



TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS FOR MOCK ELECTIONS AND VOTE COUNTING

YEARS 3-4 MOCK ELECTION: *What is your favourite fruit?*

- Follow the notes on the mock election slide of the Year 3/4 PowerPoint.
- Choose 4 students to act as candidates. They only need to read the 'candidate prompt cards' out loud.
- Reiterate final voting instructions.
- Hand out ballot papers slowly so there is no crowding in the voting area (it's best to set up an area where students can vote privately). Have the ballot box (or equivalent) on the other side of the room to help clear out students from the voting area.
- Students will likely ask, "do I fold it?" regarding their ballot papers. It's up to them, it's not required but may help to keep their vote a secret. But one fold is enough!
- Ballot papers to go in the ballot box.

HOW TO COUNT VOTES:

- You will need sorting cards. It can just be five pieces of paper with the name of one candidate on each one, plus one for 'informal votes'. You could use the candidate prompt cards as sorting cards.
- Depending on the size of your group, you can gather students to one area (on grouped desks or mat) or choose 4 students to assist with the counting at the front of the class. To set up, lay out the sorting cards in 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 are other things written on the ballot paper, you always want to include as many ballot papers as possible to the count.)
- Count the total number of formal ballot papers.
- Record these in a results table (provided below). You should draw a results table on a white board or print out a copy of the 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 'incorrect' votes / total 'correct' votes for plainer English)
- Remind students that to win this election you must get 'more than half' the total votes. We call this the 'absolute majority', and 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 '+ 0.5' to get 'more than half'. For example. If 31 students voted, the absolute majority would be 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/absolute majority. Tell students: *This is the number of votes a candidate must get to win this election.*
- Sort ballot papers → look at number 1 votes and place onto the correct sorting card accordingly.
- Count each pile and record these results in the table as the primary count. If one of the candidates gets the absolute majority (50%+1 number) declare that one the winner.
- If no candidate gets the absolute majority, ask students which candidate got the smallest amount of number 1 votes?
- This candidate will be 'excluded' from the count, so take this pile of ballot papers – ONLY this pile – and distribute that candidate's ballot papers according to the number 2 votes, making a second pile under each of the remaining piles. E.g. if strawberries got the smallest amount of number 1s, take the pile of ballot papers with number 1 for strawberries, turn over the strawberries sorting card, put ballot papers on remaining sorting cards according to their number 2 votes. Make this a separate pile to the primary count. See provided Sample Results Table below.
- Record results and add up the sub-totals (make one pile on each sorting card now). Is there a winner yet (i.e. has anyone reached the absolute majority amount)?
- If not, take out the next candidate with the lowest number of votes so far. Turn over that sorting card. Distribute these votes according to the number **2 votes first**. As before, make a separate pile on the sorting card from the main pile. If the number 2 vote is unavailable (it's been taken out) look at number 3 vote. ALWAYS look at number 2 first. Add up the totals.
- This should result in a winner

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

- a) If there is a tie for which candidate to exclude or take out – go back to the most recent count when there was a difference and the candidate 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 candidate chosen in the draw is *excluded* from the count.
- c) If there is a tie at the last count, when there are only 2 candidates left, conduct a draw (like a raffle) to choose one. This time, the candidate that is chosen in the draw is the winner.

SAMPLE RESULTS TABLE

TOTAL VOTES 32	INFORMAL VOTES 2	TOTAL FORMAL VOTES 30	ABSOLUTE MAJORITY 50% + 1 16	
CANDIDATES →	WATERMELON	APPLES	STRAWBERRIES	BANANAS
PRIMARY COUNT	12	8	4	6
FIRST DISTRIBUTION	1	2	-	1
SUB TOTAL	13	10	-	7
SECOND DISTRIBUTION	1	6	-	-
TOTAL	14	16	-	-
		WINNER		

RESULTS TABLE FOR MOCK ELECTION – *What's your favourite fruit?*

TOTAL VOTES	INFORMAL VOTES	TOTAL FORMAL VOTES	ABSOLUTE MAJORITY 50% + 1	
CANDIDATES →	WATERMELON	APPLES	STRAWBERRIES	BANANAS
PRIMARY COUNT				
FIRST DISTRIBUTION				
SUB TOTAL				
SECOND DISTRIBUTION				
TOTAL				