

# Politics, Power and People (Stage 2)

Subject Outline

# Subject outline changes

Below are the current changes to the subject outline. Teachers are encouraged to explore the changes in detail and make relevant adjustments to their teaching, learning, and assessment programs.

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| From 2024 | To 2025 onwards | page |
| Stage 2 | | |
| *Assessment Type 3: Investigation*  The written report of the investigation should be a maximum of 2000 words. | *Assessment Type 3: Investigation*  The investigation should be a maximum of 2000 words if written, and a maximum of 12 minutes for an oral presentation or the equivalent in multimodal form. | [19](#RowTitle_E_1) |

# Subject description

Politics, Power and People is a 20‑credit subject at Stage 2.

Politics, Power and People is the study of how power is distributed and exercised at all levels of society. The subject explores ideas related to cooperation, conflict, crises, and the political intricacies of a particular government. Students develop an understanding of expressions of power and politics, and the effect of these on individuals, families, schools, workplaces, communities, governments, and institutions in law, media, and the commercial world. Through an inquiry approach, students challenge their existing political understanding and move from ‘right or wrong’ thinking towards appreciating nuances that are ‘grey’. They explore abstract ideas, then put their learning into action as they move to understand the various themes related to politics, power and people at local, state, national, and international levels.

Students develop a broad understanding of political events and their impact through the integration of historical, legal, cultural, philosophical, geographical, and economic perspectives. Insights into these factors allow students to develop an understanding of how power is constructed in different contexts.

Students explore the themes by collaboratively critiquing political ideas and transferring their learning to other situations and cultural contexts. Case studies are integrated into the learning to provide students with the opportunity to construct knowledge and connect the contextual understanding of political structures with political theories. Students apply their understanding of elements of the Australian political system in a global context. They learn to understand why conflicts occur and the mechanisms used to negotiate and resolve these. Through the study of Politics, Power and People, students begin to appreciate the complexity and diversity of approaches to solving global challenges related to human rights, equality, welfare, poverty, and the distribution of resources.

Students develop skills in written and oral communication, critical and creative thinking, analysis, and the ability to conduct ethical, reliable, and valid research. When equipped with these skills, students are empowered to become active citizens, voters, and participants in local, national, and international communities. They also understand how different systems of government offer varied opportunities for participation, and make informed decisions about the right to dissent and the limits of tolerance in relation to social justice, morals, and ethics.

The investigations allow students to carry out in-depth research on the theme of their choice or an area of interest. They are encouraged to use a range of investigative methods (e.g. quantitative, qualitative, or mixed), using primary and/or secondary data. Students develop critical analysis skills and convey ideas in coherent forms of communication, using political terms to articulate their understandings and justify their political reasoning.

At Stage 2, students develop their understanding of Politics, Power and People through a compulsory theme — Making meaning from democracy: exploring Australian politics — and through two themes that are selected from the option theme section.

Students consider aspects of the democratic system — such as the historical limits of citizenship, and contemporary concerns about globalisation — from perspectives including those of the nation-state and of various media platforms.

# Capabilities

The capabilities connect student learning within and across subjects in a range of contexts. They include essential knowledge and skills that enable people to act in effective and successful ways.

The capabilities, particularly critical and creative thinking, ethical understanding, and personal and social capability are reflected in the learning requirements, content, assessment design criteria, and performance standards of Politics, Power and People.

The SACE identifies seven capabilities.

Literacy

Students extend and apply their literacy capability by, for example:

* researching, reading, and analysing sources of information related to contemporary Australian and global political systems and issues
* identifying, selecting, organising, analysing, and synthesising political sources that represent multiple perspectives
* critically evaluating and understanding the power and use of language from various sources
* discussing and sharing information, concepts, and ideas related to politics
* considering a range of perspectives to identify intent, bias, facts, and opinions, and exploring how language and images can be used to manipulate meaning relating to political issues
* developing skills to articulate, discuss, debate, evaluate their thoughts, and defend or refute arguments about controversial issues
* investigating, making informed comments, and proposing recommendations about political issues, using appropriate evidence to support their conclusions.

Numeracy

Students extend and apply their numeracy capability by, for example:

* analysing, interpreting, and presenting information in numerical and graphical form
* investigating, comparing, and analysing polls as drivers of public opinion, and examining metrics and indicators to track the impact of climate change and global economic transformation
* researching and using quantitative and qualitative data in order to recognise the impact of changing demographics on politics, electoral boundaries, and party loyalties
* acknowledging the strengths and limitations of using data when monitoring, interpreting, and analysing political events
* representing quantitative data from primary research in order to create graphs and charts to forecast potential political outcomes
* constructing and interpreting data to make meaning of past and present information using digital timelines, to understand why present political events occurred and to predict future political events.

Information and communication technology (ICT) capability

Students extend and apply their ICT capability by, for example:

* retrieving information and participating collaboratively in online learning contexts, such as interactive online learning platforms
* developing the knowledge and skills to use digital technologies, in order to analyse patterns from data sets over time and predict political results and key trends
* using social media or other platforms to responsibly collaborate, communicate, and share information with peers about political viewpoints
* exploring opportunities presented by digital or emerging technologies in order to connect with and analyse diverse political perspectives
* proposing, organising, and presenting strategies for collective action digitally, using multimodal elements.

Critical and creative thinking

Students extend and apply their critical and creative thinking capability by, for example:

* appreciating the values of inquiry such as accuracy, clarity, depth, and breadth of treatment and relevance
* asking relevant questions to challenge their assumptions, question the validity and reliability of sources of information, and develop a political argument using valid evidence
* developing their ability to interpret inferences and meaning, and appreciating the nature of politics as they examine the structure of arguments in order to evaluate the claims made
* developing a clear and holistic understanding of the underlying political issues and challenges that hinder progress toward new solutions to develop creative and defensible strategies for improving decision‑making processes, in order to serve the needs of local and global communities
* developing their metacognitive thinking through high-level reasoning, in order to examine issues related to power and propose appropriate and innovative courses of action.

Personal and social capability

Students extend and apply their personal and social capability by, for example:

* developing a personal political identity and position in relation to political and moral issues through learning to understand themselves and others
* working collaboratively in teams to tackle challenging problems that require them to develop and apply personal, interpersonal, and social skills in order to appreciate and respect their own perspective and those of others
* analysing the underpinning social structures in Australian and global political environments while considering issues related to social inclusion
* recognising their emotions and developing empathy for others when considering the impact of political discourse on members of communities
* developing personal responsibility as they make informed and responsible decisions and transform these into feasible actions to contribute to civil society at various levels
* becoming empowered to mediate, negotiate, propose, advocate, and contribute to solutions to local and global issues.

Ethical understanding

Students extend and apply their ethical understanding capability by, for example:

* considering how they can contribute to a civilised and democratic society
* discussing ethical concepts such as making moral judgments and having a critical and collective responsibility that underpins one’s political ethics
* using appropriate, ethical, and safe research processes, and evaluating findings against criteria related to human rights, citizenship, economic prosperity, social advancement, and environmental conservation
* observing appropriate protocols when communicating with members of the community, in order to explore political and ethical issues and learn to be accountable for decisions they make as members of a democratic community
* negotiating with their peers as they decide whose ethical and moral stance they should support
* examining shared beliefs, values, rights, and the responsibilities of citizenship in the context of diversity.

Intercultural understanding

Students extend and apply their intercultural understanding capability by, for example:

* participating in contemporary global debates and exploring the implications of globalisation in political contexts
* engaging with issues of cultural diversity and developing an understanding of how cultural diversity influences decisions within a range of political systems
* developing an understanding of the cultural factors that shape their perceptions and values, and those of others
* forming their own ideas and values through cultural and community engagement, and developing an understanding of how their actions impact others and the future
* exploring the political systems of Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples and considering the dynamic power relations that shape the interactions between dominant and non‑dominant cultures, including the undercurrents of difference found within these interrelations
* cultivating empathy as global citizens in order to improve the quality of their lives and the lives of others, while discovering commonalities and developing the courage to transform their beliefs and values.

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, cultures, and perspectives

In partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and schools and school sectors, the SACE Board of South Australia supports the development of high-quality learning and assessment design that respects the diverse knowledge, cultures, and perspectives of Indigenous Australians.

The SACE Board encourages teachers to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and perspectives in the design, delivery, and assessment of teaching and learning programs by:

* providing opportunities in SACE subjects for students to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and contemporary experiences
* recognising and respecting the significant contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Australian society
* drawing students’ attention to the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and perspectives from the past and the present
* promoting the use of culturally appropriate protocols when engaging with and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities

# Learning requirements

The learning requirements summarise the knowledge, skills, and understanding that students are expected to develop and demonstrate through their learning in Stage 2 Politics, Power and People.

In this subject, students are expected to:

1. understand and analyse political concepts and the interconnectedness of Australian politics and the world
2. explore political issues by synthesising information and perspectives and reflecting on the barriers to progress and solutions
3. propose solutions and make judgments, considering factors such as social climate, political structures, and perspectives
4. develop independent and collaborative communication skills in order to express the complexity of political ideas
5. reflect on their beliefs, values, and experiences concerning political ideas and concepts
6. apply inquiry skills to compare, analyse, and evaluate political issues and perspectives, using a range of evidence.

# Content

Stage 2 Politics, Power and People is a 20‑credit subject that consists of:

* one compulsory theme: Making meaning from democracy — exploring Australian political narratives
* two option themes.

In Stage 2 Politics, Power and People, students become critical consumers of political information. Students critique multiple perspectives and the social and political structures that influence political decisions. They develop a political identity and justify their political standpoints with well‑reasoned arguments. Students challenge their assumptions and develop cultural sensitivities to shape their world views. They gain an appreciation of how past Australian and global political events have shaped the world they live in today. Students consider how their actions affect people. As students become empowered to be informed and engaged citizens, they understand the power of politics both in the Australian and the global contexts. A study of politics will empower students to continue to develop their capabilities to thrive in the twenty‑first century world.

Compulsory theme: Making meaning about democracy – exploring Australian political narratives

This compulsory theme consists of five inquiry questions that focus on democracy. By exploring this concept, students gain an understanding and appreciation of the nature, strengths, and limitations of democracy.

The five inquiry questions are:

1. What is democracy?
2. To what extent does Australia’s political system reflect democratic values?
3. Can political participation influence political change?
4. To what extent do political parties effectively represent the will of the people?
5. Can an election be won without ‘playing’ politics?

In this compulsory theme, students gain an appreciation of the key ideas, ideals, and challenges to democracy in a variety of situations, both past and present. Students evaluate the Australian political system and consider how its democratic nature has changed over time. In addition, they review the unique features of our democratic system, reflect on the roles of active citizens, and analyse ways of making significant impacts. Students consider the effectiveness of the political parties in Australia as vehicles of democracy, and examine the mechanisms that political parties use to exercise power and sway public opinion.

In addressing inquiry question 1: ‘What is democracy?’, students may consider:

* Ancient Greek democratic practice
* the ‘game‑changers’ of politics
* active democratic citizenry
* the role of government in society.

Students gain an appreciation of the key ideas in the development of the concept of democracy. Students revisit the traditional roots of democracy in Greece, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the concept in its original context. Students consider the contributions  and evaluate the ideas of  key political philosophers such as Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. They review the challenges to democracy in the twenty‑first century. Students consider the roles and responsibilities of active citizens in a modern democracy, while considering the extent to which governments become involved in the personal, social, and economic activities of individual citizens.

In addressing inquiry question 2: ‘To what extent does Australia’s political system reflect democratic values?’, students may consider:

* the rule of law, through a comparative study with non‑democratic countries
* responsible and representative government
* the separation of powers
* free, regular, and representative elections.

Students consider the rule of law in theory and in practice, both in the Australian context and in selected comparative international situations. Students explore the ideals of a democratic society, with a focus on responsible and representative government. They consider the role of the Australian Constitution in protecting core democratic values and compare the Australian interpretation of the separation of powers with international examples. Students explore the importance of limiting the power of authorities, and debate the concepts of compulsory voting, voting age, and national participation in an Australian context.

In addressing inquiry question 3: ‘Can political participation influence political change?’, students may consider:

* different electoral systems
* referenda and plebiscites
* the power of collective action in advocating for change
* case studies of political movements.

Students evaluate the comparative fairness of the major voting systems in Australia at local, territorial, state, and national levels. They review how some electoral systems change over time and review the impacts of examples of malapportionment at a range of levels. They consider the effectiveness — and the mechanisms — of employing both referenda and plebiscites in an Australian context. Students explore and evaluate how they can be active citizens. Students critically examine contemporary social movements and pressure groups as avenues of political expression, at both the national and international levels.

In addressing inquiry question 4: ‘To what extent do political parties effectively represent the will of the people?’, students may consider:

* the political spectrum
* the ideology, pragmatism, policy, and practice of political parties
* classification of independent, major, and minor parties
* a case study of public opinion impacting party policy.

Students explore the ideas associated with the political spectrum, and the strengths and weaknesses of thinking about politics through an ideological lens. Students evaluate the extent to which parties in Australia are driven by their founding or modified ideologies or by political pragmatism, and investigate how conflict between ideology and pragmatism translates into party policy. Students review the impacts that this conflict have on electoral success. They evaluate the reasons for the long-term comparative success of major parties and the ephemeral nature of nearly all minor parties.

In addressing inquiry question 5: ‘Can an election be won without ‘playing’ politics?’, students may consider:

* short- and long‑term factors that affect voting
* influence of minority groups
* the power within parties – accountability and decision‑making
* a case study about how global politicians have used strategies to gain power.

Students review a range of Australian elections at different levels to analyse the multi‑factorial nature of election results. Students consider the various psychological, geographical, economic, social, and systemic factors that influence voter behaviour. Students review the impacts of minority groups in selected geographic and ideological areas. In addition, they explore the vexed question of power within parties, such as executive power, party‑room decisions, national and state policy decisions, pre‑selection factors, gender inequality, and sub‑branch activities. Concurrently, students explore the situation in an international context, through a comparative study.

Option themes

Option themes allow students to further develop their understanding of politics, power, and decision-making in specific areas of politics. The descriptions that follow the outline of possible option themes are not intended to be prescriptive. Teachers should use their knowledge and resources to develop suitable option themes that build on students’ interests. Teachers should guide students to consider social characteristics that may be central to the option themes, such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and socio‑economic and professional status.

In consultation with students, teachers select any two of the following option themes.

* Option theme 1: The United States and the world: managing challenges
* Option theme 2: A world in existential crisis
* Option theme 3: Mediatisation of politics
* Option theme 4: Politics of the minority: making Aboriginal voices heard
* Option theme 5: The Chinese century: emergence of a new hegemon.

Option theme 1: The United States and the world: managing challenges

Students consider the unique geopolitical hegemonic position of the United States after the Second World War, and explore issues that arise from the management of challenges to this position. Students evaluate the short- and long‑term effectiveness of the national responses to these challenges, both at home and abroad. They evaluate apparent and implied reasons for the foreign‑policy decisions of the United States, and the implications of these in diverse contexts. Students analyse Australia’s changing relationship with the United States.

The inquiry questions are:

1. Is the United States the undisputed global hegemonic power?
2. Is global harmony the sole aim of United States foreign policy?
3. Has the United States overcome external and internal challenges?
4. Does Australia benefit from its relationships with the United States?

In addressing inquiry question 1: ‘Is the United States the undisputed global hegemonic power?’, students may consider:

* political, economic, and geographic components of power
* soft power as a form of imperialism
* bilateral and multilateral agreements
* domestic events that affect the global positioning of the United States.

Students consider areas of American hegemonic status by reviewing the claim that America is the undisputed geopolitical leader in all areas. Students analyse past and current challenges, against the background of an ever‑changing international stage. They evaluate the claim that soft power is another form of imperialism and explore its dimensions such as language, pop culture, entertainment, and sport. Students consider the roles of selected bilateral and multilateral agreements in supporting America’s dominance in such areas as trade and defence. In addition, students reflect on the impact that national disputes, internal criticism, and national personalities have on America’s international image.

In addressing inquiry question 2: ‘Is global harmony the sole aim of United States foreign policy?’, students may consider:

* foreign policy and its evolution
* the concept of ‘a force for good in the modern world’
* the United States as a global police force
* international perspectives on foreign policy.

In this question, students consider America’s management of post‑Second World War foreign policy, and the factors driving policy change. Students reflect on the areas of comparative successes and failures in a range of geographic, economic, and ideological areas and evaluate the reasons for America’s intervention. Using a diversity of examples, students analyse whether American foreign policy benefits individual countries or regions and/or the global community. Students evaluate whether America has a role to play as an enforcer of global justice, and whether it is a compassionate international friend or is driven by self‑interest.

In addressing question 3: ‘Has the United States overcome external and internal challenges?’, students may consider:

* the changing dimensions of current international challenges and alliances
* international threats, both real and perceived
* domestic social issues affecting international cooperation
* Congress as an enabler of internal progress.

Students consider how the United States addresses the problems associated with shifting geopolitical alliances, in a globalised world in which rapid technological change makes for increasing uncertainty. Students review international examples and impacts in which past foes have become current allies, and assess how the United States faces these challenges. Students critically analyse how the United States deals with a range of domestic, social, and economic challenges that impact upon their hegemonic power. Students gain an appreciation of the powerful role of Congress, and how its nature can challenge progress.

In addressing question 4: ‘Does Australia benefit from its relationships with the United States?’, students may consider:

* the changing international challenges and alliances
* international threats to the relationship
* domestic social issues
* the notion that the United States is our ‘great and powerful friend’.

Students explore the evolution of the changing long-standing relationship between Australia and America, including a reflection on the situation during the Second World War. Students evaluate the nature of contemporary international challenges and relationships from a range of perspectives including security, trade, defence cooperation, and the tyranny of distance (with a focus on the south‑west Pacific). Students review issues linked to the American presence on Australian soil and analyse whether these benefit Australia. They further investigate the policies of the major parties and examine whether or not this relationship is in Australia’s interest. Students also critically analyse the notion that America is our great and powerful friend.

Option theme 2: A world in existential crisis

Students explore the nature of global challenges and conflicts and the impacts of these on individuals and the wider world. Students explore how global challenges have resulted in local and transnational terrorism, international interventions, nuclear proliferation, and cyber and information warfare. Students reflect on how human lives are affected by the interconnectedness and increasing interdependence of countries, companies, and individuals.

The inquiry questions are:

1. Are nuclear weapons the greatest existential threat to the world today?
2. To what extent can a global solution be found to counter climate change?
3. Will the world ever be free of armed conflict?
4. Are non‑traditional military threats now a greater danger to global peace?

In addressing inquiry question 1: ‘Are nuclear weapons the greatest existential threat to the world today?’, students may consider:

* members of the nuclear club, and their agenda
* global management of nuclear proliferation
* alternative applications of nuclear technology
* implications of Australia utilising nuclear technology.

Students explore the past and present proliferation of nuclear weapons. They examine countries that are armed with nuclear arsenals and consider the impact this has on power, security, and international relationships. Students assess the arguments justifying the possession and trade of nuclear weapons and the consequent threat that nuclear weapons have on global security, humanity, and environmental sustainability. Students further reflect on Australia’s nuclear position and consider the implications of Australia utilising nuclear technology. Students consider whether the benefits of using alternative applications of nuclear technology outweigh the risks in an increasingly complex modern world.

In addressing inquiry question 2: ‘To what extent can a global solution be found to counter climate change?’, students may consider:

* causes and impacts of climate change
* comparative global responses to climate change
* challenges for global solutions
* methods of adapting to and reducing climate change.

Students examine the causes and impacts of climate change on the environment, on resource management, and on communities around the world. Students analyse how effectively the protocols and treaties have addressed the adversities faced by vulnerable people around the world. They investigate the different responses from nations to the challenges confronting global decision‑makers, and reflect on the feasibility of these proposed solutions in an increasingly unpredictable world. Students evaluate the success of various mitigation policies and adaptation measures to reduce climate change.

In addressing inquiry question 3: ‘Will the world ever be free of armed conflict?’, students may consider:

* causes of and responses to contemporary conflict
* institutions providing collective security
* peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and state sanction
* Australia as an international supporter of global peace and security.

Students examine issues of peace and conflict from various perspectives in order to understand the complex process of conflict resolution. They explore the role of government and non‑government institutions in intervening, managing, and restoring peaceful environments. In addition, they examine the powers and limitations that shape the way these entities respond. Students evaluate Australia’s contribution to world peace and stability. Students critique the effectiveness of non‑violent approaches in achieving foreign policy objectives and resolving conflict.

In addressing inquiry question 4: ‘Are non-traditional military threats now a greater danger to global peace?’, students may consider:

* domestic and international terrorism
* cyberattacks
* energy, resource, health, pandemics, and biosecurity
* international crime, piracy, human trafficking, and exploitation.

Students consider the growing non-traditional military threats to peace, security, and prosperity, and evaluate the extent to which violent and non‑violent threats compromise global safety. They consider the nature and intended consequences of the threats, and their impacts on domestic and international communities. Students develop an appreciation of the complexities that these challenges present to governments, organisations, and communities that seek to minimise risks and impacts. Students explore non‑intentional threats that arise from mismanagement and lack of control of world resources.

Option theme 3: Mediatisation of politics

In this theme, students focus on the media and its power, various perspectives, and influences on politics. Students investigate the increasing intrusion of media into the political sphere, and critique the approach of a media‑driven society. They critically inspect evidence to determine whether political institutions have retained their influence in the face of expanding media power. Students evaluate whether political institutions are dependent upon, or independent of, the media.

The inquiry questions are:

1. To what extent does the media protect the fundamental rights and responsibilities of Western liberal democracies?
2. To what extent has global politics been revolutionised by new media?
3. Does the media set the political agenda and influence public opinion?
4. Can Australian political journalism survive the twenty‑first century paradigm?

In addressing inquiry question 1: ‘To what extent does media protect the fundamental rights and responsibilities of Western liberal democracies?’, students may consider:

* the intricacies of fairness and newsworthiness
* the rights and responsibilities of the media in Western democracies
* the Australian media as a balanced entity
* the role of cartoonists as social critics.

Students explore how some democracies in the world have overseen attempts to compromise the independence of the media sector. They critically analyse the concepts of newsworthiness, fairness, rights, and responsibilities in news selection in Western liberal democracies. Students examine: factors that threaten global media freedom, the impact of the threats on democracy, and how press freedom rebounds from repression. Students also evaluate the role of the Australian media, the standards that govern the Australian media, and the Australian media’s commitment to its statutory independence. Students investigate the provocative role of cartoonists in highlighting societal issues.

In addressing inquiry question 2: ‘To what extent has global politics been revolutionised by new media?’, students may consider:

* the role of social media in current elections
* the use of social media to influence political agendas
* the changing lenses, and perceptions of ‘extreme’ and ‘mainstream’ views
* a comparative case study of social media in Australia and another country.

Students consider how the role of media is changing from a monologue to a dialogue in which personal opinions are unfettered. Students appraise the role and use of social media as a pervasive force in politics, particularly the use of digital micro‑targeting tactics to shape political agendas. Students analyse how the media juggles shifts in perspectives with trying to remain objective and impartial when dealing with extreme and mainstream views. Through a comparative case study of social media, students explore the complexities of the new media system both in Western and non‑Western countries.

In addressing inquiry question 3: ‘Does the media set the political agenda and influence public opinion?’, students may consider:

* diversity and ownership of media organisations
* government use of media to set their agenda
* polls as drivers of public opinion
* an international case study of an election from an Australian perspective.

Students explore whether diverse ownership of the media leads to the effective functioning of democracy. As the media communicates information to the public and influences their decision‑making, government institutions leverage the power of the media to influence political outcomes. Students investigate whether the media exerts political influence on government, or if the reverse relationship is true. They examine the validity and reliability of the opinion poll as a tool for policymaking, and examine how reliance on polls affects the practice of democracy. Students analyse an international case study in which the media has made a significant electoral impact.

In addressing inquiry question 4: ‘Can Australian political journalism survive the twenty‑first century paradigm?’, students may consider:

* the reliability of news sources
* the suppression of freedom of speech
* economic viability
* cyber and national security.

Students explore the codified rules and social norms that govern the practice of Australian journalism. They analyse factors that determine source reliability and what is worthy and credible publishing. Students investigate the implications of decreasing media freedom. They consider government censorship in democratic and authoritarian regimes as well as commercial pressures due to the rise of the internet. Students examine the importance of cybersecurity and the legal protections for journalists to defend freedom of the press for the wider social and economic good. They investigate whether the Australian media presents a clear threat to democracy or is vital to ensuring government accountability.

Option theme 4: Politics of the minority: making Aboriginal voices heard

Students focus on connecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives with politics. Students reflect on the degree to which Aboriginal voices have been considered by and influenced parliament, and the extent to which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have autonomy, sovereignty, and governance. Comparative studies of other marginalised communities around the world allow students to form an appreciation of the challenges and the experiences that these communities face.

The inquiry questions are:

1. How can political representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people be achieved?
2. How far can Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives be influential in political outcomes?
3. To what extent have Aboriginal communities achieved self‑determination?
4. To what extent are the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reflected in other countries?

In addressing inquiry question 1: ‘How can meaningful political representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people be achieved?’, students may consider:

* recognition of Aboriginal people within the Australian Constitution
* political ramifications of a third parliamentary chamber
* the significance of Aboriginal political representation
* the effectiveness of the reconciliation movements of the 2000s.

Students challenge the broader concept of political representation. Through a critical lens, students address whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been sufficiently represented in parliament within the political discourse that shapes decision‑making in Australia. Students explore ways in which Aboriginal voices can be heard in politics, including the creation of a third parliamentary chamber. They consider the values reflected in the Australian Constitution and the importance of constitutional recognition. Students explore past and current attempts at reconciliation. They reflect on the transformative nature of reconciliation and the positive impact that successful reconciliation will have on the future of all Australians.

In addressing inquiry question 2: ‘How influential can Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives be in political outcomes?’, students may consider:

* the effectiveness of federal organisations
* South Australian organisations
* modern political implications of the civil rights movement
* contemporary community‑based movements.

Students explore the potential roles that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can have within politics and in shaping societal perspectives. Students analyse the effectiveness of federal and South Australian organisations in making progress, advancing rights, and advocating the perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Students consider the barriers to successful initiatives and the importance of long‑term political support. Within the context of civil rights movements, students explore the impact that activism has had on the advancement of civil rights for these people. Students critique the importance of community‑based movements for progressing equality and redressing the disparity that continues to be part of the daily Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience.

In addressing inquiry question 3: ‘To what extent have Aboriginal communities achieved self‑determination?’, students may consider:

* understanding self‑determination
* evaluation of self‑determination
* case studies related to Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) lands
* proposing a model to improve political outcomes.

Students explore the extent to which Aboriginal communities autonomously govern their communities. Students consider the right to self‑determination, especially over matters that directly affect the lives of Aboriginal people. They examine the implications for communities that do not have adequate power to influence the programs, policies, and structures that rule their lives. With this understanding, students question the notion that without self‑determination, Aboriginal communities cannot achieve equality and will continue to suffer systemic disadvantage. Students analyse the models used for self‑determination in the APY lands and propose improvements to advance community outcomes.

In addressing inquiry question 4: ‘To what extent are the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reflected in other countries?’, students may consider:

* comparisons with Asia–Pacific nations
* comparisons with Western democracies
* comparisons with other First Nation peoples
* human rights activism as an agent of change.

Students compare the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences with the challenges of other similar communities. Students explore the progress made by these communities regarding equality, social, and economic capital, wellbeing, respect for culture, and safety. They compare and contrast global examples that highlight the ongoing impacts of colonialism and displacement and the struggles experienced by marginalised communities. Students consider the advancement of human rights for these groups, and explore the complexities associated with repairing communities within the contexts of contemporary environments.

Option theme 5: The Chinese century: emergence of a new hegemon

Students focus on China’s emerging power and influence in the world and examine China’s role as the driver of global change. Students reflect on the tensions that are emerging from China’s rising global dominance, the impact that this has on the world, and how the United States or another country attempts to reinforce its own power. Students analyse the impact of China’s internal governance on its people.

The four inquiry questions are:

1. Has the rest of the world embraced the recent rise of China?
2. To what extent has China been successful in achieving its national interest?
3. What is required in order for China to be considered a global hegemon?
4. Does Australia benefit from its relationship with China?

In addressing inquiry question 1: ‘Have the twentieth century political superpowers embraced the rise of China?’, students may consider:

* implications of the Sino–Russian relationship
* the relationship between China and the United States
* the evolution of China’s foreign policies
* China’s global economic impact.

Students analyse the economic, political, and military aspects of the Sino–Russian partnership. They explore the triangular interactions between China, Russia, and the United States in relation to the adage ‘my enemy’s enemy is my friend’. Students examine the strategic competition and the increased tensions between China and the United States that led to a close China–Russia tie. Students investigate the evolution of China’s foreign policies, and evaluate China’s transformation to a modern economic superpower that has global interests and responsibilities.

In addressing inquiry question 2: ‘To what extent has China been successful in achieving its national interest?’, students may consider:

* reasons for economic progress
* implications of social policies
* military conflicts and geographical disputes
* influences in world trade and diplomacy.

Students examine the transition in China’s national interest, exploring the defensive and constructive strategies used to achieve their domestic and global agendas. Students explore China’s influences by investigating the domestic and international factors that determine strategic choices and interactions. They appraise China’s increased diplomatic investment with other countries, including the economic progress, benefits, and costs. Students analyse the implications of China’s social policy on health, education, housing, pension, disability, and poverty alleviation. They investigate the likelihood of military conflicts in areas such as the Asia–Pacific region and the rest of the world.

In addressing inquiry question 3: ‘What is required in order for China to be considered a global hegemon?’, students may consider:

* the Chinese global position
* China’s influence on international institutions
* China’s view of its role in the world
* international responses to China’s ascendency.

Students explore China’s rising position in its pursuit to change the global order of power. Students investigate China’s internationalist vision for economic integration and the increasing influence in international institutions such as the World Trade Organization, the Asia‑Pacific Economic Cooperation, and the United Nations’ Human Rights Council, Security Council, and World Health Organization. Students examine the factors that enable China to become the new hegemon, and explore how China perceives itself in shaping global affairs. They critically analyse China’s increasing interventionist approach in security and economics. Students evaluate whether China’s rise is peaceful or is a threat, by examining the international responses to its rise.

In addressing inquiry question 4: ‘Does Australia benefit from its relationship with China?’, students may consider:

* a comparative study of the Australian and Chinese systems
* Australia and China’s economic relationship
* the influence of China’s soft power in Australia
* Australia and China’s strategic relationship.

Students examine Australia–China relations, which are characterised by strong economic bonds. Students investigate the factors that made the robust relationship possible despite the differences between the Australian and Chinese political, social, and economic systems. Students define the concept of soft power, investigate the complexity of China’s influence in Australia, and decide whether Australia’s understanding of soft power diplomacy is outdated. They explore the Australia–China strategic partnership and its benefits, challenges, and impacts on diplomatic and economic relationships. Students question the complexity of this partnership and the consequences it has for Australia’s relationship with other countries.

Skills of sources analysis

The sources used should be current and selected to enhance students’ political literacy skills and awareness of current political issues. Sources could include cartoons, letters, editorials, electoral data, research documents, essays, speeches, interviews, poll results, political promotions, and diaries. Students apply their information literacy and numeracy skills in researching and using sources. The use of primary sources is encouraged, where possible. The following framework is a guide to help students develop their skills of sources analysis.

Analysing sources

Students can analyse a source by considering:

* context — when did it happen? Where did it happen? Who was involved?
* purpose — what was the purpose of creating the source?
* language — how do the nature and tone of language influence the reader?
* ideas — what ideas(s) are conveyed?
* cultural messages — what cultural norms are derived, constructed, reinforced, or challenged in the source?
* inferences — what can be inferred from the source?
* comparison — how are differences and similarities represented within one or more sources?
* selectivity — what has been left out or left unsaid? Who is not present? Whose views are not represented?
* constructs of power — how are power relationships constructed in the source?
* reflection — what can you learn from examining the source? What more do you want to know? How can you find out?

Comparing sources

Students can compare and contrast sources by considering:

* the origins of the sources — what do the authors, dates, forms, tone, and purpose of the sources have in common and how do they differ?
* content — do the political ideas presented in the sources conflict or concur?
* biases — are biased statements and total inaccuracies evident?
* interpretation — how is the same political event portrayed in different sources?
* new evidence — how does new evidence change how we view a political event?

Assessing usefulness

Students can assess a source for its usefulness in understanding a political event, activity, or argument by considering:

* propagandist or balance — how does the source help the audience to understand a political activity or event?
* source or evidence — how can the source help to form an opinion, explain a point of view, or develop an argument?
* natural or unintentional bias — does the nature of a source (primary or secondary) affect its perceived usefulness?
* facts or opinion — whose opinions are represented? Whose opinions are not? Does the source convey an inclusive representation of opinion?
* distortion — how does the source silence some opinions while privileging others?
* selection or omission — how useful is the source in developing the reader’s knowledge of the event or issue?

Evaluating sources

Students can evaluate a source by considering:

* the origin of source — who created, published, or promoted it? Where was it created, published, or promoted? Is it published by a credible and reliable source? Is the information supported by evidence? Is the tone balanced?
* author’s credentials — is the author qualified to write on the subject? Is the author affiliated with a recognised research institution?
* purpose — why has this work been produced? Who is the audience?
* bias — how does the evidence of bias in a source affect its usefulness? When and why is bias in politics deliberate? Can other literature verify information on the same topic?
* chronology — why might the source be considered reliable at one point in time yet biased at another?

# Evidence of learning

All Stage 2 subjects have a school‑assessment component and an external‑assessment component.

The following assessment types enable students to demonstrate their learning in Stage 2 Politics, Power and People.

School assessment (70%)

* Assessment Type 1: Folio (50%)
* Assessment Type 2: Sources Analysis (20%)

External assessment (30%)

* Assessment Type 3: Investigation (30%)

Students should provide evidence of their learning through six to eight assessments, including the external assessment component. Students undertake:

* at least three folio tasks
* two sources analysis
* one investigation.

# Assessment design criteria

The assessment design criteria are based on the learning requirements and are used by:

* teachers to clarify for students what they need to learn
* teachers and assessors to design opportunities for students to provide evidence of their learning at the highest possible level of achievement.

The assessment design criteria consist of specific features that:

* students should demonstrate in their learning
* teachers and assessors look for as evidence that students have met the learning requirements.

For this subject, the assessment design criteria are:

* critical and creative thinking
* communication and collaboration
* understanding and ethical reasoning
* research and analysis.

The specific features of these criteria are described below.

The set of assessments must give students opportunities to demonstrate each of the specific features by the completion of study of the subject.

Critical and Creative Thinking

The specific features are as follows:

CCT1 Propose solutions, make judgments, and compose arguments related to political issues.

CCT2 Analyse and evaluate political concepts.

Communication and Collaboration

The specific features are as follows:

CC1 Communicate political ideas, opinions, and arguments.

CC2 Collaborate in order to build on the ideas of others, solve political problems, or improve solutions.

Understanding and Ethical Reasoning

The specific features are as follows:

UER1 Understand political concepts and the interconnectedness of Australian politics and the world.

UER2 Explain the political and ethical nature of issues.

Research and Analysis

The specific features are as follows:

RA1 Apply inquiry skills to research political issues and perspectives.

RA2 Analyse and evaluate political issues using primary and secondary sources.

# School assessment

The school assessment component for Stage 2 Politics, Power and People consists of two assessment types:

* Assessment Type 1: Folio
* Assessment Type 2: Sources Analysis.

Assessment Type 1: Folio (50%)

Students undertake at least three folio assessments. One assessment must focus on collaboration skills.

The assessment may take a variety of forms including, but not limited to:

* individual oral assessments (e.g. prepared presentations, speeches)
* collaborative oral assessments (e.g. role plays, group work, seminars, or debates)
* formal written arguments
* a digital portfolio to capture evidence of progression in the learning of an issue (e.g. journal, reflective statement)
* an annotated cartoon with a writer’s statement
* a video
* a podcast.

A folio task should be a maximum of 1000 words if written or a maximum of 6 minutes if oral, or the equivalent in multimodal form.

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* critical and creative thinking
* communication and collaboration
* understanding and ethical reasoning
* research and analysis.

Assessment Type 2: Sources Analysis (20%)

Students undertake two source analysis assessments.

Each source analysis assessment should be a maximum of 1000 words if written or a maximum of 6 minutes if oral, or the equivalent in multimodal form.

Students interpret, analyse, and evaluate primary and secondary sources in relation to politics, power, government, and participation in different contexts. Students compare at least two sources for each assessment and consider different political views and complex arguments. Sources could include cartoons, letters, editorials, electoral data, research documents, essays, speeches, interviews, poll results, political promotions, and diaries. Content in the sources should focus on issues in the theme studied.

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* communication and collaboration
* critical and creative thinking
* research and analysis.

# External assessment

The external assessment component for Stage 2 Politics, Power and People consists of an investigation.

Assessment Type 3: Investigation (30%)

Students undertake one investigation focusing on any theme from the option themes section or a theme of personal interest. In consultation with the teacher, the student selects a recent political issue that involves a range of views and some level of unresolved disputation. Before proceeding, consideration should be given to the availability of a range of primary and secondary sources.

The investigation should include:

* a hypothesis or focusing question(s) to guide the investigation
* identification of the origin of the issue and who is affected by it
* discussion of the various perspectives involved
* analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of the different political views and complex arguments on the issue
* analysis of the feasibility of the proposed solutions
* reflection on the relationship between politics, power, people, and decision-making
* information drawn from a range of primary and secondary sources
* the use of appropriate political terms
* accurate acknowledgement of sources.

The investigation should be a maximum of 2000 words if written, and a maximum of 12 minutes for an oral presentation or the equivalent in multimodal form. For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* critical and creative thinking (CCT1, CCT2)
* communication and collaboration (CC1)
* understanding and ethical reasoning (UER2)
* research and analysis (RA1, RA2).

# Performance standards

The performance standards describe five levels of achievement, A to E.

Each level of achievement describes the knowledge, skills, and understanding that teachers refer to in deciding how well students have demonstrated their learning on the basis of the evidence provided.

During the teaching and learning program the teacher gives students feedback on their learning, with reference to the performance standards.

At the student’s completion of study of a subject, the teacher makes a decision about the quality of the student’s learning by:

* referring to the performance standards
* assigning a subject grade between A+ and E— for the assessment type.

The student’s school assessment and external assessment are combined for a final result, which is reported as a grade between A+ and E—.

Performance Standards for Stage 2 Politics, Power and People

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| - | Critical and Creative Thinking | Communication and Collaboration | Understanding and Ethical Reasoning | Research and Analysis |
| A | Proposes insightful solutions, makes reflective judgments, and composes arguments that relate to political issues.  Comprehensively and thoughtfully analyses and evaluates political concepts. | Highly organised and fluent communication of political ideas, opinions, and arguments.  Insightful and constructive collaboration in order to build on the ideas of others, solve political problems, or improve solutions. | Perceptive and well-informed understanding of political concepts and the interconnectedness of Australian politics and the world.  Insightful and coherent explanation of the political and ethical nature of the issues. | Uses comprehensive and discerning inquiry skills to research political issues and perspectives, using a variety of relevant and current literature.  Critical analysis and evaluation of political issues using primary and secondary sources. |
| B | Proposes balanced solutions, makes thoughtful judgments, and composes arguments that relate to political issues.  Competently analyses and evaluates political concepts. | Logical and clear communication of political ideas, opinions, and arguments.  Thoughtful collaboration in order to build on the ideas of others, solve political problems, or improve solutions. | Thoughtful understanding of political concepts and the interconnectedness of Australian politics and the world.  Clear explanation of the political and ethical nature of the issues. | Uses in-depth inquiry skills to research political issues and perspectives, using relevant and current literature.  Purposeful analysis and evaluation of political issues using primary and secondary sources. |
| C | Proposes solutions, makes judgments, and composes arguments that relate to political issues.  Analyses and evaluates political concepts. | Competent communication of political ideas, opinions, and arguments.  Collaboration in order to build on the ideas of others, attempt to solve problems, or improve political solutions. | Informed understanding of political concepts and the interconnectedness of Australian politics and the world.  Sound explanation of the political and ethical nature of the issues. | Uses sound inquiry skills to research political issues and perspectives, using relevant literature.  A sound analysis and evaluation of the political issues using primary and secondary sources. |
| D | Refers to solutions and recounts information related to political issues.  Explains a political concept. | Communication of ideas and opinions.  Some collaboration in order to attempt to solve problems. | Some understanding of political concepts.  Some recognition of the political nature of issues. | Limited inquiry using some relevant literature.  Limited analysis of the political issues using some sources. |
| E | Identification of a simplistic solution.  Identification of a political concept. | Basic communication of ideas.  Limited evidence of contributions. | Minimal understanding political concepts.  Limited recognition of the basic political ideas. | Minimal inquiry using a source.  Superficial recognition of political issues. |