



Democratic participation: Westminster Traditions

Learning intentions

This activity focuses on Australia's system of government through an exploration of Old Parliament House. Using digital material, students will gain an understanding of the Westminster tradition of parliamentary democracy; in particular, the roles and responsibilities of the House of Representatives and Senate Chambers, as well as those of the prime minister, the monarch and the governor-general.

Activity overview

Students will investigate some of Old Parliament House's significant historic spaces and consider the process of parliamentary decision-making through a collection of stories from people who worked in the building.

Materials

- Pre-recorded Old Parliament House videos: [House of Representatives and Senate Chamber episodes](#)
- Paper
- Pencils and markers.

Activity outline

- 1 Watch the pre-recorded Old Parliament House: [House of Representatives and Senate Chamber episodes](#).
- 2 Invite students, as they view the episodes, to make notes, including keywords, drawings and any questions they may have.
- 3 Divide students into small groups of three, and invite them to create two illustrations based on their collective notes: one of the House of Representatives and the other of the Senate. Encourage them to include specific details, such as how many members of parliament and senators there are, where the Speaker, the President of the Senate, the prime minister, and the governor-general or the monarch sit, and significant symbols such as the Mace and the Black Rod.

Extension activity

Using recycled materials, students can work as individuals or in small groups to create their own classroom mace. Encourage them to include in their designs connections to their local community and country by incorporating native wildlife and important sites.

Students can draw on the House of Representatives style of mace or create a completely new shape. Encourage students to consider, while creating their designs, how federal parliament works and any changes they might wish to make to Australia's system of government.

MUSEUM OF
AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY



OLD PARLIAMENT HOUSE



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