

WELCOME TO
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The
Electoral
Commission

Welcome to your vote

Learning sequence

Suitable for S3 and senior phase

Linked to Curriculum for Excellence



electoralcommission.org.uk/learning

YOUR VOTE MATTERS

DON'T LOSE IT



Curriculum for Excellence links

Experiences and outcomes

Lesson	Health and wellbeing across learning	Literacy across learning	Social studies
1: Your vote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-09a / 4-09a 3-11a / 4-11a 3-19a / 4-19a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-02a / 4-02a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-18a / 4-18b
2: Our democracy - Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-09a / 4-09a 3-11a / 4-11a 3-19a / 4-19a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-02a / 4-02a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-18a / 4-18b
3: Creating change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-09a / 4-09a 3-11a / 4-11a 3-19a / 4-19a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-02a / 4-02a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4-18c
4: Campaigning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-09a / 4-09a 3-11a / 4-11a 3-19a / 4-19a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-02a / 4-02a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-17b 3-18a / 4-18b
5: Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-09a / 4-09a 3-11a / 4-11a 3-14a / 4-14a 3-19a / 4-19a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-02a / 4-02a 3-10a 3-26a / 4-26a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-18a / 4-18b
5: How to vote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-09a / 4-09a 3-11a / 4-11a 3-19a / 4-19a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-02a / 4-02a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-18a / 4-18b



Curriculum Links – Modern Studies

Lesson	Modern Studies National 5
1: Your vote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing and applying detailed skills, knowledge and understanding in political, social or international contexts
2: Our democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing and applying detailed skills, knowledge and understanding in political, social or international contexts
3: People power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing and applying detailed skills, knowledge and understanding in political, social or international contexts using a range of sources of information to support and oppose views
4: Campaigning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing and applying detailed skills, knowledge and understanding in political, social or international contexts giving detailed justifications for decisions
5: Campaign planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing and applying detailed skills, knowledge and understanding in political, social or international contexts giving detailed justifications for decisions
6: Democracy in action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing and applying detailed skills, knowledge and understanding in political, social or international contexts giving detailed support for valid conclusions demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the main democratic processes, institutions and organisations which make up political life in Scotland and/or the UK by giving factual descriptions and detailed explanations



Curriculum for Excellence links

Experiences and outcomes



Wider links

- Rights of the Child

Article 12 - Every child has the right to have a say in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.

Article 13 - Every child must be free to say what they think and to seek and

receive all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.

- Sustainable Development Goals

4 – Quality Education

16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Key vocabulary

- **Scottish Parliament**

The Scottish Parliament makes decisions about issues like education, housing and the NHS in Scotland

- **UK Parliament**

The UK Parliament makes decisions about issues like defence and foreign affair, which affect everyone in the UK – it is made up of the House of Commons and House of Lords

- **Member of Parliament (MP)**

Your representative in the UK Parliament

- **Region**

An area of Scotland which is represented by regional MSPs in the Scottish Parliament

- **Constituency**

A smaller area than a region which is represented by an MSP in the Scottish Parliament

and an MP in the UK Parliament

- **Democracy**

A system of government where people vote to elect the people who represent them

- **Poll**

An election

- **Polling booth**

A private screened area where you vote by marking your ballot paper

- **Polling place**

The building you go to cast your vote, most likely a school or community centre

- **Ballot box**

A secure box where all the ballot papers are held until they are counted

- **Ballot paper**

A piece of paper which lists the candidates or parties you can vote for



01.

Your vote

Pupils will use comprehension and analysis skills to identify and understand how politics affects their lives and which politicians represent them

Learning objective

Students will be able to identify issues controlled by the Scottish Parliament and the UK Parliament, and understand how their vote is counted.

Resources required

- [Your Vote film](#)
- Highlighters / coloured pens

Key vocabulary

- Scottish Parliament
- UK Parliament
- Member of Parliament (MP)
- Region
- Constituency
- Devolved

Time needed

50 minutes

Differentiation

Extension and challenge activities are suggested throughout.

If necessary, copy the key vocabulary and make available on each table or a display board.

Curriculum links

- Health and wellbeing across learning

3-09a / 4-09a, 3-11a / 4-11a, 3-19a / 4-19a

- Literacy across learning

3-02a / 4-02a

- Social studies

3-18a / 4-18b



01.

Your vote

▪ Ground rules

Use the PowerPoint presentation and set a few ground rules as a class.

▪ Starter

Gauge pupils' understanding of and attitudes towards politics using a 'washing line'. Pupils stand one side of the classroom if they agree strongly and the opposite side if they disagree strongly, or somewhere in the middle.

Read out the following statements and ask pupils why they have chosen their position along the spectrum.

- I am interested in politics
- Politics affects my life
- Everyone should vote

Alternatives for this activity could include 'thumbs up, thumbs down' or paired discussion.

▪ Everyday politics – group activity

In pairs or small groups, ask students to write out the timetable for their typical day. Using highlighters or coloured pens get them to mark or label any activities which are affected by politics.

Challenge: can pupils identify who is responsible for each area they have labelled? For example, the council, the Scottish Parliament or UK Parliament.

Everyday politics examples:

7am – get the bus to school

School bus services are the responsibility of the council

12.15pm – have a school dinner

Guidelines for healthy eating in schools are published by the Scottish Parliament

4pm – go to the park

Parks, leisure centres and libraries are managed by the council

Feedback as a class to identify the different areas of pupils' lives affected by politics. Play the video to support young people's learning.

▪ Who controls what?

We have provided a list of what is controlled by councils, Scottish Parliament and UK Parliament. Ask students to decide on the top three issues they are passionate about.

• Plenary quiz

To summarise the session ask students to participate in a quiz. Questions and answers are on the PowerPoint.

Remind pupils to register to vote at [gov.uk/register-to-vote](https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)



02.

Our democracy

Pupils will explore the history and future of democracy in Scotland

Learning objectives

- To be able to discuss how democracy works in your community
- To describe how democracy has evolved in Scotland
- To discuss potential changes to democracy in Scotland

Resources required

- PowerPoint presentation
- Our democracy handout

Key vocabulary

- Democracy
- Devolution

Time needed

50 minutes

Differentiation

Extension and challenge activities are suggested throughout.

Curriculum links

- Health and wellbeing across learning
3-09a / 4-09a, 3-11a / 4-11a, 3-19a / 4-19a
- Literacy across learning
3-02a / 4-02a
- Social studies
3-18a / 4-18b



02.

Our democracy

▪ Starter – classroom democracy

One side of the classroom represents 'yes' and the other 'no'. The class will cast their vote by standing on the side they believe in. Statements could include:

- you are an adult at 18
- young people should be able to vote at 16
- I plan to / have registered to vote
- I would like more of a say on what impacts me

Ask pupils to share their opinions.

Time needed

5-10 minutes

▪ Our democracy timeline

Use the following worksheets and ask students to match the event to the year. This will create a timeline of the history of democracy.

Time needed

20 minutes

Key vocabulary

- Democracy



02.

Our democracy

Cut out the events and put them in chronological order from earliest to most recent. We have provided the below on a PowerPoint presentation if you are unable to print.

The first country lowered the voting age to 16 years

Aboriginal people won the right to vote in Australian elections

The first ever recorded election

The voting age for Scottish elections is lowered to 16 years

First election in India after independence from British colonial rule

Voting age in the UK lowered from 21 to 18 years for UK Parliament elections

Some women allowed to vote in UK elections

The first recorded election in which Black South African citizens were able to vote

First national parliament to elect more female representatives than male

Scotland extended voting rights to all foreign nationals, including those with refugee status

The first women in the world allowed to vote, without any conditions

First Black MP elected in the UK



02.

Our democracy

Match the event to the correct year.

The first country lowered the the voting age to 16 years	754 BC
Aboriginal people won the right to vote in Australian elections	1832
The first ever recorded election	2008
The voting age for Scottish elections is lowered to 16 years	1893
First election in India after independence from British colonial rule	1918
Voting age in the UK lowered from 21 to 18 years for UK Parliament elections	1951 – 52
Some women allowed to vote in UK elections	1962
The first recorded election in which Black South African citizens were able to vote	1969
First national parliament to elect more female representatives than male	1984
Foreign nationals, including those with refugee status, are able to vote in Scottish Parliament elections for the first time	1994
The first women in the world allowed to vote, without any conditions	2021
First Black MP elected in the UK	2016



02.

Our democracy- answers

First ever recorded election	754 BC in Ancient Greece
First Black MP elected in the UK	1832 - John Stewart, Conservative MP for Lymington, 1832-1847
The first women in the world allowed to vote, without any conditions	1893 – both indigenous Maori and European settlers in New Zealand won the right to vote
Some women allowed to vote in UK elections	1918 (women were granted the same voting rights as men in 1928)
First election in India after independence from British colonial rule	1951 – 52
Aboriginal people won the right to vote in Australian elections	1962
The first country lowered the voting age to 16 years	1984 - Nicaragua
First election in India after independence from British colonial rule	1918
The first recorded election in which Black South African citizens were able to vote	1994 – the ANC were elected and Nelson Mandela became President.
First national parliament to elect more female representatives than male	2008 – in Rwanda
The voting age for Scottish elections is lowered to 16 years	2016
Foreign nationals, including those with refugee status, are able to vote in Scottish Parliament elections for the first time	2020



02.

Our democracy

Future change

Now we have explored the history of our democracy we are going to start thinking about the future.

Split pupils into five groups and assign a topic to each. Each group should start to think about what they would like the future of democracy to look like in Scotland? On the centre of a piece paper, each group should write down one of the following:

1. The ways that we vote

2. Who is able to vote

3. How often we vote

4. Who we vote for

5. Who makes decisions for us

Ask pupils to think about what they would change, and how they would change it. If needed propose the following questions:

- should everyone have the right to vote?
- who should have more or less power?
- how would you like to be able to vote?
- could we make the system more modern?

Once pupils have completed their topic, the paper should be moved to the next group to add their ideas. Continue this process.

Ask groups to share their thoughts and discuss.

Time needed

20-30 minutes

Resources needed

Paper / pens



03.

Creating change

Pupils will explore how they can create change by voting, but also through other methods including pressure groups

Learning intentions

- To describe other ways to influence decision making
- Explain why the methods used are important

Time needed

50 minutes

Differentiation

Extension and challenge activities are suggested throughout if needed.

Curriculum links

- Health and wellbeing across learning

3-09a / 4-09a, 3-11a / 4-11a, 3-19a / 4-19a

- Literacy across learning

3-02a / 4-02a

- Social studies

4-18c



03.

Creating change

Starter

“If I were First Minister I would...”

In pairs, ask pupils to reflect on the above question and to share their thoughts. Encourage them to share their ideas with the group. Explain that there are many ways that we can create change - by voting, but through other methods too.

Time needed

10 minutes

Pressure groups

Ask pupils if they can think of any other ways to create change in their communities. Suggestions could include pressure groups, volunteering, petitions and protests.

Use the presentation and example to explain more about pressure groups:

- this is a group that puts pressure on the government to make change
- they are able to work between elections
- they can work to ensure the government follows through on promises made during a campaign
- some will represent people from certain groups in society

Ask the pupils what made the campaign successful. The methods to discuss are listed on the PowerPoint.

Pressure group example - save your local library

- A city council announced that over 70 of their services would not be reopening, or would be adapted, including the library
- The local community formed a pressure group to convince the council to change its mind
- Through successful campaigning, they managed to keep the library open

You are encouraged to find a local example.

Time needed

15 minutes

Creating a pressure group

Pupils will create an outline for their own pressure group. They can use the issues that were discussed in the starter activity for inspiration.

Pupils should include the issues they are passionate about, the methods they would use and why, and whether this is a local or national issue / group.

Time needed

25 minutes



04.

Campaigning

Pupils will gather information and consider the key message for their own campaign to get young people registering to vote

Learning intentions

- Describe different methods of political campaigning which may take place before an election, and what influences them
- Identify barriers young people face in registering to vote

Resources required

- Four sheets of paper labelled 'mad', 'bad', 'sad' and 'glad' or individual whiteboards
- What influences? cards
- [The Electoral Commission's campaigning film](#)

Time needed

50 minutes

Differentiation

Extension and challenge activities are suggested throughout.

Remind pupils to register to vote at [gov.uk/register-to-vote](https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).



04. Campaigning

▪ Ground rules

Review the ground rules for discussions that we created in the first session. Remind pupils that they don't have to agree with each other, but they do have to be respectful of each other's opinions.

It might be useful to keep this list of ground rules on a working wall or somewhere visible in the room to refer back to throughout this unit.

▪ Starter

Place a volunteer pupil at the front of the room and provide them with four signs: 'mad', 'bad', 'sad' and 'glad'.

Share a range of different statements with the pupils. Ask them to hold up the sign that best describes how they feel about the statement and explain their response.

Statements might include:

- voting should be made compulsory

- young people are not interested in politics
- young people can vote at the age of 16
- the minimum age for voting in UK elections is 18
- politics is boring
- not everyone in the world has the right to vote

Give other pupils the chance to sit in the hot seat and respond – they may want to respond differently to some of the same statements. Encourage the rest of the class to pose statements about politics.

Alternatively, you could give the whole class the chance to respond using individual whiteboards or label the four corners of the room 'mad', 'bad', 'sad' and 'glad' and ask pupils to move to the corner that describes their response.



04. Campaigning

▪ What influences? group activity

In small groups, give pupils a set of What influences? cards.

It may be helpful to start with a class discussion about what influences decision making in our everyday lives. For instance, how do we choose what to watch on television or what we are going to do at the weekend?

In their groups, pupils should imagine that there is an election tomorrow and they have decided to vote. Ask them to pick the three main things that might influence which candidate or political party they vote for.

Come back together as a class and discuss why they picked particular influences.

Challenge: are there any other influences not listed on the cards that might affect their choice?

▪ Campaigning film

Have pupils seen examples of political parties campaigning? How do they try to persuade voters to vote for them?

[Watch the campaigning video.](#)

How would students fact check claims made by a political candidate?

Share this fact checking list and see whether the class' tips matched.

You can fact-check by:

- looking at where the information or article has come from. Have they got a motive for saying something a certain way? Are they a known source of news, or have you never heard of them before? Is there a reference or weblink provided? Is it a screenshot of messages? Could something true have been easily changed to appear a certain way?
- finding another trusted source which confirms the information. If a reliable news website is also sharing this information, it makes it much more likely that it is real
- asking for more information. If your friend has shared a screenshot of messages or an article, ask them where they found it and if they can send you any more information. Remember to be respectful. It's easy to miss fake news
- using a reliable, impartial and trusted fact-checking service. There are a number available for free online. Remember to do your own research on these sites too



04. Campaigning

- **Research**

Pupils are being asked to plan a campaign to encourage students over the age of 14 to register to vote.

The first step is for them to identify the possible barriers that might prevent young people from registering to vote. They can do this by interviewing their classmates. (This could also be extended as a homework task to enable pupils to gather more data.)

Remind pupils of the importance of asking open questions and, if necessary, generate research questions as a class. Examples might include:

- have you registered to vote?
Why / why not?
- do you intend to register to vote before the next election? Why / why not?
- what might stop you or your friends from registering to vote?



04.

Campaigning

▪ Campaign planning

Put the class into campaign teams. Once they have completed their research, ask the team to compare the responses and generate a list of barriers young people face in registering to vote. Did any of these barriers come up more than once?

Teams should choose the most significant barrier they want to challenge with their campaign and design a 'key message' - the idea they want people to take from their campaign.

They should then plan activities that they think will encourage young people aged 14 or over to register to vote.

Additional support: pupils can use the What influences? cards and look back at the film about political campaigning from the second lesson in this unit to help them generate ideas for their campaign.

Success criteria

- list of barriers
- key message
- campaign activities plan

▪ Plenary

Give each team 60 seconds to share their findings and pitch their campaign key messages.

The rest of the class may have the opportunity to provide positive and constructive feedback using whatever feedback framework they are familiar with.



04.

What influences? cards

The views of adults at home	What candidates say they are going to do for young people	Political party leaders	Who is the most popular	The views of my friends
How trustworthy I find a political candidate or political party	What I have seen on TV	My personal experience of political party or candidate	What I have read online and in newspapers	The election campaign
A candidate's former job	My job	Talking to a political party campaigner when they knock on my door	The political parties' policies or manifestos	Meeting a candidate
A candidate's age	My age	A candidate's educational background	My gender	Celebrities or influencers
Leaflets	Where a candidates lives	My background	A candidate's background	What a candidate looks like



05.

Campaign planning project

Pupils will work together in teams to produce campaign materials

Learning intentions

- Describe elements of a campaign
- Create a campaign to persuade young people to register to vote

Time needed

50 minutes

Differentiation

Extension and challenge activities are suggested throughout.

Resources required

- Campaign poster example worksheets
- Materials for making posters – sugar paper, felt pens
- Access to the internet
- [Campaigning video](#)



05.

Campaign planning project

The Electoral Commission challenge your students to run a campaign to get young people to register to vote.

Starter

Explain to the class that young people are the age group which are least likely to be registered to vote.

In 2022:

- 68% of 18-34 year olds in Scotland were registered to vote
- 92% of 65+ year olds were registered to vote

Ask the class how this makes them feel.

Campaign analysis

In pairs ask pupils to look at the examples of voter registration campaigns provided. They should aim to analyse how effective the poster is.

These prompt questions might be helpful:

- what colours have been used? Why?
- what images or symbols have been used? What message does this give the viewer?
- does this give the viewer?

- what does the text say? What message does this give the viewer?
- how does the text appear? What impression does this give the viewer?
- is the campaign poster effective? Why / why not?

Join pairs together to compare their posters and decide which poster is more effective.



05.

Campaign planning project

▪ Campaign planning – group activity

In their campaign teams, pupils should look back at the activities they planned and start work on producing any materials required. These could include campaign posters, a speech or a presentation for an assembly. They may also need to think about securing permission to put up a display in the school library.

Some possible roles for the team are outlined on the next page. Each team is likely to need a campaign manager and a designer, but the other roles are optional depending on their campaign plan, and each pupil might have multiple roles.

Remind pupils to look back at the key message they generated in their last lesson and to stay focused on the aim of their campaign: to encourage students aged 16 years and over to register to vote at [gov.uk/register-to-vote](https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)



05.

Campaign planning project



Campaign manager

Responsibilities include: leadership and making final decisions, ensuring that the planned activity goes ahead, contacting any senior stakeholders such as a councillor, MSP or MP.

Designer

Decides which colours, images and symbols will be most effective, produces materials, such as posters, flyers or display boards.

Researcher

Tests materials (poster, lines from a speech) to check they convey the key message effectively. Talks to pupils during or after campaign events to check whether they have decided to register to vote and collect feedback on the campaign.

Fixer

Secures the relevant permissions, e.g. for the use of display boards, to hold an information session in the library, for the group to deliver speeches in form time.

Speech writer

Writes speeches or prepares presentations which will be delivered to other pupils either by themselves or by the campaign manager. Might also write letters to stakeholders such as form tutors or prefects.

Media / social media manager

Writes an article for the school blog or newspaper, plans a takeover of the school Twitter account for a day, writes a letter to a local newspaper or other publication that is widely read by pupils to promote the campaign.



05.

Campaign planning



The Electoral Commission's 2020 campaign designed to encourage young people to register to vote.

05.

Campaign planning



The Electoral Commission ran a campaign across the UK to get everyone to register to vote. This campaign is called Got 5? It is designed to let everyone know that registering is quick and easy to do.



06.

How to vote

Pupils will present their campaigns, reflect on what makes a successful campaign and have the opportunity to register to vote

It might be helpful for this lesson to take place a number of weeks after the students have delivered their campaign in school, to give them a chance to discuss any feedback or successes.

Learning intentions

- Evaluate features of a successful campaign
- Reflect of effectiveness of campaigns

Resources required

- Materials to produce a presentation of each campaign if necessary (this could be set as a homework task ahead of the lesson)
- Voting by numbers statements worksheet
- [Quizzes on the Electoral Commission's website](#)
- Access to the internet to register to vote

Time needed

50 minutes

Differentiation

Extension and challenge activities are suggested throughout.

An alternative way to deliver the project is to ask the pupils to plan the campaigns and vote on them, to decide what campaign to bring forward and run as a class after the workshops.

Key vocabulary

- Poll
- Polling booth
- Polling place
- Ballot box
- Ballot paper



06.

How to vote

Starter

By show of hands ask pupils the following questions:

- who had already registered to vote before this term?
- who plans to register to vote now?
- who is not planning to register to vote?

Ask pupils to share their reasons (reminding them of the ground rules for respectful discussion if necessary).

Team presentations

Ask each team to present their campaign to the rest of the class. It would be useful for them to include:

- what was their key message?
- what materials did they use? (they could share posters or an extract from a letter or speech)
- what campaign activities did they deliver?
- what was really effective about their campaign?
- what didn't work or was more

difficult than they expected?

- did anything change from their campaign plan?
- did they receive any feedback about the campaign? Do they know of any students who have registered to vote as a result of their campaign?

Vote

As a class or in groups, discuss which campaigns were most effective. Why was this? Were there similar elements in the most successful campaigns?

As a class vote for the most successful campaign.



06.

How to vote

▪ Voting by numbers

Put the eight statements provided into the correct order to describe the voting process.

Watch the [How to Vote film](#) again if useful.

▪ Register to vote

Give pupils a chance to register to vote online at gov.uk/register tovote

- Photo ID is now required when voting in person at UK Parliament General elections. You don't need photo ID to vote in council or Scottish Parliament elections. [Find out more.](#)

Voting by numbers correct order

5. Register to vote
7. Receive your poll card
1. Head to your polling place
9. Present your photo ID at UK Parliament elections
2. Collect your ballot paper
4. Go to the polling booth
5. Mark your ballot paper
6. Put your ballot paper in the ballot box
2. Polls close

Key vocabulary

Poll

A vote

Polling booth

A private screened area where you mark your ballot paper

Polling place

The building you go to, most likely a school or community centre

Ballot box

A secure box where all the ballot papers are held until they are counted

Ballot paper

A slip which states the candidates or parties you can vote for



06.

Voting by numbers

Sort the statements into the correct order to describe the voting process

Ask pupils to look at the statements and number them in the order they will do them.

Share the correct answers with pupils.

Resources required

PowerPoint presentation

Time needed

10 minutes

Plenary

Ask pupils to practice their right to vote by selecting the campaign they think had the most impact. This can be a simple voting process like raising their hands.

Time needed

5 minutes

1. Head to your polling place	6. Put your ballot paper in the ballot box
2. Polls close	7. Receive your poll card
3. Mark your ballot paper	8. Go to the polling booth
4. Collect your ballot paper	9. Present your photo ID at UK Parliament General elections
5. Register to vote	

