



DEMOCRACY

**Media literacy
module**



AEC

Australian Electoral Commission

Media literacy and being informed



This module highlights the importance of being informed and critically literate about sources of electoral information. Students begin in DemocraCity town square to explore and interact with various different media sources. Students will also interact with other sources of information such as political parties, friends and family and official sources such as the AEC to understand their role during an election.



Learning outcomes

By the end of the first module, students will:

- Identify ways voters are informed about and participate in democracy.
- Recognise that while voters will be exposed to many sources of information, each person should make their own decision when voting.
- Recall the role of the AEC in providing information on the voting process.



Suggested extension knowledge and understanding activities

- Identify and discuss the different sources voters may gain information during an election by reviewing the 'DemocraCity Fruit Election' material in the unit guide. Students can review the 'AEC Digital Literacy' videos and the 'Media Literacy' persuasive techniques handouts to identify the techniques.



Suggested extension application activities:

ACTIVITY: Creating your own election material

Creating your own election material: The citizens of DemocraCity are having an election to decide on a town fruit. Students can create a piece of election material using a medium of one of the sources of information in DemocraCity. More information can be found in the unit guide.



Supplementary links with AEC resources

Links to other AEC education and information resources:

- Link to Digital Literacy videos on AEC TV
 - Identifying false and misleading information - [Digital Literacy - Introduction](#)
 - [Examine – what is the content?](#)

- [Investigate – who is the author?](#)
 - [Review – When was it shared?](#)
 - [Explore – How was it shared?](#)
 - [Could it be false or AI?](#)
 - [Exploring deep fakes](#)
 - [The voting experience](#)
 - [Your vote is your choice](#)
 - [Digital Literacy: The Impact on Democracy](#)
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- Link to Stop and Consider [Stop and Consider: Our campaign - Australian Electoral Commission](#)
 - Classroom resource on teaching media literacy in democracy - [Media Literacy in Democracy: Women's Suffrage in Australia - AEC for schools](#)
 - Links to information about authorisations
 - [Authorisations – AEC TV Video](#)
 - [Authorising electoral communications – AEC Website](#)



Key questions

1. What are some of the people and places voters get information during an election?
Answer: From the AEC, the media (newspapers, TV, radio), social media, friends and family, candidates and political parties
2. What is the best source of information about the election process?
Answer: The Australian Electoral Commission, the AEC. The AEC is an independent organisation that runs Australia's federal elections. They are independent of any political parties or candidates.
3. What's the most important thing for voters to remember after receiving a lot of information and then going to vote?
Answer: Your vote is your choice. You can vote the way you want to in private. Carefully consider all the information you receive and decide who you want to vote for.





ACTIVITY

Media Literacy and Elections: DemocraCity Fruit Election

These activities help students use what they've learned about elections and media literacy to think critically about how people get information during an election. Both activities are conducted in light of a 'DemocraCity fruit election' to simulate real-life sources of electoral information during an election campaign.



Materials:

- Student handout and activity instructions.
- Media Sources handout which includes:
 - how-to-vote card
 - campaign flyer
 - newspaper article
 - online social media post
 - text-based social media posts
 - quotes from family and friends.



Teacher Preparation:

- Share [student handout](#) with instructions
- Share all six media [sources](#)



Learning outcomes:

By the end of the activities, students will:

- Recall the range of sources from which electoral information may come.
- Exercise healthy scepticism to analyse a range of sources.
- Identify a range of persuasive techniques of which to be aware.



Important to highlight

The media sources used in this activity are meant to simulate real-life examples voters may encounter during an election. These sources include official information, campaign material and sources from hearsay. Students are encouraged to critically analyse, debate and question these sources. Students are encouraged to 'Stop and Consider' the information as if they were voters in an election themselves.





ACTIVITY 1: Analysing media sources


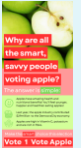

Students are asked to discuss six sources of election material related to the fruit election to identify the techniques used by the media, political campaigns and citizens when sharing information with voters.

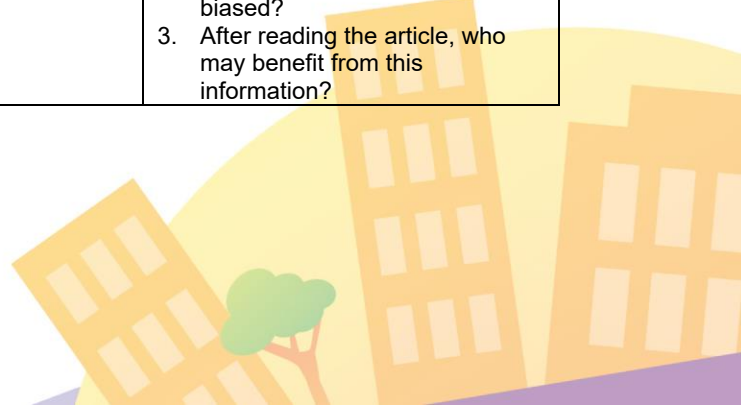
Students are encouraged to use healthy scepticism to critically analyse the sources to answer:

- What type of source is this information? Where did the information come from?
- Who produced the information, how would you check the source?
- What is the information's aim or agenda?
- What techniques are being used to persuade you?
- How might this information influence a citizen when they go to vote?




To assist in identifying the techniques, students can review the [AEC Digital Literacy videos](#) and the Media Literacy [persuasive techniques](#) handout to identify the techniques used in the election material.

Below are the source types and some guided questions teachers may use to assist in student's inquiries:

Source type	Description	Techniques	Guiding questions
How-to-vote card 	Campaign material instructing voters on how to vote for Mango. Material sets out basic information and preferred candidate order on ballot paper.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting evidence • Inclusive language 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why might political campaigns create 'how to vote' cards? 2. Do voters have to follow these cards? 3. Where might you see this electoral material during the election?
Campaign flyer 	Campaign from Strawberry campaign using overly exaggerated and hyperbolic facts and statements to convince voters.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flattery • Inclusive language • Exaggeration • Evidence and statistics • Has been authorised by the Strawberry party 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is the information in this campaign believable? 2. What do voters need to look for when viewing campaign materials? 3. Where might you see this electoral information during an election?
Newspaper article 	An excerpt from the local newspaper about the election highlighting disinformation within the Apple campaign and general mis and disinformation found in other sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert opinions • Presenting evidence 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the purpose of news reports and journalists during an election? 2. Can information in reporting be biased? 3. After reading the article, who may benefit from this information?





<p>Social media post</p> 	<p>A visual post from a social media user with basic facts on why you should vote for Apple and how to support the campaign.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting evidence • Flattery 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where might you see this type of information being shared? 2. How would you verify the information in this post?
<p>Social media text post</p> 	<p>Various types of posts from social media users including a general social media user talking about the election, official campaign posts, commentators supporting one fruit and news media organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong emotional language • Presenting evidence • Contradicting evidence • Telling stories and anecdotes • Smear 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where might you see this type of information being shared? 2. How would you verify the information in these posts? 3. Are some posts likely to be more trustworthy than others?
<p>Quotes from family and friends</p> 	<p>Anecdotes from friends and families about the election.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong emotional language • Presenting evidence • Contradicting evidence • Telling stories and anecdotes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How persuasive would you find information like this from friends and family? 2. Where do you think these people would have obtained this information? 3. How would you respond to these quotes if they were said to you?



ACTIVITY 2: Creating your own election material

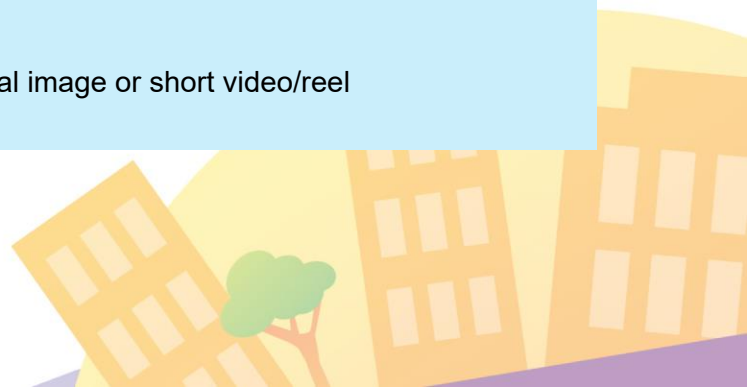
Once they have identified and discussed the difference sources of election material, students will be asked to produce their own election material to convince their fellow DemocraCity citizens to vote for a specific fruit candidate. Students can create posters, flyers or digital mediums to create their material.

Students will need to consider:

- Which candidate are they going to support?
- What message are they trying to convey? Is it a positive message, a negative campaign or factual information?
- What medium they will pick to convey their message?
- Which techniques are most effective for that medium?
- Does their material need to be authorised? Check out [this AEC video](#) to find out more about authorisations. More [information](#) can be found on the AEC website.

Some examples of materials may include:

- a campaign poster
- political flyers
- a TV advertisement
- an online video
- a social media post such as visual image or short video/reel
- an opinion or newspaper article.





ACTIVITY

Media Literacy and Elections: DemocraCity Fruit Election

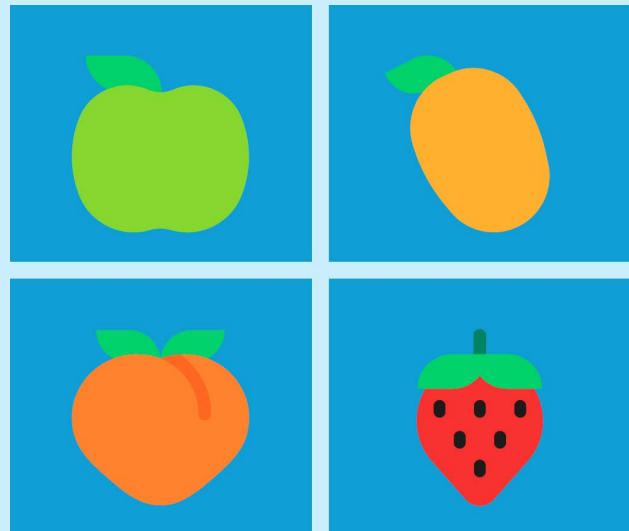
Background

DemocraCity is conducting a 'DemocraCity fruit election' using a preferential voting system to determine the official fruit of DemocraCity.

Four options are on the ballot as campaigns launch to persuade citizens on why their fruit should be made the official DemocraCity fruit.

The four fruit candidates are:

- Apple
- Mango
- Peach
- Strawberry



ACTIVITY 1: Analysing media sources

You are a citizen of DemocraCity voting in the upcoming fruit election. Before you can vote, you need to make sure you have all the information you need to make an informed vote.

There are six sources of information. Using your analytical skills and some healthy scepticism, try and answer the following questions:

- Where might you see this source of information?
- Who produced the information?
- What is the information's aim or agenda?
- What techniques are being used to persuade you?
- How might this information influence a citizen when they go to vote?





ACTIVITY 2: Creating your own electoral information

Once you have identified and discussed the different sources of election information, you may have a fruit candidate in mind you wish to support.

Using the techniques and mediums you have identified in the DemocraCity game and from analysing the fruit election information, use your skills to create a piece of electoral material in support of a fruit candidate of your choice.

Your job will be to persuade your fellow DemocraCity citizens and other classmates to vote for your preferred fruit.

When creating your material, consider:

- What medium will best convey your message?
- Is the medium appropriate for endorsing a candidate?
- Which techniques are most effective for that medium?
- Does your material need to be authorised? Check out [this AEC video](#) to find out more about authorisations.

Some examples of materials may include:

- a campaign poster
- political flyers
- a TV advertisement
- an online video
- a social media post such as visual image or short video/reel
- an opinion or newspaper article.





ACTIVITY

Media literacy and elections: How-to-vote card

VOTE 1

VOTE MANGO

How to vote for mango this election:

Put a 1 in the box next to mango and then number each other box as shown on this example ballot paper.

A vote for mango is a vote:
for more tropical fruits in DemocraCity
to support local families by keeping the mango industry alive and thriving
for the sweetest fruit representing our city

DemocraCity Election Ballot Paper

DemocraCity
Fruit Election for DemocraCity

Number the boxes from 1 to 4 in the order of your choice

4	Apple
1	Mango
2	Peach
3	Strawberry

SAMPLE BALLOT

Remember... number every box to make your vote count

Authorised by the Mango 4 DemocraCity Campaign, DemocraCity



ACTIVITY

Media literacy and elections: Campaign flyer

**Why are all
the smart,
savvy people
voting apple?**

The answer is **simple:**

-  Apples have amazing health and nutritional benefits! You'll feel younger, happier and healthier eating apples!
-  Last year, the apple industry contributed \$29 million to the DemocraCity economy.
-  Apples are high in Vitamin C, potassium and are rich in fibre.

Make the **smart** choice this election

Vote 1 Vote Apple

Authorised by the DemocraCity Apple Campaign, DemocraCity





ACTIVITY

Media literacy and elections: Newspaper article

The DemocraCity Times

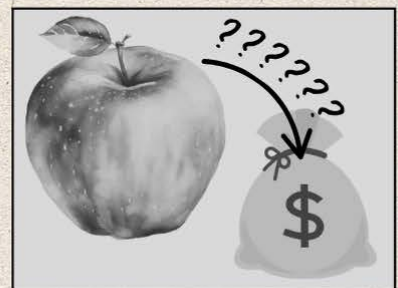
Since 1897 - News that matters to you

ROTTEN TO THE CORE: The Apple Industry Exposed

Janet Frost

Lead Investigative Reporter and Editor-in-Chief

A DemocraCity Times investigation has uncovered shocking new evidence about the apple industry which presents serious questions for their claimed benefits to the DemocraCity economy.



With the DemocraCity Fruit Election underway, campaigns are vying for voter attention as pre-polls commence next week. Voting is compulsory with fierce campaigning already being seen in the streets of DemocraCity with how-to-vote cards, campaign flyers and corflutes on street corners.

A key claim by the apple campaign throughout the election has been the economic benefits of the fruit to DemocraCity, claiming that, "Apples have contributed \$29 million to the DemocraCity economy." DemocraCity Times have uncovered damning accounting and tax records which reveal that most of the \$29 million dollar profit claimed by the apple campaign to benefit the DemocraCity economy has instead been profits made elsewhere.

A spokesperson for the peak body of the apple industry has stated while the figures were "...a mix of profits across the region which includes DemocraCity...", they clarified that "the apple industry employs over 400 locals in the picking, production and delivery of apple products throughout DemocraCity. That's double the next nearest fruit."

Fruit industry experts have pointed out to DemocraCity Times that while apples do contribute a part of the DemocraCity economy, the stated claim of \$29 million dollars would be nearly impossible to reach as the DemocraCity climate is not suited for large scale apple growing.

The peach and strawberry campaigns have leapt on this report, highlighting how apples do not contribute as much as they claimed to the DemocraCity economy and encouraged voters to support their fruits which contribute a proven, tangible benefit to the community. Verified reporting from DemocraCity Times have confirmed the peach and strawberry industries have contributed \$11 million and \$14 million dollars respectively to the DemocraCity economy.

The \$29 million dollar statistic has been one of several mis and disinformation claims being circulated. Earlier this week, a post online suggested that votes in pencil were being erased. The AEC has confirmed ballot papers are never left unattended adding "pencils are provided as they do not smudge when a ballot paper is folded, they can be stored and re-used from one event to the next without drying out like pens do."

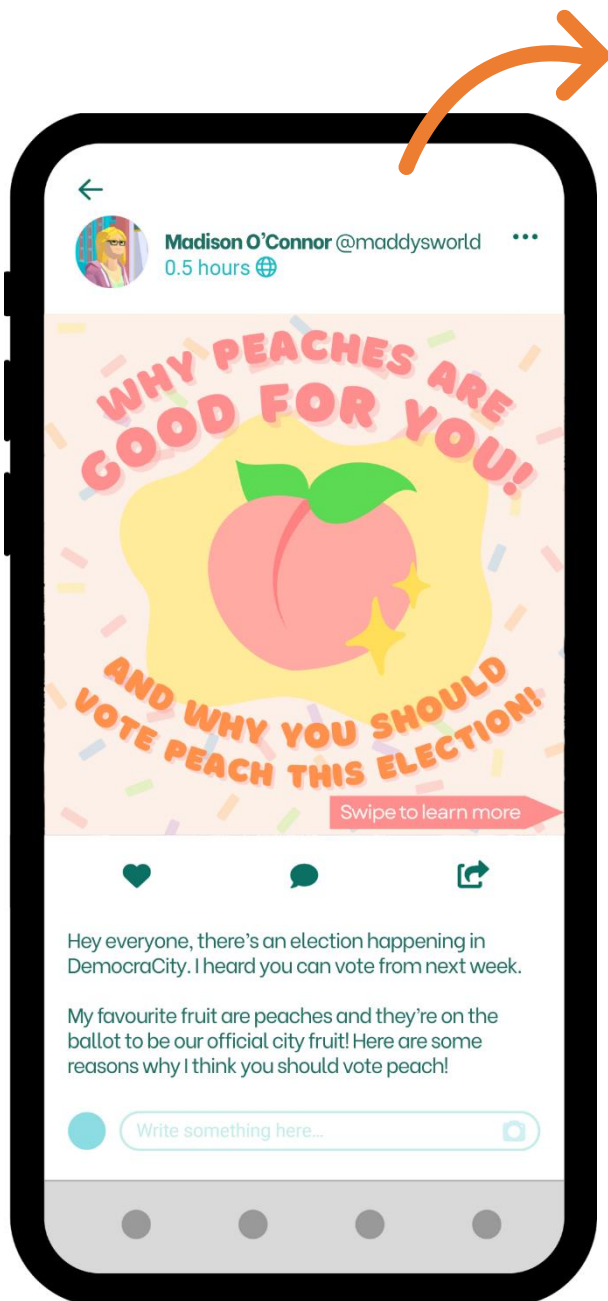
Voters are permitted to bring their own pen to mark the ballot paper with if they wish.

The campaign continues.



ACTIVITY

Media literacy and elections: Social media post



1 THEY'RE TASTY!

9 out of 10 people who try peaches say they're sweeter than most other fruits!

THEY'RE RICH IN VITAMINS AND MINERALS!

Did you know peaches are rich in antioxidants, vitamin C, magnesium and iron.

THEY'RE THE PERFECT SUMMER TIME FRUIT

3

Peaches are at peak season in January and February - making them the ultimate summertime fruit.

THEY HELP DEMOCRACY!

4

The Peach Industry employs over 200 people in DemocraCity - contributing to our economy and supporting local families!

THIS ELECTION, VOTE FOR THE MOST POPULAR, SWEETEST AND BEST FRUIT.

VOTE PEACH!!!

Authorised by The National Peaches and Stone Fruit Advocacy Group, DemocraCity



ACTIVITY

Media literacy and elections: Social media text posts



Callum's Vlogs (New vlogs everyday!) 📺 📺 📺
@calebvlogs

I've been telling everyone for years: mangos are the new super foods. Rich in nutrients and vitamins. That's where my vote will be this election. It's what all the smart gym-goers are doing. #votemango



The Official DemocraCity Apple Campaign
Political campaign
@applesfordemocracity ✓

Last year, apples contributed \$29 million to the DemocraCity economy. The choice is clear. #vote1 #voteapple



The Anti Berry Brigade
@theantiberrybrigade

Make no mistake, if we elect Strawberries, next they will outlaw all stone fruit.

It's not very merry, don't vote strawberry.



me and my tin foil hat
@meandmytinfoilhat

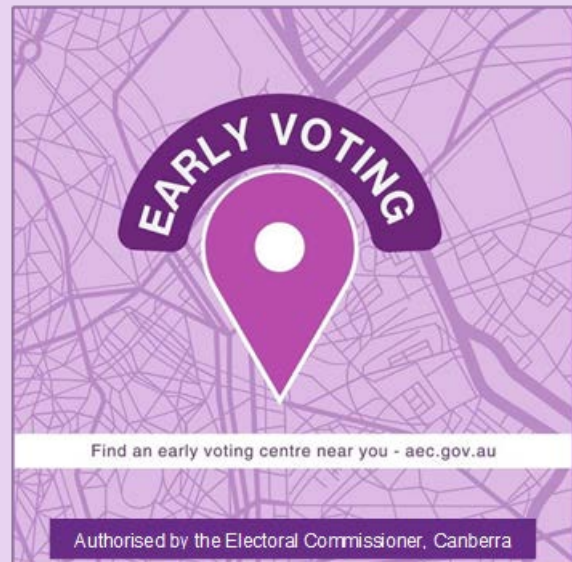
THE ELECTION IS RIGGED – a friend told me the vote counters rub out the pencil marks on the ballots. #WAKEUPPEOPLE



Australian Electoral Commission ✎
@AusElectoralCom ✓

Pre-poll voting starts next week in DemocraCity.

Make sure to number every box on your ballot paper this upcoming fruit election for your vote to count.



Janet Frost – Editor-in-chief at The DemocraCity Times
@jfrost_democracitytimes ✓

In this week's @democracitytimes investigation, the Apple Industry's misleading claims exposed and why DemocraCity received little of the \$29 million claimed. #DemocraCityElection



ACTIVITY

Media literacy and elections: Quotes from friends and family



Sally
Local dog walker

Oh, you should totally vote for apple. I heard that the apple industry pumps \$29 million dollars into our city's economy. I want to support that.



Fredrick
Friend

Someone told me that they saw vote counters rubbing out people's votes. Did you hear anything about that?



Mr Wilson
Next door neighbour

I heard the people on that Strawberry campaign want to ban all stone fruit. It seems too risky to put strawberry at #1.



Cass
Friend

I'm not 100% sure which fruit to vote for this election. I know I don't want mango to win but I can't pick between apples, strawberries or peaches.



Aunty Bell
Family member

I'm disappointed that they didn't have my favourite fruit, pears, on the ballot paper. I think I'll put apples first since that's the closest to pears.



Tyler
Friend

I am a big fan of tropical fruits, so voting mango is a no brainer.

