

FACILITATOR NOTES : YEARS 5 - 6

VOTING AND DEMOCRACY



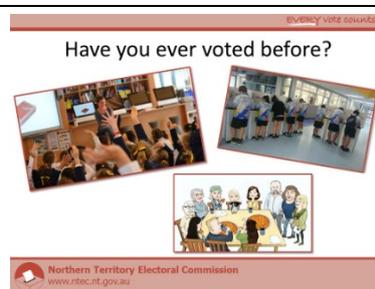
45 minutes

Australian Curriculum - CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP – Knowledge and understanding:

- *The key values that underpin Australia's democracy*
- *The key features of the electoral process in Australia*
- *The roles and responsibilities of Australia's three levels of government*
- *The responsibilities of electors and representatives in Australia's democracy*

What you need:

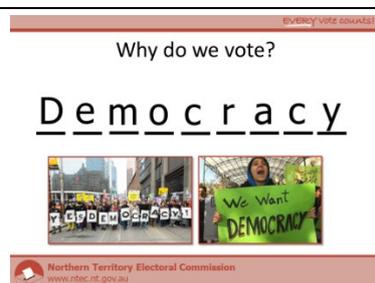
- PowerPoint presentation (on NTEC website)
- Candidate prompt cards (attached – also on NTEC website)
- Ballot papers (attached – also NTEC website)
- Teacher instructions for vote and count (attached - also on NTEC website)
- Voting area where students can vote privately
- Ballot box or something to collect ballot papers in



Ask students: "Have you ever voted before, in any kind of election, ever?" Get a range of answers from the class. Hopefully you'll cover the following examples...

On each click, show typical examples: class vote, student representative/house captains' election, or maybe even a family vote.

Tell students: "Voting is a way for everyone to have their say about something, and for everyone to be involved in decision making"



Tell students: "In Australia, we vote for the big decision makers, so those people in parliament making laws, and decision makers in government and councils."

Ask students: "Because we live in a country where we vote for the people who make our laws and decisions, it means we live in a certain kind of country, or under a certain system, that lets the people have a say on who their leaders are." "What do we call this type of system?"

On each click you can give clues, 'D', 'y', 'c' if they need it. Explain Australia is a democracy, but not all countries are, and sometimes people in those countries want to be able to have a say.



Ask students: "What is the actual definition of democracy? You are going to tell me"

Explain that we are talking about a system of government, so the way a country is controlled and a system of how decisions and laws are made. Tell students they have multiple choice.



everybody counts!

Definition of democracy

Government is the system by which a country or community is controlled

A. Government by a single ruler or group of people with no say from anyone else

C. Government by a King or Queen, who is usually born into the role. May have unlimited or limited powers.

B. Government by the people or by their elected representatives

D. Government where all decisions, including laws, are based on a religion; the rulers are usually religious leaders.



From the Greek words **Demos** meaning **people** and **Kratos** meaning **power**

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Allow students time to read each one, or read over each one individually for them. Ask them which one defines democracy. (You may want to explain that each one is a system that exists in different countries around the world.) Correct answer is B. Ask students what the most important word in the definition is (it's PEOPLE!). Show/explain the ancient Greek origins of the word democracy → demos kratos

everybody counts!

Features of a democracy

- RIGHTS and FREEDOMS
- RULE OF LAW
- MAJORITY RULE
- DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS

Free, fair, open and contested elections that are held regularly

- Everybody must follow the law and everyone is equal before the law
- Free, fair, open and contested elections that are held regularly
- Powers to make choices about how you live your life and be treated fairly
- Decisions are made when more than half agree, but minority groups are protected

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Explain to students that democracy is not just being able to vote and have a say, there is more to it. Bring up the four main elements of democracy on the left of slide. **ACTIVITY:** Tell students that you will bring up a definition on the right side and they have to match it with the correct feature from the left side. Arrows will appear on clicks matching the definition to the feature.

everybody counts!

Democratic elections

- FREE
- FAIR
- OPEN
- CONTESTED
- REGULAR

- Everyone can vote
- There are rules and laws to stop cheating
- Voters have a choice between candidates
- Elections usually held every 3 – 6 years
- Voters are free to choose whoever they want

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Tell students we will now go through the definitions of each of these key words: free, fair, open, contested and regular. **ACTIVITY:** Once again a definition will come up on the right hand side that students need to match to the correct word on the left. Answers: 1. open 2. fair 3. contested, 4. regular 5. free.

everybody counts!

Who can vote?

You must:

- be 18 years old or over
- be an Australian citizen
- be correctly enrolled – you can enrol at 16 years



Voting is **compulsory** in Australia

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Ask students: "Who can vote in government elections in Australia?" They usually know the age criteria, but may have trouble with citizenship. Give clues if they need it. Tell students that the third criteria is very important. You must be enrolled to vote first, this is like registering to vote, you need to give your name and address details. It's important to register your address because when you vote, you are voting for a representative who will be the voice for the area where you live. When you change your address, you need to update your enrolment. Bring up the last click "voting is compulsory." Ask students what this means? Explain that for all Australian citizens who are 18 years or over, they MUST vote by law. Discuss the penalties (\$20 fine for federal elections, \$25 fine for NT parliamentary elections and council elections - previously \$50). If you have a good reason for no voting, you do not have to pay the fine. Students are often surprised at the low amounts, I usually add "the fine is not a punishment for doing something bad, or criminal, it is more of an incentive to go and vote".

everybody counts!



- All votes are secret
- No names on the ballot papers

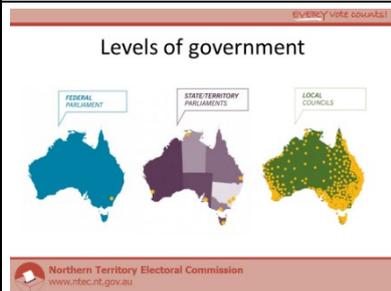
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Ask students: "Who has been to a voting centre before, maybe with your parents?" Tell students what happens in a voting centre: "First you need to get you name ticked off from the list of voters (point to the line), then you are given the correct ballot paper for where you live, because you are voting for a decision maker to represent your area (point to ballot paper being given to voter), then you go to these things (point to line of voting screens) to make your vote."

Ask students: "Why do people go to a voting screen, a private area, to make their vote?"

Elicit answer and elaborate: "It's very important that people are free to choose who they want to vote for. If no one can see who you vote for, then you can't be bullied or threatened to vote for certain people." Give further examples.

"Once you have voted, you must put your ballot paper in the ballot box" (Point to ballot box) Tell students that ballot means vote, so you have a voting paper and a voting box.



Tell students: "We know that in a democracy, it's the people who vote for our decision makers, so the people in government. But, in Australia, there are three levels of government, and we vote for the decisions makers at all three levels."

Ask students: "What are the three levels of government in Australia?"

Go through each level once students have provided answers, they may give them in a different order.

Elaborations:

Federal - They make decisions for all over Australia, and people from all over Australia vote for their representatives there. Where are they based? How many NT representatives are there at the federal level? (2 in upper house, 2 in lower house = 4)

State/Territory – The Territory parliament just makes laws for the NT, and people from all over the NT vote for their representative in this parliament. How many state and territory parliaments are there in Australia? (6 state, 2 territory = 8) You may like to ask how many territories are there in Australia. (Good trivia question!) There are 10, but only 2 have their own parliaments and make laws for themselves like states. (Some other territories are Christmas Island, Cocos Island, Norfolk Island, Pitcairn Island.)

Local councils – local governments make decisions that affect their local areas. Do you know the name of your local council? How many local councils are there in Australia? (Bit of a joke question, but there are about 560. We have 17 in the NT.)



Tell students: "The three levels of government make laws and decisions about different things"

ACTIVITY: Show the students the pictorial clues and have them tell you some of the responsibilities, or decisions, that the federal level has. Then show the answers. The federal level is the most difficult for students to guess – they are not as everyday as the other responsibilities.

(Aboriginal affairs in reality is shared by federal and state, but for the NT → Aboriginal land rights is very much a federal responsibility with no say from NT Parliament.)

EVERY VOTE COUNTS!

Government responsibilities

STATE/TERRITORY GOVERNMENT

- Arts and Museums
- Courts and Prisons
- Education/schools
- Health/hospitals
- Housing
- Police, Fire and Emergency Services
- Power and Water
- Public transport, including taxis
- Roads (main) and railways

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ACTIVITY: Show the students the pictorial clues and have them tell you some of the responsibilities, or decisions, that the state or territory level has. Then show the answers.

EVERY VOTE COUNTS!

Government responsibilities

LOCAL COUNCILS

- Footpaths and cycle paths
- Libraries (most)
- Local roads
- Parking
- Parks and ovals
- Playgrounds
- Pet and animal control
- Rubbish and recycling collection
- Swimming pools

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ACTIVITY: Show the students the pictorial clues and have them tell you some of the responsibilities, or decisions, that the local government level has. Then show the answers.

EVERY VOTE COUNTS!

Voting systems

- First past the post
- Preferential

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Tell students: "There are a few different ways to vote and count votes, and we will discuss 2 of these."
 Use the horse racing picture to explain 'first past the post': the first horse past the finish line wins, it doesn't matter how fast or slow the race was.
 Ask students: "If we are talking about an election, and using election words, who wins a first past the post election?" If they need help, say "the person with the most.....?" Confirm that the person with the most votes wins. It doesn't matter how many votes they get, as long as they get more than everyone else.
 Tell students: "This is NOT the system of voting we use in Australia for our government and council elections. We use the preferential system, where the voter needs to put everyone on their voting paper in an order, using numbers. What number would you put next to the person you want to choose?"
 Tell students: "You must put a number next to every person on your ballot paper. You must put everyone in order. If you don't number every box, we can't count your vote."

EVERY VOTE COUNTS!

First past the post

BALLOT PAPER		
SAM <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SAM	30
MAYA <input type="checkbox"/>	MAYA	25
CARINA <input type="checkbox"/>	CARINA	10
LEE <input type="checkbox"/>	LEE	35
	TOTAL	100

65 voters out of 100 did not want Lee to win

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Ask students: "If this was a first past the post election, and the person with the most votes wins, who wins this election?"
 "Yes, Lee wins this election, Lee got more votes than anyone else, Lee is now the representative for those 100 people that voted."
 Point out that A LOT of people did not vote for Lee. Click to show the sentence in blue.
 Tell students: "A lot of people didn't vote for Lee, more than half the voters chose someone else, and yet Lee is their representative." "In Australia, this is the reason we do not use first past the post voting for government and council elections."

EVERY VOTE COUNTS

Who wins a preferential election?

The winner must get **more than half** of all the votes counted.



50% + 1

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Tell students: "We use preferential voting for government elections. To win a preferential election, you must get *more than half* the votes, this means the winner must get 50% + 1 of the votes. Perhaps give 1 or 2 examples, like if we have 200 people voting, what is the absolute majority someone needs to win.

EVERY VOTE COUNTS

How to vote in a preferential election

- Put a number in every square
- Put the numbers in order of your choice
- 1 is for your favourite, 2 is for your second favourite
- Do not put your name on the ballot paper

BALLOT PAPER	BALLOT PAPER	BALLOT PAPER
SAM <input style="width: 20px;" type="text" value="2"/>	SAM <input style="width: 20px;" type="text" value="1"/>	SAM <input style="width: 20px;" type="text" value="4"/>
MAYA <input style="width: 20px;" type="text" value="3"/>	MAYA <input style="width: 20px;" type="text" value="4"/>	MAYA <input style="width: 20px;" type="text" value="1"/>
CARINA <input style="width: 20px;" type="text" value="4"/>	CARINA <input style="width: 20px;" type="text" value="2"/>	CARINA <input style="width: 20px;" type="text" value="3"/>
LEE <input style="width: 20px;" type="text" value="1"/>	LEE <input style="width: 20px;" type="text" value="3"/>	LEE <input style="width: 20px;" type="text" value="2"/>

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Tell students: These are your instructions for how to vote. Show picture: For preferential elections, we use numbers to vote, like this...

Ask students: Can you see any ticks? Crosses? Empty squares? Coloured in squares? You cannot vote this way. Click to get 1st dot point: You must write a number in the square next to every person on the voting paper, don't leave one out.

2nd dot point: The numbers should be *in order*, so the order of your choice.

3rd dot point: Write number 1 next to your favourite person, your first choice, the one you want to make decisions in government. Write number 2 next to your second choice, write number 3 next to your third choice, and you keep going until you have written a number next to every person on your paper.

4th dot point: don't forget, you don't need to write your name on the paper, you only have to write the numbers.

EVERY VOTE COUNTS

Mock election

How would you improve your school?

<p>Big playground</p> 	<p>Sports Centre</p> 
<p>ICT upgrade</p> 	<p>School farm</p> 

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MOCK ELECTION ACTIVITY – tell students it is now time to vote!

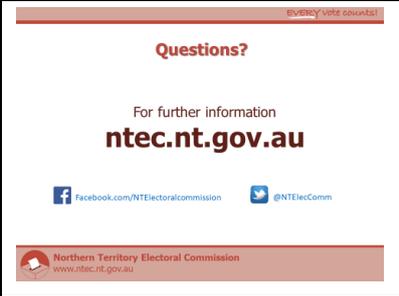
Set the scene: "Let's pretend that the NT Government is going to give your school a sum of money to build something big, what they build will be students' choice. Here are your choices...." Read out each one as you click them onto the screen.

Tell students: "You will be given information about each one, so that you can make an informed vote. We will need 4 volunteers, one for each option."

Teachers to choose students who are confident readers and will read out loud enough for everyone to hear. Those students who may add a little drama are also good!

Provide students with prompt cards (available on our website) to read out, help where required.

Before handing out ballot papers (available on our website) reiterate voting instructions: "when you receive your ballot paper go to the voting screens. Don't crowd, let everyone have a free vote. Number the ballot paper in the order of your choice with #1 being your favourite and first choice, and #4 the one you don't really like. Then put your ballot paper in the ballot box here" (have a designated voting area and put your ballot box away from here to help clear students away).

	Refer to <u>Teachers instructions for vote and count</u> for tips in conducting the election and for how to count votes in a preferential election.
 <p>Questions?</p> <p>For further information ntec.nt.gov.au</p> <p>Facebook.com/NTElectoralcommission @NTElecComm</p> <p>Northern Territory Electoral Commission www.ntec.nt.gov.au</p>	<i>[Final slide – no notes]</i>