



LESSON PLAN

Citizens and the state

Learning outcome 3.3

Compare two or more systems of government, taking particular note of the ways in which the state interacts with its citizens, and citizens can shape their state

Students will learn

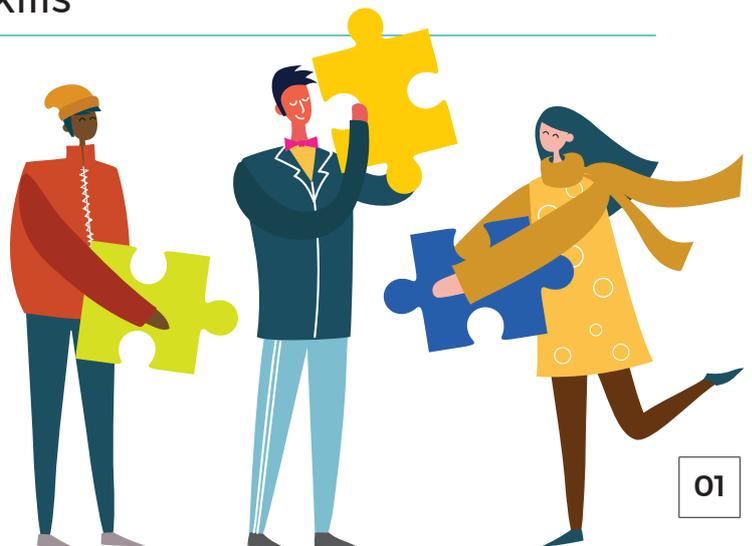
- ▶ How the state interacts with its citizens in a democracy
- ▶ To follow a case study in which the state and citizens interact on climate change
- ▶ To investigate current interactions between the state and its citizens

Materials

- ▶ Slide show
- ▶ Worksheet 1: How citizens and states interact – one for each student
- ▶ Worksheet 2: How the Oireachtas and citizens interact – one worksheet for each group, four in total, A3 if possible
- ▶ Worksheet 3: Research a political party – one for each student or group (extension activity)

Assessment for learning/Key skills

- ▶ Managing information and thinking
- ▶ Being creative



1 Introduction – Who is the State?

SLIDE 3

Recap what we mean by the state.

Reiterate that the Government is a group of 7 to 15 Ministers nominated by the Taoiseach from among the elected members of the Dáil. They decide what the Government's policies are and which new laws they want to introduce in the Oireachtas. Each Minister also leads a Government Department, such as the Department of Health, and implements Government policy in that area.

SLIDE 4

Establish the role of the state to protect and provide and ask students to consider the ways in which the Irish State does this.

SLIDE 5

Discuss the rights citizens have in a democracy.

2 Worksheet 1: How citizens and states interact

SLIDES 6 AND 7

Give each student a copy of **Worksheet 1: How citizens and states interact** (see page 5). Considering the rights people have in a democracy, ask students to consider the two key questions on the worksheet and note their answers.

Show the slides to give students ideas.

The following are some suggested answers.

How does the State interact with its citizens?

Public meetings

Constituency clinics

Attend events

Welcome visitors to Leinster House

Make laws

Social media

The Citizens' Assembly

Provision of children's allowance (government)

Collection of taxes (government)

Provision of pensions for retired and older people (government)

How can citizens shape the state?

Vote in elections

Ask local representatives to raise issues in the Oireachtas

Take part in protests

Join a political party

Stand for election

Present petitions/submissions to Oireachtas Committees

The Citizens' Assembly

Note 1: Every day the state interacts with citizens through the work of Government Departments – some relevant examples include the provision of children’s allowances, taxation, social protection payments and medical card provision. But it is important to discuss all aspects of state interaction with citizens, beyond the work of government.

Note 2: The Citizens’ Assembly 2016-2018 was a group consisting of a chairperson and 99 citizens chosen at random to represent the views of the people of Ireland. They considered a number of topics with the benefit of expert, impartial and factual advice. Their conclusions formed the basis of a number of reports and recommendations that were submitted to the Houses of the Oireachtas for further debate by our elected representatives. A new Citizens’ Assembly on gender equality convenes in 2020.

3 **Worksheet 2: How the Oireachtas and citizens interact**

SLIDE 8

Ask students to divide into the four groups as they did in the Government in Ireland lesson:

1. President of Ireland
2. Dáil Éireann
3. Seanad Éireann
4. Oireachtas Committees

Note: You could ask them to reprise their presentations from that lesson as revision and to include any student who may have been absent for that lesson.

Give each group the appropriate page of **Worksheet 2: How the Oireachtas and citizens interact** (see pages 6-9). Ask each group to consider how their branch of the Oireachtas engages with citizens and write their ideas into the worksheet. Record their ideas on the slide.

4 Case study: Climate action

SLIDES 9-12

Show examples of how the State shapes people's lives and how people input into State policy regarding climate action.

Ask students to do a web search for all the ways citizens are working to shape the way the Irish state addresses climate change. This may be done individually or as groups. Students can report their findings in a format of their choice.

Examples:

- ▶ Joining a political party with progressive policies on climate change.
- ▶ Joining an activist organisation.
- ▶ Taking part in a protest.
- ▶ Writing an opinion piece for a newspaper.

Note: You could choose a different issue, such as something that impacts your school or community.

5 Conclusion

SLIDES 6 AND 7

Recap the ways citizens and states interact.

→ Extension activities

Choose a country with a different political system from Ireland's, e.g. Turkey, China, Syria. Investigate how citizens and the state interact in that country.

Research the work of the Citizens' Assembly: www.citizensassembly.ie. Choose one of its recommendations and investigate how it is being followed up by the Houses of the Oireachtas.

Over the next week ask students to notice and list all the ways they can find of how the State engages with its citizens.

Research a political party using **Worksheet 3: Research a political party** (see page 10).



Worksheet 1: How citizens and states interact

<p>How does the State interact with its citizens?</p>		
<p>How can citizens shape the state?</p>		



Worksheet 2: How the Oireachtas and citizens interact

President
of Ireland





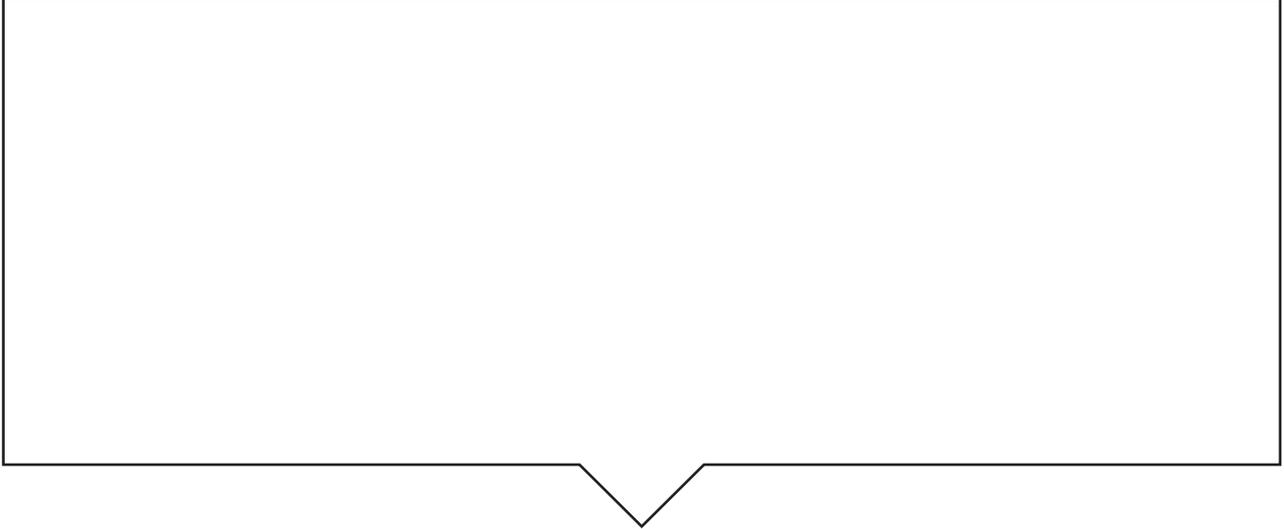
Worksheet 2: How the Oireachtas and citizens interact

Dáil
Éireann

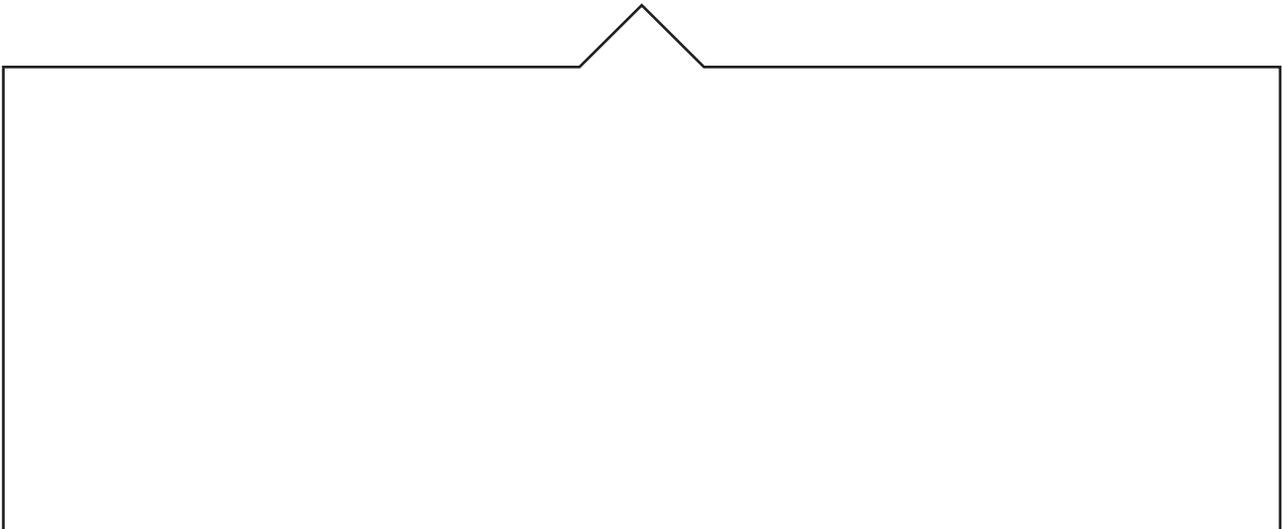




Worksheet 2: How the Oireachtas and citizens interact

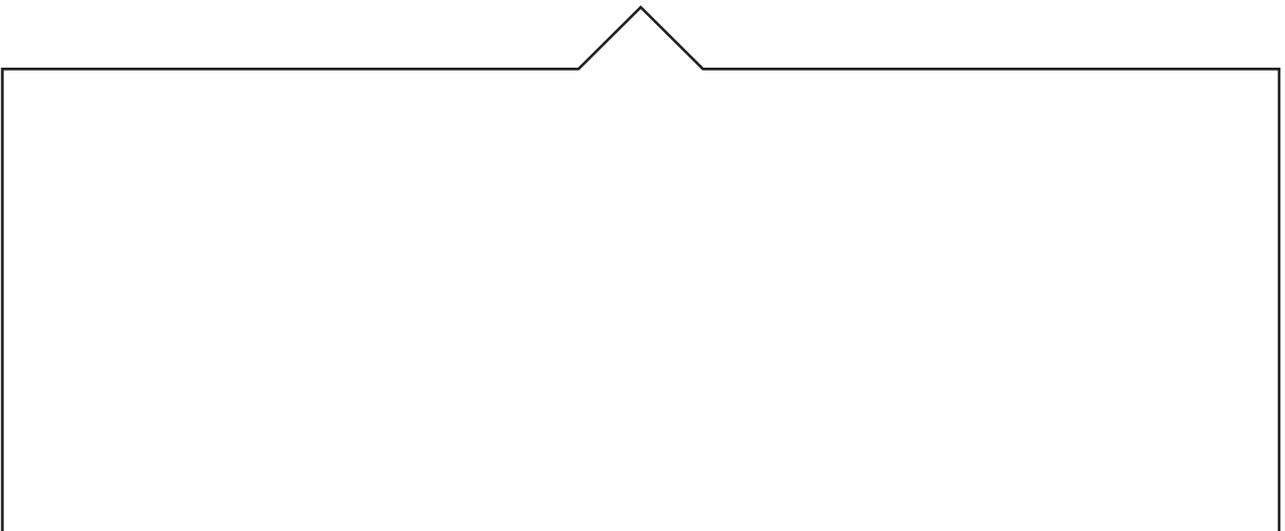
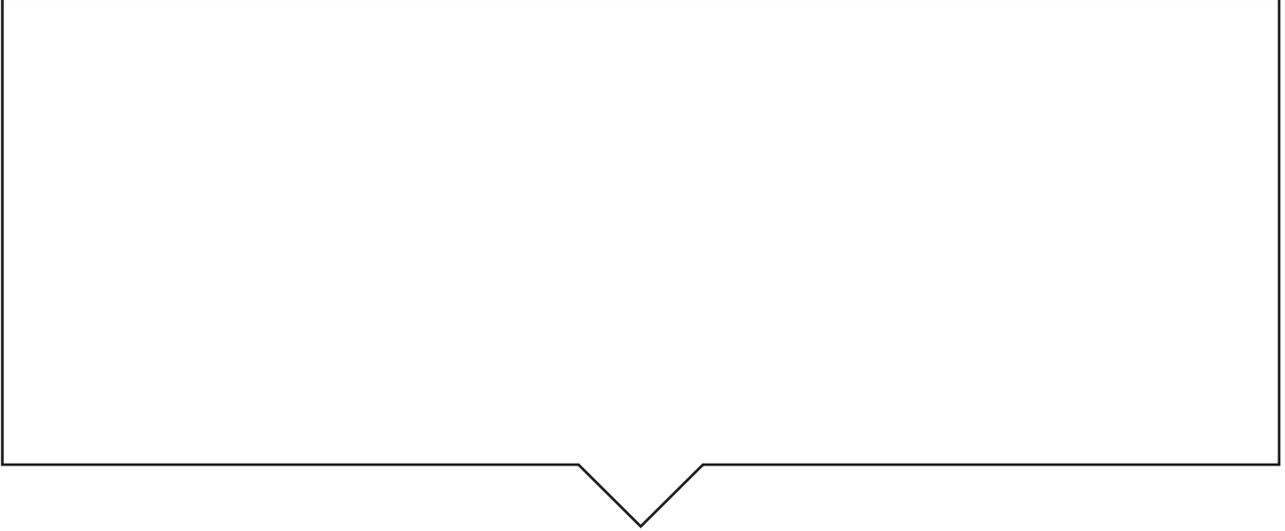


Seanad
Éireann





Worksheet 2: How the Oireachtas and citizens interact





Worksheet 3: Research a political party

Name of party			
Leader			
Number of:	TDS	SENATORS	MEPS
Background			
Beliefs/policies			
Annual membership fee			