

# Mathematics Level 7

## Chapter 5 — Skills: participating and communicating

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# Making decisions together: consensus, voting methods and mock parliaments

Curriculum — VC2HC8S06 · draws on .E01, .E02 and .E03

## Theory

A group of 24 students can decide one question in several ways — and the way it chooses can change the answer it gets. This section is mostly doing: you will run the same set of votes through different methods, build a consensus, sit in a mock parliament, and then use what you notice on a real, current issue. Section 1A looked at the voting systems Australia actually uses; here you run them yourself at classroom scale.

**Part 1 — Four ways a group can decide.** Figure 1 compares the four methods this section uses. A **method of decision-making** is simply the rule a group agrees on *before* it decides: who may vote, what the ballot looks like, and what count makes a winner.

### Four ways a group can decide

Each method answers the same question — what do we decide? — in a different way.

| Method                           | How the group decides                                                                                                                  | Who wins                                                         | Strengths and costs                                                                           |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Consensus</b>                 | The group talks until every member can accept one proposal.                                                                            | The proposal no one blocks — the one everyone will support.      | Good: the whole group backs the result.<br>Cost: slow, and one strong concern can hold it up. |
| <b>Majority vote (yes or no)</b> | Members vote yes or no on one proposal. The side with more than half the votes wins.                                                   | The side with more than half.                                    | Good: fast and clear.<br>Cost: the losing side gets no say in the result.                     |
| <b>First-past-the-post</b>       | Each voter marks one option only. The option with the most votes wins.                                                                 | The option with the most votes — even if that is less than half. | Good: the simplest ballot.<br>Cost: the winner can be most voters' second choice.             |
| <b>Preferential voting</b>       | Voters number all options in order of preference. The lowest option drops out and its votes move, until one option has more than half. | The option that ends with more than half the votes.              | Good: the winner has wide support.<br>Cost: the ballot and the count take longer.             |

In this section you will use all four — and compare the results they give to the same group of voters.

*A four-row table comparing four decision methods — consensus, majority vote (yes or no), first-past-the-post and preferential voting — with how the group decides, who wins, and the strengths and costs of each*

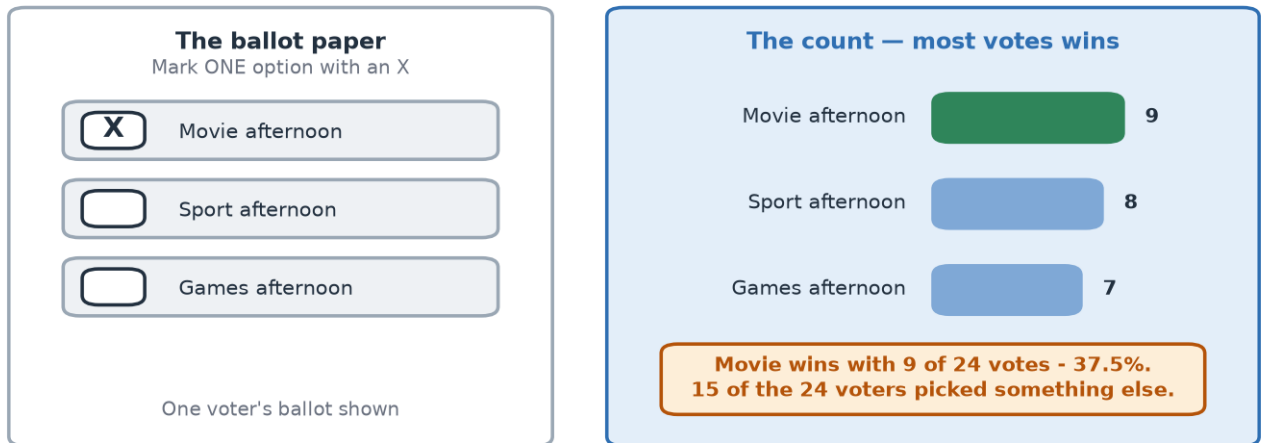
Notice the trade in every row: speed against agreement, simplicity against wide support. Choosing the method is itself a decision, and it is one worth arguing about before the vote, not after.

**Part 2 — Model vote 1: the same votes counted two ways.** The class has 24 voters and one question: which end-of-term activity — a movie afternoon, a sport afternoon or a games afternoon? Run the two counts below with real ballots in class if you can.

**Count A — first-past-the-post.** **First-past-the-post** is the method in Figure 2: each voter marks one option only, and the option with the most votes wins — even if that is less than half.

## Model vote 1 — first-past-the-post

A class of 24 votes for one end-of-term activity. Each voter marks one option only.



The winner needed only ONE MORE vote than any other option - not more than half the class.

*A model first-past-the-post ballot paper with one option marked, beside a tally of 24 votes in which Movie afternoon wins with 9 votes, 37.5 per cent, while 15 voters picked something else*

**Count B — preferential voting.** Now count the same question the preferential way. **Preferential voting** is the method in Figures 3 and 4: every voter numbers **all** the options in order, and those numbers are the voter's **preferences** — their ranked choices, first pick to last. If no option has more than half of the first-preference votes, the lowest option drops out and its votes move to each voter's next preference, until one option has more than half. This is the method used for the Australian House of Representatives (Section 1A).

## How a preferential ballot works

Model vote 1, same class. This time every voter numbers ALL options in order of preference.

**The ballot paper**  
Number EVERY box: 1, 2, 3 ...

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 3 | Movie afternoon |
| 2 | Sport afternoon |
| 1 | Games afternoon |

One voter's ballot: Games first, Sport second, Movie third

**What the numbers mean**

1 is the voter's FIRST preference - their top pick.

The other numbers are back-up choices, in order.

If no option gets more than half of the 1 votes, the option with the fewest drops out.

Its votes move to each voter's next preference - their highest number still in the count.

This repeats until one option has more than half the votes.

This is how Australians vote in House of Representatives elections - Section 1A looks at the real system.

*A model preferential ballot paper numbered 1, 2, 3 for Games, Sport and Movie, beside the rules of the preferential count: number every box, the lowest option drops out, and its votes move to next preferences until one option has more than half*

### Model vote 1 — the preferential count

The same 24 ballots, counted the preferential way. To win, an option needs more than half: more than 12.

**Step 1 — count the first preferences**

Movie 9 · Sport 8 · Games 7.

No option has more than 12, so no one has won yet.

↓

**Step 2 — the lowest option drops out**

Games has the fewest votes (7), so Games drops out of the count.

↓

**Step 3 — its votes move to next preferences**

Read the number 2 on each Games ballot: 6 of them name Sport, 1 names Movie.

Those votes move.

↓

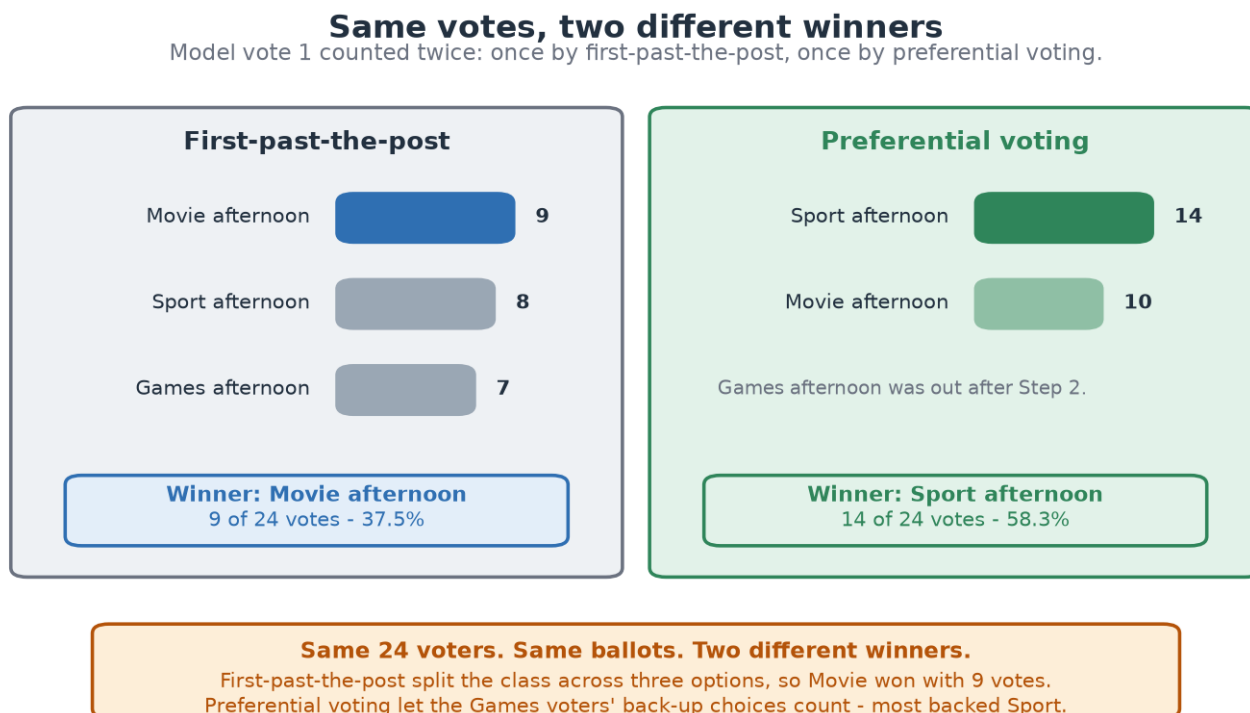
**Step 4 — check for more than half again**

Sport now has  $8 + 6 = 14$  votes. Movie has  $9 + 1 = 10$ .

14 is more than half of 24, so Sport wins.

*The preferential count for Model vote 1 in four steps: first preferences Movie 9, Sport 8, Games 7; Games drops out; its votes move 6 to Sport and 1 to Movie; Sport finishes with 14 of 24 and wins*

*The reflection (E01).* Figure 5 puts the two results side by side. Same 24 voters, same ballots — two different winners. Write two or three sentences on whether the two results differ, and why: which voters' back-up choices decided it?



*Side-by-side panels showing Model vote 1 counted twice: first-past-the-post elects Movie afternoon with 9 of 24 votes, while preferential voting elects Sport afternoon with 14 of 24*

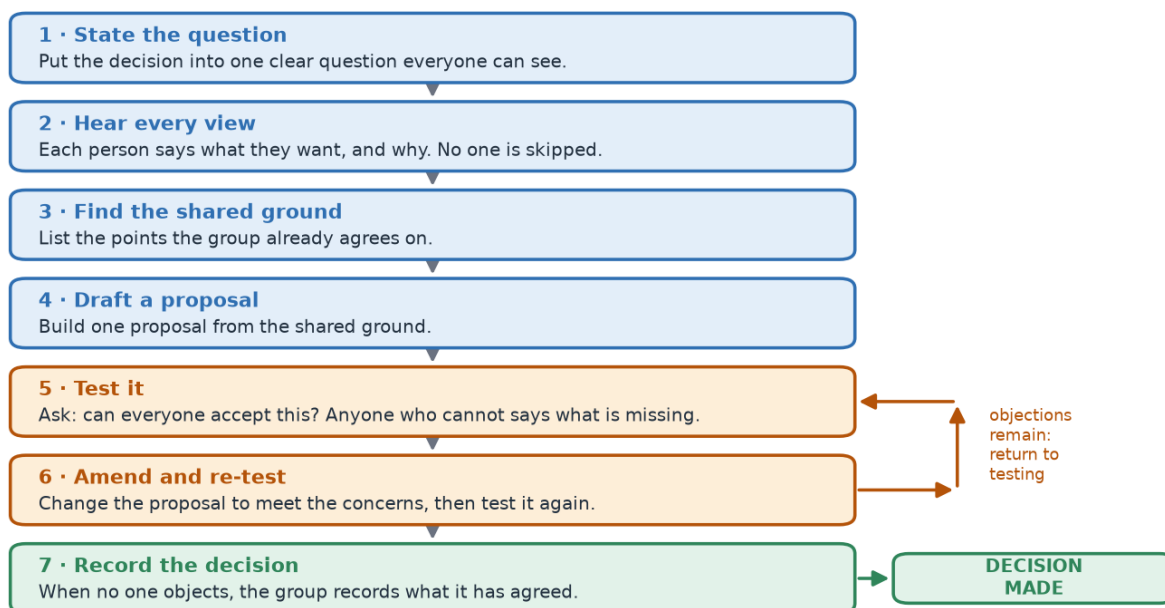
**Part 3 — Consensus.** Voting counts heads; **consensus** builds agreement.

**Defining our terms.** The Victorian Curriculum uses the term *consensus* (in “reaching consensus”) but does not define it. This section therefore treats it as follows, and every question here is answerable on this definition alone: **consensus** is an agreement every member of the group can accept and support — not necessarily anyone’s first choice, but no one blocks it. Other definitions exist (for example, “everyone fully agrees and is happy”) and are not interchangeable with this one.

Figure 6 is the process. The loop between steps 5 and 6 is the heart of it: a concern raised is not a defeat — it is the raw material for a better proposal.

## Building a consensus

Consensus means an agreement EVERY member can accept. It is built step by step - nobody votes until the group is ready.



**Consensus is not 'everyone gets their first choice'. It is an agreement every member can accept and support. Its cost is time and patience; its payoff is a decision the whole group will carry out.**

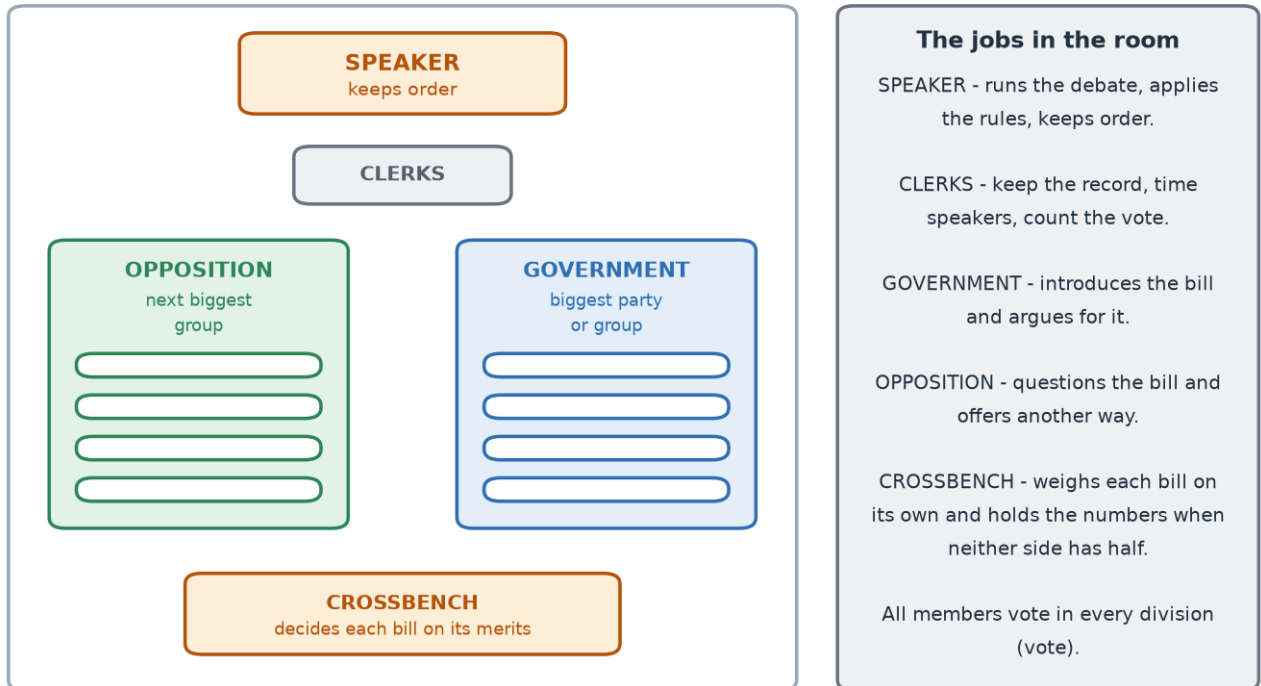
*A seven-step flow chart for building a consensus: state the question, hear every view, find the shared ground, draft a proposal, test it, amend and re-test while objections remain, then record the decision*

Try it in class on a small real question (where to run the next excursion, how to spend a class fund). Time it. Then compare: how long did consensus take against a quick yes-or-no vote — and how did the group feel about the two results?

**Part 4 — The mock parliament (E02).** Now scale up. A **mock parliament** is a model of a real parliament run by the class: model, not pretend — the roles and stages copy the real thing so you can feel how a parliament decides. Figure 7 sets out the room and the jobs; Figure 8 sets out the stages a **bill** (a proposed law) moves through before the house votes on it. Key terms, defined as they appear: the **Speaker** runs the debate and keeps order; the **clerks** keep the record and count the vote; the **government** is the biggest group in the room, the **opposition** the next biggest, and the **crossbench** is everyone else, who weighs each bill on its merits; a **division** is a formal vote.

## Setting up the mock parliament

The class becomes a parliament. The room has set seats and set jobs - just like the real Parliament of Victoria.



In a real parliament most members belong to a party, and the party with the most members in the lower house forms the government (Section 1A). In the mock, the class can elect or assign the sides.

*A plan of the mock parliament chamber — Speaker and clerks at the top, government benches right, opposition benches left, crossbench between them — beside a panel listing what each role does*

## How the mock parliament decides: the stages of a bill

A BILL is a proposed law. The mock parliament moves it through the same stages a real parliament uses.

### 1 • First reading

The bill is introduced. The Clerk reads its title; members get a copy.

### 2 • Second reading

The member who brought the bill explains what it does and why it matters.

### 3 • Debate

Other members speak for and against. The Speaker keeps order and gives each side a turn.

### 4 • Amendment

Members may propose changes. The house votes on each change before voting on the bill.

### 5 • The vote

The Clerk puts the question and members vote. More than half of those voting decides.

### 6 • Assent

Passed bills are signed into rules for the class. In a real parliament, the second house repeats the process, then the Governor signs (Section 2C).

*The six stages of a bill in the mock parliament: first reading, second reading, debate, amendment, the vote, and assent, each with a one-line description*

The mock copies the shape of the Parliament of Victoria, whose lower house makes laws the same way (Section 2C follows a real bill through all its stages). The Parliament of Victoria itself runs student programs at Parliament House, including mock-parliament experiences, under its “Teach and Learn” section ([parliament.vic.gov.au](http://parliament.vic.gov.au), viewed 26 August 2026).

**Part 5 — Methods on a real, current issue (E03).** The same thinking applies outside the classroom. A real issue to work on: Victoria banned lightweight single-use plastic shopping bags from 1 November 2019 (Wikipedia, “Plastic bag bans in Australia”, viewed 26 August 2026). Suppose your school now asks its own version — *what should we do about single-use plastics?* Figure 9 lines up the five methods from this section against that question, with when each one fits.

## Picking the right method for the job

A real issue to work on: Victoria banned lightweight single-use plastic shopping bags from 1 November 2019.

**Suppose your school now asks: what should WE do about single-use plastics?**

Five ways the class could decide - and when each one fits.

|                                |                                                                                                                                  |                                                       |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Consensus</b>               | Use it when: The student council plans the school's response and needs every member to carry it out.                             | Everyone backs the plan; takes time.                  |
| <b>Yes-or-no majority vote</b> | Use it when: The class must give a quick, clear answer to one question, e.g. 'Do we support the ban?'                            | Fast and decisive; the losing side gets nothing.      |
| <b>First-past-the-post</b>     | Use it when: Three or more separate ideas are on offer and the group accepts the most-voted idea, even on a minority.            | Simple; the winner may be most voters' second choice. |
| <b>Preferential vote</b>       | Use it when: Three or more options compete (ban, reusable scheme, education drive) and the class wants a majority-backed winner. | Broad support; longer ballot and count.               |
| <b>Mock parliament</b>         | Use it when: The class wants to trial a full proposed rule - debate it, amend it and vote on it as a 'bill'.                     | Rich practice of real process; needs roles and time.  |

**The method is itself a decision. A group that picks its method carefully gets a result more people will accept.**

Source for the issue: Victoria banned lightweight single-use plastic shopping bags from 1 November 2019  
(Wikipedia, 'Plastic bag bans in Australia', viewed 26 August 2026).

*A table matching five decision methods — consensus, yes-or-no majority vote, first-past-the-post, preferential vote and mock parliament — to when a class would use each one on the single-use plastics question, with a strength and a cost for each*

Worked Example 1 shows that changing the method can change the winner in a real national election; Worked Example 2 shows it happening in a real Victorian one, and Source A gives you the real numbers to read.

### Worked examples

#### Example 1 — Two by-elections, two methods: Australia, 1918 (scaffolded)

*A by-election is a single-seat election held between general elections, often after a member dies. In 1918 the Commonwealth Parliament changed its voting method between two of them.*

| Working                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Comment                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. The Swan by-election (Western Australia) was held on 26 October 1918, after the death of the long-serving member Sir John Forrest. It was counted by first-past-the-post.                              | First-past-the-post: one mark per voter; most votes wins, even on less than half.                                                                                                     |
| 2. Edwin Corboy (Labor) won with 6,540 votes — 34.4% of first preferences. Basil Murray (Country) had 5,975 (31.4%), William Hedges (Nationalist) 5,635 (29.6%), William Watson (Independent) 884 (4.6%). | Corboy had the most votes, but about two voters in three had picked someone else. The two non-Labor candidates between them out-pollled the winner, but their similar vote was split. |
| 3. On 21 November 1918 — between the two polls — the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Commonwealth) received assent, replacing first-past-the-post with preferential voting for federal elections.        | An <b>assent</b> is the final signing that makes a bill an Act of Parliament. The method itself was changed by law.                                                                   |
| 4. The Corangamite by-election (Victoria) on 14                                                                                                                                                           | Under first-past-the-post, Scullin would have won on the                                                                                                                              |

December 1918 — held after the death of the member Chester Manifold — was the first federal poll counted the new way. First preferences: James Scullin (Labor) 10,630 (42.5%); William Gibson (Victorian Farmers) 6,604 (26.4%); George Knox (Nationalist) 5,737 (22.9%); two others 2,069 (8.3%).

5. The lower candidates dropped out and their preferences moved. In the final two-candidate count Gibson beat Scullin 14,096 (56.3%) to 10,944 (43.7%). Gibson became the first Country party member of the Commonwealth Parliament.

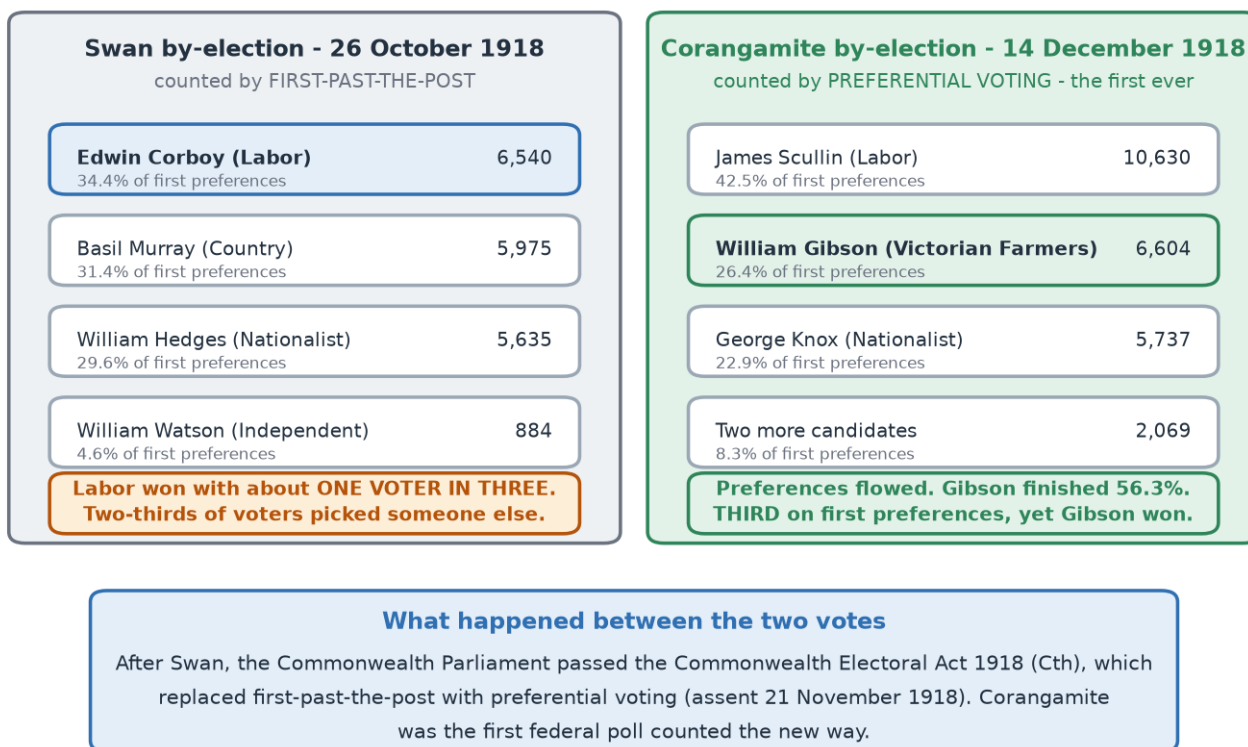
spot with the most votes. Preferential voting kept counting.

The candidate third on first preferences won, because the Nationalist voters' back-up choices mostly went to Gibson. Different method, different winner — see Figure 10.

(Sources: Wikipedia, “1918 Swan by-election”, “1918 Corangamite by-election” and “Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918” — all viewed 26 August 2026.)

### When the method changed the result: Australia, 1918

Two real by-elections for the Commonwealth Parliament, seven weeks apart, counted under two different methods.



Sources: Wikipedia, '1918 Swan by-election' and '1918 Corangamite by-election'; 'Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918' - all viewed 26 August 2026.

*Two panels comparing the real 1918 by-elections: Swan, counted by first-past-the-post, won by Labor with 34.4 per cent of first preferences; and Corangamite, the first preferential count, won by the Victorian Farmers candidate after preferences though he started third*

#### Example 2 — Third place wins: Prahran, Victorian state election, 2014 (scaffolded)

*The district of Prahran was counted under Victoria's preferential system on 29 November 2014.*

1. First preferences: Clem Newton-Brown (Liberal) 16,582 (44.8%); Neil Pharaoh (Labor) 9,586 (25.9%); Sam Hibbins (Greens) 9,160 (24.8%); five more candidates 1,675 (4.6%).

The Liberal candidate led. The Greens candidate started third, 426 votes behind Labor.

| Working                                                                                                                                                          | Comment                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2. The smaller candidates dropped out first. As their preferences moved, the Greens candidate stayed in the count ahead of the Labor candidate by only 31 votes. | Preferences can be that close: a 31-vote gap decided which of Labor and Greens faced the Liberal in the final count.          |
| 3. Labor dropped out, and most of its preferences went to the Greens.                                                                                            | Back-up choices again: Labor voters' second rankings decided the seat.                                                        |
| 4. Final two-candidate count: Sam Hibbins (Greens) 18,640 (50.4%); Clem Newton-Brown (Liberal) 18,363 (49.6%). Margin: 277 votes.                                | The winner needed more than half — and got it, narrowly, after preferences.                                                   |
| 5. The seat moved from the Liberal Party to the Greens, although the Greens candidate had started third.                                                         | Same pattern as Model vote 1 and as Corangamite in 1918: where back-up choices flow can matter more than who starts in front. |

(Sources: ABC News, 2014 Victorian election guide, district of Prahran; the 31-vote step is reported in Wikipedia, “Sam Hibbins” — both viewed 26 August 2026.)

## Practice questions

### Scaffolded

**Q1.** Look at Figure 1. Match each situation to the method it describes: (a) “We talked for an hour until no one objected to the plan.” (b) “Each of us marked one name; the name with the most marks won, though it had less than half.” (c) “We voted yes or no; 14 to 11 carried it.” (d) “We numbered every option, and the lowest kept dropping out until one had more than half.”

**Q2.** Using Figure 2: (a) How many votes did Movie afternoon win with, and what share of the 24 is that? (b) How many of the 24 voters picked something else? (c) In one sentence, say what first-past-the-post required of the winner.

**Q3.** Using Figure 4: (a) Which option dropped out first, and why? (b) Where did its votes go? (c) Show the final count and explain why it ended the count.

**Q4.** Using Figure 5: was the result different between the two methods? Explain in two or three sentences *why*, naming whose back-up choices decided the preferential result.

**Q5.** Look at the loop in Figure 6. (a) What happens at step 6 if a member still objects? (b) On this section’s definition, does consensus require everyone to get their first choice? What does it require instead?

**Q6.** Using Figure 7: (a) Who keeps order in the mock parliament, and who counts the vote? (b) What is the crossbench, and what is its job? (c) Which side introduces a bill, and which side questions it?

### Un scaffolded

**Q7.** Model vote 2: a class of 21 votes on the same three options. First preferences: Movie 8, Sport 7, Games 6. When Games drops out, 4 of its ballots name Movie as their next preference and 2 name Sport. (a) Run the first-past-the-post count and name the winner. (b) Run the preferential count to its end and name the winner. (c) This time the two methods gave the *same* winner. Explain why the result differed in Model vote 1 but not here.

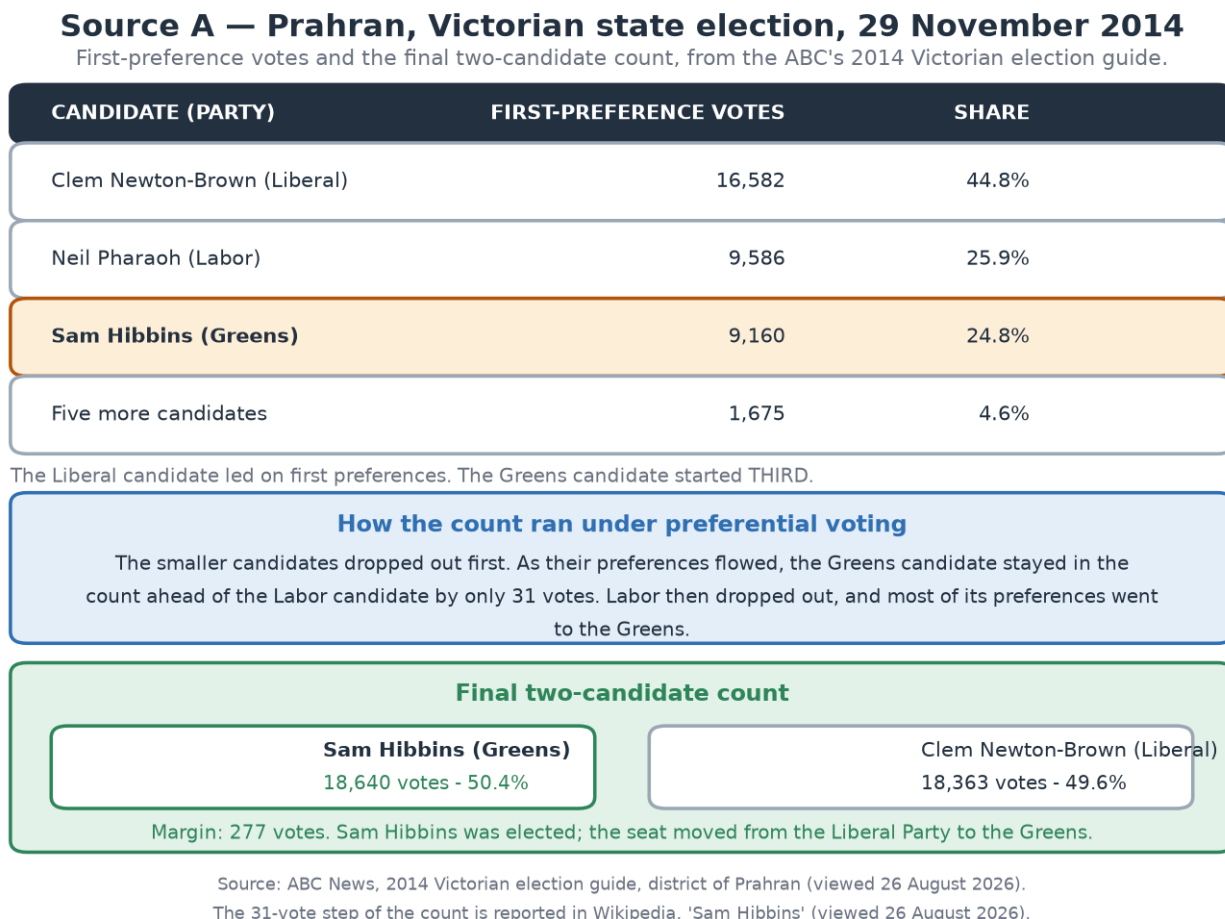
**Q8.** Two students define consensus in different ways. Ana: “Consensus means everyone is happy with the result.” Ben: “Consensus means no one blocks the result, even if it was not their first choice.” (a) Give the strongest case you can for Ana’s reading. (b) Give the strongest case you can for Ben’s reading. (c) Which reading does Figure 6 use, and which do you think is more workable for a class of 25? Marks are for the reasoning, not the side you take.

**Q9.** A mock parliament has 27 members: government 12, opposition 10, crossbench 5. A bill passes only if more than half of the members voting support it, and all 27 vote. (a) What is the smallest number of votes that passes a bill? (b) Can the government pass the bill alone? Show the numbers. (c) Explain in one or two sentences why the crossbench holds the balance — and name one real parliament idea from Section 1A this copies.

**Q10.** Your school asks: *what should we do about single-use plastics?* Choose **one** method from Figure 9 for the class to use. Explain how it would resolve the issue step by step, and give one strength and one cost of your choice for this particular question.

## Source task — reading Source A

Source A shows the real result in Prahran at the Victorian state election of 29 November 2014, as published in the ABC's election guide. Read it, then answer the questions.



*Source A: the Prahran result at the 2014 Victorian state election — first-preference votes for each candidate, how the preferential count ran, and the final two-candidate count won by the Greens candidate by 277 votes*

**S1.** According to Source A: (a) Who led on first preferences, with how many votes and what share? (b) Where did the Greens candidate start, with how many votes?

**S2.** Using the middle panel of Source A, describe in two or three sentences what the preferential count did after the first-preference tally.

**S3.** Imagine Prahran had been counted by first-past-the-post instead. (a) Who would have won? (b) Explain why that would have been a minority win.

**S4.** A caller says: “The candidate who started third should never have won — most people did not put the Greens first.” (a) Give the strongest case you can for the caller. (b) Give the strongest case you can against the caller, using how preferential voting works. (c) Which case do you find stronger, and why? Marks are for the reasoning, not the side you take.

**S5.** Connect Source A to Model vote 1 (Figure 5): name one way the two counts are alike and one way they differ.

## Answers

**Q1.** (a) Consensus. (b) First-past-the-post. (c) Majority vote (yes or no). (d) Preferential voting. **Q2.** (a) 9 votes; 37.5%. (b) 15. (c) Only one more vote than any other option — not more than half. **Q3.** (a) Games, because it had the fewest votes (7). (b) 6 to Sport, 1 to Movie. (c) Sport 14, Movie 10; 14 is more than half of 24, so the count ends. **Q4.** Yes — Movie won under first-past-the-post, Sport under preferential. First-past-the-post counted only first choices; preferential voting let the Games voters' back-up choices count, and most of them backed Sport. **Q5.** (a) The proposal is amended and tested again — the group returns to step 5. (b) No; it requires an agreement every member can accept and support, with no one blocking it. **Q6.** (a) The Speaker keeps order; the clerks count the vote (and keep the record). (b) The members who are not government or opposition; they weigh each bill on its merits. (c) The government introduces it; the opposition questions it. **Q7.** See full solution. **Q8.** See full solution. **Q9.** See full solution. **Q10.** See full solution. **S1.** (a) Clem Newton-Brown (Liberal), 16,582 votes, 44.8%. (b) Third, with 9,160 votes (24.8%). **S2.** See full solution. **S3.** (a) Clem Newton-Brown (Liberal). (b) See full solution. **S4.** See full solution. **S5.** See full solution.

## Full solutions

**Q7.** Step 1 — First-past-the-post: Movie 8, Sport 7, Games 6; most votes wins, so Movie wins with 8 of 21. Step 2 — Preferential: no option has more than half (more than 10.5), so Games (6) drops out; its votes move 4 to Movie and 2 to Sport, giving Movie  $8 + 4 = 12$  and Sport  $7 + 2 = 9$ . Step 3 — 12 is more than half of 21, so Movie wins. Step 4 — Why the same winner here but not in Model vote 1: in Model vote 1 the option that led on first preferences (Movie) was the one most of the dropped-out voters liked *least*, so the back-up choices overturned it. In Model vote 2 the first-preference leader also collected the most back-up choices, so both methods agreed. The method matters most when the front-runner is many voters' last choice.

**Q8.** Step 1 — For Ana: if consensus only means “no one blocks”, a quiet member who just gives in is counted as agreeing; Ana's reading protects every voice and gives the group a result all will throw themselves behind. Step 2 — For Ben: Ana's reading lets one unhappy member veto any decision forever, so the group may never decide at all; Ben's reading still requires hearing and meeting every concern (steps 2, 5 and 6 of Figure 6), but it lets the group act once no one is left blocking. Step 3 — Figure 6 uses Ben's reading: it ends when “no one objects”, not when everyone is delighted. A strong answer on workability weighs the two costs — a decision nobody carries out against a group that never decides — and says which risk is worse for a class of 25, with reasons.

**Q9.** Step 1 — More than half of 27 is 14 or more (half is 13.5, so 13 is not enough). Step 2 — The government has 12, and  $12 < 14$ , so it cannot pass the bill alone; it needs at least 2 crossbench members (or opposition members) voting with it. Step 3 — The crossbench holds the balance because neither side reaches 14 without at least some of its 5 votes: government  $12 + 5 = 17$  can pass, opposition  $10 + 5 = 15$  can pass, so both sides must persuade it. This copies the real parliament's balance of power, where a government without a majority must win crossbench support bill by bill (Section 1A).

**Q10.** A model answer using a preferential vote. Step 1 — The class lists the options on offer (for example: ban single-use plastics at school, switch to a reusable scheme, run an education campaign first). Step 2 — Every student numbers all options; the lowest drops out and its votes move until one option has more than half. Step 3 — That option is the class's decision, and the result has majority support even if it was not everyone's first pick. Strength: with three or more options, it avoids a winner most students did not want (the Model vote 1 problem). Cost: the ballot and count take longer than a show of hands, and a small class may not feel the method was worth the time. Other methods earn full marks with the same shape: a clear step-by-step use of the method, plus one strength and one cost fitted to *this* question.

**S2.** Step 1 — After the first-preference tally, the smaller candidates dropped out and their preferences moved to the remaining candidates. Step 2 — As they moved, the Greens candidate edged ahead of the Labor candidate by only 31 votes, so Labor dropped out next. Step 3 — Most Labor preferences then went to the Greens, carrying Sam Hibbins past the Liberal candidate in the final two-candidate count.

**S3.** Step 1 — Under first-past-the-post the most first-preference votes wins, so Clem Newton-Brown (Liberal) would have won with 16,582. Step 2 — That is a minority win: 44.8% is less than half, so more than half of the voters (55.2%) had picked someone else — the same shape as Swan in 1918 and as Movie afternoon in Model vote 1.

**S4.** Step 1 — For the caller: first preferences are the only votes where a voter's top choice is recorded; on that count Newton-Brown had nearly 7,500 more votes than Hibbins, and it can look wrong for a candidate most voters did not put first to win. Step 2 — Against the caller: preferential voting asks every voter to rank *all* the candidates, so a voter's second and third choices are also their stated wishes; Hibbins finished with 50.4% — more than half the ballots ranking him above Newton-Brown — which is wider support than the 44.8% first-preference share. Step 3 — A strong answer picks a side by naming what it values more — the purity of first choices, or a winner more than half can accept — and applies it to these numbers.

**S5.** Alike: in both, the back-up choices of the excluded option's supporters decided the winner (the Games voters in Model vote 1; the smaller candidates' and Labor's voters in Prahran), and in both the method produced a winner with more than half at the end. Different: in Model vote 1 the two methods gave *different* winners, while Prahran is a real election (not a model) with thousands of voters and a final margin of only 277 votes — close enough that a few hundred changed back-up choices would have flipped the seat.

## Ways to take part: acting on local, state and national issues

**Curriculum link:** VC2HC8S07. This section draws on VC2HC8S07.E01, VC2HC8S07.E02, VC2HC8S07.E03 and VC2HC8S07.E04.

### Theory

**The big question of this section.** A government announces a policy, or a proposed law is being debated, and it touches an issue you care about. What can you actually **do**? This section builds your toolkit: the methods Australians use to take part in public life, the level of government to aim them at, a way to judge whether they work, and a six-step plan for running a campaign of your own.

**Key term — civic participation.** *Civic participation* is taking part in public life in a way that tries to shape a decision or improve a community — from voting, to starting a petition, to marching in a rally.

**Key term — active citizenship.** An *active citizen* notices issues, forms views, and acts on them using the methods in this section. Section 1D introduced the idea; here you examine it in action on real, current issues.

### 1. Eight methods on one map (VC2HC8S07.E02)

#### Ways to take part — a map

Eight ways people in Australia can take part, and who can use each one

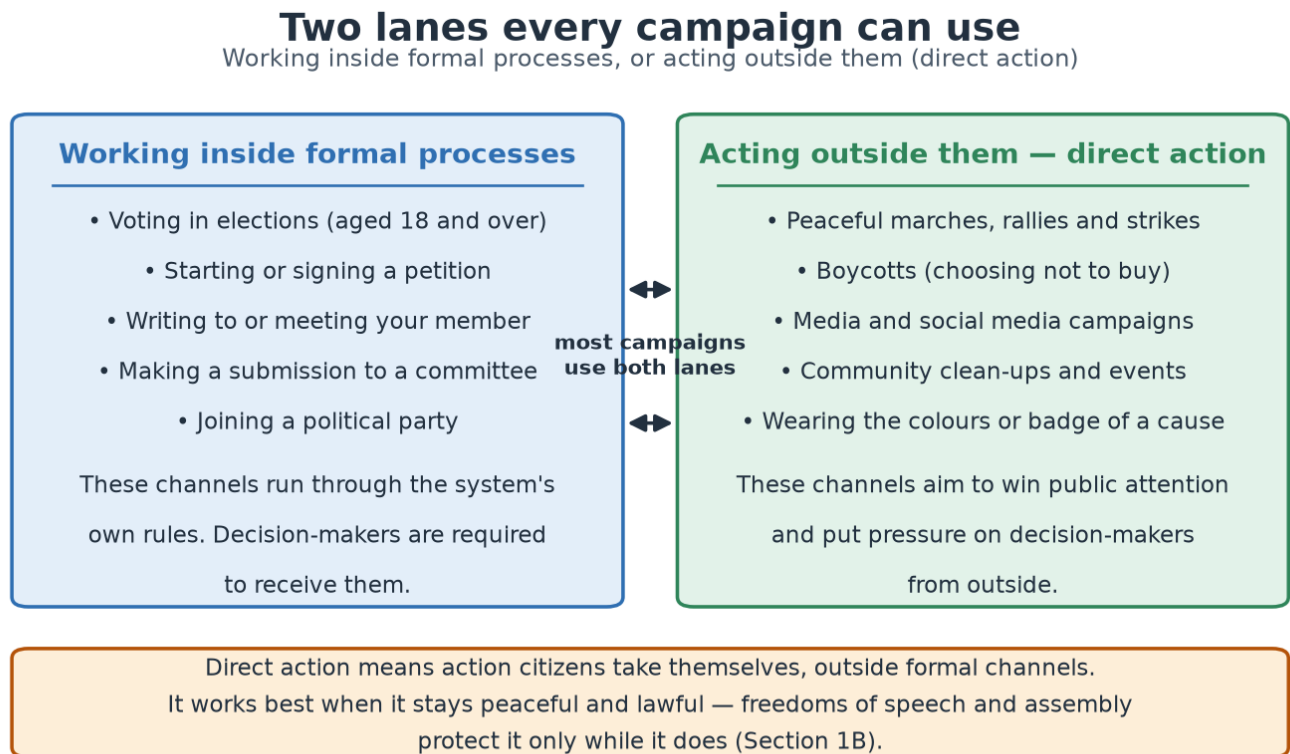
| Method                                | What you do                                                                       | Who can do it                                                 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Vote in elections</b>              | Choose your representatives at local, state and national levels.                  | Voters 18 and over. Enrolment and voting are required by law. |
| <b>Contact your member</b>            | Write to, phone or meet the member who represents your area.                      | Anyone, at any age.                                           |
| <b>Start or sign a petition</b>       | A formal written request to a parliament, signed by many people.                  | Anyone. In Victoria, people under 18 can start one too.       |
| <b>Make a submission</b>              | Send a written argument to a parliamentary committee (see Section 2B).            | Anyone.                                                       |
| <b>Peaceful protest or rally</b>      | Gather in a public place to show support for a view.                              | Anyone. The protest must stay peaceful and lawful.            |
| <b>Boycott</b>                        | Refuse to buy or use a product or service, to press for change.                   | Anyone who spends money.                                      |
| <b>Media or social media campaign</b> | Share a message in words, pictures or video to win public support.                | Anyone.                                                       |
| <b>Join a group</b>                   | Add your voice to a lobby group, community group or club that works on the issue. | Anyone, though each group sets its own membership rules.      |

*A table of eight methods of civic participation, with what you do and who can use each one*

Read the third column carefully. Only one method — voting — has an age limit. Australian citizens can enrol at 16 or 17 so they are ready on their 18th birthday; from 18, enrolment and voting are required by law, and the Australian Electoral Commission can fine a person who does not vote without a good reason (currently \$20). Every other method on the map is open to you **now**, while you are at school.

**Key terms from the map.** A *petition* is a formal written request to a parliament, signed by many people. A *submission* is a written argument sent to a parliamentary committee (the skill built in Section 2B). A *boycott* is refusing to buy or use a product or service to press for change.

## 2. Two lanes, three targets (VC2HC8S07.E02)



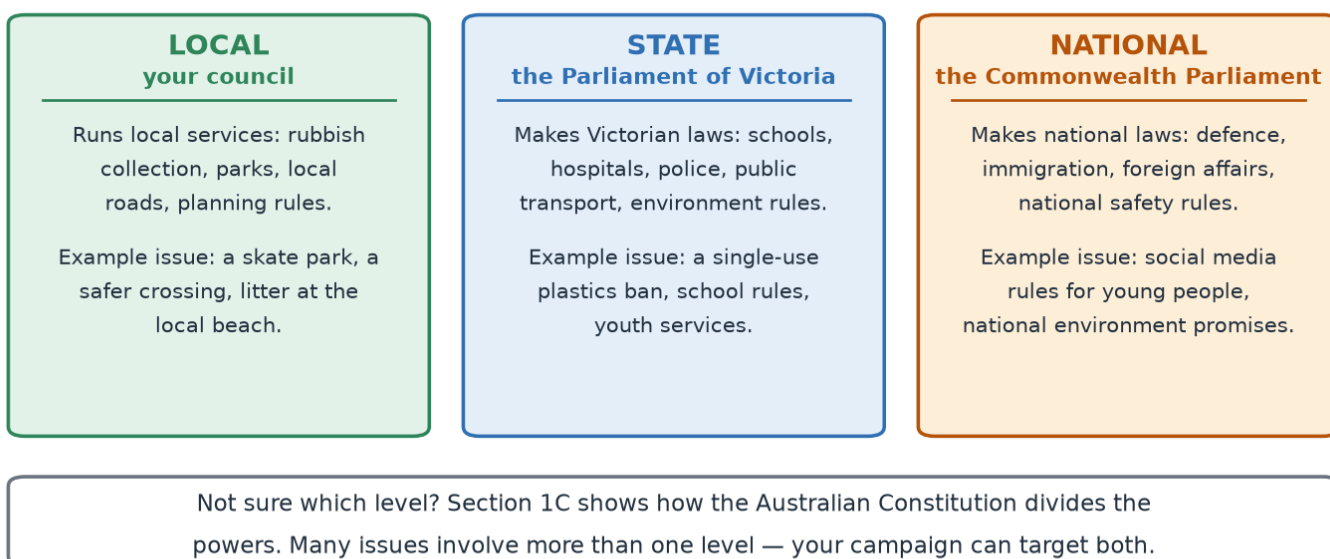
*Two lanes: working inside formal processes (voting, petitions, writing to your member, submissions, joining a party) and acting outside them (marches, boycotts, media campaigns, clean-ups, badges), with a note that most campaigns use both*

When people respond to a government policy or a proposed law, they can work **inside** the formal channels or act **outside** them.

**Key term — direct action.** *Direct action* is action citizens take themselves, outside the formal channels: a march, a boycott, a clean-up. It is protected while it stays peaceful and lawful — the freedoms of speech and assembly from Section 1B protect it only while it does.

## Which target does your issue need?

Three levels of government decide different things — aim at the level with the power



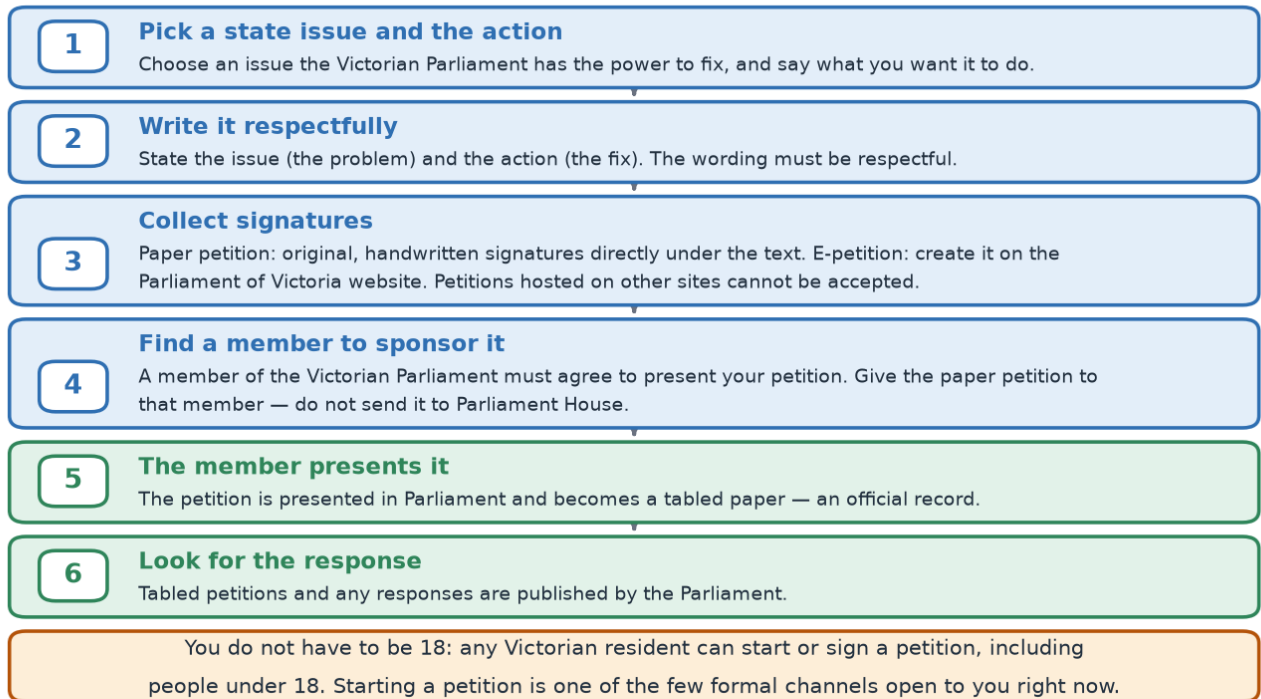
*Three cards for the three levels of government: local council, the Parliament of Victoria, and the Commonwealth Parliament, with what each decides and an example issue*

A campaign aimed at the wrong level wastes its energy: your council cannot change a national law, and the Commonwealth Parliament does not run skate parks. Section 1C shows where the Constitution draws the lines; when in doubt, ask “who has the power to make the change I want?”

### 3. A formal channel open to you now: petitions (VC2HC8S07.E02)

## How a petition to the Parliament of Victoria works

A formal written request, signed by many people — anyone can start one



*Six steps showing how a petition to the Parliament of Victoria works, from picking the issue to the member presenting it*

Two details matter for assessment questions. First, a petition must ask for something the Victorian Parliament has the power to do — a petition about a national law is aimed at the wrong parliament. Second, petitions on commercial websites cannot be presented: only an e-petition created on the Parliament of Victoria's own website, or a paper petition handed to a member, travels the path in the figure.

#### 4. Does it work? Four checks (VC2HC8S07.E03)

### Is it working? Four checks for effectiveness

Frame used in this section: a method is effective to the degree it helps the campaign reach its stated goal



*Four checks for effectiveness: reach, response, results, and limits and costs, each with the evidence to look for*

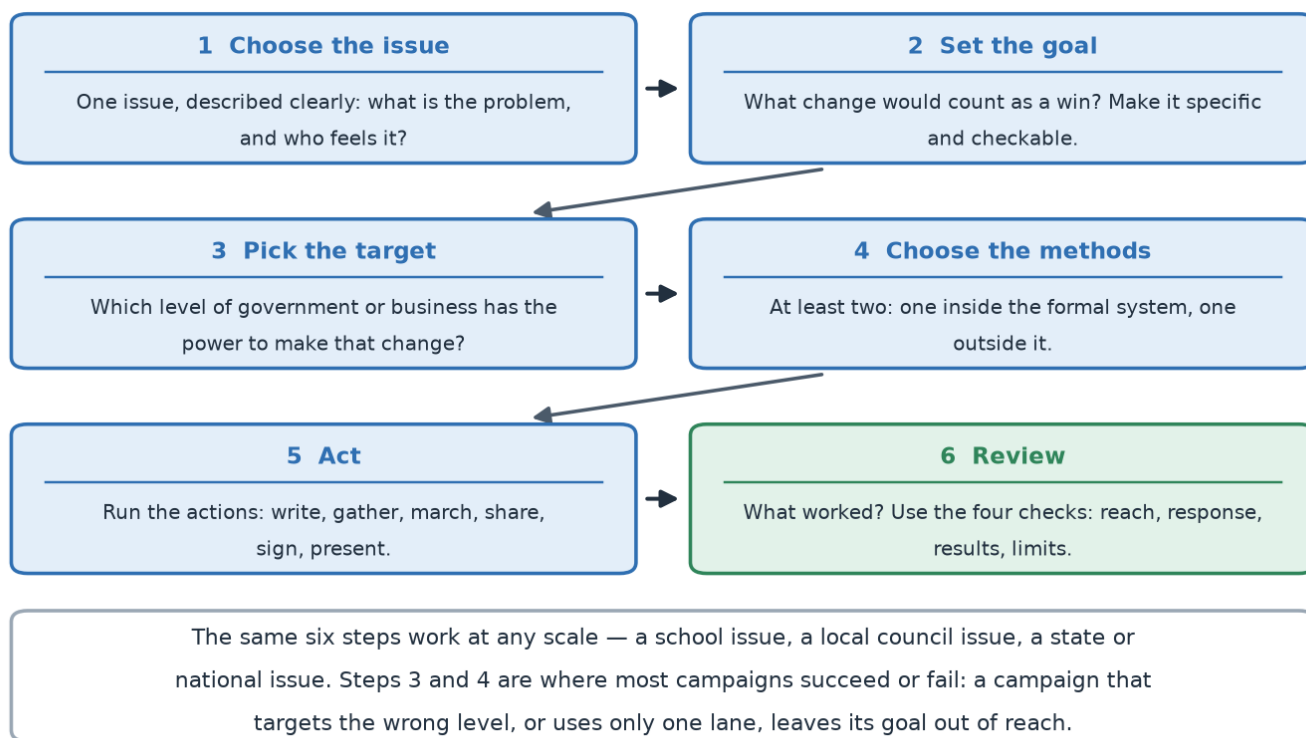
**Key term — effective.** In this section, a method is *effective* to the degree that it helps a campaign reach its stated goal. That is a scale, not a yes-or-no: a method can score well on reach and badly on results. Use the four checks in the figure, and always tie each check to evidence — a number, a date, a named response.

Two students can weigh the same evidence in different ways and both reason well. What earns marks is the reasoning: checks applied, evidence cited, limits admitted, and a conclusion that follows.

## 5. Plan a campaign in six steps (VC2HC8S07.E04)

### Plan a campaign in six steps

Campaign: a planned set of actions that aims at one goal — use more than one method



*Six steps to plan a campaign: choose the issue, set the goal, pick the target, choose the methods, act, review*

This is the capstone skill of the chapter, first seeded in Section 1D: develop **and enact** a campaign using multiple methods of your choice. “Enact” can be real (run the actions in your community) or hypothetical (carry them out in class: draft the petition, write the letter to your member, design the poster, deliver the two-minute speech). Either way, steps 3 and 4 decide most campaigns’ fate: the right level, and more than one lane.

## 6. Active citizenship on a contemporary issue (VC2HC8S07.E01)

A *contemporary* issue is one happening now, in your living memory. This section uses two, both Victorian-flavoured and both still running:

- **Climate action.** Since 2018, students have left class on strike days to demand faster action on climate change — active citizenship by members of the community, analysed in Worked Example 1.
- **Single-use plastic litter.** Years of community concern and action ended in a Victorian ban that took effect on 1 February 2023 — participation in response to government policy, examined in Worked Example 2.

## Worked examples

### Example 1 — scaffolded (VC2HC8S07.E01, VC2HC8S07.E03)

Analyse the active citizenship in the school strikes for climate, then examine how effective the strikes were.

## A movement of student strikers: key dates

School Strike 4 Climate — active citizenship by young people



Sources: Wikipedia, 'School strike for climate', accessed 26 August 2026;

School Strike 4 Climate Australia website, accessed 26 August 2026.

*A timeline of the school strikes for climate from 20 August 2018 to 30 August 2024, with five key dates*

| Step | Working                                                                                                                       | Comment                                                          |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | The issue: climate change. Strikers say governments must act faster, and stop new coal, oil and gas projects.                 | A contemporary issue — it is about the strikers' own future.     |
| 2    | The active citizens: students, joined by parents, teachers and environment groups such as Friends of the Earth Australia.     | Active citizenship is not only adults' work.                     |
| 3    | The method: peaceful strikes and marches — the outside lane.                                                                  | Direct action, protected while peaceful and lawful (Section 1B). |
| 4    | Reach: about 30,000 people marched in Melbourne on 15 March 2019; about 300,000 struck across Australia on 20 September 2019. | Reach check: strong, and national.                               |
| 5    | Response: politicians and media answered — some praised the students, some said they should be in class.                      | Response check: yes, though not always friendly.                 |
| 6    | Results: the strikes kept climate on the agenda; changes to fossil fuel projects came more slowly and                         | Results check: partial.                                          |

varied by government.

**Both sides, in full.** Critics — some parents, commentators and politicians — said students should be in class, and that missing school teaches nothing. Supporters answered that the issue is about students’ own future, that a strike day is itself a civics lesson, and that the movement was student-run. Both are real views held by real Australians; a good analysis names them and then weighs the evidence.

**Judging effectiveness.** Reach: strong (hundreds of thousands on single days). Response: strong (the strikes were answered, praised and criticised at the highest levels). Results: partial (agenda set; policy change slower and uneven). Limits: a strike day costs students class time, and some of the public turned against the method. Overall: an effective method for reach and response, still running on results.

### Example 2 — unscaffolded (VC2HC8S07.E02, VC2HC8S07.E03)

Describe the different methods of participation used in response to Victoria’s single-use plastics policy, and examine why they were or were not effective.

## From concern to ban: the Victorian single-use plastics story

How community pressure, government policy and the law connected



*A seven-step pathway from community concern about plastic litter to Victoria’s single-use plastics ban taking effect on 1 February 2023*

**Model reasoning.** The methods, in the order the figure shows them: choosing reusables (a boycott of single-use items), community clean-ups and awareness campaigns (outside lane), feedback to government (inside lane), then government policy, then **regulations** — rules made under an Act, here under the *Environment Protection Act 2017* (Vic): the *Environment Protection Regulations 2021* banned lightweight plastic shopping bags, and the *Environment Protection Amendment (Banning Single-Use Plastic Items) Regulations 2022* banned straws, stirrers, cotton bud sticks, plates, cutlery and foam containers from 1 February 2023, with a further step on 1 January 2026.

**Why they were effective.** Reach: clean-ups and media made litter visible for years. Response: the government announced a phase-out and then made it law. Results: strong — selling or supplying the banned items became against the law, and EPA Victoria enforces it, with the public able to report businesses. Limits: hospitality businesses said the ban added cost, and some argued alternatives create litter too. Participation also **changed the detail**: disability advocates argued straws are essential for some people, and the final rules exempt straws where they are needed for disability or medical reasons — evidence that an inside-lane method worked on the policy’s design.

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## Practice questions

### Scaffolded

**Q1.** From the methods map: (a) which method has an age limit, and what is it? (b) name two methods a 14-year-old could use this week; (c) which method is required by law for enrolled voters from 18?

**Q2.** Put each action in a lane (inside or outside): (a) signing an e-petition created on the Parliament of Victoria website; (b) marching in a School Strike 4 Climate rally; (c) making a submission to a parliamentary committee; (d) boycotting single-use plastic bottles; (e) joining a political party.

**Q3.** From the three-targets figure, match each issue to the level with the power: (a) a safer crossing outside your school; (b) a national law setting a minimum age for social media; (c) a ban on plastic cutlery in Victoria.

**Q4.** From the petition figure: (a) can a 14-year-old Victorian start a petition to the Victorian Parliament? (b) why will a petition hosted on a commercial website not reach Parliament? (c) who must present your petition?

**Q5.** Name the effectiveness check (reach, response, results, limits) each piece of evidence tests: (a) “about 300,000 people struck across Australia”; (b) “a Minister replied to our letter in writing”; (c) “the ban took effect on 1 February 2023”; (d) “organising the march cost our group two weekends”.

**Q6.** From Worked Example 1: (a) which lane did the strikes use? (b) which two checks scored strong? (c) which check scored only partial, and why?

### Un scaffolded

**Q7.** Examine the effectiveness of the school strikes for climate using all four checks. For each check, give one piece of dated evidence from the timeline or the worked example, and say whether the method was or was not effective for that check.

**Q8.** Your local council proposes a policy: close the skate park to build a car park. Describe two methods of participation you would use to respond — one inside, one outside — and explain why you chose each one for **this** policy.

**Q9.** Someone says: “Petitions are pointless, because Parliament does not have to agree with them.” Identify what this claim assumes, give one piece of evidence from the petition figure that supports it and one that challenges it, and reach your own judged conclusion.

**Q10.** Capstone (VC2HC8S07.E04): develop and enact a campaign. Choose one real issue — in your school, your suburb, or Victoria. Complete the six steps from the figure, naming a specific, checkable goal and the level of government with the power. Then enact at least two methods of your choice (for example: attach your draft petition of two or three sentences, your letter to your member, or your poster). Finish by predicting which of the four checks your campaign would score best on, and why.

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## Source inquiry

**Source A** — EPA Victoria, single-use plastics ban page, adapted (retrieved 26 August 2026): *From 1 February 2023, businesses in Victoria must not sell or supply single-use plastic items such as cutlery, plates, straws, stirrers and foam containers. The ban followed years of community concern about litter in parks, streets and bays. Anyone can report a business that is still supplying banned items.*

**Source B** — School Strike 4 Climate Australia, the group’s stated reasons for striking, adapted (retrieved 26 August 2026): *We strike because our future is worth fighting for. We ask governments to end new coal, oil and gas projects and move quickly to clean, renewable energy.*

**S1.** From Source A: name three banned items and the date the ban took effect.

**S2.** Source A says anyone can report a business supplying banned items. Which lane is that — inside or outside — and why?

**S3.** A student claims: “The plastics ban shows participation works, because the law changed after the community acted.” List two things this claim assumes, and say whether Source A proves or does not prove each one.

**S4.** You want to check Source B before quoting it in an essay. Name two places you could check it against.

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## Answers

**Q1.** (a) voting — enrolled voters aged 18 and over; (b) any two of: start or sign a petition, contact your member, peaceful protest or rally, boycott, media campaign, join a group; (c) voting in elections. **Q2.** (a) inside; (b) outside; (c) inside; (d) outside; (e) inside. **Q3.** (a) local; (b) national; (c) state. **Q4.** (a) yes — any Victorian resident, including people under 18; (b) only an e-petition created on the Parliament of Victoria website, or a paper petition handed to a member, can be presented; (c) a member of the Victorian Parliament. **Q5.** (a) reach; (b) response; (c) results; (d) limits. **Q6.** (a) the outside lane (direct action); (b) reach and response; (c) results — agenda set, but policy change slower and uneven. **Q7-Q10.** See Fully-worked solutions. **S1.** Any three of: cutlery, plates, straws, stirrers, foam containers; 1 February 2023. **S2.** Inside — it uses a channel the system itself built (reporting to the regulator, EPA Victoria). **S4.** Any two of: the EPA Victoria ban page itself; the Victorian legislation register (the regulations as made); dated news reports from early 2023.

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## Fully-worked solutions

**Marking guide.** For the open questions, marks are awarded for the reasoning steps, not for the conclusion: methods described with their lane and target; each effectiveness check tied to dated evidence; assumptions surfaced; evidence cited for **and** against; limits admitted; a conclusion that follows. Two students choosing different methods or reaching different conclusions can both earn full marks. The answers to the closed questions (Q1-Q6, S1, S2, S4) above are complete as given.

**Q7.** Reach: effective — about 30,000 in Melbourne on 15 March 2019, about 300,000 nationally on 20 September 2019. Response: effective — answered at the highest levels, for and against. Results: partially effective — the issue stayed on the agenda; fossil fuel policy changed more slowly and varied by government. Limits: cost in class time, and some public turned against the method. Any answer that pairs each check with dated evidence and a reasoned “effective or not” earns full marks.

**Q8.** Accept any two methods correctly laned and matched to the local level. Example: inside — start a petition asking the council to keep the park, or write to your councillor, because the council is the level with the power and formal channels must receive you; outside — a rally at the park or a social media campaign, because visible local support puts pressure on councillors before they vote. Full marks name the level (local), one method per lane, and a “why” tied to the policy.

**Q9.** The claim assumes a petition only “works” if Parliament agrees. Evidence supporting: a petition is a request — presenting it does not bind Parliament. Evidence challenging: the petition still forces the issue onto the official record (a tabled paper), wins a public response, and shows a member and signatures behind it — reach and response checks that can lead to results. A judged conclusion either way, built on those assumptions and that evidence, earns full marks.

**Q10.** Full marks require: one named real issue; all six steps completed; a specific, checkable goal; the correct level named at step 3; at least two enacted methods, at least one per lane preferred; and a prediction tied to one of the four checks with a reason. The enacted artifacts (draft petition, letter, poster) must match the stated goal.

**S3.** Example assumptions: that “after” means “because of” (the community action and the law change might be linked, or the government might have acted anyway); that a law change means participation “works” on every check (Source A shows results, not reach or response). Source A proves concern came first and a ban followed, and that reporting continues; it does not, by itself, prove the action caused the ban.

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*All real-world facts in this section are real, named and dated (D9): Greta Thunberg’s first school strike outside the Swedish parliament, 20 August 2018; global strike days 15 March 2019 (over one million strikers, 2,200 strikes, 125 countries; about 30,000 in Melbourne) and 20 September 2019 (about 4 million worldwide; about 300,000 in Australia); strikes continuing on 30 August 2024 (Wikipedia, ‘School strike for climate’; School Strike 4 Climate Australia website); Friends of the Earth Australia support for the Australian strikes; Environment Protection Act 2017 (Vic), Act No. 51/2017; Environment Protection Regulations 2021 (Vic), lightweight plastic shopping bags; Environment Protection Amendment (Banning Single-Use Plastic Items) Regulations 2022 (Vic), ban effective 1 February 2023, extension 1 January 2026; EPA Victoria, single-use plastics ban pages; Parliament of Victoria, petitions rules (any resident, including under-18s, may start or sign; e-petitions on the Parliament’s website; presented by a member; tabled paper); Australian Electoral Commission, enrolment from 16 and compulsory enrolment and voting from 18, \$20 administrative penalty for not voting without a valid reason. Retrieved 26 August 2026.*

# Communicating your analysis with evidence

Curriculum — VC2HC8S08 · draws on .E01 and .E02

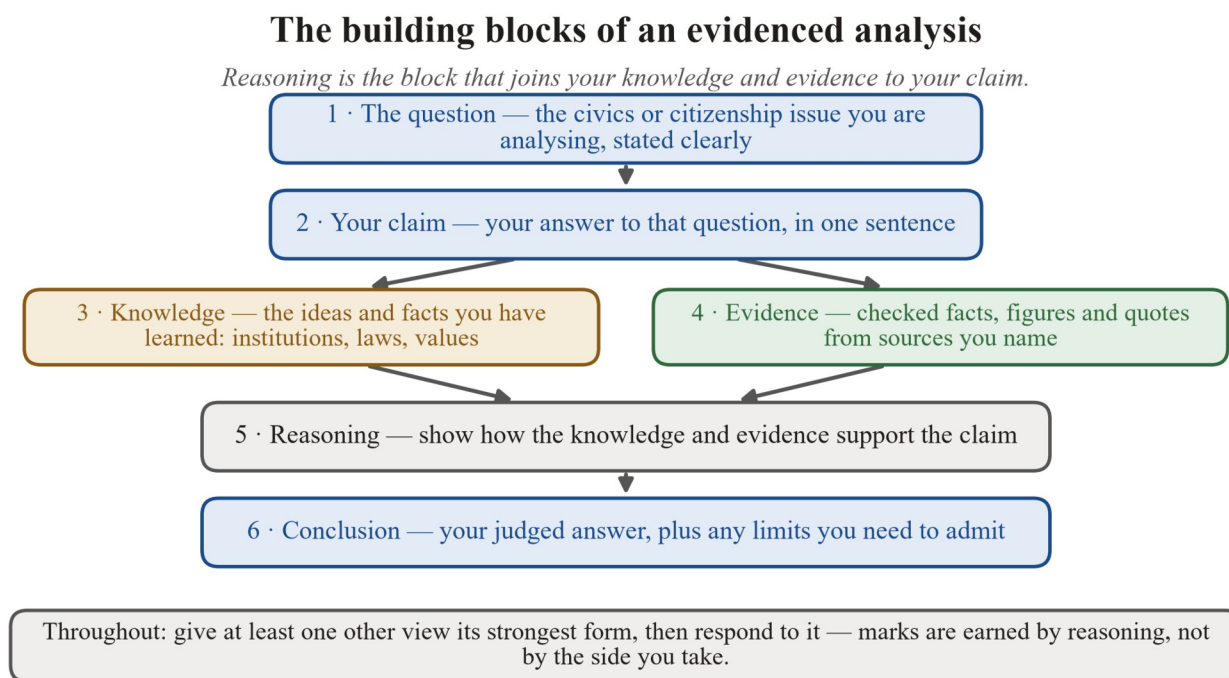
## Theory

This is the book's communication capstone. Everything you have learned so far — parties and parliaments (Chapter 1), the legal system and lawmaking (Chapter 2), Australian society and identity (Chapter 3), and the investigating and participating skills (Sections 4A to 5B) — now gets *communicated*: you develop an analysis of a civics or citizenship issue, back it with knowledge and evidence, and deliver it in more than one way.

**Part 1 — Three terms, defined before use.** The curriculum uses the words *analysis*, *evidence* and *power* without defining them, so this section states the definitions it works with, and every task here is answerable on these definitions alone.

- **Analysis** means taking an issue apart and showing how its pieces connect — who holds power, what they did, why, and with what result — then giving a reasoned answer to a question about it. It is more than a summary: a summary retells, an analysis explains and judges.
- **Evidence** means checked information, from a source you name, that supports a claim. A claim with no evidence behind it is an opinion.
- **Power** means the ability to make a decision, block a decision, or shape what others decide. In this section, **formal power** is power the law gives someone (a parliament can pass an Act; a governor-general can give Royal Assent), while **influence** is the ability to shape a decision without forcing it (voters and campaign groups can pressure a parliament, but cannot pass a law).

An **institution** is an established organisation with a public role — a parliament, a court, a government department. A **political actor** is a person acting in public life — a minister, a member of parliament, a party leader, a campaign leader. Figure 1 shows the building blocks every evidenced analysis needs, in order.



*A chain of six labelled blocks: the question, your claim, knowledge, evidence, reasoning and conclusion, with a note that at least one other view must be given its strongest form and answered*

Notice the strip at the bottom of Figure 1. Giving another view its strongest form before answering it is called **steelmanning**, and in this section it is part of the method, not an extra. An analysis that only quotes one side has not analysed the issue; it has advertised a conclusion.

**Part 2 — Where evidence comes from, and how to check it.** In civics, evidence is not a lab measurement; it is a record someone made — an Act, a judgment, a statistic, a report. Figure 2 lists the kinds of evidence you can use and the check that comes with each kind.

### Where evidence in civics comes from — and how to check it

| Kind of evidence     | What it looks like                                   | How to check it                                                 |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Parliament records   | Bills, Acts, debates (Hansard) and committee reports | Free on parliament websites — check the date and version        |
| Court judgments      | A judge's written decision and reasons               | Court websites and law databases — check the case name and year |
| Official statistics  | ABS releases, such as the 2017 postal survey result  | The agency's own release — check the date and the method        |
| Inquiry submissions  | Written views sent to a parliamentary inquiry        | The inquiry page lists every submission with its author         |
| Media reports        | News articles and broadcasts                         | Check the outlet, the author and the date; compare two outlets  |
| Community statements | Positions of interest groups and campaigns           | Ask who made the statement, and what they want to happen        |

**List every source you use at the end of your work — name, date, and where you found it.**

*A three-column table of six kinds of civics evidence — parliament records, court judgments, official statistics, inquiry submissions, media reports and community statements — with what each looks like and how to check it, plus the rule that every source used must be listed with its name, date and where it was found*

One rule covers all of them: if you cannot say who made the record, when, and where you found it, you cannot use it as evidence.

**Part 3 — Multiple methods of communication.** The content description says *multiple methods*, so a single essay is not enough. Figure 3 sets out the four methods this book works with, and when each is strongest.

### Four methods for communicating an evidenced analysis

| Method                          | What it is                                   | Strongest when                                       | It must have                                       |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Written analysis</b>         | Paragraphs and reports that argue a claim    | You need space to weigh evidence and different views | Defined terms, named sources, a clear structure    |
| <b>Graphical representation</b> | Power maps, flow charts, charts and posters  | You need to show how parts connect                   | A title, labels, a key, and dates                  |
| <b>Oral presentation</b>        | A speech, debate or pitch to an audience     | You want to persuade the people in the room          | A clear claim, signposted evidence, careful timing |
| <b>Multimodal or digital</b>    | Slides, web pages, short video, infographics | Text, image and sound work together                  | Captions, tidy design, sources on show             |

The capstone task asks for at least two methods — usually written plus graphical. Choose the method that carries your message best; never decorate.

*A four-column table of four communication methods — written analysis, graphical representation, oral presentation, and multimodal or digital — with what each is, when it is strongest, and what each must include*

**Part 4 — A model text, with labels.** Figure 4 is a short written analysis of the 2017 change to Australia’s marriage law — the same case study Section 1B examined. Each strip is colour-coded to one block from Figure 1.

## A model analytical paragraph — annotated

Issue: Australia's 2017 marriage law change. Each strip is one part of the analysis.

| CLAIM      | EVIDENCE                                                                                                                                                                                   | REASONING | OTHER VIEW |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| CLAIM      | In 2017 Australia changed its marriage law through a decision of the Commonwealth Parliament, informed by the public's views.                                                              |           |            |
| EVIDENCE   | On 15 November 2017 the Australian Bureau of Statistics announced that 61.6% of formal postal survey responses supported change, on a 79.5% response rate.                                 |           |            |
| EVIDENCE   | In December 2017 the Senate and the House of Representatives passed the Marriage Amendment (Definition and Religious Freedoms) Act 2017, and it received Royal Assent on 8 December 2017.  |           |            |
| REASONING  | This shows where formal power sits: the survey informed the Parliament but did not bind it, and the parties allowed members a conscience vote, so the Parliament itself made the decision. |           |            |
| OTHER VIEW | Those who opposed change argued for keeping the traditional definition of marriage; the final Act included protections for religious bodies, so that view was weighed too.                 |           |            |

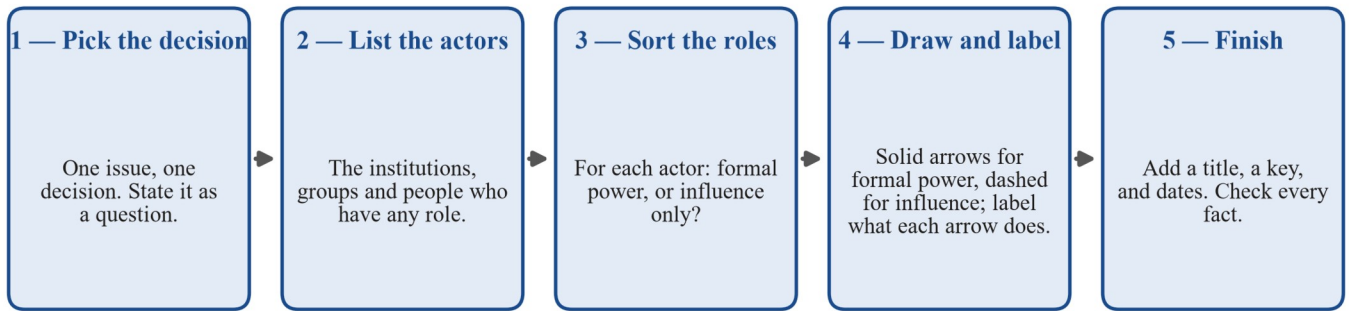
Every fact here is dated and can be checked, and the other view is given its strongest form — that is what 'evidenced' means.

*A labelled model analytical paragraph on the 2017 marriage law change: a blue claim strip, two green evidence strips with dated facts from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Parliament, an amber reasoning strip, and a grey strip giving the opposing view its strongest form*

Three things to notice in Figure 4. First, every fact carries a date and can be checked against a named source (Section 1B's sources: the Australian Bureau of Statistics release of 15 November 2017, and the Parliament's own records of the November–December 2017 votes). Second, the reasoning strip does the analysis: it says *where formal power sat* — with the Parliament, not the survey. Third, the last strip steelmans the other side instead of mocking it. (The writing craft here is the analytical writing your English classes teach; this section supplies the civics content and the graphical methods.)

**Part 5 — Graphical representation one: the power map (elaboration .E01).** A **power map** is a diagram of who held formal power and who held influence in one decision. The actors you map are the ones the book has already met — the parties and parliaments of Section 1A, the key institutions of Section 1C, and the political actors who exercise power in them, Section 4E. Figure 5 is the method; Figure 6 is a finished model, again on the 2017 marriage law change.

## How to build a power map — five steps

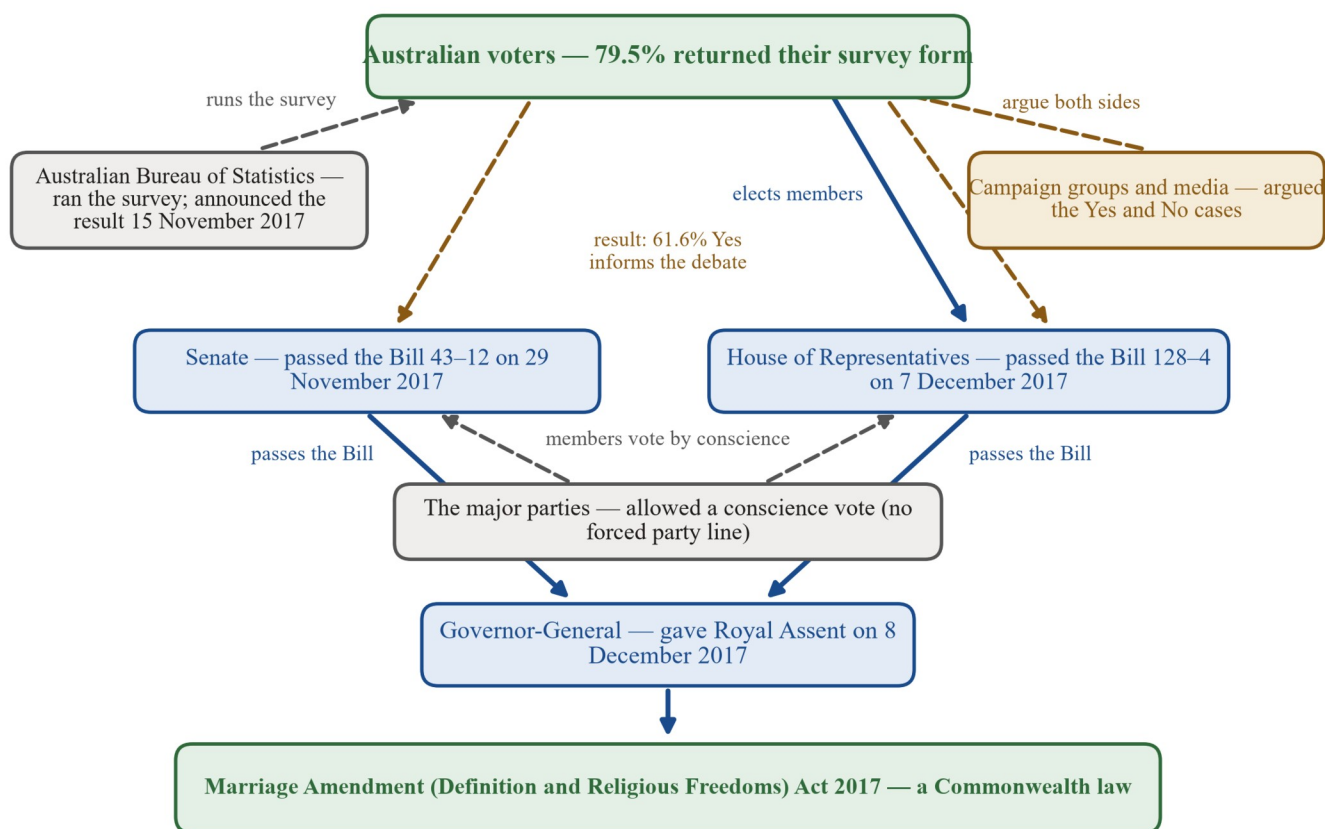


Key: box = an institution, group or person · solid arrow = formal power · dashed arrow = influence · the label says what the power does

*Five step cards for building a power map: pick the decision, list the actors, sort the roles into formal power or influence, draw and label solid or dashed arrows, and finish with a title, key and dates; with a symbol key underneath*

## Model graphical representation — who held power in the 2017 marriage law change?

*Solid arrows = formal power (a legally binding step). Dashed arrows = influence or an administrative role.*



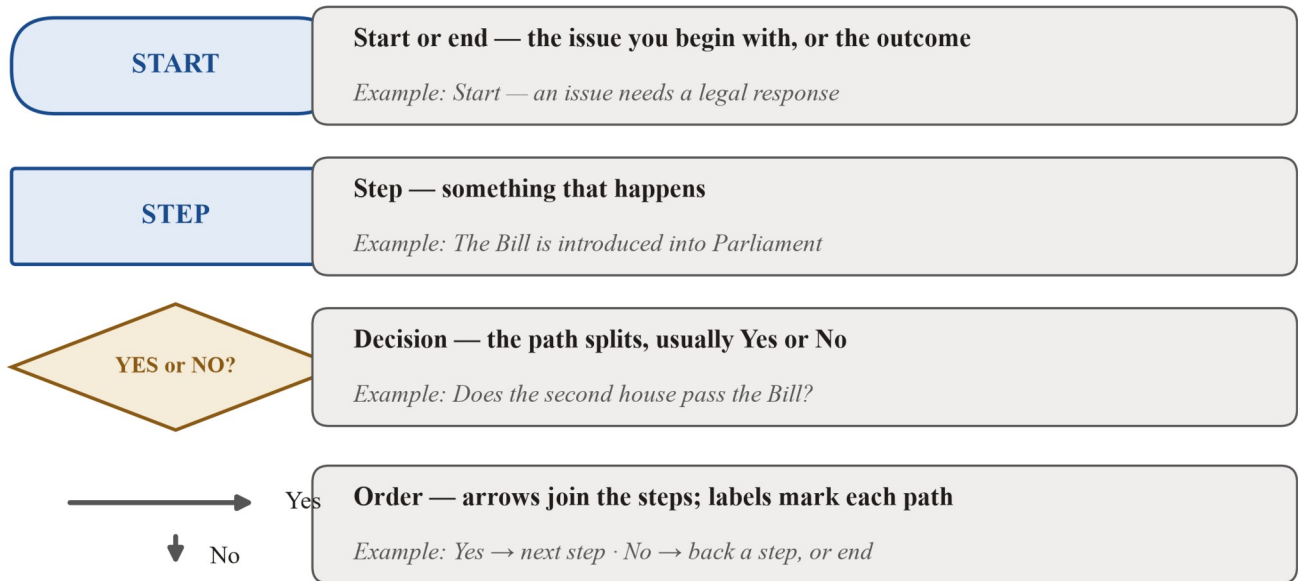
*Use this structure for your own issue: same symbols, different actors.*

*A finished power map of the 2017 marriage law change: solid formal-power arrows run from the voters, through the Senate and House of Representatives passing the Bill, to the Governor-General's Royal Assent and the final Act, while dashed arrows show the Australian Bureau of Statistics running the survey, the 61.6% Yes result informing both houses, the campaigns arguing both sides and the parties allowing a conscience vote*

Read Figure 6 against the definitions in Part 1. The solid arrows trace the *formal power*: members are elected, both houses pass the Bill, Royal Assent makes it law. The dashed arrows trace *influence*: the survey result (61.6% Yes on a 79.5% response rate) and the campaigns shaped the decision, but the survey did not bind the Parliament — the Parliament still had to vote. That difference, drawn as solid versus dashed, is the whole point of the map.

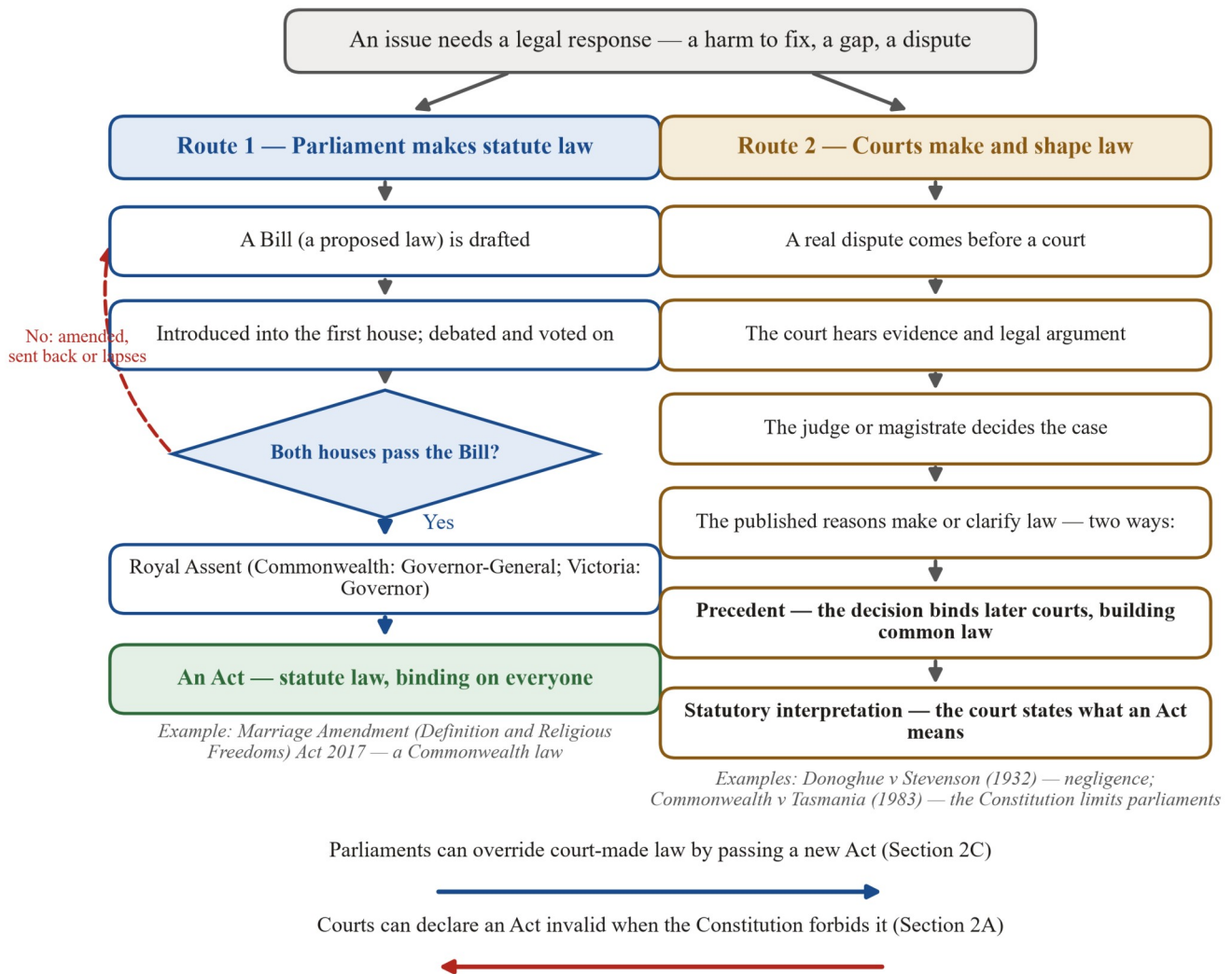
**Part 6 — Graphical representation two: the lawmaking flow chart (elaboration .E02).** A **flow chart** shows steps in order, with branches where a decision splits the path. Figure 7 teaches the four symbols you need; Figure 8 is a finished model of the two ways laws are made in Australia — by parliaments (statute law) and by courts (common law and statutory interpretation), the two sources of law Section 2C examines — and the criminal and civil law of Section 2D is where that court-made law does its work.

## Flow chart symbols — the ones you need



*The four flow chart symbols — a rounded start or end box, a step rectangle, a yes-or-no decision diamond, and labelled arrows — each shown with a civics example*

## Model flow chart — the different ways laws are made by parliaments and courts



A two-route flow chart: the parliament route from a drafted Bill through debate, a both-houses-pass-it decision and Royal Assent to an Act, and the courts route from a dispute through a hearing and decision to precedent and statutory interpretation, with arrows showing that parliaments can override court-made law and courts can declare an Act invalid

The two arrows at the bottom of Figure 8 are the part students most often leave out, and they carry the real analysis. Statute law ranks above common law: a parliament can override (replace) judge-made law by passing a new Act (Section 2C). And under the Australian Constitution, the High Court of Australia can declare an Act invalid if the Parliament lacked the power to make it — as in *Australian Communist Party v Commonwealth* (1951), Section 2A's worked example. A flow chart that shows only the forward path shows lawmaking without its checks.

**Part 7 — Pulling it together.** When your analysis is drafted, run the checklist in Figure 9 before anything is handed in, said aloud or published.

## Before you deliver — the evidenced-analysis checklist

*Tick every box before your analysis goes out — in any method of communication.*

- |                                                                             |                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Key terms are defined at first use                 | <input type="checkbox"/> All sources are listed — name, date, where found      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Every fact is correct, dated and can be checked    | <input type="checkbox"/> The method fits the message and the audience          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Every claim is joined to knowledge or evidence     | <input type="checkbox"/> Every visual carries a title, labels and a key        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At least one other view is stated at its strongest | <input type="checkbox"/> Names, dates and spelling are checked — read it aloud |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The limits of your evidence are admitted           | <input type="checkbox"/> Your conclusion follows from your evidence            |

*A two-column tick-list of ten checks: key terms defined; facts correct, dated and checkable; claims joined to knowledge or evidence; another view stated at its strongest; limits admitted; sources listed; method fits the message; visuals titled, labelled and keyed; names and spelling checked; conclusion follows from evidence*

### Worked examples

#### Example 1 — Building a power map (scaffolded, .E01)

*Build a power map answering the question: “Who held the power to change Australia’s marriage law in 2017?” The finished map is Figure 6.*

| Working                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Comment                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. State the decision as a question: “Who held the power to change the marriage law in 2017?”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Step 1 of Figure 5 — one issue, one decision, stated as a question.                                      |
| 2. List the actors: Australian voters; the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS); campaign groups and the media; the Senate; the House of Representatives; the major parties; the Governor-General.                                                                                                                                     | Step 2 — every institution, group and person with a role, before sorting them.                           |
| 3. Sort the roles. Formal power: the Senate and House (they pass the Bill), the Governor-General (Royal Assent). Influence or administrative role: voters and campaigns (they shaped opinion); the ABS (it ran the survey and counted it); the parties (a conscience vote meant each member decided).                                   | Step 3 — the formal/influence split from Part 1. The survey informed the Parliament; it did not bind it. |
| 4. Draw the arrows. Solid: voters → House (elects members); Senate and House → Governor-General (pass the Bill); Governor-General → Act (assent makes it law). Dashed: ABS → voters (runs the survey); result → both houses (61.6% Yes informs the debate); campaigns → voters (argue both sides); parties → members (conscience vote). | Step 4 — solid for formal power, dashed for influence, and every arrow labelled with what it does.       |

| Working                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Comment                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5. Add the title, the key (solid = formal power; dashed = influence) and the dates: result 15 November 2017; Senate 29 November 2017 (43–12); House 7 December 2017 (128–4); Royal Assent 8 December 2017. | Step 5 — a map without a key or dates tells the reader nothing they can check. |

(Sources: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey, released 15 November 2017; Parliament of Australia, Senate and House of Representatives votes, November–December 2017; Royal Assent 8 December 2017.)

### Example 2 — Building the lawmaking flow chart (scaffolded, .E02)

Build a flow chart showing the different ways laws get made — by parliaments and by courts. The finished chart is Figure 8.

| Working                                                                                                                                                                                              | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Start box: “An issue needs a legal response.”                                                                                                                                                     | The rounded start symbol from Figure 7 — every chart begins with the issue.                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 2. Route 1, parliament: Bill drafted → introduced and debated → decision diamond “Both houses pass the Bill?” No → amended, sent back or lapses; Yes → Royal Assent → an Act (statute law).          | The parliament route of Figure 8, with its decision diamond. Example tag: <i>Marriage Amendment (Definition and Religious Freedoms) Act 2017</i> , a Commonwealth law.                                                                                                                |
| 3. Route 2, courts: dispute → hearing → decision → two outcomes: precedent (the decision binds later courts, building common law) and statutory interpretation (the court states what an Act means). | The courts route. Example tags: <i>Donoghue v Stevenson</i> (1932), the precedent behind the modern law of negligence; <i>Commonwealth v Tasmania</i> (1983), where the High Court read the Constitution’s external affairs power as letting the Commonwealth stop the Tasmanian dam. |
| 4. Draw the two arrows between the routes: parliaments can override court-made law by a new Act; the High Court can declare an Act invalid when the Constitution forbids it.                         | The checks that turn two separate paths into one system — the arrows students most often forget.                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 5. Add the title and check every fact and date against Section 2C.                                                                                                                                   | A flow chart is a claim about how the system works; it must be checkable.                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

## Practice questions

### Scaffolded

**Q1.** Figure 1 names the blocks of an evidenced analysis. Label each sentence of this mini-analysis as *claim*, *evidence*, *reasoning* or *conclusion*: (a) “The 1973 lowering of the voting age extended Australia’s democracy to younger citizens.” (b) “The *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1973*, a Commonwealth law, changed the federal voting age from 21 to 18.” (c) “If people old enough to be treated as adults in other law can vote in federal elections, participation is more equal.” (d) “So the 1973 change was both a legal fix and a statement about who belongs in the democracy.”

**Q2.** Using Figure 2, name the kind of evidence each item is, and the check you would run: (a) the text of the *Marriage Amendment (Definition and Religious Freedoms) Act 2017*; (b) a news article from 15 November 2017 about the postal survey result; (c) the ABS announcement of the survey result; (d) a written view sent to a parliamentary committee.

**Q3.** Using Figure 3, choose the best method for each job and give one reason: (a) show a principal which people and bodies decided a question; (b) show a class the order of steps by which a Bill became an Act; (c) persuade a school assembly to back a campaign; (d) weigh two views of an issue at length, with sources.

**Q4.** Read the power map in Figure 6. (a) Name two actors joined by *solid* arrows and say what the arrow means. (b) Name two actors joined by *dashed* arrows and say what the arrow means. (c) The survey showed 61.6% Yes. Could the survey itself have changed the law? Answer using the words *formal power* and *influence*.

**Q5.** Read the flow chart in Figure 8. (a) What happens to a Bill if both houses do not pass it? (b) Name the two ways courts make or shape law. (c) Which route can override the other, and by what step? (d) Which court can declare an Act invalid, and why?

**Q6.** Read the model paragraph in Figure 4. (a) Which strips are evidence, and what makes each one checkable? (b) Which strip is reasoning, and what question does it answer? (c) Which strip steelmans, and how do you know it is the strong form of the other view?

### **Unscaffolded**

**Q7.** Map the power in a decision at *your* school — for example, a change to a uniform rule or the canteen. Real roles only (principal, school council, student leaders, parents): list the actors, sort formal power from influence, and draw the map with solid and dashed arrows, a title, a key and dates where you have them.

**Q8.** Pick one issue: the 2017 marriage law change, the Tasmanian dam dispute (*Commonwealth v Tasmania*, 1983), or the 1973 lowering of the voting age. Write the strongest case you can for each side — the case each side’s own supporters would recognise. Marks are for the quality of the two cases and your reasoning about them, not for the side you prefer.

**Q9.** Using the blocks of Figure 1, write one analysis paragraph (150–200 words) on one of the three issues in Q8. Every fact must be dated, every source named, and one other view stated at its strongest before you answer it.

**Q10.** A Year 8 group must explain to the principal’s office how one Australian law was made or changed. Choose *two* methods from Figure 3 for the explanation and justify each choice against the audience and the message.

### **Inquiry task — the capstone**

Source A (Figure 10) is the opening section of the Australian Constitution. It is the formal answer to the question every power map asks: where does the Commonwealth’s law-making power sit?

#### **Source A — Australian Constitution, section 1**

*In force from 1 January 1901. Reproduced verbatim.*

“The legislative power of the Commonwealth shall be vested in a Federal Parliament, which shall consist of the Queen, a Senate, and a House of Representatives, and which is hereinafter called ‘The Parliament’.”

Australian Constitution s 1 — the opening words of Australia's highest law.

*Source A: the words of section 1 of the Australian Constitution, which puts the Commonwealth’s law-making power in a Federal Parliament made up of the Queen, a Senate and a House of Representatives*

**S1.** According to Source A, in whom is the legislative power of the Commonwealth vested, and what three parts make up that Parliament?

**S2.** In your own words and using this section’s definitions: why can voters and campaign groups *influence* the Parliament but never *pass* a statute?

**S3.** Source A names the Commonwealth Parliament. Name the equivalent law-making parliament for Victoria, and its two houses.

**The capstone brief.** Choose one *real* civics or citizenship issue — the 2017 marriage law change; *Commonwealth v Tasmania* (1983); the 1973 lowering of the voting age; or another real, dated issue that you find and can check. Then communicate an evidenced analysis of it in **at least two methods**:

1. a **written analysis** of 250–350 words built on the blocks of Figure 1, with every term defined, every fact dated, every source named, and one other view steelmanned and answered; and
2. **one graphical representation** — a power map (Figure 5) or a lawmaking flow chart (Figure 7) — connected to the same issue, with a title, a key and dates.

End with a source list (name, date, where found) and run the checklist in Figure 9 before you submit.

**Success criteria — drawn from the achievement standard.** Your work shows that you can: analyse the roles of institutions and political actors in the issue; use knowledge from this book (Chapters 1–3) and evidence from named sources; give different perspectives a fair hearing; and communicate the analysis through more than one method.

## Answers

**Q1.** (a) Claim. (b) Evidence. (c) Reasoning. (d) Conclusion. **Q2.** (a) Parliament records — check the date and version on the parliament website. (b) Media report — check outlet, author, date; compare two outlets. (c) Official statistics — the agency’s own release; check date and method. (d) Inquiry submission — the inquiry page lists it with its author. **Q3.** (a) A power map — it shows who decided and who influenced. (b) A flow chart — it shows steps in order. (c) Oral presentation — it persuades a live audience. (d) Written analysis — it gives space to weigh evidence and views. **Q4.** (a) Any solid arrow, e.g. Senate → Governor-General: the Senate passed the Bill, a step fixed by law. (b) Any dashed arrow, e.g. campaigns → voters: shaping opinion without forcing anything. (c) No — the survey had influence, not formal power; only the Parliament could pass the statute. **Q5.** (a) It is amended, sent back, or lapses. (b) Precedent (common law) and statutory interpretation. (c) Parliament overrides common law by passing a new Act. (d) The High Court of Australia, because the Constitution gives it the final word on what the Constitution allows. **Q6.** (a) The two green strips — each carries a date, a number and a named source that can be checked. (b) The amber strip — it answers “where did formal power actually sit?” (c) The grey strip — it states the other side’s case as a serious position (the traditional definition) and notes what it won (protections in the final Act), rather than mocking it. **S1.** In a Federal Parliament, made up of the Queen, a Senate, and a House of Representatives. **S2.** See full solution. **S3.** The Parliament of Victoria — the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council. **Q7–Q10.** See full solutions.

## Full solutions

**Q7.** Step 1 — List real roles, e.g. for a uniform change: the principal, the school council, student leaders, parents. Step 2 — Sort: the school council and principal hold the formal power to set policy; student leaders and parents hold influence (petitions, surveys, meetings). Step 3 — Draw: solid arrows from the decision-makers to the outcome; dashed arrows from the influencers to the decision-makers; label every arrow; add a title, a key and the real dates of any meetings or decisions you can name.

**Q8.** Step 1 — State each side’s strongest case in its own supporters’ words. For the 2017 change, e.g.: the equality case (the law should treat couples alike, and a majority of voters agreed in the survey) and the traditional case (marriage has a settled historical definition, and change should carry protections for those who hold the traditional view in religion or conscience). Step 2 — Check symmetry: each case gets the same care, the same evidence standard, no mocking. Step 3 — Judge: say which case you find stronger *and which part of it did the deciding*; marks reward that reasoning, not the side.

**Q9.** Step 1 — Question and claim in the first two sentences. Step 2 — Evidence sentences carry dates and named sources (e.g. for the voting age: the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1973*, a Commonwealth law). Step 3 — A reasoning sentence connects the evidence to the claim. Step 4 — A steelmanned other view, answered. Step 5 — A conclusion that follows from the evidence and admits any limit (e.g. that some states changed their voting ages at different dates).

**Q10.** Step 1 — Match method to message: the flow chart carries “how the law was made” (order of steps), the written analysis carries “why it mattered” (weighing evidence and views). Step 2 — Match method to audience: a busy office reads a one-page chart quickly; the short written part supplies the sources it can check. Step 3 — Justify in two or three sentences each: name the audience’s need and the method’s strength from Figure 3.

**S2.** Step 1 — Source A vests the law-making power in the Parliament alone; no one else holds it. Step 2 — Voters and campaigns sit outside that vesting: they can change minds, elect members and pressure governments — influence. Step 3 — Formal power is the power the law gives; the law gives the statute-making step only to the Parliament, so influence can move the Parliament but never replace it.