

Votes Build Government

How Australian citizens choose national leaders

SS6CG4.a "Explain citizen participation in democratic governments [i.e. the role of citizens in choosing the leaders of Australia (parliamentary democracy)]."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each action citizens can take to influence who leads Australia, then circle the two sentences that explain how a prime minister is chosen.

Choosing Representatives

- ① Australia is a parliamentary democracy, which means citizens choose people to represent them in Parliament. At a federal election, Australians vote for candidates in their local electoral divisions to fill seats in the House of Representatives. They also vote for senators, who represent their states or territories in the Senate. Citizens do not vote directly for the prime minister. Instead, their votes help decide which representatives and parties will have the power to make national laws.
- ② To take part, eligible citizens enroll to vote. Australian citizens who are 18 or older are generally required by law to enroll and vote in federal elections. On election day, each voter makes a private choice on a secret ballot. For the House of Representatives, voters rank candidates in order of preference. If no candidate has more than half the votes at first, preferences are counted until one candidate has a majority. This system lets voters show more than one choice.
- ③ After an election, the members of the House of Representatives meet in Parliament. Usually, the political party or coalition that can command a majority in the House forms the government. Its leader becomes prime minister. Other elected members may question the government, debate bills, and vote on laws. At the next election, citizens can keep or replace their representatives through their ballots. By enrolling, voting, learning about candidates, and discussing issues respectfully, citizens influence who leads and how government responds.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which two groups of representatives do Australians vote for in a federal election?

2 Why do Australians not vote directly for the prime minister?

3 What does a voter do on a House of Representatives ballot, and what happens if no candidate has more than half the votes at first?

4 Name two ways, besides casting a ballot, that citizens can influence who leads and how government responds.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write 3 to 4 sentences for a new eligible voter. Explain one step they must take before an election, one action they take on election day, and how their vote can help choose the prime minister.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each action citizens can take to influence who leads Australia, then circle the two sentences that explain how a prime minister is chosen. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two groups of representatives do Australians vote for in a federal election?	Candidates for the House of Representatives and senators.
2	Why do Australians not vote directly for the prime minister?	Citizens elect representatives. Usually, the leader of the party or coalition that commands a majority in the House of Representatives becomes prime minister.
3	What does a voter do on a House of Representatives ballot, and what happens if no candidate has more than half the votes at first?	The voter ranks candidates in order of preference. Preferences are counted until one candidate has a majority.
4	Name two ways, besides casting a ballot, that citizens can influence who leads and how government responds.	Answers include enrolling to vote, learning about candidates, and discussing issues respectfully.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Before a federal election, I would enroll because eligible Australian citizens aged 18 or older are generally required to enroll and vote. At the polling place, I would use a secret ballot and rank House candidates in my order of preference. My vote helps elect a local representative, and the leader of the party or coalition that commands a House majority usually becomes prime minister.

For Question 2, students should explain that voters choose representatives rather than directly choosing the prime minister. For the open response, accept accurate explanations of enrollment, secret ballots or ranked preferences, and the House majority connection to the prime minister.