

Civics and Citizenship Level 5

Chapter 4 — Skills: participating and communicating

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

Attribution: Classbasics Pty Ltd, vwx.au

Curriculum codes refer to the *Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0*, published by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). Classbasics is not affiliated with the VCAA; the VCAA does not endorse this resource and makes no warranties regarding it.

Distribution note: this document may be distributed, and whole pages may be removed from it, provided only WHOLE pages are removed (never part of a page). This allows teachers to remove tests, exams and subtopics they do not want to issue.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content has been excluded as accuracy cannot be guaranteed, and it is better to be respectful than cover the entire curriculum inaccurately.

Significant effort has been made to ensure this content is legal. Please send any areas of concern to admin@vwx.au with appropriate document/legal references so errors can be verified and changes be made.

Contents

Section	Page
Talking it through: deliberating on a community issue	2
Investigation task	12
Why taking part in democracy matters	14
Explaining current issues with knowledge, ideas and perspectives from sources	26

Talking it through: deliberating on a community issue

Civics and Citizenship 5 · Chapter 4 — Skills: participating and communicating · Section 4A

Owns VC2HC6S05
Draws on VC2HC6S05.E01 VC2HC6S05.E02
(for linkage — D7)

Before we start — agreeing on the big words

A group of friends wants to play a game, but they each want a different game. One friend shouts, “My game! Because I said so!” That is a quick way to decide — but it is not a good way. A better way is to talk and think together, with reasons. That way of deciding has a name. It is called **deliberating**.

Some of the words in this section can be used in slightly different ways. The Victorian Curriculum uses them but does not give them one fixed meaning, so this section tells you the meanings it uses. Every question in this section can be answered with these meanings. Other meanings exist, and they are not the same as these.

Word	How this section uses it
deliberate (a doing word)	to think and talk carefully about something together before deciding, weighing up the reasons on each side
deliberation	that careful, shared thinking and talking
consensus	an agreement that everyone in the group can accept — not always everyone’s first choice, but one that no one says no to
community	a group of people who share something, such as a place (a town or a suburb), a school, a club or an interest
issue	a matter that people think and talk about, often because a decision is needed

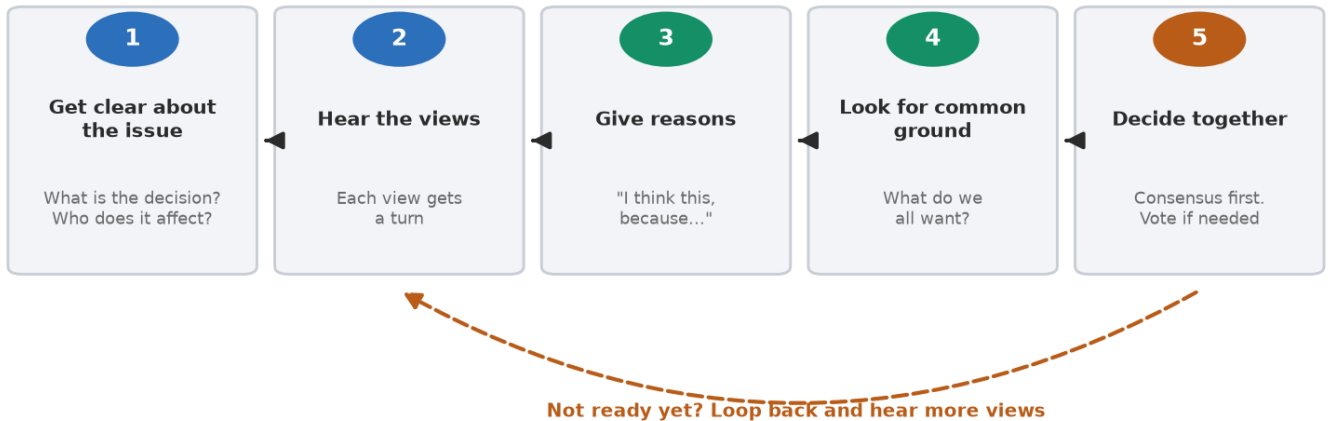
If you have ever worked with your class to reach an agreement together, you have already practised the heart of this skill. In this section you take the same skill further — bigger issues, and more communities.

1. What it means to deliberate

Deliberation slows a decision down — on purpose. Instead of the loudest voice winning, or hands being counted straight away, the group gives the issue a fair hearing first.

Deliberation: five steps

Careful group thinking before a decision



A vote counts hands. Deliberation weighs reasons first.

A loop of five steps: get clear about the issue, hear the views, give reasons, look for common ground, and decide together. An arrow leads from the last step back to the second step, showing that a group can loop around until the decision is ready.

Figure 1. The five steps of deliberation. The last step can send you back to step 2 — good groups loop around until the decision is ready.

Here are the five steps.

1. **Get clear about the issue.** What decision needs to be made? Who does it affect?
2. **Hear the views.** People see issues in different ways. Each view gets a turn to be heard.
3. **Give reasons.** A view is stronger when it stands on reasons and facts: “I think this, because...”
4. **Look for common ground.** What do we all want? Even views that disagree often share a goal.
5. **Decide together.** Aim for a **consensus** — an agreement everyone can accept. If a consensus will not come, put it to a vote, and the group accepts the result.

Deliberation is not the same as an argument. In an argument, the goal can become winning. In a deliberation, the goal is a decision the group can stand behind. Deliberation is also more than a quick vote. A vote counts hands; deliberation weighs reasons first.

You have seen this at a national scale too. In Section 1B you met the values of Australia’s democracy, such as freedom of speech and expression. Deliberation is one of those values at work: people share views, listen to reasons, and decide together. In Section 2C you saw deliberation in parliament, where elected members debate a bill (a proposed new law) before they vote on it. Citizens deliberate as well — in classes, in meetings, and in communities.

2. Two ways a group can decide: consensus and vote

Two ways a group can decide together

	CONSENSUS	VOTE
How does the group decide?	Everyone can accept one plan	Most people choose one option
What happens to views that do not win?	They are heard, and worked into the plan where possible	They are heard, and the group goes with the majority choice
What does it need?	Time, listening, and give and take	A fair count, like a secret ballot
What is it good for?	Class rules, club plans, shared goals	Choosing one option, or one person, when views are set

Both ways work best after deliberation.

A table comparing two ways of deciding: consensus and voting. The rows compare how the group decides, what happens to views that do not win, what the way needs, and what it is good for.

Figure 2. Two ways a group can decide together.

Both ways work best when deliberation comes first. A vote with no discussion is just a count of first thoughts. A consensus with no reasons is just the loudest person getting their way.

When do you use each?

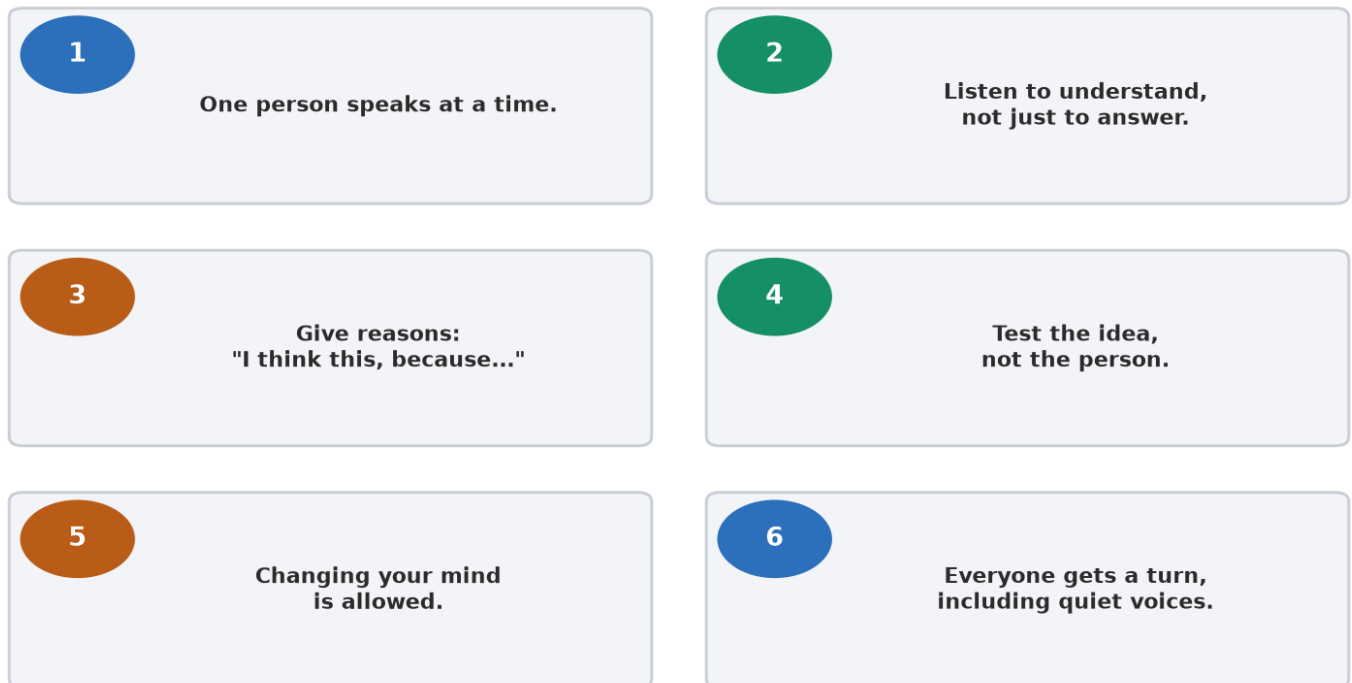
- **Consensus** suits decisions everyone must live with — class rules, club plans, a shared goal. It takes longer, but everyone's view stays part of the decision.
- **A vote** suits picking between options, or picking a person for a role, when views are set and a clear result is needed. Australia's elections work this way — you met them in Section 1A.

3. Ground rules for talking together

Deliberation needs ground rules, or it turns into noise. Here are six.

Ground rules for talking together

They protect every voice, including the quiet ones



A poster of six ground rules: one person speaks at a time; listen to understand, not just to answer; give reasons; test the idea, not the person; changing your mind is allowed; everyone gets a turn.

Figure 3. Ground rules for talking together. They protect every voice — including the quiet ones.

1. One person speaks at a time.
2. Listen to understand, not just to answer.
3. Give reasons: "I think this, because..."
4. Test the idea, not the person. Say "I see it another way, because..." rather than "You are wrong."
5. Changing your mind is allowed. A good reason can move anyone.
6. Everyone gets a turn — including the quiet voices.

4. Hear every view at its strongest

Here is a trick of careful deliberation. Before you judge a view, say it back in its strongest form — the form the person who holds it would agree with. Then find its best reason. Only after that do you weigh it up.

Hear every view at its strongest

Say it, check it, find its best reason, only then weigh it up



Say the view in its strongest form.



Check: would the person who holds it agree with your words?



Find its best reason.



Only then weigh it against the other views.

Use it on views you like, too. Fair thinking works the same way on both sides.

A checklist with four steps: say the view in its strongest form; check that the person who holds it would agree with your words; find its best reason; only then weigh it against the other views.

Figure 4. Hear every view at its strongest before you weigh it up.

Why bother? A weak form of a view is easy to knock down — but knocking down a weak form proves nothing. The real question is whether the view still stands when it is said at its strongest.

Use this trick on views you **like**, too. Test your own favourite view as carefully as you test the views you disagree with. Fair thinking works the same way on both sides.

Worked examples

Example 1 — with help

Deliberate about a real issue: what should communities do about single-use plastics?

Single-use plastics are items used once and then thrown away — things like straws, bags, cups and packets. They are handy, but many end up as litter, where they can harm wildlife and make places ugly. Different Australian communities have responded in different ways. Step through the deliberation using Figure 5 and the questions below.

Three communities, three responses to single-use plastic

One issue — and more than one reasonable response

Community	What they did	When
South Australia (a state)	Banned lightweight plastic shopping bags.	2009
Hobart (a city in Tasmania)	Banned single-use plastics — the first Australian capital city to do so. Some local businesses said the change was hard on them.	March 2019
Victoria (a state)	Now bans single-use plastic straws, cutlery, plates, drink-stirring sticks, cotton buds, and foam plastic food and drink containers.	In force now

Sources: Wikipedia, "Waste management in Australia"; Victorian Government, vic.gov.au (retrieved 26 August 2026).

A table of three communities and their responses to single-use plastic: South Australia banned lightweight plastic shopping bags in 2009; Hobart banned single-use plastics in March 2019, the first Australian capital city to do so; Victoria now bans single-use plastic straws, cutlery, plates, drink-stirring sticks, cotton buds and foam plastic food and drink containers.

Figure 5. Three communities, three responses to single-use plastic. Sources: Wikipedia, "Waste management in Australia" (South Australia, 2009; Hobart, March 2019), and Victorian Government, "Single-use plastics", vic.gov.au (Victoria's banned items), both retrieved 26 August 2026.

Working	Comment
1. What is the issue? Single-use plastics are used once, often become litter, and can harm wildlife.	Get clear about the issue first (step 1).
2. What has each community done? South Australia acted on shopping bags in 2009. Hobart acted on single-use plastics in March 2019. Victoria now bans several single-use plastic items across the state.	Hear what each community did (step 2).
3. What is the strongest reason for each response? South Australia: bags may be used for minutes, but they stay as litter for years. Hobart: a city can act quickly to look after its own places. Victoria: one rule for the whole state is simple and even for every shop and shopper.	Say each view at its strongest (step 3, and Figure 4).
4. What is strong about the worries, too? Some local businesses said Hobart's change was hard on them: new rules can cost shops money and take time to get used to. Victoria's list does not cover every plastic — no ban covers everything at once.	Test every side, including the side you like (steps 3 and 4).

5. Which community do you agree with, and why?

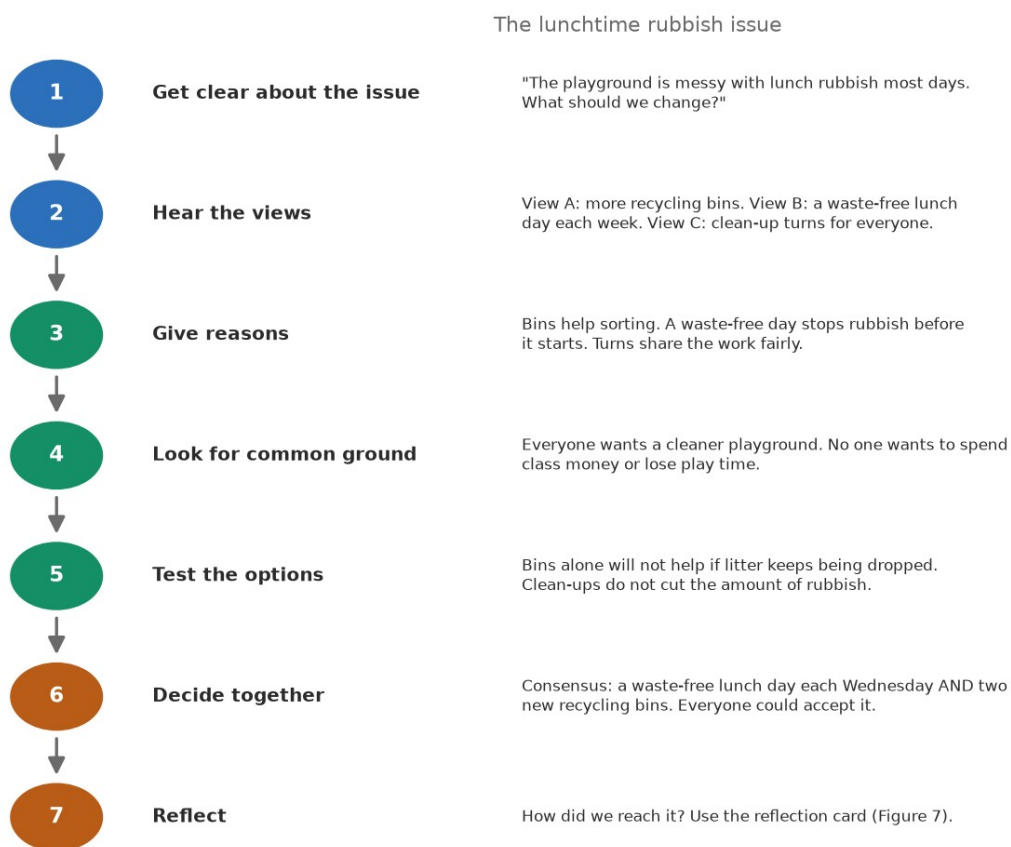
Decide and give your reasons (step 5).

Sample: I agree with Victoria most. Banning the items that most often become litter is a strong step, and one rule across the state is simple for everyone. I also respect Hobart for moving first and showing what a city can do.

Marking note: marks go to the strength of your reasons, not to the community you pick. Two students can pick different communities and both do well — as long as both give strong reasons.

Example 2 — with help**Reach a consensus in your class: the lunchtime rubbish issue.**

A Year 5 class noticed that the playground was messy with lunch rubbish most days. Here is how they deliberated their way to a consensus.

One class's path to consensus

A seven-step path: name the issue, hear the views, give reasons, look for common ground, test the options, decide together, and reflect. Each step shows what one class did about lunchtime rubbish, ending in a consensus of a weekly waste-free lunch day and two new recycling bins.

Figure 6. One class's path to consensus.

Step	What the class did
1. Get clear about the issue	"The playground is messy with lunch rubbish most days. What should we change?"
2. Hear the views	View A: add more recycling bins. View B: hold a waste-

Step	What the class did
	free lunch day each week. View C: every student takes a turn on a clean-up crew.
3. Give reasons	Bins help people sort their rubbish. A waste-free day stops rubbish before it starts. Clean-up turns share the work in a fair way.
4. Look for common ground	Everyone wants a cleaner playground. No one wants to spend class money or lose play time.
5. Test the options	Bins alone will not help if litter keeps being dropped. Clean-ups do not cut the amount of rubbish. A waste-free day cuts rubbish, but only on one day.
6. Decide together	Consensus: a waste-free lunch day each Wednesday and two new recycling bins, placed where the class agreed. Everyone could accept it — even the students whose first choice was different.
7. Reflect	The class used the reflection card (Figure 7) to think about how they reached the consensus.

Reflecting on how the consensus was reached is part of the skill. The card below helps.

Reflection card

How did we reach our consensus?

1	How did our class reach this agreement? Which steps helped most?
2	Which ground rule helped us most? Why?
3	Did anyone change their mind? What changed it?
4	Was every voice heard? How do we know?
5	What would we change next time?

A reflection card with five questions: How did our class reach this agreement, and which steps helped most? Which ground rule helped us most, and why? Did anyone change their mind, and what changed it? Was every voice heard, and how do we know? What would we change next time?

Figure 7. Reflection card: how did we reach our consensus?

Practice tasks

With help

S1. Fill the gaps using the word bank: *community · consensus · deliberate · issue · reasons*

- (a) To _____ is to think and talk carefully together before deciding.
- (b) An _____ is a matter that people think and talk about, often because a decision is needed.
- (c) A view is stronger when it stands on _____.
- (d) A _____ is an agreement that everyone in the group can accept.
- (e) A _____ is a group of people who share something, like a place or a school.

S2. Put the five steps of deliberation in order, from first to last.

- (a) Give reasons for each view.
- (b) Get clear about the issue.
- (c) Decide together — aim for a consensus, and vote if one will not come.
- (d) Hear the views.
- (e) Look for common ground.

S3. Which ground rule from Figure 3 (rules 1–6) matches each example?

- (a) Mia waits until Tom has finished before she speaks.
- (b) Noah says, “I think the bins are the answer, because they were already full by Tuesday.”
- (c) Ava asks Sam for his view, because Sam has not had a turn yet.
- (d) Zoe says, “I see it another way, because clean-ups do not cut the amount of rubbish,” not “You are silly.”

S4. Consensus or vote? Sort each decision into the better way.

- (a) The class chooses one of three books to read aloud.
- (b) The class agrees on a rule about how we treat each other — a rule everyone must be able to accept.
- (c) The school picks a new student leader.
- (d) The club agrees on a shared goal for the term.

S5. Say it at its strongest. A shop owner in Hobart was worried about the single-use plastics ban. Complete the frame so the worry is said in its strongest form.

“This view, at its strongest, is: the ban could _____ for shops, because _____.”

S6. True or false? Correct the false ones.

- (a) Deliberation means the loudest voice wins.
- (b) A consensus is an agreement that everyone in the group can accept.
- (c) In a deliberation, you listen to understand, not just to answer.
- (d) A vote works best when there has been no discussion at all.

On your own

U1. Choose an issue that affects your school. Write two different views about it, with one reason for each view.

U2. Consensus and voting are two ways a group can decide. Give one way they are the same, and one way they are different.

U3. Look again at the three communities in Figure 5: South Australia, Hobart and Victoria. Which community’s response do you agree with most, and why? Also give one strong point about one of the other responses. Marks go to the strength of your reasons, not to the community you choose.

U4. Your class is going to deliberate about a real issue that affects your class or your school. Explain how you would run it. Include the steps you would follow, the ground rules you would use, and how you would know when you had reached a consensus.

Investigation task

In this section, the investigation is yours to do: your class deliberates about an issue and reaches a consensus — or works out honestly why it cannot. Your deliberation is your evidence.

1. **Choose the issue.** As a class, pick one real issue that affects your class or your school. Examples: lunchtime rubbish, noisy spots at lunch, how the class library is shared, what happens in wet weather.
2. **Collect the views.** Gather at least two views with reasons. Aim for more. Remember Figure 4: say each view at its strongest.
3. **Deliberate.** Follow the five steps (Figure 1) and the ground rules (Figure 3). One student records the views and the reasons as they are spoken.
4. **Decide.** Reach a consensus if you can. If you cannot, record where you got stuck and what would help next time.
5. **Reflect.** Each student completes the reflection card (Figure 7) on their own.

Record your work on the planner below.

Investigation planner

Record your class deliberation here

Our issue 	The views and reasons we heard 	Our common ground
Our consensus (or where we got stuck) 		My reflection

An investigation planner with five panels: our issue; the views and reasons we heard; our common ground; our consensus, or where we got stuck; and my reflection.

Figure 8. Investigation planner.

Answers

S1. (a) deliberate; (b) issue; (c) reasons; (d) consensus; (e) community.

S2. (b) → (d) → (a) → (e) → (c).

S3. (a) rule 1 (one person speaks at a time); (b) rule 3 (give reasons); (c) rule 6 (everyone gets a turn); (d) rule 4 (test the idea, not the person).

S4. (a) vote; (b) consensus; (c) vote; (d) consensus.

S5. Sample: “This view, at its strongest, is: the ban could cost small shops money, because new kinds of cups and containers can cost more than plastic ones.” Any answer that states the worry in its strongest form, with a reason, is accepted.

S6. (a) False — deliberation weighs reasons first; the loudest voice does not just win. (b) True. (c) True. (d) False — a vote works best after deliberation.

U1. Sample answer. Issue: lunchtime rubbish. View A: add recycling bins, because much of the rubbish can be recycled. View B: hold a waste-free day, because stopping rubbish before it starts works better than sorting it later. Accept any issue that really affects the school, with two distinct views and one reason each.

U2. Sample answer. Same: both are ways for a group to make a decision after hearing views. Different: in a vote, the choice with the most support wins; in a consensus, the group keeps working until everyone can accept the agreement.

U3. Sample answer. I agree with Victoria most, because the banned items are the ones that most often become litter, and one rule across the state is simple for every shop and shopper. A strong point of Hobart’s response: it moved first, and showed other communities what is possible. Marks go to the strength of the reasons, not to the community chosen.

U4. Sample answer. We would follow the five steps: get clear about the issue, hear the views, give reasons, look for common ground, and decide together. We would use the ground rules from Figure 3. We would know we had reached a consensus when we could ask every student, “Can you accept this?” and every student could say yes. Accept any answer that uses the steps and rules of this section.

Investigation task. Completed in class; the planner (Figure 8) and the reflection card (Figure 7) are the record. A class that reaches a consensus and a class that gets stuck — and says honestly why — can both do well, as long as both show careful deliberation.

Why taking part in democracy matters

You are learning: VC2HC6S06. Links: .E01 .E02 .E03.

Before we start — agreeing on the big words

This section is about **taking part**. The Victorian Curriculum uses these words but does not give them one fixed meaning, so this section tells you the meaning it uses. Every question in this section can be answered with these meanings. Other meanings exist, and they are not the same as these.

Word	How this section uses it
participate	to take part; participation is taking part
democratic processes	the ways a democracy makes choices together: elections, voting, talking things through, contacting members, joining groups
active citizen	a person who takes part in their community and works to make it better
deliberate	to talk carefully about an issue and weigh the reasons before deciding
consensus	an agreement everyone can accept
negotiate	to talk until each side gives a little and an outcome everyone can accept
values	ideas about what is right and important
freedom	being able to do or say something without anyone stopping you unfairly
fairness	treating people in a way that is right and even, without leaving anyone out unfairly
equality	everyone counts the same way before the law and in public life
rule of law	the idea that the law applies to everyone — including the government — and that no one is above the law

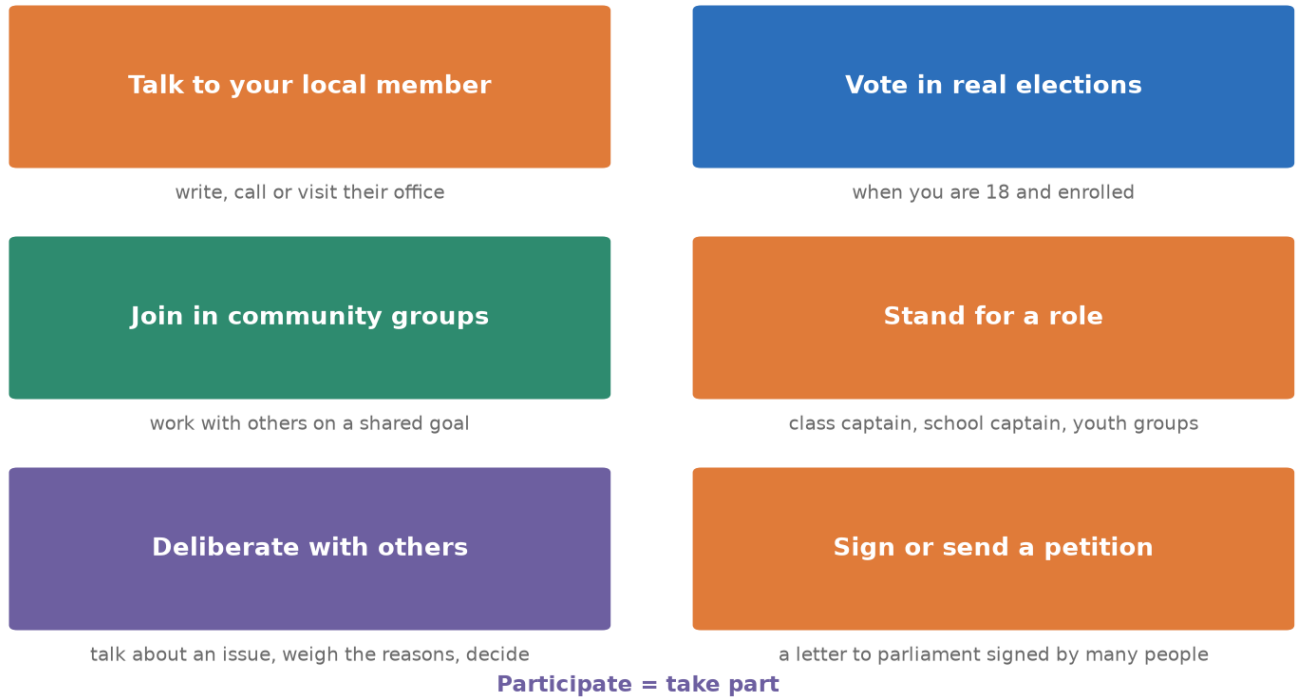
Two more words we will use a lot: a **citizen** is a member of a community or a country, and a **civic goal** is a goal that helps the community, not just one person.

1. What counts as a democratic process?

A **democracy** is a way of choosing leaders and making decisions in which citizens have a say, usually by voting. In a democracy, decisions are not just made by the strongest or the loudest — everyone counts. So a **democratic process** is any of the ways citizens have that say: voting in elections, standing for a role, sending a **petition** (a letter signed by many people asking for change) to parliament, contacting your local member, joining a community group, and talking an issue through together. Some of these you can do right now; some come when you are older.

Ways to participate in democratic processes

Some you can do right now; some come when you are older



Six coloured cards show six ways to participate: vote in real elections when you are 18 and enrolled, stand for a role such as class captain, sign or send a petition, talk to your local member, join in community groups, and deliberate with others.

Figure 1. Six ways to participate in democratic processes.

2. Why participate? Five reasons

Taking part is not just a nice idea — it is what makes a democracy work. Here are five reasons to participate.

Why participate? Five reasons

Reasons to take part in democratic processes, in plain words

Reason	What it gets us
1. Your voice gets heard	Leaders learn what citizens want and need
2. Leaders are kept in check	People who vote and ask questions make leaders answer for their choices
3. Decisions get better	More views mean more is noticed before a decision is made
4. Democratic values are upheld	Free and fair elections only work when people join in
5. Goals are achieved together	Active citizens working together can change things for the better

A table with five reasons to participate, each with what it gets us: your voice gets heard; leaders are kept in check; decisions get better; democratic values are upheld; goals are achieved together.

Figure 2. Five reasons to take part in democratic processes.

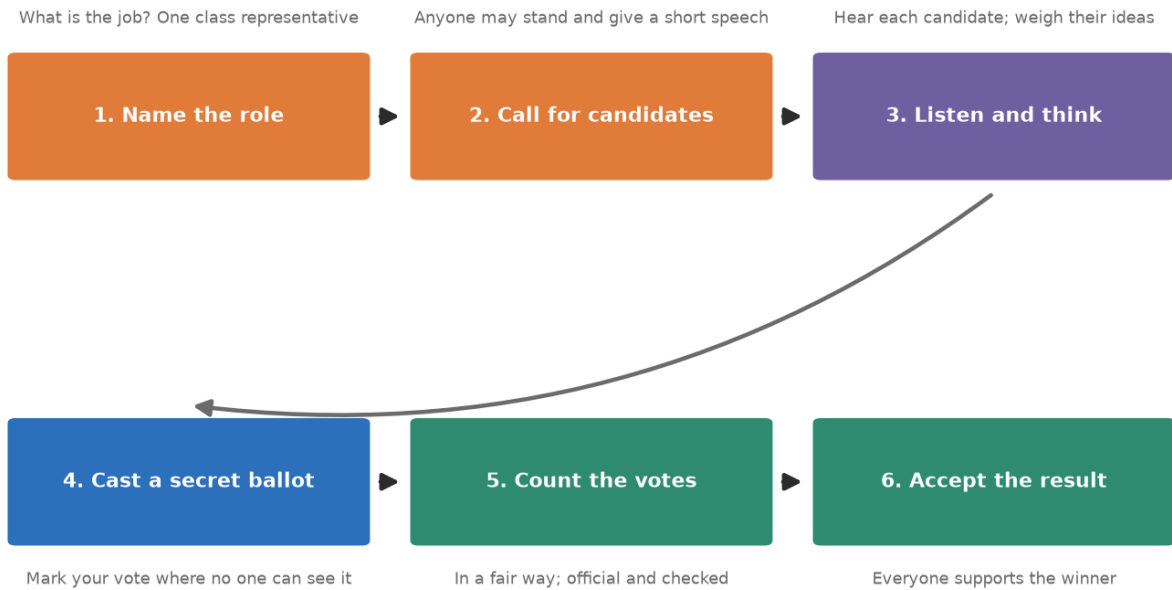
Now think about what happens when people do **not** take part. If few people vote, the winner only speaks for a few. If no one asks questions, leaders do not have to answer for their choices. If one group stays home, its needs get missed. Taking part is how a democracy stays fair.

3. Elections — participation that supports democratic values

Soon you will run a classroom election (worked example 1). It copies the real thing. A **candidate** is a person who puts their name forward to be chosen, and a **representative** is the person the group chooses to speak and act for it. In Australia, citizens who are 18 or older vote in real elections. An **enrolled** voter is one who is signed up on the roll, the list of voters. Four features keep those elections open, free and fair.

Running a classroom election

Six steps that copy how real Australian elections work



In real elections, steps 4-6 use the secret ballot and are run by the Australian Electoral Commission (federal) or the Victorian Electoral Commission (Victoria).

A six-step flow for running a classroom election: name the role, call for candidates, listen and think, cast a secret ballot, count the votes in a fair way, accept the result.

Figure 3. The six steps of a classroom election, copying how real Australian elections work.

Australian election features — and why they need you		
Each feature works because citizens take part		
Feature	How it works	Why taking part matters
Secret ballot	No one can see how you vote	You can make your own honest choice
Preferential voting	Number the candidates in the order you choose	Your vote keeps counting even if your first pick does not win
Compulsory voting	Every enrolled voter must vote	The result shows what everyone thinks, not just some
Independent commissions	The AEC and the VEC run elections, not the government of the day	Elections stay open, free and fair

AEC = Australian Electoral Commission. VEC = Victorian Electoral Commission.

A table of four features of Australian elections — secret ballot, preferential voting, compulsory voting, and independent commissions — with how each feature works and why taking part matters for each one.

Figure 4. Four features of Australian elections. The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) runs federal elections and the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) runs Victorian state and local council elections; both are independent, which means they are not part of the government of the day.

Here is the key idea: **each feature only works if people take part**. The **secret ballot** (a vote where no one can see how you voted) protects your free choice — but only if you make one. **Preferential voting** (numbering the candidates in the order you choose) keeps your vote counting — but only if you vote. **Compulsory voting** means the result shows what everyone thinks — but only if everyone is enrolled and votes. That is why Australia made voting a duty for enrolled adults in 1924; the first federal election held under that rule was in 1925. (Source: Australian Electoral Commission, aec.gov.au. Retrieved 26 August 2026.)

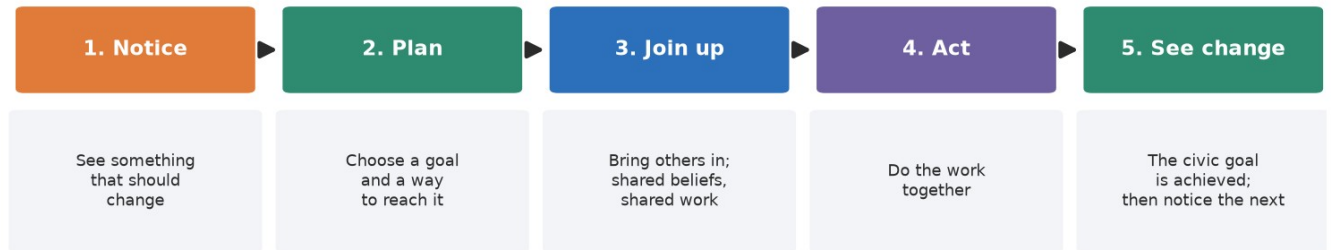
Real elections are within your memory, and one is coming up: the Australian federal election was held on 3 May 2025, and Victoria's next state election is on 28 November 2026. (Source: Australian Electoral Commission, aec.gov.au; Victorian Electoral Commission, vec.gov.au. Retrieved 26 August 2026.)

4. How active citizenship reaches a civic goal

Voting is not the only way to participate. **Active citizens** — people who take part and work to make things better — achieve civic goals all the time. Here is the pattern they follow (→ Section 2E).

How active citizenship reaches a civic goal

An active citizen is a person who takes part and works to make things better



Every step is a form of participation. Voting, joining, speaking up, deliberating and acting are all ways citizens take part.

Five steps in a row show how active citizenship reaches a civic goal: notice, plan, join up, act, see change.

Figure 5. The five steps of active citizenship.

And here is a real story that follows those steps.

Active citizenship at work: the Clean Up Australia story

How one person's idea became a civic goal achieved by volunteers



A timeline of the Clean Up Australia story: in 1989 Ian Kiernan notices rubbish in Sydney Harbour and volunteers clean it up; in 1990 the first Clean Up Australia Day is held across Australia; in 1993 the idea spreads as Clean Up the World; today the event still runs every year with schools, families and community groups taking part.

Figure 6. The Clean Up Australia story: one person's idea, achieved by active citizens. (Source: Clean Up Australia, cleanup.org.au. Retrieved 26 August 2026.)

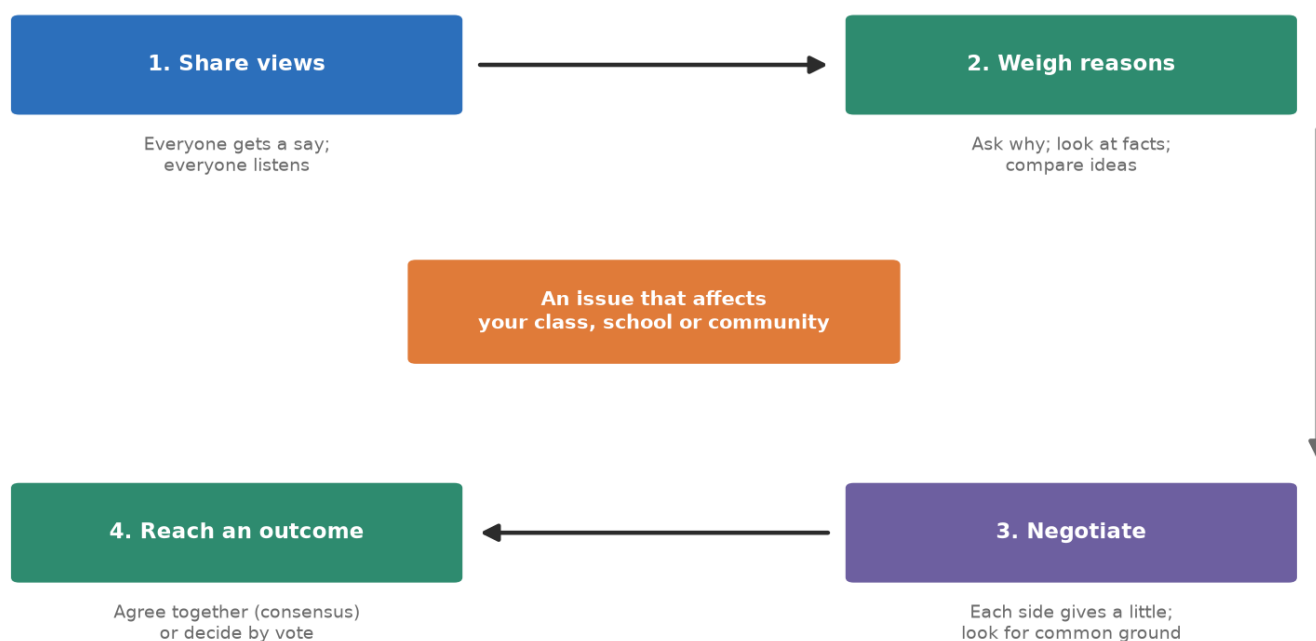
One person noticed a problem. Many active citizens did the work. The civic goal — cleaner public places for everyone — was achieved, and the idea spread around the world.

5. Talking it through is participation too

Not every decision ends in a vote. Sometimes people participate by **deliberating**: sharing views, listening, and weighing the reasons. Then they **negotiate** an outcome — each side gives a little — and reach a **consensus** everyone can accept (→ Section 4A).

Talking it through is participation too

Deliberation and negotiating an outcome, step by step



Deliberation = careful talk where people weigh reasons before deciding. Consensus = an agreement everyone can accept.

A loop with an issue in the middle and four steps around it: share views, weigh reasons, negotiate, reach an outcome by consensus or by vote.

Figure 7. Deliberating and negotiating: two ways to take part in democracy.

When your class talks through where the class trip goes, or how to spend the class money, and reaches an agreement everyone can accept — that is democratic participation. Your voice counted, even though no ballot was cast.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — with help

Run a classroom election for one class representative, using the rules in the first column. Then match each rule to (a) the real Australian feature it copies, and (b) the democratic value it supports.

Classroom rule	What it copies	Value it supports
(a) No one can see how you mark your paper.	The secret ballot	Freedom — you can choose honestly, with no one watching
(b) Everyone gets one vote, and two students check the count.	Elections run and checked by the AEC or VEC , not the government	Fairness and the rule of law — the same rules for everyone
(c) You number the candidates 1, 2, 3 in the order you choose.	Preferential voting	Every voice keeps counting, even if your first pick does not win
(d) Everyone in the class must vote.	Compulsory voting	Equality — every citizen's say counts

Because every classroom rule copies a real feature, the role-play shows why taking part in elections supports democratic values (→ Section 1A).

Worked example 2 — with help

Use the five steps in Figure 5 to explain the Clean Up Australia story in Figure 6.

Step (Figure 5)	What happened in the story
1. Notice	In 1989, Ian Kiernan noticed the rubbish in Sydney Harbour.
2. Plan	He planned a clean-up day and set a goal: a clean harbour.
3. Join up	Volunteers joined in; in 1990 the first Clean Up Australia Day ran across the country.
4. Act	They cleaned beaches, parks and streets together.
5. See change	Public places are cleaner; the event still runs every year, and the idea spread to the world in 1993.

One notice, one plan, and many joined-up citizens added up to a civic goal achieved. That is active citizenship (→ Section 2E).

Practice questions

With help

Q1. What does *participate* mean?

Q2. Name **three** ways a Year 5 student can participate right now (Figure 1).

Q3. Give **two** reasons to take part in democratic processes (Figure 2).

Q4. True or false, then correct the false one: In Australia, enrolled adults can skip voting if they feel like it.

Q5. What is the name for a vote where no one can see how you voted?

Q6. Name the two commissions that run elections, and say which one runs federal elections and which one runs Victorian elections.

On your own

Q7. Explain why participation matters, using **two** reasons from Figure 2. Say one thing that can go wrong when people do not take part.

Q8. Your class elects a representative using the steps in Figure 3. Explain how this role-play supports **two** democratic values.

Q9. Pick **one** step from Figure 5 and explain how active citizens used it in the Clean Up Australia story (Figure 6).

Q10. “Deliberation is a form of participation.” Explain what this means, with one example from your class or school (Figure 7).

Source task

Read the short source in the picture (Australia's law about voting), then answer in your own words.

Source: Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, section 245(1)

Australia's law about voting — read it carefully

Duty to vote

*It shall be the duty of every elector to vote
at each election.*

Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, section 245(1). Compulsory voting entered this Act in 1924.

**In everyday words: in Australia, voting is a duty.
Every person enrolled to vote must vote in elections.
An elector is a person enrolled to vote.**

A source card with the exact words of section 245(1) of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 — “It shall be the duty of every elector to vote at each election” — and a plain-English gloss below: in Australia, voting is a duty, and every person enrolled to vote must vote in elections.

Source: Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, an Australian federal law, section 245(1). Retrieved 26 August 2026.

- S1.** In your own words, what does the source say every elector must do?
- S2.** The source uses the word *duty*. Give a simpler word or phrase that means the same here.
- S3.** Give **one** reason why Australia makes voting a duty, using a reason from Figure 2.
-

Answers

Q1. To take part. **Q2.** Any three of: stand for a role; sign or send a petition; talk to your local member; join in community groups; deliberate with others. **Q3.** Any two of the five: your voice gets heard; leaders are kept in check; decisions get better; democratic values are upheld; goals are achieved together. **Q4.** False — under compulsory voting, enrolled adults must vote. **Q5.** The secret ballot. **Q6.** The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) runs federal elections; the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) runs Victorian elections. **Q7.** Sample: your voice gets heard, and leaders are kept in check; if people do not take part, leaders do not have to answer for their choices. **Q8.** Sample: the secret ballot supports freedom (you choose honestly); everyone voting supports equality (every say counts). **Q9.** Sample: join up — volunteers joined Ian Kiernan, and in 1990 the first Clean Up Australia Day ran across the country. **Q10.** Sample: talking through an issue and weighing the reasons is taking part, because your views shape the decision; for example, when our class agreed on a class job roster, everyone's view counted. **S1.** Every elector must vote at each election (voting is a duty). **S2.** "Must do" / "a job you have to do". **S3.** Sample: so the result shows what everyone thinks, not just some (equality; your voice gets heard).

Answers explained

Q1. *Participate* means to take part; participation is taking part.

Q2. From Figure 1, things you can do now: stand for a role (class captain, school captain, youth groups); sign or send a petition; talk to your local member; join in community groups; deliberate with others. (Voting in real elections comes at 18.)

Q3. Any two from Figure 2: your voice gets heard; leaders are kept in check; decisions get better; democratic values are upheld; goals are achieved together.

Q4. False. Voting in Australia is compulsory: every enrolled adult must vote at each election.

Q5. The **secret ballot** — no one can see how you vote, so you can make your own choice.

Q6. The **Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)** runs federal elections; the **Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC)** runs Victorian state and local council elections.

Q7. A full answer gives two reasons from Figure 2 and one downside. Sample: participation matters because (1) your voice gets heard — leaders learn what citizens want — and (2) leaders are kept in check — people who vote and ask questions make leaders answer for their choices. If people do not take part, a small group decides for everyone.

Q8. A full answer names two values and links each to a step in Figure 3. Sample: the secret ballot supports **freedom**, because no one can see your vote, so you choose honestly; everyone voting supports **equality**, because every citizen's say counts the same. (The fair count also shows the **rule of law** — the same rules for everyone.)

Q9. A full answer picks one step and matches it to the story. Sample: **join up** — after Ian Kiernan noticed the rubbish, volunteers joined in, and in 1990 the first Clean Up Australia Day was held across the country. The goal was achieved by many citizens acting together.

Q10. A full answer says what deliberation is and gives a real example. Sample: when people share views, listen and weigh the reasons before deciding, they are taking part — their views shape the outcome even without a vote. For example, when our class talked through how to spend the class money and reached an agreement everyone could accept, that was participation.

S1. The source says every elector (a person enrolled to vote) must vote at each election.

S2. A simpler way to say *duty* here: something you **must do** — a job you have to do.

S3. Any reason from Figure 2 that fits. Sample: because then the result shows what **everyone** thinks, not just some — equality in action.

Explaining current issues with knowledge, ideas and perspectives from sources

You are learning: VC2HC6S07. Links: .E01 .E02.

Before we start — agreeing on the big words

This section is about **explaining an issue using ideas from different sources**, and then showing that skill two ways: by making a **pamphlet** about a proposed law, and by giving a **speech** when you stand for a leader role. The Victorian Curriculum uses these words but does not give them one fixed meaning, so this section tells you the meaning it uses. (The **curriculum** is the official plan for what schools teach.) Every task in this section can be answered with these meanings. Other meanings exist, and they are not the same as these.

Word	How this section uses it
issue	a question people disagree about and have to decide
source	a place an idea or fact comes from — a law, a parliament record, a party statement, the news
perspective	one way of seeing an issue; different people can see the same issue in different ways
position	what a person, party or group says should happen
political party	a group of people who share ideas about how the country should be run, and work to be elected
policy	a party's or government's plan for one area, written down and announced
pamphlet	a small folded sheet that tells people about one issue
bill	a proposed law that parliament is debating
electoral roll	the list of people who are signed up to vote (also called the roll)

One more word you will meet in a source: an **elector** is a person who is on the electoral roll.

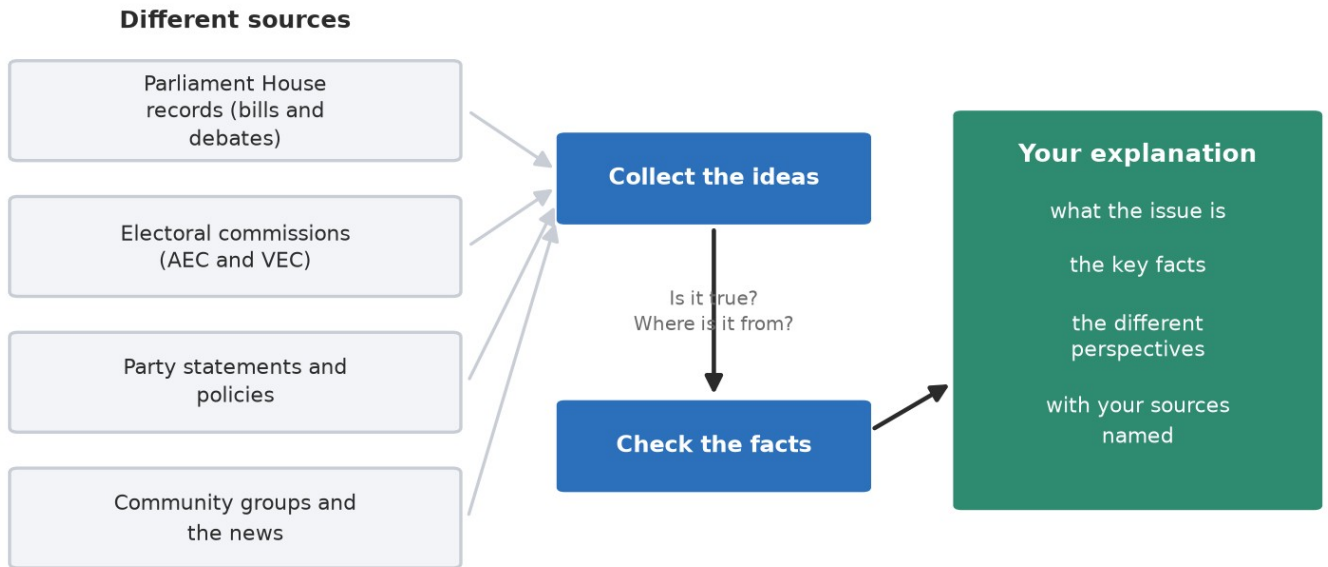
And one rule for this whole section: **we mark how well you explain, not which side you pick**. People disagree about the issue in this section, and that is normal in a democracy. A strong explanation shows every perspective in its strong form — even the one you disagree with.

1. The skill: from different sources to your explanation

To **explain** an issue means to say clearly what the issue is, what the facts are, and what different people say about it. One source on its own can miss things, so we collect ideas from **different sources**, check the facts, and then explain in our own words.

From different sources to your explanation

The skill of Section 4C: use what you find, then explain the issue



Ideas and perspectives from different sources make your explanation stronger than one source alone.

A flow figure: four source boxes on the left (Parliament House records, electoral commissions, party statements and policies, community groups and the news) feed into a collect-the-ideas box, then a check-the-facts box, and then a green your-explanation box listing what the issue is, the key facts, the different perspectives, and your sources named.

Figure 1. From different sources to your explanation.

Three moves make the skill:

- **Collect the ideas.** Gather what each source says about the issue.
- **Check the facts.** For each fact, ask: is it true? and where is it from?
- **Explain.** Say what the issue is, the key facts, and the different perspectives — in your own words, with your sources named.

2. The issue we will use: should the voting age go down from 18 to 16?

In Australia you must be **18** to vote in federal elections. That rule is in the **Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918**, a federal law, in **section 93**. Some people want to change the rule to **16**. In **2018** a Greens senator brought a **bill** — a proposed law — to parliament to make that change. The bill did not pass, so the rule stayed at 18, but the issue keeps coming back. That makes it a perfect issue for this section: it is a proposed law that real parties hold real positions on.

Here are the key facts, each with its source:

- **Voting is a duty.** The law says every elector must vote at each election (Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, section 245(1)). Australia has had this duty since 1924 (→ Section 4B).
- **You can enrol at 16.** If you enrol at 16, your enrolment starts when you turn 18 (AEC and VEC).
- **Other countries let 16-year-olds vote.** In Austria people vote from 16 (since 2007). In Brazil, 16- and 17-year-olds can choose to vote (since 1988).

A civics issue to talk about: should the voting age go down from 18 to 16?

People on both sides have real reasons. A good explanation shows both.

In Australia you must be 18 to vote in federal elections. Some people want to change that to 16.

YES — some people say change it

Many 16-year-olds work part-time and pay tax. They live under the laws, so they should have a say in them.

Big decisions made today will affect young people the longest — such as looking after the environment.

Other places already do this. In Austria people vote from 16 (since 2007). In Brazil, 16- and 17-year-olds can choose to vote (since 1988).

NO — some people say keep it at 18

The law gives adult duties, like jury duty, at 18. Voting should match those duties.

Voting is a big job. Two more years gives young people time to learn how elections work.

Many ages in the law sit at 18. Changing only one age might not fit with the rest.

Sources: Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, s 93; Austrian law (2007); Brazilian law (1988). Retrieved 26 August 2026.

A two-column figure asking should the voting age go down from 18 to 16. The yes column gives three reasons: many 16-year-olds work part-time and pay tax, so they should have a say in the laws they live under; big decisions made today will affect young people the longest; and other places already do this (Austria since 2007, Brazil since 1988). The no column gives three reasons: the law gives adult duties like jury duty at 18, so voting should match those duties; two more years gives young people time to learn how elections work; and many ages in the law sit at 18, so changing only one might not fit.

Figure 2. A civics issue to talk about, with the strong reasons on each side. (Sources: Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, s 93; Austrian law (2007); Brazilian law (1988). Retrieved 26 August 2026.)

3. Who says what — and how to report it in a fair way

First, who are the parties? A **political party** is a group of people who share ideas about how the country should be run, and work to be elected. These are the four main parties in the federal parliament.

Political parties in Australia

A political party is a group of people who share ideas about how the country should be run, and work to be elected

	Australian Labor Party	Australia's oldest political party — formed in the 1890s.
	Liberal Party of Australia	Formed in 1944. Often works with the Nationals.
	Nationals	Formed in 1920 as the Country Party. Speaks up for country and farming areas.
	Australian Greens	Formed in 1992. Strong on protecting the environment.

There are other smaller parties too, and some members of parliament do not belong to any party.
After the federal election on 3 May 2025, the Australian Labor Party forms the government.

Source: Australian Electoral Commission, 2025 federal election result. Retrieved 26 August 2026.

A table of four political parties in Australia, each with a party-colour chip and a short note: Australian Labor Party (Australia's oldest political party, formed in the 1890s); Liberal Party of Australia (formed in 1944, often works with the Nationals); Nationals (formed in 1920 as the Country Party, speaks up for country and farming areas); Australian Greens (formed in 1992, strong on protecting the environment). A note below says there are other smaller parties too, and some members of parliament belong to no party, and that after the federal election on 3 May 2025 the Australian Labor Party forms the government.

Figure 3. Political parties in Australia. (Source: Australian Electoral Commission, 2025 federal election result. Retrieved 26 August 2026.)

Now, where does each party stand on our issue? Figure 4 retells each position in plain words, in its strong form.

Where the parties stand: should the voting age go down to 16?

Each position is retold in plain words, in its strong form

Party	Position	Why they say so
 Australian Greens	Yes — lower it to 16	They say 16-year-olds already work and pay tax, so their voice should be heard. A Greens senator brought a bill like this to parliament in 2018.
 Liberal Party and Nationals	No — keep it at 18	They say 18 is when the law gives adult duties, and voting should match those duties.
 Australian Labor Party	Members disagree	Some Labor members support the change, and some do not.

These are summaries of party statements and of debates in parliament — not exact quotes.

Sources: Australian Parliament House records (2018 bill); party statements. Retrieved 26 August 2026.

A three-row table of party positions on whether the voting age should go down to 16: Australian Greens — yes, because 16-year-olds already work and pay tax, so their voice should be heard (a Greens senator brought a bill like this to parliament in 2018); Liberal Party and Nationals — no, because 18 is when the law gives adult duties, and voting should match those duties; Australian Labor Party — members disagree, some support the change and some do not.

Figure 4. Where the parties stand. These are summaries of party statements and of debates in parliament — not exact words. (Sources: Australian Parliament House records (2018 bill); party statements. Retrieved 26 August 2026.)

When you report a position, report it **fair and strong** — the way its own supporters would say it. Never make a position sound weaker than it really is.

Reporting a position: fair and strong, not weak

A fair report shows each side the way its own supporters would say it

Fair and strong	Weak and unfair
The Liberal Party and the Nationals say the voting age should stay 18. They say 18 is when the law gives adult duties, and voting should match those duties. This is their position, told clearly.	They just don't want young people to have a say. This makes the position sound silly. Nobody who holds it would say it like this.

Rule: show every position at its strongest, even the one you disagree with.

Two panels side by side. The fair-and-strong panel retells the Liberal and Nationals position clearly: the voting age should stay 18, because 18 is when the law gives adult duties, and voting should match those duties. The weak-and-unfair panel says only: they just don't want young people to have a say. A rule box below reads: show every position at its strongest, even the one you disagree with.

Figure 5. Reporting a position: fair and strong, not weak.

Worked examples

Worked example 1 — with help

A pamphlet explains one issue to a reader. Read the model pamphlet in Figure 7, then use the table to see how each part does its job.

The parts of an issues pamphlet

A pamphlet is a small, folded sheet that tells people about one issue

1. Title A short hook that names the issue.	2. The issue One or two clear sentences: what is the issue, and why does it matter?
3. Key facts What we know, checked and true — with the source of each fact.	4. Different positions What each party or group says — fair and strong, even the side you disagree with.
5. Questions to think about Help the reader weigh the positions and think for themselves.	6. Sources A short list of where the ideas and facts came from.

A pamphlet explains an issue. It does not have to tell the reader what to think.

Six numbered cards showing the parts of an issues pamphlet: 1 title (a short hook that names the issue); 2 the issue (one or two clear sentences); 3 key facts (checked and true, with the source of each fact); 4 different positions (what each party or group says, fair and strong, even the side you disagree with); 5 questions to think about (help the reader weigh the positions); 6 sources (a short list of where the ideas and facts came from).

Figure 6. The parts of an issues pamphlet.

Model pamphlet — made from the sources in this section

Notice how each part does its job, and how every fact names where it came from

Should 16-year-olds vote? What the parties say

THE ISSUE

In Australia, you must be 18 to vote in federal elections (s 93). Some people want to change that to 16. In 2018, a Greens senator brought a bill to parliament to lower the voting age to 16. The bill did not pass, but the issue keeps coming back.

KEY FACTS

- Voting is a duty: everyone on the electoral roll must vote, or pay \$20 (s 245).
- You can enrol at 16, and your enrolment starts when you turn 18 (AEC, VEC).
- Austria: people vote from 16 (since 2007). Brazil: 16- and 17-year-olds can choose to vote (since 1988).

WHAT THE PARTIES SAY

Australian Greens — YES. They say 16-year-olds who work and pay tax should have a voice in the laws they live under.

Liberal Party and Nationals — NO, keep it at 18. They say 18 is when the law gives adult duties, and voting should match those duties.

Australian Labor Party — members disagree. Some support the change, and some do not.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

Which reasons do you find strongest — and why? What would you want to know before you made up your mind?

A model pamphlet titled “Should 16-year-olds vote? What the parties say”. The issue part says the rule is 18 (section 93), some people want 16, and a 2018 bill did not pass. The key facts part lists three facts, each with its source: voting is a duty (section 245); you can enrol at 16 (AEC and VEC); Austria and Brazil let 16-year-olds vote. The positions part retells the Greens (yes), the Liberal Party and Nationals (no), and the Labor Party (members disagree), each in strong form. The questions part asks the reader which reasons are strongest.

Figure 7. A model pamphlet, made from the sources in this section.

Pamphlet part	What the model does	Where it comes from
1. Title	Names the issue and hooks the reader: “Should 16-year-olds vote?”	—
2. The issue	Two clear sentences: the rule is 18, some want 16, a 2018 bill did not	The Act (s 93); Parliament House records

Pamphlet part	What the model does	Where it comes from
3. Key facts	Three checked facts, each with its source named .	s 245; AEC and VEC; Austria and Brazil
4. Different positions	Greens yes; Liberal and Nationals no; Labor members disagree — each told in its strong form.	Party statements; Parliament House records
5. Questions	Asks the reader to weigh the reasons and think for themselves.	—
6. Sources	A short list of where the ideas and facts came from.	The four sources in this section

Because every fact names its source and every position is told in its strong form, the pamphlet explains the issue without telling the reader what to think. That is task E01: a pamphlet describing where the political parties stand on a proposed law.

Worked example 2 — with help

A leadership speech explains why **you** should be chosen, using democratic values and active citizenship (→ 1A, 1B, 2D, 4B). Figure 8 shows how each value can show up in a speech.

Democratic values can show up in your speech

From Sections 1A and 1B — now used in your own words

Democratic value	How it can show up in your speech
Freedom of speech	You say your ideas out loud, and your classmates can ask you questions.
Free and fair elections	You ask for a secret class vote where every vote counts the same.
Participation	You ask every student to take part — voting, asking, and putting up ideas.
Representation	You promise to listen to the whole class, not just your friends.
Active citizenship	You offer to do real jobs for the class, not just wear a badge.

When your speech uses a value, say which one — it gives your reasons more weight.

A table linking five democratic values to how they can show up in a leadership speech: freedom of speech (you say your ideas out loud, and classmates can ask you questions); free and fair elections (you ask for a secret class vote where every vote counts the same); participation (you ask every student to take part); representation (you promise to listen to the whole class, not just your friends); active citizenship (you offer to do real jobs for the class, not just wear a badge).

Figure 8. Democratic values can show up in your speech.

Now read Alex’s model speech in Figure 10 and match each part to the value it draws on.

Plan your leadership speech in five steps

A speech for a class or school leader job — like class captain

Plan your leadership speech in five steps	
1. Greet and say who you are	Keep it strong about one minute long speak clearly look at your audience give reasons, not just wishes
“Good morning. My name is ... and I am standing for class captain.”	
2. Say why you care	
One true sentence about your class or school.	
3. Give your reasons — link each one to a value	
“I believe in fairness, so I will ...” (two or three reasons is plenty)	
4. Say what you will do if you are elected	
Two clear promises you can actually keep.	
5. Close	
“Vote for the reasons you think are strongest. Thank you!”	

Five step cards for planning a leadership speech: 1 greet and say who you are; 2 say why you care; 3 give your reasons and link each one to a value; 4 say what you will do if you are elected; 5 close. A side panel says keep it strong: about one minute long, speak clearly, look at your audience, give reasons not just wishes.

Figure 9. Plan your leadership speech in five steps.

Model speech — class captain election (with notes)

Every part of the speech is doing a job. The notes say which one.

Alex's speech

Good morning, everyone. My name is Alex, and I am standing for class captain.

I care about our class. I want every student to feel that their voice matters.

In our election, everyone gets a fair and secret vote — just like real elections in Australia. That is why I will keep my promises to all of you, not just my friends.

If you elect me, I will listen to your ideas at our weekly class meeting. I will speak up for our class at school meetings, and then report back to you, so you know what happened.

Being a leader is not about being the boss. It is about helping us work together — that is active citizenship in our own class.

Vote for the person whose reasons you think are strongest. I hope that is me. Thank you.

Say who you are

Say why you care

Link a fair election to a promise (fairness)

What you will do: listen, speak up, report back (representation)

Say what leadership means to you (active citizenship)

Close — and let the voters decide

A model one-minute speech for class captain by Alex on a paper panel, with six notes naming the job of each part: say who you are; say why you care; link a fair and secret vote to a promise (fairness); say what you will do — listen, speak up, report back (representation); say what leadership means to you (active citizenship); close and let the voters decide.

Figure 10. A model speech, with notes.

Part of the speech	What Alex says	The value it draws on
Greet	“My name is Alex, and I am standing for class captain.”	—
Why I care	“I want every student to feel that their voice matters.”	Participation — every voice
Fair vote	“Everyone gets a fair and secret vote — just like real elections in Australia.”	Free and fair elections (→ 1A)
Promises	Listen at the class meeting, speak up at school meetings, report back.	Representation (→ 1B)
Leadership	“Helping us work together — that is active citizenship in our own class.”	Active citizenship (→ 2D, 4B)
Close	“Vote for the person whose reasons	Fairness

you think are strongest.”

Alex gives reasons, not just wishes, and names the values behind them. That is task E02: a speech on why you should be chosen as a leader, using democratic values and active citizenship.

Before you hand in any pamphlet or speech, use the checklist.

Before you hand it in: the 4C checklist

- ☐ 1. I said what the issue is, in a short clear way.
- ☐ 2. My facts are right, and I know where each one came from.
- ☐ 3. I named my sources.
- ☐ 4. I showed each perspective in a fair and strong way.
- ☐ 5. I gave reasons, not just feelings.
- ☐ 6. I made any hard words clear.

Tick every box. If one is not true yet, fix it before you share.

A six-item checklist to tick before you hand in: 1 I said what the issue is, in a short clear way; 2 my facts are right, and I know where each one came from; 3 I named my sources; 4 I showed each perspective in a fair and strong way; 5 I gave reasons, not just feelings; 6 I made any hard words clear.

Figure 11. Before you hand it in: the 4C checklist.

Practice questions

With help

- Q1.** In Figure 1, what two checks do you make between collecting ideas and writing your explanation?
- Q2.** Which federal law says you must be 18 to vote in federal elections, and which section of that law is it in?
- Q3.** Name the party that says **yes** to changing the voting age to 16, and the two parties that say **no** (Figure 4).
- Q4.** True or false, then correct the false one: a fair report makes the side you disagree with sound silly.
- Q5.** In the model pamphlet (Figure 7), which key fact comes from the AEC and VEC?
- Q6.** Which democratic value is Alex drawing on when promising to listen to the whole class, not just friends (Figure 10)?

On your own

Q7. Using Figure 2, write the “the issue” part of a pamphlet in **two** sentences of your own.

Q8. Pick the position you disagree with in Figure 4. Report it in its strong form, the way its own supporters would say it (Figure 5).

Q9. Write **two** promises for your own leadership speech, and name the democratic value each one draws on (Figures 8 and 9).

Q10. Explain why an explanation built from two or more sources is stronger than one built from a single source (Figure 1).

Source task

Look at the four sources in the picture. The sources **are** the task: use them to build your own pamphlet and speech, the two final making tasks of this section.

Source task: four sources about the voting age

Use these sources to build your own pamphlet and speech

Source 1 — real words from the law <i>“It shall be the duty of every elector to vote at each election.”</i> — Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, section 245(1) Plain words: everyone on the electoral roll must vote. An elector is a person who is on the roll.	Source 2 — position card: YES The Australian Greens want the voting age to be 16. They say: if you are old enough to work and pay tax, you are old enough to vote.
Source 3 — position card: NO The Liberal Party and the Nationals say the voting age should stay 18. They say: voting is a big duty, and 18 is when the law gives adult duties.	Source 4 — facts card You must be 18 to vote in federal elections (s 93). If you do not vote without a good reason, you may have to pay \$20 (s 245). You can enrol at 16, and your enrolment starts when you turn 18. — AEC and VEC

Sources 2 and 3 are summaries in plain words, not exact quotes. Sources: Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918; Australian Parliament House records; party statements; AEC and VEC enrolment rules. Retrieved 26 August 2026.

Four source cards about the voting age. Source 1 is a document panel with the exact words of section 245(1) of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 — “It shall be the duty of every elector to vote at each election” — with a plain-words gloss: everyone on the electoral roll must vote, and an elector is a person on the roll. Source 2 is the Greens position card: yes, the voting age should be 16, because if you are old enough to work and pay tax, you are old enough to vote. Source 3 is the Liberal and Nationals position card: no, the voting age should stay 18, because 18 is when the law gives adult duties. Source 4 is a facts card: you must be 18 to vote in federal elections (section 93), you may have to pay \$20 if you do not vote without a good reason (section 245), and you can enrol at 16 (AEC and VEC).

Sources 2 and 3 are retold in plain words, not exact words. Sources: Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918; Australian Parliament House records; party statements; AEC and VEC enrolment rules. Retrieved 26 August 2026.

S1. Source 1 gives the law's exact words. In your own words, what must every elector do?

S2. Sort the four sources: which one is a law, which two are positions, and which one is a facts card? How can you tell a position from a fact?

S3. Using all four sources, create your own one-page pamphlet on the voting age, with the six parts from Figure 6. Check it against Figure 11 before you share it. *(This is task E01.)*

S4. Now stand for class captain. Present a one-minute speech saying why you should be elected, drawing on at least **two** democratic values and on active citizenship. Check it against Figure 11 before you present. *(This is task E02.)*

Answers

Q1. Check the facts: is it true? and where is it from? **Q2.** The Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918, section 93. **Q3.** Yes: the Australian Greens. No: the Liberal Party and the Nationals. **Q4.** False — a fair report shows the side you disagree with at its strongest. **Q5.** You can enrol at 16, and your enrolment starts when you turn 18. **Q6.** Representation. **Q7.** Sample: “In Australia you must be 18 to vote in federal elections. Some people want to change that to 16, and a bill to do so came to parliament in 2018.” **Q8.** Sample (the no position): “The Liberal Party and the Nationals say the voting age should stay 18. They say 18 is when the law gives adult duties, and voting should match those duties.” **Q9.** Sample: “I will speak up for our class at school meetings (representation), and I will ask every student for their ideas (participation).” **Q10.** Sample: two or more sources let you check the facts against each other and show the different perspectives, so your explanation misses less. **S1.** Every elector must vote at each election (voting is a duty). **S2.** Source 1 is a law; Sources 2 and 3 are positions (they say what should happen); Source 4 is a facts card. A position says what should happen; a fact says what is true, and can be checked. **S3.** Check against Figures 6 and 11: six parts, facts with sources named, positions fair and strong. **S4.** Check against Figures 8–11: five steps, at least two values named, active citizenship shown.

Answers explained

Q1. Between collecting ideas and explaining, you **check the facts**: is it true? and where is it from? (Figure 1.)

Q2. The rule is in the **Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918**, a federal law, in **section 93**.

Q3. The **Australian Greens** say yes; the **Liberal Party** and the **Nationals** say no (Figure 4). The Labor Party has members on both sides.

Q4. False. The rule is the opposite: show every position at its strongest, even the one you disagree with (Figure 5).

Q5. The fact that **you can enrol at 16**, and your enrolment starts when you turn 18, comes from the AEC and VEC.

Q6. Representation — listening to the whole class, not just your friends.

Q7. A good two-sentence issue names the rule and the proposed change, e.g. “In Australia you must be 18 to vote in federal elections (s 93). Some people want to change that to 16, and a bill to do so came to parliament in 2018.”

Q8. A strong answer retells the chosen position the way its own supporters would, e.g. for the no side: “18 is when the law gives adult duties, and voting should match those duties.” It does not make the position sound silly.

Q9. A strong answer gives two promises that can actually be kept, each linked to a value from Figure 8, e.g. representation (speak up for the class, report back) and participation (ask every student for their ideas).

Q10. A full answer says that different sources let you **check the facts** against each other and show the **different perspectives**, so your explanation is stronger than one source alone (Figure 1).

S1. The source says every elector (a person on the electoral roll) **must vote** at each election — in Australia, voting is a duty.

S2. Source 1 is a **law** (it is the Act’s exact words). Sources 2 and 3 are **positions** — they say what should happen. Source 4 is a **facts card** — it says what is true, and each fact can be checked. That is how you tell a position from a fact.

S3. Your pamphlet should have the six parts from Figure 6, name the source of each fact, and report each party’s position in its strong form (Figures 4 and 5). The checklist (Figure 11) is the mark scheme.

S4. Your speech should follow the five steps (Figure 9), draw on at least two democratic values (Figure 8), and show active citizenship — real jobs, not just a badge (→ 2D, 4B).