every issue sits at the band’s familiar-and-personal scale — classroom, school, home, local park, local council (TOC D8). No parliament, elections, courts or enforcement enter this section.
 - **Step 1 — hook.** Start a class wonder wall. Say one thing you noticed this week (the wet-weather box is full, the library got new books, a street near the school got new trees) and ask what students wonder about it. Leave the wall up for the whole section.
 - **Step 2 — big ideas.** Read the Big ideas text together, pausing at the word box and at each picture. Then run the four steps (notice, wonder, ask, find out) live on one item from the wonder wall.
 - **Step 3 — worked examples.** Walk through Examples 1 and 2; for Example 3, have students say the modelled question back in their own words before describing their own. Example 4 can be done as a class sort on the board.
 - **Step 4 — practice.** Q1–Q4 with support (pairs welcome); Q5–Q8 on their own, with written or drawn answers accepted; R1 as think–pair–share.
 - **Step 5 — the artefact.** Each student completes the “My question list” page (Picture 8). This is the section’s produced artefact: keep every list; students pick one question from it when Section 3B begins.
 - **Assessment note.** Mark questions against the three-point check in Picture 4 (question word, findable, about the issue) and against the issue kinds in Picture 2 — never on the opinion inside a question. Two students with opposite views can both produce full-mark questions.
-

Big ideas

Look around your school, your home and the area where you live. Something is always happening. The swings at the local park break in a storm. The school thinks about a new rule for the playground. A group of people works together to clean up the beach.

When something is happening and people think about it, talk about it, or want to find out about it, we call it an **issue**. Issues can be big or small. Some we want to change. Some we just want to understand.

Civics is about how people live together in communities. The issues in this section come in three kinds.



Three cards showing the three kinds of issues. Card one: about decisions, called **political**, for example what should go in the new playground? Card two: about rules and laws, called **legal**, for example why do bike riders have to wear helmets? Card three: about taking part and helping, called **civic**, for example who helps at our school sports day?

Picture 1 shows the three kinds.

- **About decisions.** Someone is making a choice for a group. These issues are called **political**. People use this word in different ways. In this book, *political* means: about the decisions people make for a group, and how they make them.
- **About rules and laws.** A **rule** tells the people in one group what to do. A **law** is a rule made for everyone. These issues are called **legal**. In this book, *legal* means: about rules and laws.
- **About taking part and helping.** People joining in, helping or working together where they live. These issues are called **civic**. In this book, *civic* means: about people taking part and helping in their community.

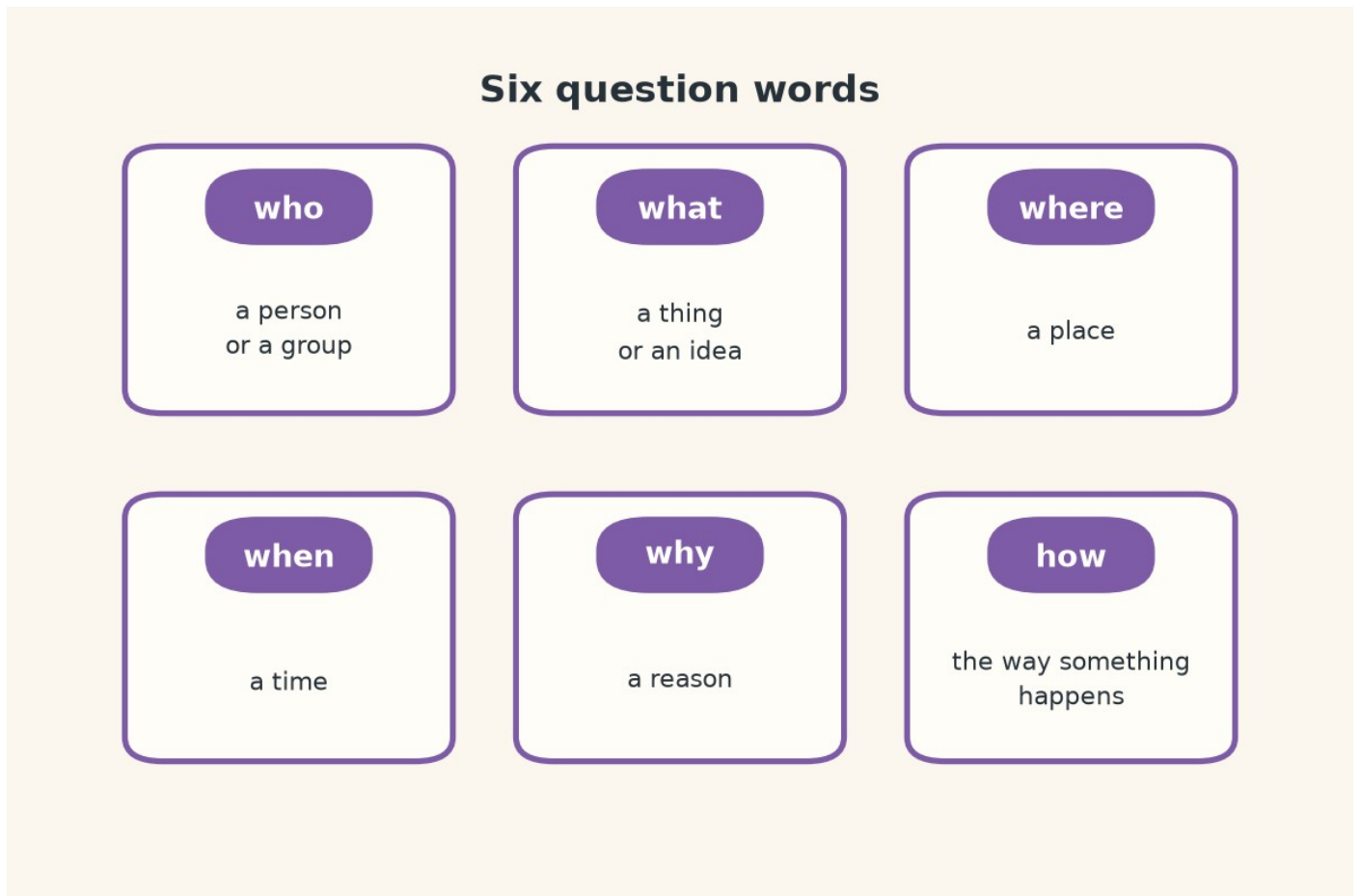
A **community** is a group of people who share a place, a school or a club. Your class is a community. Your family is a community. Everyone in the area where you live is one big community.

Words we use

- **issue** – something that is happening, that people think about, talk about, or want to find out about.
- **political** – about decisions made for a group. People use this word in different ways. In this book, this is what it means.
- **legal** – about rules and laws.
- **civic** – about people taking part and helping in their community.
- **investigate** – to look for answers in a careful way.
- **community** – a group of people who share a place, a school or a club.
- **rule** – what a group asks its own people to do.
- **law** – a rule made for everyone.
- **decision** – a pick; when you choose one thing and not another.
- **democracy** – a way of deciding where everyone in the group gets a say. A group that decides this way is being **democratic**. People use this word in different ways. In this book, this is what it means.

Good questions start with question words

When we want to find out about an issue, we ask **questions**. A question is something you say or write when you want to find out. Most questions start with one of six little words: **who, what, where, when, why** and **how**.

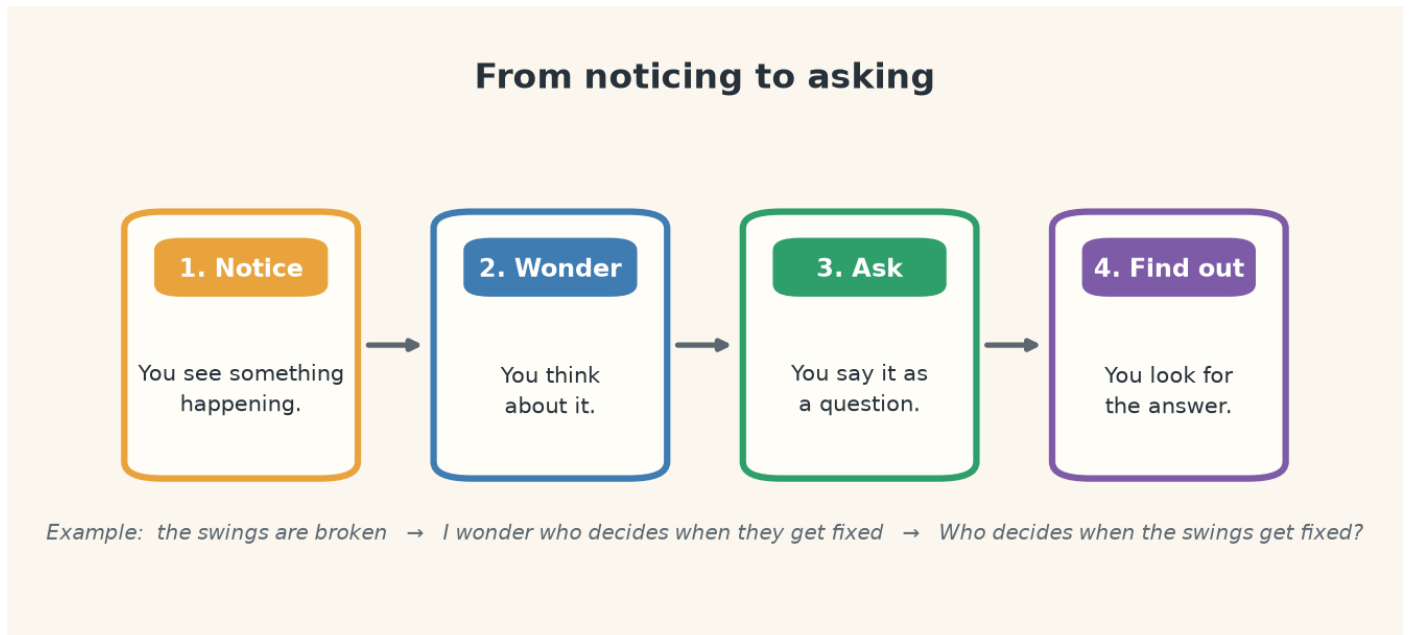


Six question words with what each one helps you find out. Who: a person or a group. What: a thing or an idea. Where: a place. When: a time. Why: a reason. How: the way something happens.

Each question word points you to a different kind of answer. Picture 2 shows what each one finds.

From noticing to asking

Big investigations start small. They start with someone noticing something. Picture 3 shows the four steps.



Four steps in a row. Step one: notice, you see something happening. Step two: wonder, you think about it. Step three: ask, you say it as a question. Step four: find out, you look for the answer.

1. **Notice.** You see something happening. *The swings at the park are broken.*
2. **Wonder.** You think about it. *I wonder who decides when they get fixed.*
3. **Ask.** You say it as a question. *Who decides when the swings get fixed?*
4. **Find out.** You look for answers. That is the next step, in Section 3B.

Is your question ready?

Not every question is ready to be used. A good question for finding out passes three checks.

Is my question ready?

✓

Does it start with a question word?

✓

Can I find it out? (Is it not a yes-or-no question?)

✓

Is it about my issue?

Three ticks? Your question is ready.

A checklist titled *Is my question ready?* Three ticked checks. One: does it start with a question word? Two: can I find it out, is it not a yes or no question? Three: is it about my issue?

Picture 4 is the check. Look at the second point. Some questions can be answered with just yes or no. *Is the park fun?* Yes. No. Done. A yes-or-no question stops the finding-out. A question-word question opens it up. *What makes the park fun?* Now there are many things to find out, and many people to ask.

Thinking trap. Some questions hide an idea inside them. *What can we do about the ugly fence?* hides the idea that the fence is ugly. But is it? Before you answer a question, check the idea hiding inside it. If the idea is not right, fix the question first.

Worked examples

Example 1 — with help

From noticing to asking. A Year 4 class notices three things about their local park. They turn each one into a question, using the steps from Picture 3.

What we notice	What we wonder	Our question	Kind of issue
The swings broke in a	Someone decided to close	Who decided to close the	About a decision

What we notice	What we wonder	Our question	Kind of issue
storm, and the park closed for a week.	the park. Who was it?	park?	(political)
Workers came to fix the swings before anyone could use them again.	Maybe there are rules about keeping the park safe.	What rules keep the swings safe to use?	About rules and laws (legal)
Some families want to help look after the park.	How can they join in?	How can families help look after our park?	About taking part and helping (civic)

Check the three questions against Picture 4. Each one starts with a question word. Each one takes more than yes or no to answer. Each one is about the park. All three are ready.

Example 2 — with help

A question list about a decision. The council is the group that makes decisions for the area where you live. Picture 5 is a model question list. It is about one issue: the council wants to build a new playground in the town park, and it must decide what goes in it.

Our question list

The issue: the council wants to build a new playground in the town park

About decisions

- Who** Who decides what goes in the new playground?
- How** How will the council ask people what they want?
- Will** Will students get a say?
- When** When will the decision be made?

About rules and laws

- What** What rules will keep the new playground safe?
- Will** Will there be rules about using it?

About taking part and helping

- How** How can students help with the new playground?
- Who** Who will look after it when it is built?

Every question starts with a question word, takes more than yes or no to answer, and is about the issue.

A model question list titled Our question list, about the issue: the council wants to build a new playground in the town park. Under about decisions: who decides what goes in the new playground? How will the council ask people what they want? Will students get a say? When will the decision be made? Under about rules and laws: what rules will keep the new playground safe? Will there be rules about using it? Under about taking part and helping: how can students help with the new playground? Who will look after it when it is built?

Look at how the list is made.

Step	What the class did	Why it works
1. Name the issue.	“The new playground in the town park.”	Every question on the list stays about one issue.
2. Ask about the decision.	Who decides? How will they ask people? Will students get a say?	Section 1B is about how groups make decisions. Questions like these help you find out how a decision is made, and if everyone gets a say.
3. Ask about rules and laws.	What rules will keep it safe?	New places often come with new rules.
4. Ask about taking part.	How can students help?	Section 2D is about people taking

Step	What the class did	Why it works
		part in their communities. Questions like these help you find out how people can join in.

Every question on the list passes the Picture 4 check, and the list has at least one question of each kind.

Example 3 — on your own

A question about people taking part. Every year, on the first Sunday in March, people all over Australia take part in Clean Up Australia Day. They pick up litter in parks, streets and beaches. The group that runs the day, Clean Up Australia, says more than 1,000,000 people join in each year, and it has run since 1990 (see Sources).

Here is a question about all those people taking part:

Why do so many people give up a Sunday to pick up litter that is not theirs?

The question is a good one. It starts with *why*. You cannot answer it with yes or no. To find out, you could ask people who join in, or read what they say. And here is one more, closer to home:

How could our class take part in a clean-up day?

Example 4 — on your own

Sort the questions, and fix one. Here are five questions about a school issue: the school tuckshop is changing what it sells.

Question	Kind of issue
Who decided to change the tuckshop?	About a decision (political)
Did students get a say in the change?	About a decision (political) — but it is a yes-or-no question! Fix it: How did students get a say in the change?
Why does Victoria have a law that says every bike rider must wear a helmet?	About rules and laws (legal) — a real law, made for everyone (see Sources).
What healthy foods could the tuckshop sell?	About a decision (political)
How can students help the tuckshop waste less food?	About taking part and helping (civic)

Row two shows the fix. A yes-or-no question can still point at the right issue — it just needs a question word before it is ready.

Practice

With help

Q1. Match each question word to what it helps you find out. Use Picture 2 to help.

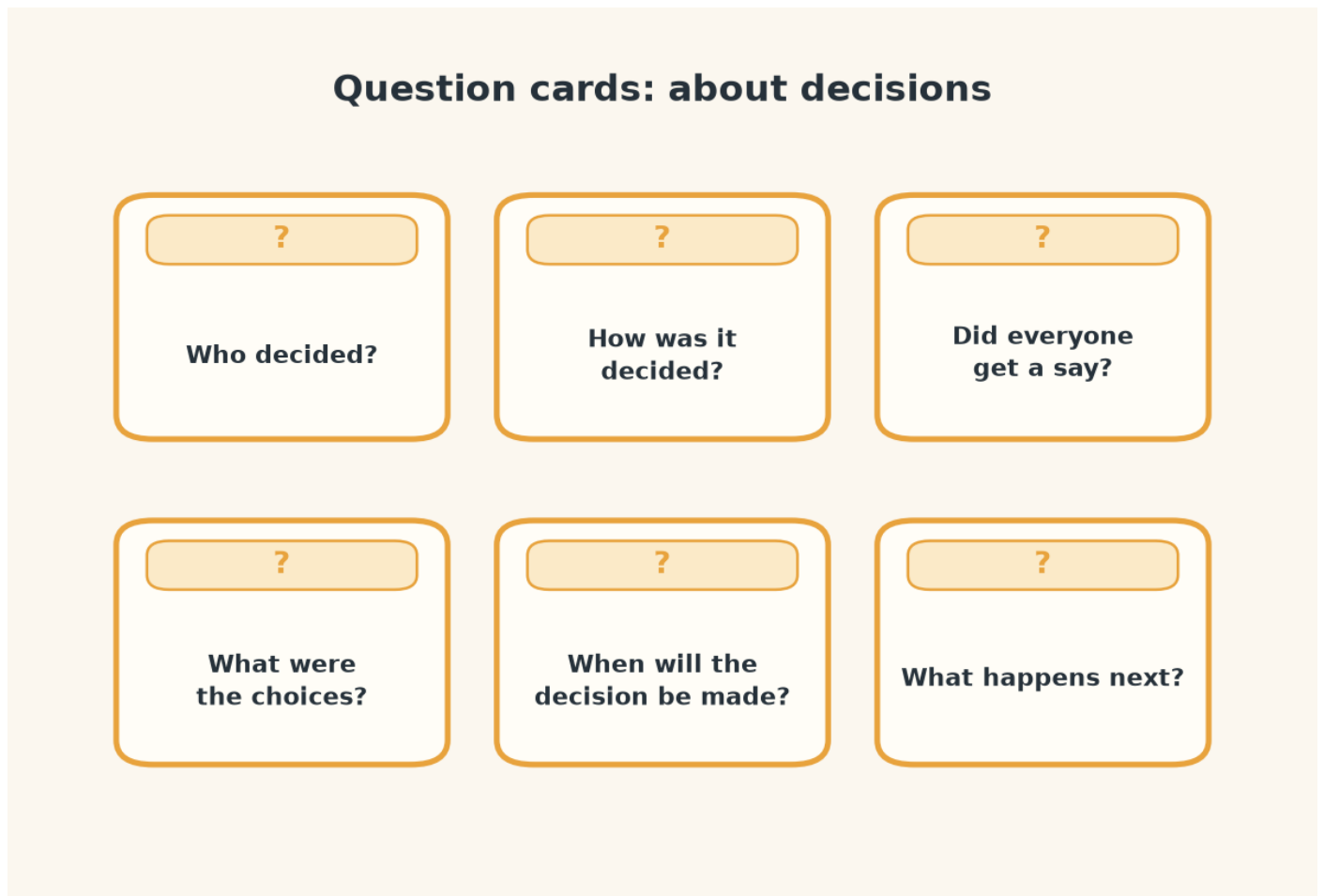
who · what · where · when · why · how

- (a) a place
- (b) a reason
- (c) a person or a group
- (d) the way something happens
- (e) a time
- (f) a thing or an idea

Q2. Finish each question with a question word from Q1. Each word is used once.

- (a) _____ decided to plant new trees at our school?
- (b) _____ does the school library close?
- (c) _____ can we make the wet-weather box better?
- (d) _____ do students have to walk, not run, in the hallway?
- (e) _____ is the class garden?
- (f) _____ happens to the rubbish from our lunch boxes?

Q3. Look at Picture 6, the decision-question cards. Pick the two questions you most want to find out about. Tell a friend why you picked them.



Six question cards about decisions. Who decided? How was it decided? Did everyone get a say? What were the choices? When will the decision be made? What happens next?

Q4. This question stops the finding-out: *Do students want a class garden?* Rewrite it with a question word so it opens the finding-out.

On your own

Q5. Think of one decision made at your school this year. Write two questions about that decision. Each question must pass the Picture 4 check.

Q6. Write one question about people helping in your community. It can be about your school, a club, or the area where you live.

Q7. Here is an issue: *the local park needs new plants after a hot summer.* Write one question about a decision, one question about rules and laws, and one question about taking part and helping.

Q8. Look at Picture 7, the taking-part question cards. One card asks about Clean Up Australia Day. Write your own question to add to the set.

Question cards: about taking part and helping

? Who helps here?	? Why do they help?	? How do they help?
? How can I join in?	? What would happen if nobody helped?	? Who gives up their time at Clean Up Australia Day?

Six question cards about taking part and helping. Who helps here? Why do they help? How do they help? How can I join in? What would happen if nobody helped? Who gives up their time at Clean Up Australia Day?

Reasoning

R1. Why are question-word questions better for finding out than yes-or-no questions? Give one of each in your answer.

Make your question list

Pick one issue that matters to you. It can be at school, at home, or in the area where you live. Copy Picture 8 into your book and fill it in.

My question list

My issue is: _____

About decisions

About rules and laws

About taking part and helping

★ **Star the question you most want to find out.**

Check each question: question word? can I find it out? about my issue?

A blank question list to fill in. At the top: my question list. My issue is: a line to write on. Then three boxes. About decisions: two lines. About rules and laws: two lines. About taking part and helping: two lines. At the bottom: star the question you most want to find out.

Write at least one question in each box. Check every question against Picture 4. Then star the question you most want to find out. Keep your list — in Section 3B, you will use it to choose what to find out about.

Answers

Q1. (a) where. (b) why. (c) who. (d) how. (e) when. (f) what.

Q2. Answers may include: (a) Who. (b) When (or Why). (c) How. (d) Why. (e) Where. (f) What.

Q3. Any two cards. A good answer names the two cards and gives a reason for each pick, such as wanting to know if students get a say.

Q4. Answers may include: *What do students want in a class garden?* or *Where could our class garden go?* A good answer starts with a question word and cannot be answered with yes or no.

Q5. Answers will vary. A good answer gives two questions about the one decision, each starting with a question word, each about that decision, and each taking more than yes or no to answer.

Q6. Answers will vary. A good answer asks about real people helping in a community the student is in, such as *Who helps at our school sports day?*

Q7. Answers may include: About a decision — *Who decides what to plant in the park?* About rules and laws — *Are there rules about picking the flowers in the park?* About taking part and helping — *How can students help water the new plants?*

Q8. Answers will vary. A good answer starts with a question word and is about people taking part or helping, such as *How do people sign up to help at Clean Up Australia Day?*

R1. A good answer: yes-or-no questions stop the finding-out, because one word answers them; question-word questions open it up, because there are many things to find out and many people to ask. One of each, such as *Is the park fun?* (yes or no) and *What makes the park fun?* (question word).

Sources (for the teacher)

- Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0, Civics and Citizenship, Levels 3 and 4 band: content description VC2HC4S01 and elaborations .E01 and .E02 (VCAA export VC2_AS-CD-Elab_29-07-2026.csv, retrieved 2026-07-29; codes only, VC2 wording not reproduced; the curriculum is the scope authority for this section). Assessed against the Levels 3 and 4 achievement standard for this code; the standard’s wording is not reproduced here.
- Clean Up Australia Day — held on the first Sunday in March; more than a million people take part each year; first held in January 1990; run by the not-for-profit group Clean Up Australia: checked against the Wikipedia article “Clean Up Australia” (retrieved 2026-08-26; the group’s own site returned a 403 at retrieval).
- The bicycle-helmet law: Victoria’s road rules require bicycle riders to wear an approved helmet; Victoria made helmets compulsory for cyclists from 1990, first in Australia: checked against the Wikipedia article “Bicycle helmet laws” (retrieved 2026-08-26).
- All issues, classes, parks and scenarios in this section are original to this book; no publisher material was used.

Selecting and organising information to describe an issue happening now

VC2HC4S02 · Levels 3–4 band · (codes only; VC2 wording not reproduced)

The Victorian Curriculum adds four extra tasks to this code:

- **VC2HC4S02.E01** — an issue happening now that connects to a law
- **VC2HC4S02.E02** — linking an issue to a decision — was it democratic, or not?
- **VC2HC4S02.E03** — sorting the communities you are part of into groups of your own
- **VC2HC4S02.E04** — sorting a list into two columns — rights and responsibilities

E03 sits under the **Sustainability** priority, so one of our sorting groups below is a community that cares for a place.

The standard this section builds toward: the Levels 3 and 4 achievement standard for VC2HC4S02; its wording is not reproduced.

Knowledge sections this section draws on: 1B democratic and non-democratic decisions · 2A rules and laws · 2B rights and responsibilities · 2C communities and identity.

Word Watch

- **source** — a place you get information from. Books, web pages, people you ask, signs, and your own counting can all be sources.
 - **information** — facts and ideas you find out.
 - **data** — numbers and facts you collect yourself, like a tally of what is in the lunch bins.
 - **issue** — something happening now that people notice, talk about, and try to make better.
 - **contemporary** — the word the Victorian Curriculum uses for *happening now, today*. The curriculum uses this word but does not define it, so this book says exactly what it means here: happening now, in our time. In our own sentences we say “happening now”.
 - **select** — to choose the parts that help your question, and leave the rest out.
 - **organise** — to sort what you selected into a table, list or chart, so it makes sense.
 - **describe** — to tell about something using the facts you selected.
 - **law** — a rule made by the government that everyone in that place must follow (→ 2A).
 - **government** — the group of people who make the laws and big decisions for a state or a country.
 - **democratic decision** — the curriculum uses *democratic* but does not define it, so this book says exactly what it means here (the same way as Section 1B): a decision where everyone in the group gets a say, and the group decides together.
 - **non-democratic decision** — a decision where one person, or a small group, decides for everyone without asking the rest (→ 1B).
 - **rights** — things you should get (→ 2B).
 - **responsibilities** — things you should do (→ 2B).
 - **community** — a group of people who share a place, an interest, or a way of caring for each other (→ 2C).
-

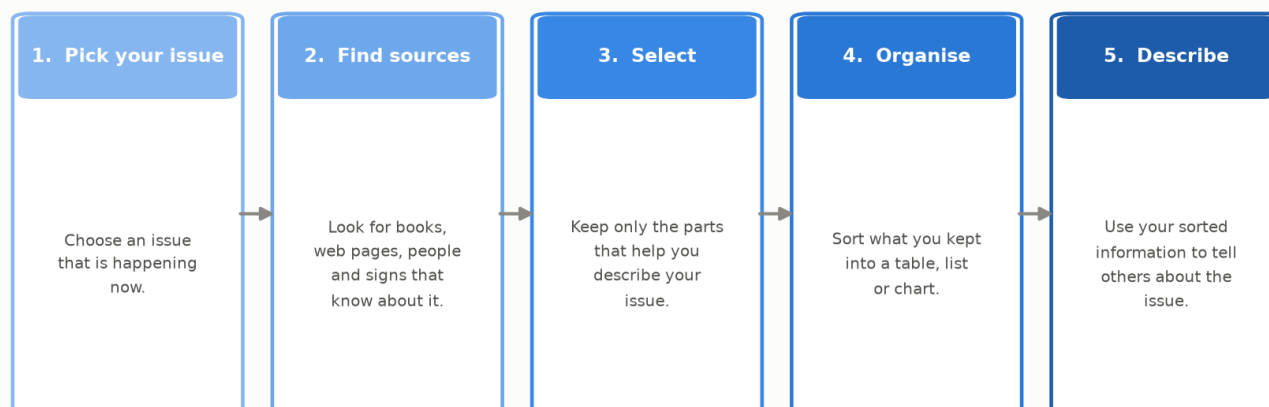
How it works

In Chapters 1 and 2 you built big ideas about how people live together: how groups make decisions (1B), what rules and laws do (2A), what rights and responsibilities are (2B), and what communities you belong to (2C).

This section turns those ideas into a skill. When something is happening now — an **issue** — you can find out about it from more than one **source**, **select** the parts that help, **organise** them, and **describe** the issue so someone else understands it. That is exactly what the curriculum code on this page asks you to learn.

Why more than one source? Each source shows one side of an issue. A law tells you what is allowed. A tally tells you what is really happening at your school. A sign tells you what someone is doing about it. Put the sides together, and the whole issue comes into view.

The 5 steps: from an issue to a clear description



You can go back a step at any time. Real investigators do!

A row of five boxes joined by arrows: 1 Pick your issue, 2 Find sources, 3 Select, 4 Organise, 5 Describe, each box with a short hint.

Figure 1 — The five steps, from an issue to a clear description.

The five steps, one at a time:

1. **Pick your issue.** Choose something happening now — not last year's news, not a made-up worry.
2. **Find sources.** Books, web pages (with a grown-up), people you ask, signs and posters, and numbers you collect yourself.
3. **Select.** A source holds more than you need. Keep only the parts that help you describe *your* issue.
4. **Organise.** Sort what you kept, so each fact sits next to the question it answers — and next to the source it came from.
5. **Describe.** Write or tell, in your own sentences, what the issue is. Every sentence rests on a fact you selected.

Kinds of sources

Kind of source	What it can give you	Example
 Library books	long facts and explanations	a book about plastic in the sea
 Websites	quick facts and news	the EPA Victoria page about single-use plastics
 People you ask	their stories — what they saw and did	the person who runs the school canteen
 Signs, posters and photos	what things look like, and what people want you to know	the new sign outside the canteen
 Numbers you collect yourself	data about your own class or school	your tally of the lunch bins

A table of five kinds of sources — library books, websites, people you ask, signs posters and photos, and numbers you collect yourself — with what each can give you and an example.

Figure 2 — Kinds of sources.

Two habits of good selecting

- **Keep only what helps.** Interesting is not the same as useful. A fact about long ago, or about the weather, might be interesting — but if it does not help describe your issue, let it go.
- **Every fact keeps its address.** When you keep a fact, write down which source it came from. Then anyone can check it, and you never present a made-up idea as a found fact.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 (with help) — one issue, three sources: single-use plastic

Single-use plastic means things like straws, plates, bags and spoons that get used once and thrown away. What to do about it is an issue happening now — a contemporary issue — and it connects to a law (that is E01). Let's do all five steps.

Steps 1–2 · Pick the issue and find sources. Our question: *What is happening about single-use plastic in Victoria, and at our school?* Three sources:

Source 1 — a law. This card is made for this book from a real web page: Environment Protection Authority Victoria, 'Single-use plastics', epa.vic.gov.au/single-use-plastics, retrieved 26 August 2026.

Source 1 · A law about single-use plastics

- From 1 February 2023, shops in Victoria cannot sell or give out many single-use plastic items.
- These items include plastic straws, plastic knives, forks and spoons, plastic plates, drink stirrers, foam plastic food boxes and cups, and some plastic bags.
- Important: some people need plastic straws because of a disability or for their health. The law says they can still get them.
- The law is called the Environment Protection Amendment (Banning Single-Use Plastic Items) Regulations 2022.

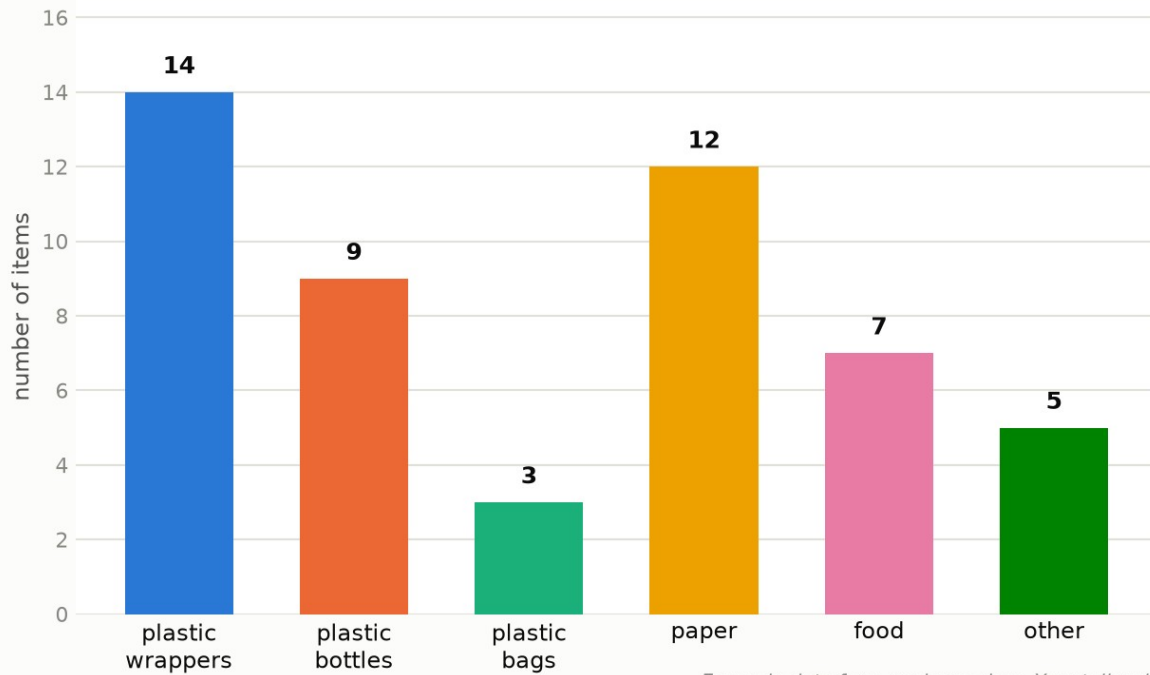
Made for this book from: Environment Protection Authority Victoria, 'Single-use plastics', epa.vic.gov.au/single-use-plastics, retrieved 26 August 2026.

Source 1 card, a law about single-use plastics: from 1 February 2023 shops in Victoria cannot sell or give out many single-use plastic items; the items are listed; some people can still get plastic straws for their health; the law's name is given; made from the EPA Victoria page, retrieved 26 August 2026.

Figure 3 — Source 1, a law about single-use plastics (made from a real page, retrieved 26 August 2026).

Source 2 — our own data. Class 4B counted what was in the lunch bins for one week. The chart below uses example numbers for a made-up class; your tally will be your own.

Class 4B lunch-bin tally — one week



Example data for a made-up class. Your tally will be different.

A bar chart titled *Class 4B lunch-bin tally, one week*: plastic wrappers 14, plastic bottles 9, plastic bags 3, paper 12, food 7, other 5, with a note that the numbers are an example for a made-up class.

Figure 4 — Source 2, our class tally (example data).

Source 3 — a sign. A made-up sign for this book, outside the school canteen: “From next term, our canteen swaps plastic spoons for wooden ones.”

Step 3 · Select. Not everything stays. Mia asked one question about every piece: *Does this help me describe my issue?*

Selecting: what do I keep?

✓ Keep — it helps me describe the issue

From 1 February 2023, shops in Victoria cannot sell or give out many single-use plastic items.
Source 1 — the law

Class 4B counted 26 pieces of plastic in the lunch bins in one week.
Source 2 — our tally

Some people need plastic straws for their health, and the law lets them keep getting straws.
Source 1 — the law

✗ Leave out — it does not help

Plastic was first made more than 100 years ago.
Source 3 — library book

It rained 12 mm in our town last Tuesday.
Source 4 — weather page

Ask about every piece: does this help me describe MY issue? If yes, keep it. If no, let it go.

A selecting table with a green Keep column and a red Leave-out column: kept facts about the law, the class tally, and straws for health; left-out facts about when plastic was first made and about rain.

Figure 5 — Step 3, selecting what to keep.

Notice the two left-out facts. They are true facts — but they describe something else, so they go.

Step 4 • Organise. One row per question, and every fact keeps its address.

Organising: Mia's sorted notes		
My question	What I found out	Where it came from
What does the law say?	Since 1 February 2023, shops in Victoria cannot sell or give out plastic straws, knives, forks, spoons, plates and drink stirrers.	Source 1 — the EPA Victoria web page
How much plastic is in our bins?	26 pieces in one week: 14 wrappers, 9 bottles and 3 bags.	Source 2 — our class tally
What is our school doing about it?	The canteen will swap plastic spoons for wooden ones next term.	Source 3 — the canteen sign

One row per question. Now Mia can see what she knows, and where each fact came from.

An organising table with three columns — *My question*, *What I found out*, *Where it came from* — and three rows about the law, the class tally, and the canteen sign.

Figure 6 — Step 4, Mia's organised notes.

Step 5 · Describe. Mia used her table to write five sentences. The coloured lines show where each sentence came from.

From notes to a description — a model text

Mia's description

Single-use plastic is an issue happening now in our town and our school.

From 1 February 2023, shops in Victoria cannot sell or give out many single-use plastic items, like plastic straws, plates and cutlery.

In our school, Class 4B counted 26 pieces of plastic in the lunch bins in one week: 14 wrappers, 9 bottles and 3 bags.

Our canteen says it will swap plastic spoons for wooden ones next term.

The law still lets people get plastic straws if they need them for their health.

Key: each coloured line shows where that sentence came from.

from Source 1 — the EPA law page

from Source 2 — our class tally

from Source 3 — the canteen sign

Every sentence rests on information Mia selected and organised. Nothing is made up.

Mia's description: five sentences, each with a coloured line showing its source — blue for the EPA law page, orange for the class tally, green for the canteen sign.

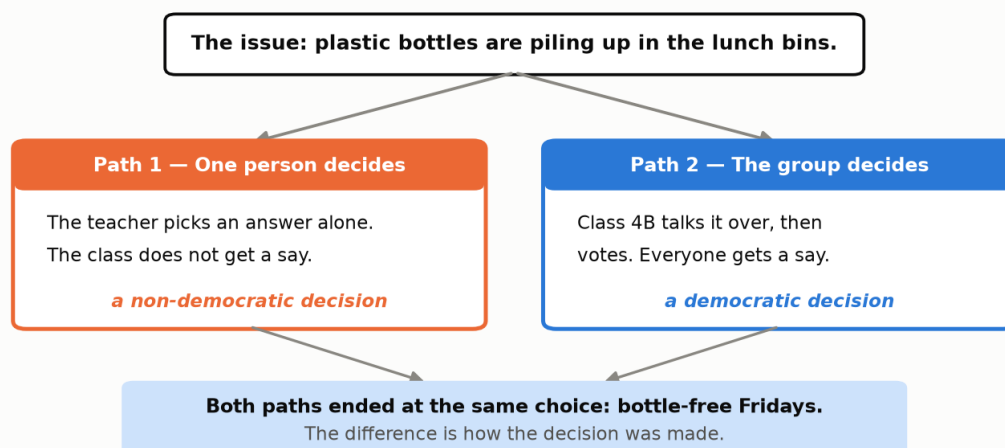
Figure 7 — Step 5, Mia's description with a source key.

Mia's description is strong because nothing in it is made up: every sentence rests on a fact she selected and organised, and every fact has an address.

Worked example 2 — connecting the issue to a decision (E02)

Here is another issue: plastic bottles piling up in the lunch bins. Now connect the issue to a decision that was made. The same issue can be decided in two different ways:

The same issue, two ways to decide



One person deciding can be fast, and that helps when you must act quickly. For choices that are for the whole class, the group way lets everyone have a say.

The same issue decided two ways: Path 1 one person decides, a non-democratic decision; Path 2 the group decides, a democratic decision; both paths end at bottle-free Fridays.

Figure 8 — The same issue, two ways to decide.

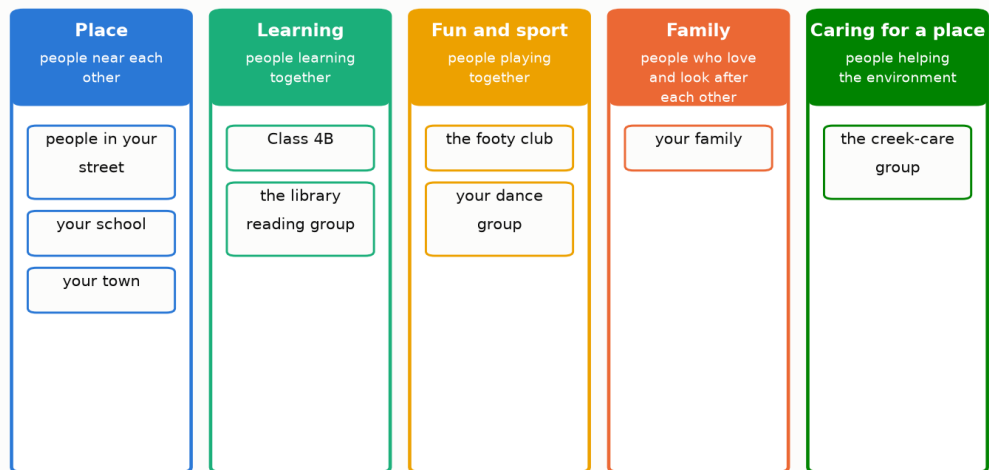
In Path 1, one person decides — a **non-democratic decision**, in our Word Watch meaning. In Path 2, the group decides together — a **democratic decision**. Both paths ended at the same choice, so the *choice* does not tell you which path it was. The *way of deciding* does. And be fair to Path 1: one person deciding can be fast, and that is really good when you must act quickly. The group way is slower, but everyone gets a say and understands the why.

So when you hear about an issue, ask: *was a decision made here? By one person, or by the group?* That connects the issue to a decision — democratic or non-democratic.

Worked example 3 — sorting the communities you are part of (E03)

You belong to many communities at once. E03 asks you to sort them into groups. Here is one way to do it — the groups you choose are up to you.

Sorting our communities — one way to do it



Some communities could go in two groups — for example, your school is a place AND a place to learn. Talk about where you would put them.

One way to sort communities into five groups — Place, Learning, Fun and sport, Family, and Caring for a place — with example communities in each group.

Figure 9 — Sorting our communities, one way to do it.

Look at the last group, *Caring for a place*. A community can be people who look after something together — like a creek-care group that plants trees and picks up rubbish by the creek. That is the sustainability side of this task: some communities exist to look after a place.

And notice the note at the bottom: your school could sit in two groups. A good sort is not about one right answer — it is about giving a reason for where you put each community.

Worked example 4 — rights or responsibilities? (E04)

E04 asks you to sort a list into rights and responsibilities. Here are ten cards, not yet sorted.

Sort the cards: rights or responsibilities?

feel safe at school	follow the school rules	use library books	take turns	be heard when you talk
keep the classroom tidy	play in the yard at lunch	listen when others talk	get help from a teacher	look after school things

Rights

things you should get

1

2

3

4

5

Responsibilities

things you should do

1

2

3

4

5

Ten unsorted cards — *feel safe at school, follow the school rules, use library books, take turns, be heard when you talk, keep the classroom tidy, play in the yard at lunch, listen when others talk, get help from a teacher, look after school things* — above two empty columns labelled **Rights** and **Responsibilities**.

Figure 10 — Sort the cards: rights or responsibilities?

Let's sort the first two together.

- *feel safe at school* — Is that something you should **get**, or something you should **do**? You should get it. → **Right**.
- *follow the school rules* — Something you should do. → **Responsibility**.

That is the whole test: **get** → **right**, **do** → **responsibility**. You finish the other eight cards in Q3.

Practice questions

Q1. Name one issue happening now in your town or your school. (a) Describe it in one sentence. (b) Does it connect to a law or a rule (→ 2A)? (c) Does it connect to a decision that was made (→ 1B)? If yes, was that decision democratic or non-democratic? How do you know?

Q2. List four communities you are part of. Sort them into groups you choose yourself, give each group a name, and draw your sort the way Figure 9 does.

Q3. Sort the other eight cards from Figure 10 into the two columns: rights (things you should get) and responsibilities (things you should do).

Q4. Your own issue page. (a) Pick an issue happening now. (b) Use at least two different sources. (c) Fill in an organise table like Figure 6. (d) Write four or five sentences describing your issue, like Mia did in Figure 7. (e) Mark where each sentence came from — a coloured line like Mia’s, or [S1] and [S2] after the sentence.

Before you finish, check:

- I picked an issue happening now.
 - I selected facts from at least two sources, and I left out what did not help.
 - I organised my facts, and every fact keeps its address.
 - I can describe the issue in my own sentences.
-

Answers

Q1. Answers will vary. Example: (a) “Plastic rubbish keeps landing in the creek near our school.” (b) It connects to a law — Victoria’s single-use plastics law from Source 1 — and to local rules about litter. (c) It connects to a decision: our town decided to put up extra bins and signs after the council asked people what they wanted — a group decision, so democratic in our Word Watch meaning.

Q2. Answers will vary. Example: my communities — my street, my school, my footy club, my family. My groups — Place (my street, my school), Fun and sport (my footy club), Family (my family).

Q3. Rights: use library books · be heard when you talk · play in the yard at lunch · get help from a teacher.
Responsibilities: take turns · keep the classroom tidy · listen when others talk · look after school things.

Q4. See the worked answers below for a full example page.

Worked answers

Q3. The get/do test, card by card:

- *use library books* — something you should get (the library is there for you) → right.
- *take turns* — something you do → responsibility.
- *be heard when you talk* — something you get → right.
- *keep the classroom tidy* — something you do → responsibility.
- *play in the yard at lunch* — something you get → right.
- *listen when others talk* — something you do → responsibility.
- *get help from a teacher* — something you get → right.
- *look after school things* — something you do → responsibility.

Q4. An example page — issue: litter at the local park.

Sources (all made up for this book, except your own counting): S1 — a sign at the park: “Please take your rubbish home.” S2 — my own tally: 18 pieces of litter counted after Saturday’s games. S3 — a person I asked: the person who looks after the park.

My question	What I found out	Where it came from
What does the park ask people to do?	Take your rubbish home.	S1 — the park sign
How much litter is there?	18 pieces after Saturday’s games.	S2 — my tally
Which day has the most litter?	Saturday, after sport.	S3 — the person who looks after the park

Description:

There is an issue happening now at my local park: after weekend sport, litter stays on the grass [S2]. The park asks people to take their rubbish home [S1]. My tally found 18 pieces of litter after one Saturday [S2]. The person who looks after the park says Saturday has the most litter [S3].

Every sentence has an address, and nothing is made up. A good page has: an issue happening now, two or more sources, an organise table, and sentences with their addresses.

Describing an institution: what it does, how it decides, why it matters

Victorian Curriculum 2.0 · Civics and Citizenship · Levels 3 and 4 · Skills, Evaluating democratic institutions and systems · VC2HC4S03 — VC2HC4S03.E01 and VC2HC4S03.E02.

What you will learn. In this section you will: describe one important group or system in the community — an **institution** — and say why it matters; find the local government in that picture, with the services it runs for everyone (VC2HC4S03.E01); and show how the council makes decisions in a democratic way (VC2HC4S03.E02). This section builds on Section 1C, which is where you met local government.

Theory

1. What is an institution?

Some things in our community do not come and go in a day. They keep going, year after year, and they have an important job.

An **institution** is an important group or system that has a job to do in the community, and keeps doing it, year after year.

A **system** is a set of parts that work together to do one job.

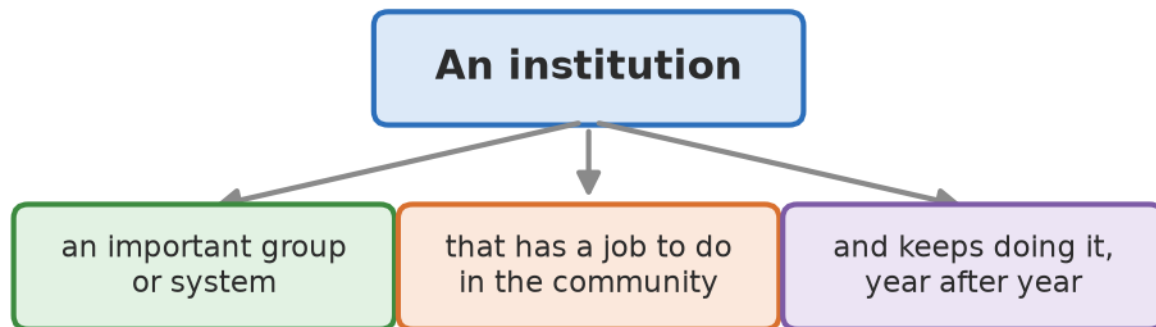
A school is an institution. It has a job: helping children learn. It is a group of people: students, teachers and families. It is a system: classes and terms that work together. And it keeps going, year after year.

Three more words to know:

- **Civic** means about citizens — the people of a community — and the things they do together.
- **Political** means about how a place is run, and who gets to decide.
- **Legal** means about laws.

One institution is all three of these. It is the one this section describes: your **local government**.

What is an institution?



Examples you know:



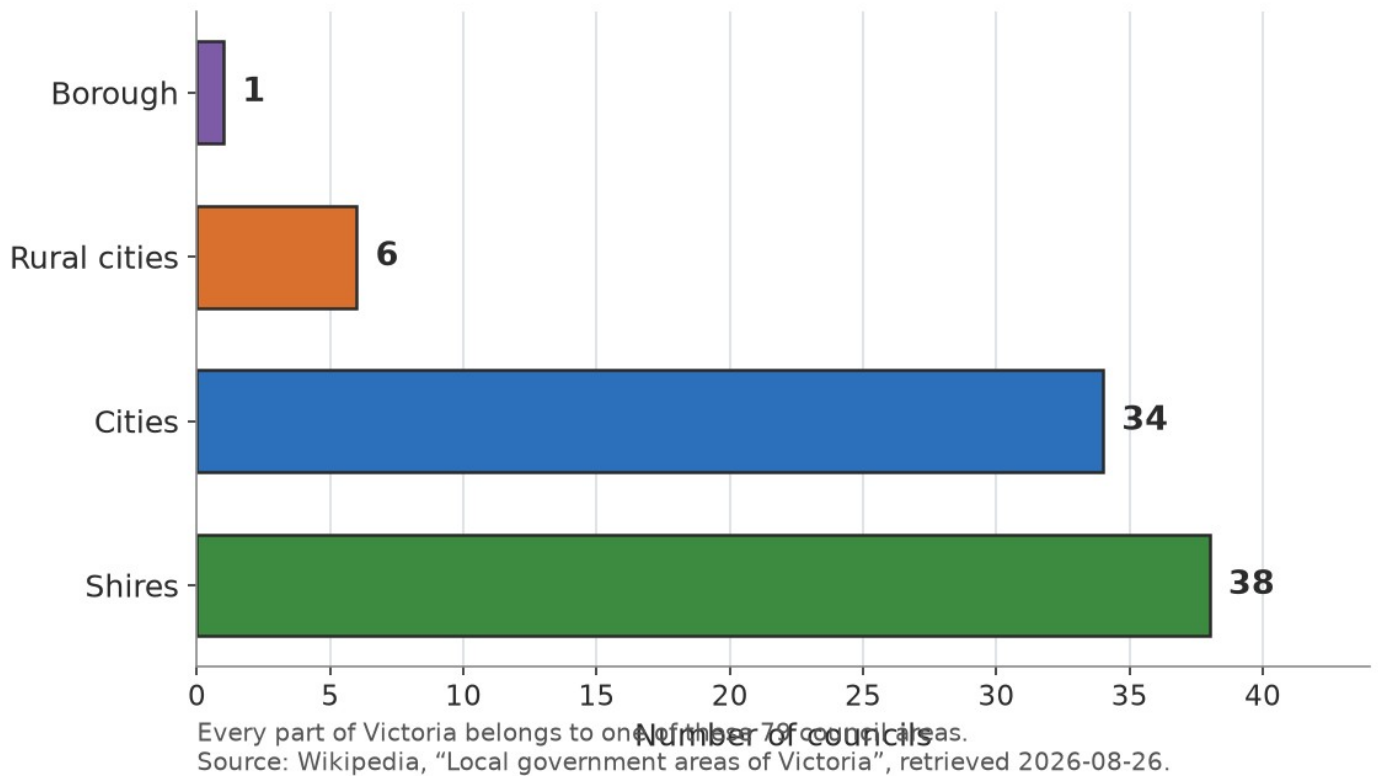
This section is about one institution: your local council.

A web diagram: in the middle, “an institution”; around it, its three parts — an important group or system, a job to do in the community, and keeping going year after year; below, four examples: a school, a local council, a library and a sports club

2. One area, one council

Every place in Victoria belongs to one of **79 councils**. A **council** is the group that looks after a local area. Its area is called a **local government area**. The councils have different names: most are called cities or shires. One small area is still called a **borough** — that is an old name for a very small council area.

Victoria's 79 local councils

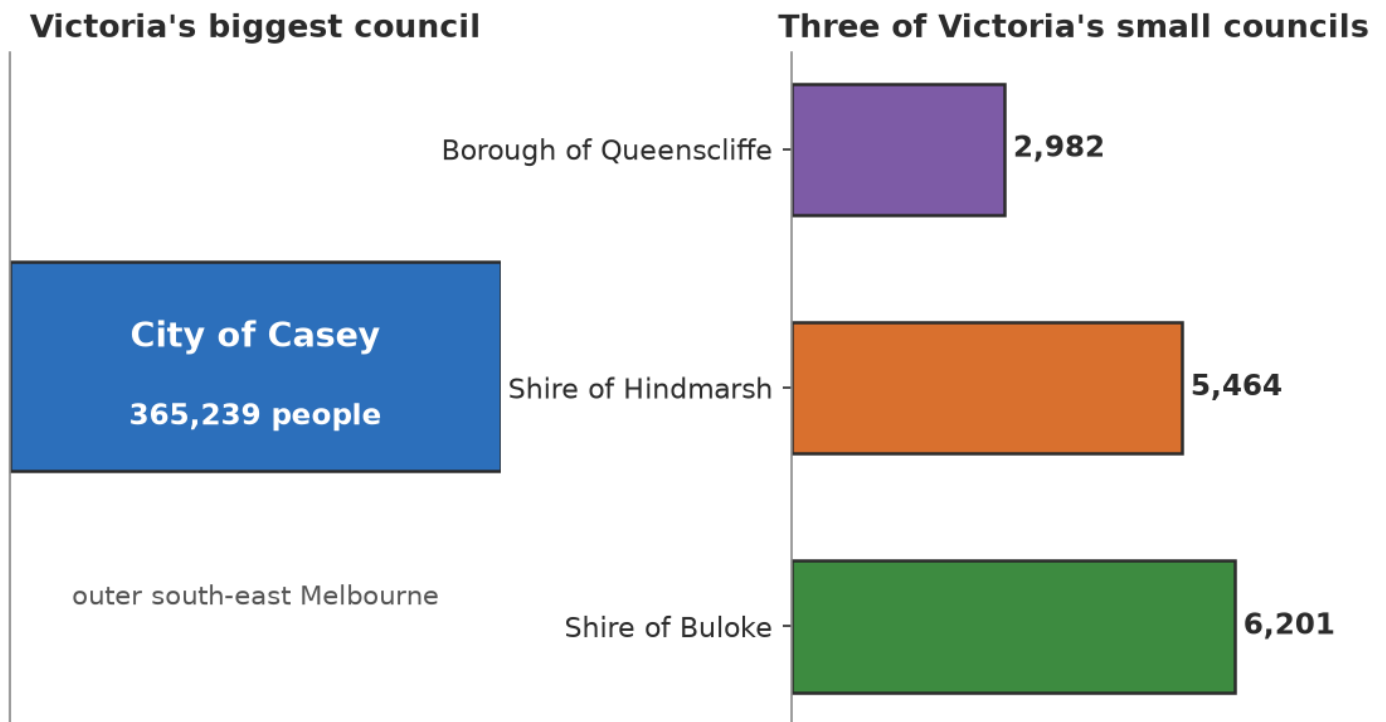


A bar chart of Victoria's 79 local councils by name: 38 shires, 34 cities, 6 rural cities and 1 borough. Source line: Wikipedia, Local government areas of Victoria, retrieved 2026-08-26

Source: Wikipedia, 'Local government areas of Victoria', retrieved 2026-08-26.

Councils come in very different sizes. The **City of Casey**, in the outer south-east suburbs of Melbourne, is Victoria's biggest council: 365,239 people were counted there in 2021. The **Borough of Queenscliffe** is one of the smallest: 2,982 people. Casey is more than 120 times bigger than Queenscliffe — yet each one has the same job: to look after its own area.

Councils come in very different sizes



Note: the two panels use different scales. The numbers are the real counts of people.

A two-panel bar chart: the City of Casey with 365,239 people, and three small councils — the Shire of Buloke with 6,201 people, the Shire of Hindmarsh with 5,464, and the Borough of Queenscliffe with 2,982 — with a note that the two panels use different scales

Source: Wikipedia, 'City of Casey', 'Shire of Buloke', 'Shire of Hindmarsh' and 'Borough of Queenscliffe', retrieved 2026-08-26.

3. What a council does: services

A **service** is something the council runs or looks after for everyone in its area. Here are six real jobs from one real council, the City of Casey.

Some things the City of Casey looks after

Six jobs from the real council's own list

Waste and environment	Collects our bins and recycling; looks after nature
Family and community services	Helps families; health checks for babies and young children
Parking, roads and footpaths	Local roads, footpaths and safe places to park cars
Arts, sports and places to hire	Pools, gyms, art shows, halls and ovals
Property and planning	Rules about buildings and how land is used
Pets and animals	Looks after lost pets; places where dogs can run

Source: City of Casey website (casey.vic.gov.au), retrieved 2026-08-26.

A table of six City of Casey service jobs with student-language meanings: waste and environment (bins and recycling, looking after nature); family and community services (helps families; health checks for babies and young children); parking, roads and footpaths; arts, sports and places to hire (pools, gyms, art shows, halls and ovals); property and planning (rules about buildings and land); pets and animals (lost pets; places where dogs can run)

Source: City of Casey website, retrieved 2026-08-26.

Look for your own week in that table: the bins at home, the library, the playground, the pool, the footpath on the way to school.

4. How a council decides in a democratic way

Now the second half of our job: saying how local government is **democratic**. First, two words. **Democracy** means rule by the people — in Section 1B you saw that the word comes from Greek words meaning “people power”. Something is **democratic** when the people choose who decides, and when decisions are made for everyone.

The people who sit on a council are called **councillors**. A **councillor** is a person chosen by the people of the area to help decide things for the area. The City of Casey has 12 councillors.

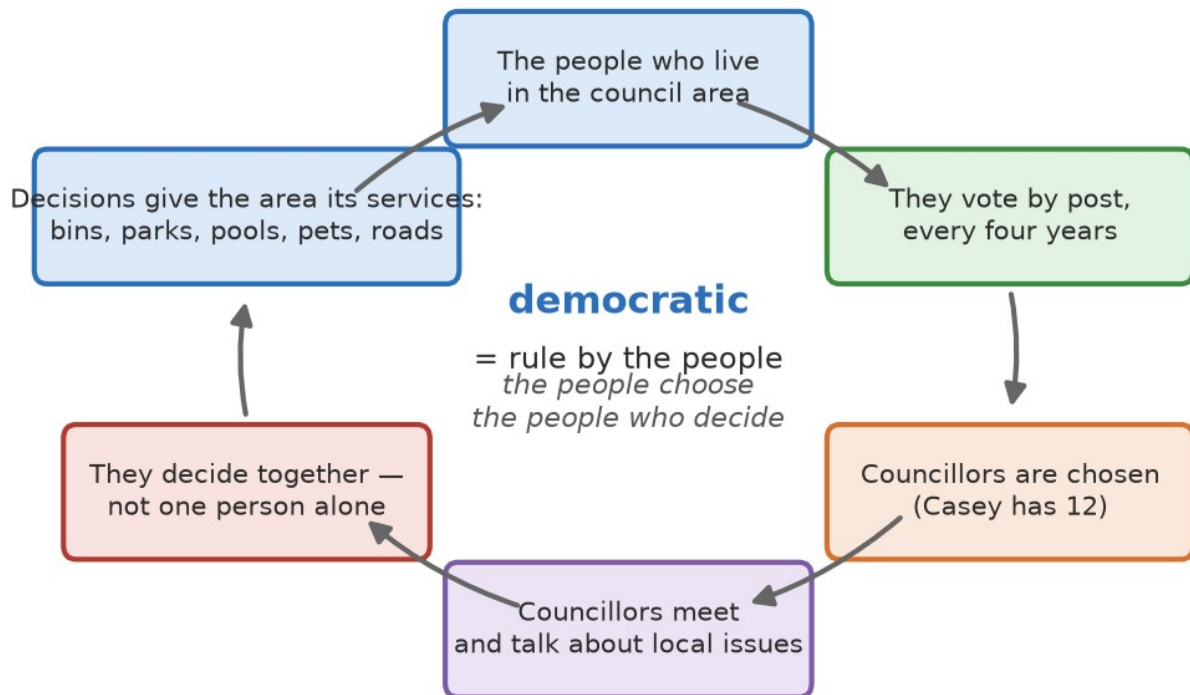
How are they chosen? Every four years, the people who live in each council area vote, and the vote comes to your house in the mail — voting is by post. A group called the Victorian Electoral Commission runs the voting for all of Victoria. The last council election was on 26 October 2024, and 4,532,506 people were able to vote.

After the vote, the councillors meet. They talk about the issues in the area, and they decide together. One councillor does not decide alone — not even the councillor who leads the meetings, who is called the **mayor**.

So local government is democratic in two ways:

- the people of the area **choose** the councillors, by voting every four years; and
- the councillors **decide together** — one person does not decide alone.

How council decisions are made



A circle of six boxes joined by arrows: the people who live in the council area vote by post every four years; councillors are chosen (Casey has 12); councillors meet and talk about local issues; they decide together, not one person alone; decisions give the area its services — bins, parks, pools, pets, roads — and the decisions serve the people. In the middle: democratic, rule by the people

Source: Wikipedia, '2024 Victorian local elections' and 'City of Casey', retrieved 2026-08-26.

In Section 1B you looked at groups deciding together, and in Section 1A at one person deciding, or everyone deciding. A council is the whole-area form of everyone deciding: too many people to fit in one room, so the people choose a group to decide for them — and they choose again every four years.

5. Why local government is important

Our job says: describe the institution **and** say why it is important. A good answer gives a reason, and a fact to back the reason.

- **Reason 1 — services we use every week.** Fact: your council collects the bins and recycling, runs the library, and looks after parks, playgrounds, pools and footpaths.
- **Reason 2 — one group thinks about the whole area.** Fact: every place in Victoria belongs to one of the 79 councils, so someone is always looking after the whole area — not just one street or one school.
- **Reason 3 — it is close to home.** Fact: the councillors live in the area too. In Section 1C you saw that people in the area can tell their council what they think about its services.

Here is a model answer, written by a student. Notice that it does all four jobs of a description.

Local government, and why it is important

My local government is the council for the area where I live.

It is an institution. Victoria has 79 councils. My council

collects our bins and recycling, runs the library, and looks after parks and playgrounds.

Council is democratic: the people who live in the area choose

councillors by voting every four years. Then the councillors

meet and make decisions together. One person does not decide alone.

Local government is important because it gives us services we

use every week, like the library, the pool and the footpaths.

It also listens when people in the area want to say something.

That is why local government matters to me.

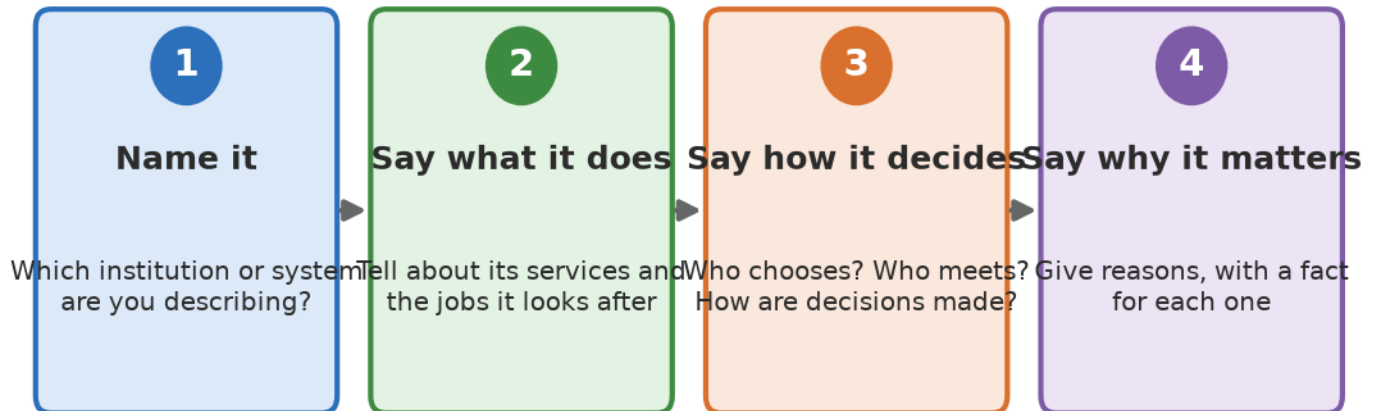
A model description. It names the institution, tells what it does, tells how it decides, and says why it matters.

A model student description on ruled paper: it names local government as the institution, says what it does (bins and recycling, the library, parks and playgrounds), says how it decides (the people choose councillors by voting every four years; the councillors decide together), and says why it matters (services used every week, and a council that listens)

6. Your turn to describe

Use the same four steps for your own description.

Four steps to describe an institution



Use these steps for any institution — here, we use them for local government.

Four numbered step boxes: 1 name it — which institution or system are you describing? 2 say what it does — tell about its services and the jobs it looks after; 3 say how it decides — who chooses? who meets? how are decisions made? 4 say why it matters — give reasons, with a fact for each one

When your description is done, check it with this list.

Checklist for my description

- ☐ I named the institution I am describing.
- ☐ I said what it does, with at least two services.
- ☐ I said how it makes decisions, and who chooses the people in it.
- ☐ I gave at least two reasons why it is important.
- ☐ I used a fact from this section to help each reason.
- ☐ I used subject words: council, councillor, services, democratic.
- ☐ My sentences are full sentences, and I checked my spelling.

Tick each box as you check your writing.

A checklist of seven ticks for the student's own description: named the institution; said what it does with at least two services; said how it makes decisions and who chooses the people in it; gave at least two reasons why it is important; used a fact for each reason; used the subject words council, councillor, services, democratic; full sentences and checked spelling

Worked examples

Example 1 — with help

Name the institution, and find its services.

Describe the local government of the City of Casey: name the institution, and give four of its services.

Working	Comment
The institution is the council — the City of Casey council, the local government of that area.	The institution is always the council, not one building or one person.
Services from the services table: (1) it collects the bins and recycling; (2) it runs libraries; (3) it looks after parks and playgrounds; (4) it looks after pools, gyms and ovals.	A service is something the council runs or looks after for everyone in its area.
Check against the definition: a group and a system (yes), with a job (yes), that keeps going year after year (yes).	All three parts of “institution” are true, so the word fits.

Example 2 — with help

Council service, or not?

Use two questions to test each one: *Does the council do it?* and *Is it for everyone in the area?*

Thing	Does the council do it?	Is it for everyone in the area?	Result
Your street's bins and recycling are collected.	Yes.	Yes — every street in the area.	Council service.
The library lends you books.	Yes — the council runs the library.	Yes — anyone in the area can join.	Council service.
The school canteen chooses its menu.	No — the school does.	Only people at that school.	School thing, not a council service.
Your family decides what is for dinner.	No — your family does.	Only your family.	Family thing, not a council service.

A council service is done by the council, for everyone in its area.

Example 3 — with help

Is it democratic? Run the three tests.

Test	Local government	Pass?
Do the people of the area choose who is in it?	Yes — every four years, by a vote that comes in the mail.	Pass.
Does the group decide together, not one person alone?	Yes — the councillors meet and decide together; even the mayor does not decide alone.	Pass.
Are its decisions and services for everyone in the area?	Yes — bins, parks, pools and footpaths are for the whole area.	Pass.

Three passes: local government makes its decisions in a **democratic** way.

Example 4 — on your own

Map the model text to the four steps.

The model text in the figure does all four jobs of a description. Find where.

- *Step 1 — name it:* “My local government is the council for the area where I live. It is an institution.”
- *Step 2 — say what it does:* “collects our bins and recycling, runs the library, and looks after parks and playgrounds.”
- *Step 3 — say how it decides:* “the people who live in the area choose councillors by voting every four years ... the councillors meet and make decisions together. One person does not decide alone.”
- *Step 4 — say why it matters:* “it gives us services we use every week ... It also listens ... That is why local government matters to me.”

A description that does all four jobs is a complete answer to the job of this section: describe an institution or system, **and** say why it is important.

Practice questions

With help

Q1. Finish the sentence: *An institution is an important _____ or system that has a _____ to do in the community, and keeps doing it, year after year.*

Q2. Look at the web diagram at the start of this section. Two of the four examples are places you have probably used yourself. Name two, and say what each one's job is.

Q3. a) How many councils are there in Victoria? b) Name the four kinds of council shown in the bar chart. c) Which kind has just one in all of Victoria?

Q4. Look at the council sizes chart.

- a) Which council is Victoria's biggest, and how many people live there?
- b) Which is the smallest shown, and how many people live there?
- c) Casey is more than how many times bigger than Queenscliffe?

Q5. Copy and complete this table. Sort each thing into *council service* or *not a council service*.

Thing	Council service, or not?
The bins and recycling are collected.	
The school canteen chooses its menu.	
The library lends you books.	
A birthday party at your house.	
The playground is looked after.	

Q6. Finish the sentences: *The people of a council area choose their councillors every _____ years. The vote comes in the mail, so voting is by _____.*

Q7. The five steps below are mixed up. Write them in the right order, using the circle diagram.

- a) The councillors meet and talk about local issues.
- b) The people who live in the area vote by post.
- c) Decisions give the area its services.
- d) Councillors are chosen.
- e) The councillors decide together.

On your own

Q8. Explain how local government makes its decisions in a democratic way. Use the words *choose*, *vote* and *together* in your answer.

Q9. Why is local government important? Give two reasons. Back each reason with one fact from this section.

Q10. True or false? If false, fix the sentence.

- a) One councillor decides alone for the whole area.
- b) The people of the area choose their councillors every four years.
- c) Only big cities in Victoria have a council.

Q11. A friend says, "Councils only collect bins, so they are not important." Give the strongest answer you can for the other side. Use at least two things from this section. (The mark is for your reasons, not for winning the argument.)

Q12. Your description (the thing you make in this section). Write six to eight sentences describing local government — the council of the area where you live. Use the four steps: name it; say what it does; say how it decides; say why it matters. Check your work with the checklist, then swap with a partner and check theirs.

Answers

Q1. group; job.

Q2. Answers will vary. Example: a school — its job is helping children learn; a library — its job is lending books and giving people a place to read.

Q3. a) 79. b) cities, shires, rural cities, borough. c) borough.

Q4. a) The City of Casey, 365,239 people (2021). b) The Borough of Queenscliffe, 2,982 people. c) More than 120 times.

Q5. Row 1: council service. Row 2: not. Row 3: council service. Row 4: not. Row 5: council service.

Q6. four; post.

Q7. b, d, a, e, c.

Q8. See the model answer below.

Q9. See the model answer below.

Q10. a) False. b) True. c) False.

Q11. See the model answer below.

Q12. See the model answer below.

Model answers

Q8. Local government is democratic because the people of the area choose who decides. Every four years, everyone in the area can vote, and the vote comes by post. The people chosen this way — the councillors — then meet and decide together, so one person never decides alone. The people choose, and the group decides together: that is rule by the people.

Q9. One model answer. Reason 1: local government gives us services we use every week — fact: my council collects the bins and recycling and runs the library. Reason 2: one group thinks about the whole area — fact: every place in Victoria belongs to one of the 79 councils, so someone is always looking after the whole area. (Reason 3 is also strong: it is close to home, because the councillors live in the area too.)

Q10. a) False — fixed: *The councillors decide together; one councillor does not decide alone.* b) True. c) False — fixed: *Small areas have councils too; the Borough of Queenscliffe has only 2,982 people.*

Q11. One model answer. Councils do far more than collect bins. They run the libraries and look after the parks, playgrounds, pools and footpaths that people use every week. They look after the whole area — all 79 council areas together cover every place in Victoria. And they are close to home: the councillors live in the area, and people can tell their council what they think. A group that gives us services every week, looks after the whole area, and listens, is important — even if bins are the part we notice most.

Q12. One model description. *The council of the area where I live is my local government. It is an institution, one of the 79 councils of Victoria. It collects our bins and recycling, runs the library, and looks after parks and playgrounds. It is democratic: the people who live in the area choose councillors by voting every four years, by post. Then the councillors meet and decide together, and one person does not decide alone. Local government is important because it gives us services we use every week, and because one group looks after the whole area. That is why local government matters to me.* (Your description is good if it does all four steps and the checklist ticks are true of it.)

Consensus-building and deliberation on an issue affecting the classroom

Civics and Citizenship · Levels 3 and 4 · Skills strand: Participating in civic processes

VC2HC4S04 (codes only; VC2 wording not reproduced)

E01 · what makes a good group decision — Task 1 **E02** · the class agrees together on how rules and laws are different — Task 2 **E03** · the class agrees together on its own classroom rules — Task 3

This section works towards the Level 4 achievement standard for VC2HC4S04; the standard's wording is not reproduced.

In Section 1B you met the big question of who decides — one person, or the whole group. In Section 2A you saw how rules and laws are different. In this section, **your class does the deciding**. You will finish with one made thing: a **class consensus record**.

New words: deliberation and consensus

The curriculum (the plan of what schools teach) for this year level uses two big words here and does not explain them. In this section they mean:

- **Deliberation** is what a group does when it talks carefully about a question before deciding. People share ideas, listen to each other, and give reasons.
- **Consensus** is when everyone in a group can say, “I can live with that plan.” It does not mean everyone got their first pick. It means nobody is left saying, “No, I cannot go along with that.”

The words may mean other things in other places. In this book, these are the meanings we use.

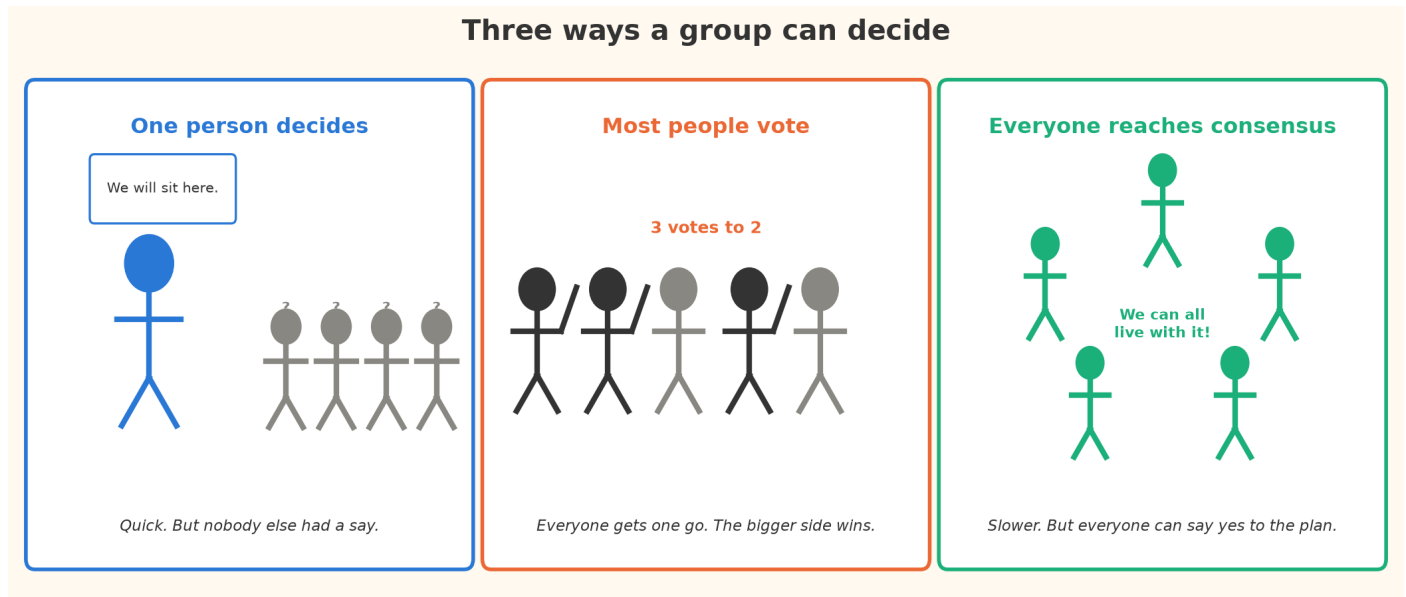


Five circles joined by arrows show the five steps of deliberation: get the question clear, share ideas, listen and ask questions, give reasons, decide together.

Deliberation is the talking part. Consensus is what the group hopes to reach at the end.

Three ways a group can decide

Deciding as a whole group is **democracy** — rule by the people (Section 1B). A group can do it in three ways.



Three panels show three ways a group can decide: one person decides, most people vote, or everyone reaches consensus.

1. **One person decides.** The teacher says where everyone sits. Quick — but nobody else got a say.
2. **Most people vote.** Everyone gets one go, and the side with more wins. Quick, and fair in one way: every person's say is equal. The hard part is that the smaller side loses, and the plan may not feel like theirs.
3. **Consensus.** The group talks and changes the plan until everyone can say, "I can live with that." Slower — but nobody is left out.

Voting and consensus are both fair, in different ways. A vote is fair because every say is equal. Consensus is fair because the group works until nobody is left out. In this section we try the consensus way.

What makes a good decision?

Before we try it, let's agree on what good deciding looks like.

What makes a good decision?



Everyone in the group got to speak.



People listened to each other.



People gave reasons for their ideas.



The plan feels fair.



We will check later if it is working.

If your group can tick most of these, you are deciding well.

A checklist of five things that make a good group decision, each box ticked.

And these talk rules help a class deliberate well.

OUR TALK RULES

- 1 One person speaks at a time.
- 2 We listen to the person speaking.
- 3 We say why: "I think ___ because ___."
- 4 It is OK to change your mind.
- 5 All ideas get heard. No laughing at ideas.

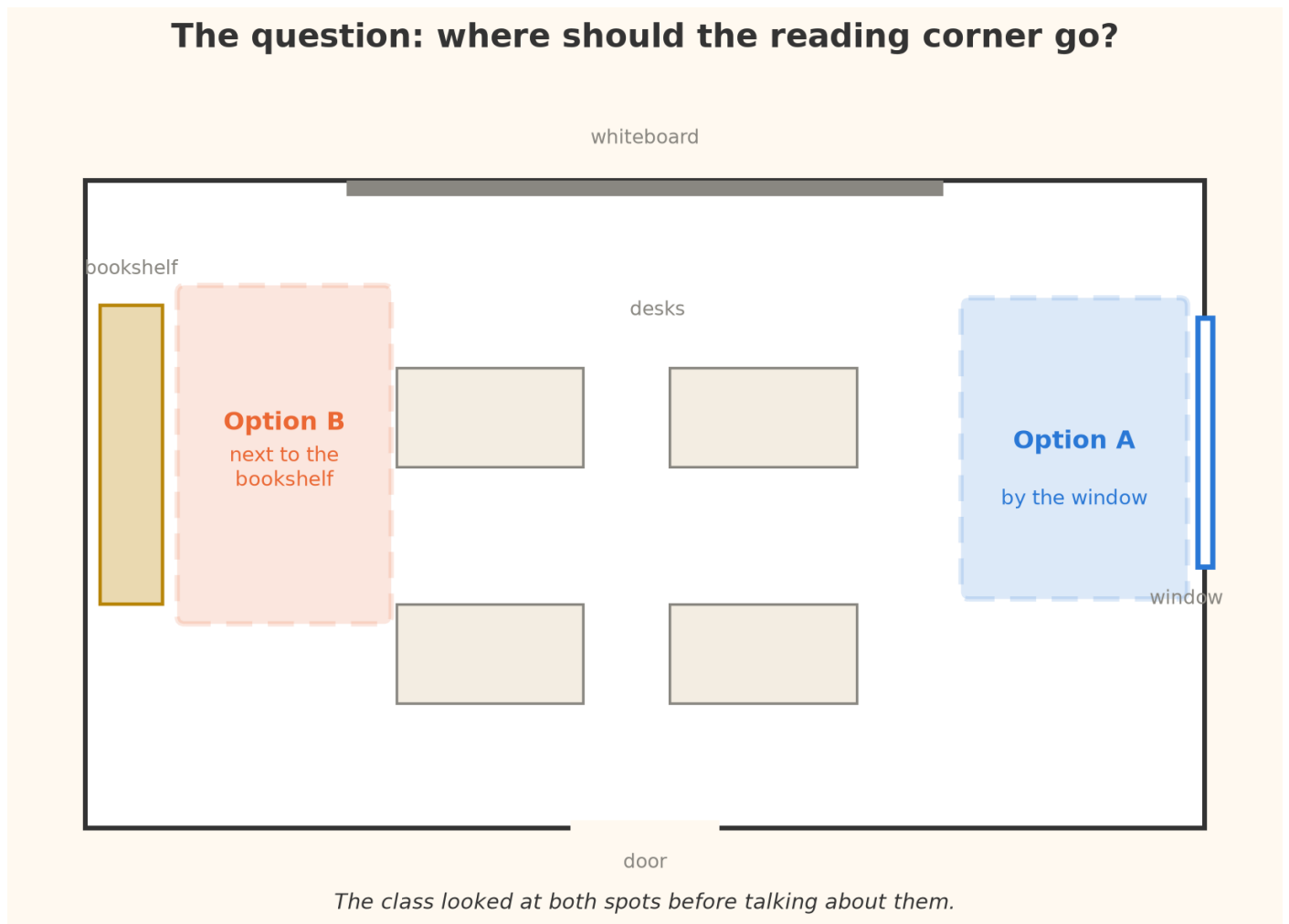
These rules help everyone feel safe to speak.

A poster of five talk rules for class talks: one person speaks at a time, we listen to the person speaking, we say why, it is OK to change your mind, all ideas get heard.

Task 1 (E01). With your class, look at the checklist. Think of a time your class made a choice this year — where to sit, or what game to play at lunch. Which boxes would you tick? Give your reasons.

Room 4 decides together

Room 4 has a question. The class is getting a new reading corner, and it must pick a spot.



A classroom plan showing two spots for the reading corner: by the window, or next to the bookshelf.

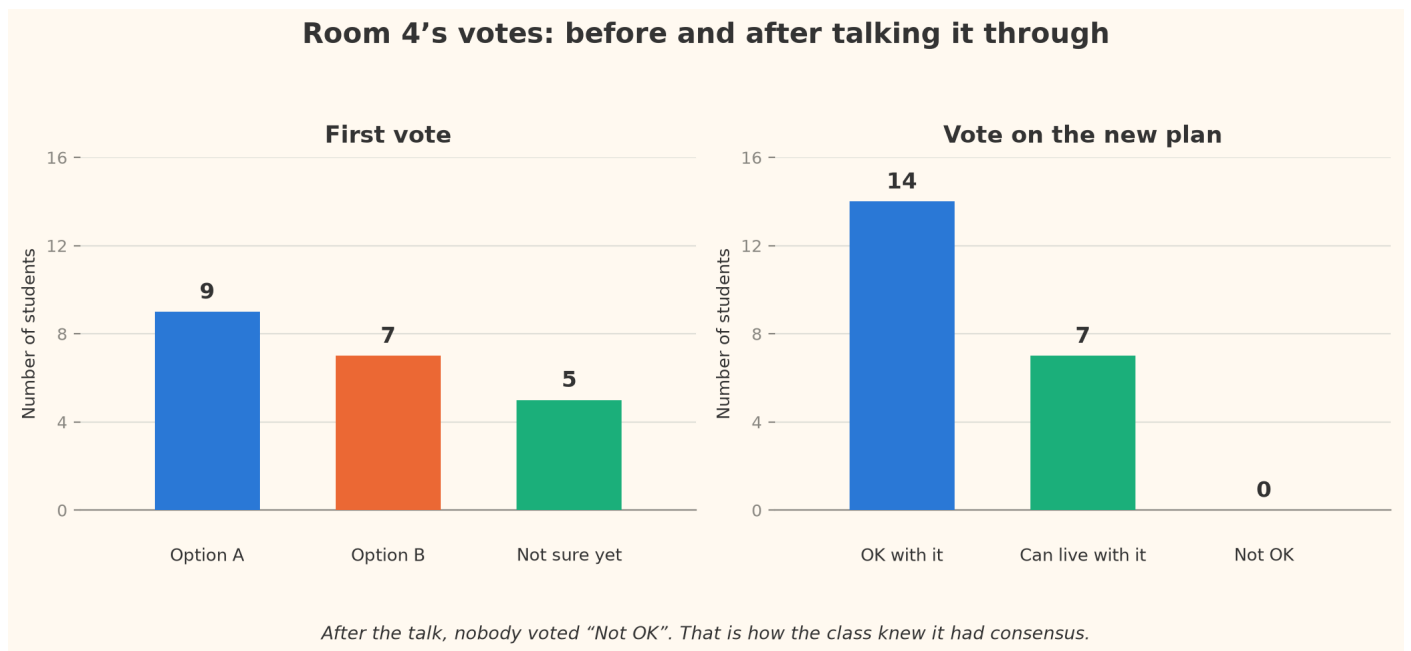
Step 1 — get the question clear. Where should the reading corner go?

Step 2 — share ideas. Some want Option A, by the window: the light is lovely and you can see outside. Some want Option B, by the bookshelf: the books are close and the corner is nice and calm.

Step 3 — listen and ask questions. “Will the window spot be too loud?” “Will the bookshelf spot be too dark?”

Step 4 — give reasons. The class uses the talk rules: “*I think Option A because the light is lovely.*” “*I hear you, and I worry the bookshelf spot will be dark.*” “*What if we put a lamp in the bookshelf spot?*”

Step 5 — decide together. The class votes.



Two bar charts show Room 4's first vote and the vote on the new plan, where nobody votes no.

Nine for A, seven for B, five not sure yet. That is **not** consensus — twelve people could not yet say, “I can live with that.”

So the class listens to the not-sure people. Someone has a new idea: the corner goes by the bookshelf, with beanbags, a lamp, and headphones for anyone who wants quiet. The class votes on the **new** plan: 14 say OK, 7 say they can live with it, and **nobody** says no.

That is consensus. Not everyone's first pick — but everyone can say yes to the plan.

Grown-ups deliberate too

Grown-ups use the same steps. In Victoria, each local area has a council, and its councillors (the people chosen to run the local council) meet, talk about questions, listen, and decide together. The City of Casey, for example, holds its council meetings in person, and anyone can come and watch. Section 1C looks at what councils do for their areas. Your class did today what councillors do at their meetings.

Rules and laws: sorting as a class

Section 2A showed the difference between rules and laws: a **rule** is made for one group — your class, your family, your school. A **law** is made for everyone.

Some things we follow are laws. In Victoria, the road rules are laws, because they are for everyone on the road: a person riding a bike must wear a helmet (*Road Safety Road Rules 2017*, rule 256), and drivers must wear a seatbelt (rule 264).

Sorting: rule or law?

RULES — made for one group	LAWS — made for everyone
Put your hand up to speak <i>made by the class, for the class</i>	Riders must wear a bike helmet <i>a Victorian road rule for all riders</i>
Pack away your toys at home <i>made by a family, for that family</i>	Stop at a red light <i>a road rule for all drivers</i>
Line up quietly at school <i>made by the school, for the school</i>	Drivers must wear a seatbelt <i>a road rule for all drivers</i>

A rule is for one group. A law is for everyone.

A sorting chart with three rules in one column and three laws in the other.

Task 2 (E02). As a whole class, reach consensus on the sort above. Does everyone agree where each card sits? Would anyone move a card? Can anyone give a reason the sort is wrong? When nobody can, you have consensus — and you can tick the record: *“We agree as a class: a rule is for one group, and a law is for everyone.”*

Then ask: *are our classroom rules also laws?* Talk it through and reach consensus on the answer. (They are rules: the class made them for the class — not for everyone in Victoria.)

Making our classroom rules

Now your class makes its own rules, by consensus.

Task 3 (E03). In small groups, each write three rules you think your class needs. Then, as a whole class, deliberate: share, listen, give reasons, and change the plan until everyone can live with it. Keep three to five rules. Say what we **do**, and keep each rule clear.

When you get there, fill in a record like the one below, and every student ticks or signs it. That record is your class’s made thing for this section.

Our class consensus record

CLASS

Room 4

OUR QUESTION

Where should our reading corner go?

IDEAS WE HEARD

Option A: by the window. Option B: next to the bookshelf. A new idea: add beanbags, a lamp, and quiet headphones.

THE PLAN WE CAN ALL LIVE WITH

The reading corner goes next to the bookshelf, with beanbags and a lamp. Anyone who needs quiet can use the headphones.

HOW WE CHECKED

We voted on the new plan: 14 said OK, 7 said they could live with it, 0 said not OK.

CAN EVERYONE LIVE WITH THIS PLAN?

Yes

DATE

12 March 2026

Every student in Room 4 signed or ticked this record.

A filled-in class consensus record for the reading-corner decision.

Your turn

Task 4. Think, then talk as a class: which way of deciding fits which question? Give a reason each time.

- (a) What game we play at Friday sport — one person, a vote, or consensus?
- (b) A new classroom rule for the whole year?
- (c) Which book the teacher reads at story time?

Possible answers

Task 1. Any answer with reasons is fine. Example: “We tick *everyone in the group got to speak*, because everyone said an idea, but we do **not** tick *people listened*, because some people talked over each other.”

Task 2. The chart shows the agreed sort: hand up, pack away at home, and line up quietly are rules (each is for one group); helmet, red light, and seatbelt are laws (for everyone). Classroom rules are **not** laws: the class made them for the class only.

Task 3. Your class’s own record. A strong one has three to five clear rules about what we do, and every student ticked it.

Task 4. No single right answer — the reasons are what count. Example: (a) a vote is fine, because it is quick and the winner can change next week; (b) consensus, because the rule lasts all year, so everyone must be able to live with it; (c) one person (the teacher) is fine, or a vote, because a story is short, so losing the vote is not a big deal.

Sources

Real-world facts in this section were checked on 26 August 2026:

- *Road Safety Road Rules 2017* (Vic), authorised current version (legislation.vic.gov.au): rule 256 (bicycle helmets); rules 264–265 (seatbelts for drivers and for passengers 16 years and over).
- City of Casey, “Council meetings” (casey.vic.gov.au): meetings are held in person and open to the public; councillor attendance and decisions are recorded.

Telling people about an issue, with facts and the right subject words

Civics and Citizenship 4 · Level 4 · Chapter 3 — Skills: investigating, evaluating, participating and communicating · Section 3E. Teaching order: 12th of 12, after 3D (sections run in VCAA code order, TOC §3).

Owns: VC2HC4S05 (codes only; VC2 wording not reproduced). Source of code: Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0, Humanities: Civics and Citizenship (VCAA), Levels 3 and 4 band, Skills strand, Communicating sub-strand, from the VCAA export VC2_AS-CD-Elab_29-07-2026.csv (retrieved 29 July 2026).

Achievement standard: this section is assessed against the Levels 3 and 4 standard for VC2HC4S05; the standard’s wording is not reproduced here.

Elaborations drawn on: VC2HC4S05.E01 (a poster about rights and responsibilities) and VC2HC4S05.E02 (a picture of your local council at work, or of people helping your community). Neither §2A exclusion touches this section.

Linked bank: none — 0 MCQs are keyed to VC2HC4S05 (TOC §1; this learning area has no pre-built bank).

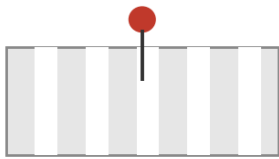
Student-facing text runs from “What we are learning” to “Fully-worked answers”. The front matter above and the Teacher note at the end are for the teacher.

What we are learning

In this chapter you have already asked good questions (3A), sorted facts (3B), written about our council (3C) and made choices together (3D). This section puts those skills to work. You will tell people about an issue, in words, using facts and the right subject words.

A civics and citizenship **issue** is something happening in your school or community that people can think about and work on together. A **source** is anything you read, look at or listen to that gives you facts. To **describe** an issue is to say, in words, what the issue is, who it touches, and what people can do about it.

What is a civics and citizenship issue?

Example 1	Example 2	Example 3
		
The bins fill up fast, and litter spills out.	The playground is crowded at lunchtime.	The school crossing is very busy after school.

An issue is something happening in your school or community that people can think about and work on together.

Three cards showing familiar issues — a park bin with litter spilling out, a crowded playground at lunchtime, and a busy school crossing after school — above a strip that says an issue is something happening in your school or community that people can think about and work on together.

Look at the three examples in the figure. Each one touches a community, so each one is a civics and citizenship issue. They are the right size for this book too: they are about your park, your playground and your crossing — the familiar and personal.

The subject words. Earlier sections of this book gave you the words of this subject: **rights** and **responsibilities** in Section 2B, **rules** and **laws** in Section 2A, **local government** (the **council**) and its services in Section 1C, **citizens** and **communities** throughout — including the people who help their communities in Section 2D — and **democracy**, a way of choosing where everyone in the group has a say, in Sections 1A and 1B. This section is where you use those words.

Subject word bank

These are the subject words of this book. Each word is defined when you first meet it.

citizen	a person who belongs to a community or a country
community	people who share a place, or who work or play together
rights	things people are able to do or have
responsibilities	things people should do, to look after themselves and others
democracy	a way of choosing where everyone in the group has a say
rule	something a group agrees its members will follow
law	a rule that everyone in the whole community must follow
local government	the council that makes decisions for a town or part of a city

A word bank of eight subject words with short meanings: citizen, a person who belongs to a community or a country; community, people who share a place or who work or play together; rights, things people are able to do or have; responsibilities, things people should do to look after themselves and others; democracy, a way of choosing where everyone in the group has a say; rule, something a group agrees its members will follow; law, a rule that everyone in the whole community must follow; local government, the council that makes decisions for a town or part of a city.

The word bank is your kit. A good description uses at least three of these words.

Ideas from sources. Facts make a description strong. Facts come from sources.

Where do facts come from? Four kinds of sources

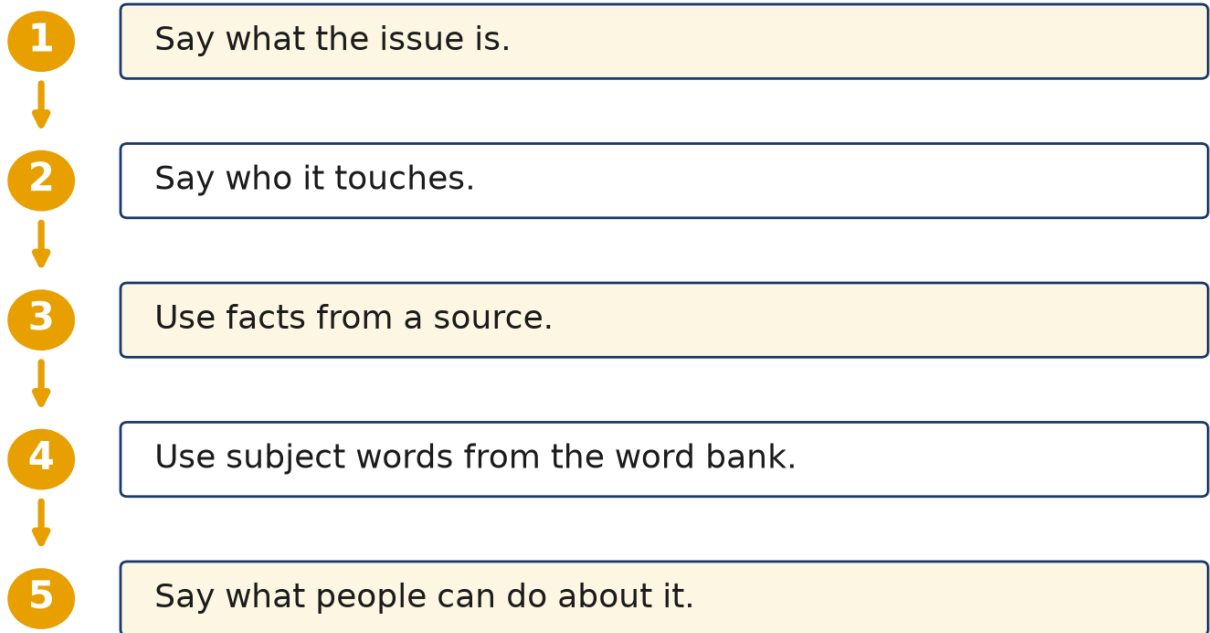


Four kinds of sources drawn as small panels — a sign that says please use the bins, a photo, a notice about a park clean-up day, and a fact card — above a strip that says a source is anything you read, look at or listen to that gives you facts.

When you use a fact from a source, name the source. Then people can check it. That is how facts stay facts.

The five steps. To describe an issue, follow these steps in order.

Five steps to describe an issue



Five numbered steps joined by arrows: 1 say what the issue is; 2 say who it touches; 3 use facts from a source; 4 use subject words from the word bank; 5 say what people can do about it.

Worked examples

Example 1 — the bins at the park, built step by step

Our issue is Example 1 from the first figure: the bins fill up fast, and litter spills out at the park. Our facts come from Source card B.

Source card B — Our local council

There are 79 local councils in Victoria.

Each council collects people's rubbish and looks after places to play, like parks and pools.

One of these councils is the City of Greater Geelong.

It is home to 271,057 people (2021 Census).

Source: Wikipedia, "Local government in Victoria" and "City of Greater Geelong", read 26 August 2026.

Source card B — Our local council: there are 79 local councils in Victoria; each council collects people's rubbish and looks after places to play, like parks and pools; one of these councils is the City of Greater Geelong; it is home to 271,057 people (2021 Census); source line at the bottom naming Wikipedia and the date read.

Facts, real and checkable: there are 79 local councils in Victoria; each council collects people's rubbish and looks after places to play; the City of Greater Geelong is one of these councils, home to 271,057 people at the 2021 Census. (The Census is the big count of everyone in Australia.) (Source: Wikipedia, "Local government in Victoria" and "City of Greater Geelong", retrieved 26 August 2026.)

Step	What we write	Why it works
1	At our park, the bins fill up fast, and litter spills onto the grass.	It says what the issue is, in one clear sentence.
2	The park is for everyone in our community.	It says who the issue touches, and it uses the word community .
3	Our council collects our rubbish. In Victoria there are 79 councils, and each one looks after its own parks and pools.	It uses a fact from Source card B, and it names the card.
4	Everyone has a right to use a clean park. With that right comes a responsibility: to put litter in the bin.	It uses the words right and responsibility , and it joins them, as Section 2B taught.
5	We can pick up litter when we see it, and we can ask our council for more bins.	It says what people can do — citizens and council, each with a part.

Now read it all together:

At our park, the bins fill up fast, and litter spills onto the grass. The park is for everyone in our community. Our council collects our rubbish. In Victoria there are 79 councils, and each one looks after its own parks and pools. Everyone has a right to use a clean park. With that right comes a responsibility: to put litter in the bin. We can pick up litter when we see it, and we can ask our council for more bins.

Count the subject words: *community, council, right, responsibility* — four. That is a description with ideas from a source and the subject words of this book — the work this section teaches.

Example 2 — fixing a weak description

Here is a weak description of another issue:

Storms are bad. Help comes.

It names the issue, just. But it tells us nothing more. Let us fix it with Source card A and the five steps.

Source card A — People who help: VICSES

VICSES is short for the Victoria State Emergency Service.

Its volunteers help people in Victoria when floods and storms hit.

VICSES has more than 5,000 volunteers and 300 paid workers.

Source: Victoria State Emergency Service, “About us” page, ses.vic.gov.au, read 26 August 2026.

Source card A — People who help: VICSES is short for the Victoria State Emergency Service; its volunteers help people in Victoria when floods and storms hit; VICSES has more than 5,000 volunteers and 300 paid workers; source line at the bottom naming the VICSES website and the date read.

Facts, real and checkable: VICSES is the Victoria State Emergency Service; it has more than 5,000 volunteers and 300 paid workers; its volunteers help people in Victoria when floods and storms hit. (Source: Victoria State Emergency Service, “About us” page, read 26 August 2026.) A **volunteer** is a person who gives their time to help, without pay.

The weak part	The better part	The fix
“Storms are bad.” (missing)	When floods and storms hit, homes can be hurt, and people need help. This issue touches every community in Victoria.	Say what the issue is, clearly (Step 1). Add who it touches (Step 2), with the word community .
“Help comes.” (missing)	From Source card A, I know that VICSES sends more than 5,000 volunteers to help. Those volunteers are citizens, doing their part for the community.	Name the source and use its fact (Step 3). Add the subject words citizens and community (Step 4).
(missing)	People can say thank you to the volunteers, and one day, people can join them.	Say what people can do (Step 5).

Read the fixed description all together:

When floods and storms hit, homes can be hurt, and people need help. This issue touches every community in Victoria. From Source card A, I know that VICSES sends more than 5,000 volunteers to help. Those volunteers are citizens, doing their part for the community. People can say thank you to the volunteers, and one day, people can join them.

The weak one was two grey sentences. The fixed one is a description: it has the issue, the people, a fact with its source, the subject words, and a part for people to play.

Practice questions

With help

Q1. Match the word to its meaning. Draw a line from each word to its meaning.

Word	Meaning
1. citizen	a. a rule that everyone in the whole community must follow
2. law	b. things people should do, to look after themselves and others
3. democracy	c. a person who belongs to a community or a country
4. responsibilities	d. a way of choosing where everyone in the group has a say

Q2. Spot the subject words. Underline the subject words in this description.

Our class made a rule: one person speaks at a time. It is a class rule, not a law, but it helps everyone learn. Learning is a right we all have, and listening is a responsibility we all share.

Q3. Use Source card B. (a) Write one fact from the card in your own words. (b) Name one thing near your home or school that your council looks after.

Q4. Use the model poster.

OUR PARK IS FOR EVERYONE

Our rights

things we are able to do and have

- ✓ play on the oval
- ✓ use the swings
- ✓ sit under the trees

Our responsibilities

things we should do for others

- ★ put litter in the bin
- ★ share the space
- ★ look after the plants

A model poster — every right goes with a responsibility.

*A model poster titled **Our Park Is for Everyone**, with a green column listing rights — *play on the oval, use the swings, sit under the trees* — and a red column listing responsibilities — *put litter in the bin, share the space, look after the plants* — above the line: a model poster, every right goes with a responsibility.*

- (a) Name one right from the poster and the responsibility that goes with it. (b) Add one right and one responsibility of your own, about the park.

Q5. Use the sentence starters. The busy school crossing is Example 3 in the first figure. Use two different starters from the figure below to write two sentences about it.

Sentence starters for your description

The issue is ...	Step 1
This matters because ...	Step 2
From the source, I know that ...	Step 3
People can ...	Step 5

Use these to start your sentences, then write on in your own words.

Four sentence starters on writing strips: The issue is ...; This matters because ...; From the source, I know that ...; People can ...

On your own

Q6. Pick one issue from the first figure that we did not use in the examples — the crowded playground or the busy crossing. Describe it in five sentences, one for each step. Use at least three subject words, and one fact from a source you have read or seen. Name the source.

Q7. Here is a weak description: “The playground is boring. Fix it.” Fix it into a five-sentence description, one sentence for each step.

Making task — your poster or your picture

Choose one of these two jobs. Both finish with a description — and the description is the real work of this section. Use the checklist before you hand it in.

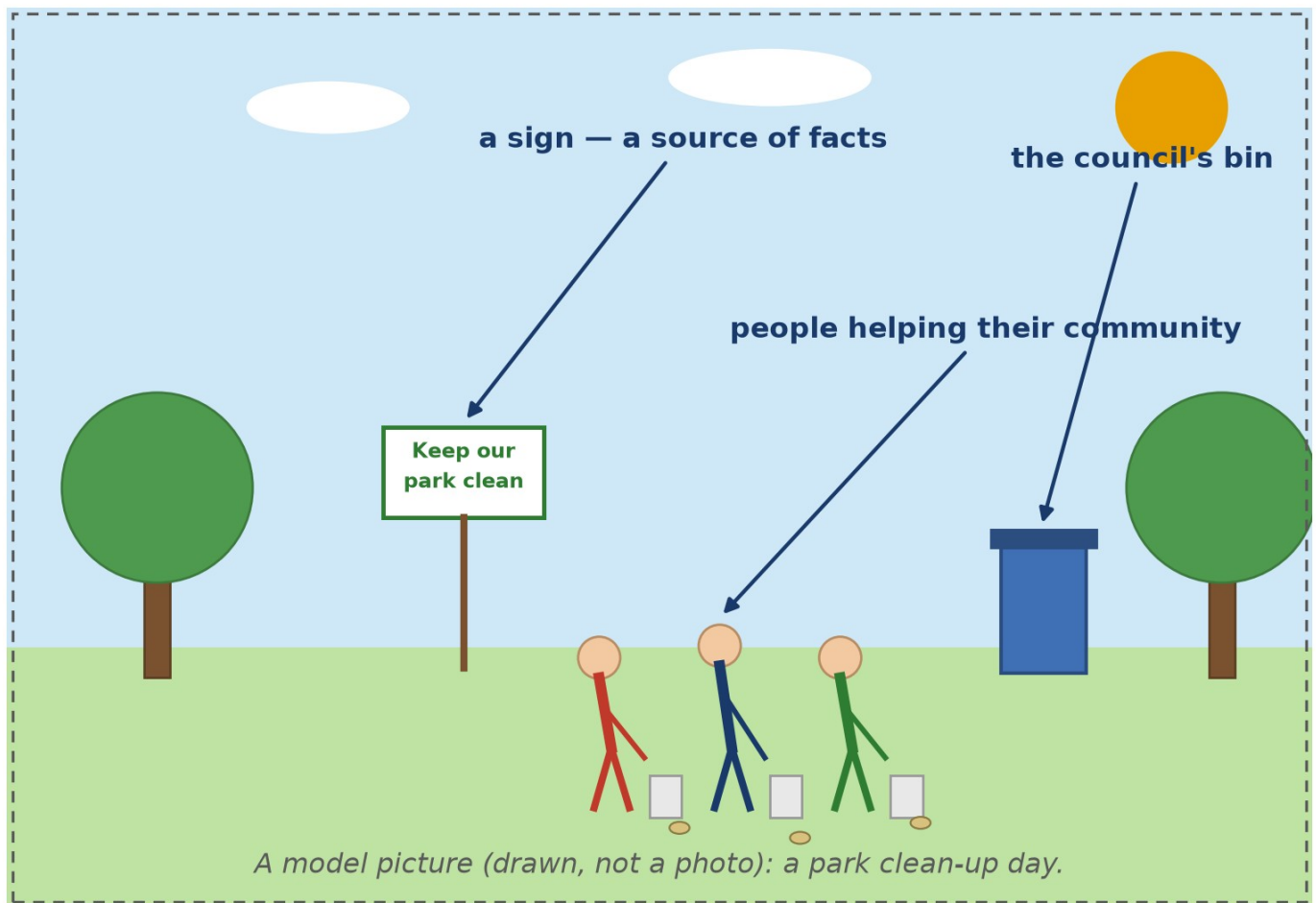
Before you finish, check:

- ☐ I named the issue.
- ☐ I said who it touches.
- ☐ I used facts from a source, and I named the source.
- ☐ I used subject words from the word bank.
- ☐ I said what people can do about it.
- ☐ My poster or picture is clear and easy to read.

A before-you-finish checklist with six tick boxes: I named the issue; I said who it touches; I used facts from a source, and I named the source; I used subject words from the word bank; I said what people can do about it; my poster or picture is clear and easy to read.

Task A — a poster. Make a poster about the rights and responsibilities in your community — your class, your school or your street. Show at least two rights and two responsibilities, and show how each right goes with a responsibility. The model poster in Q4 shows one way to lay it out; the words and the place must be your own. Then, under the poster, describe in five steps the issue your poster helps with, using at least three subject words.

Task B — a picture. Draw a picture of your local council at work, or of people helping your community. Label at least three parts of your picture. The model picture below shows one idea, with labels and a sign as a source.



A drawn model picture of a park clean-up day: three people pick up litter into bags near the council's bin and a sign that says Keep our park clean; labels point to the people helping their community, the council's bin, and the sign as a source of facts; a caption says it is a model picture, drawn, not a photo.

Then, under the picture, describe in five steps the issue your picture helps with, using at least three subject words and one fact from a source you name.

Answers

Q1. 1–c, 2–a, 3–d, 4–b.

Q2. The subject words are: *rule* (twice), *law*, *right* and *responsibility*.

Q3. (a) One answer: “Victoria has 79 councils.” (b) Answers will not all be the same — a park, a pool, the bins, a library or a playground are all good if they are near you.

Q4. (a) One answer: the right to play on the oval goes with the responsibility to look after the plants and the grass. (b) Answers will not be the same. Check that the right is something people are able to do or have, and the responsibility is something people should do for others.

Q5. One answer: “The issue is that the crossing is very busy after school.” and “People can wait for the crossing supervisor and walk, not run.”

Q6. Check the five steps in order, at least three subject words underlined, and one fact with its source named.

Q7. Check the five steps in order; the weak two sentences must be gone, replaced by clear ones.

Making task. Check: a poster with two rights and two responsibilities, or a picture with three labels; and under it, a five-step description with at least three subject words, a fact from a named source, and a part for people to play.

Fully-worked answers

Q1. A citizen is a person who belongs — 1–c. A law is the rule for everyone in the whole community — 2–a. Democracy is the way of choosing where everyone has a say — 3–d. Responsibilities are the things people should do for themselves and others — 4–b.

Q2. *Rule* is a subject word (it appears twice), *law* is a subject word, and so are *right* and *responsibility*. “Class” and “learn” are good words, but they are not the subject words of this book.

Q3. (a) The card says each council collects people’s rubbish, so one fact in your own words is: “My council takes our rubbish away.” (b) A park near your home is looked after by your council, so “the park down my street” is a good answer.

Q4. (a) On the poster, “use the swings” is a right; the responsibility that goes with it is to share the space, so the next child gets a turn. (b) One answer: a right — drink from the water taps; a responsibility — leave the taps off after you.

Q5. Starters used: “The issue is ...” and “People can ...”. A third sentence with “This matters because ...” would make it stronger still.

Q6. One model answer, for the crowded playground: “The issue is that the playground is crowded at lunchtime. It touches every child who wants to play. From the council’s website, I know our council looks after places to play. Play is a right, and sharing the space is a responsibility. People can take turns by grade, one grade each day.” Subject words: *council*, *right*, *responsibility* (three); source named: the council’s website.

Q7. One model fix: “The issue is that the playground has the same old games, and many children have stopped playing. It touches every child at lunchtime. From a class count on Monday, I know 21 of 24 children wanted new games. New games are a right we can ask for, and looking after new gear is a responsibility we can share. People can ask the council for a game kit, and we can make a roster to look after it.” All five steps are there, with three subject words and a named source.

Making task, Task A — one model. A poster for the classroom: rights — “a turn to speak” and “help when we are stuck”; responsibilities — “listen when others speak” and “help when we can”. The description under it: “The issue is that loud voices stop some children from learning. It touches our whole class, which is a community too. From our class count, I know nine children found it hard to hear last week. A turn to speak is a right, and listening is a responsibility. People can pass a talking card, and our teacher can keep the count.” **Task B — one model.** A picture of a street clean-up: labels on the people helping, the council’s bin, and a sign. The description under it follows the five steps, with *community*, *citizens* and *responsibility*, and one fact from a named source.

Teacher note

Curriculum map. This section owns VC2HC4S05 in full (TOC §3): the CD is delivered through the five-step describing sequence, not a walk of the elaborations (elaborations are illustrations, not a syllabus). E01 → the model poster (Q4) and Making task A; E02 → the model picture and Making task B; the CD’s core skill — describing with facts from sources and the subject words of this book — is built in Example 1, repaired in Example 2, drilled in Q1–Q5, and evidenced in Q6–Q7 and the making task’s written description. The achievement standard’s wording is not reproduced here; the checklist and the task checks carry the rubric language, scoring describing (issue, people, fact with source, subject words, action). Integration per the Chapter 3 notes and D7: the poster task draws its content from 2B (rights and responsibilities) and names it; the picture task draws on 1C (local government and its services) and 2D (people helping communities) and names both; the cross-section skills of 3A–3D are named in the opening paragraph.

§2A. Neither exclusion touches this section: VC2HC4S05 .E01 and .E02 are neutral elaborations and both are drawn on in full. All contexts are neutral (park, playground, crossing, classroom, storms), per CONTENT_POLICY Rule 1.

Scale (D8). Everything sits at the familiar-and-personal scale: the child’s park, playground, crossing, classroom and local council. No parliament, no elections, no police or courts, no levels of government beyond “our council”, no formal legal citizenship — those are Levels 5–6 content. Rights and responsibilities stay at the community scale exactly as 2B teaches them.

Sources and data. Every real-world datum carries a source line with retrieval date (D5): 79 Victorian councils, councils’ rubbish collection and recreation places, and the City of Greater Geelong with 271,057 people at the 2021 Census (Wikipedia, “Local government in Victoria” and “City of Greater Geelong”, retrieved 26 August 2026); VICSES as the Victoria State Emergency Service with more than 5,000 volunteers and 300 paid workers helping in floods and storms (Victoria State Emergency Service, “About us” page, [ses.vic.gov.au](https://www.vic.gov.au), retrieved 26 August 2026). The two source cards are original house reproductions of those verified facts, and the model poster and model picture are original sketches labelled as models, never presented as real photographs or real council documents (SOURCE_USE Rule 3).

Register. Sentences are short and concrete at the Yr4 reading level (D3); this is a reading level, not a read-aloud level. There is no prior-knowledge box (D9); every subject term is defined at first use in this section even where an earlier section also defines it.

Materials. Pencils, paper, and coloured pencils or crayons for the poster and picture; the making task suits one teaching period plus sharing time.