

6

Session 6: How to fill out a ballot paper

You will need

- A copy of the Easy English Guide relevant to your preferred method of voting (the one that was used in session 5) this will be called either **How to vote at a Polling Place** or **How to Vote by mail**. This book is written in a way that is easy to understand. You can download them from the AEC website, [Easy English Guides](http://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/Publications/easy-english) (http://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/Publications/easy-english), or request copies by phoning 13 23 26.
- Sample ballot papers for the House of Representatives, Senate and Referendum.
- If preparing for a state, territory or local government election, contact your state or territory electoral body for information and resources. You will find links at www.elections.gov.au

Activities

- Have a look at the sample ballot papers that will be used for voting in the next election.
- Get each participant to locate the instructions on the ballot paper or have someone point them out.
- Emphasise that a voter must follow the instructions for their vote to count.
- Practice filling out the relevant ballot papers.

Group discussion

- What is a how-to-vote card? If someone tries to give you one do you have to take it? If you take one do you have to follow it?

Key idea: Who you choose to vote for is your decision. Outside the polling place, candidate representatives may give you how-to-vote cards, suggesting you vote in a particular way. You do not have to follow how-to-vote cards.

- Who can help you fill out your ballot paper?

Key idea: You can take someone you trust with you to help fill in your ballot paper or you can ask a polling official to help.

- Can someone else tell you who to vote for?

Key idea: Who you vote for is your choice. You might want to talk to friends or family about the candidates to help you decide.

- What do you do if you make a mistake on your ballot paper?

Key idea: If you make a mistake take your spoilt ballot paper back to the polling official and they can give you a new one. They won't look at your mistake but you do need to give the ballot paper back to them.

Notes for facilitator

Please stress to participants that ballot papers can have different requirements for ensuring they are filled out correctly and can be counted. Only one level of government should be dealt with at one time. Participants should be taught how to fill out the relevant ballot papers in the weeks immediately prior to an election.

Use either the **How to vote at a Polling Place** or **How to vote by mail** Easy English guide as a reference guide to help participants and their support people.

You can find a [practice voting tool](#) on the AEC website. This has been developed to explain the easiest way to make sure your vote will count in federal elections. It is interactive with easy to follow instructions on how to complete ballot papers correctly for the House of Representatives and the Senate.

You may wish to use the practice voting tool yourself prior to conducting this session. You may also consider using it with your group if you think it is appropriate. You will need to ensure that the participants understand that in a Federal election they won't be using a computer, they will be filling in actual pieces of paper.