Victor the Vote Counter
VO SCRIPT (v9 08-03-11 TL)

1. INTRO

Open to a line of voters, all shapes and sizes, approaching a ballot box. The camera slowly focuses in on the box as the voters shuffle up and post their ballots.

Hello.
On Thursday May 5th 2011, there will be a referendum on the voting system you use to elect MPs to the House of Commons.

Having zoomed close to the slot, a hand posts a ballot paper through and we follow it inside.

Comment [CC1]: Not sure if it might lead some to believe that you are voting using the new system on 5 May (i.e when voting in the local/devolved elections). Prob best not to have it as a ballot box.

There are two voting systems for you to choose between: the current system and a different one. To explain them both, I'd like to introduce Victor.

The slip flutters down through the darkness, down a cone of light cast by the slot. It lands on the desk of our protagonist, Victor.

It's Victor's job to count every vote in our elections, and that means he's something of an expert in these things.
Ready to do some explaining, Victor?

He nods. As the VO explains the choices, signs illuminate in the darkness behind his desk.

Great.
So, there are two systems to choose from: 'First past the post' and 'Alternative vote'.
Which one do you want to hear about first?
Click a sign to choose.

<u>Approx 40 secs</u>

2a. FPTP

Victor stands up and walks left. We're now in a new part of the ballot box. The words 'First past the post' are against the wall, and a huge pile of papers sits in a mound on the floor. Victor tumbles in.

'First past the post' is the system we currently use in UK general elections; here's how it works.

Victor emerges clutching a vote slip. We cut to see it full screen. There is a list of candidates, A through D. Candidate B is marked with a cross.

With 'First past the post', you vote for just one candidate. You do this by putting a cross into the box of the person you want to vote for.

Comment [CC2]: Remove word 'just' – we want to keep away from making any implications of one system taking more effort to do or anything like that

We cut back to the room. Victor is busily counting votes from the pile, his tongue poked out in concentration.

The votes for each candidate are then put into a pile and counted.

We flash forward. The votes are now all counted in four tall piles against the wall. Candidate C's pile is clearly taller.

When the counting is finished the candidate with the most votes wins.

Victor extends a tape measure and verifies the tallest, nodding.

A candidate doesn't need to get a minimum number of votes – to win they only need more votes than any other candidate.

He pins a rosette on candidate C's pile, and walks right to return to his desk.

Comment [CC3]: Keep the same winner as in the booklet and make sure the same candidate wins AV as wins FPTP

Thank you, Victor!

Victor is back behind his desk. The two signs – 'FPTP' and 'AV' - are illuminated behind him, and a new sign has appeared on the front of his desk. It reads 'I'm done'.

So, did you understand first past the post?
Victor nods.

Not you, Victor, our voter!
If you do understand, click 'Alternative Vote' to find out about the other voting system.
If you don't, click the 'First past the post' sign to play this clip again.
And, if you're happy that you understand both systems, just click 'I'm done'.
Approx 55secs (total 1min 35secs)

2b. AV

Victor stands up and walks right. We're now in a new part of the ballot box. The words 'Alternative Vote' are marked on the wall, and a heap of votes swing from the ceiling in a cargo net.

The 'Alternative vote' system is different to the way we currently vote in UK general elections; here's how it works.

Victor releases the votes on to the floor, accidentally burying himself. He pops up, clutching a slip, and we cut to see it full screen. Again we see a list of candidates, A through D, but they are now marked with numbers. B is 1, A is 2, C is 3 and D is not ranked.

Comment [CC4]: Please have them all filled in

In this system, you use numbers to rank the candidates in order of your preference. You put a 1 next to your first choice, 2 next to your second choice, 3 next to your third choice and so on.

You can choose how many candidates to rank, and you don't have to rank every one.

Comment [CC5]: The final version of the booklet has a new line added in here. Please can you add so it says 'You can choose how many candidates to rank. You don't have to rank every candidate. As long as you rank at least one, your vote will be counted.'

We cut back to the room. Victor is busily counting the vote slips around him into tidy piles.

The number 1 votes for each candidate are then put into a pile and counted.
Off you go, Victor!

Flash forward. All of the votes are now counted into four tall piles against the wall. Candidate C's pile is tallest.

Comment [CC6]: Please can you make it exactly as the booklet – so first round A and B are equal, then A takes small lead etc etc

When the counting is finished, if a candidate has received more than half the number 1 votes, that candidate wins and there is no further counting.

A dashed line draws across the wall. It is labeled '50% of number 1 votes', and sits well above all of the piles.

But, if no candidate has received more than half the number 1 votes, it means there will be at least one more round of counting. So, since no one has enough votes in our example, Victor can start round 2.

Victor walks over and attempts to lift the smallest pile of votes – candidate A.

At this point, the candidate with the fewest number 1 votes is removed from the contest.

With a good heave, he lifts the whole pile and carries it out of shot.

Each ballot paper in that candidate's pile is then looked at again.

Two ballot papers slide in front of the screen, one in each of Victor's hands. The number 1 vote on both (both for candidate A) is crossed out. One has a number 2 (B) and number 3 vote (D) on it. The other has no other votes.

If the ballot paper shows a number 2 vote for another candidate, that paper is added to the relevant pile.
If a ballot paper does not show a number 2 vote, it is no longer used.

The paper with no more votes on it is striked through. The word 'Removed' appears above it. The paper with the number 2 votes is labeled 'Redistributed'. Victor's hand then lowers the 'removed' paper from the frame.

We then fade back to the room. There are three remaining piles, and all three are taller than before. At the top of each pile is a coloured section showing where the redistributed votes have ended up.

The 50% marker on the wall is lower, and now reads '50% of remaining votes'.

Victor is reaching up on his tip-toes to add the last of the redistributed votes to candidate B's pile. The tallest pile from round 1 (candidate C) is now smaller than candidate B's pile, which is now the tallest. The lead has changed.

If a candidate has received more than half of the remaining votes, that candidate has won and the counting stops.

But - as in our example - if no candidate has received more than half of the remaining votes, then another round of counting begins.
Away you go, Victor!

Once more, Victor goes to lift the smallest pile (now Candidate D's pile). As this pile is taller than the last one he lifted, his knees knock and he strains to lift it. Puffing and panting with wobbly legs, he carries the pile out of frame.

Just like before, the candidate with the fewest votes is taken out of the contest, and the ballot papers from that pile are then redistributed or removed.

Like before, two ballot papers slide in front of the screen, one in each of Victor's hands. Both have their number 1 and number 2 votes crossed out (A&D). One paper has a number 3 vote for Candidate B. The other has no more votes on it.

The paper with no votes is again labeled 'removed', and the other paper is labeled 'redistributed'. Victor's hand then pulls the 'removed' slip out of frame.

Comment [CC7]: Use the language of the booklet – it has been through so much rigorous testing it is 'safer'

So something like: The candidate with the fewest number 1 votes
is removed from the contest – in this case
Candidate D.
o Each ballot paper on Candidate D's pile is looked
at again.
o If the ballot paper shows a number 2 vote for
another candidate, it is added to that candidate's
pile. For example, if a ballot paper showed a
number 1 vote for Candidate D and a number
2 vote for Candidate B, it would be moved to
Candidate B's pile.
o If the ballot paper does not show a number 2 vote,
it is no longer used.

This applies to the whole section

Comment [CC8]: We don't want to use this as it is a new term not used in the booklet and may not be clear to everyone

Comment [CC9]: Is it possible to show this happening rather than it just appears to have happened?

Comment [CC10]: Don't move the line – we don't want to suggest masses of ballot are taken out – keep it like the booklet

Comment [CC11]: Keep it the same as the booklet – so A takes a small lead

Comment [CC12]: Don't use this term – use 'moved'

We then fade back to the room again. There are two remaining piles, and both are taller than before. At the top of each pile is another coloured section showing where the redistributed votes have ended up.

Victor is now on a ladder, reaching to put the last of the redistributed votes on top of the Candidate B's pile, which has broken the 50% line on the wall (which has lowered again).

Comment [CC13]: Candidate A to win (we want the same winner in FPTP and AV)

We have a winner! One candidate now has half the remaining votes.

Victor pins a rosette on Candidate B's pile.

Of course, this is just one example. If more candidates are involved, this process can be repeated until one candidate has more than half the remaining votes.

He slides down his ladder like a pro, and walks off screen to the left.

Thank you Victor!

Back behind his desk, Victor nods. The two signs are illuminated behind him, and the front of his desk still reads 'I'm Done'.

Hopefully you now understand 'Alternative Vote'.
If you do, click 'First past the post to find out about the other voting system.
If you don't, click the 'Alternative Vote' sign to play this clip again.
And, if you're happy that you understand both systems, just click 'I'm done'.

Approx 1min 55secs (total: 3min 30 secs)

3. END

Cropping in closer to Victor behind his desk, we can no longer see the signs in the background. He wipes his brow and 'phews'.

So, now we've explained the voting systems, what happens when you go to vote on May 5th?

Victor produces the referendum ballot paper from his desk, and holds it forward so it fills the screen.

You'll receive a ballot paper with this question:

"At present, the UK uses the first past the post' system to elect MPs to the House of Commons. Should the 'alternative vote' system be used instead?"

Vote 'yes' if you think alternative vote should be used. Vote 'no' if you think first past the post should be used.

Victor removes the ballot paper and puts it back in his desk, smiling.

That's it! Thanks for your help Victor.

Cutting back to the wide view, the signs have been replaced with the words 'aboutmyvote.co.uk'

If you'd like to know more, visit aboutmyvote.co.uk. Thanks for watching.

The slot spotlight clicks off, leaving the words 'aboutmyvote.co.uk' visible on a black screen, as 'Polling stations open 7am-10pm' fades in beneath.

Victor's eyes are left blinking in the darkness - he 'humphs', and we hear his footsteps as he walks out of frame. A replay button appears, and the film finishes.

<u>Approx 30 secs (total: 4mins 5secs)</u>