

# Law Enforcement, Courts and the Role of Citizens

## Lesson Ideas Pack



# Introduction

We support the view that schooling should develop a sense of community engagement in students by increasing their potential to be informed, responsible, ethical and active participants in society.

Through practical tasks relating to real life experiences, these *free* resources help students develop a positive attitude towards their role in society. They enable teachers to select lesson ideas within a theme in any order, to best suit **curriculum requirements** and the **interest** of students.

We developed these to make the content of the Australian Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Civics and Citizenship syllabus for Years 7-10 *more engaging*.

To make things easy, lesson ideas link directly to the Australian and Victorian Curriculum content codes and key concepts, namely; *Democratic Values, The Westminster System, Justice, Participation, and Rights and Responsibilities*.

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## Year Level Description and Required Content

### Year 7

An understanding of the Civics and Citizenship concepts is developed through a focus on Australia's democracy and legal system. The teaching ideas in this resource assist students to gain knowledge and understanding of rights and responsibilities of being a participant in the legal system and how it provides justice for all. *Links to curriculum code:* [ACHCK050](#) / [VCCCL022](#)

### Year 8

An understanding of the Civics and Citizenship concepts is developed through a focus on Australia's laws, the responsibilities and freedoms of citizens and participation in the democratic process. The teaching ideas in this resource assist students to gain knowledge and understanding of how the role of citizens within the Westminster system ensures that our democratic values are protected. *Links to curriculum code:* [ACHCK062](#) / [VCCCG020](#)

### Year 9

An understanding of the Civics and Citizenship concepts is developed through a focus on how Australia's legal system works to support a democratic and just society. The teaching ideas in this resource assist students to gain knowledge and understanding of a key principle of Australia's justice system, that of equity before the law. *Links to curriculum codes:* [ACHCK077](#) / [VCCCL033](#) & [ACHCK078](#) / [VCCCL034](#)

## Year 10

An understanding of the Civics and Citizenship concepts is developed through a focus on Australia's global roles and responsibilities and the values and practices that enable a resilient democracy to be sustained. The teaching ideas in this resource assist students to gain knowledge and understanding regarding the safeguards that protect Australia's democratic system and society.

Links to curriculum code: [ACHCK094](#) / [VCCCC036](#)

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## Learning Intentions

### Resource Focus

Students understand that citizens have a role to play in supporting law enforcement and ensuring that the justice system is fair and equitable.

### Students Understand:

- How the role of policing has evolved over time
  - That the role of law enforcement varies between countries
  - That citizens' have an important role in supporting law enforcement
  - That in Australia an arrested person retains their rights as a citizen
  - That citizens' play an important part in supporting our democratic values through their roles in law enforcement and the court system
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## Lesson Ideas

### Tuning In

In the past local towns and cities often paid for a small group of men to ensure law and order especially at night. A professional police service first came into being in the UK in 1829 under an Act of Parliament introduced by the Home Secretary Sir Robert Peel.

- Ask students to explore the [history of their state or territory police force](#) and use an app such as [Sutori](#) to create a chronological timeline showing significant dates in their police force history. Students then explore the relevant state or territory police [historical society/museum website](#) to conduct additional research and complete the following activity as a class.

For each event/change, students pose an explanation as to why it was introduced (discuss students' ideas). Add to your timeline each event/change explanation and conduct a group sharing of completed timelines. Students use this information to answer the question: Why has the way the police operate changed over time?

## Lesson Idea 1: Policing In Australia Today

- Students read the extract from the Australian Government's [Life in Australia: Australian Values and Principles](#), written for new immigrants. Divide the class into eight groups. Allocate a value identified in the extract to each group. Using the advice provided by the extract, each group identifies and explains the reasons for the inclusion of their value. Groups report back their findings and discuss their reasoning. (Remind students that the audience for the document are people who have come from another country).
- Ask students to watch [Here's What a Day in the Life of a WA Police Officer Looks Like](#) or [Be A Force for Good](#) video and create a poster/pamphlet, to be given to new migrants on their arrival, explaining the role of the police in Australia today (students should consider the appropriateness of the design for a multi ethnic audience).

## Lesson Idea 2: Policing In Australian States and Territories

- Using the HASS inquiry process, students research the following question: How do the police in your state or territory achieve their [strategic intentions](#)? Students should provide explanations for each piece of evidence they use.

[State and Territory Police](#) – a list of websites to assist students with their inquiry process  
[Here's What a Day in the Life of a WA Police Officer Looks Like](#) – video  
[Be a Force for Good](#) – video

## Lesson Idea 3: The Role Of Citizens In Law Enforcement

- [Citizen's Power of Arrest](#). In Australia, a person can arrest someone if they think that they have or are in the process of committing an offence. They must abide by the law ensuring that no undue force is used and should hand the person to a law enforcement officer as soon as is practicable.  
As a class, listen to [Citizen's Arrest](#) and discuss with students the positive and negative aspects of the provision of citizens' arrest. Conduct a class debate summarising the positive and negative aspects of citizens' arrest. Prior to conducting the debate, you may wish to explain the debating process using the student handout [Debating Structure](#), found on the Debating South Australia website, or by sharing [The Debaters Association of Victoria](#) link that explains the speaker roles. Students can be assessed using the [Debate Rubric](#).

Further teaching ideas regarding this topic are provided in *Democratic Values* Lesson Idea #4.

- Seeking or providing information to the police.  
Depending on the purpose of the call to the police there are 3 numbers that can be used. Which one should you use and when? Put the following numbers on the board and use a call out to gather information from the class.

000 (for emergencies or life-threatening situations)

131 444 (when police assistance or attendance is required)

1800 333 000 (reporting crime information anonymously through Crime Stoppers)

Ask students to think about when people should call the Police and not Crime Stoppers. Provide students with the [Who Are You Going To Contact?](#) worksheet to complete.

Why is it important that citizens can anonymously provide law enforcement agencies, like Crime Stoppers, with information about crimes?

## Lesson Idea 4: The Court System In Australia

- In Australia, an important principle, enshrined in the constitution, is that the Judiciary is independent of Parliament. The idea of this separation of powers means that court processes and decisions cannot be influenced by Parliament or Executive. Watch the first segment of the video, [High Court Documentary](#). Discuss with students what might happen in countries where the separation of powers does not exist.
- In Australia, each state and territory have their own court system. There are four federal courts - high, federal, family and federal circuit. They all have specialist roles with the high court being the court of final appeal regarding judgements from all other courts in Australia. Ask students to view the [Australian Court hierarchy diagram](#) and create a Word application diagram to name each court and the role it plays. Links to each state and territory parliament are provided [here](#). As a group, discuss their findings and why an appeal process regarding court decisions is important.
- Law making in Australia is divided between parliament (statute laws) and courts (common law). All laws must follow a set of principles, Rule of Law, to ensure that they are fair and protect an individual's rights and freedoms.

For further teaching ideas regarding making laws and the rule of law, visit the *Laws and Crime* package.

- The legal system maintains equity and justice by providing support to citizens who are arrested (remember that in Australia there is the presumption of innocence until the courts have proven guilt).

Discuss as a class, why the presumption of innocence is so important in a democratic system that promotes active citizenship? Students should consider how this may encourage more people to use Crime Stoppers.

- Provide students with either the [What To Do If Charged With A Criminal Offence](#) information sheet from the Frances Burt law Education program or [The Victorian Legal Aid Criminal Offences](#) information sheet. Students discuss the rights of an arrested citizen and investigate one of the organisations identified in the information sheet.

Divide students into groups of 6 and explain that their task is to create a short video describing police powers and youth rights with the police in their state or territory. Before they create a storyboard using an app such as [Penultimate](#) and film the story, ask students to explore the following website: [Police powers and my rights with the Police](#) and select their specific state or territory. Once the videos are completed, share them as a class and choose the most informative presentation.

## Lesson Idea 5: The Role Of Citizens In The Court System

Why is jury duty a responsibility of Australian citizenship?

- To assist in making the court system as fair as possible major trials require 12 to 18 citizens to attend as jurors. Their job is to decide, from the evidence presented, if a person is innocent or guilty. Conduct a class call out and document a list of possible positive and negative aspects of trials by jury.
- Using the WA government website, students watch the 15minute video [A Fair Trial](#). Students make notes on how the process is made as fair as possible for both jurors and the accused. Refer to the list of Trial by Jury positives and negatives to ascertain whether there are processes to negate any of the concerns. Students then use their notes to create an information pamphlet that could be given to citizens who are attending jury duty for the first time. Or
- Using the Supreme Court of Victoria resource, students watch the mock trial video, [One Punch, a Lifetime of Consequences](#). Students make notes on how the process is made as fair as possible for both jurors and the accused. Referring to the [Australian Law Reform Commission](#) website, students identify the key attributes of a fair trial to ascertain whether there are processes to negate any of the concerns. Students then use their notes to create an information pamphlet that could be given to citizens who are attending jury duty for the first time.

- Discuss how the ‘safety net’ of the jury process may encourage more citizens to provide information about crimes to Crime Stoppers.
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## Learning Resources

### Tuning In

- [History of State and Territory Police Forces](#) - information sheet
- [Historical Societies / Museums of States and Territory Police Forces](#) – information sheet

### Lesson Idea 1 – Policing in Australia Today

- [Life in Australia: Australian Values and Principles](#) – information extract
- [Here’s What a Day in the Life of a WA Police Officer Looks Like](#) – video
- [Be a Force for Good](#) - video

### Lesson Idea 2 – Policing in Australian States & Territories

- [Strategic Intentions of State & Territory Police Forces](#) – information sheet
- [State & Territory Police Forces](#) websites – information sheet
- [Here’s What a Day in the Life of a WA Police Officer Looks Like](#) – video
- [Be a Force for Good](#) - video

### Lesson Idea 3 – The Role of Citizens in Law Enforcement

- [Citizen’s Power of Arrest](#) – website
- [Citizen’s Arrest](#) – radio interview
- [Debating Structure](#) - Debating South Australia information sheet
- [The Debaters Association of Victoria](#) – website
- [Debate Rubric](#) – assessing sheet
- [Who Are You Going To Contact?](#) – worksheet

### Lesson Idea 4 – The Court System in Australia

- [High Court Documentary](#) – video
- [Australian Court hierarchy diagram](#) – diagram
- [State and Territory court systems](#) – information sheet
- [What To Do If Charged With A Criminal Offence](#) - information sheet
- [The Victorian Legal Aid Criminal Offences](#) – website
- [Penultimate](#) – app
- [Police Powers and my rights with the Police](#) - website

## Lesson Idea 5 – The Role of Citizens in The Court System

- [A Fair Trial](#) – video
- [One Punch, a Lifetime of Consequences](#) – video
- [Australian Law Reform Commission](#) - website

### Further Student Enquiry

- [Role of Police in Australia](#) – website
- [Youth and the Law](#) - website
- [The Law Society of Western Australia Education resources](#) – website
- [The Victoria Law Foundation](#) – website

### Assessment

- [History of State and Territory Police Forces](#)- information sheet
- [Sutori](#) – app
- [Historical Societies / Museums for States and Territory Police Forces](#) – information sheet
- [Strategic Intentions of State and Territory Police Forces](#) – information sheet
- [Debating Structure](#) - Debating South Australia information sheet
- [The Debaters Association of Victoria](#) - website
- [Debate rubric](#) – assessing sheet
- [Who are you going to contact?](#) - worksheet
- [A Fair Trial](#) – video
- [One Punch, a Lifetime of Consequences](#) - video
- [Marking Key](#)

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## Further Student Enquiry

- Students can compare and contrast the [role of the police in Australia](#) and another country.
  - Students can investigate several issues related to [youth and the law](#).
  - For student court visits, scripted court scenarios and other legal and civic teaching resources visit either [The Law Society of Western Australia Education Resources](#) or [The Victoria Law Foundation](#) website.
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# Assessment

## Formative

- Ask students to explore the [history of their state or territory police force](#) using this link and use an app such as [Sutori](#) to create a chronological timeline showing significant dates in their police force history. Students then explore the following state or territory [police historical society/museum websites](#) to conduct additional research and complete the following activity as a class.

For each event/change, students pose an explanation as to why it was introduced (discuss students' ideas). Students add each event/change to their timeline and conduct a group sharing of completed timelines. Students use this information to answer the question: Why has the way the police operate changed over time?

- Using the HASS inquiry process students research the following question: How do the police achieve their [strategic intentions](#)? Students should provide explanations for each piece of evidence they use.
- Conduct a class debate on the positive and negative aspects of the provision of citizens' arrest using the [Debating Structure](#), found on the Debating South Australia website, [The Debaters Association of Victoria](#) website and the [Debate Rubric](#).
- Students complete the worksheet [Who are you going to contact?](#)
- Students watch the video [A Fair Trial](#) or [One Punch, a Lifetime of Consequences](#). Students make notes on how the process is made as fair as possible for both jurors and the accused.

## Summative

- Students devise a poster/pamphlet, to be given to new migrants on their arrival, explaining the role of the police in Australia today (students should consider the appropriateness of the design for a multi-ethnic audience).
- Using the HASS inquiry process, students research the following question: How do the police achieve their mission statement? Students should provide explanations for each piece of evidence they use.
- Students answer the question: Australia's law enforcement and justice system are improved through active citizenship.
- Students investigate the rights of an arrested citizen.
- Students investigate the processes in place that encourage citizens to use Crime Stoppers for reporting crimes
- Students compare and contrast the Crime Stoppers program in Australia with its counterpart in another country.

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This material can also be [accessed online](#)

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