

Teacher Notes



Symbols



I do: my turn to talk. This is the explanation section of our lesson where you are required to listen.



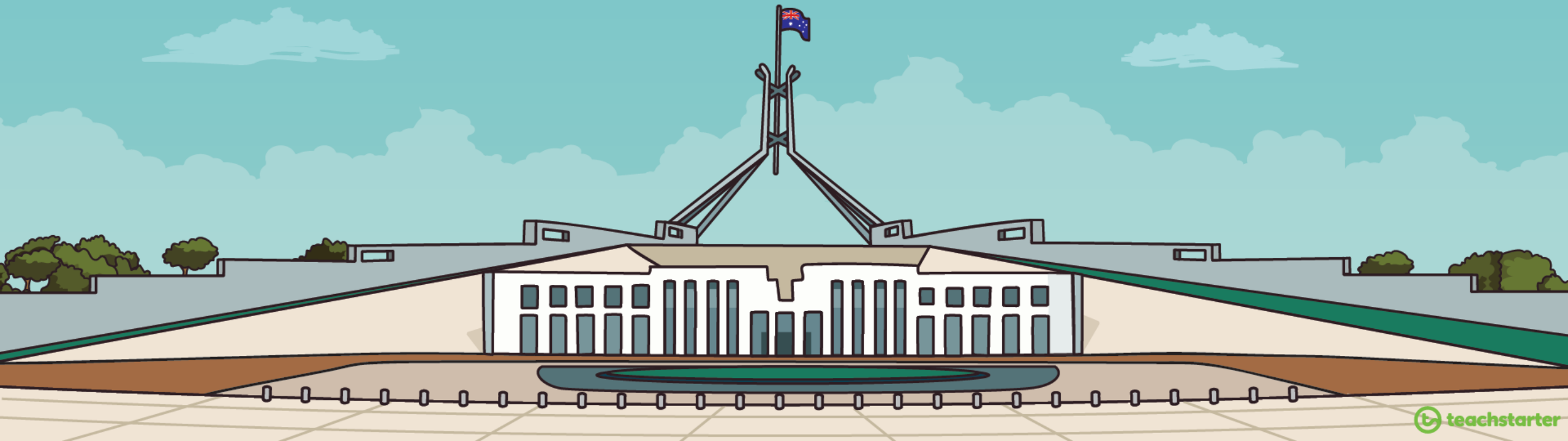
We do: this is where we discuss or work on the concepts together.



You do: your turn to be involved. You may be working in a group or on an activity individually.

AUSTRALIA'S

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT



A System of Government

A system of government is a system of rule in a country.

A country's system of government normally consists of legislators, administrators and arbitrators.

The government of a country creates its rules and ensures that these rules are followed.

Governments may also control the country's economy, social freedoms, law enforcement, school system and political systems.



A System of Government

Imagine if Australia did not have a system of government.
Discuss some of the problems that could arise in society if
Australia did not have a government system.

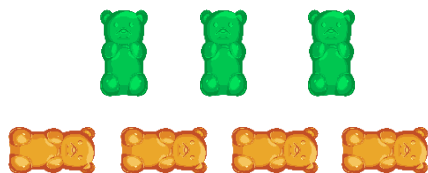


Different Systems of Government

There are many different systems of government. Some of the systems include:

oppression

The unjust control of people by others.



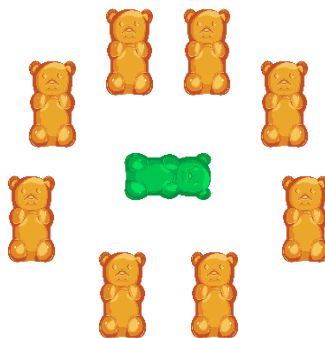
anarchy

A society without a government.



revolt

The refusal of obedience and order.



democracy

A society where the people have a say about how they are governed.



dictatorship

Power is given to one person or group.



Different Systems of Government

Using gummy bears, demonstrate each system of government.

Discuss what system of government is the most fair and why.



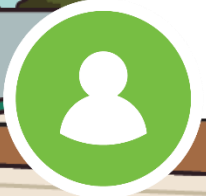
Democracy

A democracy is a system of government in which the people, directly or indirectly, have a say about how they are governed.

The word democracy originates from the Greek language, meaning 'rule of the people'.

In a democratic society, the people are governed through elected representatives. However, the people can influence the formation of different policies by means of a direct vote or referendum.

Australia is both a representative democracy and a constitutional monarchy.



Democracy

Imagine if there was only one student in your class who was in charge of making all the decisions. Imagine this person loved playing soccer and decided that every class sport lesson for the whole year was a soccer game.

Discuss as a class:

- if you would agree with this decision
- if this was a fair decision
- how the decision could have been made fair.

Discuss why it is important for the people to have a say in the way their country is governed.



Australia's System of Government

Australia has both a representative democracy and a constitutional monarchy. This system of government refers to the party, or coalition of parties, supported by the majority of members in the House of Representatives.

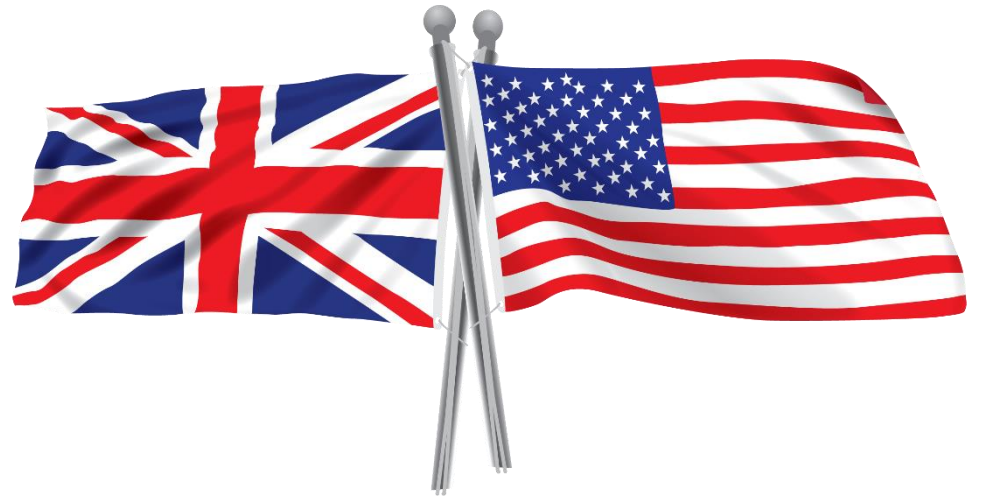
In a **representative democracy system**, the people vote for representatives to present their ideas and interests in a parliament. Australia's parliamentary members are elected to the Senate or the House of Representatives to represent the Australian people and make laws on their behalf.

In a **constitutional monarchy system**, the king or queen is the head of state and acts in accordance with a constitution. Australia's head of state is the Governor-General, who represents the Queen of England.



The 'Washminster' System

The establishment of Australia's system of government was influenced by both the British Westminster system and the United States federal model from Washington. Consequently, Australia's system of government is sometimes referred to as the 'Washminster' system.



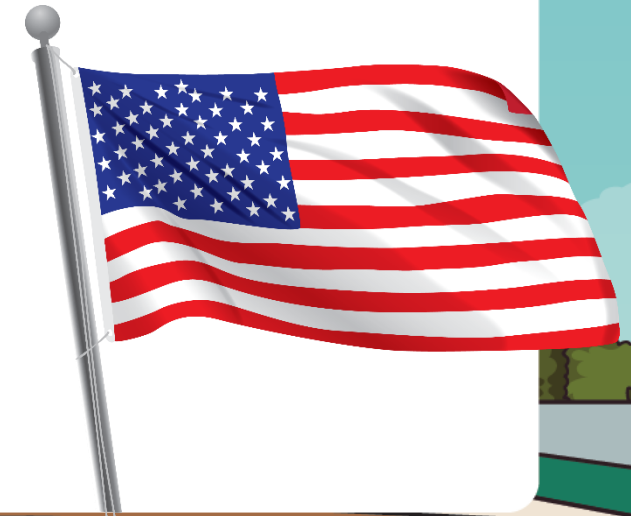
The British Westminster System

The British Westminster system of government was developed in the United Kingdom in 1215. The term comes from the Palace of Westminster where the British Parliament is located. The system is a series of procedures for operating a legislature. In a Westminster system, the government is formed by the political party or parties with the support of the majority in the lower house of the Parliament. In Australia, the lower house of Parliament is called the House of Representatives.



The United States Federal Model

The United States federal model of government was developed in the United States in Washington. The US model shares the power to govern between the national and state governments. Parts of Australia's federal system of government are based on the US model. Australia has a written constitution, which describes many of the rules for how Australia is governed. Australia's two parliamentary chambers, the Senate and the House of Representatives, comes from the US congress.



Australia's System of Government

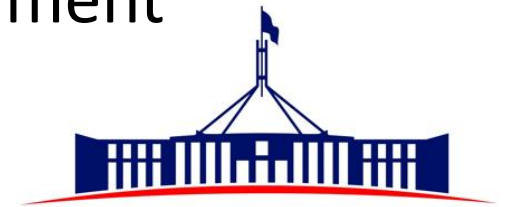
Discuss why elements from both the British and United States systems of government were chosen as a basis for Australia's system of government.



Parliament

Parliament is a place where:

- government is formed and held accountable for its actions
- the people of Australia are represented in the House of Representatives and the Senate
- bills are proposed to create new laws and make changes to old laws
- issues of national importance are debated and dealt with
- the political party with the most members in the House of Representatives after an election forms the government
- the work of the government is examined.



Parliament

Parliament is a place where ministers and senators meet to represent the people of Australia and make laws.

As a class, discuss if Australia could be governed successfully without a parliament in place.



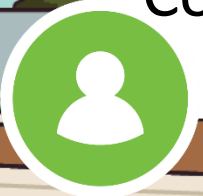
Separation of Powers

To avoid one group having all the power, the power to make and manage federal law is distributed between three groups – the Parliament, the Executive and the Judiciary.

The Parliament makes and amends the law. It is made up of the Governor-General (the Queen's representative), Senate and House of Representatives.

The Executive puts the law into action. It is made up of the Governor-General (the Queen's representative), Prime Minister and Ministers.

The Judiciary makes judgements about the law. It is made up of the High Court and other federal courts.



Separation of Powers

In Australia, the power to make and manage federal law is distributed between three groups.

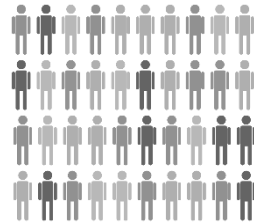
Discuss why it is important to avoid one group having all the power.

The Parliament



Power to make
and change law.

The Executive



Power to put
law into action.

The Judiciary



Power to make
judgement on law.

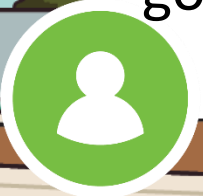


The Governor-General

Australia is a constitutional monarchy, meaning the Queen is Australia's head of state. As the Queen lives in Britain, her powers are delegated to the Governor-General who lives in Australia.

The Governor-General is appointed by the Queen on the recommendation of the Prime Minister and serves a term of five years representing Her Majesty in Australia. The Governor-General is responsible for ensuring that the country is governed according to the rules set out in the Constitution.

The Governor-General is part of Australia's Parliament, together with the Senate and the House of Representatives. They must remain neutral between the government and the opposition at all times.



The Governor-General

In Australia, there has been a continued debate on whether Australia should become a republic.

In a republic country, power is held by the people and their elected representatives. Instead of the monarch in England, the country has an elected or nominated president as its head of state.

Discuss as a class what would happen to the Governor-General if Australia became a republic.



Parliament House - Location

Parliament House is located on Capital Hill in Canberra. Canberra was chosen as Australia's capital as it is half-way between Sydney and Melbourne. The Constitution specified that the capital had to be located in New South Wales, at least 100 miles from Sydney.



Parliament House - Employees

The people who work at Parliament House include:

- Members of Parliament and their staff
- parliamentary offices and public servants
- the press gallery
- employees who provide services.



The Different Uses of Parliament House

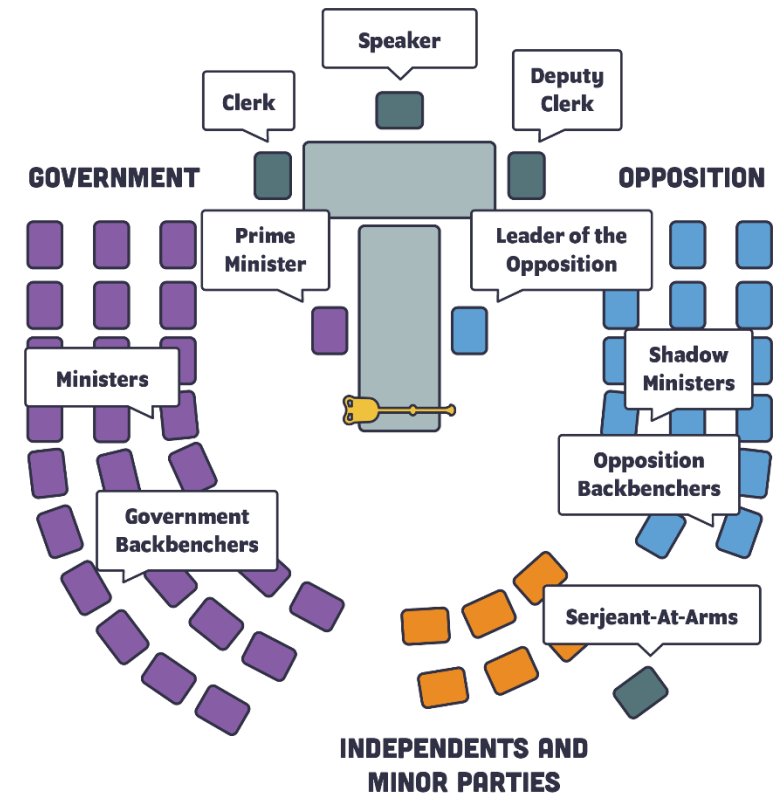
Parliament House is used for:

- making and changing federal laws
- representing the people of Australia
- providing a place where government is formed
- keeping a check on the work of the government.



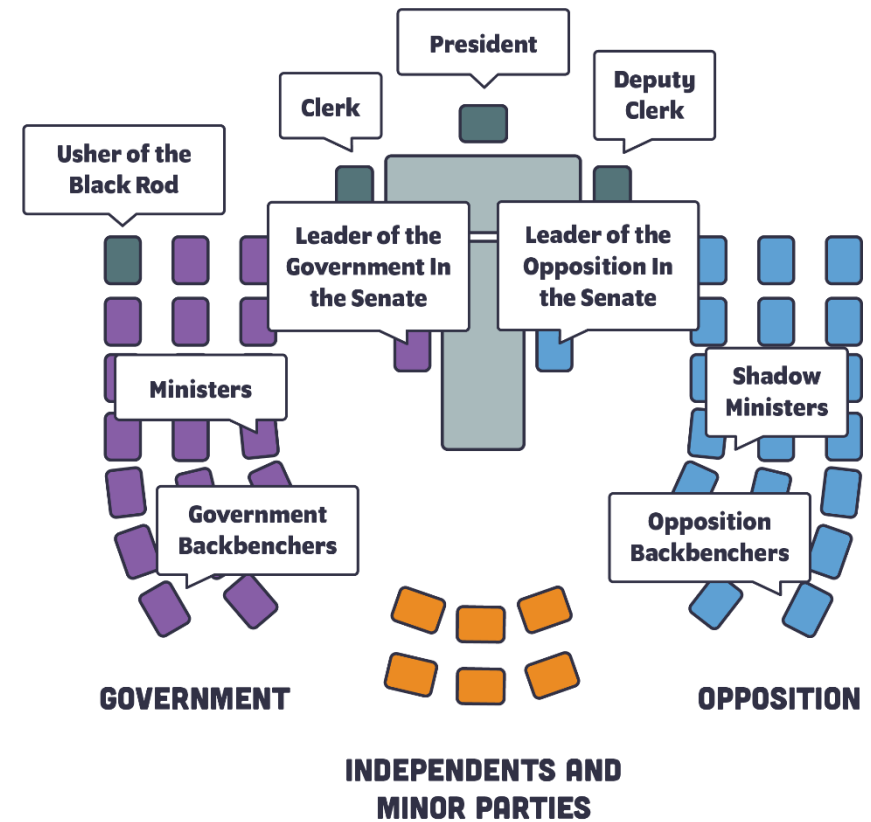
The House of Representatives

Also known as the Lower House or the People's House, the House of Representatives is made up of 150 elected members who represent one of Australia's electorates. The party with the majority of members forms the government. The House of Representatives debates and passes bills, scrutinises the government and represents the people.



The Senate

Also known as the Upper House, The Senate is made up of 76 elected Senators who represent Australia's states and territories. The senate debates and passes bills, scrutinises the government and represents the people.



Parliament House

It was specified that Parliament House be located in New South Wales, but at least 100 miles from Sydney.

Discuss as a class:

- reasons why this specification was put in place
- other potential locations in New South Wales where Parliament House could have been located.



Australia's Government - Independent Task

In small 'expert' groups, create a poster to display in the classroom that summarises one of the following topics below.

- Parliament of Australia
- Separation of Powers
- The House of Representatives
- The Senate

