



DEMOCRACY

Voting options module



AEC

Australian Electoral Commission

Voting options

In this module, students will be introduced to different voting options by helping DemocraCity citizens. The activity has students meeting people with different circumstances and recommending voting options to them from a multiple-choice list.



Learning outcomes

By the end of the activities, students will:

- Recall that voting in Australia is compulsory.
- Identify different voting options during an election.
- Understand when each voting option may be used.



Suggested extension knowledge and understanding activities

- Match the voting scenario: Have students match the different situations of voters to the most suited voting options on the [Voting scenarios](#) worksheet.



Suggested extension application activities:

UNIT OF WORK: Free and fair – Voting options in Australia

- The linked unit includes an opportunity for students to reflect on Australia's voting options and features and design a 'free and fair' classroom election based on these features.



Supplementary links with AEC resources

Links to other AEC education and information resources:

- Democracy Rules – Topic 3 [‘What's your vote worth?’](#)
- Democracy Rules – Topic 5 - [‘Young people and the vote’](#)
- AEC TV: [Check voting options – Referendum](#)
- AEC TV: [The count - getting the votes home](#)
- [Election safeguards](#)





Key questions

1. Do you have to vote at your local polling place on election day?
Answer: No, there are many other ways you can vote in certain circumstances.
2. What are some reasons you might be able to vote before election day?
Answer: Some of the reasons include you are working on the day, you are going to be travelling, are not well or going to give birth.
3. Can you post your vote if you can't go to the polling place?
Answer: Yes, you can.
4. Can you email your vote?
Answer: No, you can't.



Free and fair – Voting options in Australia

**DEMOCRACY MODULE**

Voting options

**KEY CONCEPT**

Characteristics of democracy

**RELATED CONCEPTS**

- **Equity** – representation, fairness and impartiality.
- **Rights and responsibilities** – civic privilege and compulsory voting.
- **Accessibility** – addressing barriers to participation.

**Overarching questions**

There is a variety of voting options, why is that important for Australia's democracy?

Inquiry questions:

Factual – What voting options exist in Australia?

Conceptual – What could be the possible impact on equity and representation if voting wasn't compulsory?

**Learning outcomes**

By the end of the activities, students will:

- Identify and describe voting options used in Australia.
- Evaluate voting rules (including compulsory voting, timeframes and methods) and how they relate to equity and representation.
- Consider and design class election parameters that reflect principles of free and fair voting.

**Suggested extension learning experiences and activities:**

Designing a 'Free and fair' class election. Students apply their understanding of voting options and features by planning a class election that reflects democratic principles.

**'Free and fair' class election activity overview**

1. **Group brainstorm:** What makes an election free and fair?
2. **Design phase:**
 - Choose a voting method (e.g. preferential, first-past-the-post).
 - Decide on rules: eligibility, campaigning, ballot secrecy, vote counting.

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- Consider accessibility: how will all classmates participate, what voting options will be available?

3. Reflection:

- Justify choices using concepts of equity and fairness.
- Compare with Australian electoral practices.
- Compare and contrast with one of our regional neighbours.

Teacher scaffolding: Voting options and features in Australia

Voting option/aspect	Feature	Impact on 'Free and fair'
Compulsory voting	It is compulsory for enrolled voters to vote in federal elections. As voting is compulsory, people are given several ways to cast their vote.	Positively impacts participation and therefore representation in decisions made in Australian elections.
Postal voting	Ballots mailed in for those unable to attend polling stations.	Increases accessibility. Provides an option for people who may not be able to get to a polling place.
Early (pre-poll) voting	Voting before election day with valid reason.	Convenient. Means people can still vote if they're unavailable on election day.
Provisional (Absentee) voting	Voting outside one's electorate. Also available if someone can't be found on the electoral roll.	Ensures participation; people aren't disenfranchised by not being found on the roll – they still have the opportunity to vote and then the AEC checks after election day.
Telephone voting	Telephone voting made available to people who are blind or with low vision and for voters in Antarctica.	Provides an accessible option for participation.
Preferential voting	Voters rank candidates in order of preference.	Promotes majority support - ensures the person elected is chosen by more than half of the voters.
Electoral roll accuracy	High enrolment rates and regular updates.	Enhances legitimacy and inclusivity.

Free and fair: Voting options in Australia – Suggested assessment rubric

Criteria	Level 1-2	Level 3-4	Level 5-6	Level 7-8
Criterion A: Knowing and understanding	Identifies limited voting methods and shows minimal understanding of electoral fairness.	Describes several voting options with basic explanation of fairness.	Explains voting methods with accurate understanding of fairness, equity, and representation.	Analyses voting options comprehensively, clearly linking electoral systems to fairness and equity.
Criterion B: Investigating	Gathers minimal information and uses it with limited relevance.	Collects some relevant data but lacks depth or organization.	Uses relevant evidence to support planning and decisions in election design.	Researches thoroughly, using clear, relevant evidence to critically support election decisions.
Criterion C: Communicating	Shares ideas with limited clarity or structure.	Communicates decisions clearly but lacks coherence or justification.	Communicates election design clearly and logically with some justification.	Communicates persuasively and with clarity, thoroughly justifying election choices using key concepts.
Criterion D: Thinking critically	Provides basic reflection with minimal evaluation of fairness.	Reflects on fairness with some evaluation but lacks depth.	Evaluates election design using fairness and development concepts with some insight.	Thoughtfully evaluates and refines election design, showing deep understanding of fairness and development.





WORKSHEET

Voting scenarios

Instructions

Now that you have explored the voting options citizens of DemocraCity have during an election, below are some voters who have unique voting situations.

Think back to those voting options from DemocraCity and do some research on other voting options from the column on the right. Use your knowledge to recommend a voting option to the people below and justify your answer.



Sally

I am blind and live at home. I know that AEC staff can assist me if I can get to a polling place, but the nearest polling place is too far away.

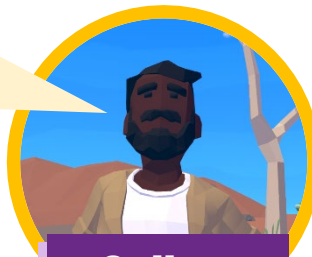
Do I have any other options?

Your answer:

I live with my family on Country in a remote community in the Kimberley in Western Australia. The closest town to me with a polling place is 3 hours away. I'll be here for the whole election.

Are there any voting options for me?

Your answer:



Callum

I'm a researcher studying emperor penguins at Mawson Station in Antarctica for 12 months and won't be home for the election.

Do I have to vote? What are my options?

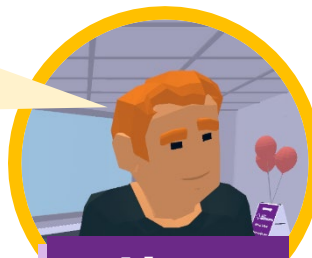
Your answer:



Keiko

I'm currently backpacking in Europe and heard there is an election happening back home. Since I'm traveling, I don't have a postal address. I'll be in London for most of the pre-poll period.

Your answer:



Liam

Other voting options

Overseas voting



In-person voting may be available for those outside of Australia. Find out how people can vote overseas [by watching this video.](#)



Telephone voting



The AEC has a dedicated telephone voting service available to eligible voters. [Check out the AEC's website to find out more.](#)



Mobile polling



Did you know the AEC has an in-person voting services that travels around remote parts of the country? [Watch this video to find out more.](#)



