



TEACHERS' RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Upper primary and lower secondary
(ages 12+; years 7 to 12)

CONTENTS

1. Book summary	1
2. Inspiration	2
3. Featured topics	2
4. Writing and design	3
5. Themes	4
6. Extension activities	5
7. Further reading	6

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- **Learning areas:** Humanities and Social Sciences, the Arts, Technologies, Politics
- **General capabilities:** Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking; Personal and Social Capability; Visual Literacy; Ethical Understanding, ICT Capability

REASONS FOR STUDYING THIS BOOK

- To enhance media literacy, to develop capabilities in critical thinking, learning to evaluate knowledge, clarifying key concepts and ideas disseminated by news organisations
- To enhance student abilities to respond to 21st century challenges by offering information to help them use critical thinking purposefully; offering concept learning to help construct theories with key information clearly laid out.

THEMES

- Politics
- Economics
- Technology
- Society and culture
- International relations

PREPARED BY

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NO SILLY QUESTIONS

THE DAILY AUS EXPLAINS HOW THE WORLD WORKS
(AND WHY YOU SHOULD CARE)

BOOK SUMMARY

No Silly Questions lays out the facts and principles behind our daily media headlines.

The Daily Aus is Australia's leading social-first news service and its founders have written this book to help readers enhance their media literacy, and to plug knowledge gaps with jargon-free explainers on everything from emissions trading and crypto to interest rates and human rights.

Divided into six chapters, which are centred around key subject areas, the book unpicks important topics so that readers will feel less overwhelmed by, and are equipped to understand, the daily news and the concepts that underpin it.

What's a budget deficit? How does voting actually work? What does the UN do? What does net zero mean? This book shows not only that there are no silly questions, but that there are simple answers to those you might have always wanted to ask.

INSPIRATION and INTENT

In 2017, Sam Koslowski and Zara Seidler started a social media news website, The Daily Aus. Their aim was to create a news service that empowered young people to engage with the world around them. They knew that many people felt like there was nowhere for them to get information that was clear, concise and in their language. Essentially, there were no news outlets catering to a social-first generation.

And so, The Daily Aus was born. A digestible and bite-sized way to consume news, which explained the context behind a story, not just the headline of the day.

At the beginning, that looked like five news items uploaded to Instagram stories every day. In those early days, the audience remained small but engaged.

In the days of the pandemic – when news outlets had to answer where you could go, who you could see and what you could do – that audience grew considerably. In 2023 The Daily Aus reaches over one million young Australians every month.

One challenge with writing this book was the ever-changing nature of news. Changes in politics in Australia and around the world, in science and technology, in economics, happen fast. But this book consists of explainers that will stay relevant and to which students can refer when they need to learn more about a topic, or to refine their knowledge on it.

FEATURED TOPICS

1. **Our Political System**
2. **The Economy**
3. **Our Climate**
4. **Society and Culture**
5. **Science and Technology**
6. **The World Around Us**

1. Our Political System

There are lots of good reasons to care about politics. The decisions made by politicians have enormous implications for our quality of life today. They also shape the world of tomorrow.

And just as it's your quality of life on the line, it's also your money. If you earn money in Australia and therefore pay tax, your tax dollars pay for the policies announced in Canberra – not to mention the salary of the politicians announcing them.

But, for TDA, the biggest reason you should care about politics can be summed up in one word: privilege.

It is a privilege to live in a country that has free, democratic elections. It is a privilege to feel safe when voting. It is a privilege to have access to independent media reporting on politics. There are millions of people around the world who don't have this privilege, and it shouldn't be taken for granted.

Politics can be tricky to follow. It's fast-paced, and political reporting often relies on the consumer having a lot of assumed knowledge. That is exactly what we want to avoid. We're here to demystify politics for you, so that next time you're reading news about a leadership spill, a ministerial appointment, or a new policy, you'll understand the full picture.

Questions

- Can you name the three levels of government in Australia, and explain a little about their function?
- What do you think are the pros and cons about Australia's compulsory voting system?
- What do you know about proportional representation and how it works in elections?
- What is a constitution?
- What's the difference between Australia's House of Representatives and the Senate in terms of its functions and elected politicians?

2. The Economy

The economy is 'the system for deciding how scarce resources are used so that goods and services can be produced and consumed', according to the Reserve Bank of Australia. In other words, it's the way a society decides who gets what and how.

Usually when we think of the economy, we think of money – how to get it, how to save it, how to spend it. There's no doubt money is central to the way the economy runs. But the economy goes deeper than money. It's society's answer to fundamental questions like, will you have enough to eat? Will you be able to put a roof over your head? What standard of living can you expect to have?

And the economy isn't some mysterious being – *you* are the economy. When you have a job, you get something out of the economy (money in your pocket), but you also put something into it (whatever you produce at work).

You contribute to the success of the economy, and you are affected by it in turn. When it's in good health, you'll feel it; it might be easier for you to find a job, for



example. When the economy is struggling, you'll feel that too.

So, the economy matters and it's important to understand its workings.

Questions and activities

- Write a paragraph about the Gross Domestic Product and how it works in a nation's economy.
- In a government's annual budget, name some of the ways it raises money, and in which areas does that money tend to get spent?
- What are some advantages and disadvantages of a) higher than average taxes; b) lower than average taxes?
- Write a paragraph about the role of superannuation for workers?

3. Society and Culture

By paying attention to social justice, we can understand more deeply the complexities and inequalities in our society and work towards a fairer future. From delving into the history of and ongoing struggles for LGBTQIA+ rights to better understanding our First Nations people's fights for equity, the intersection between social justice and the news adds shades of understanding to what it means to be human.

There is another reason to examine social justice issues: it's the element of the news that most requires us to develop our ability to gather information, analyse vastly different perspectives and arguments, and shape well-informed opinions.

This process of digesting information and forming our own views can help us develop and improve our critical thinking skills, which are valuable in many aspects of life. For example, after learning about the root causes of poverty and inequality, we can engage in informed discussions and debates about solutions, and use our critical thinking skills to assess the effectiveness of different approaches.

There are, however, some major challenges in this sphere. By being aware of these challenges and seeking out information from diverse sources, we can overcome the difficulties and gain a more well-rounded understanding of social issues.

Questions and activities

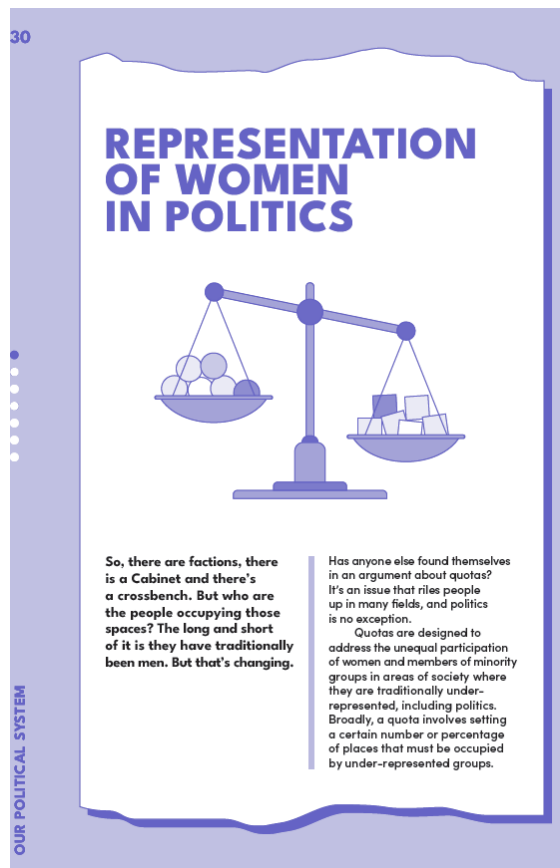
- Think of two examples from recent news items you've read that show a) bias; and b) sensationalism.

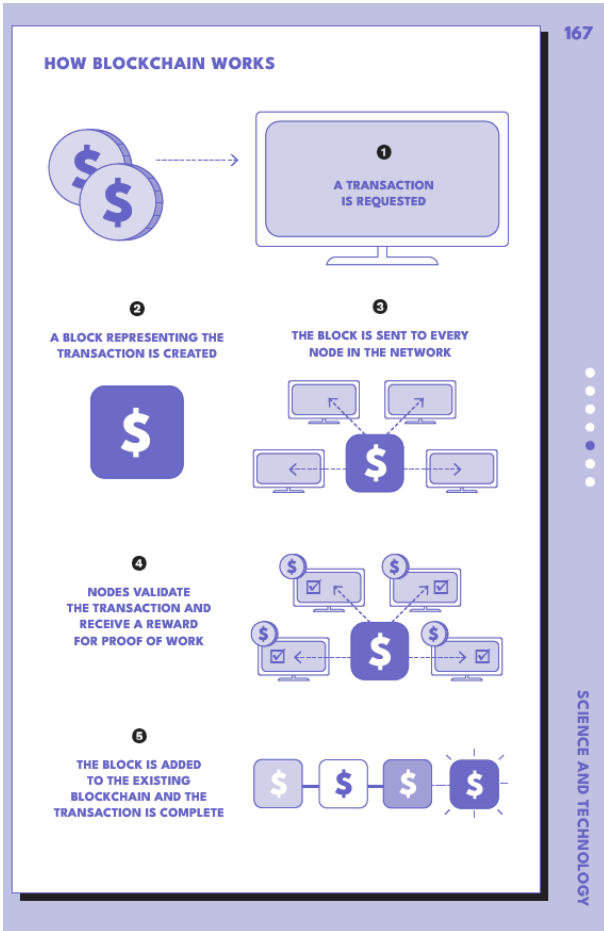
- Which topics in this chapter seem the most pressing issues in the fields of social justice in the 2020s and why?
- How have laws around consent around sex changed in the past decade? Why do you think considerations around consent have changed?

WRITING and DESIGN

A quote on the back of *No Silly Questions* says 'The Daily Aus are the masters of making important information neutral, accessible and digestible.'

The book is also designed to enhance its accessibility and readability for a variety of ages and readerships:





Questions

- Do you think the graphics, illustrations and page design help impart the information in each chapter? Give reasons for your answer.
- Can you give some examples of illustrative material that stands out to you and makes you more interested to read on that topic?

Activities

- Pick a passage that's text only and explain – and illustrate – what kinds of infographics or images you'd have added to it and why you'd have picked them.
- Take an example of an illustrated or non-standard double-page spread and consider the impact it has compared to just the text. Would the entry be as interesting with just the words?
- Choose two or three paragraphs in the book which you think showcase the authors' ability to explain a complex subject simply and analyse why you think that visually and verbally they have distilled the topic successfully.

THEMES

Engaging with current affairs

No Silly Questions aims to explain fundamental concepts in key areas of the world's and nations' affairs so that readers can consume the news without feeling, for example, set back by not knowing how government works or what a market economy is, or how mitigation systems for global warming work.

Questions and activities

- In groups, discuss what you believe 'media literacy' means. Has the idea changed over time? What does it mean for young people today?
- Which topics in this book do you think will be of most relevance to you in the next decade and why?
- What do you think it means to be a 'good news consumer'?

SPEED-DATING SUPERPOWERS: RISING ASIAN POWERHOUSE NATIONS IN THREE STATS

India

1. By 2032, India's population will overtake China's to become the world's largest, peaking at 17 billion in the 2060s.
2. India's GDP has multiplied by five times since 1970. It's grown every year for thirty-five years.
3. The share of India's population living in poverty has fallen sharply – 415 million people have been lifted out of poverty since 2007.

World's largest population by 2032
Poverty fallen sharply

Japan

1. Japan has the world's third-largest economy – and most of its economic growth has occurred in the second half of the twentieth century.
2. It faces a rapidly ageing population – 15 per cent of the population is aged over 75 (about 20 million people). By 2030, one in five Japanese citizens will be over 75. Life expectancy is 84 – up from 72 in 1970.
3. It's expected Japan's ageing population could lower its GDP by 1 per cent a year in the years leading to 2050.

World's third-largest economy
Ageing population



Mis- and disinformation in media

No Silly Questions aims to teach you how to debunk untrue claims or ‘facts’ that news articles are promoting.

Questions and activities

- What’s the difference between misinformation and disinformation? Use examples to illustrate your answer.
- Find two news articles from the last twelve months that you think contain claims that are misleading or have not been fact-checked, and rewrite these claims so they are accurate. Show your sources.

Standing up and speaking out

The authors of *No Silly Questions* have taken a stand about something they believe in: breaking down complex ideas in the news with respect and rigour.

There are also examples in many of the chapters of figures in the last decades of national and world affairs who have stood up and spoken out for causes they see as important for the wellbeing of humanity.

Questions and activities

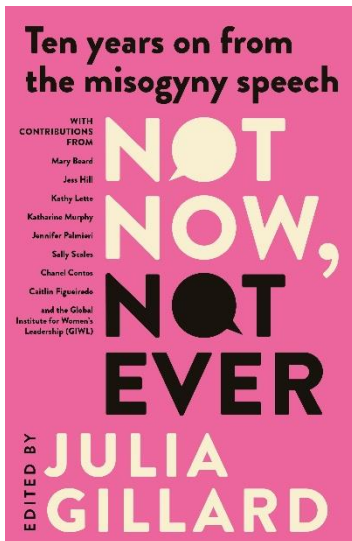
- As a class, choose some of the figures featured in this book. What are some important things they have stood up and spoken about? What are some examples of how they are trying to make the world a better place, or the media a healthier place?
Which of them do you most identify with and why? Are there things they have done that you would like to emulate? What are these and how might you get started?
- As a class or in groups, discuss what issues are most important to you now. How have the topics and people featured in this book helped to augment your understanding of these topics?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

- Choose one subject area in this book and research it in order to write your own 400–600 words article on it. For example you could pick ‘Recession’ and research how the recession of 2008 unfolded before writing a short piece reporting on it from the perspective of someone writing years later.



FURTHER READING

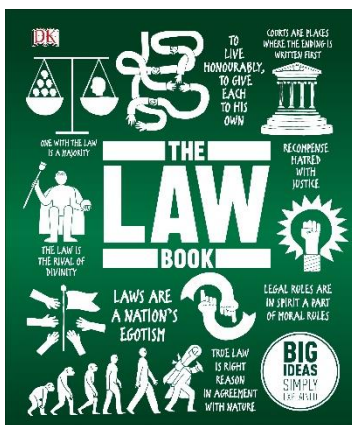


Ten years on from the speech that stopped Australia in its tracks – Julia Gillard’s misogyny speech. Where were you then? And where are we now?

On 9 October 2012, Prime Minister Julia Gillard stood up and proceeded to make all present in Parliament House that day pay attention. The incisive ‘misogyny speech’, as her words came to be known, continues to energise and motivate women who need to stare down sexism and misogyny in their own lives.

While behaviours may have improved since the misogyny speech, there remains a way to go and Julia Gillard explores the roadmap for the future with next-generation feminists Sally Scales, Chanel Contos and Caitlin Figueiredo to motivate us with that rallying cry: Not now, not ever!

ISBN 9780143779759

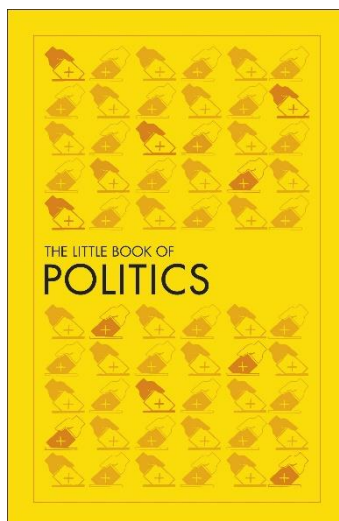


An accessible guide to the most important and groundbreaking legal milestones in history, and the people behind them.

This overview guide is brilliant for novices looking to find out more and experts wishing to refresh their knowledge alike.

- More than 90 ground-breaking legal milestones
- Packed with facts, charts, timelines and graphs to help explain core concepts
- A visual approach to big subjects with striking illustrations and graphics throughout
- Easy to follow text makes topics accessible for people at any level of understanding.

ISBN 9780241410196



The perfect pocket-sized introduction to politics and political thought throughout history.

From the origins of democracy to Machiavelli’s cunning statecraft, and from Rousseau’s ‘social contract’ to the American Declaration of Independence, Marxist communism, the dawn of populism, and identity politics, *The Little Book of Politics* examines the philosophies behind the different political beliefs and methods of government used around the world over the course of human history.

Packed with infographics and flowcharts that explain complex concepts in a simple but exciting way, this book offers you a combination of clear text and hard-working infographics in a portable format that is perfect for reading on the go.

ISBN 9780241426432

