



Student Resource Book

Year 9 & 10



Module 3

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Meet Joe Blogs

ACHCK076 How social media is used to influence people's understanding of issues.

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The Twitterati chirps loudly, Facebook goes feral, the bloggers bang on and your mailbox gets maxed out with all manner of messages, policies and pleas to vote for one particular candidate or another. Don't forget vodcasts, podcasts, RSS feeds, and all the other emerging social media platforms that are revolutionising the way we either stay informed or in the case of 'fake news' become ill-informed.

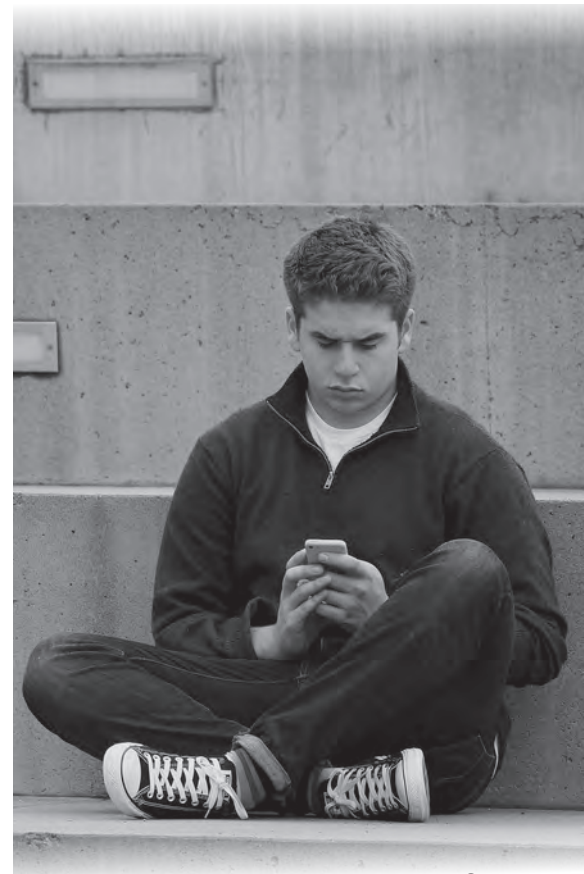


It is important when trying to get the facts that we use credible and objective websites. That is why the Parliament of Western Australia's website is so important if you are studying, researching or are just interested in Civics and Citizenship.

Here you can be assured of getting factual information that is free from political bias. In the past, political parties would rely upon Media Officers/ Press Secretaries to promote their issues and policies to the voters. This would generally be achieved through the Media Officer sending out media releases to the press, television networks and radio stations.

Today, this job is much more complex due to many voters receiving their information relating to politics from social media. It is also becoming increasingly common for voters to be targeted directly through Facebook advertisements. Therefore, a Media Officer today must 'manage traffic' on each platform and ensure information is spread as widely as possible across the digital landscape.

Voters also utilise social media to comment, campaign and collect information on candidates and parties. They may also use social media to start petitions for social change and are sometimes referred to as 'clicktivists' or online Activists.



Before social media emerged, many forms of social change were a result of activists getting signatures on a petition and physically delivering it to an individual member of the Parliament of Western Australia, who would present it on the petitioners' behalf.

Edith Cowan was one such activist, who campaigned for women in Western Australia to have the right to vote.

Below is a petition that was presented to Western Australia's first Premier, Sir John Forrest, urging the government to provide women with the right to vote in Western Australia.



A deputation from the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of Western Australia was received by Sir John Forrest on 20 November 1893.

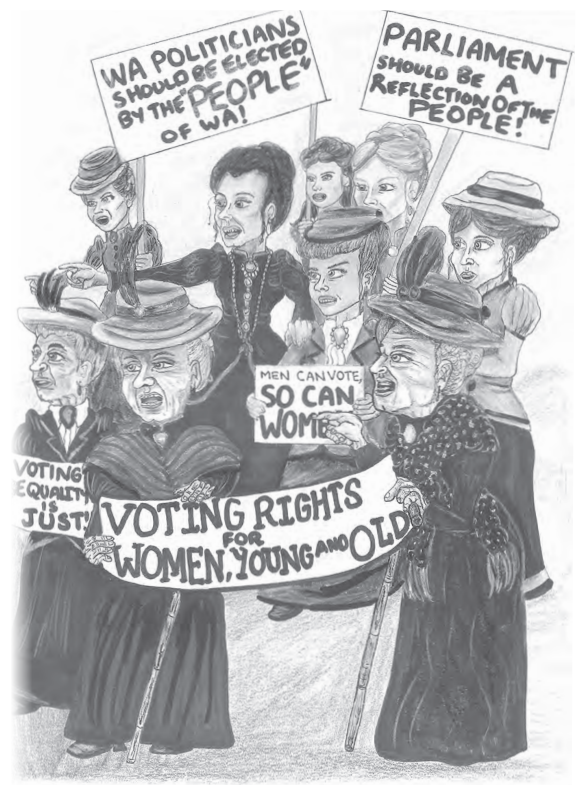
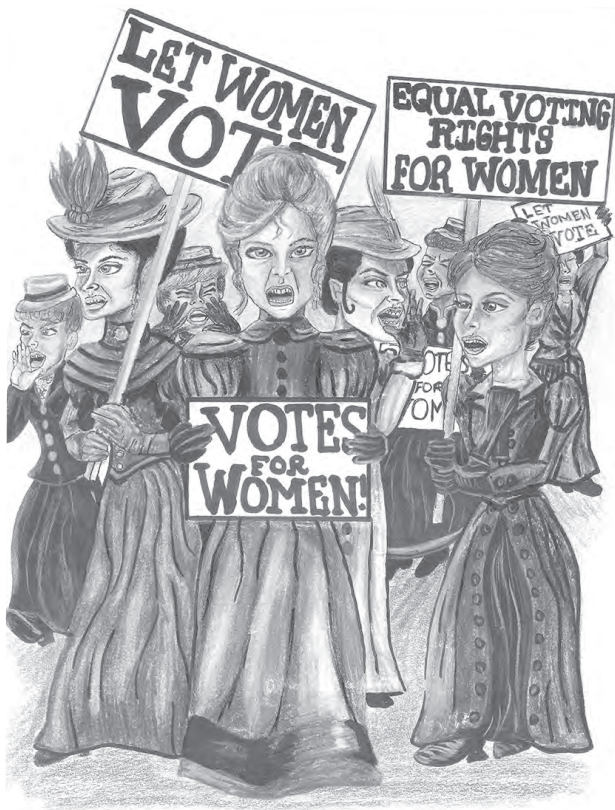
PETITION

1. Because it is the foundation of all political liberty that those who obey the law should be able to have a voice in choosing those who make the law.
2. Because Parliament should be the reflection of the wishes of the people.
3. Because Parliament cannot fully reflect the wishes of the people when the wishes of women are without any direct representation.
4. Because a government of the people by the people and for the people should mean all the people and not one half.
5. Because most laws affect women as much as men.
6. Because the laws which affect women especially are now passed without consulting these persons whom they are intended to benefit.
7. Because some of these laws press grievously on women as mothers. As, for instance, those relating to the guardianship of children.
8. Because some set up a different standard of morality for man and woman.
9. Because such laws are thereby rendered insufficient for protecting women from wrong.



10. Because the enfranchisement of women is a question of public wellbeing and not a help to any political party or sect.
11. Because the votes of women would add might and power to the more settled and responsible communities.
12. Because the possession of the vote would increase the sense of responsibility amongst women towards questions of public importance.
13. Because public spirited mothers make public spirited sons.
14. Because large numbers of intelligent, thoughtful, hardworking women desire the Franchise.
15. Because the objections against their having the Franchise are based on sentiment, not reason.
16. Because to sum up all reasons in one - it is just.

Source : Woman's Christian Temperance Union of WA Inc.



Although the petition was received by the first Premier of Western Australia, Sir John Forrest in 1893, it wasn't until 1899 that Western Australian women finally won the right to vote. Then in 1921 at the age of 60, Edith Cowan became the first ever female member of the Parliament of Western Australia!

Ode to Edith

We have more women in Parliament now than we ever have before
But there was a time in our state when they couldn't pass the door
Yet a group of women fought so hard from a club in Karrakatta
Back in 1893 they took up on this matter

A petition went to parliament asking members to take note
You only talk for half the state when women cannot vote
They faced strong opposition but the women held the line
And justice finally came their way in 1899

Edith Cowan, was just one, who fought for equal rights
She dreamt of more than just the vote and had Parliament in her sights
The floodgates had now opened, social change had now begun
She was elected into Parliament in 1921

From the Children's Court to hospitals her campaigning knew no ends
She started out as one lone voice but discovered many friends
She inspired those with vision and challenged those without
She was not one to be talked down of that there was no doubt

A member with integrity, who did just what she meant
who saw the path to social change, began at Parliament
She summonsed forth the winds of change, when women won the vote
Edith's image proudly shines on our fifty dollar note

Her portrait hangs in Parliament, a reminder to us all
That all can question equity but few answer the call
An electorate is named after her and a uni is as well
How big is her legacy? Well only time will tell

So her clock stands strong and solid at the entrance of Kings Park
Take the time to visit her and reflect upon her plaque
Edith Cowan's memory has stood the test of time
You can only reach the summit if you're prepared to take the climb.



Learning Opportunity: Wonder Women!

Refer to the poem 'Ode to Edith' on the previous page and answer the following questions.

What year was the petition calling for women to have the vote in Western Australia presented to Parliament?



Who was the member for the Parliament of Western Australia, who was given the petition?

What Australian note does Edith appear on?

In what year did women win the right to vote?

Apart from the right to vote what were two other things that Edith Cowan campaigned for?

1

2

What year did Edith Cowan become a member of the Parliament of Western Australia?

What are two things in Western Australia that are named after her?

1

2

Where in Western Australia does her portrait hang?

What kind of monument was built in her honour and where is it located?

Since the days of Edith Cowan, the Parliament of Western Australia has been fortunate enough to witness ever increasing numbers of women entering public office.

In fact, in this, our **41st Parliament**, Western Australia has more female members than ever before. Visit the Parliament of Western Australia website and find out how many women we now have sitting in both houses of the Parliament of Western Australia.

Number of women in the Legislative Assembly

Number of women in the Legislative Council

On the same site locate the Biographical Register of Members of the Parliament of Western Australia and research two of the following prominent Western Australian Women and answer the accompanying questions: **Carmen Lawrence, Margaret McAleer, Carol Anne Martin, Florence Cardell-Oliver**

What were the similarities between the two women you researched?

What early life experiences do you think influenced their decision to enter Parliament?

What may have been some of the barriers they would have faced entering into Parliament?

All parties should introduce a quota system to ensure that Western Australia has 50% of women in the Parliament. What are your views on the above statement? Do you agree or disagree? Make sure you provide reasons for your answer.

Historically, social change was often slow, but now in the world of social media, online campaigning and digital petitioning sites such as [change.org](https://www.change.org) which has attracted over 180 million followers, we can often see things change more quickly.

This form of cyber campaigning can highlight an issue of public interest and gain greater public attention than traditional forms of petitioning.

It is important to recognise, however, that although online petitions can increase public awareness, both the **Legislative Council** and the **Legislative Assembly** require hard copy versions with original signatures.

Although both the lower house and the upper house accept petitions, each chamber has its own guidelines that must be followed.



Following are the guidelines for the Legislative Council, however if you would like to understand the Legislative Assembly guidelines as well, check out our website www.parliament.wa.gov.au.

Presenting a Petition

You can't just roll up to the Legislative Council and personally present a petition to the House. You will need to ask your local member of the Legislative Council to present it on your behalf. Once you have done this, the member will then run it by the **Clerks at the Table**, who will make sure it conforms with the Standing Orders.

When presenting the petition to the Legislative Council, the member wishing to table the petition must sign or endorse his or her name on the first page and must present it to one of the Officers of the Council at least one hour before the House sits. After the petition is tabled or presented it is referred to the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs for consideration and report. The Committee may seek your advice and input from the member who presented the petition and the relevant Minister.

The process of presenting a petition may appear complex, but let's remember, when Edith Cowan and friends presented their petition all those years ago, it changed the course of history! At the end of the day if you don't like the rules, you still need to play by the rules to change the rules.



How Do I play by the Rules?



The last thing you want is to obtain lots of signatures on your petition, only to have it knocked back for not following the required format. So to avoid disappointment, make sure you follow the rules, which are known in the Parliament as Standing Orders.

Put simply, if you want your petition to stand up and not fall over – follow the Standing Orders!

The simple rules to follow are as below -

Contents of petitions:

A petition shall -

- (a) be addressed to the President and Members of the Council;
- (b) state the action or remedy sought from the Council, which must be repeated at the top of every page of the petition;
- (c) be legible and unamended whether by insertion or deletion or inter-lineation;
- (d) be couched in reasonable language;
- (e) be in the English language, or be accompanied by a certified English translation;
- (f) contain the name, address, and original signature or mark of the petitioners;
- (g) be signed by the person or persons promoting the petition, who must reside in Western Australia or, if a corporation, have its registered office in Western Australia; and
- (h) if from a corporation, be made under its common seal or, if the corporation does not have a common seal, a copy of the corporation's articles of incorporation must be attached to the petition.

Apart from telling you what a petition shall contain, Standing Order 101 will also tell you what a petition shall **not** contain. If you are interested, **check out our website for further info.**

Learning Activity

PETITION - 15 Minute Challenge

Working in pairs, you have five minutes to identify an issue, five minutes to identify a solution and five minutes to convince five people to sign your petition. Once you have collected your signatures, present to your class parliament for feedback.

To the Honourable President and Members of the Legislative Council of the
Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned residents of Western Australia respectfully request/oppose/support
or similar wording... (outline the issue/facts leading to why you believe you need the petition here)

Your Petitioners therefore respectfully request that the Legislative Council will

(outline situation which needs change here).

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Name	Address	Signature