



**Are elections the best way to decide  
who runs the country?**  
Key Stage 3 scheme of work

**Key question: Are elections the best way to decide who runs the country?**

**National curriculum links:** the operation of Parliament, including voting and elections; understanding of government, democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizens; use and apply knowledge and understanding while debating, evaluating viewpoints and presenting reasoned arguments

Lessons	<p><b>1. Why are elections important?</b></p>	<p><b>2. Which system of voting is best?</b></p>	<p><b>3. Is it important that elections are free and fair?</b></p>	<p><b>4. How do we ensure free and fair elections in the UK?</b></p>	<p><b>5. Why do so many adults in the UK not vote?</b></p>	<p><b>6. Should we change the electoral system in the UK?</b></p>
Overview	<p>As a foundation for this scheme of work, students develop understanding of elections as part of democratic governance. They revisit and reinforce learning about democracy. They explore voting and how governments are formed, before focusing on elections locally and nationally. They reflect on why elections are important.</p>	<p>Students learn about voting systems – first past the post, single transferable vote, and proportional representation. To apply learning, they take part in a simulated vote count using each system. They then write a short report advising the PM on whether we should keep the first past the post system and take part in a class discussion and vote.</p>	<p>Students learn what it means for an election to be free and fair. They explore case studies of less democratic countries, which do not have a free and fair system. They look at the insurrection at the Capitol in the US as a related news story. They draw together what they have learnt by revisiting the importance of democracy.</p>	<p>Students explore what organisations are doing to strengthen democracy in the UK by ensuring free and fair elections. They create fact files based on case studies, and discuss and vote on which organisation they feel is most effective in strengthening democracy. They write and self-assess an article about the Electoral Commission's work.</p>	<p>Students explore why so many adults in the UK don't vote in elections. They investigate data around voter turnout, consider issues related to voter apathy, and learn about some of the barriers to adults voting, including the contentious issue of votes for prisoners. In a speech writing task, they develop a logical argument and practise oracy skills.</p>	<p>Students debate about whether we should change the electoral system critically engaging with some of the wider issues related to voting and democracy considered in earlier lessons. The lesson finishes by considering the overarching key question: 'Are elections the best way to decide who runs the country?'</p>
Learning questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What part does voting play in a democracy?</li> <li>2. How is a government formed in the UK?</li> <li>3. How does voting help us elect representatives nationally and locally?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What voting systems are used to elect candidates in democracies?</li> <li>2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of different voting systems?</li> <li>3. Should we keep the first past the post voting system in the UK?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is a free and fair election?</li> <li>2. Are elections free and fair in other countries?</li> <li>3. Is democracy the best form of government?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does the Electoral Commission help to ensure free and fair elections in the UK?</li> <li>2. What is the pressure group Make Votes Matter trying to do to make the voting system fairer in the UK?</li> <li>3. How does ensuring free and fair elections help to protect democracy?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is voter apathy and how does it affect elections?</li> <li>2. Why are some adults in the UK not able to vote?</li> <li>3. Should prisoners have the right to vote?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Could we improve the electoral system in the UK?</li> <li>2. How can I construct a convincing argument?</li> <li>3. Are elections the best way to decide who runs the country?</li> </ol>
Concepts and skills	<p>Concepts: democracy, rights, responsibilities Skills: interpreting data, analysis, evaluation</p>	<p>Concepts: democracy, legislation, fairness Skills: interpreting data, analysis, evaluation</p>	<p>Concepts: democracy, fairness, legislation Skills: discussion, analysis, evaluation</p>	<p>Concepts: democracy, freedom, rights Skills: discussion, analysis, evaluation</p>	<p>Concepts: democracy, freedom, rights Skills: discussion, analysis, evaluation, oracy</p>	<p>Concepts: democracy, freedom, rights, change Skills: discussion, analysis, evaluation, representing views to others, debate, oracy</p>
Activities	<p>Video on voting as part of democracy Discussion of a quotation Voting on statements Discussing photographs Video on general elections Worksheet on forming a government</p>	<p>Analysing photographs Information cards about different systems of voting Vote counting simulation Writing a short report Discussion and vote on voting</p>	<p>Election word game Video and worksheet on free and fair elections Short talks on case studies Completing an onion diagram Class discussion of a quotation</p>	<p>Free and fair election recall Completing fact files Teaching a partner Discussion and debate Writing a short article Self-assessment</p>	<p>Questions to match answers Analysing data on voter turnout Sort cards about voter apathy Guided reading and questions Writing a short speech</p>	<p>Multiple choice quiz Assessment task – making a leaflet, writing an essay or creating a detailed mind map Peer assessment Discussion</p>
Resources	<p>Slide presentation Worksheet: Picture analysis Worksheet: Forming a government Keyword bank for the lesson Glossaries of key terms</p>	<p>Slide presentation Worksheet: Voting systems Resources: Voting slips and information cards Glossary of key terms</p>	<p>Slide presentation Worksheet: election word game Worksheet: free and fair elections Case studies: elections worldwide Worksheet: photo analysis Glossary of key terms</p>	<p>Slide presentation Worksheet: fact files Information sheets: the Electoral Commission and Make Votes Matter Glossary of key terms</p>	<p>Slide presentation Worksheet: voter turnout Sorting cards Worksheet: which adults can't vote? Glossary of key terms</p>	<p>Slide presentation Worksheet: should we change the electoral system in the UK? Glossary of key terms</p>
Differentiation	<p>Differentiated worksheets Questioning techniques Use of keyword bank Peer support</p>	<p>Scaffolding techniques Peer support Questioning techniques Different levels of support</p>	<p>Focusing on different case studies Peer support Prompt questions for writing Questioning techniques Different levels of support &amp;</p>	<p>Paired discussion Success criteria Prompt questions for response sheet Questioning techniques Different levels of support &amp;</p>	<p>Scaffolded support for guided reading Speech writing success criteria Questioning techniques Different levels of support &amp;</p>	<p>Groupings for the debate Assigning statements Questioning techniques Different levels of support &amp; challenge</p>
Assessment Opportunities	<p>Verbal responses to questioning Whole-class responses through whiteboard use Individual response to a quotation</p>	<p>Formative assessment through live marking and feedback Vote counting Self-assessment checklist</p>	<p>Formative assessment through live marking and feedback Discussion of case studies Individual feedback opportunities</p>	<p>Recap of key information Success criteria for detailed assessment of writing</p>	<p>Speech writing task with success criteria, for formative assessment of peer/self-assessment Live marking opportunities</p>	<p>Recall practice challenge grid Verbal feedback on debate Live marking of planning sheets Questioning when chairing debate</p>
Takeaway task	<p>Students research election results for their area – in both local and general elections. They consider what difference the elections made.</p>	<p>Students carry out research on the Electoral Reform website.</p>	<p>Students choose one of the following issues – freedom of the press, voter engagement and trade unions. They compare this issue in the UK and another country.</p>	<p>Students carry out independent research into a pressure group – either the Prison Reform Trust or Full Fact.</p>	<p>Students research barriers to voting for people with disabilities on the Electoral Commission website. They list potential barriers and suggest possible solutions.</p>	

## Key Stage 3 (Year 9) Citizenship scheme of work

# Are elections the best way to decide who runs the country?

### About this scheme of work

This scheme of work focuses on voting and elections.

Students develop an understanding of elections in the context of democracy. They learn about local and national elections in the UK and how a government is formed. They explore different voting systems and consider whether the UK should keep the first past the post system. They then focus on the importance of elections being free and fair, investigating case studies from less democratic countries and finding out how we ensure elections are free and fair in the UK. They explore some of the reasons why so many adults in the UK don't vote, including voter apathy and barriers to voting. Finally, they bring together their learning across the scheme in a debate about the future of the electoral system in the UK.

### National curriculum links

The operation of Parliament, including voting and elections; understanding of government, democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizens; use and apply knowledge and understanding while debating, evaluating viewpoints and presenting reasoned arguments

### Building progression

This scheme of work is part of ACT's model core curriculum for Citizenship in secondary schools, which has been designed to develop and deepen students' knowledge, skills and understanding throughout Key Stages 3 and 4. Other units linked to this scheme of work include:

**Year 10:** Should the UK be called a democracy?

**Year 11:** How can we become future political leaders?

### Citizenship skills

Interpreting data, analysis, evaluation, discussion, oracy, debate, representing views to others

### Citizenship concepts

Democracy, rights, responsibilities, legislation, fairness, freedom, change

## What do the six lessons cover?

### Lesson 1: Why are elections important?

1. What part does voting play in a democracy?
2. How is a government formed in the UK?
3. How does voting help us elect representatives nationally and locally?

### Lesson 2: Which system of voting is best?

1. What voting systems are used to elect candidates in democracies?
2. What are the advantages & disadvantages of different voting systems?
3. Should we keep the first past the post voting system in the UK?

### Lesson 3: Is it important that elections are free and fair?

1. What is a free and fair election?
2. Are elections free and fair in other countries?
3. Is democracy the best form of government?

### Lesson 4: How do we ensure free and fair elections in the UK?

1. How does the Electoral Commission help to ensure free and fair elections?
2. What is Make Votes Matter trying to do to make the election system fairer?
3. How does ensuring elections are free and fair protect democracy?

### Lesson 5: Why do so many adults in the UK not vote?

1. What is voter apathy and how does it affect elections?
2. Why are some adults in the UK not able to vote?
3. Should prisoners have the right to vote?

### Lesson 6: Should we change our electoral system in the UK?

1. Could we improve the electoral system in the UK?
2. How can I construct a convincing argument?
3. Are elections the best way to decide who runs the country?

<b>ballot</b>	A system of voting secretly and in writing.
<b>ballot box</b>	A sealed box into which voters put ballot papers.
<b>ballot paper</b>	A slip of paper used to cast a vote.
<b>campaigning</b>	Actions or events organised by an individual or a group of people to achieve an aim.
<b>candidate</b>	A person who is standing for election.
<b>constituency</b>	A geographical area represented by an MP.
<b>councillor</b>	Oversees the work of local councils.
<b>debate</b>	A formal discussion on a particular matter, in which different views are put forward. A debate often ends with a vote.
<b>democracy</b>	A system of government where citizens are able to vote in regular and fair elections for representatives, who then make laws and decisions on their behalf.
<b>dictatorship</b>	An autocratic form of government in which a leader, or group of leaders, hold power with no or few limitations.
<b>election</b>	The act of voting for a representative. This is usually done by marking a ballot paper, which is then counted.
<b>Electoral Commission</b>	The independent body that oversees elections and regulates political finance in the UK.
<b>electorate</b>	People who are eligible to vote.
<b>evaluation</b>	Judging or determining the significance, worth, or quality of someone or something.

<b>first-past-the-post</b>	The voting system used in the UK to elect representatives, whereby the candidate with the most votes in a constituency wins.
<b>evaluation</b>	Judging or determining the significance, worth or quality of someone or something.
<b>general election</b>	When the citizens of a country vote to elect a new government. A general election in the UK usually happens once every five years.
<b>the Government</b>	The group of people who have been elected to run the UK. The Government is led by the Prime Minister.
<b>House of Commons</b>	An elected body currently consisting of 650 members of Parliament. It is the lower house of Parliament and meets in the Palace of Westminster.
<b>House of Lords</b>	The upper house of Parliament, which meets in the Palace of Westminster. It comprises of life peers and hereditary peers, who scrutinise the bills approved by the House of Commons.
<b>legislation</b>	A law or set of laws that have been passed by Parliament.
<b>legislature</b>	The law-making body of the state, i.e. Parliament.
<b>local election</b>	An election in which people in a geographical area vote for people to become local councillors.
<b>local government</b>	A system of government that operates at a local level, providing services to its community.
<b>monarchy</b>	A form of government in which a king or queen reigns as the head of state.
<b>MPs</b>	Members of Parliament elected to represent a constituency.
<b>non-governmental organisation (NGO)</b>	An organisation that tries to achieve social or political aims but is not controlled by a government.

<b>Parliament</b>	Parliament represents citizens' interests, makes laws, and oversees the Government. It is made up of the House of Commons and the House of Lords.
<b>political party</b>	An organisation that co-ordinates candidates to stand in elections. People who belong to a political party tend to share similar ideas about politics.
<b>pressure group</b>	A group that puts pressure on the government, or those in power, to do something or change something.
<b>Prime Minister (PM)</b>	The head of government.
<b>proportional representation</b>	A voting system in which political parties gain seats in proportion to the number of votes cast for them.
<b>representative</b>	A person chosen or appointed to act or speak on behalf of others.
<b>responsibility</b>	A duty that we are expected to do as a citizen of a country.
<b>right</b>	Something that we are entitled to by law.
<b>secret ballot</b>	An anonymous form of voting.
<b>single transferable vote</b>	A voting system in which a person ranks candidates in order of preference and their vote can be transferred from their first choice to a second or further candidate.
<b>voter apathy</b>	Lack of interest among voters in a democracy, resulting in a lot of people who have the right to vote not exercising it.
<b>voter turnout</b>	The percentage of eligible voters who cast a vote in an election.
<b>vote</b>	A formal choice between two or more candidates or courses of action. In an election, voting is by ballot.

## UK (United Kingdom)

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) is an island country that sits north-west of mainland Europe. It is made up of mainland Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland) and the northern part of the island of Ireland (Northern Ireland). It has numerous smaller islands.