



TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS FOR MOCK ELECTIONS AND VOTE COUNTING

HOW TO RUN PRETEND ELECTION: *Favourite thing to do when you have free time*

- Go through each choice (on slide 18) and ensure students understand each one.
- Have an area in classroom set up where students can vote individually, and privately. You don't have to have voting screens. Provide pens or pencils to vote with. Students to go to voting area to vote only, not line up.
- Hand out ballot papers and allow students to vote in the voting area
- Keep reiterating voting instructions – “put a number in every square, number 1 is your favourite choice, don't write your name, etc.”
- If students make a mistake, replace the ballot paper for them. Tell them this is possible in real elections too (make sure they return the incorrect paper).
- Ballot papers to go in a 'ballot box', this can be anything to collect the votes in. Preferably something that has a lid that you can put a hole in – like a real ballot box.
- If you are located in Darwin or Alice Springs the NT Electoral Commission is happy to lend you ballot boxes and voting screens for this activity.

HOW TO COUNT VOTES: [GO TO SLIDE 19 IN THE POWERPOINT](#)

- It is easiest to count the votes using sorting cards. These just need to be pieces of paper that each have the name of one of the 'candidates' or choices from your election. You may need an extra one for 'informal votes'.
- Run through the next slide (slide 19) in the PowerPoint with the students, the one after the pretend election slide.
- Depending on the size of your group, you can gather students around a counting desk or choose 2-3 students to assist with the counting at the front of the class. To set up, lay out the sorting cards in the same order as ballot paper.
- Empty the ballot box and make one pile of ballot papers. Check for informal votes (i.e. votes that cannot be counted: not every square is numbered, numbers not sequential, full name written on ballot paper) and put these on the 'informal votes' sorting card. Hopefully you have no informal votes. (If you can read the voter's intention, even if it's difficult, and even if there is other things written on the ballot paper, you always want to include as many ballot papers as possible to the count.)
- After removing the informal votes, count the total number of formal ballot papers.

- Record these on a blank results table (provided below). You should draw a table on a white board or print a copy of one below to fill in. It is much easier for students to understand the counting of preferential votes if they can see all the steps in this process.
- Write in the total votes, informal votes and total formal votes. (You could call them correct votes / incorrect votes for plainer English.)
- Remind students that to win this election you must get 'more than half the total votes'. Mathematically this is 50% +1 of the total formal votes. It might happen that 50% of your total votes has a decimal (if an odd number) so rather than '+ 1' you just need to add '+ 0.5' to get 'more than half'. For example. If 31 students voted, you need to find 50% of 31 → 31 divided by 2 = 15.5, then to get 'more than half' this becomes 16. (Because you cannot have half a vote.)
- Tell students: *This is the number of votes you need to win this election.*
- Sort ballot papers → look at the number 1 choices and place onto sorting cards accordingly.
- Count each pile separately and record these results in the table as the primary count. If one of the choices gets 'more than half' (or the 50%+1 number) declare that one the winner.
- If no choice gets 'more than half', ask students who has the smallest amount of votes so far, i.e. who got the smallest amount of number 1s?
- Take this one out – ONLY this one – and distribute that choice's papers according to the number 2s making a second pile under each of the remaining piles. E.g. if Choice 3 got the smallest amount of number 1s, take the ballot papers with number 1 for Choice 3, turn over Choice 3's sorting card, put these ballot papers on the remaining sorting cards according to the number 2 choices. Make this a separate pile to the primary count. See sample table.
- Record results and add up sub-totals (make one pile on each sorting card now). Is there a winner yet (i.e. has anyone reached the 'more than half' amount)?
- If not, repeat the process. Take out the choice with the lowest number of votes so far. Turn over that sorting card. Distribute according to the number **2s first**, making a separate pile to the main pile on the sorting card. If the number 2 choice is unavailable (it's been taken out already) look at number 3 choice. ALWAYS look at number 2 first.
- Record the distributed votes in the results table. Add up the totals.
- Is there a winner yet? If not repeat process again. Take out the choice that has the lowest number of votes. Turn over that sorting card. Distribute according to the numbers 2s first, making a separate pile. If the number 2 choice is unavailable, look at number 3 choice (if unavailable look at number 4). Always look at the number 2 choice first.
- Record the results and add up the totals. This should result in a winner.

If there's a tie:

1. If there's a tie for the lowest number of votes → check which choice got the lowest amount of number 1 votes at the primary count. This one is excluded and taken out of the count.
2. If there's a tie at the primary count for the lowest number of votes → randomly choose the one to exclude or take out. Best to do it like a raffle. The one chosen is excluded and out of the count.
3. If there's a tie with the last 2 choices (at the last line of counting) → randomly choose the winner from the last 2 choices. Best to do it like a raffle, but this time, the one chosen is the winner.

SAMPLE RESULTS TABLE

TOTAL VOTES 32	INFORMAL VOTES 2	TOTAL FORMAL VOTES 30	MORE THAN HALF 50% + 1 16		
CANDIDATES →	READ	COOK	BE ACTIVE	WATCH TV OR MOVIES	GO ONLINE
PRIMARY COUNT	3	4	5	8	10
FIRST DISTRIBUTION	-	1	1	1	-
SUB TOTAL	-	5	6	9	10
SECOND DISTRIBUTION	-	-	2	2	1
SUB TOTAL	-	-	8	11	11
THIRD DISTRIBUTION				5	3
TOTAL			Winner! ←	16	14

RESULTS TABLE FOR PRETEND ELECTION

TOTAL VOTES	INFORMAL VOTES	TOTAL FORMAL VOTES		MORE THAN HALF 50% + 1	
CANDIDATES →	READ	COOK	BE ACTIVE	WATCH TV OR MOVIES	GO ONLINE
PRIMARY COUNT					
FIRST DISTRIBUTION					
SUB TOTAL					
SECOND DISTRIBUTION					
TOTAL					