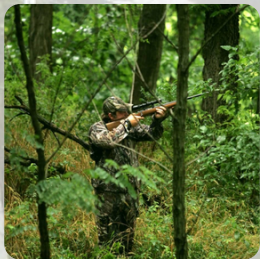
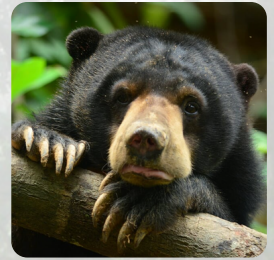


# PARLIAMENT OF ANIMALS

ALL DAY



**HANDS-ON  
WORKSHOP**  
FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

with

*Sarah Pye*  
AUTHOR AND SPEAKER





# Parliament of Animals

## A FIVE ACT INVESTIGATION

This 4-5-hour-long workshop explore concepts of civic engagement, the challenges of governance, and conservation with groups of 10-20 student leaders or extension students in years 6-9.

Students are introduced to the hypothetical Hutan village deep within the rainforest. Authorities have proposed a bridge across the river and the mayor has called a town meeting to determine whether there is support for this development. She has invited not only the human residents, but the non-humans too.

Through five 'acts', students are allocated a human or non-human character, research their character's needs and explore their character through drama workshops. They then present their perspective at the town gathering before voting takes place. The day ends with a discussion of civics, parliament and voting through an Australian and global lens.

## RATIONALE

*Parliament of Animals* utilises a hybrid of inquiry-based and project-based learning. Recent studies have measured the greater effectiveness of both teaching methods over a traditional didactic approach (Guthrie et al 2004, Hickey et al 2000, Hickey et al 1999, Hmelo-Silver et al 2007, Langer 2001, Lynch et al 2005 & Wu et al 2005).

Investigative skills are crucial for effective functioning in civics. 'Democratic societies need citizens who are politically engaged and knowledgeable about their governments' (Reichert & Torney-Purta 2019). School-based civic and citizenship education has been recognised as an important factor in this process. Grounding the workshop in a provocation that needs examination through investigation, procedural fairness, and sound decisions based on the evidence the students find, *Parliament of Animals* supports the future engagement and participation in civics. By including inquiry-based learning in a civics environment, students will be effectively educated for democratic life by encouraging analytical skills that will enable them to better examine, criticise and influence society around them.

The use of the Arts, specifically drama, as a cross-curricular approach to improve both social-emotional and academic learning is being praised largely for its benefit to enable learners to express their opinion, make meaning, and reflect in a variety of ways. Specifically, a focus on collective creativity has been labeled vital in understanding affective meaning making (Dawson & Lee 2018).



## **ACT 1**

Participants are introduced to Hutan village and the human and non-human inhabitants of the village. As a group, they brainstorm certain occupants of the village. They participate in an ice-breaker activity to explore these characters and reflect on their learnings. The group discusses things they may already know about the characters, leaving room for further investigation. Participants are then introduced to the problem the village is facing before being divided into teams and randomly assigned a research character by pulling a USB from a hat (30 mins).

## **ACT 2**

Teams use the digital dossier on their USB to research their chosen character. Using internet-enabled devices, they investigate things like physical characteristics, lifestyle, needs, desires, and skills. With a deeper understanding of their character, each team discusses their position for or against the bridge and organises their arguments (1.5 hours).

## **ACT 3**

Participants create an animal costume for one of their team members to wear. (If there are only 10-12 participants, they each have a character). To help them get into character, each transformed person will perform a series of freeze images of their character when prompted (1 hour).



# Continued:

## ACT 4

Parliament is called to session with all human and non-human characters present. Each character is given the floor for three minutes to present their perspective on the proposal, in character. They then answer questions from the mayor (Sarah), the other characters, and the remaining villagers (the audience). When everyone has had their say, the mayor sums up the arguments for and against. Each participant (characters and other villagers) are then given a ballot paper and they make their way to the voting booth to cast their vote.

## ACT 5

Participants change out of their costumes and reconvene to await the results. Sarah leads a discussion on the processes of civics in Australian and globally. They reflect on the exercise, are prompted to consider the value of considering the perspective of other species, and are asked to draw connections between their experience and civic duty in Australia. At the end of the reflection, the mayor then announces the result of the ballot.



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# Curriculum alignment

Year 6

## HASS F-6

### AC9HS6S02

locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats

### AC9HS6S03

evaluate information and data in a range of formats to identify and describe patterns and trends, or to infer relationships

### AC9HS6S04

evaluate primary and secondary sources to determine origin, purpose and perspectives

### AC9HS6S05

develop evidence-based conclusions

### AC9HS6S06

propose actions or responses to issues or challenges and use criteria to assess the possible effects

### AC9HS6S07

present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions

## SCIENCE

### AC9S6U01

investigate the physical conditions of a habitat and analyse how the growth and survival of living things is affected by changing physical conditions

### AC9S6I06

write and create texts to communicate ideas and findings for specific purposes and audiences, including selection of language features, using digital tools as appropriate

## ENGLISH

### AC9E6LA07

identify and explain how images, figures, tables, diagrams, maps and graphs contribute to meaning

### AC9E6LY02

use interaction skills and awareness of formality when paraphrasing, questioning, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, and sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions

### AC9E6LY04

select, navigate and read texts for a range of purposes, monitoring meaning and evaluating the use of structural features; for example, table of contents, glossary, chapters, headings and subheadings



### SCIENCE

**AC9E7LY05**

use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring, questioning and inferring to analyse and summarise information and ideas

**AC9S7H04**

explore the role of science communication in informing individual viewpoints and community policies and regulations

**AC9S7I05**

analyse data and information to describe patterns, trends and relationships and identify anomalies

**AC9S7I08**

write and create texts to communicate ideas, findings and arguments for specific purposes and audiences, including selection of appropriate language and text features, using digital tools as appropriate

### CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP

**AC9HC7S02**

locate, select and organise information, data and ideas from different sources

**AC9HC7S05**

create descriptions, explanations and arguments using civics and citizenship knowledge, concepts and terms that reference evidence

### ENGLISH

**AC9E7LA02**

recognise language used to evaluate texts including visual and multimodal texts, and how evaluations of a text can be substantiated by reference to the text and other sources

**AC9E7LE02**

form an opinion about characters, settings and events in texts, identifying areas of agreement and difference with others' opinions and justifying a response



# Curriculum alignment

Year 8

## SCIENCE

### AC9S8H03

examine how proposed scientific responses to contemporary issues may impact on society and explore ethical, environmental, social and economic considerations

### AC9S8I08

write and create texts to communicate ideas, findings and arguments for specific purposes and audiences, including selection of appropriate language and text features, using digital tools as appropriate

## CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP

### AC9HC8K05

how culture and religion may influence individuals' and groups' perceptions and expressions of citizenship and their actions as citizens

### AC9HC8S02

locate, select and organise information, data and ideas from different sources

### AC9HC8S05

create descriptions, explanations and arguments using civics and citizenship knowledge, concepts and terms that reference evidence

## ENGLISH

### AC9E8LA01

recognise how language shapes relationships and roles



### SCIENCE

#### **AC9S9I08**

write and create texts to communicate ideas, findings and arguments effectively for identified purposes and audiences, including selection of appropriate content, language and text features, using digital tools as appropriate

### CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP

#### **AC9HC9K04**

the role of courts, judges, lawyers and juries in trials, and the rights of the accused and the rights of victims

#### **AC9HC9S02**

locate, select and compare information, data and ideas from a range of sources

#### **AC9HC9S04**

evaluate the methods or strategies related to making decisions about civic participation

#### **AC9HC9S05**

create descriptions, explanations and arguments using civics and citizenship knowledge, concepts and terms that incorporate evidence

### ENGLISH

#### **AC9E9LY01**

analyse how representations of people, places, events and concepts reflect contexts

#### **AC9E9LY03**

analyse and evaluate how language features are used to represent a perspective of an issue, event, situation, individual or group



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