

THE HOWARD LIBRARY

LESSON 1: HOW GOVERNMENT POLICY IS SHAPED AND DEVELOPED – THE NATIONAL FIREARMS AGREEMENT

The following lesson is aligned to the Australian Curriculum for Year 9 Civics and Citizenship. It explores how government policy is shaped and developed, including the role of Prime Minister and Cabinet, through a case study of how Australia's gun laws were changed under Prime Minister John Howard.

Materials Required: Class set of Howard Library's **Pre-Reading Activity: National Firearms Agreement**, **National Firearms Agreement Case Study** and **National Firearms Agreement Three Level Guide**.

Pre-Reading Activity: Answer Sheet for students to correct their work.

Lesson Duration: This lesson is designed to run for approx. 60 – 70 minutes

LINKS TO THE YEAR 9 CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP CONTENT DESCRIPTIONS

Knowledge and Understanding	<p>The process through which government policy is shaped and developed, including the role of Prime Minister and Cabinet (ACHCK103)</p> <p>The role of political parties and independent representatives in Australia's system of government, including the formation of governments (ACHCK075)</p>
Civics and Citizenship Skills	<p>Account for different interpretations and points of view (ACHCS085)</p> <p>Recognise and consider multiple perspectives and ambiguities, and use strategies to negotiate and resolve contentious issues (ACHCS086)</p> <p>Present evidence-based civics and citizenship arguments using subject-specific language (ACHCS088)</p>

LESSON GOALS

Students will understand

How the Prime Minister and Cabinet shaped and developed Australia's gun control policy in 1996

Students will be able to

Form and express points of view about gun control and the issue of violence in society

Lesson Note: This lesson makes use of a Three Level Guide – a literacy resource designed to help students navigate complex texts. More information about Three Level Guides – including a video of students completing one – can be found [here](#).

LESSON INSTRUCTIONS

Warm-up Discussion Questions (5 to 10 mins – whole class)

After introducing students to the goals for the lesson, discuss some or all of the following questions as a class:

- 1) Who is the current Prime Minister? How do you get to be Prime Minister in Australia? What do you understand the Prime Minister's role to be? What qualities would you expect a good Prime Minister to have?
- 2) A policy is a plan of action developed by the government. Often, a new policy will involve a plan to change the law in a certain area. Why do laws need to be changed and updated? What changes would you make to the law in Australia?
- 3) Today we will learn about how, in 1996, the Australian Government developed a policy to change Australia's gun laws. What do you already know about gun laws in Australia? How do they compare to gun laws in other countries, such as the USA?

Pre-Reading Activity (10 to 15 mins – Individually or in pairs)

- 1) Provide students with the **Pre-Reading Activity: National Firearms Agreement**. This is a vocabulary building activity that will introduce students to key terms from the **National Firearms Agreement Case Study**.
- 2) After students have completed the activity, they can use the **Pre-Reading Activity: Answer Sheet** to correct their work.

Case Study and Three Level Guide (40 mins – small, mixed ability groups)

- 1) Break class into mixed ability reading groups of 3-4 students. Provide all students with a copy of the **National Firearms Agreement Case Study** and the **National Firearms Agreement Three Level Guide Activity**.
- 2) Familiarise the whole class with the **National Firearms Agreement Three Level Guide Activity**. Ensure they understand the difference between the three levels and have previewed all of the questions.
- 3) Students read the **National Firearms Agreement Case Study** in their mixed ability groups. Encourage students to mark up the case study as they read. They should star or highlight information relevant to the questions they have previewed.
- 4) Students complete Level 1 and Level 2 questions as a group. They should share and discuss the evidence they have located in the text to support their answers.
- 5) Students complete Level 3 questions independently. Stress that for these questions they are to form their own opinions, which will be discussed as a whole class.

Wrap-up Discussion Questions (5 – 10 mins – whole class)

- 1) Ask students to share their responses to the Level 3 questions. For each question, invite both TRUE and FALSE responses. Encourage respectful debate.
- 2) After the discussion, reflect on the following: Did anyone in the class raise a point you hadn't considered? Why is it important to listen to different points of view? Where do you think your opinions come from? Are some opinions better than others – and if so – what do you think are the characteristics of a 'good' or 'bad' opinion?