



Teacher Resource

Voice to Parliament Update

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 does Indigenous Voice to Parliament mean?
2. The idea for a Voice to Parliament came from a meeting in 2017 with Indigenous delegates. What is the name of the document that was written?
3. A referendum is needed if you want to change Australia's _____.
4. Australia has had 44 referendums. How many have been successful?
 - a. 8
 - b. 22
 - c. 44
5. Can you think of reasons why Indigenous voices may not have been heard in the past?

Activity: Class Discussion

After watching the BTN Voice to Parliament Update story, hold a class discussion using the following discussion starters.

- What is a referendum?
- What is the Voice to Parliament?
- Why do we need a referendum?
- When will the referendum happen?
- What needs to happen for the referendum to be successful?
- What questions would you like to ask about the Voice to Parliament?
- What questions do you have about referendums?



Language and Vocabulary

Voice to Parliament, referendum, First Nations voice, double majority, rights and responsibilities, democracy, vote, poll, Australian Constitution, Uluru Statement from the Heart, constitutional recognition.

EPISODE 18

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KEY LEARNING

Students will explore the purpose of an Indigenous Voice to Parliament. Students will explore 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: The Right to Voice

Class Discussion

To help students understand the right to voice, hold a class discussion asking students if they know what it means to have a voice. Ask students to share their own thoughts and experiences related to expressing their opinions and being heard. Use a mind map to record students' responses to the following questions.

- Do you know what it means to have a voice?
- Why do you think it is important to express yourself?
- Think about a situation in your life where you have felt your voice was important.
- How does it feel when you are not able to share your thoughts or ideas?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you wanted to speak up but couldn't? What happened?
- How do you feel when you get to have your say?
- How can we make sure everyone has a chance to voice their opinion in class or at home?
- What are some real-life examples of people using their right to voice? For example, protesting for change, voting, writing an article or book or speaking up in school meetings.

Explain to students that rights come with responsibilities. Discuss the importance of expressing oneself responsibly, such as:

- Respecting the rights and opinions of others.
- Using language that is respectful and avoids harm.
- Understanding the consequences of our words and actions.

Reflection

Ask students to write a short paragraph reflecting on why they believe it is important for all individuals to have a voice in society. Explain to students that the right to voice is essential in a democratic society. Having the right to voice allows people to participate in decision-making, share their experiences, and advocate for change.

Activity

Students will think about what is important to them in their community and express this creatively through a letter to their local Member of Parliament, an artwork, or a poem. Before starting this activity, students will think about that they appreciate about their community, the issues they observe and what they would like to see improved. Students will write their ideas and thoughts using dot points or on post-it notes.

Letter to your MP

- Write a letter to your local Member of Parliament (MP).
- Your letter will need to address the issues or improvements you would like to see in your community.
- Include language that is persuasive, respectful, and specific.

Artwork

- Create an artwork that represents your thoughts and values about your community.
- Your artwork can include drawings, painting, collages or other mediums.
- Use colours, symbols and imagery that help convey your message.

Poetry

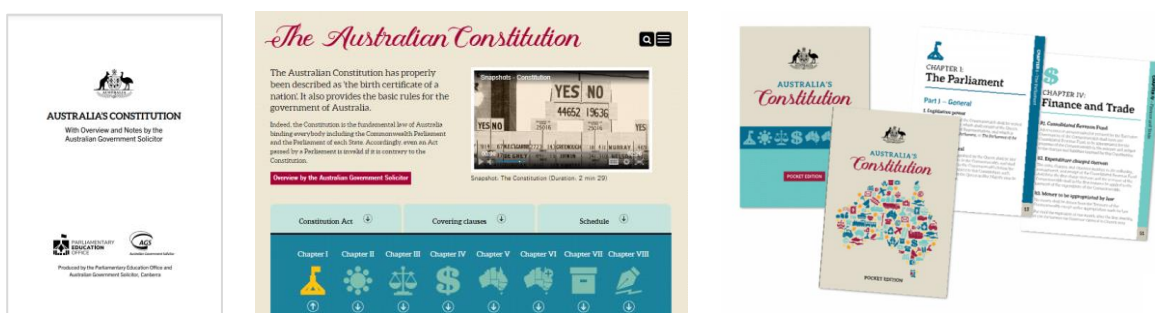
- Write a poem to express your feelings and thoughts about an issue in your community that is important to you.
- Use imagery and descriptive language to help convey your message.
- It could be haiku, acrostic, black-out or another type of poetry.

Activity: Exploring Australia's Constitution

In this activity students will explore what the Australian Constitution is, including its purpose, history, and significance. Begin by asking students if they have heard about the Australian Constitution and if they know what it is.

Consider providing a copy of the Constitution to your students to look at. There are several ways for students to explore the Australian Constitution, including:

- [Download and print a copy](#) of the Australian Constitution (Parliament of Australia). Students can bind their own copies of the document with red ribbon.
- [View an online copy](#) of the Australian Constitution (PEO). This online document allows you to skip to various chapters within the document.
- [Purchase a pocket edition](#) of the Australian Constitution (PEO)



Australia's Constitution can be used by classroom teachers when undertaking a unit of work on the Constitution. The PEO highlights parts of the Constitution which are useful to explore as a class. Use the Constitution as a starting point to explore the following topics:

- the right to vote ([section 41](#))
- the powers of the Australian Parliament (sections [51](#) and [52](#))
- how the Constitution can be changed ([section 128](#))

Activity: Referendum Research

Discuss the information raised in the BTN Voice to Parliament Update 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.

Research Questions

- What is the Voice to Parliament? Write a summary which answers the 5 W's – Who, What, Where, When and Why? Include the following words in your explanation: Uluru Statement from the Heart, referendum, First Nations Voice and constitution.
- What is the Australian Constitution? When and why was it written?
- What are the steps to change the Australian Constitution? Explain the process of a referendum. How many votes does a referendum need to be successful?
- How many referendums have been held in Australia? Use a timeline to highlight important referendums in Australia.
- Why was the 1967 Referendum important in Australia's human rights history? Use the term constitutional recognition in your explanation.
- 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?

Activity: Portrait

In this activity students will identify and understand the importance of individuals who have used their voice to make a positive change in society. As a class discuss the importance of individuals or groups who have used their voice to make a positive change in society and brainstorm a list of people that have made a significant impact.

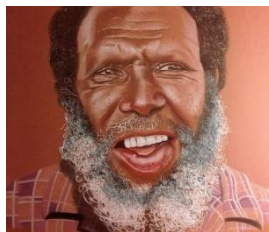
Below are examples of Australians who have fought for the right to voice, such as civil rights activists, suffragettes, or advocates for free speech.



[ABC Fierce Girls – Oodgeroo Noonuccal](#)



[BTN – Australian Women in Politics](#)



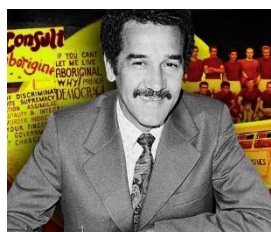
[BTN – Mabo Day](#)



[ABC Fierce Girls – Edith Cowan](#)



[ABC Fierce Girls – Fanny Finch](#)



[BTN – Charlie Perkins](#)



[ABC Fierce Girls – Nyadol Nyuon](#)



[BTN – Freedom Ride](#)

Students will then choose one of these people or groups that they find inspiring. Alternatively, they can choose someone in their community who has used their voice to make a positive change in society.

Students will use the following as a guide:

- Research the individual and record their achievements, their values, and the impact they have had on society.
- Use a range of primary and secondary sources during your research including biographies, articles, letters, speeches, artworks, photographs, and news stories.
- Plan and create a portrait of the person or group. Think about the expressions, symbolism, and colours that reflect the person, their values, and their impact.
- Explore and experiment with different techniques and mediums to produce a portrait.
- Present your portrait to the class, introducing who the person is, the impact they had and then explain your portrait and what each of the elements in the portrait mean.
- Organise a class exhibition of your artworks to share with the school and local community.

Activity: Classroom Constitution

In this activity, students will work together to create a classroom constitution, understand the importance of making decisions democratically, and then participate in a class referendum to vote on classroom rules.

Classroom Activity

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 (rules and procedures). This is your classroom's constitution.

Review and discuss 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. Use this PEO activity to help run your [class referendum](#).

Hold a classroom vote asking to either approve or reject the suggested change to your classroom constitution. Create a ballot paper and polling booth to lodge your votes. Visit the AEC to see what a ballot paper looks like and learn [how to vote in a referendum](#).



Count the votes.

Useful Websites

- [What is the Indigenous Voice to Parliament? Here's how it would work and who's for and against it](#) – ABC News
- [It's official — the Voice referendum is happening. Here's what comes next](#) – ABC News
- [Voice to Parliament](#) – BTN
- [Australia's Constitution](#) – BTN
- [Referendum Campaign](#) – BTN
- [Referendums and Plebiscites](#) – PEO
- [The Statement](#) – The Uluru Statement
- [Referendums and Plebiscites](#) – PEO