

# 3. Understanding the constitution through exploring values and perspectives

## Social Studies (Level 5)



### Overview

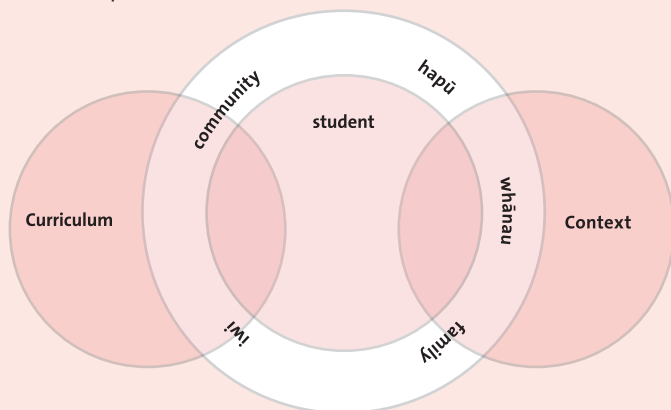
This resource provides support for social studies teachers who wish to emphasise the values and perspectives aspect of the social inquiry approach, when teaching about our constitution. The materials use quiz sheets and perspective cards produced for the 'Constitution Conversation'. It is envisaged that the teaching and learning can be integrated into existing classroom programmes.

### Aspects of planning

When planning consider:

- the big ideas that underpin *The New Zealand Curriculum*, as well as the social sciences learning area
- the relevance of the topic and contexts for your students
- the learning strengths and needs of your students and what the students bring with them to the learning.

These aspects of planning are integral and reciprocal. They naturally overlap, so learning tasks and activities incorporate all three aspects.



### Students' strengths and needs

What skills and knowledge do the students (and their whānau/ family, hapū, and iwi) bring to the learning?

What support will the students need to fully express their social sciences understandings?

### Context

*Suggested key conceptual understandings*

- Students will understand that the rules about how we live together, and what we value, are reflected in formal and informal ways.
- Students will understand their role in the development and implementation of these rules and values.

### Curriculum

*Social Studies – Level 5*

- Understand how systems of government in New Zealand operate and affect people's lives, and how they compare with another system.
- Understand how the Treaty of Waitangi is responded to differently by people in different times and places.
- Understand how people define and seek human rights.

### Resources that support the understanding of our constitution

- Our Constitution website
- Constitution Conversations cards
- Treaty of Waitangi Constitution resources
- Civics Education
- What is a Constitution?
- An essay on New Zealand's Constitution
- New Zealand Constitution booklet
- Constitution Conversation resources

### Link to Social Studies – Level 4

Understand how formal and informal groups make decisions that impact on communities.

### Monitoring the development of conceptual understanding

Initially, assess each student's understanding of the key ideas in order to track their ongoing progress and to modify your teaching.

*New Zealand's Constitution Quiz card:*

"What does New Zealand's current constitution do?"

"The Constitution Conversation is relevant to all New Zealanders because ..."

*Bill of Rights Act quiz card:*

"How are New Zealander's rights protected?"

To continue learning, (or establish prior learning), about the constitution, students could begin to fill out a KWLH chart. This chart could be referred back to and added to throughout the learning.

K – What they know about the constitution

W – What they would like to know

L – What they have learnt

H – How they can learn more.

Students could rank constitutional issues in order of importance to them and discuss their reasons for doing so.

To explore the political underpinnings of the constitution conversation, students could view the **Pita Sharples interview** and the **cartoon** that was published before the panel was established. After viewing the interview and cartoon, students could identify and discuss the perspectives shown and give evidence to back up their ideas.

To help students link the learning to their own lives, have them survey their families and friends about whether aspects of the constitution that are important to them are clearly reflected in our constitutional arrangements. For example, they could ask, "Does the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 adequately protect our rights? Do we need to add more rights from international agreements? Is it right that Parliament can make laws that do not necessarily align with the Act?"

### Finding out

Link prior learning of the constitution to the emphasis on exploring values and perspectives in this support material.

Model how to complete a KWLH chart to support the students' reflections.

Ask questions to support the students to understand that different people focus on different aspects of the constitution.

- Why are some topics of constitutional conversation more important than others to different people?
- What aspects of the constitutional arrangements is Dr Pita Sharples interested in?
- What other aspects of the constitution do you believe are important and why?

### Values and perspectives

Ask questions to encourage the students to think about the constitution from other people's perspectives.

- How do your family/whānau feel about the current constitutional arrangements?
- How do you think people's perceptions of citizenship shape their views about the constitution?

### Reflecting and evaluating

- What else do we need to know about the constitutional arrangements to make informed decisions as New Zealanders?

Prompt students to consider their own opinion about the constitution and what has shaped their opinion?

### Reflecting and evaluating

Prompt students to consider the ways in which any changes to the constitution may have an effect on them, their families/whānau, hapū, and iwi.

*Māori representation quiz card:*  
“What is the purpose of the Māori electoral option?”

*Treaty of Waitangi quiz card:*  
“What is the current status of the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand’s constitution?”

*The Treaty of Waitangi conversation card explores possibilities:*  
“Retain the status quo, i.e. keep the Treaty as part of our constitution where it is referenced in law and as a guide for Crown–Māori relationships.”

“Include the Treaty and/ or its principles in a written constitution that has a higher status than other laws (supreme law).”

Māori representation in government is a topic of constitutional conversation. To explore their own values related to this, students could draw a values continuum and place themselves on it, with one end being no designated Māori seats and the other end keep status quo. Students can then share where they have placed themselves and why. This continuum could be revisited after a period of learning, related to the purpose of Māori representation. The students could consider if their position has changed and why.

To explore perspectives about the role of the Treaty of Waitangi in the constitution, students could watch the **TVNZ interview**, and identify the various perspectives stated. Students could then participate in a class debate, responding to the conversation cards and taking on a specific perspective. Students may find it useful to use the fact sheets and the topic booklets to help prepare their arguments.

To support students to reflect on their learning, refer them back to their KWLH charts and get them to add further comments.

Ask questions to prompt critical thinking about the role of the Treaty of Waitangi and New Zealand’s constitution.

- Should New Zealand have one written document, that has higher status than other laws, or leave it as the status quo?

**Values and perspectives**

Give feedback to the students about their understanding of viewpoints and perspectives related to the role of the Treaty of Waitangi in the constitution, and ensure the students understand why people hold these viewpoints.

**Reflecting and evaluating**

Ask questions to prompt students to critically evaluate their own and peers’ participation in the debate.

- Was a range of perspectives covered?
- Which ones were dominant?
- Why might some perspectives not have been heard?

**So what?**

Prompt students to consider the value of engaging with this learning by asking questions.

- What relevance does this have for my community and me?

**Now What?**

What other perspectives could be drawn upon related to the constitutional arrangements?

**Concepts**

- constitution
- democracy
- government
- rules
- rights
- tikanga
- rangatiratanga

Appropriate activities (such as creating concepts maps, walls, and circles) can help to draw on students’ understandings and build upon these, make connections between contexts, and transfer understandings from one context to another. Further explanation of these activities can be found in the **approaches to building conceptual understandings resource**.

**Command words**

- describe
- explain
- examine
- analyse
- critically analyse
- interpret
- comprehensively
- in-depth

Interpretation of these words can vary within learning areas, so exposing students to questions associated with **command words** will help their understanding.

Co-construct meanings with students, and within learning areas with teachers, to develop a holistic view of these words.

**Specific knowledge and understanding required, for example:**

- The role of the constitution, and what it incorporates
- Knowledge of the concept of citizenship and how that may contribute to participation in the constitution
- The current role of the Waitangi Tribunal in response to adherence to the Treaty of Waitangi

The **Constitution Conversation resources** and instructional guides 1 and 2 will be useful to refer to, as well as the **citizen teaching units**.

Waitangi Tribunal resources:  
[www.waitangitribunal.govt.nz/resources/school\\_info/](http://www.waitangitribunal.govt.nz/resources/school_info/)

**Key Competencies**

The focus of learning can support the development of:

*Participating and contributing* – through developing an understanding of what it means for students to contribute to conversations about political issues.

*Thinking* – by reflecting on how and why people vary in their viewpoints.

*Relating to others* – by listening actively, recognising different points of view, and sharing ideas.

*Using language symbols and text* – through the analysis of visual representations of our constitution.

**Values**

With the focus of this instructional guide being on the development of understanding of the constitution, use the ideas to help students:

- express their own values
- explore, with empathy, the values of others
- critically analyse values, and actions based upon them
- discuss any disagreements that arise from differences in values
- make ethical decisions and act on them.

# Resources

## Teaching resources

Building Conceptual Understandings Series – access to PDFs

Citizenship – This website contains citizenship teaching materials for Levels 2 and 5

Waitangi Tribunal information for schools

[www.ssol.tki.org.nz/](http://www.ssol.tki.org.nz/)

[www.education.citizenship.govt.nz/](http://www.education.citizenship.govt.nz/)

[www.waitangitribunal.govt.nz/resources/school\\_info/](http://www.waitangitribunal.govt.nz/resources/school_info/)

## Constitution Conversation resources

Constitution Conversation website

Facebook page for the Constitution Conversation

Hosting a meeting – for a range of resources to support hosting, including conversation cards to initiate discussions

New Zealand's Constitution: The Conversation so Far

New Zealand Constitution booklet

New Zealand Constitution Conversation videos

Our Constitution external links

Perspectives on the constitution – video clips

Submissions link for the Constitution Conversation

The Constitution Conversation's summary of the principles underpinning the constitution

The Constitution Conversation's summary of the Treaty of Waitangi in the constitution

The independent panel that the government appointed to listen, record, and consider people's views

Treaty of Waitangi constitution resources

[www.ourconstitution.org.nz/Our-Constitution](http://www.ourconstitution.org.nz/Our-Constitution)

[www.facebook.com/TheConstitutionConversation](https://www.facebook.com/TheConstitutionConversation)

[www.ourconstitution.org.nz/Host-a-Meeting](http://www.ourconstitution.org.nz/Host-a-Meeting)

[www.cap.govt.nz/store/doc/The\\_Conversation\\_So\\_Far.pdf](http://www.cap.govt.nz/store/doc/The_Conversation_So_Far.pdf)

[www.ourconstitution.org.nz/store/doc/NZC\\_Booklet.pdf](http://www.ourconstitution.org.nz/store/doc/NZC_Booklet.pdf)

[www.youtube.com/user/NZConstitution/videos](https://www.youtube.com/user/NZConstitution/videos)

[www.ourconstitution.org.nz/External-Links](http://www.ourconstitution.org.nz/External-Links)

[www.ourconstitution.org.nz/New-Zealands-Constitution/Perspectives](http://www.ourconstitution.org.nz/New-Zealands-Constitution/Perspectives)

[www.ourconstitution.org.nz/Make-a-general-submission](http://www.ourconstitution.org.nz/Make-a-general-submission)

[www.ourconstitution.org.nz/New-Zealands-Constitution](http://www.ourconstitution.org.nz/New-Zealands-Constitution)

[www.ourconstitution.org.nz/Treaty-of-Waitangi](http://www.ourconstitution.org.nz/Treaty-of-Waitangi)

[www.cap.govt.nz/The-Panel](http://www.cap.govt.nz/The-Panel)

[www.ourconstitution.org.nz/Treaty-of-Waitangi/Resources](http://www.ourconstitution.org.nz/Treaty-of-Waitangi/Resources)

## Legislation

Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand's explanation of the New Zealand constitution

Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand's explanation of the Constitution Act 1986

[www.teara.govt.nz/en/constitution/page-1](http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/constitution/page-1)

[www.teara.govt.nz/en/video/35894/constitution-act-1986](http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/video/35894/constitution-act-1986)

## Perspectives on the constitutional arrangements

Dr Pita Sharples talking about the reasoning behind the constitutional review

James Allan discussion on changing an unwritten constitution

Listener article about the concerns related to the constitutional arrangements

NewstalkZB article on implications of one written constitution

[www.tvnz.co.nz/breakfast-news/pita-sharples-constitutional-review-video-3956276](http://www.tvnz.co.nz/breakfast-news/pita-sharples-constitutional-review-video-3956276)

[www.nzcpr.com/guest332.htm](http://www.nzcpr.com/guest332.htm)

[www.listener.co.nz/current-affairs/politics/queen-and-country-reviewing-new-zealands-constitution/](http://www.listener.co.nz/current-affairs/politics/queen-and-country-reviewing-new-zealands-constitution/)

[www.newstalkzb.co.nz/auckland/news/nbpol/708473116-public-opinion-sought-over-written-constitution-for-nz](http://www.newstalkzb.co.nz/auckland/news/nbpol/708473116-public-opinion-sought-over-written-constitution-for-nz)

## Other sources of information

Introduction to the constitution by Rt. Hon. Sir Kenneth Keith, ONZ

Constitution writing by young people

Constitutional reform cartoon

International civic and citizenship education study publications in response to New Zealand's involvement in ICCS in 2008

The NSW Government's glossary of command words

[www.cabinetmanual.cabinetoffice.govt.nz/node/68](http://www.cabinetmanual.cabinetoffice.govt.nz/node/68)

[www.empower.co.nz](http://www.empower.co.nz)

[www.natlib.govt.nz/records/22786774?search%5Bil%5D%5Bcategory%5D=Images&search%5Bpath%5D=items&search%5Btext%5D=DCL-0016491](http://www.natlib.govt.nz/records/22786774?search%5Bil%5D%5Bcategory%5D=Images&search%5Bpath%5D=items&search%5Btext%5D=DCL-0016491)

[www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/iccs](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/series/iccs)

[www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus\\_hsc/glossary\\_keywords.html](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/glossary_keywords.html)