Parliament
of Victoria

Parliament House

Supporting your visit

If you're planning to book an excursion to Parliament House, we've put together this series of resources that can be used to help prepare your students pre-visit and consolidate their learning post-visit.

There are also some strategies to help students construct questions they can ask while on the tour or doing a role play and links to some of the other resources that may be helpful.

Information for your visit

Social stories

Two social stories are available to accompany a visit to Parliament House. These have been designed for visitors who are neurodiverse who may like to read them in preparation for their visit. One is intended for readers of all ages, the other focuses on the experience of a school visit to Parliament House.

Scan or visit
vicparl.news/socialstory

Security information

Visitors to Parliament House are required to pass through a security checkpoint before entering the building. This involves a walk-through scanner and baggage scanning. Visitors with pacemakers should ask to be scanned using handheld scanners. Bags must be left at reception when taking part in a tour or sitting in the public galleries.

vicparl.news/schools

Pre-visit preparation

While on the tour, the students will potentially see both the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council chambers and the Parliamentary Library (depending on the availability).

Further pre-visit preparation options can be found in the 'Key concepts: pre and/or post visit' section' of this resource.

Finding your electorate

Students can explore the interactive map on the VEC website to find their local, state and federal electorates. When exploring their state level electorates (regions and districts), students may find that their school and home may be in a different electorate, especially in Metro areas of Melbourne.

Explore the VEC interactive map maps.vec.vic.gov.au

Finding your member

Once students know their electorates they can explore the 'find a member of parliament' page to see which MPs represent them in both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council.

Students may also want to read the relevant MPs inaugural speech to find out the sorts of issues they consider to be most important.

You might like to ask the students to see if they can guess where their MPs sit in the chamber, depending on their party and/or whether they are a minister, back-bencher or cross-bencher).

Scan or visit
vicparl.news/Find-an-MP

On the tour

Preparing questions

You might like students to prepare some questions to ask on the tour or use the pre-prepared questions on the following page. Below are some useful tools to help students develop their own questions.

Harvard Project Zero Thinking Routines, such as
- I used to think ... but now I think ...
- 3-2-1 Bridge

Headlines

Know, Want to know, Learned (KWL) chart
- Question matrix

Visit the 'Supporting resources' page for these and other resources to help students develop questions.'

Scan or visit
vicparl.news/supporting-resources

Pre-prepared questions

These questions maybe useful to help students think about and reflect on their experience at Parliament House.

- How would you describe the building?
  - What did you first notice? Why?
  - What surprised you about the building? Why was it surprising?
  - What do you think the architects wanted people to think and feel when they came to Parliament House?

- Parliament House is often described as the people's house.
  - What did you see or hear that confirms this is a building for the people?
  - Was there anything that contradicted this?
  - How would you change Parliament House to make it more inclusive?

- What was the most surprising thing you learnt? Why were you surprised?
  - What was your favourite room? Why?
  - What room, story, object, person would you like to know more about?

- What's one thing you would change about:
  - the building
  - the chambers
  - the law-making process
  Why would you make these changes?

Exploring the building

Download the *Exploring Parliament House* cards to encourage students to explore the various rooms of Parliament House from different perspectives.

Scan or visit
vicparl.news/your-visit

Key concepts: pre and/or post-visit

There are a number of parliamentary concepts that may be referred to throughout your visit to Parliament House.

Below are some key questions and resources that can be used to frontload concepts for students prior to their visit and/or consolidate students' understanding post-visit.

Representation

Key questions

- How might the role of an MP change depending on the house of parliament they sit in?

  Think about the different types of voting used for both houses (preferential or proportional voting), the geographical space, the area that the electorate covers, how many people in the electorate.

- How might the concerns of the constituents (all the people in the electorate, including everyone who can and can't vote) change from electorate to electorate?

  What might be the causes for these changes in concerns? Consider demographic information, such as age, gender, cultural or ethnic background, religion, employment types and unemployment, geographical details, most common economy.

Key resources

Representation and democracy

This resource explores the different forms of representation, the principles of democracy and how democracy and representation work in Victoria. Students can explore how different models of representation affect decision-making.

Scan or visit
vicparl.news/rep-dem

Electorate data cards

The *Electorate data cards* consist of statistics for each of the 88 lower house electoral districts, and for all of Victoria, from the last Australian Census in 2021. The data provided is a snapshot of some key demographic information such as age distribution and country of births, as well as size of the electorate, population, housing types, and some income and expense details.

Students can use the cards to consider how members of parliament make decisions for their electorates or can be used across disciplines to explore population distributions and/or statistical analysis.

Scan or visit
vicparl.news/elect-data-cards

Three levels of government

The *Three levels of government flash cards* include 30 different examples of responsibilities and services. A key is provided that lists the level of government that has the primary oversight for each. But for many of the examples the oversight is far more complicated.

This means for examples like taxes, education and roads there are opportunities for students to discuss how the different levels of government interact and manage different aspects of a service, and most importantly, who they can contact to discuss the service.

Scan or visit
vicparl.news/threelevelsofgov

Engaging perspectives

Encourage students to engage with and develop a range of perspectives on any given topic using the *Engaging perspectives cards*.

This set of cards can be used in different ways to explore a range of perspectives on a given topic. The cards consist of three different categories: stakeholders, priorities, and emotional motivations.

Each card has a series of questions for students to work through, and the categories when used in conjunction with each other, can encourage students to identify new or different arguments about a given topic.

Scan or visit
vicparl.news/eng-persp

How a law is made

Key questions

- What might be the benefits or limitations of having two chambers instead of one in the law-making process?

- If there was a third chamber, what would you make them responsible for?

- What changes would you like to make to the law-making process?

Key resources

How a law is made animation

How parliament makes laws follows the process of the introduction of a bill into parliament, its passage through both houses, to receiving Royal Assent.

Some questions to use with the video include:

- Why are appropriation bills (bills relating to finances) only introduced into the Legislative Assembly?

- How does a bicameral system support the values of democracy?

- What function does Royal Assent have and why is it important?

Scan or visit
vicparl.news/pov-explains

Debating in the chamber

The *How to write a bill template* outlines for students some key questions to consider when writing a bill. There are also some prompt questions for students to consider different party positions.

The *Chamber place cards* cover some of the key roles for MPs across both of the chambers. On the front of the place card, students have an opportunity to fill in their ministerial roles (if applicable) and their electorate. The MPs role in the chamber, standing orders (chamber rules) and key phrases for debate are listed on the back on the place cards.

Scan or visit
vicparl.news/debating

So you think you can pass a law

This interactive game invites students to follow the process of trying to pass a bill through both chambers of parliament and receiving Royal Assent.

Scan or visit
vicparl.news/pass-a-law

A guide to challenging conversations

The resource provides some guiding strategies for facilitating issues-based discussions in the classroom, especially issues that may be considered challenging - for any number of reasons.

These strategies also acknowledge that any topic has the potential to raise questions and concerns for students and teachers, especially when they encourage different perspectives.

Scan or visit
vicparl.news/chalconv

Having your say

Engaging with parliament

Download and print your own set of classroom posters outlining the ways people can engage with parliament; contacting your MP, submitting to a committee inquiry and/or submitting a petition.

Designed as simple flowcharts that include the process, key information and QR codes for more information, these can be used to prompt students to get involved and take part in some of Victoria's democratic systems.

Scan or visit
vicparl.news/Eng-parliament

The Parliament Prize

The Parliament Prize is an annual competition run by the Parliament of Victoria based on the format of Members' statements to parliament. Students submit a 90 second video discussing an issue or a matter of importance to them.

The competition opens mid-May each year. After the winners are announced, a summary of the key issues from across Victoria are published.

Scan or visit
vicparl.news/parlprize

While you're in the area

Take a walk

You might like to take students on a walk around some civic places of importance in the area around Parliament House. The tour takes in ten landmarks and monuments and comes with a range of activities and questions that can either be used at the time of the walking tour or back in the classroom.

Discover civics walk, East Melbourne

Scan or visit
vicparl.news/civicwalk

Augmented reality

The augmented reality experience on the steps of Parliament House allows visitors an opportunity to see the evolution of Parliament House, hear about the history of parliament and the work of Members of Parliament, and most importantly, how you can have your say.

The ARConnect app is available for free for Apple and Android devices. Scan the QR code below or on the steps of Parliament House for more information.

Parliament House: Augmented reality

Scan or visit
vicparl.news/AR

Visit Old Treasury

Consider visiting the Old Treasury Building to build or extend your students' understanding of democracy and federation. The location of the Old Treasury Building, right next door to parliament, is no coincidence.

Not long after the first sitting in the newly opened Parliament House, the decision was made to construct a 'New Treasury' with storage to secure colony's gold reserves.

Read more about the Old Treasury programs that relate to Parliament of Victoria on our Places of civic importance blog post parliament.vic.gov.au/teach-and-learn/education-blog/Places-of-civic-importance

Explore more of Old Treasury's education programs and exhibits oldtreasurybuilding.org.au/school-programs

ACMI free exhibit

A short walk down Flinders St is the Australian Centre for Moving Image. The centre piece exhibition *The Story of the moving image* explores how the moving image, and the stories they tell, have changed over time.

This is a great exhibition for exploring who is represented and how they are represented in stories, how these representations have changed over time, and most importantly, who is missing from these representations.

acmi.net.au/whats-on/story-of-the-moving-image-exhibition