



# Should first-past-the-post be scrapped?

## Lesson 1

**How can we become future political leaders?**

**Lesson 1:**  
**Should first-past-the-post be scrapped?**  
**Key Stage 4 / Year 11**

<p><b>Context</b></p>	<p>This lesson is part of a scheme of work that comprises 6 lessons for teaching Key Stage 4 Citizenship in line with the requirements of the Citizenship National Curriculum. The lesson is part of the ACT model Key Stage 4 curriculum which can be used and adapted to fit with your school’s provision.</p> <p>Each scheme of work has an enquiry question as the focus which is then organised into smaller questions that provide the learning focus for each lesson.</p>
<p><b>Overview</b></p>	<p>This lesson is designed to teach students about the UK’s electoral system for general elections i.e. first-past-the-post (FPTP). students will explore three other voting systems and decide whether or not they think FPTP is the best voting system. Students will have opportunities to think critically through completing various activities, culminating in a debate and a referendum style vote.</p>
<p><b>Citizenship Skills and Concepts</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creating and sustaining reasoned arguments, and reaching sustained conclusions</li> <li>● Understanding others’ points of view</li> <li>● Critical thinking</li> <li>● Oracy</li> <li>● Discussion and debate</li> <li>● Democracy</li> <li>● Governance</li> </ul>
<p><b>Essential Teaching Guidance</b></p>	<p>Read the Teacher resource to gain an understanding of the different voting systems, more information can be found on the Electoral Reform Society’s website. <a href="https://www.parliament.uk/site-information/glossary">https://www.parliament.uk/site-information/glossary</a></p> <p>It is important to have political impartiality when teaching political topics, details can be found in the Political impartiality in schools guidance.</p> <p>The Deliberative Classroom: Topical Debating Resources and</p>

	<p>Teacher Guidance   Association for Citizenship Teaching (<a href="https://teachingcitizenship.org.uk">teachingcitizenship.org.uk</a>) is a useful resource to help teachers hold debates in the classroom.</p>
<p><b>Learning Questions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What voting systems can be used in elections?</li> <li>• Should first past the post be scrapped?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources</b></p>	<p>PowerPoint, voting systems worksheet (differentiated worksheet available with gap fills and example answers), referendum ballot papers.</p>
<p><b>Assessment Opportunities</b></p>	<p><b>There are a range of assessment opportunities within this lesson that provide a number of to gain an understanding of the progress your class is making, these include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mind map</li> <li>• Worksheet</li> <li>• Q&amp;A</li> <li>• Written task</li> <li>• Debate</li> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Take away task</li> </ul> <p>The first mind map will allow you to gain an understanding of the students prior knowledge of voting and in addition will highlight any misconceptions students have which can be corrected quickly.</p> <p>In the discussion tasks there are a number of ways you can select students to take part including, random name generators, cold calling, think pair share etc. When taking part in the discussion you can scaffold the questions you ask according to the knowledge you have gained of the class ensuring that the comprehension and recall questions can be answered and the questions which require more detailed and supported views are targeted at students who would feel confident to do so in the first instance.</p> <p>As students fill out their worksheet you may want to check their knowledge by encouraging group feedback for the answers.</p>

<p><b>Do now / Starter /Entry Task</b></p> <p><i>(5 minutes)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students independently create a <b>mind map</b> with prior knowledge about voting, allow 2-3 minutes for this activity.</li> <li>• Randomly choose students to feedback to the class, students add new knowledge to their mind maps. Annotate students' contributions on the board, add any additional information of your own. To show prior knowledge vs. knowledge learnt, students should write in a different colour pen.</li> <li>• Explain what democracy is and introduce the concept of voting systems.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Task 1</b></p> <p><i>(30 minutes)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To <b>develop students' knowledge of voting systems</b>, lead on slides 4-20 (with students discussing questions/points and completing the worksheet throughout).</li> <li>• When students complete the worksheet on slides: 9, 12, 16 and 20, allow time for this to be completed independently or in small groups. Model FPTP to scaffold to the class before students work independently/in small groups. Circulate the room to check students' understanding.</li> <li>• Before moving onto the next voting system, pause to assess learning using Q&amp;A. Annotate feedback on the board, adding important additional information students may have missed (see teacher resource). students add new information in a different colour pen to show additional knowledge.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Task 2</b></p> <p><i>(10 minutes)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students <b>write a brief answer</b> to 'From the voting systems we have learnt about today, which do you think is the fairest? Why?' using the knowledge they have gained in Activity 1.</li> <li>• Sentence starters can be used to support students e.g. I believe the fairest voting system is...this is because...</li> <li>• Circulate the room to check students' understanding.</li> <li>• Randomly select students to read out their answers, in full sentences. You could use a random name generator here, lollipop sticks or cold calling.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Plenary / Reflection</b></p> <p><i>(15 minutes)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debate to discuss the lesson topic: Should first-past-the-post be scrapped?</li> <li>• You can do this by allowing students to choose a side i.e. yes or no, or divide students into sides, or allow points from students as they are.</li> <li>• Make a table on the board for yes and no, when a valid point is given, add a point to the relevant side.</li> <li>• You may wish to add a timer so students can see how long is left.</li> <li>• Allow for counterarguments to ensure the debate flows. You may need to direct students if they find rebutting points</li> </ul>

	<p>difficult/keep deviating from the point.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Provide quick verbal feedback when students have given particularly well structured and relevant points, and when points may need more substance.</li><li>● At the end of the allotted time, tally up the points - the team with the most points, wins!</li><li>● Explain what a referendum is.</li><li>● Referendum vote: using the referendum ballot papers, students vote on whether to scrap FPTP. If possible use a make-shift ballot box for students to put their papers in. Count the votes and announce the outcome.</li></ul>
<p><b>Takeaway Task</b></p>	<p>Research arguments for and against the voting age, in the UK, being reduced to 16. students' arguments should be balanced, with a minimum of five arguments for each side.</p>

## Teacher resource: Voting systems

	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
First-past-the-post (FPTP)	The candidate with the most votes wins a seat in the House of Commons; as a MP for a specific constituency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quick and simple system</li> <li>• Voters know who represent them</li> <li>• Usually results in a majority government; policies do not need to be compromised due to a coalition</li> <li>• MPs have a personal mandate to represent their constituency as they won the most votes</li> <li>• Constituents can contact their MP directly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Votes for losing candidates are wasted</li> <li>• Some people do not bother to vote as they think their vote will be wasted, some may vote tactically because of this</li> <li>• The number of votes does not proportionally reflect the number of seats in House of Commons</li> <li>• Smaller parties are under-represented e.g. in 2019 the Green party won 2.7% of the vote share but only one MP was elected</li> <li>• 'Safe seats' create complacency in some constituencies; the likely candidate to be elected does not need to campaign for votes</li> </ul>
Proportional representation (PR) closed party list	The electorate vote for a party rather than an individual candidate. The seats allocated in the House of Commons would be proportionate to the vote share a party receives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of seats a party has represents the vote share</li> <li>• Smaller parties are represented</li> <li>• Votes are not wasted</li> <li>• Parties are more likely to work in coalition</li> <li>• May encourage more political engagement from voters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extremist parties are more likely to have representation</li> <li>• Creating laws, making decisions, etc. will be more complex and time consuming due to parties being in coalition</li> <li>• Communities may feel they do not have a MP directly representing them</li> </ul>

## Teacher resource: Voting systems

Single transferable vote (SVT)

Supplementary voting (SV)

Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Voters rank candidates in order of preference. Votes from candidates who meet the quota are transferred to voters' second choice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 'Safe seats' are reduced, parties need to campaign everywhere not just in marginal seats</li> <li>● Minimal wasted votes</li> <li>● Voters are very likely to have some representation they have voted for</li> <li>● MPs are more likely to share a broader range of voters' views</li> <li>● Reduces tactical voting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Counting votes takes longer than other voting systems</li> <li>● Some constituencies could become very big in sparsely population areas</li> <li>● Not suitable for a general election due its complexities</li> <li>● More prone to 'donkey voting;' voters rank candidates in the order they appear on the ballot paper</li> <li>● Voters are likely only to come into contact with candidates during election time</li> </ul>
<p>Voters can choose two candidates. If a candidate receives over 50% of the votes, they win. If there is no outright winner, the top two candidates run-off. The run-off candidate with the most votes is declared the winner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Candidates need be more strategic with campaigning as both the first and second votes are important</li> <li>● Increased democracy as the voter has a first and second choice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased chance of the main parties being elected</li> <li>● Wasted votes, as they are not transferred</li> <li>● High likelihood of tactical voting</li> <li>● The chosen candidate may not have 50% of the total vote share</li> </ul>

# Voting systems

Write a brief description of each voting system, and explain their advantages and disadvantages.

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Proportional representation (PR) closed party list			
Single transferable vote (SVT)			
Supplementary voting (SV)			



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Proportional representation (PR) closed party list	The electorate vote for a _____ rather than an _____ candidate. The seats allocated in the House of Commons would be _____ to the vote share a party receives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of seats a party has represents the vote share</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extremist parties are more likely to have representation</li> </ul>

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Single transferable vote (SVT)	<p>Voters _____ candidates in _____ of preference. Votes from candidates who meet the quota are transferred to voters' second choice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voters are very likely to have some representation they have voted for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counting votes takes longer than other voting systems</li> </ul>
Supplementary voting (SV)	<p>Voters can choose _____ candidates. If a candidate receives over 50% of the votes, they win. If there is no outright winner, the top two candidates _____.. The run-off candidate with the most votes is declared the winner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased democracy as the voter has a first and second choice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased chance of the main parties being elected</li> </ul>

### Word bank

Commons	rank	proportionate	order
run-off	votes	individual	
candidate	two	party	

### Should first-past-the-post be scrapped?

Vote only once putting a  **X**  in the box of your choice.

Yes

No

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