

Study Guide for Democracy in Australia

AUSTRALIA'S POLITICAL SYSTEM

FOR REVIEW

1. What are the three levels of government in Australia? Do Australians vote to elect governments at each of these levels?
2. What is a federal system of government? When did the state governments and when did the Commonwealth (Australian) Government come into being?
3. What is the electoral roll and what is its significance? Who among people living in Australia are eligible to go onto the electoral roll and who are not?
4. How do eligible people not on the electoral roll get on to it?
5. What are the three main components of our political system? What does the separation of powers between them mean and why is it so important?

FOR DISCUSSION

1. In small groups discuss the British Commonwealth, what it is and any the countries that you believe belong to it (Think of the Commonwealth Games). List as many common characteristics of these countries as you can.

Compare the conclusions from the small group discussions with those of other small groups in a general class discussion.

2. In small groups look up and discuss in what way Australia's political system differs from that of the British system.

Compare the conclusions from the small group discussions with those of other small groups in a general class discussion.

3. In small groups look up and discuss in what way Australia's political system differs from that of the US system.

Compare the conclusions from the small group discussions with those of other small groups in a general class discussion.

FOR MORE ADVANCED DISCUSSION

4. In small groups research and discuss which of these two systems (British and US) had the greatest influence on Australia's political system and on which parts.

FOR RESEARCH

1. What are the main political parties in Australia and in what way are the things they stand for different?
2. What is the "rule of law" and why is it important? How relevant is it to Australia?
3. What does the Australian Constitution cover?

For advanced research:

4. Looking at the material under 'Democracy in Australia' on the Australian Collaboration web site and drawing on any other material that you can find, what do you consider to be the most important things to do to improve the functioning of Australia's democracy?