

Three levels of law-making

1. Create a three levels of law-making quiz

Devise a quiz about the three levels of law-making. Write a list of ten questions and answers. For example, you could ask questions like 'What are the three levels of government in Australia?' Find a partner and take it in turns to answer each other's questions.



2. Locate the three levels of government

On a map of Australia locate and mark where the following meet:

- Federal Parliament
- Your state or territory Parliament
- Your local council.

Illustrate your map with an image that represents each of these levels of law-making. For example, you could include a photograph of Parliament House or draw the emblem of your local council.

To find out more about federal Parliament, check these links on the PEO website:

Fact Sheet – Parliament House
www.tinyurl.com/FS-Parl-House

Image Library – Parliament House
www.tinyurl.com/APH-images

You could also check this link on the Australian Parliament House website:
www.tinyurl.com/APH-SenMem

To find out more about your state or territory parliament and local councils, follow this link on the PEO website:
www.tinyurl.com/PEO-Parliaments

3. Discover who represents you

Find the names of the people who represent the area you live in:

- Mayor
- State/territory member of parliament
- Federal member of the House of Representatives
- One or more of your federal senators

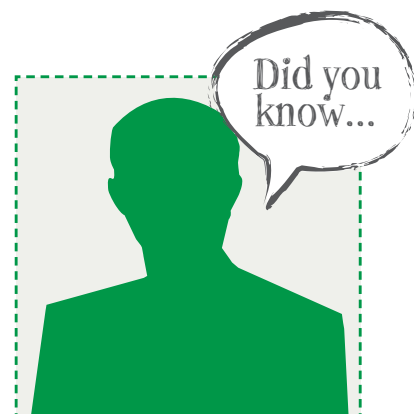
Find or draw a picture of one of your representatives. Add a speech bubble to your picture with their name, position and an interesting fact about them.

To find out which electorate you live in and the name of your federal member, follow this link to the Australian Electoral Commission website:
www.tinyurl.com/AECElect

To find out more about your federal member or the senators who represent you, follow this link to the Australian Parliament House website:
www.tinyurl.com/APH-SenMem

To find out who represents you in your state or territory parliament and local council, follow this link on the PEO website:
www.tinyurl.com/PEO-Parliaments

••• **FEDERAL** •••••
• **STATE/TERRITORY** •••••
••••••••• **LOCAL** •••••••••



4. Identify the responsibilities of the three levels of government

Find three newspaper articles that refer to services provided by one or more of the three levels of government in Australia. As a class, sort the articles into three categories—federal, state/territory and local. Discuss why each article relates to a particular level of government. For example, an article about Australian troops fighting overseas relates to defence, which is a federal government responsibility.

To find out more about the three levels of government, check this fact sheet on the PEO website:

www.tinyurl.com/FS-Three-Levels

Dear...
I am concerned
about...
Please act!

5. Write a letter to one of your representatives about an issue of concern to your local community

What action could be taken about this issue? Identify whether this is a local, state or federal matter. Address your letter to the appropriate representative; for example, your local councillor or federal member of parliament. Ask them to act on the issue you have identified.

6. Discuss whether Australia needs three levels of government.

Write a proposal that supports the current system or argues for change

Consider issues such as:

- How practical would it be for a state government to be in charge of local matters: for example, library opening hours, policing dog registration or garbage collection?
- Are there some things that the federal government should be in charge of because they relate to the whole nation: for example, education or health services?

For more information about the three levels of government, check this Closer Look paper on the PEO website:

www.tinyurl.com/CL-Gov-Aust

SECTION 109 Inconsistency of laws

When a law of a State is inconsistent with a law of the Commonwealth, the latter shall prevail, and the former shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be invalid.



7. Explore why federal law can over-ride state law.

Section 109 of the Australian Constitution deals with inconsistencies between federal and state law. The Constitution says that if the federal Parliament and a state Parliament both pass laws on the same subject, then the federal law over-rides the state law. Why do you think this provision was included in the Constitution? Do you think the federal Parliament should have this power? Why / why not?

8. Research an issue over which state/territory and federal governments have clashed

Some examples are drug injecting rooms, euthanasia, same sex marriage and mandatory prison sentencing. Should your state/territory parliament make laws about issues such as these or should this be a federal responsibility?