

## FACILITATOR NOTES : YEARS 7

### VOTING AND DEMOCRACY

45 minutes



Australian Curriculum - CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP – Knowledge and understanding:

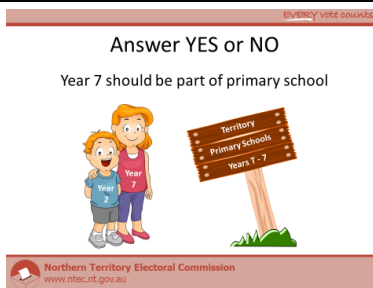
- *The process for constitutional change through a referendum*

What you need:

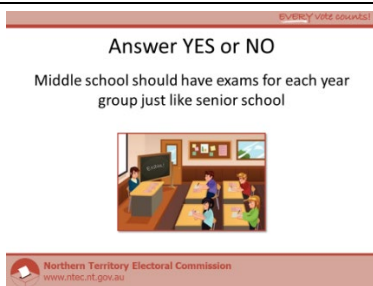
- PowerPoint presentation (on NTEC website)
- YES/NO case prompt cards (attached – also on NTEC website)
- Ballot papers (attached – also NTEC website)
- Teacher instructions for vote and count (attached - also on NTEC website)
- Voting area where students can vote privately
- Ballot box or something to collect ballot papers in



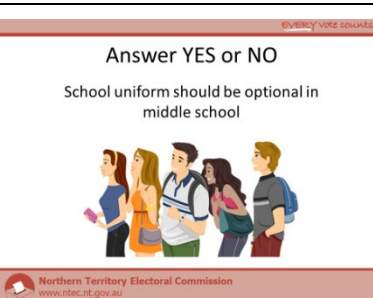
Tell students: "Today we will be talking about voting, but it's a special kind of voting where you give your opinion to a question, rather than voting for a person or a representative. We are going to start with me asking a few questions to you, specifically, as Year 7 students"








Tell students they are YES or NO questions. Read out the statement. Ask students: "Hands up for 'yes'.... Hands up for 'no'." Confirm results







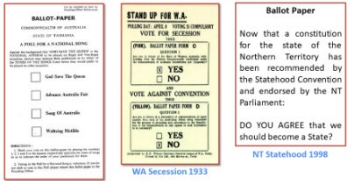

Read out statement/question. Ask students: "Hands up for 'yes'.... Hands up for 'no'." Confirm results



Read out statement/question. Ask students: "Hands up for 'yes'.... Hands up for 'no'." Confirm results

<p>every vote counts!</p> <p>What do we call this kind of vote?</p> <h1>Re f e r e n d u m</h1>  <p>Northern Territory Electoral Commission www.ntec.nt.gov.au</p>	<p>Ask students: "What do we call this type of vote, where you answer yes or no to answer a question?" If required, click in some clues, 'R' then 'm'. Confirm if they have all heard this word before (usually they have).</p>
<p>every vote counts!</p> <h2>Definition of referendum</h2> <p><b>REFERENDUM:</b> a vote in which all the people in a country or area give their opinion about an important political or social question (dictionary definition)</p> <p><b>CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM:</b> a vote on any proposed change to a country's Constitution.</p> <p>Northern Territory Electoral Commission www.ntec.nt.gov.au</p>	<p>Tell students: "This is the definition of a referendum," read out definition in full. (After ...'country or area' you could elaborate and say "for example the NT, who have had a referendum just for people in the NT). Tell students: "Then there is a constitutional referendum, which is [read out definition in full]". "To understand this, you need to know..." (next slide)</p>
<p>every vote counts!</p> <h2>What is the Constitution?</h2> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p><b>AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION</b></p> <p>The Australian Constitution is the set of rules by which Australia is run.</p>  </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p><b>FEDERATION</b></p> <p>Federation was the process by which 6 separate British colonies agreed to unite to form the Commonwealth of Australia. This happened 1 January, 1901.</p>  </div> </div> <p>Northern Territory Electoral Commission www.ntec.nt.gov.au</p>	<p>Ask students: "What is the Constitution?" Confirm answer with click to show definition. (Students may say it's the law, or a book of laws, let them know this isn't correct, though many people think this.). Show picture. (Note: the picture is of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia Act, which was the act (law) that passed through British Parliament which installed the Constitution in Australia.) Ask students: "When did we get the Constitution?" (1901) "What happened in Australia at the time, that gave us the Constitution?" (Federation). Show formal definition of federation. Show picture. Ask students: "What's interesting about this picture?" (No NT, or NT is part of SA). Elaborate: NT became part of SA in 1863 when SA bought the NT from NSW. Not too long after, SA no longer wanted the NT under their control (too expensive) but did not have any options. The Constitution has a special section (s126) that allows the states to 'surrender' any territories to Commonwealth control. SA did this in 1911, and NT is still under Commonwealth/federal control, although we now have self-government.</p>
<p>every vote counts!</p> <h2>Definition of referendum</h2> <p><b>REFERENDUM:</b> a vote in which all the people in a country or area give their opinion about an important political or social question</p> <p><b>CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM:</b> a vote on any proposed change to a country's Constitution</p> <p><b>PLEBISCITE:</b> a referendum, sometimes called an advisory referendum, that does not affect the Constitution.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div> <p>Northern Territory Electoral Commission www.ntec.nt.gov.au</p>	<p>Tell students: "Back to our definitions. We know about referendums, and constitutional referendums, but there's another word that's used... 'plebiscite'. Has anyone heard of this word?" Show definition, tell students: "Plebiscite is the same as a referendum [read out referendum definition again] these words are interchangeable." Elaborate: Sometimes people just say referendum when they really mean a constitutional referendum, and these are different. Show pictures: When we have constitutional referendums, and for some regular referendums, these are treated like every other election. People go into voting centres to cast a vote, where they write down their opinion to the referendum question.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">EVERY VOTE COUNTS</p> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Differences between....</h3> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p><b>CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUMS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only for proposed changes to the Constitution</li> <li>Bill must pass by both houses of parliament first, then the people vote, then given Royal Assent if passed</li> <li>Parliament bound by result of vote</li> <li>Compulsory for all eligible voters</li> <li>Voters must write YES or NO to the proposed change</li> </ul> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top; width: 50%;"> <p><b>PLEBISCITES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be a question about anything, usually a political or social question</li> <li>People vote first (to inform debate), then voted on by parliament, then given Royal Assent if passed.</li> <li>Parliament not bound by result of vote</li> <li>May or may not be compulsory</li> <li>How to answer question may vary</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">Northern Territory Electoral Commission www.ntec.nt.gov.au</p>	<p><b>CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUMS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only for proposed changes to the Constitution</li> <li>Bill must pass by both houses of parliament first, then the people vote, then given Royal Assent if passed</li> <li>Parliament bound by result of vote</li> <li>Compulsory for all eligible voters</li> <li>Voters must write YES or NO to the proposed change</li> </ul>	<p><b>PLEBISCITES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be a question about anything, usually a political or social question</li> <li>People vote first (to inform debate), then voted on by parliament, then given Royal Assent if passed.</li> <li>Parliament not bound by result of vote</li> <li>May or may not be compulsory</li> <li>How to answer question may vary</li> </ul>	<p>Tell students: "Let's look at how constitutional referendums are different to regular referendums, which we'll call plebiscites to be very clear."</p> <p>Click through each one individually, reading them out in full. For the <u>second point</u>, first ask students how laws are made, the basic steps → bill proposed, debated, voted on, if gets majority is passed. For most states and at the federal level – but not NT – bill then goes to a second house for the same process. Once passed by both houses it must be given 'royal assent' by the Queen's representative. In NT this is the Administrator – who can only give assent, not 'royal' assent as the Governor-General can or state governors.)</p> <p>The go through the second point highlighting this important difference between constitutional referendums and plebiscites.</p>
<p><b>CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUMS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only for proposed changes to the Constitution</li> <li>Bill must pass by both houses of parliament first, then the people vote, then given Royal Assent if passed</li> <li>Parliament bound by result of vote</li> <li>Compulsory for all eligible voters</li> <li>Voters must write YES or NO to the proposed change</li> </ul>	<p><b>PLEBISCITES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be a question about anything, usually a political or social question</li> <li>People vote first (to inform debate), then voted on by parliament, then given Royal Assent if passed.</li> <li>Parliament not bound by result of vote</li> <li>May or may not be compulsory</li> <li>How to answer question may vary</li> </ul>		
<p style="text-align: center;">EVERY VOTE COUNTS</p> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Some examples – Constitutional Referendums</h3> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Republic and Preamble 1999      Aboriginal people counted 1967</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Northern Territory Electoral Commission www.ntec.nt.gov.au</p>	<p>Tell students: "Let's look at some real life examples of constitutional referendums".</p> <p><u>Republic and Preamble</u>: This was the most recent constitutional referendum in Australia, which took place in 1999. The change was about Australia becoming a republic, which means independent of Britain, and the Queen would no longer be our head of state. (Students may have further questions about what being a republic means.)</p> <p>Ask students: "What was the result of this constitutional referendum? Are we a republic?" (No)</p> <p><u>1967 referendum</u>: The Constitution includes information about counting the national population or the 'census' and originally stated that Aboriginal people were not to be included in this count "...Aboriginal natives shall not be counted". The referendum in 1967 proposed removing this exception to include Aboriginal people in any population calculations. Ask students: "What was the result of this referendum?" Are Aboriginal people included in the census? (Yes)</p> <p>This referendum is now seen as significant in the history of Aboriginal rights. It sometimes confused with Aboriginal people being given right to vote (this happened by law in 1962) and Aboriginal people being granted citizenship (this happened, along with everyone else, in 1949 when Australian citizenship was introduced.)</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">EVERY VOTE COUNTS</p> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Some examples – Constitutional Referendums</h3> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 20px;">  </div> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>1977 Referendums</b></p> <p>An Act to alter the Constitution so as to allow electors in Territories, as well as electors in the States, to vote at referendums on proposed laws to alter the Constitution.</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Northern Territory Electoral Commission www.ntec.nt.gov.au</p>	<p>In 1977 there was a constitutional referendum asking if people living in Territories (there are 10 territories in Australia) should be allowed to vote in referendums. They were not included in the Constitution originally because the Constitution is very focused on the states, and the relationship between the states and the federal parliament. There is very little mention about territories. This means people living in Australian territories have different constitutional rights to those in states.</p> <p>Ask students: "What was the outcome of this referendum?" Yes, Territorians can vote in referendums, but ironically they did not vote in this one in 1977.</p> <p>(Territory referendum votes are counted differently though, but this is explained on a later slide.)</p>		

<p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">BREVITY VOTE SOURCES</p> <p>Some examples – referendums/plebiscites</p>  <p style="font-size: x-small;">National Anthem 1977 Northern Territory Electoral Commission www.ntec.nt.gov.au</p>	<p>Tell students: “Here are some examples of regular referendums or plebiscites that we’ve had in the past”</p> <p><u>1977</u>: People voted 1,2,3,4 (preferential) for the national anthem. Discuss the choices if you like. Ask students what the result was. (Advance Australia Fair)</p> <p><u>1933</u>: Just people in WA voted on whether they should ‘secede’ or separate from the rest of Australia. Ask students what the result was. (No)</p> <p><u>1998</u>: Just people in NT voted on whether NT should become a state. Ask students what the result was. (No) The referendum question was very specific, it was not about statehood in general but whether people accepted the new constitution that had been written for the new state of NT. The outcome of the vote was 51% said no, 49% said yes. Some of the people who voted no liked the concept of statehood, but didn’t like the new constitution or didn’t like the process by which it was developed.</p> <p>You are likely to get questions about what does it mean to change to a state. It means we would be the same as the other states according to the constitution on what laws we can and can’t make, and what we have control over. We are not the same at the moment. There are other differences too. No need to change the name though, we can still be called Northern Territory but be a state.</p>
<p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">BREVITY VOTE SOURCES</p> <p>Some examples – referendums/plebiscites</p>  <p style="font-size: x-small;">Northern Territory Electoral Commission www.ntec.nt.gov.au</p>	<p>Here are some examples of well known referendums from other countries.</p> <p><u>Top left</u>: Ask students if they have heard of ‘Brexit’. Explain that it is about Britain/UK leaving/exiting the European Union. In June 2016 voters were required to place an ‘x’ next to their choice which was either ‘remain a member of the European Union’ or ‘leave the European Union’. Ask students if they know what the result was. (Leave)</p> <p><u>Bottom left</u>: Ask students what four countries make up the United Kingdom/UK? (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland). Scotland held a referendum in 2014 to ask voters if they wanted Scotland to be an independent country and separate from the UK. Ask students what the result was? (Stay in UK. There is now talks of a second referendum, as Scotland very much wanted to stay in European Union)</p> <p><u>Top right</u>: In 2015 NZ held a referendum about a new NZ flag. Anyone could put through ideas, from which 5 were chosen for the people to choose from. Voters were to vote preferentially in order of 1,2,3,4,5.</p> <p><u>Bottom right</u>: In 2016 the second phase was for voters to choose from the winner of the first referendum and the existing NZ flag. This was a postal vote and the picture on the slide is the actual letter sent to voters. Voters had to tick their preferred option. Ask students what the result was. (Existing NZ flag.)</p>
	<p>An earlier slide touched on this already...</p> <p>There is a process by which constitutional referendums must go through. First the constitutional change goes through federal parliament as a bill. The bill is introduced and later debated and voted on. If it passes, it then goes to the other</p>

EVERY VOTE COUNTS!

### Constitutional referendums

There is a process that must be followed in order to change the Australian Constitution

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house for debate and a vote. If it is passed by the second house, it does not go straight to royal assent, instead the referendum process begins. It is up to those members of parliament who voted yes for the change to prepare a 'yes case' (reasons why voters should vote yes) and those members of parliament who voted no prepare the 'no case'. This information is sent out to all voters so that they are fully informed about both sides of the debate. A referendum election is then held where voters either write yes or no to the proposed change. This must be held within 2 – 6 months after the bill passed in parliament.

The last click will bring up two historical examples of yes cases developed for the republic referendum and the 1967 referendum to include Aboriginal people in the census count.

EVERY VOTE COUNTS!

### Double Majority

For a constitutional referendum to be successful it must be approved by a **DOUBLE MAJORITY** of voters:

- A national majority of all voters from all states and territories
- A majority of voters in a majority of states (i.e. at least 4 out of 6 states)

A referendum is passed when:

and

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Tell students that once the voting has been done, it is time to count the votes, and there are two stages to the counting process. This is because for a referendum vote to pass, you need what is called a 'double majority'. On each click explain the 2 yes majorities needed to pass a referendum (majority meaning *more than half*):

- A majority of voters (from across Australia as a whole) who voted yes
- AND a majority of states (4 out of 6) who resulted in a majority yes vote (show picture)

Both of these must be achieved for the referendum to pass, and therefore for the constitutional change to be made. Ask students: "What's interesting about the states' map?" NT (nor ACT) are counted with the majority of states, this is states only, but we are counted in in the first part, looking at the majority of Australia as a whole. This is because the Constitution really only talks about the states, and not territories, and this is one of the differences between states and territories.

EVERY VOTE COUNTS!

### Which referendums passed?

PROPOSAL	YEAR	NATIONAL % OF YES VOTES	STATES WITH MAJORITY OF YES VOTES
Give Commonwealth power over essential services	1926	43%	NSW, QLD
Give Commonwealth power to legislate on social services	1946	54%	ALL
Give Commonwealth power to control rents and prices	1946	41%	NONE
Include Aboriginal people in population counts (census)	1967	91%	ALL
Have Senate and House of Rep elections at same time	1977	62%	NSW, VIC, SA
Make Australia a Republic with President as head of state	1999	45%	NONE

Of the 44 Constitutional Referendums in Australia, only 8 have passed

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**ACTIVITY:** Tell students here are the results of past constitutional referendums in Australia. They need to tell you which ones passed because they achieved the required 'double majority'. Go through each one individually, asking students "did it pass?" [Only 2 (social services) and 4 (Aboriginal count) passed.] Show last sentence and read it out loud. Tell students it is deliberately difficult to pass referendums, the Constitution wasn't designed to be changed easily and often, only when it really is what the people/society want.

EVERY VOTE COUNTS!

### Mock referendum

Fireworks should be legal for personal use on special days

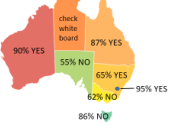
[www.ntec.nt.gov.au](http://www.ntec.nt.gov.au)

**MOCK REFERENDUM ACTIVITY** - Tell students it is now time to vote in pretend/mock referendum to see how they work.

The question they will be voting on is (show on click) whether fireworks should be legal for personal use on special days. (Don't forget second click for the animated gif!)

Ask students: Where else in Australia are fireworks legal like what we have on firecracker night here in the NT (where you can buy your own, and let them off at home or around your neighbourhood)? (No other state or territory has legal





	<p>fireworks like we do. Still have fireworks displays though, run by professionals.)</p> <p>Tell students: This referendum is a national question that is being run in all states and territories in Australia (pretend of course). 'Special days' just means that in addition to Territory Day there would be other set days like maybe New Year's Eve, Australia Day etc. It will only involve set days, and not just any day you like. So the only big change for us (NT) would be extra 'firecracker nights' a year.</p>
<p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">everybody vote counts!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Yes and No cases</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p><b>YES</b> Fireworks should be legal on special days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional Territory Day celebration</li> <li>• Already restrictions for safety</li> <li>• Most people responsible</li> <li>• Good for economy</li> </ul> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p><b>NO</b> Fireworks should NOT be legal on special days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Already banned across Australia</li> <li>• Dangerous</li> <li>• People don't follow the rules</li> <li>• Bad for dogs and dog owners</li> </ul> </div> </div> <p style="font-size: x-small;">Northern Territory Electoral Commission www.ntec.nt.gov.au</p>	<p>Tell students: "Remember, with referendums the members of parliament for each side prepare information for the public about the 'yes case' and the 'no case'. It is now time for you to be informed about both cases."</p> <p>Ask for 4 volunteers: 2 for the yes case and 2 for the no case. Hand each pair either the <u>yes or no prompt cards</u> (available on our website). Each pair will alternate and read out the 4 dot points for either the yes or no case. Have the students read the yes case first, then show the summary on first click, then hear the no case, then click in the no summary. Let students know it is now time to vote!</p> <p><b>VOTING:</b> Before handing out the <u>ballot papers</u> (available on our website) remind/ask students how they need to vote → write down the words YES or NO in the box on the ballot paper. Have a voting area with screens/partitions for a private vote, and let students know this is where they go to vote (you may want to discuss secret voting). Have a ballot box and put it in a separate space to the voting area to help clear students out. Tell students to put their completed ballot paper in the ballot box. They may ask if they need to fold it, it is up to them, but for privacy they may like to fold it once (only once as it is easier to count with less folds)</p>
<p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">everybody vote counts!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Referendum results</b></p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: x-small;">A double majority is required for this referendum</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <p style="font-size: x-small;">NATIONAL % VOTES</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">% VOTES BY STATE/TERRITORY</p> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p><b>51% YES</b></p> <p><b>49% NO</b></p> </div>  </div> <p style="font-size: x-small;">Northern Territory Electoral Commission www.ntec.nt.gov.au</p>	<p>Before you click further on this slide count the votes first (just show the heading). Get 2 students to do the count.</p> <p><b>COUNT:</b> First separate the votes into 2 piles → yes and no. If there are any informal votes (like "maybe" or blank ones) these need to be taken out. Then count each pile. Write the results up on white board: total yes votes, total no votes, informal votes (if any), total votes. Convert the results to a percentage. (Yes votes/total votes x 100, no votes/total votes x 100, informal votes/total votes x 100.) Circle either the yes or no % with the winning majority (over 50%).</p> <p><b>RESULTS:</b> On first click, remind students that a double majority is required. Tell them we'll first look at the national vote, as this referendum was done across Australia. Show results. It's close! Tell students that so far there is a majority yes vote, we now need to check the state votes. Click to show map. Tell students they can use the circled % amount on the white board as the result for all NT. Ask if the double majority was reached. (They usually say yes straight away, BUT it's a trick ☺, only 3 <i>states</i> have a majority yes, the other yes votes are from territories and therefore do not count.)</p> <p>The overall result is a no, because a double majority was not reached (4 states with yes vote required).</p>


QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONS?

For further information  
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[Final slide – no notes]

# YES Case - Fireworks should be legal on special days

- The Northern Territory allows fireworks to celebrate Territory Day on 1 July. This a long held tradition and a much loved community event.
- The NT already has restrictions in place to keep the community safe from fireworks, like you can only buy fireworks and set them off at certain times, and only on Territory Day.
- Injuries and other incidents are rare and most people use their fireworks responsibly. Why should the majority of people who do the right thing be punished when only a small group do the wrong thing?
- Allowing the use of personal fireworks on Territory Day is very good for the Northern Territory's economy. Fireworks are hugely popular and people come from interstate just for this event.

# NO Case - Fireworks should NOT be legal on special days

- Fireworks are already banned in every state and territory, except the Northern Territory. These laws should be the same everywhere in Australia.
- Fireworks should only be used by licensed professionals as they can be dangerous to people and property. Every year in the Northern Territory there are accidents and injuries from fireworks.
- While there may be restrictions on fireworks use for Territory Day, these are often ignored. There are always fireworks let off on days when it is not allowed.
- Fireworks are terrifying for dogs which makes Territory Day very difficult for dog owners and the council who pick up runaway dogs. This is especially difficult when fireworks are let off on days it is not allowed.



## BALLOT PAPER



### PRACTISE PLEBISCITE

Instructions to voter:

*Write YES or NO in the space  
provided opposite the  
questions set out below*

**A PROPOSED LAW:**  
to allow the personal use of  
fireworks on special days

DO YOU APPROVE  
OF THIS CHANGE?

Write "YES"  
or "NO"

## BALLOT PAPER



### PRACTISE PLEBISCITE

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Write "YES"  
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