



The Parliament Prize Student guide

Choosing your topic

If you're keen to enter the Parliament Prize competition this year but you're not sure what your topic will be, or perhaps you're not yet sure what to say about the topic you've chosen, then it's time to do a little bit of research. Here are some research tips that might help you settle on your topic and develop a convincing message.

Not sure what to talk about?

Sometimes the hardest part of a research task is knowing where to start. Perhaps there isn't anything in particular that you're passionate about, or perhaps you're passionate about so many things that it's hard to choose. As a first step you can:

- Read the local newspaper, *The Age*, and/or *Herald Sun*. (This might be online if you don't get a physical paper anymore.)
- Read the agendas/minutes from your local council meetings. These are readily accessible via your local council's website. The agenda will give you an overview of the topics, while the minutes will tell you what Council Members discussed, any action they are taking or decisions made.
- Watch a range of news and current affair programs.

What would you say to parliament if you were an MP?

How does this help?

Looking at a number of different sources of news can help to identify the sorts of issues people are talking about. Think about the people, ideas, stories or comments you remember.

- What stuck in your mind?
- What did you find interesting?
- Was there anything that made you mad or angry? Or perhaps you were upset by something? Or maybe you read or saw a feel-good story about someone or something?
- If you end up with too many ideas, see the questions below.

Too many ideas?

You only have 90-seconds, so focusing on a topic is important. If you're having trouble selecting the idea, the questions below might help:



- Why are these issues or topics important to you?
 - Is there a connection between the answers that you have given? If so, maybe you want to talk about the connection, for example environmental issues, and use one of the topics or issues as an example.
- How might the different topics or issues affect other people in the community?
 - You might select an issue or topic that has the biggest impact or a topic that doesn't affect many people, and therefore perhaps people won't know about it.
- Why might it be important to share this topic or issue with Parliament?