

LESSON PLAN: OPTION 1

WHAT IS VOTING AND HOW CAN YOU TAKE PART? (ACCESSIBLE)

MATERIALS PROVIDED

- Accessible slide deck for 1 hour session

MATERIALS NEEDED

No additional materials needed

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

LESSON PLAN:

Introduction (5 mins)

SLIDE 1

Title and welcome

- Welcome students and introduce the topic of rights - discuss some rights that students have as they get older. Explain that we will look at some specific rights about how we improve our community. Contextualise the session in terms of the election landscape i.e. is this being delivered after an election? When will your students be old enough to register to vote, and to vote?

SLIDE 2

Session aims

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

What is civic and democratic participation? (10 mins)

SLIDE 3

Setting up the discussion

- Explain that we will be looking at some different activities together and to put their hands up if they have taken part in this or if they know someone who has.
 - **Discussion opportunity:** When students put their hands up you can prompt a longer discussion and share experiences of these rights.

LESSON PLAN CONTINUED:

SLIDE 4

Civic participation

- Explore the different civic participation activities and clarify any gaps in knowledge.

SLIDE 5

Democratic participation

- Explore the different democratic participation activities and clarify any gaps in knowledge.

SLIDE 6

Why people engage in civic and democratic participation

- Elicit some responses from the students first, encouraging them to recall the different rights they have explored. Afterwards, show them some of the reasons people do these activities.

Who can vote and who do you vote for? (10 mins)

SLIDE 7

Voting introduction

- Use this slide to prompt discussions about any recent elections that might have happened. Use the images to discuss what happens on voting day.

SLIDE 8

Voting eligibility

- Show which Londoners can vote in elections. You may want to explain the word 'eligible' to them.
 - **Discussion opportunity:** allow students an opportunity to ask about their eligibility. This will set them up for registration later, at school or home. Remind students that there are other ways to engage in their civic and democratic rights (slides 4 and 5).

SLIDE 9

Potential future changes to voting age

- Show the milestones graphic and ask students to discuss which activities they can already do at their age.
- Explain that there are discussions about a change in the law that would mean young people could register to vote from 14 years old and vote from 16.

LESSON PLAN CONTINUED:

How does voting work? (20 mins)

SLIDE 10 How does voting work?

- Explain that there are different ways of voting and that we will explore these in more detail. You can elicit knowledge from students that they might already have on this topic.

SLIDE 11 Registering to vote

- Explain the process of registering to vote, that it is completed on the gov.uk website and usually doesn't take long.

SLIDE 12 Three ways to vote

- Explain the three different ways to vote: in person, by post, and by proxy.

SLIDE 13 Photo Voter ID

- Discuss different forms of ID. Highlight that student IDs and a young person's Oyster card are not accepted forms of photo Voter ID.

SLIDE 14 Voter Authority Certificate

- Explain what a Voter Authority Certificate is and why someone might apply for one. Explain that this is not a form of ID that is accepted in other places, this is only for voting.

How can you continue to get your voice heard by your representatives? (15 mins)

SLIDE 15 How can you engage with your representatives beyond elections?

- Discuss the different ways you can engage with your representatives. There might be discussions about other ways of engaging, for example through social media.
 - **Discussion opportunity:** Discuss the way students would prefer to have their voice heard.

SLIDE 16 Further information

- Signpost to the websites provided. Please note these are linked so you can explore them as a class if you have time.

LESSON PLAN CONTINUED:

SLIDES 17-23 Democracy mini quiz

- This can be completed as a class or in groups! The answers provide follow-up information. Use this quiz to explore some of the learnings from the session and answer any further questions students might have.

Challenge, conclusion and plenary (15 mins)

SLIDE 24 Challenge

- Take a show of hands for students who pledge to do each activity on the screen.

SLIDES 25-26 Conclusion

- Remind students of the GLA Democracy Hub, WhatsApp Channel, and Chatbot.
- As a plenary, ask students to discuss what they learnt today that they didn't know previously. Ask the students to feed back 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:

- This lesson plan is an accessible version that can be adapted to different contexts such as for EAL and SEND learners. You may need to adjust the complexity of language and examples accordingly for the needs of your learners.
- Consider the use of role play to bring voting to life! You can use this resource as part of wider work with role play exercises where students create a polling station in the classroom: this can include having one student checking photo Voter ID, one student giving ballot papers, a designated area for voting privately, etc. Students could vote for candidates in the classroom, or you could create a class referendum on an issue that matters to them.
- You can adapt the materials for the following political contexts:
 - Before an election:
 - At the beginning of the session, contextualise it in terms of the upcoming election, explain key dates for the election.
 - On Slide 8 signpost which elections are coming up.
 - After an election:
 - At the beginning of the session, contextualise it in terms of the recent election, explain what people voted for.
 - On Slide 8 signpost which elections have just taken place.
 - No election imminent:
 - At the beginning of the session, contextualise it in terms of democratic and civic rights being a constant of our lives, it is not election-specific.
 - On Slide 6 emphasise the importance of being registered to vote and how this also has benefits beyond just voting (it can improve your credit score and allows you to be selected for jury service).

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>

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.

I do not have a fixed address. Can I register to vote?

Yes, you can. Many people do not have a fixed or permanent address, and some might be homeless. You can still register to vote at a place where you either have the most local connection or spend most of your time, by making a declaration of local connection. There is a specific form for registering in this case - you can find it at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-to-vote-if-you-havent-got-a-fixed-or-permanent-address>

Once I register to vote, am I then registered for life?

No, you must re-register to vote if you ever change your address, your legal name or your nationality. Dual nationals should re-register when they get their British citizenship because it carries with it full voting rights.

What do I need to vote?

First, you need to be registered to vote, you can do this at gov.uk/register-to-vote. You can choose to vote in person, by proxy or by post. When you register to vote, you will automatically be registered to vote in person. When voting in person, you will receive a polling card before the day of the election, letting you know where you can cast your vote. On the day of the election, you will need to bring an accepted form of Voter ID, find the full list here:

<https://www.gov.uk/how-to-vote/photo-id-youll-need>. If you are interested in voting by proxy, where somebody casts your vote on your behalf, you can apply and learn more here: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote>. If you are interested in voting by post, where you cast your ballot in the post, you can apply and learn more here: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote>.

FAQS

What are the benefits of registering to vote and getting a photo ID to vote?

Registering to vote enables you to exercise your fundamental democratic rights, which were hard won and are not available to all Londoners. Being registered to vote also improves your credit score because potential lenders are able to refer to the electoral register to verify your name and address. The electoral register is also used to select participants for jury service – diverse juries are more likely to result in fairer verdicts. You decide if you want to vote or not. But, making sure you are registered to vote and have an accepted photo ID to be able to vote, allows you to have your voice heard on the issues that matter to you, your family and your community, on London's and the country's future.

What details will be checked on my photo Voter ID?

Staff at the polling station will be looking at your Voter ID to confirm that the name on your photo ID is the same as your name on the electoral register, and that you look like the person in the photo. Staff will not be checking the gender marker, address or nationality on your ID.

Can I have my photo ID checked in private? Do I have to give a reason why?

Yes, a private space will be available in the polling station for this purpose. You can ask for your photo ID to be checked in private. Such requests should be handled discreetly and with courtesy. No, you do not have to give a reason for this request, and you should not be asked to explain why.

Where can I find more information and support on voting?

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/>

Link to information on candidates in your area:
<https://whocanivotefor.co.uk/>

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