



Teacher Resource

Australia's Constitution

Focus Questions

Discuss the BTN story as a class and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following:

1. What is a constitution?
2. When was Australia's Constitution created?
 - a. 1888
 - b. 1901
 - c. 1967
3. What is the process called to change Australia's Constitution?
4. What will the next Australian referendum be about?
5. What questions do you have about this story?

Activity: What do you see, think and wonder?

Students will watch the BTN Australia's Constitution story, then respond to the following questions:

- What did you SEE in this video?
- What do you THINK about what you saw in this video?
- What did you LEARN from this story?
- What QUESTIONS do you have?

Activity: Class Discussion

After watching the BTN story, hold a class discussion using the following discussion starters.

- What is the Constitution?
- When was the Australian Constitution written?
- Why do we have a constitution?
- Can the Constitution be changed? How?
- How do you think being left out of the Constitution affected Aboriginal people?



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KEY LEARNING

Students will learn about the role of Australia's Constitution. Students will describe the process for constitutional change through a referendum.

CURRICULUM

HASS – Year 5

The influence of people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, on the environmental characteristics of Australian places.

HASS – Year 6

Experiences of Australian democracy and citizenship, including the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, migrants, women and children.

Key figures, events and ideas that led to Australia's Federation and Constitution.

HASS – Year 7

Sequence information about events, developments, periods and phenomena using a variety of discipline-appropriate formats and conventions including chronological frameworks that use dating conventions.

Civics & Citizenship – Year 7

The process for constitutional change through a referendum.

This document may contain the names and images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people now deceased. It also contains links to sites that may use images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people now deceased.

Activity: Glossary

Students will brainstorm a list of key words that relate to the BTN Australia's Constitution story. Here are some words to get them started. Challenge students by asking them to use words from their class glossary to write their own sentences. Alternatively, students can make their own crossword puzzle or word find.

CONSTITUTION	DEMOCRACY	INDIGENOUS RIGHTS
REFERENDUM	FEDERATION	RECOGNITION

Further investigation: Tricky words

Students will choose additional keywords and terms to add to their class glossary that are tricky. For example, constitutional recognition, constitutional reform, and census. Students will find a definition and explain to their classmates what the keywords mean.

Activity: Inquiry Research

Discuss the information raised in the BTN Australia's Constitution story. What questions were raised in the discussion and what are the gaps in students' knowledge? The following KWLH organiser provides students with a framework to explore their knowledge on this topic.

What do I <u>k</u> now?	What do I <u>w</u> ant to know?	What have I <u>l</u> earnt?	<u>H</u> ow will I find out?

Students will develop their own question/s to research or choose one or more of the questions below. Encourage students to collect and record information from a wide variety of sources and present the information they find in an interesting way.

- What is a constitution?
- What was the reason for the change to the Australian Constitution in 1967?
- How do you think being left out of the Constitution affected Aboriginal people?
- What is a referendum? How do they work and when was a referendum last held in Australia?
- What is the history of Australia's referendums? Plot your findings on a timeline.
- Explain why the 1967 Referendum was important in Australia's human rights history.
- Create a timeline of significant events that have contributed to equal rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Write a summary for one key event, which answers the 5 W's – Who, What, Where, When and Why?
- What is the Uluru Statement from the Heart?

Activity: Classroom Constitution

Start this lesson by holding a hands-on activity to get students thinking about fairness and equality. Divide your class into small groups. Each group will be required to carry out the same task (for example, building a bridge or house), however, each group will be provided with different resources.

Task: In small groups create a small bridge or house using only the resources provided specifically to your group.

Resources: Group 1 - paper, cardboard, scissors, sticky tape, and coloured pencils.
Group 2 - paper, sticky tape, string. Group 3 – paper and cardboard only.

Discussion: How did the students feel during this activity? Discuss what fair means and how it relates to equality.

Classroom Constitution and Referendum

Students will create their own classroom constitution and then hold a class referendum. Facilitate a class discussion to get your students thinking about what their classroom constitution might look like.

- Work as a class to brainstorm a list of values. Choose 5 core values, with each value having its own constitutional statement.
- Think of some rules and expectations of your class.
- How will you make sure all students are treated fairly and can have their fair say?
- How would it make you feel if you were left out of your classroom constitution?

Steps to creating a classroom constitution and holding a class referendum:

Consider your classroom as a country. Give your country a name and describe how it is run. This is your classroom's constitution.



Review your classroom constitution; does it include equal rights for everyone in your class? How can you improve it? Suggest any changes you would like to make to your classroom constitution. Remember any changes to your classroom constitution need to be voted on in a referendum.



As a class write a referendum question. Explain arguments for and against the change you want to make to your classroom constitution.



Hold a classroom vote asking to either approve or reject the suggested change to your classroom constitution. Create a voting card and polling booth to lodge your votes.



Count the votes.

Activity: Visual literacy

Below are photographs depicting significant events in Australia's history of Indigenous citizenship rights. Look at the images below (alternatively find your own images using the internet) and then respond to the following questions:

- What is happening in the image?
- Where do you think it was taken?
- How do you think the people in the image might be feeling? Describe the mood of the photograph.
- Is there a message about democracy that comes across in the image? Explain.
- What question/s would you like to ask the people in the image?
- Create a caption for each image.

After students have responded to the above questions click on the link for each image to find out what is happening and learn more about this significant event.



Image – [National Museum Australia](#)
BTN story – [Bridge Walk Anniversary](#)



Image – [National Museum Australia](#)
BTN story – [Referendum Campaign](#)



Image – [National Museum Australia](#)
BTN story – [Wave Hill](#)



Image – [National Museum Australia](#)
BTN story – [Freedom Ride](#)

Students will create a timeline which looks at key events in Australia's reconciliation history. Students will include the following in the timeline: Mabo decision, Native title, 1967 Referendum, Bridge Walk, National Apology, Redfern Speech, Bringing them Home report, tent embassy, Close the Gap campaign and Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Activity: What is Constitutional Recognition?

Constitutional recognition is something a lot of Indigenous people in Australia have been campaigning for, for a long time. But what exactly is it and why is it such a big deal? Watch BTN's Explainer on Constitutional Recognition as a class and hold a class discussion to clarify terms and meanings. [Link to BTN Explainer](#)



Activity: Referendum Campaign

As a class, watch the BTN [Referendum Campaign](#) story to find out about the campaign to give First Australians a voice in parliament and recognition in the Constitution. Discuss the story as a class and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following:

1. To change the Constitution there needs to be a _____.
2. What did people vote on in the 1967 Referendum?
3. How many successful referendums has Australia had?
4. What is the Uluru Statement from the Heart?
5. What has the new Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese said about supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart?



Useful Websites

- [Referendum Campaign](#) – BTN
- [Garma Festival 2022](#) – BTN
- [Constitutional Recognition](#) – BTN
- [Constitutional Recognition Explained](#) – BTN
- [Civics Special](#) – BTN
- [The Australian Constitution in Focus](#) – PEO
- [1967 Referendum](#) – BTN
- [What is the Australian Constitution?](#) – Human Rights Commission (YouTube)