



## TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS FOR MOCK ELECTIONS AND VOTE COUNTING

### HOW TO RUN PRETEND ELECTION:

- Go through each choice and elaborate on what they would offer to your school. With the younger students you could ask them to tell you some things that would be good about each choice, or what kind of things they could do with each one. Some examples:
  - Arts and Music Centre – place to learn about art, dance, music and cultural activities. Learn how to play musical instruments and make songs.
  - Big playground – for play at recess and lunch and after school
  - School pool – for swimming lessons and community use
  - School Farm – learn how to grow food, look after animals and about bush tucker.
- Hand out ballot papers
- 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.
- 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.

### HOW TO COUNT VOTES:

- 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 in the PowerPoint with the students, the one after the pretend election slide → *Who wins this election?*
- Depending on the size of your group, you can gather students to one area (on grouped desks or mat) or choose around 4 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. (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 results table on the white board or print a large 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 (if any) 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.)
- Calculate the 'more than half' figure. Tell students: *This is the number of votes the winner must get to win this election.*
- Sort ballot papers → look at the number 1 votes 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?
- This choice will be excluded, so take this pile of ballot papers – ONLY this pile – and distribute these according to the number 2 votes, 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 votes. 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. Exclude (or take out) the choice with the lowest number of votes so far. Turn over that sorting card. Distribute these ballot papers according to the number **2 votes 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.
- This should result in a winner. See sample results table below.

If there's a tie at any stage of counting:

- a) If there is a tie for which choice to exclude or take out – go back to the most recent count when there was a difference and the choice with lowest number of preferences is *excluded* from count.
- b) If there's a tie at the primary count (number 1s), conduct a draw (like a raffle) to choose one. The choice chosen in the draw is *excluded* from the count.
- c) If there is a tie at the last count, when there are only 2 choices left, conduct a draw (like a raffle) to choose one. This time, the choice that is chosen in the draw is the winner.

## SAMPLE RESULTS TABLE

| <b>TOTAL VOTES</b>  | <b>INFORMAL VOTES</b> | <b>TOTAL FORMAL VOTES</b> | <b>MORE THAN HALF 50% + 1</b> |              |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>32</b>           | <b>2</b>              | <b>30</b>                 | <b>16</b>                     |              |
| CANDIDATES →        | ARTS/MUSIC            | PLAYGROUND                | POOL                          | FARM         |
| PRIMARY COUNT       | 12                    | 8                         | <del>4</del>                  | 6            |
| FIRST DISTRIBUTION  | 1                     | 2                         | -                             | 1            |
| SUB TOTAL           | 13                    | 10                        | -                             | <del>7</del> |
| SECOND DISTRIBUTION | 1                     | 6                         | -                             | -            |
| TOTAL               | 14                    | 16                        | -                             | -            |
|                     |                       | WINNER                    |                               |              |

**RESULTS TABLE FOR PRETEND ELECTION – younger students**

| <b>TOTAL VOTES</b>  | <b>INFORMAL VOTES</b> | <b>TOTAL FORMAL VOTES</b> | <b>MORE THAN HALF<br/>50% + 1</b> |             |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| CANDIDATES →        | <b>ARTS/MUSIC</b>     | <b>PLAYGROUND</b>         | <b>POOL</b>                       | <b>FARM</b> |
| PRIMARY COUNT       |                       |                           |                                   |             |
| FIRST DISTRIBUTION  |                       |                           |                                   |             |
| SUB TOTAL           |                       |                           |                                   |             |
| SECOND DISTRIBUTION |                       |                           |                                   |             |
| TOTAL               |                       |                           |                                   |             |

**RESULTS TABLE FOR PRETEND ELECTION – senior students**

| <b>TOTAL VOTES</b>  | <b>INFORMAL VOTES</b> | <b>TOTAL FORMAL VOTES</b> | <b>MORE THAN HALF<br/>50% + 1</b> |                   |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| CANDIDATES →        | <b>MR JOBS</b>        | <b>MS EDUCATION</b>       | <b>MR ENVIRONMENT</b>             | <b>MS HOUSING</b> |
| PRIMARY COUNT       |                       |                           |                                   |                   |
| FIRST DISTRIBUTION  |                       |                           |                                   |                   |
| SUB TOTAL           |                       |                           |                                   |                   |
| SECOND DISTRIBUTION |                       |                           |                                   |                   |
| TOTAL               |                       |                           |                                   |                   |