

A stylized illustration of a cityscape with several orange buildings and green trees, set against a yellow sun. A purple banner with a white border is superimposed over the center, featuring a white robot head icon with blue eyes.

# DEMOCRACY

## Election day module



**AEC**

Australian Electoral Commission

# Election day



This module is an excellent introduction to what happens on election day and to running a class election.



In the first module, students are transported to a polling place to be guided through the process of voting on election day and practise filling in ballot papers for the House of Representatives and the Senate.

In the second module, students walk around and explore the polling place, finding key people and important objects. By doing so, students develop greater understanding of the voting process and how the AEC maintains election integrity.



## Learning outcomes

By the end of the first module, students will:

- Recall the three questions each voter is asked before being issued a ballot paper.
- Recall that voters can vote above or below the line in the Senate.
- Demonstrate how to correctly fill in a House of Representatives and Senate ballot paper.

By the end of the second module, students will:

- Recall the key areas and objects within a polling place.
- Recall the roles different people fill on polling day.
- Identify that the AEC ensures election integrity by having various process and people present in a polling place.

By the end of the Declaration voting module, students will:

- Recognise that voters can still vote even if they cannot be found on the electoral roll.
- Recognise that people with a variety of needs can be assisted in voting.
- Identify the purpose of a declaration vote.



## Suggested extension knowledge and understanding activities

- Organise a mock polling place for a class election. Refer to the [Get Voting](#) site for information on election roles, components and supplies. [Setting up a polling place checklist](#).
- Visit the AEC website and [practise](#) completing a ballot paper for the House of Representatives.

- Research the role of campaigners in supporting candidates. Also consider the rules around their involvement at the polling place. Create a poster for your classroom election explaining the rules campaigners must abide by. More information available here: [Party & Campaign Workers](#).



## Suggested extension application activities:

### UNIT OF WORK: Election day in action

A good election encourages democratic decision making and a respected outcome. A good election is based on principles that ensure it is free and fair.

- Use the 'Unit of work' in this module to conduct a class election.



## Supplementary links with AEC resources

### Links to other AEC education and information resources:

- AEC TV video: [Preferential Voting](#)
- AEC website get voting tool - [Practise voting - House of Representatives](#)
- AEC [Preferential voting: House of Representatives explainer](#)
- AEC [Preferential voting: Senate explainer](#)
- AEC [Ballot paper formality guidelines](#)



## Key questions

### Election day (level 1)

1. What are the three questions voters are asked before being issued a ballot paper?

**Answer:**

- What's your full name?
- Where do you live?
- Have you voted in *this* election?

2. What do you write on a House of Representatives ballot paper to vote?

**Answer:** Write a number next to each candidate from your most preferred candidate to your least preferred.

3. What are the two ways you can vote on a Senate ballot paper?

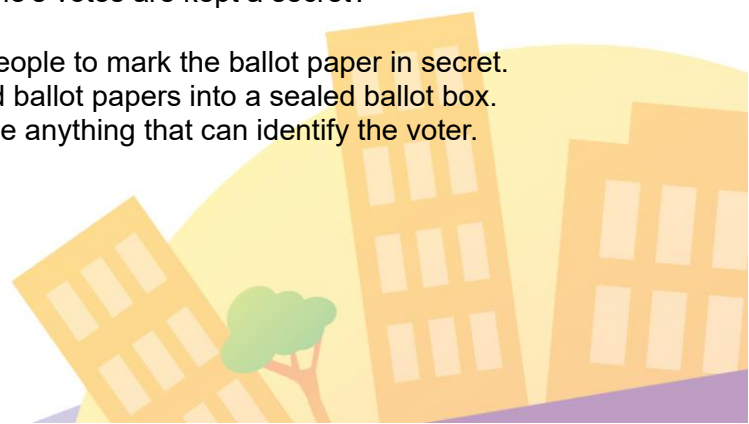
**Answer:** Either above the line for groups of candidates OR below the line for individual candidates.

### Election day (level 2)

1. What are some ways that people's votes are kept a secret?

**Answer:**

- Voting screens allow people to mark the ballot paper in secret.
- Voters drop their folded ballot papers into a sealed ballot box.
- Ballot papers don't have anything that can identify the voter.



2. What are some of the things the AEC does to make sure votes aren't interfered with, that elections are fair and all votes count?

**Answer:**

- A ballot paper guard makes sure the ballot boxes are secure.
- Ballot boxes have secure seals with seal numbers. It's checked each day to make sure it's not been tampered with.
- When not in use, ballot papers are stored in 'Ballot paper secure zones' under the watch of the Office in Charge (OIC).
- Scrutineers – work for the candidates and can be in the polling place to observe.



# Election day in action



**DEMOCRACY MODULES**  
Election day, Election night and  
Distribution of preferences



**KEY CONCEPT**  
Citizenship



## RELATED CONCEPTS

- **Participation** – active engagement in democracy through voting.
- **Processes** – electoral systems (including preferential voting) and election roles.
- **Integrity** – fairness and accessibility of voting processes.



## Overarching questions

**How do electoral structures and safeguards support participation and a trusted outcome in democratic societies?**

Inquiry questions:

**Factual** – What is preferential voting and how is it conducted on election day?

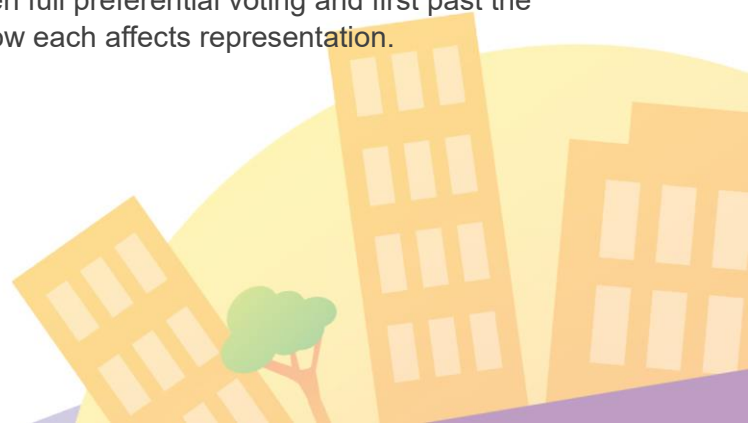
**Conceptual** – How do polling procedures contribute to secure and accessible voting?



## Learning outcomes

By the end of the activities, students will:

- Explore and explain measures like ballot box integrity, accessible tools, and voter assistance options.
- Explain how the AEC ensures elections are secure and conducted transparently through the various roles and checks present in a polling place.
- Demonstrate how to complete a formal vote for the House of Representatives.
- Demonstrate understanding of the first preference count by determining ballot paper formality.
- Demonstrate understanding of the full distribution of preferences in a House of Representatives count.
- Recall the differences between full preferential voting and first past the post and critically evaluate how each affects representation.





## **Suggested extension learning experiences and activities:**

- Develop a resource pack (poster, video, guide) for educating first-time voters about polling place procedures and electoral integrity safeguards.
- Create an informative poster for 'completing a formal vote' for display in your polling place explaining how to vote and why it's important.
- Conduct a class election using '[Get Voting](#)' resources. Conduct a full distribution of preferences to achieve an election result.
- Research full preferential versus first past the post voting and write an evaluation on how each impacts representation.



## Election day in action - Suggested assessment rubric

Criteria	Level 1-2	Level 3-4	Level 5-6	Level 7-8
<b>Criterion A: Knowing and understanding</b> Use knowledge to explain concepts and ideas in familiar and unfamiliar contexts.	Demonstrates minimal knowledge of electoral systems and voting processes.	Demonstrates some knowledge, with limited application to unfamiliar scenarios.	Demonstrates accurate and relevant understanding of electoral systems in varied contexts.	Demonstrates comprehensive and insightful understanding of electoral processes and safeguards.
<b>Criterion B: Investigating</b> Formulate questions, plan investigations, and use methods effectively.	Identifies a basic question or hypothesis with minimal planning or reference to sources.	Develops questions and conducts investigations with some source variety or procedural structure.	Designs purposeful investigations using credible sources and clear methodology.	Conducts sophisticated inquiry with critical use of diverse sources and rigorous investigative planning.
<b>Criterion C: Communicating</b> Organise and express information in appropriate formats and styles.	Communicates with limited clarity or structure; errors interfere with understanding.	Communicates ideas using some structure and conventions; meaning is mostly clear.	Organises ideas clearly using appropriate formats and terminology relevant to electoral contexts.	Communicates persuasively and fluently using discipline-specific vocabulary and engaging formats.
<b>Criterion D: Thinking critically</b> Analyse concepts, arguments, evidence and draw reasoned conclusions.	Shows minimal analysis or evaluation; conclusions lack justification.	Attempts analysis with some logical reasoning; conclusions are basic or unsupported.	Evaluates evidence and arguments with reasoned conclusions relevant to civic contexts.	Demonstrates insightful analysis and synthesis, drawing well-substantiated conclusions about democracy.





# Setting up a polling place

The AEC [‘Get Voting’ resources](#) provide all you need to prepare for and conduct your own election.

To help transform your learning space into a polling place we have the following checklist:

Task	More information	Check
Establish voting route: Enter → Vote → Ballot Box → Exit	It's important to make sure voters can enter, participate and leave the polling place. This maintains some order, illustrates the importance of fairness and integrity through visible voting systems and mirrors real life participation in Australia.	
Set up a table near the entry for polling officials with your 'electoral roll', pencils and ballot papers.	Making it clear that voters need to visit the issuing table first will help with the flow of traffic. You can also have a polling official at the door to direct voters and control any line that begins.	
Position voting screens with adequate spacing	By spacing voting areas appropriately you increase the accessibility of the space while also modelling and encouraging the secret ballot. You can also consider adding some seated booths to ensure greater accessibility.	
Position ballot box between the voting screens and the exit.	This positioning encourages voters to deposit their ballot papers in the ballot box before leaving the polling place. A ballot box guard can also be in place to assist voters and ensure all ballot papers are placed in the box.	





