EXAMPLE ACTIVITY
REPRESENTATION: POLITICAL PARTIES*

Age group: middle- to late-secondary school

Political parties embody shared views and are formed with the intention of being elected to parliament and influencing governance. In this lesson students explore concepts of collective action and representation; identify issues of national concern; form parties; develop party platforms; and deliver an election speech.

Outcomes

Students will:

- list current federal parliamentary parties;
- consider the role of political parties;
- practise party based representation;
- state the relationship between parties, elections and Cayman Islands policy; and
- define specific parliamentary terms.
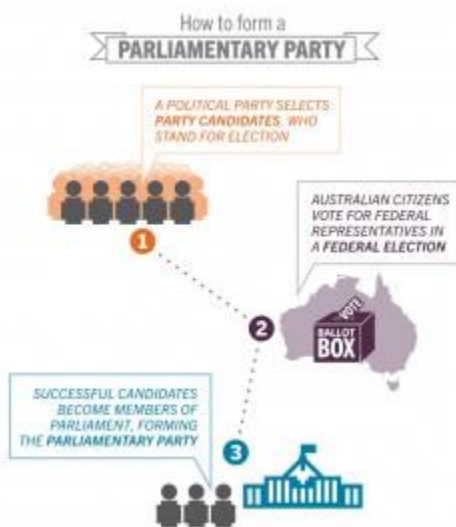
Focus Questions ANSWERS

- Why do political parties form?
- What is a party platform?*(a public statement of principles and aims of a political party usually presented at an election)*
- What is a party policy? *(a plan of action or principle agreed or chosen by a political party)*
- What is the difference between a political and parliamentary party? *(a parliamentary party is a subset of a political party)*

Concept Words

- Party
- Ideology
- Election
- Political party
- Party discipline
- Campaign
- Platform
- Policy
- Voting
- Agenda
- Social movement
- Member of parliament
- Member of the Legislative Assembly

Getting Started

1. Initiate discussions by asking students: How do groups form in parliament? *(common ideologies may lead to the formation of political parties and election to parliament)*
2. Discuss the benefits of collaborating with like-minded people. *(greater skill base, range of experience, support and influence e.g. compare the influence of a single protester to a street rally of 100 protesters)*
3. List the main political parties in the Cayman Islands. Who do these parties represent? *(their constituents)* Why do they form? *(to represent and advocate shared views for the purpose of influencing Cayman governance)*
4. Discuss the difference between the smaller parliamentary party and the larger political party. *(see diagram below)*

How to form a
PARLIAMENTARY PARTY

A POLITICAL PARTY SELECTS PARTY CANDIDATES, WHO STAND FOR ELECTION

1

AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS VOTE FOR FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVES IN A FEDERAL ELECTION

2 BALLOT BOX

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES BECOME MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, FORMING THE PARLIAMENTARY PARTY

3

Main Activity

1. Ask students: What's your cause? What big issues do you care about? *(climate change, youth wages, university entrance, cost of music CDs, terrorism etc.)*
2. Group like issues under 3 or 4 subject headings. *(environment, youth affairs, economic growth, national security etc.)*
3. Group students into parties based on shared views and concerns. Parties may vary in size. Retain two students to act as Independents (members of parliament who do not belong to a party).
4. Ask students to determine a party name, to select a spokesperson, to develop a party platform which reflects the party's priorities and to present an election campaign speech of 2 to 5 minutes.
5. Hear each presentation and allow time for peer review.

Debrief

1. Ask students to describe their experience of belonging to a party. Ask: Were party members committed and motivated? Was input shared or dominated by individuals? Was the party well organised and effective in communicating its philosophy?
2. Did experiences vary? How? Why? What was it like to be an Independent and to act alone?

Parliamentary Context

- Why does a political party need a clear and effective platform? *(to express alternative views and policies)*
- How does a party platform influence how people vote? *(by mobilising support for the platform)*
- How do political parties influence change in Cayman? *(successful parties form government and implement law; unsuccessful parties form opposition and scrutinise the actions of the government)*
- What might happen in a country if there were no parties, just Independents? *(many views and perspectives, less predictable voting patterns, more fractured power)*
- How well do you think political parties represent different sectors of the Cayman Islands community?

Extension Activities

- Ask students to create a poster which outlines their party's political principles.
- Ask students to create a 30 second video advertisement promoting their party's political principles.
- Ask students to research an issue and to create a policy statement to address the problem. Include a five point outline, a rationale and an implementation plan.

Useful Tools

Definitions

Party: from Middle English *partie*, from Old French *partir* to divide

1. a person or group taking one side of a question, dispute or contest
2. a group of persons organised for the purpose of directing the policies of government
3. a person or group participating in an action or affair e.g. a group of soldiers.

Documents and Resources

- [Australia Parliamentary Education Office Fact Sheets – Political Parties](#)

*Adapted from Australia Parliamentary Education Office parliamentary lesson plan titled [Representation: Political Parties](#).