 Values, citizenship and voting

Suggested duration: 3 x 60 minutes

Teachers should choose materials and activities that meet the needs of their students and local school context.

Course outcomes

6.1 Assess, adapt and apply skills to develop and maintain respectful relationships and successfully participate in education, work and community contexts.

6.2 Demonstrate behaviours that model positive values, beliefs and attitudes and promote inclusion and equity for self and others

What do we want students to know, understand or be able to do?

* Recognise the importance of Australia’s core values in personal behaviour and civic action.
* Identify rights and responsibilities of citizens.
* Assess the importance of voting.
* Demonstrate solutions to issues as part of a plan for action and present ideas and viewpoints.
* Use terms and concepts reflective of citizenship or civic action.

Suggested content

| Learning context | Content |
| --- | --- |
| Independence  Focus: Preparing for participation in community, education and employment | Building and participating in community   * active and informed citizenship, e.g. volunteering and community service * participation in democratic electoral processes, e.g. enrolling to vote, voting government elections |

Teaching notes

The influence of core values on Australia's society is seen through personal behaviours and actions. Democracy is one of Australia’s core values, as is freedom, equality, fairness and justice.

The importance of voting in Australia's democracy is a key stage of any process of change.

An exploration of Australia's democracy and its role in decision making will enable students to develop civic knowledge and understanding, and apply citizenship skills, including opinions, appreciation of different points of view and be able to discuss personal perspectives.

Creating a safe and supportive learning environment

There are a number of strategies that can be used to create a supportive learning environment which enables students to feel safe to learn and ask questions. They include:

* making students aware at the beginning of Life Ready sessions that disclosing personal information that indicates they may be at risk of harm will be reported to the school principal in all instances. This includes personal disclosures related to instances of abuse, drug use, neglect or sexual activity under the legal age of consent.
* being aware that some parts of Life Ready can be confronting and sensitive for some students.
* enabling students to withdraw if they find issues personally confronting to protect them from making harmful disclosures. Equally, it is important to be prepared for issues that arise as a result of a student making a public disclosure in the classroom.

More information on creating a safe and supportive learning environment can be found on the [Life Ready website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/life-ready).

Evaluating resources before use

Preview and evaluate all strategies, resources and teaching and learning approaches in full before use with students to determine suitability for student learning needs, stage of development and local school context. Consider the age, maturity, cultural background, sexuality, gender, sex, health and other characteristics of students in your care. Apply professional judgements to all strategies, teaching and learning approaches and resources including audio visual materials (e.g. videos, media clips and YouTube), interactive web-based content (e.g. games, quizzes and websites) and texts.

Use the [resource review flowchart](https://schoolsequella.det.nsw.edu.au/file/083acd3a-daca-4307-9afe-bc6c888f694a/1/final-resource-flowchart-html5.zip/index.html) to decide about the suitability of teaching and learning resources.

Materials should be reviewed in full and endorsed by the school principal before use in NSW government schools.

Communication with parents and caregivers

Some aspects of Life Ready may be viewed as sensitive or controversial, such as learning about abuse, child protection, drugs, respectful relationships, sexual health, sexuality and violence. Inform parents and carers, prior to the occasion, of the specific details of the Life Ready program, so that parents and caregivers have time to exercise their rights of withdrawing their child from a particular session. In this regard, a parents or caregiver’s wish must be respected.

Establishing how parents and caregivers will be informed about programs and involved in consultation is a school-based decision. Where parents and caregivers indicate they wish to withdraw their child from a program it is useful to negotiate which parts of the Life Ready program they are concerned about. A sample information letter is available on the [Life Ready website](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/pdhpe/life-ready).

Learning experiences

Activity one – Our shared values

The importance of key values in Australia’s democracy, and their influences on personal behaviours and actions

1. In groups:
   1. brainstorm, discuss and list values that are important. Compare the groups’ results to that of the class, and devise a common list of 8-10 values.
   2. using the common list of values, individually rank the top three values in order of importance. Compare the results with group/class members
   3. survey family members, by asking them to identify their top five values. Share the results and reflect upon generational differences, if any.
2. View the [Australian values statement](https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/trav/life/aust/values-statement/living-in-australia-values-statement-long) and explore and discuss the similarities and differences in these core values to those of the students, the class’ values and those indicated by the Government. Do all of these core values underpin our rights as an Australian citizen?
3. Recall the difference in definitions of the terms: values, rights and responsibilities.
4. Discussion:
   * how does Australia’s core values connect with the rights and responsibilities you have as a citizen?
5. Demonstrate understanding of the above through an online visual display. (E.g. poster)

Activity two – Citizenship in action

1. Discuss: What is the importance of having a shared belief of Australia’s core values to bring about change?
2. In pairs, think of the tactics used to get family, parents, friends, to do what one wants them to do. Collect as many ways of influencing people's actions as possible from other pairs of class members. Grade them for effectiveness from the students’ own life experience.
3. Ask students for ideas as to how they can participate in Australia’s democracy, by taking informed and responsible action, to bring about change?
4. Generate further conversation by listing examples of what students have done?
5. Watch [Getting involved](https://www.peo.gov.au/multimedia/videos.html) (Parliamentary Education Office).
   1. in small groups, summarise the ways students can be active citizens and effective agents of change. Examples include: contacting parliamentary representative at local, state or federal level; writing or signing a petition; writing a letter to the editor; joining a lobby group or political party; attending a rally; attending local council meetings; and being an informed voter. Complete the worksheet *Ways to Participate.*
   2. comment on peaceful demonstrations versus more extreme action taken by some pressure groups. Give examples of both. Discuss how cognisant their action is to Australia’s core values.
6. Summarise by discussing the following question:
   1. what sorts of things can people do to take responsible, informed action to bring about change?

Resources

* [Parliamentary Education Office](https://www.peo.gov.au/uploads/peo/docs/fact-sheets/getting_involved.pdf)

Activity three – Why vote?

Teachers note: Background information/websites

* [Political participation among the young in Australia](https://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/research/caber/files/3a.pdf)
* [education.aec.gov.au/getvoting](https://education.aec.gov.au/getvoting/)
* [education.aec.gov.au/democracy-rules](https://education.aec.gov.au/democracy-rules/)

Students:

1. review several websites, including [Your vote – your privilege and your responsibility](https://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/25/theme2-voting-any-way-you-can.htm). Provide reasons for voting and complete the table “To vote or not to vote”. Discuss the reasons the websites are effective in encouraging voters to vote.
2. brainstorm answers to the question “What value do you see in voting?”
3. why should I vote?” – In two minutes work in groups of three and discuss possible answers to this question.
4. discuss the reasons why many young people choose not to vote (refer to the table “To vote or not to vote”.
5. formulate a public awareness campaign to alert peers as to the importance of voting. Present findings online in a social media format or blog.

Resources

To vote or not to vote

Research the importance of voting on severable credible websites (e.g. .gov.au and .org.au). Fill out the table below.

| Name  Website address | Reasons for voting that you agree with | Explain why you agree with it | Reasons for voting that you disagree with | Explain why you agree with it |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Your vote - your privilege –you’re your responsibility  [www.aec.gov.au](https://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/25/theme2-voting-any-way-you-can.htm) |  |  |  |  |
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Ways to participate

| Method of participation | How this method of participation works | An example of when this could be used effectively |
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