

My Vote
My Voice

Understanding democracy and what it means for me

Introducing Voting

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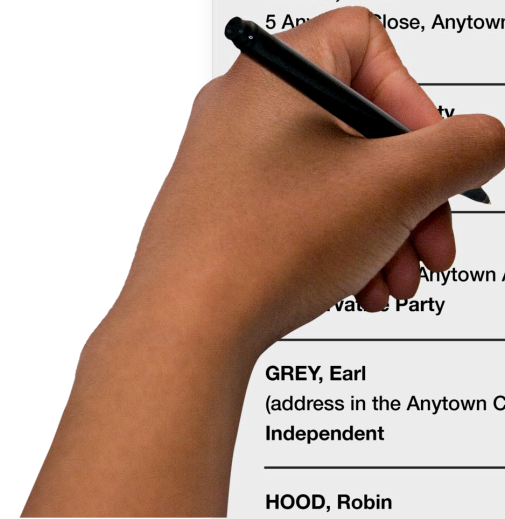
What is voting?

- We live in a **democracy**. This means we choose who is in charge.
- We do this by **voting**.
- Voting is how you have your say on who represents you.
- Voting happens during **elections**.
- You vote for **politicians** to represent your local area.
- You can vote in **Local Elections** and **General Elections**.









What are political parties?

- If someone wants to get elected we say they are ‘**standing for election**’.
- People will often choose to represent a **political party** when they stand for election.
- A political party is a group of people who share similar ideas about what is right for the country.
- The two biggest political parties are the **Conservative Party** and the **Labour party**.
- Each political party has a leader and members.



Election of the Local Council

Vote for only one person by putting a cross in the box next to your choice

GREEN, Greta 5 Anytown Close, Anytown AT34 6CT		<input type="checkbox"/>
ROSE, Anya 12 Anytown Lane, Anytown AT33 5DX		<input type="checkbox"/>
SMITH, John 7 Anytown Road, Anytown AT12 E34 Independent Party		<input type="checkbox"/>
GREY, Earl (address in the Anytown Constituency) Independent		<input type="checkbox"/>
HOOD, Robin 64 Purple Road, Anytown AT12 7HT The Forest Party		<input type="checkbox"/>
MILLER, Windy 7 Daisy Drive, Anytown AT98 7RK Alternative Power Forum		<input type="checkbox"/>

At the moment lots of people with learning disabilities aren't voting. Why do you think that is?

You might be asked to feed back to the group.



Did you know?

A mind map is a great way to present your ideas.

- Write the question in the middle of the page.
Draw a circle around it.
- Then write your ideas down.
- Use lines to show how ideas connect together.



Does voting even matter?

As a group, discuss whether voting is important today.



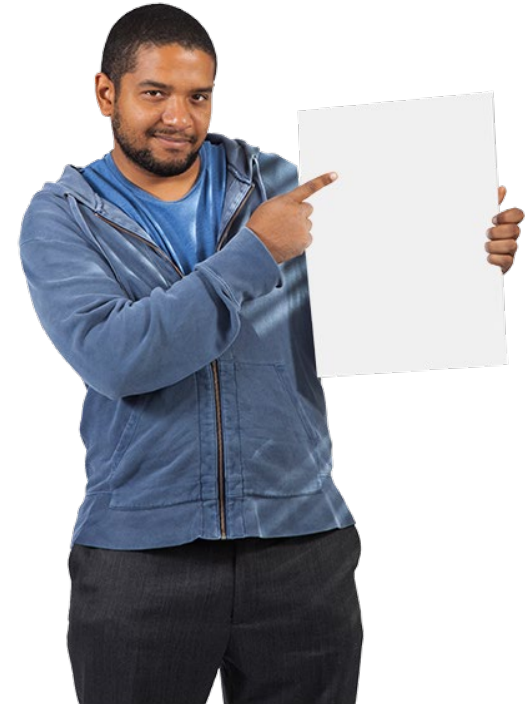
Show us why your voice matters

Take a blank piece of paper and complete this sentence...

My Voice Matters because...

Finished? Why not turn your piece of paper into a colourful poster?
Add drawings, colour and art to make your poster stand out.

If you don't like writing or drawing, you could show us why your voice matters by sticking pictures on the page. You can get the pictures from a newspaper or the internet.



Create your voters

Everyone should imagine a brand-new character. Who are they? What are they interested in? What makes them happy and what makes them angry?

Are they voting in the next election? Why? Why not?

How will they vote? In person, by proxy or by post? Why?

Some people might want to draw their characters.



Breaking down barriers

What's stopping you voting? Let's break down barriers with our fun bowling game! To take part you'll need some bowling pins, a bowling ball, paper and pens.

- Start the game by thinking about the things which might stop people voting. These are called barriers.
- Cut out newspaper pictures, download and print pictures off the internet, draw or write words which represent these barriers.
- Stick each barrier on a bowling pin.
- Now ask yourself what can be done to break down these barriers.
- After you've answered that question, it's time to bowl and knock those barriers down!



Don't have bowling pins? Why not use old plastic bottles and a ball.

Remember

You can vote in Local Elections and
General Elections

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What is a local election?

Information

- In the local elections we get to vote for our **local councillors**. Local councillors come together to make a group called a council.
- Councils are very important. They help run local services like schools and bin collections.
- Sometimes you can vote for a **mayor** in your local election too.

Councillors represent your views
in Council meetings.

MPs represent your views at
Parliament. You can find out more
about that later on.



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What is a General Election?

- In a **General Election** you vote for a **Member of Parliament (MP)**.
- **An MP** is an ordinary person who has decided that they want to help run the country.
- Your MP represents where you live in **Parliament**. Parliament is the place where laws are made.

How do you win the General Election?

- The political party with the most MPs in the country wins the election. They form the **government**.
- The leader of the winning party becomes the **Prime Minister**.
- Sometimes one party does not have enough MPs to make a government on their own. When this happens two or more parties can join together to create a **coalition government**.



Mock election

Split everyone into **Candidates and Voters**.

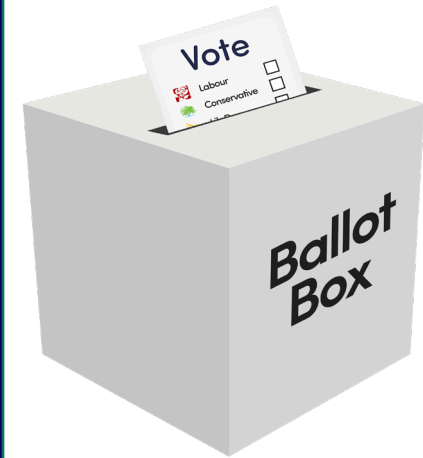
- **Candidates** should come up with three things they would do if they were Prime Minister.
- **Candidates** present their ideas back to voters.
- **Voters** need to ask lots of questions so that they can decide who to vote for.
- **Voters** should write who they want to win and why on a piece of paper.
- **Voters** should take their paper up to a box that represents the ballot box. Voters should also show their ID, like they will need to in a real election.



Polling Day Practice

Set up a mock polling station. You need:

1. Someone sat behind a table checking names, addresses and IDs.
2. Places where people can vote. In each voting station you should have a practice ballot paper and pencil. [Download our practice ballot paper here.](#)
3. A box that people can put their ballot papers in.



OUR TIPS

1. You could have people conducting a fake exit poll outside.
2. Make sure people know what to do if they have any access needs.

Then....

1. Ask people to queue outside the door of the mock polling station.
2. Every time a voting station is empty invite someone new in to vote.
3. Check their ID, name and address before you let them vote.
4. Direct them to a voting station.
5. Make sure they put their practice ballot paper in the box when they're done.

Make a manifesto

What would you do if you were in charge? Pick **three things** that you would like to change if you were Prime Minister. Be prepared to feed them back to the group.



How does the UK Government work?

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How does the UK Government work?

- **The job of the Prime Minister** and the government is to come up with ideas and plans about how to run the country. These ideas and plans are called **policies**.
- The government needs **many policies to run the country**. To make this easier to manage, the government is split up into different offices, which are called departments. For example, we have a Department for Health and Social Security and a Department for Transport.
- The PM chooses **cabinet ministers** to run each of these departments. Together with the PM they make decisions about how to run the country.
- There are lots of other people who are not politicians who work in these government departments. **They are called civil servants**. Civil servants are not elected. Anyone can apply for a job as a civil servant.
- The UK Government gets to make all the decisions about England and some of the decisions about Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. **Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland also have their own governments**.

Who is in charge right now?

- The Conservative Party is in charge. **Rishi Sunak** is the **Prime Minister** and **leader of the Conservative Party**.
- The party that had the second highest number of MPs in the last election is the Labour Party. **Keir Starmer** is **leader of the Labour Party**.



Design your own cabinet

Do you remember what cabinet ministers do?

Who would you have in your cabinet? Please pick a local hero, celebrity or politician to fill each of these key cabinet roles. Make sure you have good reasons for choosing them for your cabinet.

1. **Prime Minister** – they are the leader of the UK
2. **Chancellor** – they are the main money person in the UK
3. **Health Secretary** – they look after hospitals and social care
4. **Foreign Secretary** - they decide how Britain works with other countries
5. **Home Secretary** - they are responsible for things like immigration and policing

Definitions

Print off our definition sheet

Cut out the words and their definitions and mix them up. Can you remember what definition goes with what?



Spot the politics!

Someone should stand up and talk about what they do in an average day.

Everyone else should hold up their hand, a flag, foam finger or something similar, every time something that is affected by politics happens.



Making change

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Voting is not the only way you can change things



- You can write to your MP to tell them about issues you are passionate about.
- You can volunteer for charities and campaigns.
- You can join a local political group.
- You can start a petition. A petition is a letter which says what you want to change. You can ask other people to sign it.

Top tip – did you know that if you host your petition on [this website](#) the government might even respond!

Write a letter to your MP

Why not write to your MP to encourage them to champion accessible voting.

- Did you know you can write to or email your MP?
- Why not write them a letter or email asking them to support My Vote My Voice?
- You can tell them why voting matters to you and ask them to sign up to be an Accessible Voting Champion.
- You can find out who your MP is and get their contact details online. [Find your MP here.](#)
- Not sure what to write? [Use our template letter.](#)

