

Making laws

1. Create a law-making quiz

Devise a quiz about making laws. Write a list of ten questions and answers. For example, you could ask questions like ‘What is a bill?’ Find a partner and take it in turns to answer each other’s questions.

2. Imagine you are a member of parliament

What new law would you like to make and why? Write the title of your bill (proposed law) and an explanation of why it is needed.

3. Write a speech to introduce a bill to ban junk food advertising on television

Imagine you are the Minister for Health introducing the bill into Parliament and you need to convince the Parliament to pass this bill. Come up with reasons to ban junk food advertising. Alternatively, you could imagine that you are the Shadow Minister for Health either arguing against the bill or proposing an amendment (change) to make it a better bill.

4. Run a law-making role-play

As a class, run a role-play to pass a bill through Parliament.

- Ask the class to decide on a topic for the bill; for example, you could choose a current issue or it could be a hypothetical topic such as a bill to ban homework.
- Divide the class into government, opposition and minor parties/Independents.
- Ask the government to introduce the bill.
- Debate and then vote on the bill.

For information about how to run a role-play, check these lesson plans on the PEO website:

Law-making: House of Representatives
www.tinyurl.com/role-play-Reps

Law-making: The Senate
www.tinyurl.com/role-play-Senate

You might like to work with another class, with one class taking on the role of the House of Representatives and the other acting as the Senate.



“Mr Speaker,
I would like to
introduce a Bill
for an Act...”

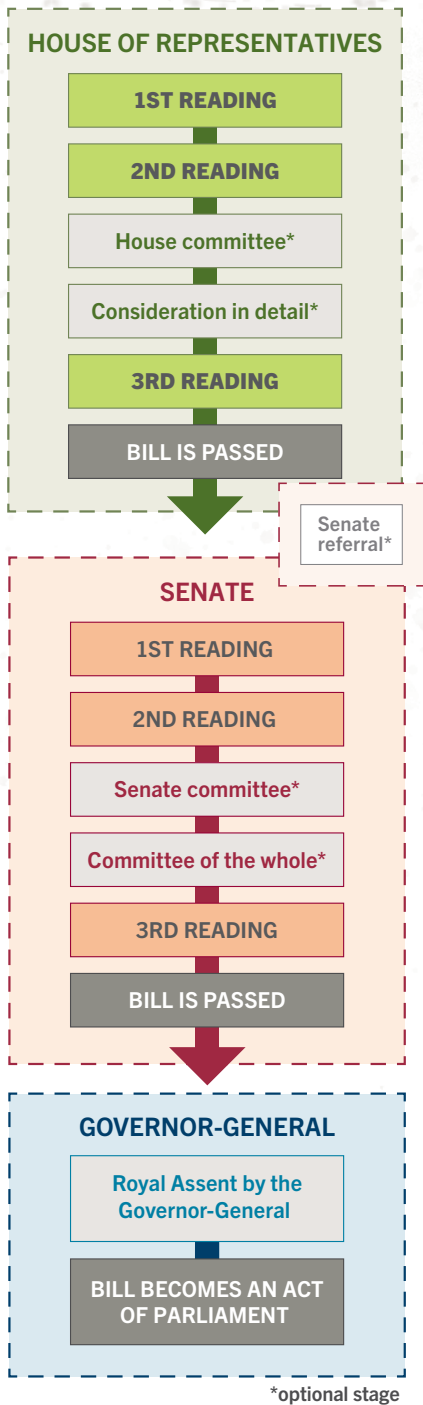
5. Explore why Parliament needs to make laws

Think about why we have laws and, as a class, discuss how laws help to manage or improve our society. Imagine what our nation would be like if we didn’t have laws. You might like to consider how Australian laws have changed since federation.

To find out more about laws, check out these websites:

Australian Parliament House: Bills
www.tinyurl.com/APH-Bills-Laws-Search

Department of Social Security:
Values and Law
www.tinyurl.com/DSS-Values-and-law



6. Passing a bill in Parliament

A bill needs to pass through both houses of Parliament to become law. What would happen if there was only one chamber? Think about the role of the Senate and why Australia decided to have a bicameral Parliament, which means it consists of two houses. Write a brief summary of your thoughts.

For more information check out this Senate brief on the Australian Parliament House website:

www.tinyurl.com/SenBrief10

To view the diagram on the left in more detail, check out

www.tinyurl.com/path-bill

7. Investigate a bill currently before the Parliament

To find out about bills currently before the Parliament, follow this link on the Australian Parliament House website:

www.tinyurl.com/APH-Bills-Laws-Search and click on 'Bills before Parliament'.

Select a bill and write a report that includes:

- The title of the bill.
- The purpose of the bill (you will find this in the section called 'explanatory memoranda').
- Who introduced the bill into Parliament.
- Who has spoken about the bill and what was said for or against the bill.

8. Compare law-making in Australia and the United States

Australia's system of governance was based partly on the United States model. Compare the similarities and differences in the two law-making systems. Are there advantages or disadvantages in either system?

Conduct a class discussion.

To start your research, check out these links:

Closer Look – Parliament and Congress

www.tinyurl.com/CL-Parl-Congress

United States House of Representatives – The Legislative Process

www.tinyurl.com/US-HoR-Lawmaking

