



Sample assessment task

Year level	7
Learning area	Humanities and Social Sciences
Subject	Civics and Citizenship
Title of task	Separation of powers in Australia

Task details

Description of task	In small groups, students produce a written script and role-play the separation of powers in Australia. They explain the importance of the separation of powers, the main roles and function of each of the three arms of government and how they operate in practice in Australia. The students use relevant examples to demonstrate their understanding. The students complete an extended written response to consolidate their knowledge of this topic.
Type of assessment	Formative
Purpose of assessment	To inform progression in a learning cycle and plan further learning if required.
Assessment strategy	Role-play and written work
Evidence to be collected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written script Extended written response
Suggested time	Six periods

Content description

Content from the Western Australian Curriculum	<p>Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>The concept of the separation of powers between the legislature, executive and judiciary and how it seeks to prevent the excessive concentration of power</p> <p>Humanities and Social Sciences skills</p> <p>Apply subject-specific skills and concepts in familiar and new situations</p>
Key concepts	Democracy, the Westminster system

Task preparation

Prior learning	Students have learnt about the importance of the separation of powers in Australia and its role within Australia's political and legal system.
Assessment differentiation	<p>Teachers should differentiate their teaching and assessment to meet the specific learning needs of their students based on their level of readiness to learn and their need to be challenged.</p> <p>Where appropriate, teachers may either scaffold or extend the scope of the assessment task.</p>

Assessment task

Assessment conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> role-play in groups of no more than four students extended written response completed individually under test conditions
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to the internet Written resource about the separation of powers Script (produced by students)

Instructions for teacher

1. Revise with students the concept of separation of powers by referring to the PEO website:
<http://www.peo.gov.au/learning/fact-sheets/separation-of-powers.html>
2. Organise students into groups.
3. Provide students with task instructions.
4. Each group creates a mind map about what they will include in their written script. See sample:
https://www.goconqr.com/en/p/227446-australian-parliamentary-system-mind_maps
5. The groups develop focus questions to assist them in their research, based on the guidelines provided in the task instructions.
6. Students begin writing their script in their groups.
7. Before the students complete their script, check to see that they have included all relevant concepts and a relevant example to demonstrate their understanding of the separation of powers.
8. Each group presents their role-play in front of the class.
9. If needed, plan additional learning experiences before students sit their in-class extended written response.

Instructions to students

Separation of powers creative task: role-play



[From: *Play script writing templates*. (n.d.). Retrieved November, 2015
from www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-t-12252-play-script-templates]

In groups of four, create an entertaining and educational 5-minute role-play about the separation of powers in Australia. Each group will present their role-play to the whole class. You are to also submit a written copy of your script.

Group instructions

Lessons 1–2

1. Create a mindmap using both your prior knowledge and the handout from the website:
<http://www.peo.gov.au/learning/fact-sheets/separation-of-powers.html>
2. Individually, compile notes using the following guidelines:
 - (a) What is the separation of powers?
 - (b) Who was Baron de Montesquieu?
 - (c) Why and how did Baron de Montesquieu's ideas influence the concept of the separation of powers?
 - (d) How is the separation of powers set out in Australia's Constitution?
 - (e) Why the legislative and the Executive are not completely separate in Australia?
 - (f) Why is the judiciary not completely separate in Australia?
3. Your group should develop focus questions to assist you in your research based on the guidelines provided in the task instructions.

Lesson 3

1. Plan your script and assign various roles.
2. Each person begins writing their script as part of the group.

Lesson 4

1. Finalise their script and ensure that they are prepared to present in the next lesson.

Lesson 5

1. Presents your role-play in front of the class.
2. Hand in the written script to your teacher.

Lesson 6

1. Individually complete an extended written task on the separation of powers.

Sample check list

Description	Check
Written script	✓
Comprehensively answers task guidelines	
Includes relevant examples	
Evidence of thorough research on the separation of powers	
Makes clear links to focus questions throughout to correctly demonstrate their understanding of the separation of powers	
Description	Check
Role-play	✓
The group in showing each scenario included:	
Evidence of research and planning in the presentation	
Explicit reference to guidelines	
Appropriate subject-specific terminology	

Instructions for teacher**Extended written task****The separation of powers****Description of task**

Write an extended written response to show an understanding of the concept of the separation of powers and how it operates in Australia.

Assessment conditions

Students will complete the extended written task under test conditions.

Task preparation

Students have had previous lessons of guided research and discussion on Montesquieu, the doctrine of the separation of powers and its application to Australia.

Materials/resources

Three specific questions are provided.

Time allocation

45 minutes working time

Sample marking key

Assessment task

Description	Marks
Question 1	
Defines the separation of powers outlining each of the three arms	2
Makes a general statement about the separation of powers	1
Subtotal	2
<p>Answer could include, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the government has executive, legislative and judicial powers divided into separate arms or institutions that act separately and are independent of each other • the separation of powers was advocated by French philosopher, Baron de Montesquieu, as a way of ensuring that governments could not wield excessive power • the separate arms of government provide a system of checks and balances on each other 	
Description	Marks
Question 2	
Explains the reasons for why the separation of powers is considered essential in a democracy	4–5
Outlines the reasons why the separation of powers is considered important in a democracy	2–3
Makes a general statement about the separation of powers and democracy	1
Subtotal	5
<p>Answer could include, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • influence of French philosopher Baron de Montesquieu who advocated the necessity for the separation of powers to ensure stability of government and fundamental rights and freedoms • he stated that power, which was too concentrated in one arm, could lead to the abuse of authority and power and that this posed a threat to individual rights and freedoms • the separation of powers would ensure that each arm of government did not exceed its power, thereby an essential limitation to government power • for example, the separation between the judiciary and the legislative arms acts as a check and balance on the law making authority of parliament • the separation of powers, the legislative, executive and judiciary would be outlined in a Constitution, which would ensure the separation of each arm 	
Description	Marks
Question 3	
Discusses in detail the concept of the separation of powers in Australia and its application in reality	7–8
Discusses the concept of the separation of powers in Australia and its application in reality	5–6
Outlines with little discussions the concept of the separation of powers in Australia and its application in reality	3–4
Makes general statements about the concept of the separation of powers in Australia and its application in reality	1–2
Subtotal	8

Answer could include, but is not limited to:

- the Australian Constitution clearly separates and acknowledges the separation of powers
- the legislative; the executive; the judiciary are outlined in the Australian Constitution
- for example: The legislature passes a law to ban people smugglers who attempt to bring asylum seekers unlawfully into Australia on boats, without a visa. If the border protection task force (police) intercepts a boat travelling in Australia's water they then have the authority to administer the legislation by detaining the people smuggler/s. The offender/s would be tried in an Australian court (the judiciary function) and if found guilty, may be sentenced to a prison sentence
- although the separation of powers does exist in Australia, the distinction is blurred between the executive and legislative branches. This is because the government (ministers) is formed by the party that holds a majority in the Lower House, and ministers are drawn from the legislative branch. The executive therefore performs both a legislative and executive function, which shows that they are not completely separate in Australia. For example, the executive creates a bill on anti-terrorism which they are then responsible for enforcing, through police or immigration officials, once it become law
- the judiciary is also not completely separate as the federal government (executive) appoints judges to the High Court of Australia, although the courts are independent in their decision-making function

Total

15