

Representation—One Voice for Many

HSIE/SOSE outcome

Investigates rights, responsibilities and decision-making processes in the community and demonstrates how participation can contribute to the quality of community life.

Subject matter focus

Using the One Voice for Many interactive the student will learn about the broad concept of representation.

Implications for learning

In this area of study, students have opportunities to:

- Explore the concept of representation.
- Interpret a humorous visual depiction of representation.
- Apply the concept of representation to everyday problems.
- Analyse the effectiveness of two methods used to select representatives.
- Reflect on the qualities of good representatives.
- Reflect on the pros and cons of representative democracy.

Take home message

Australians choose representatives from a number of candidates.

One Voice for Many outcome

Understand that representatives are chosen from a group to speak and act on their behalf.

Using the One Voice for Many animation

This animation uses a humorous approach to explain how representatives can be chosen:

- View the animation (perhaps more than once). Answer the questions listed under 'Key questions'.
- Brainstorm a number of possible jellybean issues.
- Become the jellybeans. Divide into groups. Choose a 'spokesbean' for each group and choose a problem to solve.
- Role-play telling the spokesbean (the group's representative) about the problem and the problem being solved (or otherwise) around the jellybean table.

Key questions

- Who (or what) do the jellybeans represent? (people, equality, diversity).
- What does the large group of jellybeans represent? (A large community).
- Why does the large group split into smaller groups? (Allows for more effective communication within and between groups).
- What might the small groups be talking about?
- Who are the jellybeans in the spotlight? (Representatives of the groups).
- Who chose them?
- Why are they in the spotlight? (Accountability).
- What are the three jellybeans discussing?
- What do you think they have agreed to?
- What might happen next?
- What do you think the different colours of the jellybeans represent? (Diversity).

Class activities

- Retell the story told by the animation, from the point of view of one of the jellybeans.
- What if Australia was governed by a dictatorship? Redraw the jellybean animation.
- Hypothetical voting: Who would you choose from your class to represent you at an athletics competition; in a debating contest; at the school assembly; in a cartoon drawing competition; to a charity organisation? Are the people the same or different? Why?
- Tell a story about a time when you entered a competitive situation. Were you successful or not? What method was used to decide the winner? (Generally either by a vote or on merit.)
- Decide and justify which selection method is best—majority vote or on merit?
- Discuss the metaphor: 'As mixed as a handful of jellybeans'. Can you create your own metaphor for an aspect of Australian society?
- Invent an alternative way to choose representatives. Does this method rely on voting, merit or some other factor?
- Speak for three minutes on why some people lead and why some people follow.
- Tell a friend something that you did when you were not chosen for a role that you really wanted. Would you behave differently now? Why? Why not?
- List five things that you would do as a representative. Rank them in order of importance.

Reflection

- Focus on choice: What are the difficulties of including every individual in making all decisions?
- How would you solve this problem, if at all?
- What are the advantages of representative democracy? (Solves the problem of making decisions for large populations.)
- Are there any disadvantages? (Sense of alienation from the decisionmaking process).
- Was there ever a time when you were picked for something special? Compare your experience with a friend's experience.
- Select three qualities that a good representative should have. Support your choice with examples.
- Decide—Jellybeans make a better symbol of diversity or uniformity? Why? Explain.

Integration

- Maths: long division.
- Sport: Playing 'Islands'. (A number is called and students quickly develop groups of that size. Students not absorbed by a group sit out until the next game commences).
- Arts: Repetition of colour, size and shape as a design option.

Literacy notes

This study provides opportunities for students to apply new ideas through roleplay; critically evaluate an animation; analyse a metaphor; practice public speaking; create, present and retell an exposition text; create a list and rank elements of the list in order of importance.

Resources

Get *Parliament*, magazine available from the Parliamentary Education Office.

See http://www.peo.gov.au/publications/get_parliament.html

Links

- Video – What is Parliament?
<http://www.peo.gov.au/multimedia/video/whatIsParliament/transcript.html>

- Australian Electoral Commission: <http://www.aec.gov.au/>
- Parliamentary Education Office, Fact Sheet - Elections:
<http://www.peo.gov.au/students/fss/fss41.html>