

Active Citizenship

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. Digital resources embedded in these lesson ideas comply with 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 the role of citizen participation in protecting our democratic way of life.

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 how citizens can use direct action to contribute to Australian democracy.

Links to curriculum codes: [AC9HC8K01](#) / [VC2HC8K06](#)

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 how justice can be adversely affected if citizens are uninformed or inactive.

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 how Australia's democratic system promotes direct action to oppose threats from organised crime, corruption and lawlessness.

Links to curriculum codes: [AC9HC10K05](#) / [VC2HC10K10](#)

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Learning Intentions

Resource Focus

Community safety is enhanced by individuals taking positive action.

Students Understand:

- Their rights and responsibilities as Australians
 - The process of becoming an Australian citizen
 - The importance of being properly informed before taking action
 - How the bystander effect influences people's actions
 - Opportunities for taking civic action
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Lesson Ideas

Tuning In

Students are provided with a stimulus, such as the [Australian citizenship affirmation](#) or [Australia's Local Hero](#) and [2025 Young Australian of the Year](#) videos.

Discuss students' views about what people said regarding being Australian. What do they agree with, disagree with and/ or wish to add?

Lesson Idea 1: Australian Citizenship

- Students use information from the [Australian citizenship affirmation](#) or [Australia's Local Hero](#) and [2025 Young Australian of the Year](#) videos to identify the behaviours and values shown by local hero award winners. (This can also link back to the *Democratic Values* theme pack).
- Using the handout [What I Like About Living in Australia](#), students draw up a list of things that they like about living in Australia. (Tell students the other two columns on the sheet will be completed later in Lesson Idea #2 - Protecting What We Value).
- Discuss with students why people must comply with the following requirements to be eligible for Australian citizenship:
 - be a permanent resident
 - meet the residence requirements
 - be of good character
 - intend to live or maintain a close and continuing association with Australia.
- Students are provided with the [Australian Affirmation & National Anthem](#) handout used by participants at citizenship ceremonies.
 - Discuss with students why they think the reading of the Australian Affirmation has recently been added to the Citizenship ceremony.
 - Provide students with the handout [Life in Australia; Australian Values and Principles](#). Students read the paragraphs taken from this document and discuss, using a **think, pair, and share** activity, what messages this information provides about Australia for new migrants.
 - Students are divided into 9 groups. Each group is allocated a value or principle to research. Each group chooses a method, such as poster, song, rap song, poem, speech, play or tweet, to explain to the rest of the class the purpose of this value or principle as part of Australian society today. (Students either, access online the information contained in the Government document [Life in Australia: Australian Values and Principles](#), or are provided with downloaded copies of the relevant sections.)

- In verse two of the National Anthem, it states that “we’ll toil with hearts and hands to make this Commonwealth of ours renowned of all the lands”. Discuss with students what this might mean in the context of citizens’ responsibilities, introducing the notion of active citizenship.
- In 2019 Australian Education Ministers from all states and territories declared that a goal of education should be that students become active and informed members of the community. Discuss why Ministers thought that this was so important in a democratic society like Australia (democracy relies on citizen participation).

Lesson Idea 2: Protecting What We Value

- Students return to their handout [What I Like About Living in Australia](#) and from what they have learnt so far, they may add up to five new items to their list. Students then title the second column *Actions I Can Take* and the third column *Actions Government Can Take*. They then complete the table adding in the particular actions they can take i.e. reporting suspicious behaviour, or government can take to ensure that these things they like about living in Australia are protected. (Note students could add the level of government responsible for the action they identify).
- For information about the roles and responsibilities of local government, students can visit their state or territory [local government website](#). The relevant link will take students into more detail about local government and how it functions.

Lesson Idea 3: Concerns In Our Community

- Ask students to individually make a list of concerns that occur in their local communities and wider neighbourhood. Students share and discuss their list with a partner. Pose the question, “Are these concerns all crimes, or are they non-criminal community concerns?” As a class decide on some suitable headings that these concerns can be divided into (examples of headings for crimes can be found on the Crime Stoppers WA website – [Crime Types](#) page). Classify the concerns under appropriate headings.
- Organise the class into small groups. Ask each group to select from their list a criminal concern and devise a role play about it. Provide the groups with access to the [Role Play Planning](#) sheet to help with the planning process. The role play is to include:
 - How the concern affects the community / neighbourhood
 - Two possible solutions to the concern; one by individual citizens and the other by government (note that the solutions must abide by the principles within the Australian Affirmation)
 - Why people will feel safe in the community once this concern is successfully dealt with.

Case study: Drug dealing

- Drug-related crimes and criminal activity are the most common reason for citizens to contact Crime Stoppers. Using a call out, consider the adverse effects on a community from illicit drugs. You may wish to refer to the resource [Impact of Drugs on Communities](#).
- Show students the three Crime Stoppers scenarios/videos in their drug campaign: [They'll never know it was you](#) – *Protect your family*; *In over your head*; and *Work should be safe* and discuss the key messages in each video (click on the red Play icon to stay on the Crime Stoppers webpage rather than viewing on the YouTube platform).
- Ask students to create a Word Cloud, using an app such as *Word Cloud Generator*, to explain how these scenarios appeal to people's emotions and encourage positive community action. Conduct a class discussion focusing on the key words they used and why they are powerful visually.
- Using the Crime Stoppers news item [Six things a drug dealer won't tell you](#), students investigate and discuss as a class, the reasons for using this campaign, and how community members can provide information to Crime Stoppers about drug-related criminal activity.
- Ask students to design, as a class, a strategy for sharing the information contained within these articles with other students in the school. Remember that the purpose of the exercise will be to promote positive student action.
- You can explore Drug Crime in more depth [here](#).

Case study: Cyber bullying and eSafety

Citizens in a democracy hopefully make decisions based on good information. In 2016 the Oxford Dictionary picked "Post-truth" as their word for the year. This word is used in circumstances where objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief. Posts on social media will often be designed to appeal to these traits influencing people to act in positive or negative ways.

- Negative use of social media is experienced by young people in situations of cyber bullying which is designed to reinforce a negative emotion or belief about a person. Discuss with students why cyber bullying has now become a crime in Australia.
- For information about the crime of cyber bullying and what individuals can do to stop it research the [Lawstuff website](#) (both national and state based information is provided). Ask students to create a mood poster that explains the steps that individuals can take when faced with cyber bullying. Once completed, display the posters around the room and ask students to vote for the most effective poster. Discuss as a class why the winning poster was so popular. When designing your mood poster, think about the colours, patterns, images and words you will use to best convey your message.

- eSafety is another cyber issue facing young people today. Unwanted contact via the internet is any type of online communication young people may find unpleasant or confronting, or that leads them into a situation where they might do something they regret. Unwanted contact is not limited to 'strangers' - it can happen even if they initially welcomed the contact. It can also be online 'friends' they have not met face-to-face, or from someone they actually know.
 - o View [Tips To Be Smart Online](#) – keeping you and your friends safe from unwanted contact and discuss as a class the key messages about keeping safe online and what skills students may need to be resilient online.
 - o You may wish to explore the Bullying theme in more detail with your students. [Bullying No Way](#) is a government initiative that provides strategies and resources to explore bullying with your students.
 - o Digital citizenship can be explored in more depth [here](#).

Lesson Idea 4: Taking Community Action

Explore your state or territory community-based initiatives that assist in keeping our neighbourhoods safe and provide citizens with ways to be active.

Neighbourhood Watch Australasia is an overarching organisational body, embracing Neighbourhood Watch programs in Australia and the Neighbourhood Watch Support Program of New Zealand. Each state and territory has its own [Neighbourhood Watch](#) initiative that enables citizens to help keep their communities safe. These initiatives encourage citizens to report suspicious behaviour using the Crime Stoppers process.

- To understand how Neighbourhood Watch can assist citizens in making their community safer, visit the [Neighbourhood Watch Australasia](#) website, select the Contact menu to find your state or territory link and explore the information page or video with your students.
- To enable students to practise their observation and reporting skills, visit the [WA Police Force observation and reporting techniques](#) training videos.
Watch as a class the introductory video [Eyes on the Street and Neighbourhood Watch](#).
- Discuss the categories of suggested observations. For example, physical features and clothing. Ask students to watch [Scenario 1 Bus Stop](#) and individually jot down their observations. Once the clip has finished, students can pair and share their observations, identifying similarities and differences.

Lesson Idea 5: The Bystander Effect

- Discuss with students what they think this means in the context of active citizenship. Watch the YouTube extract [The Bystander Effect: The Science of Empathy](#) and complete the following SEE-THINK-WONDER exercise.
 - What do you see? • What do you think is going on? • What does it make you wonder?
Discuss as a class why people acted this way.
- Students visit the bystander effect information on the [Changing minds website](#) (or download the page for students to use in class). Students complete the [Bystander Effect Explosion Chart](#) worksheet. An extended activity for Year 10 students would be to watch [The death of Kitty Genovese](#) video and explore how the bystander effect works.
- Pose the question and discuss: The role of Crime Stoppers is to encourage/empower citizens to be proactive and report suspicious behaviour or criminal activity. What adverse consequences for individuals and the broader community are likely to arise if citizens do not resist the bystander effect in these situations?
- Conduct as a class a [Circles of Action activity](#) (page 17) with your students to explore how they could persuade people to be active citizens, overcoming the Bystander effect. What can I do in:
 1. my inner circle of friends, family, people I know
 2. my community such as my school and my neighbourhood
 3. the world beyond my immediate environment.

Ask students to create a digital story to illustrate one of your suggested actions using an app such as *Puppet Pals HD*. Once completed, students then pair and share their stories.

Resources

Lesson Idea 1 - Australian Citizenship

- [Australian Citizenship Affirmation](#) – website & video
- [Australia's Local Hero](#) and [2025 Young Australian of the Year](#) – videos
- [What I Like About Living in Australia](#) – student handout
- [Australian Affirmation and the National Anthem](#) – student handout
- [Life in Australia: Australian Values and Principles](#) – student handout

Lesson Idea 2 - Protecting What We Value

- [What I Like About Living in Australia](#) – student handout

- [Local government websites](#) – student handout

Lesson Idea 3 - Concerns In Our Community

- [Crime Types](#) - website
- [Role Play Planning](#) – student handout
- [Impact of Drugs on Communities](#) – student handout
- [Crime Stoppers drug campaign – They’ll never know it was you](#) - – website and videos
- [Six Things A Drug Dealer Won’t Tell You](#) – website
- [Drug Crime & the Law](#) - resource
- [Cyber bullying – Lawstuff](#) - website
- [Tips To Be Smart Online](#) – eSafety fact sheet
- [Bullying No Way](#) – website and resources
- [Digital Citizenship](#) – resource

Lesson Idea 4 - Taking Community Action

- [Neighbourhood Watch Australasia](#) - website
- [Observation and Reporting Techniques](#) & [Scenario 1 Bus Stop](#) - videos from WA Police
- [Eyes on the Street and Neighbourhood Watch](#) - video

Lesson Idea 5 - The Bystander Effect

- [The Bystander Effect: The Science of Empathy](#) - video
- [Changing Minds](#) – website
- [Bystander Effect Explosion Chart](#) – student handout
- [The death of kitty Genovese](#) - video
- [Circles of Action activity](#) (page 17)

Further Student Enquiry

- [School Drug Education and Road Aware](#) - website

Assessment

- [Recipe for a good citizen](#) – student handout
 - [Australian Citizenship Assessment](#) – student handout
 - [Marking Key](#)
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Further Student Enquiry

- Students investigate the divergent views regarding the date of Australia Day (the stopping of Australia Day firework display by Fremantle Council and their holding of an alternative multicultural day (One Day) on the 25th January could be explored for a local context. The Federal governments ban on holding citizenship ceremonies on this day could be used to explore the connection between politics and citizenship).
- Students investigate the process of becoming an Australian citizen.
- Students investigate how, why and the possible consequences of the Australian Government's ability to withdraw a person's citizenship.
- Students investigate the history of the inclusion of a particular Australian value or principle.
- Students investigate line two in the National Anthem 'For we are young and free.'" (Jessica Mauboy's position on singing the National Anthem at the 2015 Melbourne Cup may assist students' understanding of perspective)
- [SDERA School Drug Education and Road Aware](#) provide a comprehensive range of classroom and whole school focused resources regarding drug education.

[Marking Key](#)

Assessment

Formative

- Use information from class discussions and completed handouts to provide information about the level of knowledge and understanding of the topics listed under Learning Intentions.

Summative

- Provide students with access to the resource [Recipe for a good citizen](#) and ask them to complete by:
 - Creating the recipe of 'what makes a good citizen'
 - Identifying the ingredients (characteristics) of a good citizen
 - Identifying the method (observable behaviours) of a good citizen
- Students design, for the school/classroom, a persuasive poster, role play, ICT presentation, story board, pamphlet or speech that promotes active citizenship
- Provide students with a copy of the handout [Australian Citizenship Assessment](#) which is completed individually under test conditions
- Students pose and investigate a question around active citizenship
- Students investigate the notion that for a healthy democracy to flourish it requires citizens to be active and informed.

- Students investigate the safeguards introduced to protect citizens who take action.
 - Students investigate how our legal system provides the freedom for citizens to take action.
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This material can also be [accessed online](#)

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