

Civics and Citizenship

Laws and Crime

Lesson Ideas Pack



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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. Digital resources embedded in these resources support the [Social Media Minimum Age obligation](#) (SMMA obligation) and have been chosen with careful consideration to support learning and wellbeing. Some resources feature YouTube videos that can be seen without logging into an account. These should be viewed by students with teacher support.

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*. The activities provided are just suggestions and should be adjusted to suit the student cohort.

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 how Australia's legal system aims to provide justice, through the rule of law.

Links to curriculum codes: [AC9HC7K03 / VC2HC8K05](#)

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 the types of law in Australia including criminal law, civil law, and the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law. *Links to curriculum codes:* [AC9HC8K03 / VC2HC8K07](#) & [AC9HC8K04 / VC2HC8K08](#)

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 regarding the key principles of Australia's justice system, including equity before the law, independent judiciary, right to appeal and the factors that can undermine the application of the principles of justice.

Links to curriculum codes: [AC9HC9K04](#) / [VC2HC10K05](#)

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 codes: [AC9HC10K01](#) / [VC2HC10K03](#)

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Learning Intentions

Resource Focus

Community safety and wellbeing is enhanced when individuals understand the law and take action to prevent crime.

This resource provides students in years 7-10 with the opportunity to explore how Australia's democracy, and other democracies, may be undermined, and identify the safeguards that protect Australia's democratic system. They explore the types of laws and how laws are made within the Westminster system and describe the rights and responsibilities of participants in the process.

Students Understand:

- The principles of The Rule of Law
- That laws are based on values, beliefs and society norms
- The historical basis of our Westminster system
- The categories of laws and crime in Australia
- How to interpret crime statistics and the way the media reports crime
- How statute laws are developed

Lesson Ideas

Tuning In

To introduce the concept of The Rule of Law, ask students to watch the video [What is the Rule of Law](#) and take notes about:

- the meaning of the concept
- its history
- the key principles.

Students then use their notes and an app such as *Creately* to design a spider diagram titled The Rule of Law. Once completed, students pair and share their findings then discuss as a class whether they found any aspects of the video particularly interesting.

Lesson Idea 1: The Rule Of Law

In Australia, our legal system is based on the principle of The Rule of Law. The Rule of Law is based on a set of principles that our legal system and government follow.

- Put each principle on the board and in turn discuss why students think each one is important and how we ensure that it is provided.

Rule of Law principles:

- Consistent, fair and impartial decisions about legal matters
- Protection of individual's rights, freedoms
- Ways to settle disputes between parties according to the law
- Laws that are knowable, followable and fit for purpose.

Assist students to identify that we have legal institutions such as courts, fair trials, lawyers to help us interpret the law, laws that are clearly understood, that people are deemed innocent until proven guilty and the judiciary are independent of government. [The Rule of Law Education](#) website provides further information about each principle and can be used for further student investigation.

- Discuss with students why Australian citizens are more likely to take community action, such as contacting Crime Stoppers, if they know what our laws are and the protections for the individual that the rule of law provides. Ask students to create a Crime Stoppers marketing poster targeted at secondary students that includes the Rule of Law principles. The most effective posters could be exhibited in the classroom or around the school.

Lesson Idea 2: Origin Of Our Legal System

The right to justice and a free trial is something we expect from living in our democratic society. Today not every country's legal system has these protections. So where did these rights come from? Prior to Federation in 1901, the majority of new migrants to Australia came from the United Kingdom so the political and legal processes used today are based on the UK's Westminster system. The origins of the Westminster system can be traced back through history to a very important document called the Magna Carta.

- Show students the [Magna Carta and the emergence of Parliament](#) video or the video animation [Magna Carta: The foundation of the Rule of Law](#) from the Magna Carta website hosted by the British Library. Students watch the video and discuss what was so important about clause 39 that it is still used today as a basis for our laws.
- Students view the handout [Magna Carta](#) Resource from the Frances Burt Law Education Program website, or the animation [Magna Carta – the story of our freedom](#).
Students use the information in the document to draw a timeline titled: *The Westminster system: its historical legacy*. Students include an explanation of the important events in the development of the Westminster system. (Use this as a summative assessment activity.) Students may wish to create an online timeline using an app such as READWRITETHINK's [Timeline](#).

Lesson Idea 3: Making Laws

We have two ways in which laws are made. **Statute laws** are made through passing an Act of Parliament whilst **common law** is made by court procedures and decisions made by judges and juries.

Show the video [About Parliament – Making A Law](#). Students take notes of the various steps in the Australian Parliament. Discuss with students why this process seems so complex. Students draw up a flow diagram of the steps involved explaining why each step is necessary. As an extension activity, students can research their state or territory parliamentary law-making processes; create a flow diagram describing the steps taken; and; as a class, compare and contrast the Australian Parliament and state/territory parliament law-making processes.

Lesson Idea 4: Types Of Laws

- In Australia, we have both State and Federal laws with the latter applying to everyone in Australia. These laws are divided into Criminal and Civil. Criminal laws are designed to protect people from wrongdoing and can be prosecuted by the police whilst civil laws are designed to

solve problems between groups or individuals. Students write their own definitions and examples of criminal and civil law.

- Ask students which of these types of law is the focus for reporting to Crime Stoppers? (Criminal law). To support our democratic values and help safeguard our society, students explain why people should report, through Crime Stoppers, when these criminal laws are broken. (Use this information for formative assessment.)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people also have Customary Lore. These are lores that have developed over time and are used to regulate behaviour and connect people to each other and the land. Aboriginal Lore refers to the traditional systems of knowledge, customs, and beliefs passed down through generations within Australian Aboriginal cultures. Unlike the Western concept of "Law," which is often seen as a set of rules enforced by a central authority, Lore is an all-encompassing spiritual framework that governs every aspect of life, including social behaviour, environmental management, and spiritual practice.

They may vary between different Aboriginal groups and, although this is still being debated, they are not considered part of Australian law. Depending on the interest of your student cohort you may wish to explore customary law further through researching websites pertaining to the traditional owners of the land where your school is situated. For example, students in the Perth area would explore the [Noongar Lore](#) website. Students in Victoria can explore the role of Koori Courts and how they interpret and implement Koori law by viewing [The role of Elders and Respected Persons at the Victorian County Koori Court](#).

- Students use the [Your Safety & Security Information](#) from the WA Police Force website or [Home and Property Information](#) from the Victorian Police Force website and design their own public awareness pamphlet/poster. (Use this information for summative assessment.)

Lesson Idea 5: 'Unusual' Laws

- As laws relate to values, beliefs and society norms, different countries and times in history produce what we might consider to be unusual laws. For instance, it used to be illegal to dust your doormat on a Sunday. Why might this be? (People wore their best clothes for attending church).

Students investigate an unusual law and create a presentation slide describing their chosen law. Once completed collate the slides and view them as a class. Discuss why each law may have been created. (Note for Year 10 students this should be done in the context of contemporary laws of another country). For example, each year school leavers going to Bali are reminded to make themselves aware of the laws and legal processes of Indonesia. To be a good international citizen, it is important to understand that different countries, just like Australia, base their legal system on their own set of beliefs and values.

- When visiting another country, it is important that visitors inform themselves of the differences between Australia and the destination countries legal system. Divide the class into groups of four. Each group is to select a travel destination and investigate its laws, especially those that could impact on tourists. When the research has been completed, groups create a presentation using a range of formats such as a video, PowerPoint or poster and share with the rest of the class. Use this as a summative assessment investigation.
- Using the [Current Trends and Future Laws](#) worksheet, students:
 - Identify possible community concerns not currently covered by existing laws
 - Propose a new law to cover these concerns
 - Propose how the law should be applied by the police and judiciary
 - Write a persuasive argument in support of introducing this law.

You may wish to extend this activity by choosing one of these laws and conducting a student role play introducing and debating the new law (Bill) in the House of Representatives. Teacher resources to support the role play can be found at [Make A Law: House of Representatives](#).

Lesson Idea 6: Investigating Crime Statistics

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics provides recent information focussing on crime statistics. Ask students to access the website to research [crime data](#) for their state or territory and conduct a group discussion about these statistics. During this discussion it is important to highlight that the media can sometimes misrepresent crime statistics. Students access the [Western Australian Police Force Crime Statistics](#) website, read the notes and explain why we need to be careful when reading quotes about crime statistics in the media. Alternatively, students access the [Crime Statistics Agency](#) webpage explanatory notes section and explore Data Source, Scope and Coverage and Victoria Police recorded crimes standards and practice.
- Students use the [Western Australian Police Force Crime Statistics](#) or [Crime Statistics Agency](#) (Crimes by Area) website to search for a particular neighbourhood's crime statistics (compare different neighbourhoods). They graph a particular year's data and observe trends. Invite students to suggest reasons for the rise and fall in the statistics (seasonal crime such as at Christmas) and the effect that this might have on the individual and community. (This may be used for summative assessment.)
- Hold a class discussion about crimes in the news. Organise the students into pairs. Ask students to research and discuss the types of crimes that are prevalent in the media. Explain

that each pair will select two media articles focusing on crimes and complete the [Law in the Media](#) worksheet. (This information may be used for formative assessment.)

- Use the [Crime Storyboard](#) worksheet to create a storyboard that illustrates what happens when a law is broken. Students are to use the storyboard to:
 - record what happened
 - explain which law was broken
 - suggest strategies to avoid this situation in the future

Students can also use the story board information and an app such as *Vyond* to create an animated version of their research.

Lesson Idea 7: Reporting Crime

Refer to the *Why Crime Stoppers Works* package.

Ask students to think about when people should call the Police or Crime Stoppers. Provide students with access to [Who Are You Going To Contact?](#) worksheet to complete.

Resources

Lesson Idea – Tuning In

- [What is the Rule of Law](#) – video

Lesson Idea 1 – The Rule of Law

- [The Rule of Law Education](#) – website

Lesson Idea 2 – Origin Of Our Legal System

- [Magna Carta and the emergence of Parliament](#) – video
- [Magna Carta: The foundation of the rule of law](#) – video
- [Magna Carta](#) - handout
- [Magna Carta – the story of our freedom](#) - video
- [READWRITETHINK Timeline](#) - app

Lesson Idea 3 – Making Laws

- [About Parliament - Making a Law](#) – website & video

Lesson Idea 4 – Types of Laws

- [Noongar Lore](#) – website
- [The role of Elders and Respected Persons at the Victorian County Koori Court](#) - video
- [Your Safety & Security Information](#) – website
- [Home and Property](#) - website

Lesson Idea 5 – ‘Unusual Laws’

- [Current Trends and Future Laws](#) – worksheet
- [Make A Law: House of Representatives](#) – website & video

Lesson Idea 6 – Investigating Crime Statistics

- [Crime data](#) - website
- [Western Australian Police Force Crime Statistics](#) – website
- [Crime Statistics Agency](#) – website
- [Crime Statistics Agency \(Crimes by Area\)](#) - website
- [Law in the Media](#) - worksheet
- [Crime Storyboard](#) – worksheet

Lesson Idea 7 – Reporting Crime

- [Who Are You Going To Contact?](#) – worksheet

Further Student Enquiry

- [The Law Society of Western Australia Education Resources](#) - website
- [Parliamentary Education Office](#) - website

Assessment

- [Marking Key](#)

Further Student Enquiry

- Visit the [The Law Society of Western Australia Education Resources](#) website for school visits to courts and further education resources
- Students develop their own question to investigate Making a Law. The [Parliamentary Education Office](#) provides some useful information for students.

Assessment

Formative

- Students write their own definitions and examples of criminal and civil law.
- Students explain why, as good citizens, people should report criminal crimes through Crime Stoppers
- Hold a class discussion about crimes in the news. Organise the students into pairs. Ask students to research and discuss the types of crimes that are prevalent in the media. Explain that each pair will select two media articles focusing on crimes and complete the [Law in the Media](#) worksheet.

Summative

- Many of the activities in the lesson ideas can be used for summative assessment
- Students present, in an appropriate format, their views on how our legal system both protects citizens and requires them to be active participants
- Students present, in an appropriate format, their understanding of the process of law making in Australia
- Students present, in an appropriate format, their understanding of how the Rule of Law seeks to provide justice for Australian citizens
- Students present, in an appropriate format, their understanding of how the Rule of law provides safeguards that protect Australia's democratic process

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

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