

LESSON PLAN: OPTION 1 UNDERSTANDING YOUR DEMOCRATIC VOICE

MATERIALS PROVIDED

- Slide deck for 1 hour session

EXTRA 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 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 old enough to register to vote, and to vote?

SLIDE 2

Session aims

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

Why is civic and democratic participation important? (10 mins)

SLIDE 3

Mind map

- Display the mind map showing reasons people participate in democracy and civic life.
- **Discussion opportunity:** Have students discuss other reasons for civic and democratic participation and ask for volunteers to share their ideas.

LESSON PLAN CONTINUED

SLIDE 4

Table of differences

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

SLIDE 5

Civic participation

- Explain civic participation and how it empowers citizens.

SLIDE 6

Democratic participation

- Highlight examples of democratic participation and its importance. Please note that the activities featured in this are in the order that your students will be able to access them as they get older.
 - **Discussion opportunity:** Ask students if they've done any of the things mentioned on these last two slides.

SLIDE 7

Representation of the People Bill

- Show the milestones graphic and ask students to discuss which milestones, if any, they have already reached.
- Explain the Representation of the People Bill and that, if it passes, it will allow young people to register to vote from 14 years old and vote from 16.

Who can vote and who do you vote for? (5 mins)

SLIDE 8

Who you vote for

- Present the three different structures that Londoners vote in. General elections take place at least every five years, while local elections, Mayor of London, and London Assembly elections take place at least every four years.
- **Discussion opportunity:** Tell students that the last general election was 4th July 2024, the last local elections were on 7th May 2026 and the last Mayor of London and London Assembly elections were on 2nd May 2024. Discuss with students how old they will be when the next elections of each type come around.

SLIDE 9

What is 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.

LESSON PLAN CONTINUED

SLIDE 10

Who are MPs and local councillors?

- Explain what an MP and local councillor is and the areas of policy they influence. Mention the name of the school's local constituency MP, or look it up here: [Find your MP - MPs and Lords - UK Parliament](#)

SLIDE 11

Voting eligibility

- Outline the eligibility requirements to vote in London elections.
- For further definitions of [eligible EU citizens](#) and [eligible Commonwealth citizens](#) please click on the Electoral Commission links provided.

How can I register to vote and what do I need to do? (20 mins)

SLIDE 12

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.

SLIDE 13

Registering to vote

- Model the voter registration process by explaining the process and showing the screenshots of the gov.uk website.

SLIDE 14

Change of personal details

- Explain the registration process for a change in personal details or not having a fixed address.

SLIDE 15

How to vote

- Explain the different ways students can vote, highlighting that they would need to apply for postal or proxy voting after they have registered to vote.

SLIDE 16

Accepted forms of ID

- Present some of the forms of accepted photo Voter ID. Highlight that student IDs and Young Person's Oyster card are not accepted.
- A couple of things to note:
- Even if your form of ID is out of date, you can still use it for voting, as long as it still looks like you and has the same name that you registered to vote with.
- Also, polling staff are only checking that you look like your photo and your name matches - they do not check gender markers.

LESSON PLAN CONTINUED

SLIDE 17

Voter Authority Certificate

- Explain what a Voter Authority Certificate is, that it's valid for 10 years, and that it can be used for voting purposes only. It is not an accepted proof of age ID.

How can you continue to have your voice heard by your representatives beyond an election? (15 mins)

SLIDE 18

Engaging with representatives

- Explain how students can engage with their representatives, even when there's no election coming up.
- Highlight that everyone can do these actions; you do not need to be eligible to vote to do so.
- **Discussion opportunity:** With your class, explore some of the links to find out information about your local area.
- **Discussion opportunity:** Conduct a quick quiz to test knowledge about local representatives. Ask questions such as "Who knows the name of the MP for our constituency?" or "Who knows the name of the Mayor of London?"

SLIDE 19

Further information

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

SLIDES 20-27

Mini quiz

- Guide students through the quiz. This can be completed as a class or in groups! The answers provide follow-up information.

Pledge, conclusion and plenary (5 mins)

SLIDE 28

Pledge

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

SLIDES 29-30

Conclusion

- Signpost students to the GLA Democracy Hub for more information, highlighting the community language resources, 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 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.
- 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.
 - On Slide 19 explore the “Who Can I Vote For” site to see candidates in your area.
 - 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.
 - On Slide 10 explore who the current representatives are, especially those who have recently been voted in. Emphasise how to engage with them.
 - 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.

FAQS

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>.

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.

FAQS

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