

Year 2 General Studies

# The Australian Constitution

A national constitution is a set of rules for governing a country. The Australian Constitution has properly been described as 'the birth certificate of a nation'. It provides the basic rules for the government of Australia. The Constitution took effect on 1 January 1901, when Australia was federated and became a nation.

## How was the Australian Constitution created?

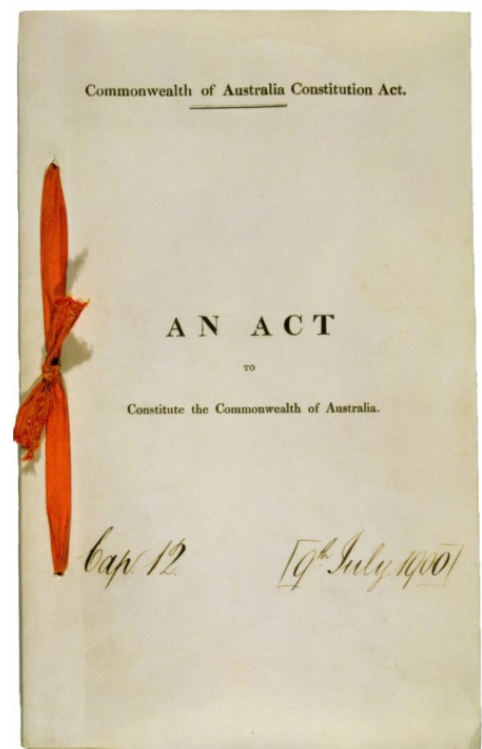
Before 1901 the present Australian States were separate colonies of the British Empire. When the colonies decided to join together in a federation, representatives from each colony create a constitution for the new nation.

## What does the Australian Constitution do?

The Australian Constitution establishes the form of the Federal government and sets out the basis for relations between the Federal government and the states. It is a set of rules by which the country is run.

## How can the Constitution be changed?

The Parliament can change ordinary laws by passing amending laws, but it can only initiate proposals for changes to the Constitution. The approval of the people of Australia is necessary for any change to the Constitution. This process occurs when all Australians vote 'yes' or 'no' to a question, and is called a referendum.



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**Questions**

**1. What is a national constitution?**

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**2. Approximately how many years old is the Australian Constitution?**

(Circle the correct answer)

**20 / 120 / 220**

**3. Can the Constitution be changed?**

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**4. What is a referendum?**

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**5. A constitution is a set of rules by which the country is run.**

**True / False**

**6. When did Australia become a nation? (Circle the correct answer)**

**1788 / 1890 / 1901**