Overview
The aim of this lesson plan is to give teachers a range of ideas and activities to:

• Facilitate student understanding of the democratic values that underpin Australia’s representative democracy and compare our form of government with other countries
• Promote student understanding of the concept of voting
• Encourage student engagement with their representatives in local government and in the Parliament of Victoria in the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council

Curriculum Links
Victorian Curriculum F-10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Learning Area</th>
<th>Strands</th>
<th>Curriculum Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 &amp; 6</td>
<td>Humanities: Civics and citizenship</td>
<td>• Government and democracy</td>
<td>VCCCG008; VCCCG010</td>
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<td>- Discuss the values and principles and institutions that underpin Australia’s democratic forms of government</td>
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<td>- Identify and discuss the key features of the Australian electoral process</td>
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<td>Critical and creative thinking</td>
<td>• Questions and Possibilities</td>
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<td>- Examine how different kinds of questions can be used to identify and clarify information, dates and possibilities</td>
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Learning Goals
By the end of these lessons, students will be able to:

• Understand the concept of a democracy
• Identify some democratic values
• Describe two examples of democratic values: voting and representative government
• Conduct a fair and democratic voting process
• Demonstrate how a representative government works
• Identify (name) their representatives in local government, the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council

Resources and Materials

Included with this lesson plan are:

- Teacher guide
- Teacher instructions: learning activities
- Democratic values checklist x 2 worksheet
- Word jumble: Thinking about democracy, and answer sheet

You will need:

- Journeys: Inside the Parliament (EAL version)
  This is a free data disk available by emailing: educationinfo@parliament.vic.gov.au
- Scissors to cut up word jumble (if using option 1)
- Enough small pieces of paper (voting cards) for each student
- For the extension activity access to: electorallookup.vec.gov.au and www.parliament.vic.gov.au/members
- For teacher reference:
  www.parliament.vic.gov.au/about/the-parliamentary-system/the-electoral-process#voting

Learning Activities Summary

1. Warm-up: Group decision-making activity – Where do you want to go for a school camp?
2. Democratic values: checklist
3. What is a democracy? Victoria vs other examples around the world
4. Democratic values jumble (match the value to the meaning)
5. What is voting?
6. Representative democracy: class activity
7. Group decision-making activity revisited - Where do you want to go for an excursion? Using representatives and the voting process

Achievement Standard

By the end of these lessons students will meet the needs of the achievement standards in Levels 5 and 6 Civics and Citizenship by being able to:

• Discuss the values and principles that underpin Australia’s democratic forms of government
• Identify and discuss some of the key features of the Australian electoral process
• Identify various ways people can participate effectively to achieve shared goals
Lesson plan for teachers

1. WARM-UP ACTIVITY: GROUP DECISION-MAKING

Don’t tell the class that this is an ‘activity’; make them believe the task is ‘real’.

Tell the class that as a group, they have an important decision to make: the school has decided to take them on a very special camp, and they are able to choose where the camp will be held and all activities whilst on camp.

Explain the constraints:
- The camp can be anywhere in Australia (the school has just received a lot of money for flights etc.!) 
- It has to be a five day camp 
- They can plan any activities that are safe and fit within the school’s policies 
- They only have three minutes to reach a decision and you are not going to be involved at all to help them with their decision-making

Start the clock! (3 minutes)

Sit somewhere near the back of the room with a notepad, and write down any observations about how decisions are made. Although it may be tempting to intervene if things get loud/raucous, it’s important that you let the scene play out without teacher intervention (within reason). Keep time (3 minutes). Observations might include things like:
- Students sat in silence for the first 20 seconds
- Student X leapt up in front of the class to take charge immediately
- Student y shouted constantly
- Students A, B, C started talking as a group and didn’t listen to others
- Some students said nothing and their input was not considered
- Some students dominated the discussion and shouted their ideas over the top
- Some students became uninterested and started doing something else

When the time is up, give some constructive feedback to the class about what you observed.

Ask students to think about whether they thought this was a very fair group decision-making process.

2. DEMOCRATIC VALUES: CHECKLIST

This activity gives students the chance to reflect on and feedback their thoughts about the group decision-making process. Ask students to individually fill in the attached Democratic Values Checklist for the class group decision-making (left-hand side only). Explain that they can either tick: ? (they’re not sure, or don’t understand the question), No (they disagree with the statement) or Yes (they agree with the statement) for each line of the checklist.

Students can share their responses with the person next to them and have a discussion about similarities and differences. Have a class discussion around the concept of ‘fairness’… what was fair about this process and what was not fair?

Ask students what the process would have been like with 50 people, 100 people, or 5.79 million people (the population of Victoria) trying to make a decision as a group.

Tell students that today we’re looking at the concept of ‘democracy’, which a type of government that strives to help society make decisions in a way that is fair.
3. DEMOCRACY CASE STUDIES: VICTORIA VS OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

Allow some time for students to explore the ‘Journeys: Inside Parliament’ resource (data disc available by ordering from educationinfo@parliament.vic.gov.au). The resource paints a picture of the lack of freedom and absence of democratic processes in the following countries:

• Pakistan (Habib)
• Afghanistan (Hayatullah and Joseph)
• Ethiopia (Lensa)

Have a class discussion about the following ideas:

• How does voting in Victoria compare with voting in these countries?
• What opportunities are there for Victorians to get involved in a career in politics? How is this different from these countries?
• Is everyone treated equally in these countries?
• Does the government always act fairly and in the best interests of the people in these countries?
• What would it be like to live here compared with Victoria?

Key Question: If these countries do not have a democratic system of Government, and Victoria does, how might we describe the concept of ‘democracy’? Use the case studies as a point of comparison.

Definition: a system of government that sees everyone as equal, and gives everyone (who is eligible – e.g. aged 18+ in Australia) the power to vote for his or her representatives. Everyone’s vote is equal (regardless of background, wealth, gender etc.). It comes from two Greek words: Demos (all citizens living within a particular city-state) and Kratos (power or rule). People have the ‘power’!

4. THINKING ABOUT DEMOCRACY: WORD JUMBLE

Option One
(This will require preparation before class: cut up the ‘Word Jumble’ worksheet into sets. Each set should contain eight word cards and eight definition cards. Ensure there are enough sets for one set per pair of students.)

Give each pair a set of jumbled cards. Ask them to match the word (small card) with its corresponding definition (large card). Go through the answers with the class, clarifying any key words or answering questions. These could be stuck onto sheets of paper, decorated and displayed around the class (e.g. use a symbol to illustrate each idea).

Option Two
Using p1 of the Word Jumble resource sheet, students can work individually or in pairs to link the relevant key word with the appropriate definition by drawing a line between the pairs. Go through answers with the class, clarifying any key words or answering questions. You might also ask students to interpret each value by drawing an appropriate symbol to illustrate each idea.

Have a class discussion reviewing the concept of ‘values’ as being things that are important to us. Set the context of ‘democratic values’ as being things that are important for all of society.

5. WHAT IS VOTING AND WHY IS IT USED?

Refer back to the warm-up activity. No doubt students felt that what occurred was not a very fair process. Explain that we are now going to look at a key part of democracy that is used throughout Victoria to ensure that group decisions can be made fairly: voting.

Discussion points: students may have already had some experience voting (SRC, class captain, decision-making at home) – start by asking students where they may have voted in the past.

Explain that first we are going to explore something called a Direct Democracy, where every person in the class has one vote.

Nominate a student to become an official counter and another to be the official recorder of results.

Open / Public Voting Process in a Direct Democracy:

Read the following statements and ask students to put up their hand if they agree ‘yes’ with the statement. Have the student counter count the hands, and the student recorder record the results on the board (e.g. 12/25).

1. Cats are better than dogs
2. Sweet food is better than savoury
3. Football is better than soccer
4. Going to school is important
5. Pizza is better than pasta
Secret Ballot Voting Process in a Direct Democracy:
Fun Fact: When voting is done in secret, it’s known as a secret ballot. The secret ballot was invented by the Victorian Parliament in 1856. In other parts of the world, it’s known as the ‘Australian Ballot’.

Distribute a small piece of paper (voting card) to each student.

Instructions for Students:
After you have heard a statement (examples below), you are to write YES or NO on your piece of paper, without telling anyone your response. The student official counter should collect the papers, then count the results, with the student recorder recording the response on the board.

Read out one of these example statements:
• This school is one of the best schools in Victoria.
• In our class, everyone is treated fairly.
• Coming to school makes me feel happy.

Have a class discussion comparing the two types of voting (public vs. secret ballot).

Suggested questions to ask:
• What are some of the advantages of the open vote?
  - Fast
  - Efficient
  - Gives a quick snapshot of a group’s main opinion
• What are some of the disadvantages of the open vote?
  - People may be influenced by others
  - People may feel pressure to follow other people’s opinions
  - It requires accurate counting and record-keeping
  - If there were lots more people, it would take too long
• What are some of the advantages of the secret ballot?
  - It gives people confidence to vote without pressure
  - Relatively fast
  - Gives a good overview of a group’s main opinion
• What are some of the disadvantages of the secret ballot?
  - It takes longer than an open vote
  - People could perhaps tamper with the votes behind the scenes (this happens in many parts of the world - good to discuss)
  - If there were more people, it would take a long time to add up/tally all the responses

How was this a more ‘democratic’ process than the group decision-making at the start of class?

If the Victorian Government had asked all Victorians to vote every time they wanted to do something in Parliament (e.g. change a law), it would be too time-consuming to wait for every person in Victoria to respond/count the votes etc. There are too many people for there to be a Direct Democracy. Instead, they have what is called a Representative Democracy (see next activity).

6. REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY: CLASS ACTIVITY

To avoid having to consult each and every person in society, Victoria has what is known as a Representative Democracy. Our population is so large and society is so complex that we have representatives to act (or vote) on our behalf.

Activity: Divide the class into three (or five – so long as it is an odd number) groups. Ask each group to meet and to have a discussion (making sure every person in the group is heard) about the following issues:
1. What is more important: the environment or creating jobs?
2. What is more important: hospitals or police?
3. What is more important: public transport or education?

Allow 5-10 minutes for the discussion, encouraging the group to move towards consensus if possible.

Select one person from each group to act as the Representative and ask them to come to the front of the room.

Ask the three (or five) Representatives to vote on the following statements (by raising their hands if they agree with the statement below). Record the results on the board:
1. Creating jobs is more important than looking after the environment.
2. Having good police is more important than having good hospitals.
3. Education is more important than public transport.
Explain that this is how a Representative Democracy works. Elected leaders are entrusted to represent their constituents (or the people they represent) and vote on their behalf.

Questions for discussion:

- Was this a fair process?
- How well did the Representatives know their constituents?
- How well did the Representatives represent their group’s feelings?
- What are some potential problems with this type of democracy?
- Why might it be important to have your voice heard as a group member?
- What could you do to make sure your Representative understands your views?

7. GROUP DECISION-MAKING REVISITED

Explain that we are going to revisit the group decision making process from the start of the lesson, but this time we are going to use democratic values (fair voting, representative government) to help us make the decision.

Keeping the same three (or five) groups of students, give them 10 minutes to talk as a group (making sure they listen actively, take it in turns to speak) to discuss this question:

Where would you like this class to go on an excursion?***

Within their group, they may like to have a vote (Open or Secret Ballot) - but this is optional.

After the discussion, invite the Representatives to the front of the room to present their group's ideas to the class.

Set the challenge to the class, that they must now try to make a group decision, using democratic values. You might suggest:

- **Option One:** Conduct a secret ballot with the class to choose from the options
- **Option Two:** Conduct an open vote to choose from the options
- **Option Three:** Conduct a vote using only the Representatives for each of the options

Once the decision has been made, students should then complete the ‘Values Checklist’ (right-hand side) resource sheet to evaluate this process.

Have a discussion around the difficulty of group decision-making and discuss how students found the experience of a direct democracy vs. a Representative Democracy.

**Note: this last activity works best if there is some chance that the excursion might actually go ahead. Offering to plan the excursion if students are able to follow fair and democratic process can be a powerful motivator!**

Students may like to write some responses to these questions or display their new understandings in the form of a poster:

1. What did you learn about group decision making today?
2. What did you learn about ‘democracy’ today?
3. What does ‘voting’ mean? What does ‘Representative government’ mean? What are some of the advantages of these processes?
4. Victoria is part of a democracy. What does this mean and how does this compare to some other parts of the world?

8. EXTENSION: FIND MY REPRESENTATIVES IN THE VICTORIAN PARLIAMENT

Students can use this website to search for their representative (you might like to use the school address, or students could use their home addresses):


This will return a representative for the:

- State District (The representative in the Legislative Assembly, or green room)
- State Region (The representative in the Legislative Council, or red room)
- Local Council information

Students can then look up their representative on the Parliament of Victoria website:


Students can write an email to one (or both) of their representatives in the Victorian Parliament, outlining:

- What they have learnt about democracy
- What they have learnt about voting and representative government
- A request for information about how they might involve themselves in Victoria’s democratic system in the future
### Instructions: Match the key word to its correct definition.

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<td>Everyone is equal under the law. This means nobody should be treated differently from anybody else because of their race, ethnicity, country of origin, age, gender, marital status or disability, political or religious beliefs.</td>
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<td>Accountable Government</td>
<td>Being able to say or write what you think about the government or about any other subject or social issue, as long as you don’t break the law, endanger people or make false allegations.</td>
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<td>Freedom of Speech</td>
<td>Men and women have equal rights. Jobs and professions are open equally to men and women. Women and men can serve in the military and hold positions in government.</td>
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<td>A government where elected representatives (Members of Parliament) speak and make decisions on behalf of the people they represent when proposing, debating and passing laws (legislation).</td>
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<td>The ideas or beliefs that make a society fair, including: democratic decision-making, freedom of speech, equality before the law, social justice, equality, social justice.</td>
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<td>Equality for Women and Men</td>
<td>A process of making a decision that is fair, where everyone involved has an equal say. For example: voting, or reaching a consensus through discussion where everybody has a say.</td>
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<td>Everyone has equal opportunity and a ‘fair go’. There is mutual respect, tolerance and fair play. There is justice in the distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges (i.e. it is fair).</td>
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# School Camp Group decision-making process

## Democratic Values Checklist

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