

LESSON PLAN: OPTION 2

GETTING YOUR VOICE HEARD BEYOND THE BALLOT BOX

MATERIALS PROVIDED

- Slide deck for 1 hour session
- Easy access slide deck for 1 hour session

MATERIALS NEEDED

No additional materials required

HOW THIS SESSION CAN FIT INTO YOUR WHOLE-SCHOOL APPROACH:

- Forming part of your pastoral provision
- Forming part of your PSHE provision
- Promoting the British value of democracy through SMSC development
- Forming part of non-fiction writing for English Language
- Forming part of various curriculum subjects e.g. after learning about climate change in Science, this lesson could be used to write to an MP about climate change, while also learning about democratic and civic rights.

LESSON PLAN:

Introduction (5 mins)

SLIDE 1

Title and welcome

- Welcome students and introduce the topic of political literacy. Contextualise the session in terms of the election landscape i.e. is this being delivered after an election? When will your students be of an age eligible to vote?

SLIDE 2

Session aims

- Go through the session aims and learning questions you will explore.

Why is it important to know your civic and democratic rights? (10 mins)

SLIDE 3

Voting rights milestones

- Present the image highlighting the significance of different years in terms of rights to vote.
 - **Discussion opportunity:** Have students discuss in small groups which rights/dates surprised them.
 - **Another discussion opportunity is on the next page...**

LESSON PLAN CONTINUED:

SLIDE 3

Voting rights milestones (continued...)

- **Discussion opportunity:** Discuss with students what they know about how those rights were gained. This is an opportunity for students to link their learning from History.

SLIDE 4

Mind Map

- Display the mind map showing reasons people participate in democracy and civic life.
 - **Discussion opportunity:** Have students discuss their own reasons to the mind map.
 - **Discussion opportunity:** Ask for volunteers to share their reasons for why participation matters.

SLIDE 5

Table of Differences

- Explain the differences between democratic and civic rights using the table.

SLIDE 6

Civic Rights

- Explain civic rights and how they empower citizens.

SLIDE 7

Democratic Rights

- Highlight examples of democratic rights and their importance. Please note that the democratic rights featured in this are in the order that your students will be able to access those democratic rights as they get older. Note on participating in citizen's assemblies: it is important to highlight that you do not need to be eligible to vote to participate in all citizen's assemblies. It depends on the individual approach each organiser takes (e.g. local authority) and the political mandate they are seeking, in other words some will recruit from electoral roll only, others will go more widely and get a representative sample.
 - **Discussion opportunity:** Discuss which democratic and civic rights students have already started participating in.

LESSON PLAN CONTINUED:

How can you have your voice heard in the voting system? (5 mins)

SLIDE 8

Who you vote for

- Present the three different structures that Londoners vote in. This is also an opportunity to discuss previous elections. For example, “in May 2024, Londoners voted for the Mayor of London and London Assembly members. In July 2024, Londoners voted in the General Election”.
 - **Stretch opportunity:** Discuss the pros and cons of devolution and how centralised decision-making can be helpful and not helpful in different scenarios.

SLIDE 9

Voting eligibility

- For further definitions of [eligible EU citizens](#) and [eligible Commonwealth citizens](#) please click on the Electoral Commission links provided.

SLIDE 10

Voting basics

- Present the 3 key points about voting. Highlight that student IDs and a young person’s Oyster card are not accepted forms of photo Voter ID.

What issues are important to you and who is the appropriate representative to address this with? (30 mins)

SLIDE 11

What issues are important

- Present some of the issues people care about, highlighting that there are many more issues that people are passionate about.
 - **Discussion opportunity:** Discuss with students which issues are important to them. Begin with issues in the local area, at a London-wide level and at a national level. Ask students to select one issue that is the most important to them.

SLIDE 12

Why engage with the GLA

- Explain who the GLA is and the two parts it is made up of. This is a good opportunity to explain the structure of GLA including the roles and responsibilities of the Mayor of London, as well as the London Assembly.

SLIDE 13

Why engage with MPs

- Explain what an MP is and why you should engage with them. This would be a good opportunity to explain who the local MP is, if you are unsure, you have a link on the next slide to check who they are.

LESSON PLAN CONTINUED:

SLIDE 14

Writing to your representative

- Students can do this individually, in pairs or in small groups. Students can begin drafting their letter, while the teacher checks in with each group to help them find who they would address this to, using the WriteToThem link.

How can you continue to have your voice heard by your representatives beyond an election? (5 mins)

SLIDE 15

Other forms of engagement

- Present the different forms of engagement. Highlight that you do not need to be eligible to vote in order to do anything on this slide.
 - **Discussion opportunity:** Discuss with student's which engagement channels they are most looking forward to.

Conclusion and plenary (5 mins)

SLIDE 16

Conclusion

- As a plenary, ask students to discuss what they learnt today that they didn't know previously. Ask the students to feedback to the class. Wrap up the session by encouraging students to get their voices heard and emphasise that they are at the beginning of their relationship with democracy and civic life, but this is something that continues for the rest of their lives. It is in their hands to shape the future of London!

NOTES:

- The lesson plan is adaptable to different age groups but is targeted at KS4 and KS5. You may need to adjust the complexity of language and examples accordingly for younger age groups.

FAQS

These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are designed to support practitioners to empower young people with their civic and democratic rights. For a comprehensive list of FAQs, head to:

<https://www.registertovote.london/resources/english-faqs>

How did people get civic and democratic rights in the first place?

The expansion of voting rights has often been the result of long and hard-fought campaigns and movements by ordinary people. For example, the Suffragettes fought for decades to win women the right to vote. Understanding this history helps us appreciate the importance of these rights and why it's crucial to use them in our democracy.

Where can I start or sign official petitions?

A petition is a text with a group of signatures from individuals requesting the UK Government or another authority to act on a specific issue. It's a way for individuals and groups to raise concerns, demand changes in law or policy, or call for specific interventions. Official petitions appear on the Parliament's website at petition.parliament.uk. To initiate a petition on the UK Government and Parliament website, you must be a British citizen or a UK resident. Once you have created your petition and secured five initial supporters, it will undergo a review process and be published if it meets established standards. You can only sign a petition once.

Upon reaching 10,000 signatures, the government will issue a response. At 100,000 signatures, the petition may be considered for parliamentary debate. Most petitions that achieve this milestone are debated unless the issue has been addressed recently.

How can I find out about volunteering opportunities in my area?

There are many volunteering opportunities in London. This website <https://simplyvolunteerlondon.uk/> can help you find an opportunity that you are interested in. There are also a number of Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) across London, organisations that support local voluntary and community opportunities. You can also find info about volunteering opportunities on the London City Hall website at www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/volunteering.

How can we find out who our representatives are to write to them?

You have many representatives: your local councillor, Member of Parliament (MP), Mayor of London and London Assembly members. You can write to them, or even meet them, even if you are not eligible to vote. To find out the details of your representatives, head to <https://www.writetothem.com/>. You can contact London City Hall and the Mayor of London at www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-mayor-does/contact-city-hall-or-mayor

What is the difference between the Greater London Authority and the Mayor of London?

The Greater London Authority (GLA) is the regional authority for London and is made up of the Mayor, who sets strategic priorities for London in areas like transport and housing, and the London Assembly, made of 25 members, that holds the Mayor accountable and also develops its own policies. You can find more at www.london.gov.uk

FAQS

Who can register and vote in London?

You can register to vote if you are resident (usually live) in London and are aged 16 or over (but you will not be able to vote until you are 18). Currently, British, Irish, qualifying Commonwealth, qualifying EU citizens and EU citizens with retained voting rights residing in London can register and vote. You can check your eligibility at

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/which-elections-can-i-vote>

How do I register to vote?

To register to vote you can head to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote and fill in the online form. It only takes a few minutes.

Do you need your National Insurance (NI) number to register to vote?

When you register to vote online, you are asked for your National Insurance (NI) number. Your NI number is used in the registration process as a unique identifier, the easiest and quickest way to confirm who you are. But don't worry if you don't know or don't have an NI number – just leave your contact details during the online registration process, and your local council electoral services will get in touch.

Where can I find more information and support on voting?

Link to information on candidates in your area:

<https://whocanivotefor.co.uk/>

Link to the Greater London Authority's Democracy Hub where you can find more political literacy resources, including FAQs in 15 community languages:

<https://www.registertovote.london/>

For tailored support on your democratic rights, simply text the number for the Greater London Authority's WhatsApp Chatbot: +44 7908 820136