SCRIPT: PASSING A BILL

Phase		Explanation for students & passing bill script	Teacher notes and actions
Explanation	**Overview process**	**Explanation** We're going to go through the process of passing a hypothetical (imaginary) bill through parliament. There are five steps to this process: 1) deciding on the political parties 2) deciding on the details of the bill 3) introducing and debating the bill in the Legislative Assembly 4) introducing and debating the bill in the Legislative Council 5) if the bill passes, Royal Assent	More information about set-up and implementation is available in the *Victoria 2050 teaching guide*.
	Assigning roles	**Explanation** The first thing we need to do is divide into parties: • government to the right • opposition to the left • minor parties and independents on the cross bench You will also need to decide on a: • Minister for Victoria's Future (government) • Shadow Minister for Victoria's Future (opposition) • Spokesperson for each minor party • Two additional speakers for each party Optional: • Work out or vote for your party leader • Decide on your party name	**Set-up** Split the group into parties: • Government, 50%+1 • Opposition – approx. 30% • Minor party / independent approx. 20% For larger groups, split government into small groups (similar to factions) that can come together to negotiate as a larger group. Independent and minor parties are good for students who may need to work in smaller groups or by themselves. **Hand out assets: Political party cards** Hand out party cards detailing the responsibilities of each of the parties.

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	Intro of Vic 2050	**Explanation** Over the next 25 years, the Victorian population is estimated to increase to 10 million people. A number of parliamentary committee inquiries have recommended changes to some important service areas to make sure Victoria can support the population growth. The government has read the recommendations and has decided to introduce a bill to parliament outlining the priorities for Victoria for the next 25 years. It believes all areas outlined in the committee reports are important, but also recognises the state has limited resources – people, time, money, space and materials – and therefore needs to prioritise.	
	The *Priority area cards*	**Explanation: Using the *Priority area cards*** The *Priority area cards* provide information about why each area is important to Victoria, what is currently happening and what future changes might need to be made over the next 25 years. Read the cards, and as a party decide on your top and lowest priorities, and areas that are negotiable. Record your answers and reasons, with supporting evidence on the *Priority record sheet*. Your speakers will use these notes to help with their speeches.	**Hand out assets: *Priority area cards*** Hand out the priority cards and the record sheet to each group and give them time to read through the information. Option: Not all 14 areas need to be used. You can limit the number of area cards depending on how complex you want the activity to be.

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	Writing the bill	**Explanation: Government decides on the bill** The government party has decided they want to introduce a bill including the priorities for Victoria over the next 25 years. The government needs to decide on what these priorities are, listing: • top three priorities • bottom three priorities • the remainder of the areas, that may be negotiable **Explanation: Other parties / independents decide on the priorities** The opposition and the minor parties / independents also need to meet to decide on their preferred priorities, so they are prepared to respond to the government's bill.	**Hand out assets: *Priority record sheet*** The sheet has space for students to list their priorities, reasons and any supporting evidence from the cards they would like to use. <u>Options:</u> To help students make decisions, you may like them to: • create three piles—top three, bottom three, negotiable • use a traffic light system—green, red, yellow
	Introducing the passage of a bill	**Explanation: Passing the bill** We're about to go through the process of passing a law in Victoria. The bill, which is a draft law, needs to be what we call read three times and pass both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council chambers. The three readings are: • first reading, introducing or reading the title of the bill • second reading, introducing the detail and debating the bill • third reading, voting on the bill To ask to speak, members stand (or raise hands) and the Presiding Officer will select whose turn it is. Generally, when the bill is open to debate, the order of speaking rotates between: • government • opposition • crossbench	<u>Options:</u> Select the Speaker (Presiding Officer) if not doing this role yourself. Outline rules for debate, for example: • "Hear, hear" from MPs if they like something said (instead of clapping) • "Shame" from MPs if they don't like something that has been said (discretion with group) • adding a Clerk (parliamentary officer) to help count • using 'On the voices' where students say "*Aye*" or "*No*" to move between readings, except for the third reading where there is an official vote.

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Explanation: Legislative Assembly		**Explanation: The Legislative Assembly** The Legislative Assembly, or lower house, has 88 electorates, with 1 member per electorate, with a total of 88 members. The Legislative Assembly is where government is formed by the party that has the majority (50% +1) members (or seats). Most bills are introduced by the government party in the lower house.	

Script: Legislative Assembly	**First reading**	Speaker:
		
		    "I call on the Minister"
		
		Minister for Victoria's Future:
		
		    "Speaker, I rise today to introduce the *Future of Victoria (Victoria 2050) bill*".
		
		Speaker:
		
		    "The question is that the *Future of Victoria (Victoria 2050) bill* be read for the first time. All those in favour say 'aye'. All those against 'no'.
		
		    The [ayes/noes] have it."
			Hand out assets: *Student script*
			
			Provide the students in the following roles a copy of the *Student script*:
			
			• Speaker and President (if a student role)
			• Minister for Victoria's Future
			• Shadow Minister for Victoria's Future
			• Premier
			• each of the spokespeople for the minor parties and any independents
			
			Note:
			
			If 'ayes have it', proceed.
			
			If 'noes have it', explain the bill would normally end there. This is unlikely because the government has the numbers in the lower house for it to pass. If the bill does fail, you can explain this, and move forward with the readings to continue on with the experience.

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	Second reading	Speaker: "I call on the Minister to read the bill for the second time" Minister for Victoria's Future: "The preferred top 3 priorities for the government are [list top 3 priorities]. The preferred bottom 3 priorities for government are [list bottom 3 priorities]. The other priorities are negotiable." Shadow Minister for Victoria's Future: "Speaker, I seek a brief explanation of the bill" Minister or Premier: [Provides a brief summary of the reasons for why the top and bottom priorities were chosen]	**Display *Priority area tracking titles*** As the Minister for Victoria's Future lists the top and bottom priorities, the titles for each of the priority areas can be displayed (e.g. stuck to the board). This can either be done in three sections, similar to the *Priority record sheet*, or in three columns. This display will be useful in the Legislative Council section, where students debate and vote on amendments.
		Speaker: "I call on members of the chamber to respond to the bill" Allocated speakers: • Shadow minister for Victoria's Future • spokesperson for each of the minor parties • government member (minister, Premier or government backbencher) to respond to the points raised	<u>Note:</u> Given usually in the Legislative Assembly bills pass (government introduce bills and have the majority), the majority of the debate can be saved for the Legislative Council. It is worth noting, however, that all members who want to speak on the bill would still be given opportunity to, even though the bill will likely pass.

	Third reading	Minister: "I now move that the bill be read for a third time" Speaker: "All those in favour of the bill as listed, stand in place." (Clerk counts the vote) "All those against the bill as listed, stand in place." (Clerk counts the vote) Options: Option 1, motion passed, Speaker: Bill passed (# ayes, # noes). *The Future of Victoria (Victoria 2050) bill* will now be sent to the Legislative Council and their agreement is requested" Option 2, bill defeated, Speaker: *The Future of Victoria (Victoria 2050) bill* defeated (# ayes, # noes).	Note: The Clerk usually counts the vote for and against, but this can be done by the Speaker (or both). Options: • The bill can fail, but explain if the government introduces the bill, it will likely pass and move to the Legislative Council • Make students vote with their party, this will mean with a government majority, it will pass • Alternatively, the bill can fail and the activity ends, which means some government members have voted against the bill and this is an opportunity to discuss belonging to a party when you might not share party values (or values have shifted)

Explanation: Legislative Council	**Explanation: Legislative Council** We are now going to repeat the process, but in the Legislative Council. The Legislative Council, or upper house, has 8 regions, with 5 members per region, with a total of 40 members. The Legislative Council is known as the house of review, because it reviews the bills passed by the Legislative Assembly. There are different members in the Legislative Council than the Legislative Assembly, so you no longer need to stay with your party and argue for what they have decided. You can argue and vote for the areas you would like to see prioritised.	Notes: As the Legislative Council has different members and a different composition of parties (i.e. government may not have the majority), students can act as independents. This may encourage a range of perspectives and speakers. Students can use any of the arguments when setting the priorities, any of the arguments they have heard since, and/or any new arguments. A student will need to act as the government representative in the Legislative Council to introduce the bill. This may be the student who previously had the role of Minister for Victoria's Future, however they are playing a different member while in the Legislative Council Option: Select the President (Presiding Officer) if not doing this role yourself.

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<td rowspan="2" style="writing-mode:vertical">Script: Legislative Council</td>
<td style="writing-mode:vertical">First reading</td>
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President:

> "I call on a member of the government to read the bill for the first time."

Member of the government:

> "President, I rise today to introduce the *Future of Victoria (Victoria 2050) bill.*"

President:

> "The question is that the *Future of Victoria (Victoria 2050) bill* be read for the first time. All those in favour say '*aye*'. All those against '*no*'.
> The [ayes/noes] have it."

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Notes:

The order of priorities presented is exactly the same as what passed the Legislative Assembly, although the member of the government introducing the bill may present different arguments.

If "ayes have it", proceed, "if noes have it", explain the bill would normally end there. You can decide to:

- explain to students that the bill has failed but continue anyway
- end this part of the experience, and move on to the design challenge

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<td style="writing-mode:vertical">Second reading</td>
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President:

> "I call on the member of the government to read the bill for the second time."

Member of the government:

> "The preferred top 3 priorities for the government are [top 3 priorities]. The preferred bottom 3 priorities for government are [bottom 3 priorities]. The other priorities [other priorities] are negotiable.

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		President:	
		"I call on members of the chamber to respond to the bill" [Students take it in turn to provide their perspective on the bill]	Students who wish to speak on the bill stand (or raise their hands) The order of speaking is generally: • government • opposition • crossbench And repeat until no one wants to speak (or there is no more time).
	Explanation: Committee of the Whole	**Explanation: Committee of the Whole** The Committee of the Whole is stage where members can ask questions of the minister or a government member regarding the bill, they can also propose and vote on amendments (changes to the bill). This process can take a very long time, especially if the bill is very long and there is a lot of detail to discuss. Not all bills go through the Committee of the Whole. There may not be questions or amendments. Sometimes a bill will go through the Committee of the Whole, and amendments might be suggested, but the majority of members will vote no to the changes. The Committee of the Whole process that we will do is a variation of what would happen in the Legislative Council.	Notes: There is a detailed explanation on running this stage of the process in the *Victoria 2050 teaching guide*. The Deputy President actually runs the Committee of the Whole process, and this may be an opportunity for a student to run the process. The Legislative Assembly also have a similar process called *Consideration in Detail*, but this process is not as common in the lower house.

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		Member of the crossbench: "I move that the bill be committed to a Committee of the Whole." President: "The question is that the *Future of Victoria (Victoria 2050) bill* enter the Committee of the Whole stage. All those in favour say 'aye'. All those against 'no'. The [ayes/noes] have it."	Note: If the ayes have it, proceed. If the noes have it, explain the bill would go to a third reading without any amendments.
	Committee of the Whole	Member of the crossbench: "I move that any areas in the top and bottom priority list that have majority agreement are not to be amended." President: "The question is that any areas in the top and bottom priority list that have majority agreement are not to be amended. All those in favour say 'aye'. All those against 'no'. The [ayes/noes] have it."	Note: The motion—"any areas in the top and bottom priority list that have majority agreement are not to be amended"—would not actually be a motion, but the Committee of the Whole stage has been structured this way for expediency.

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President

"We will now commence Committee of the Whole. The process will be as follows:

- I will read each of the priority area in turn, starting from the top priorities, followed by the bottom priorities. There will be a vote on each area.
- If the majority of members agree that the area stay at its current level of priority, we will move on to the next area.
- If the majority of members disagree and would like to change the area's level of priority, the area will be removed and placed with the other 'negotiable' areas.

Once this process has taken place, for all top and bottom areas, I will call on members to propose amendments, that is which negotiable areas will fill the remaining gaps."

President repeats for all top and bottom priority areas:

"The question is that [area from the top/bottom priorities] is agreed to. All those in favour say 'aye'. All those against 'no'. The [ayes/noes] have it."

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Moving *Priority area tracking titles*

As the vote happens to confirm the top and bottom priority areas:

- leave the *Priority area tracking title* where it is, if the majority of the members agree to the priority level of the area remaining the same
- move the *Priority area tracking title* to negotiable, if the majority of the members disagree with the priority level and would like to suggest a different area to take its place

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| | | President:

"I call on members to propose amendments to fill any gaps in the bill, beginning with the bottom priorities, followed by the top priorities. You will have 30 seconds to present your amendment and reason. A reminder that only areas that are negotiable to fill gaps may be proposed. If a member wishes to propose an amendment they may stand (or raise their hand)."

[Members stand or raise their hands.]

President:

"I call on the member for [selects the member]."

The selected member:

"Thank you President. I would like to propose that [area] be given consideration for the gap in the [top/bottom priorities], for the following reasons [provides reasons]."

President:

"Any members wish to speak to the proposed amendment please stand (or raise your hand)."

Members stand or raise their hands. | Note:

As the vote happens to amend the top and bottom priority areas:

• Leave the *Priority area tracking title* where it is, if the majority of the members agree to the priority level of the area remaining the same

• Move the *Priority area tracking title* to negotiable, if the majority of the members disagree with the priority level and would like to suggest a different area to take its place |

President:

> "I call on the member for [selects the member]."

[Members have their opportunity to provide their perspectives on the proposed area.]

President:

> "The question is that the [area] be added to the [top/bottom] priorities. All those in favour say 'aye'. All those against 'no'.
>
> The [ayes/noes] have it."

[This is repeated, with other members suggesting amendments until all spots on the bill are occupied, at which point the Committee of the Whole is complete.]

President:

> "The Committee of the Whole is now complete. As the bill stands the top priorities are [reads top priorities]. The bottom priorities are [reads bottom priorities]."

	Third reading	Opposition speaker 2: "I now move that the bill be read for a third time." President: "All those in favour of the bill as listed, stand in place (hands up). All those against the bill as listed, stand in place (hands up)." Options: Option 1, bill passes, President: "The *Future of Victoria (Victoria 2050) bill* has passed [# for, # no]. A message will now be sent to the Legislative Assembly to vote on any amendments, before it is sent to the Governor for Royal Assent." Option 2, bill is defeated, President: "The *Future of Victoria (Victoria 2050) bill* defeated [# for, # no]."	Note: The Clerk usually counts the vote for and against, but this can be done by the President (or both).
	Explanation	**Explanation: Royal Assent** The Governor provides Royal Assent and the bill becomes an Act of Parliament and a law. Some bills will include a commencement date a time in the future for the law to come into effect. This means that the law doesn't start as soon as it receives Royal Assent, and gives everyone time to learn about the law and how it might affect them.	