

Band/Outcome	Prior	During	After
<p><b>BAND 3</b></p> <p>Soc 3.3</p> <p><b>Civics, Governance and Social Justice</b></p> <p>Research and describe features such as decision making in familiar political and legal systems and analyse how choices, opportunities and conflict affect people's life chances.</p>	<p>Investigate representative decision making processes.</p> <p>Participate in the government group activity survival task 'Who Makes Decisions?'</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Look at the resource sheet <i>Why do we need governments?</i> and <i>Types of Government and Representative Democracy</i>.</p> <p>Using the Discovering Democracy Middle Primary unit page 18 <i>How should a Nation be ruled?</i></p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Using Discovering Democracy Upper Primary unit page 17 <i>Australia's form of Government</i>.</p> <p><b>Resources:</b></p> <p>For more information on different government systems:-</p> <p>Australian Readers Upper Primary Collection <i>Liberty, Equality, Fraternity</i> pp 2-12</p> <p>Australian Readers Lower Secondary <i>Monarchs</i> pp 2-4.</p>	<p>Invite a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) to visit your class.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Visit Parliament House and have an MLA to speak about representative democracy.</p>	<p>Have students complete Resource Sheet <i>Why do we need governments?</i></p>

# WHO MAKES THE BIG DECISIONS?

## Setting the Scene

A tried and trusted method of looking at the political processes involved in decision-making is to use an activity based on Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. M. and R. Oldmeadow (1975) have done this and so, more recently, has Sellinger (1979).

As a preliminary exercise, before looking at the case studies (in 4a and 4b), your teacher could organise a survival game based on *Lord of the Flies*. The basic situation is outlined in Suggested Task 4:1.

## Suggested Task 4:1 - Role Play

A group of about 20 young people about your age has been stranded without transport in a remote tropical island somewhere in the Pacific. Some of the group members have explored the island and have found no other sign of human occupancy but there is an abundance of coconuts, a central mountain peak surrounded by dense foliage and sandy beaches. Tracks and droppings suggest the presence of wild pigs. The group is entirely on its own and must survive until rescued. The group begins to discuss what they should do first:

- make shelters
- make a signal
- explore
- swim
- gather food
- find water

If your own group were in this situation, what would you do? What would you do first? How would you decide? How would you overcome disagreements? How would you enforce decisions once they had been made? Who would make the decisions? Should there be a leader? How would a leader be selected? There is no one correct way to answer these questions and solve all the group's problems. There may be several conflicting solutions. Each person may have his or her own solution but, somehow, the group will have to cooperate if it is to survive. Its members must try to make joint decisions. Should they set up rules to guide their behaviour as they go about their decision-making? Will everyone have to follow the rules? Will it be necessary to have punishment? What will the punishment be and who will carry it out?

After participating in a role-playing exercise such as the one outlined above, you could take part in a debriefing exercise in the form of a class discussion in which you try to define the following concepts and answer the accompanying questions.

## **WHY DO WE NEED A GOVERNMENT?**

### **Can you imagine what it would be like if we had no government at all?**

For a start there would be no laws and people could do whatever they liked. They could drive their cars as fast as they wanted to, on either side of the road (if there were any roads), never stopping for others or slowing down to avoid accidents. You could be attacked or robbed on your way to school (if there were any schools!). You'd never be safe, and you probably wouldn't trust anyone.

It would be a bit like a football game with no rules and no umpire – there would be a lot of fighting and arguing. The result might be good for the biggest and toughest players, but not much good for anyone else.

The very first governments began by providing armies to defend people against warlike neighbouring countries. Later they made laws to protect ordinary people against criminals and bullies. Later still, they began to build roads, schools and hospitals. Governments today do much, much more. What do governments do in countries like Australia? I can think of five main things.

- They make laws, and they set up courts, judges and police to make sure that people obey the laws.
- They provide some very important services, like roads, schools, hospitals, ambulances, fire brigades, armed forces, trains, buses and garbage collection.
- They try to manage our money and make the country thrive. They encourage farmers, factory owners, mining companies and other businesses to provide jobs producing the food, goods and materials we want – plus some left over to sell to other countries in exchange for things they make.
- They try to plan our cities, towns and countryside so there is room for everyone to do what they want or need to do, without getting in each other's way or ruining the environment. They try to make sure that homes are grouped together, away from noisy, smelly industrial sites and close to schools, shops, trains, buses and sports grounds. They preserve some of the most beautiful areas of wilderness.
- They try to umpire between us. We (all the people) need somebody else to manage these things for us while we get on with our own lives. In Australia, governments do this with our permission; they work for the Australian people – we're the bosses, not them! Every few years we have an election in which all the adults vote for (elect or choose) people to do this important job. The people we elect know that if they don't do what we want, then we won't vote for them next time round. So in a way, we're really governing ourselves. This kind of government is called a democracy.

# TYPES OF GOVERNMENT

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### Absolute monarchy

Pharaohs ruled Egypt from about 3100-1100 BC. Succession was via the eldest surviving son. One woman, Hatshepsut, ruled as Pharaoh after claiming that her royal birthright allowed her to rule as a man. Believed to be related to the sun god, Ra, the Pharaoh had absolute power. He did not rule by mere whim, however. The Pharaoh's subjects relied upon him as a religious figure and intermediary to the gods. The people of Egypt ranged from the very wealthy to slaves. Viziers, somewhat like ministers, administered Egypt and were expected to act judiciously and honestly. The working men and women had certain rights, protected under Pharaoh's law, but no power to change laws or resist high taxation.

### Direct democracy

Democracy in Ancient Athens was literally 'rule by the people'. All citizens were expected to attend the Assembly every nine days or so to vote on the laws by which Athens would be ruled. Should the minimum 6000 not turn up to vote, citizens would be rounded up to attend the Assembly. In 508 BC, an aristocrat of Athens, Cleisthenes, divided the citizens of Athens and the surrounding area according to population into small communities, *demes*. He drew representatives from all over by lot to form the Council of 500 so as to break up the tribal allegiances and power of the old oligarchy (rule by a few). Citizenship was by no means extended to all. Only men, freeborn in Athens to Athenian parents, were citizens. Therefore, the majority of the population (women, 'foreigners' and slaves) had no say in government.

### Representative democracy

Australia's representative parliamentary democracy (so called because all citizens over 18 vote to elect representatives) stems from Federation in 1901. In the Commonwealth Parliament there is one member in the House of Representatives from each of the 148 electoral divisions throughout Australia. There are 76 Senators; 12 from each of the six states and two from each of the territories.

Citizenship was introduced on 26 January 1949 (before which time Australians were considered British subjects). The present criteria for Australian citizenship is:

- all people born in Australia before 1986;
- those born in Australia after 1986 must also have one parent who is an Australian citizen or permanent resident to qualify;
- by descent – if a person is born overseas and at least one parent is an Australian citizen;
- by adoption – occurs when an Australian citizen legally adopts a child in Australia when that child is a permanent resident;
- migrants to Australia can become citizens by grant. Most migrants become eligible to be granted citizenship by being a permanent resident in Australia for two years. Other requirements include study of citizenship, its responsibilities and privileges; basic knowledge of English; good character; living in or having close association with Australia; payment of the citizenship fee; and pledging loyalty to a democratic Australia.

# THE HISTORY OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

Australia's system of government is a representative parliamentary democracy. Although it combines democracy with monarchy, sovereignty (the power to make decisions about how we are governed) resides with the people. The people elect all members of both Houses of Parliament. Our system of government derives largely from the British system which itself evolved as the power to govern shifted from the monarch to the parliament. The shift began around the time of King John.

King John reigned in England from 1199 to 1216. At this time parliament did not exist and John tried to rule as an absolute monarch. He could pass laws or levy taxes on his own authority. Many circumstances, but mostly the imposition of heavy taxes, created discontent among John's barons who eventually exacted from him a grant of liberties that the king could not lawfully violate. The document detailing these rights became known as Magna Carta or the Great Charter. It was signed and sealed by King John at Runnymede in 1215, and is a major historical symbol of the curtailment of the governing power of the monarch. Rights protected by the Magna Carta were essentially those of the upper classes.

The power of the monarchy was more seriously challenged in seventeenth-century England. King Charles I (who reigned 1625-49) ruled by 'divine right' (the right given by God to the monarch to rule) and by 'the ancient constitution' (ancient customs and traditions that were never written down). Charles precipitated dissent in his parliament by imposing taxes without parliament's consent and by advocating adherence to the ceremony and ritual of high-church Anglicanism in opposition to the Puritan majority of the House of Commons, who wanted a less ritualised religious observance.

A political impasse arose because parliament regularly endeavoured to gain more control of government and to become more powerful than the king. In 1642 civil war erupted. This ended with a revolution, the execution of King Charles I, and the establishment of a republic under the guardianship of Oliver Cromwell in 1649. The power of parliament barely survived Cromwell's death, but with the restoration of the monarchy new problems centred largely on the issue of Catholic emancipation and the likelihood of a Catholic succession. When the Protestant William of Orange peacefully invaded England, its Catholic King, James II, fled. In the constitutional crisis that followed, parliament resolved to make William the king and his wife Mary, James II's daughter, queen. The parliament also devised and presented to William and Mary, before their coronation, a Declaration of Rights that altered the power of the monarchy forever. William and Mary became 'constitutional monarchs', which meant that the monarch remained the head of state but power now rested with the parliament.

To read more about the ideas in this unit, refer to *Discovering Democracy – A Guide to Government and Law in Australia*, pp 107-8.

## Democracy

Australia is a **democracy**. This means that representatives chosen by the Australian people govern Australia.

Qualities of a Democracy:

- all adults should have the right to vote – freely and secretly;
- there should be one vote of one value for every person;
- elections should be held regularly;
- any adult should be able to stand for election;
- groups and parties should be able to nominate candidates for election;
- laws controlling elections, counting votes, etc should be fair and clear;
- the result of the election should be fair and accepted as fair by the community.

# HOW SHOULD A NATION BE RULED?

## Design a tower simulation (30 minutes)

**1a.** To revise the principles and processes of the three different systems, divide the class into three even groups to produce a design for a new tower to celebrate the nation. They have 10 minutes to plan and create their design.

### Group 1 (absolute monarchy):

One person is nominated (by the teacher) as the boss. This person will design and draw the tower. The boss can discuss what the tower might look like, but does not have to listen. The boss is the only person responsible for the design. The others can watch and follow directions (Colour that in...Draw me...) but cannot comment. The boss can exclude any person from the task.

### Group 2 (direct democracy):

The whole group is responsible for the tower. Every person must be involved and *all* decisions *must* be made by discussion and vote (size, shape, colour). All decisions must be made first. Any changes or new ideas must be voted on (work must stop and all group members must vote).

### Group 3 (representative democracy):

The group discusses the design and what it should look like. The group must then select the best two or three people to work on the design. These two or three are responsible for producing a tower that the group likes. They can consult the group and/or receive advice at any time.

**1b.** Debrief: report the group response to the rest of the class.

- Did you get the task finished? Why/why not?
- Who is happy with the design?
- What were the pluses/minuses/interesting points about the way your group worked?

**1c.** Specific points for each group to consider:

- Group 1 (absolute monarchy): If this person was good/bad, will the next boss (their son/daughter) be better/worse/the same?
- Group 2 (direct democracy): What would happen if your group size doubled?
- Group 3 (representative democracy): What could you do if one (or more) of your designers was not working well?

**WHY DO WE GO FROM 1 TO 3? WHERE'S 2?**

### Campaign Trail (25 minutes)

**3a.** Consolidate knowledge by having the class divide into groups to develop an advertising campaign.

- Group 1 (absolute monarchy): Campaign for rule by one.
- Group 2 (direct democracy): Campaign for rule by all.
- Group 3 (representative democracy): Campaign for rule by elected representatives.
- Group 4 (Citizens' rights group): Campaign for the right of citizens.

**3b.** Students prepare a two-minute campaign slot to advertise the aspects of their ruling system (Groups 1-3) or citizens' rights. Preparation may include:

- Posters, slogans, placards
- Dramatisation (television advertisement)

**3c.** Final presentation: Group response 'in role'.

- Each group gets their ideas across in two minutes
- They promote their system of rule
- They advertise their rights

*Discovering Democracy Middle Primary Unit, p18.*

### Australia's form of government (30 minutes)

**1a.** Discuss the term 'democracy'. List ideas on the board. Ask students to identify any elements of the previous systems that were democratic.

**1b.** Australia's form of government is called a **representative parliamentary democracy**. Ask students to suggest what this term means.

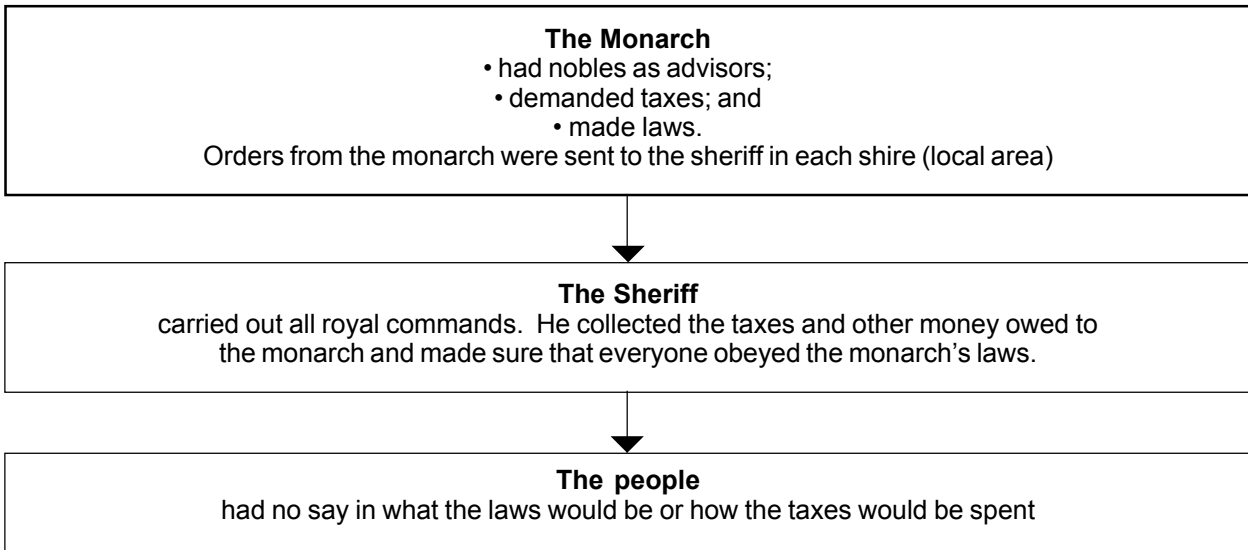
**1c.** Ask: 'How do we select people for parliament?'

People **vote** for politicians who will go to our national parliament in Canberra and **represent** the views of the people. The people choose who will be their **representative** in parliament, to discuss and debate about how we are governed.

**1d.** Distribute copies of Handout 2 and compare and confirm student ideas. Use Handout 1 for reference.

Parliament is the **legislature**, which means it is the place where decisions about how we are governed are made.

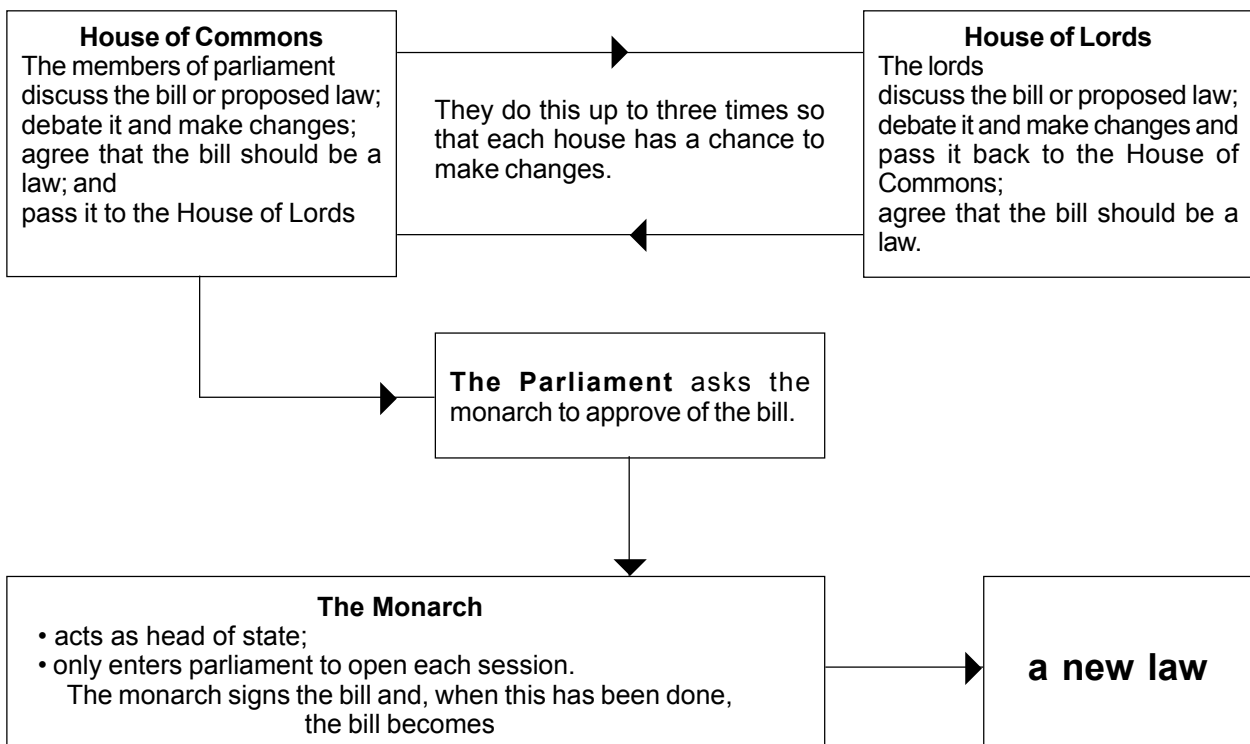
**Before there was a British Parliament:**

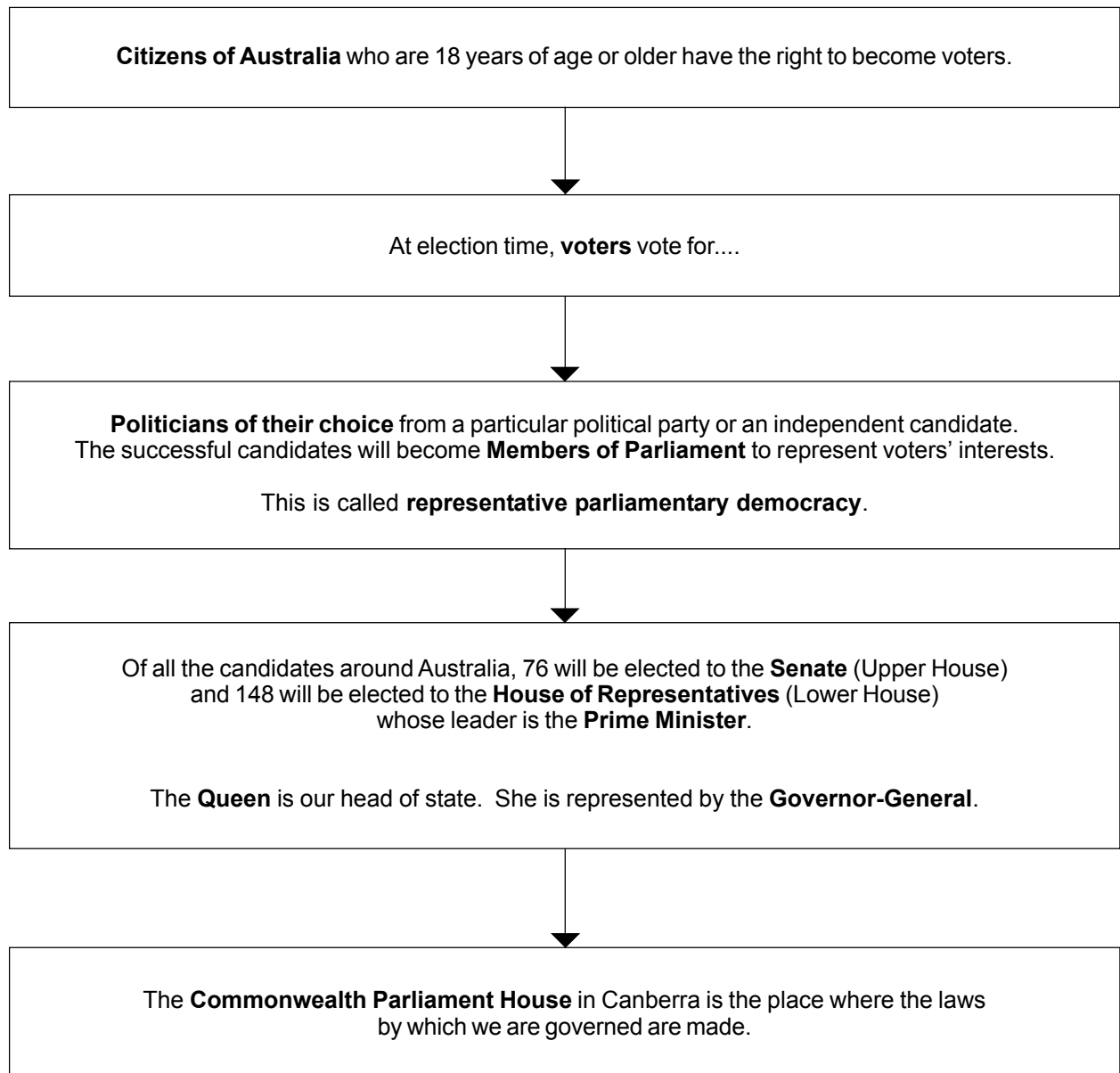


**The modern British Parliament (the Westminster system):**

Parliament makes the rules or laws by which the people of Great Britain are governed. Parliament, in Britain, consists of the monarch (king or queen), the House of Lords (lords and bishops) and the House of Commons (members of parliament who are voted for by the people).

To make a new law, a member takes it to the House of Commons:





# WHY DO WE NEED GOVERNMENTS?

Listed below are the main things governments do for us in Australia. Underneath each point, give examples of the sorts of things that would happen if we **didn't** have governments handling this for us.

## **Governments: 1. Make laws**

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## **2. Provide services**

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## **3. Manage our money to make Australia prosper.**

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## **4. Plan cities, towns and the countryside so that they benefit everyone.**

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## **5. Umpire between people who clash because their needs and desires differ.**

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