

MY ELECTION MY FIJI



Teacher Guide

Introduction to Elections
Social Science



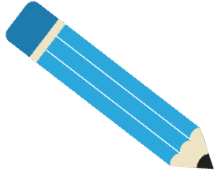
Learning Outcomes

Year Nine (9) Learning Outcomes

Sub Strand	Content Learning Outcomes	Achievement indicators	Scope and Content
1.1 Identity, Culture and Social Organisation	SS9.1.1.3 Investigate the contributions of local leaders to societal development and the promotion of social organisation	SS9.1.1.3.2 Explain how local leaders acquire their positions and contribute to societal development and social organisation	Ways local leaders acquire their positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elections Appointment - Traditional selection - Contributions to societal development and social organisation - Promote law and order - Encourage participation and inclusion

Year Ten (10) Learning Outcomes

Sub Strand	Content Learning Outcomes	Achievement indicators	Scope and Content
1.1 Government and Democracy	SS10.1.1.2 Understand the role of elections in a democratic society	Explain the features of a democratic election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representative democracy - Features of free, fair and transparent election - Universal suffrage - One person One vote - The secret ballot - Electoral offences
		Analyze how the voting process contributes to fair and democratic outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voter registration - Polling stations - Voting processes - Participation in voting - Reasons for voting - Mock voting exercise



Activity

Where you see this sign, there will be an activity for you to complete. Your teacher will advise you about whether to do this independently or as a group. Your teacher might give you additional activities to complete.



Discuss

When you see this sign, there will be something for you to discuss such as questions or statements. Try to consider different perspectives and explain your ideas. Listen carefully to what others have to say and ask questions. An important part of democracy is that everyone has a say - it's important that you share and discuss your ideas in a respectful manner.



Explore

When you see this sign, there will be something for you to explore further or in more detail. You might need to work independently to improve your knowledge and understanding even further. It's always a good idea to challenge yourself and go the extra mile.



Define

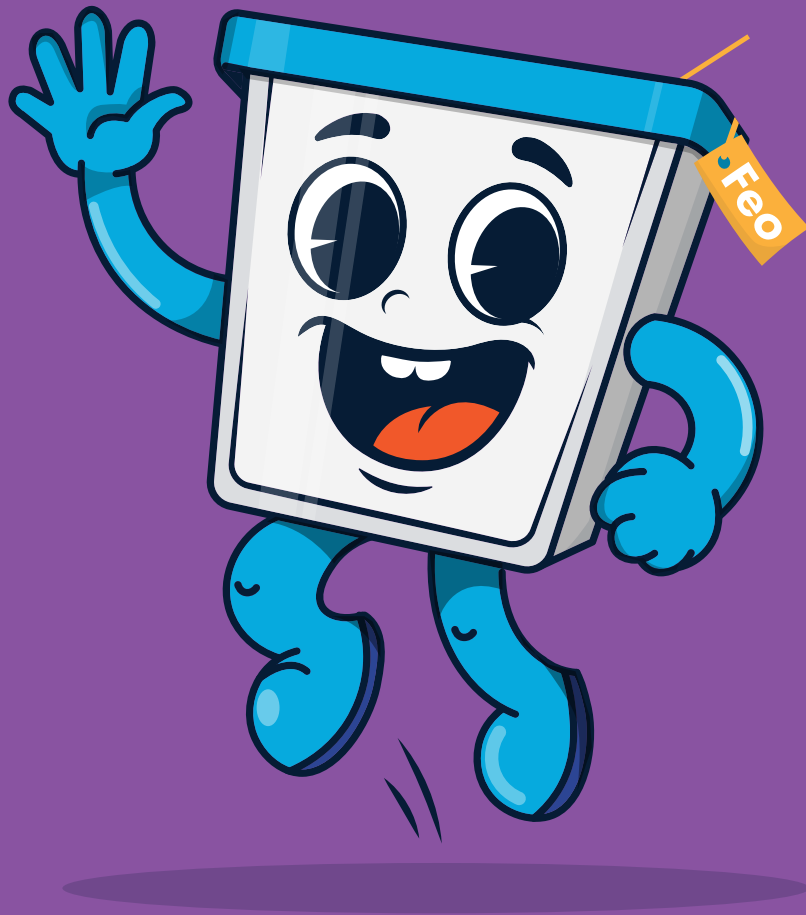
When you see this sign, there might be new words or concepts. You can write your own definitions and draw pictures or symbols to help you remember new words. You might want to think of words that have a similar meaning (synonyms) or words that have the opposite meaning (antonyms). Try writing your own sentence using the new word.

Democracy and Elections

SS10.1.1.2

Explain the features of a democratic election:

- Representative democracies
- Universal Suffrage
- The role of the Fijian Elections Office in democratic elections
- One person, one vote



Understanding Democracy



'Demos' = the people
'Kratos' = to rule



1. What do you already know about the concept of democracy?
2. What is the fairest way to make decisions about how a country is run and by whom?
3. What are the key features of a healthy democracy?

The word democracy comes from two ancient Greek words: the literal meaning is 'rule by the people'. Democracy is a form of government where the people are able to decide how they want a country to be governed and by whom. Citizens choose a representative through the process of fair and regular elections where they can vote for a preferred candidate or political party who represents their views.

A democracy should have an independent justice system to ensure that laws are respected. Judicial independence means that judges are separate from the government. They are not pressured or influenced and are free to make impartial decisions based on the facts and the law. A healthy democracy also needs a free press which means that a country's newspapers, television and radio stations are able to express any opinions they want including being critical of governments or leaders.

A democracy is not ruled by a King or Queen, someone with money or power or a dictator who people are afraid of; a democracy is governed by someone who is chosen by the people to represent their ideas. In a democracy, everyone gets to have a say in how a country is run.



a. Write your own definition of a healthy democracy

b. Draw a symbol or picture to represent democracy

c. Describe the opposite of a democracy

d. List the key features of a healthy democracy

Early Democracies

It is believed that the first democratic form of government was developed in Athens in Greece (Europe) in the late 6th century. This political system was known as 'demokratia' and gave power to male citizens rather than to a dictator or ruling class which had been the norm for several hundred years before.

Citizens directly participated in decision making (rather than electing representatives like in modern democracies). Unfortunately, only free, native-born, land-owning men were considered citizens with full political rights.

Women, slaves and foreigners were

excluded from citizenship and from political participation. This meant that almost 90% of the population were not involved in voting.

Citizens would meet in the agora to discuss and vote on important matters; they raised their hands to vote, and their decisions became the law.

This ancient political system was extremely influential in the Mediterranean region and inspired similar systems in other Greek city-states as well as influencing the ancient Roman Republic. Democracies look very different today.

Democratic or not democratic? You decide:

- a. All people are treated equally and fairly in society.
- b. The media has freedom of speech and can criticize the government.
- c. You must pay a fee to take part in an election.
- d. The media is controlled and owned by the government.
- e. People choose someone to represent their views during elections.
- f. You have to vote for whoever your parents vote for.
- g. The country is ruled by a monarch who has the final say on all decisions.
- h. Elections are easy to access for everyone including persons with disabilities.
- i. The media only promotes/advertises one candidate before the election.
- j. Everyone over the age of 18 is allowed to register to vote.
- k. You must reveal who you voted for as you leave the polling station.
- l. Elections take place regularly so that the people can choose new leaders.
- m. Only some people are allowed to vote in elections.
- n. Elections take place every 100 years.
- o. Not all votes are worth the same in the final count.
- p. Your vote is your choice, and you mark the ballot paper in private.
- q. Candidates buy your votes with bribes and enticements.
- r. There are no women or ethnic minority groups elected into government.



Representative democracies

Most democratic countries are representative democracies. This involves elections which people can vote in, to choose who represents them at a government level. This differs to a direct democracy where citizens vote directly on laws and policies rather than electing representatives.



Sometimes, we might participate directly in decision-making, often through a referendum. A referendum is when everyone in a country gets to vote on a decision such as changing a law or choosing a policy. Instead of representatives deciding, the people have the final say by voting yes or no.



In a representative democracy, there must be a choice of who people want to vote for. Elections must be free to participate in and conducted fairly, without bribery or coercion. Democracy means everyone should have an equal voice regardless of who they are or where they come from. A successful democracy can give every individual the opportunity to make a difference in the way the future is shaped. An election is regarded as valid in a democracy, only when it offers real alternatives.



Key words activity:

For each word: Define it in your own words, draw it, find synonyms and antonyms, use it in a sentence.

Candidate: A person who is nominated for election; you vote for your preferred candidate or representative during an election

Election: The process through which citizens choose who will represent them in government
Government: The group of people with the authority to govern (rule) a country or state

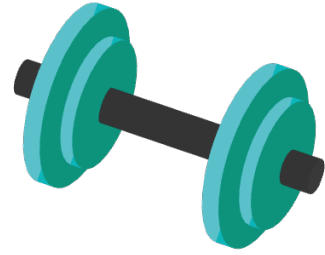
Political Party: A group of people who have the same beliefs about how to run the country and want to become part of the government – political parties have policies and ideas about how to run the country

Member of Parliament/MP: The official title of someone who has been chosen to represent the people that voted for them.

Citizen: A member of a country or state (a person) with rights and responsibilities

Dictatorship: A system of government in which a person or a small group, rules with almost unlimited power. The ruler of a dictatorship is called a dictator

Strengthening democracies



1. What makes a democracy stronger?
2. How can democratic processes be improved to make them fairer?
3. How am I involved in democratic processes?

A healthy democracy requires citizen participation. One of the easiest ways to participate is to vote. A democracy is characterized by the fact that authority and power comes from the people; the people decide. We vote for individuals or representatives to do what we need and want them to do. If we like how they represent us, we vote for them again. If not, we vote for someone else in the next election.

An election is the method of choosing leaders. Every adult has the right to vote, known as 'universal suffrage'. Democracy is more than just holding elections. However, free and fair elections are one of its fundamental conditions.

An election is regarded as valid in a democracy, only when it offers real alternatives. Freedom of speech is important in a democracy to ensure that the government don't control what is said in the media. People shouldn't be afraid of the government. People should also have access to free information so they can think and decide for themselves.

a. Describe the purpose of elections in a healthy democracy.

b. How might democracies be strengthened and improved in the future?

c. Explain why voting is an important process in a democracy.

d. Why is freedom of speech important in a democracy?

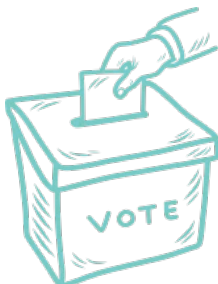


The role of Elections



Quiz Questions:

1. What is a political party?
2. What is meant by the term 'candidate'?
3. What does MP stand for? What do MPs do?
4. What is the role of the Prime Minister?
5. What is a general election and how often do they take place?



When you participate in an election, you are choosing a leader and making a decision about how your country or community will be run. You are choosing a candidate to represent your views and make important decisions on your behalf including making decisions about laws and policies.

Political parties are groups of people who share similar ideas about how a country should be run. Some political parties have specific views, ideas or ideologies about the best way to run the country. They put forward candidates to run for positions such as Member of Parliament (MP) which is a person who represents a specific area in the government i.e. Minister for Health or Minister for Education.

The government is made up of elected MPs (Members of Parliament) who work together to create laws and policies. The Prime Minister is the leader of the government and is usually the person whose party has the highest number of MPs after an election. Their role is to lead the country, make important decisions and work with other leaders to solve problems.

General elections are held to choose Members of Parliament who represent the entire country at the national level. These elections determine the government and the Prime Minister.

Local government elections, on the other hand, are held to choose representatives for local government bodies. These elections focus on issues that directly affect local communities.

Universal Suffrage



Universal suffrage means that all adult citizens have the right to vote, no matter their gender, race, wealth, or education level. This idea is a key part of democracy because it gives everyone an equal voice in choosing the people who lead the country.



In the past, only certain groups—like wealthy men—were allowed to vote in many places. Over time, people fought hard for equal voting rights so that all adults could take part in shaping their country's future. Today, universal suffrage is seen as a basic human right in most democracies around the world.



One of the biggest steps toward universal suffrage was giving women the right to vote. The first country to do this was New Zealand, in 1893, where women won the right to vote after years of campaigning and protests. This inspired other countries to follow, though some took many more years to change.



The importance of universal suffrage is that it allows fairer representation of the whole population. When more people are included in the voting process, the government is more likely to reflect the needs and wishes of everyone—not just a small, powerful group.



The suffragette movements were powerful campaigns led by women across the world to fight for their right to vote. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, women in many countries were not allowed to vote, and they began organizing protests, marches, petitions, and even hunger strikes to demand equal rights.



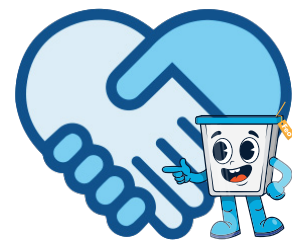
While many women gained the right to vote during the 20th century, not everyone was included at first. Indigenous communities in several countries still had to fight for full voting rights. In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were not given full voting rights until 1962.

The role of the Fijian Elections Office

The Fijian Elections Office (FEO) plays a vital role in maintaining democracy in Fiji. Its core responsibility is to ensure that elections are conducted freely, fairly, and transparently.

What does the FEO do?

- Conduct free and fair elections
- Register voters and provide information and education
- Register political parties and provide guidelines for candidates in accordance with the law
- Set up polling stations and train staff ready for an election
- Publish elections results and reports that clearly explain the processes
- Remain politically neutral. It is vital that the FEO is independent from political parties and government. This means that elections are run fairly, and no one can interfere. There are strict rules about elections to ensure that governments cannot get involved.



The FEO makes it easier for young people to engage with democracy through registration drives and civic education (like this workbook!) The FEO ensure that every vote counts equally. When you're old enough to vote, you will help to shape policies about education, jobs, climate and more. Understanding the processes now, helps us to understand the value and importance of a fair and transparent system and hold institutions accountable. The FEO acts as a safeguard for democracy by making sure that elections are honest and not manipulated. This protects everyone's future.



Tasks:

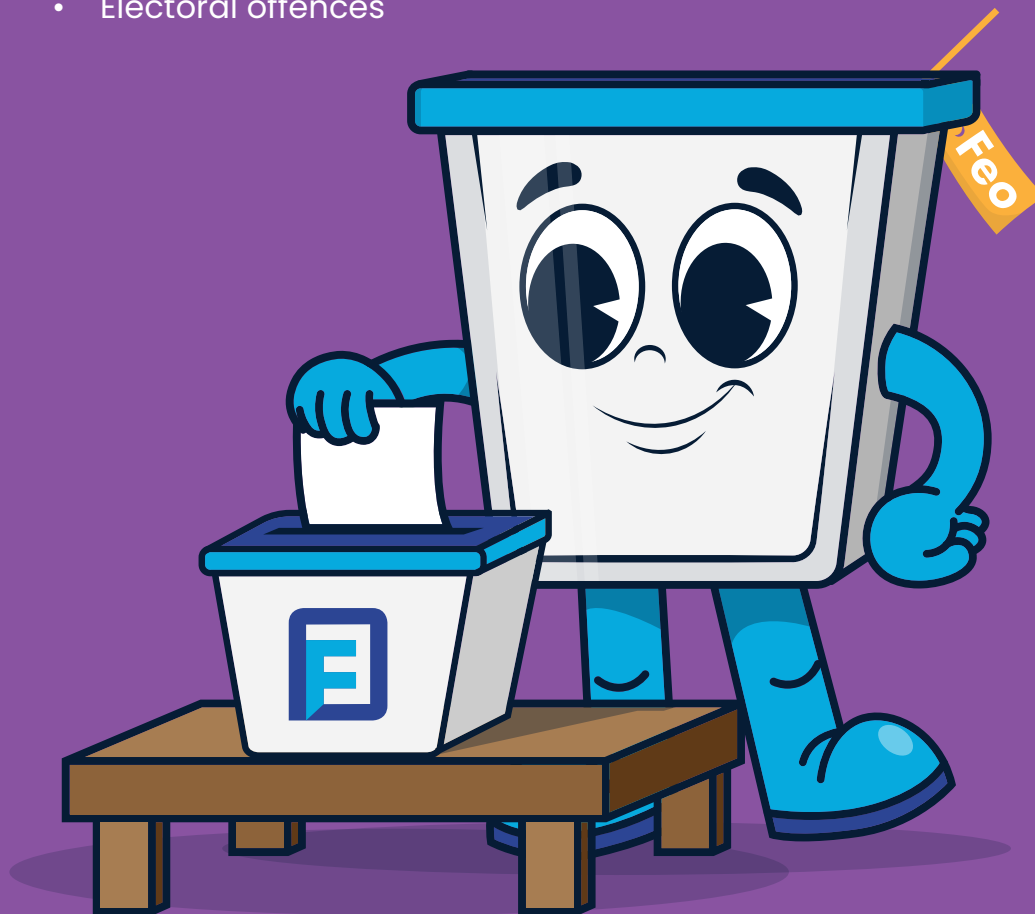
- Design a one-page guide or poster for a younger student based on the topic 'democracy'.
- Create a quiz for your friends and family members: How much do they know about the features of a democracy? Write the questions and the answers.
- Design a set of flashcards for the words listed below. Include a definition of the word and a picture to help you remember the meaning: representative democracy, direct democracy, referendum, Member of Parliament, general election, equality, political party, transparency, dictator, justice, universal suffrage
- Timed talk: Speak for one-minute on the topic of democracy and universal suffrage. How much do you know/remember? Can you speak for one whole minute?

Free, Fair and Transparent Elections

SS10.1.1.2

Understand the role of elections in a democratic society:

- Features of free, fair and transparent elections
- The secret ballot
- Electoral offences



One person, one vote

The concept of "one person, one vote" is a fundamental principle of democracy that means each citizen gets one vote, and every vote is counted equally. No matter who you are—rich or poor, young or old, from a city or a village—your vote counts equally. It ensures that no one has more political power than someone else just because of their social status, wealth or background. This idea promotes fairness by giving everyone an equal say in choosing leaders and making important decisions that affect the whole country or community.

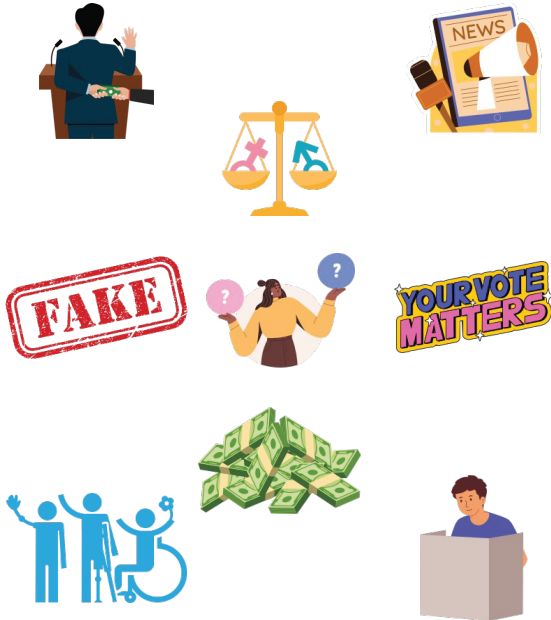
Historically, not all groups had the right to vote—such as women, Indigenous peoples, or people of certain races or classes—but over time, voting rights have expanded to reflect the belief that all people should have equal power in shaping their future.

When one person, one vote is respected, it strengthens trust in the government and helps make sure that leaders represent the needs and voices of the whole population, not just a few.



1. Why is it important that every person's vote counts the same?
2. How might a country be unfair if some people's votes counted more than others?
3. What do you think would happen if only certain groups were allowed to vote?
4. Can you think of a time when your opinion mattered in a group decision? How is that like voting?
5. What are some ways to encourage more people to vote and use their voice in elections?

Free and Fair Elections



Match the statements to the images:

In a free and fair election:

1. There is no bribery
2. Your vote counts
3. People can vote in private/secret
4. Money is not involved
5. Individuals with a disability (visible or not visible) can participate fully
6. There is no fraud
7. A free press means that the media is not controlled by the government
8. There is a real choice between candidates,
9. There is a gender balance

When an election is free, it means that anyone who is legally entitled to be nominated can stand as a candidate. People can vote for their chosen candidate without fear of punishment. When an election is fair, it means that all voters and candidates are treated equally. Votes are counted properly and there is no bribery or fraud involved in the election process. The election must also offer a real choice. Voters must be free to choose between different candidates.

In a transparent election, everyone must be clear about the rules and processes. The public are allowed to ask questions and scrutinise the process. The process should be open and honest.

- Women vote and stand as candidates without fear of discrimination - there is gender equality.
- Voting is done secretly - you don't reveal who you voted for or feel forced into voting a certain way. You don't have to tell anyone who you voted for.
- Everyone has access to the election - a physical or hidden disability should not prevent you from casting your vote.
- The media don't tell people who to vote for: a free press means that newspapers, television and radio stations are free to express any opinions they want, even if that means criticizing the government.
- The electoral process is transparent meaning that it is open, accessible and understandable to the public allowing for accountability at every stage. Processes should be open to scrutiny by all.

Elections should be free and fair for all.

- Decide how the examples below would make an election unfair
- Identify the problem
- Discuss what you would need to change to ensure a free and fair election
- What improvements could be made to make elections as fair as possible?



1. Someone offers you money outside the polling station if you vote for their family member.
2. At the polling station, you're told that you're not allowed to vote because of the colour of your hair. You are told to leave.
3. A family member tells you who you should vote for. They tell you that you must vote for the same political party as them.
4. You're a wheelchair user and when you arrive at the polling station, there is no ramp for you to access the building. You are turned away from voting.
5. Someone offers to sell their vote to you just before the election.
6. You have a visual impairment, and you can't read the candidate list. Noone offers to help you.
7. When you cast your vote, people are watching you. They can see which box you tick to select your candidate.
8. There are people with banners and placards outside the polling station telling you who to vote for. They are happy and polite, but they insist that you vote for their candidate.
9. You can't register to vote because you can't read the registration form.
10. The polling station is too far away from where you live. You have no way of getting there.
11. Someone tries to intimidate you at the polling station; they advise you to think carefully about who you vote for. They look threatening and suspicious.
12. You only receive information about one potential candidate. You don't think they'd make a good MP.
13. You cannot leave your home due to ill-health. You miss out on the chance to vote.

Free, fair and accessible elections



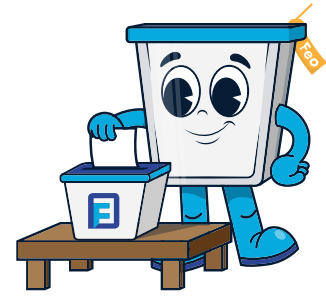
1. Money or bribes should not be offered during the voting process.
2. All registered voters should be allowed to vote in the election, providing they aren't committing offences or disrupting the voting process.
3. You are free to make your own decision about who to vote for. It's important to do your research and make an informed decision using factual and relevant information.
4. Polling stations should be accessible to everyone. Whether you're a wheelchair user, someone with a visual impairment or an elderly person, everyone should be able to participate.
5. You cannot buy or sell votes; this is corruption.
6. There are options available for people with visual or hearing impairments. Everyone can vote and have access to the right information.
7. You should cast your vote privately, in a booth or behind a screen. Nobody can see who you vote for.
8. Generally, there are rules around campaigning on election day. This is to prevent people from trying to influence you just before you cast your vote.
9. It should be easy for eligible voters to register to vote. Someone can help you complete the registration form.
10. Transport can be provided on election day to support people in rural settings.
11. Voting should be simple, safe and easy.
12. There should be different candidates for you to choose from during the election. You are aware of your options and able to research the different candidates equally.
13. Options should be provided for people who cannot travel to vote.

Tasks:



- Design an accessible polling venue that would allow people living with any kind of disability to easily cast their vote.
- Write a paragraph that sums up what you've learnt about free, fair and transparent elections.

The Secret Ballot



A ballot paper is a piece of paper used by a voter to indicate their preferred candidate or political party. Ballot papers differ greatly from country to country, according to the voting system used in that country, as well as other factors. Some countries do not use ballot papers but use voting machines or computers to cast their votes. The ballot paper might feature a number that corresponds to a candidate, or it might include a list of names. Some ballot papers include a photo of the candidate. Usually, you can circle or tick or cross to show who you want to vote for.

In most countries, there is a blackout period before the elections meaning that candidates have to stop campaigning just before the election. This is important because it means that voters can go to the polling station without fear of intimidation or coercion. Individuals vote for the candidate of their choice and their vote remains a secret. You don't have to tell anyone who you voted for because your vote is your secret.

Candidates and political parties are usually prohibited (banned) from organizing meetings or gatherings and from enticing voters with incentives or food. This time allows voters to reflect on the candidates without intense influence or pressure – they don't feel pressure to vote in a certain way and are free to make their own, informed, choice.



The importance of the secret ballot



1. Why is it important to cast your vote in secret?
2. What could happen if voting wasn't done secretly?
3. What would you expect to see on election day to make sure that people can cast their vote secretly and safely?

- For each word: Define it in your own words, draw it, find synonyms and antonyms, use it in a sentence.
- Election, ballot paper, campaign, influence, equality, discrimination, prohibited.



Electoral offences

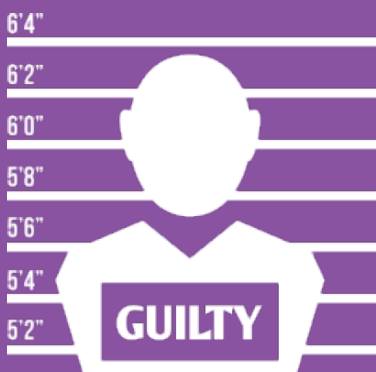
To make sure that elections are free, fair, transparent, trustworthy and peaceful, it is important that there are laws, rules and regulations in place surrounding elections. It is everyone's responsibility to obey the law to ensure that elections run smoothly and fairly. Doing something wrong during this process is known as an offence and could mean that you'd be liable to a fine or even imprisonment.

What are some electoral offences?

- Voting more than once
- Voting in a place that isn't your assigned Polling Station
- Pretending to be someone else and voting in their place
- Bribery - taking money or receiving a benefit from someone and promising to vote for them
- Making false statements about candidates
- Preventing an election official from doing their job
- Destroying or stealing ballot papers
- Doing something that means voting is not secret anymore
- Giving false information to the electoral authorities
- Interfering with the ballot box or any other election material

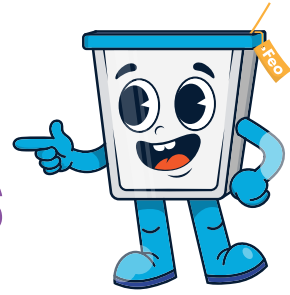


- **Read the statements and decide what kind of offence has been committed.**
- **How could this behaviour interfere with a free and fair election?**



1. Someone I know is running as a candidate. They took me out for dinner and asked me to vote for them. They even paid for my dinner but it's fine because I know them.
2. When I went to vote, I knocked the ballot box over. The staff member got mad at me for trying to help sort the ballot papers out.
3. I went to my Polling station to vote and then I went to another Polling station in a different part of Fiji - I'm excited because now my vote is going to be worth twice as much!
4. My sister looks a lot like me, so I borrowed her ID card to vote. It's OK because we're family.
5. My friend gave me \$100 to go and vote for them in the upcoming election.
6. Freedom of expression is my right - I can say what I want about the candidate, even if it's not true.
7. I can take a photo of my ballot paper and send it to my friends and my favourite candidate to show them that I voted for them!

Our Rights and Responsibilities



Democratic rights come with certain responsibilities. A responsibility is a duty or obligation meaning it is something that you should do in order to respect, promote and maintain certain rights. For example, the right to vote comes with the responsibility to cast your ballot in an informed and purposeful manner.

Freedom of movement: You have the right to move freely from country to country and within countries.

Freedom of speech: You have the right to state your opinions and ideas without being stopped or punished.

The right to privacy: You have the right to live in private and keep your personal life-style choices private, within your own

home.

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion: You have the right to form your own opinions, express yourself freely, think for yourself and choose your own philosophy or religion.

Freedom of assembly: You have the right to demonstrate and protest in public as long as you don't threaten life or property.

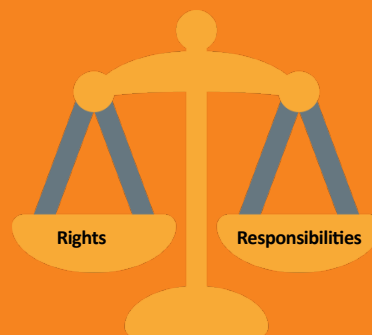
Freedom from slavery: You should not be forced to work under the threat of penalty or punishment (or be forced into work that you have not offered to do voluntarily).

The right to vote: You have the right to participate in a democracy by choosing your representatives through an election. You can vote when you turn 18 and have registered to vote.

• Is it a right or a responsibility?

- Obey laws
- Freedom
- Feel safe
- Don't harm others
- Voice your opinion
- Own a house
- Respect other people's property
- Get an education
- Be respected by others
- Don't stop other people from learning
- Treat everyone fairly
- Get a job
- Be treated fairly by the law
- Have access to healthcare

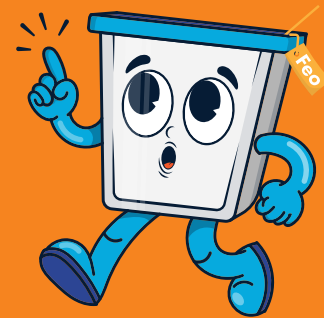
- Pay taxes
- Look after the environment
- Vote responsibly
- Participate in society
- Live in a clean environment
- Treat others the way you would like to be treated



Our Human Rights



1. Each of the images above links to a human right. What are they?
2. What do you think all people should have the right to, regardless of their age, ethnicity, gender or wealth?
3. Do you think there are places/times when people might have their human rights taken away from them?



What are human rights?

Human rights are the rights and freedoms which everybody has from the moment of birth, simply because they are human beings. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights sets out 30 rights that apply to every human being across the globe.

These rights are not privileges which need to be won; they apply equally to everybody regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, wealth or social standing. Because they are rights, they cannot be taken away from anyone including by the government.

Human rights are based on the idea of 'treating others as you would wish to be treated'. When we say that each person has human rights, we are also saying that each person has a responsibility to respect the human rights of others.



- Is guaranteeing human rights only an issue in non-democratic countries?
- What can happen when human rights are not respected?

Universal Declaration of Human Rights



- We are all born free and equal
- Freedom from discrimination
- The right to life
- Freedom from Slavery
- Freedom from cruel treatment
- You have rights no matter where you go
- Treated equally and fairly under the law
- Your human rights are protected by the law
- No unfair detainment
- The Right to a Fair Trial
- We are always innocent until proven guilty
- The right to Privacy
- Freedom to move
- The right to seek a safe place to live
- The right to have a nationality
- Allowed to marry and have a family as an adult
- The right to have your own things
- Freedom of thought and religion
- Freedom of expression
- The right to have a nationality
- The right to democracy and voting
- Social security, housing, education, medical care
- Worker's rights including a fair wage
- The right to play, rest and relax
- The right to have a nationality
- The Right to Education
- Copyright
- A fair and free world
- Responsibility and duty
- No one can take your human rights away

Our rights and responsibilities



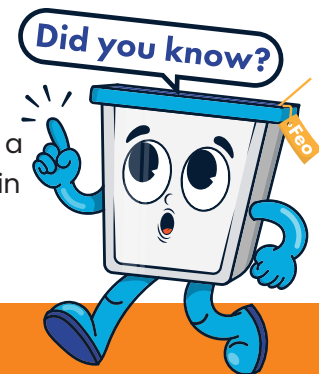
'Treat others as you wish to be treated'

When we say that each person has human rights, we are also saying that each person has responsibilities to respect the human rights of others. Why is it so important to treat others as we wish to be treated? How can we make sure that we do this?

Human rights are divided into the following categories:

- Civil and political rights
- Economic and social rights
- Environmental, cultural and developmental rights

Choose one right from each of the three categories and write a paragraph about what it means to you and how it applies to life in Fiji.



- Human rights do not have to be bought, earned or inherited – they belong to every human.
- Human rights are the basic standards without which, people cannot live in dignity.
- Rights cannot be taken away – no one has the right to deprive another person of their rights.
- People still have human rights even when the laws of their countries do not recognize them – for example, when slavery is practiced, slaves still have rights even though these rights are being violated in the country.
- Human rights are the same for all human beings regardless of race, sex, religion, political opinion or national or social origin. We are all born free and equal in dignity and rights.
- Human rights are universal.

Rights, Responsibilities and Religion

"Love your neighbor as yourself" (Christianity)



'I look upon all creatures equally' (Hinduism)



Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute' (Christianity)

'The one who loves all intensely begins perceiving in all living beings a part of himself' (Hinduism)



'Hatred does not cease by hatred, but only by love; this is the eternal rule' (Buddhism)



'Better than a thousand hollow words is one word that brings peace' (Buddhism)



**YOU AND I
CAN HELP**

'If a person sits in their home and says to themselves, 'What have the affairs of society to do with me?' they destroy the world' (Judaism)

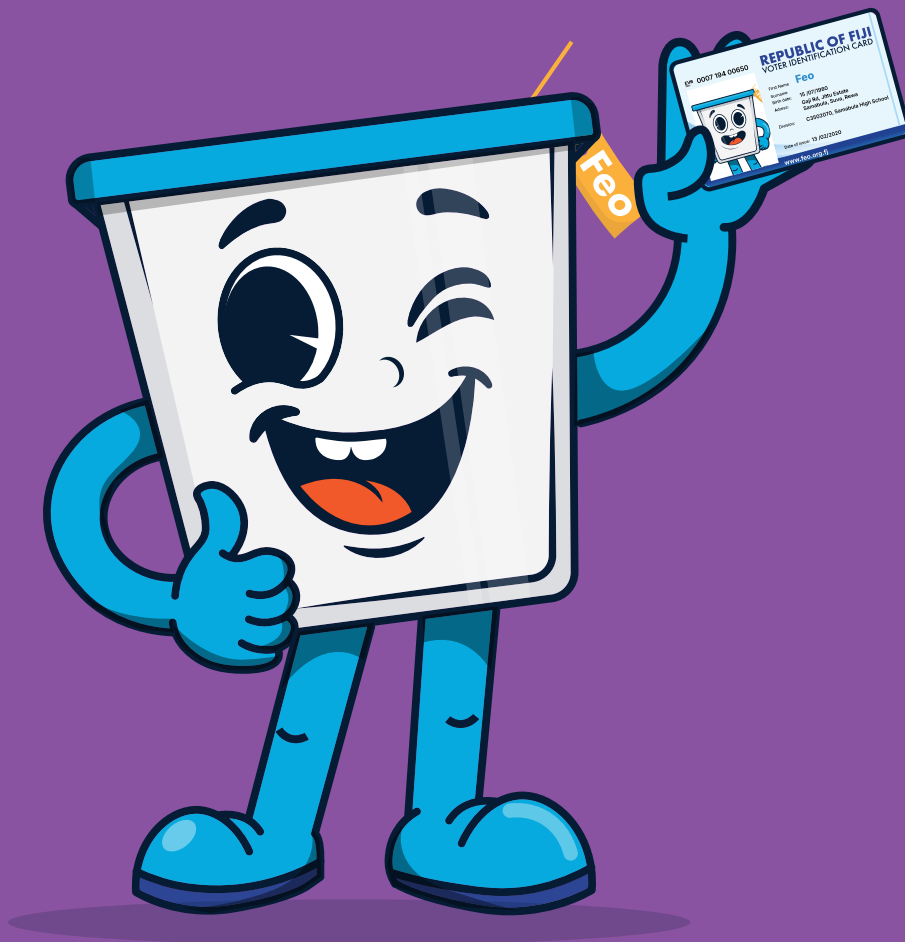
'And do not let ill-will towards any folk incite you so that you swerve from dealing justly. Be just; that is nearest to heedfulness' (Islam)

Voting Processes

SS10.1.1.2

Analyze how the voting process contributes to fair and democratic outcomes:

- Voter registration
- Polling stations
- Voting processes
- Participation in voting: why do we vote?
- Mock voting activity



Voter Registration



Before you cast your vote, you need to register as a voter. In Fiji, you can register at a Voter Services Centre (VSC) in various locations by taking the required documents. Registration must be done in person and cannot be done on someone's behalf. In order to register successfully you will need to fill in a registration form and produce your birth certificate and a valid ID such as your Fijian passport or driver's license. You will then be issued with a Voter Card which you will present when you cast your vote. You also need to update your details if you change address or name, or if there is a correction to your date of birth.

In Fiji, everyone who is or who will be 18 or over on or before the date the writ for the election is issued, has the right to be registered as a voter. You are eligible to register if:

- You are a citizen of Fiji
- You are 18 years of age or above
- You are free of mental disorder
- You are not serving a sentence of imprisonment of 12 months or longer.

Why do people need to register to vote?

- Voter registration guards against multiple voting by the same person.
- It ensures that everyone who is entitled to vote is able to.
- It enhances the democratic process and transparency.
- It makes it easier to organise the election and count the votes.
- Voter registration should be free, easy and accessible to all.



1. What is the purpose of voter registration?
2. What do you need to take when you register to vote?
3. Where do you go to register to vote?
4. Where could you find more information about voting and voter registration?

How to cast your vote

Venue Queue Control

When you enter the Polling Venue, you will be directed to the correct Polling Station by the Venue Queue Controller. They will guide you to the correct Polling Station.



Inside Queue Control

When you enter the Polling Station, the Inside Queue Controller will check your fingers for ink before giving you the Voter Instruction Booklet to guide you through the voting process. This is to check that you haven't already voted.

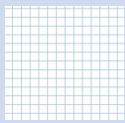


Identification

When you reach the ID Officer, you will need to show your Voter Card or valid photo ID so it can be checked. The ID Officer will confirm your name on the Voter List.

Signature

You will now need to sign the Voter List in the 'Signature' column for record keeping purposes.



Issuing the Ballot Paper

The Ballot Paper Issuer will give you one Ballot Paper and explain how to mark it. You will then proceed to the voting screen/booth.

Marking the Ballot Paper

You will need to look through the Voter Instruction Booklet to identify the candidate you would like to vote for. You must CIRCLE or TICK the number of the candidate on the Ballot Paper you would like to vote for. Fold your Ballot Paper into four.



Inking

The Inking Officer will mark your index finger or little finger on the left hand by dipping it into the ink bottle. This is to ensure that each person only votes once and to indicate that you have cast your vote.

Placing Ballot Paper in Ballot Box

You now need to put your folded Ballot Paper into the Ballot Box to cast your vote in the election. You have just voted!



Leaving the Polling Station and Venue

Once you have cast your vote, you can now leave the Polling Station and Polling Venue.

After the election



Counting the votes:

After polls close, the process of counting the votes begins. This is done in a secure and transparent way to make sure every vote is properly counted.



Declaring the results:

Once the counting is complete, official results are announced. These results show which candidates or political parties have won enough votes to gain seats in Parliament.



Forming a government:

If it's a general election, the party (or coalition of parties) with the most seats in Parliament is invited to form the new government. They will choose a Prime Minister, who leads the country.



What it means for the country:

A new government may introduce changes in education, jobs, healthcare, or climate policies. New leaders might bring fresh ideas—or continue existing policies. The government sets the tone for how the country develops, locally and globally.



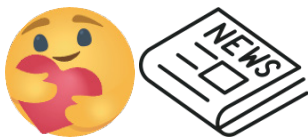
What do I do after an election?

What can I do if I'm not old enough to vote?

Even if you're not old enough to vote, your role in a democracy is still vital before and after an election.

You can:

- Stay informed about government decisions
- Read the news and check the reliability of information
- Speak out on issues that matter to you
- Hold leaders accountable
- Learn about your country's history
- Be a good citizen and look out for other people



Why should I vote?



Voting is one of the ways you can make changes on the issues you believe in.

Elections impact who represents you in government, how public money gets spent and what laws are passed. Members of Parliament will determine how much funding certain areas get. If your candidate wins, their values and ideas will be put into action so it's important to learn about the policies and plans that might be put into place. When you vote for an individual or political party, you're saying that you agree with their values and vision for Fiji.

Voting is an essential way to participate in any democratic process, to ensure that your voice is heard and to determine what is important to you as a citizen of Fiji.

Activity: The importance of voting and being an active citizen

- Use the images above to discuss why it is important to vote in an election.
- How might these images link to different issues and topics in society?
- When you vote for a specific candidate, what kind of issues might you want to consider before you vote for them?
- How might voting in an election impact your day-to-day life?



Issues that matter to me...



Voting is an important way to get your voice heard. However, before you think about voting, it's vital to consider the issues that matter to you. When you vote for a candidate or political party, you are voting for someone who will best represent the views that you hold. Political parties have policies and manifestos so when you vote, you know about what changes they hope to make. It's important to cast an informed vote and do your research.

As well as voting in an election, there are other ways you can be involved in a democracy including through community engagement or activism. There are lots of groups who focus on specific issues or rights by organising events, fundraising, campaigning, raising awareness or encouraging the government to change and improve policies. As a young person, there are lots of events that you can get involved in before you are old enough to vote in an election.

What changes and improvements would you most like to see in the world around you?

1. How might the images above link to issues in society that might be important to you?
2. Which of these issues matter to you the most and why?
3. Are there other issues that are important to young people today? How might these issues change depending on where you are in the world?
4. How could you get involved and start to make a positive difference in your community?

Persuading Young People to Vote

“What matters to you?”

“When you don’t exercise your rights, they can be taken away.”

“Don’t let somebody else make the decision for you.”

“If you care about me, it’s important you go out and vote, because who leads is going to determine whether I can do certain things”



Reasons to Vote:

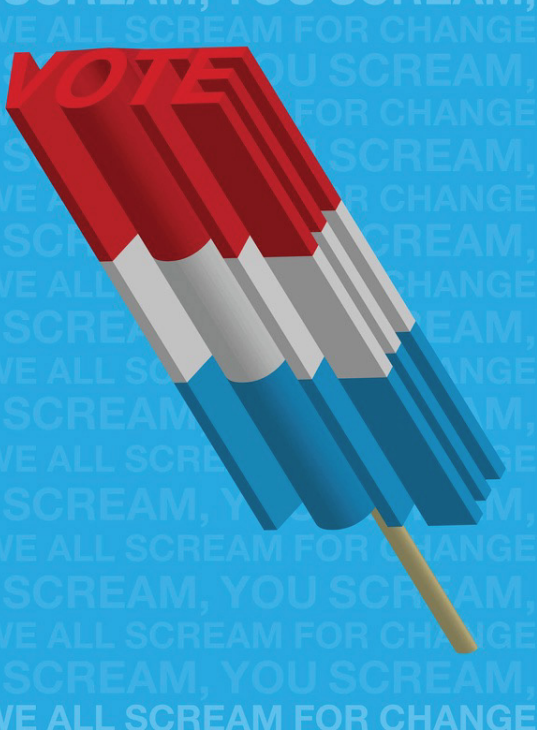
- To make a change
- To have your say
- It is your right and responsibility to do so
- To support your preferred candidate
- To make a decision about what is important to you
- To respect those who fought for your right to vote
- Because your vote counts and can make a difference

Reasons Not to Vote:

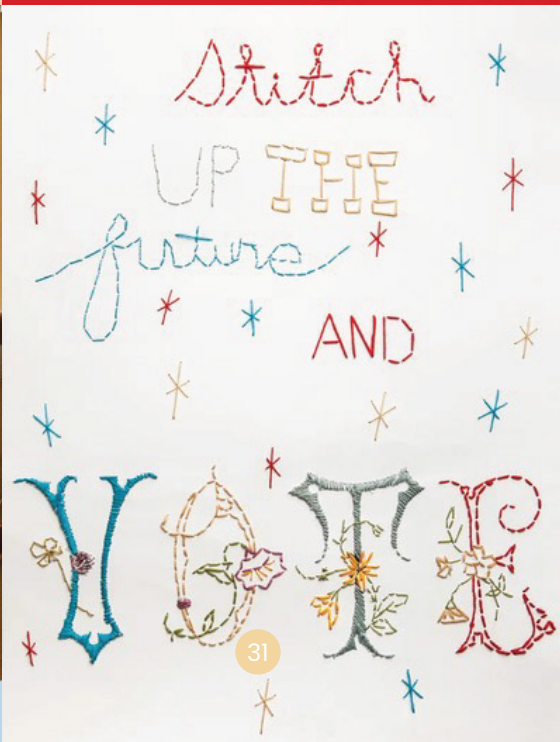
- You are not a citizen
- You don't know how to vote
- You do not understand the ballot paper
- You don't like any of the parties or candidates
- You are too busy or out of town
- You haven't registered to vote or are not on the Voter List

Activity:

1. Discuss how each of the posters on the next page might persuade someone to vote in an election.
2. Identify the persuasive features that have been used in each poster. How do they grab your attention?
3. Explain which poster you like the best and why.



Simply put, there's no time to waste. Make a plan to safely cast your ballot.



Electoral Participation



Everyone aged 18 or above in Fiji has the right to vote. It is important to have your voice heard and to be included in decisions that impact you and those around you.

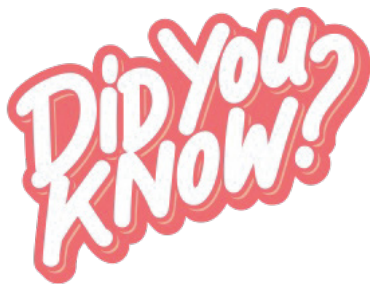
Voting is the responsibility of a good citizen and an important contribution to society. Voting ultimately shapes your future and the future of a country.

1. "If you don't vote, you lose the right to complain'. Do you agree with this statement?
2. What would happen if everybody decided not to vote?
3. How would you encourage young people to vote in an election?
4. What do you think are the three most important reasons to vote in an election?
5. Do you think voting should be compulsory?
6. What would you say to someone who has never voted before? How could you persuade them to vote?



Every vote makes a difference!

- One vote made Oliver Cromwell Lord Protector of England in 1653.
- One vote changed France from a monarchy to a republic in 1875.
- One vote decided that Americans would speak English rather than German in 1776.
- One vote made Adolf Hitler leader of the Nazi party in 1923.
- Sydney was awarded the 2000 Olympic Games by only two votes.



Designing your own vote poster

Design a poster encouraging first-time voters to use their vote in the next election. What reasons might you give to show that voting is an important part of democracy? You might want to include information on the following:




- How and where to register
- Why people should want to vote and how their vote can make a difference
- A persuasive logo/slogan/image

Voting Activity: Classroom Ballot




Favourite Activity

- 
Rugby
- 
Volleyball
- 
Soccer




Favourite Fruit

- 
Pineapple
- 
Guava
- 
Banana

Favourite Snack

- 
Cracker
- 
Cream Bun
- 
Roti

Best Field Trip Location

- 
Beach
- 
Museum
- 
Sand Dunes

Counting the vote

Consider the different voting systems and counting methods that can be used for your in-class vote. If you vote for your favourite item, then when you count the votes, the item with the most votes will win. If you use ranked-choice voting, where you rank your preferences (1, 2 and 3) then the votes are redistributed until one option has a majority. Approval voting means that students can vote for as many options as they want, with the most approved option winning.

What happens to the outcome of your class vote when you use different voting systems? Do the results change? What impact do the different systems have on fairness and representation?



Activity: Reflecting on your learning

1. Based on what you have learnt, describe the role of elections in maintaining strong democracies.
2. Explain five key features of free, fair and transparent elections.
3. List X10 important steps in the voting process.
4. Give X3 examples of an electoral offence.
5. Imagine you are trying to convince a friend to vote. What would you say to them to encourage them to participate in this crucial democratic step?

Activity: Extended Writing

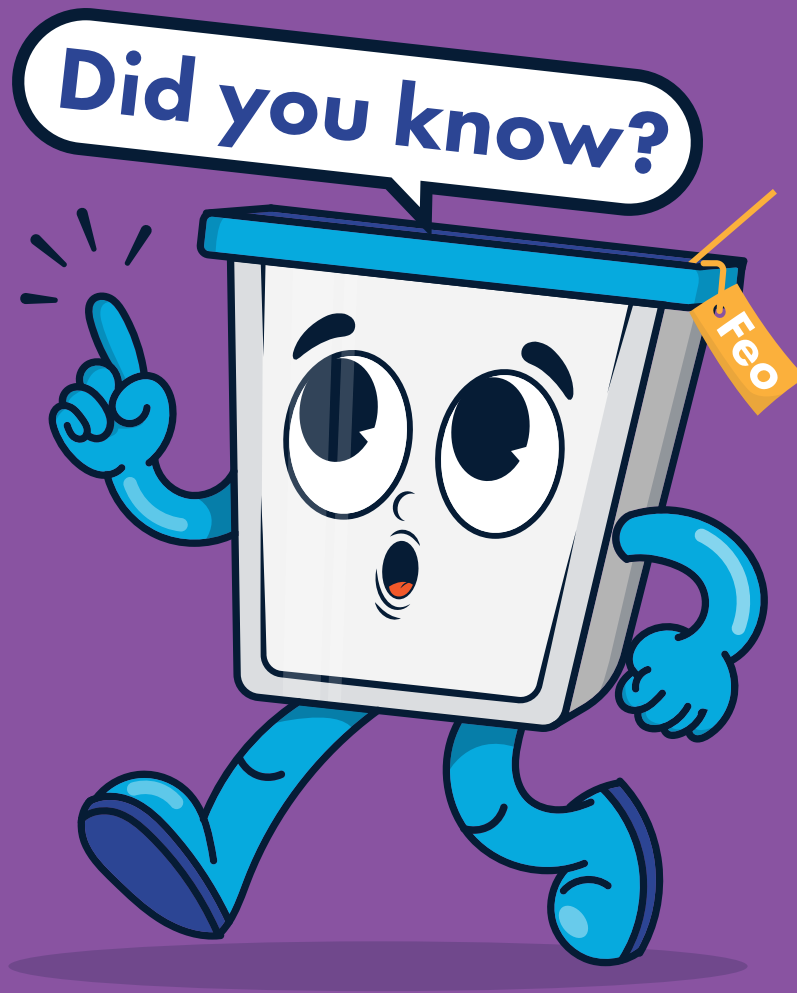
Explain the features of a democratic election: Write a paragraph outlining the features of a free, fair and transparent election and explain how these link to democracy.

Analyse how the voting process contributes to fair and democratic outcomes: Write a paragraph explaining the key steps in the voting process and how each step contributes to a fair and democratic society.

Write a paragraph explaining how you think democracies and elections can be strengthened and improved in the future to ensure that everyone can fully participate. What positive changes would you like to see in the world?

Write a speech entitled: 'The role of elections in a democratic society'. Include as many of these terms as possible: universal suffrage, transparency, equity, candidate, political party, representative democracy, policy, FEO, registration, government, ballot box, rights and responsibilities, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, polling station.

Election Extras: Dive Deeper into Democracy



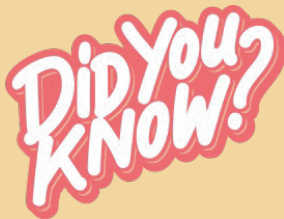
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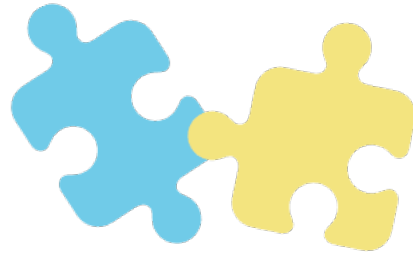
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-
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- Why people should want to vote and how their vote can make a difference
- A persuasive logo/slogan/image

Solve the riddles



- I'm not free but I'm priceless. I'm worthless until I'm marked. What am I?
- We're names on signs and posters all around, you might see us advertising in the town. We give speeches across the land and hope we can lead and lend a helping hand. Who are we?
- I'm cast in secret inside a booth, I'm powerless alone but mighty in a group. What am I?
- We're the meat of the political debate, the topics that might shape this country's fate. From education to healthcare and more, candidates speak about us and you keep the score. What are we?
- I'm not just a right but a hard-won fight, the cornerstone of democracy's might. Wars were waged and lives laid down, to win the chance to cast me around. What am I?
- I'm the day that arrives when your voice can ring loud. The lines might be long but you'll feel proud. What am I?
- Choose from: election day, a vote, key issues, political candidates, the right to vote, ballot paper

Activity: Poetry Writing

- Write an acrostic poem that spells out the word democracy, elections or voting down the side.
- Sum up what you have learnt about each topic whilst also creating a thought-provoking and interesting poem.

D.....
E.....
M.....
O.....
C.....
R.....
A.....
C.....
Y.....



Structuring a debate



Plan and research

- What topics are you interested in debating?
- Which side are you drawn to for each statement?
- What are your initial opinions, thoughts and ideas?



Choose your topic

- Research using reliable sources of information
- Find facts and data to back up what you're saying
- Find quotes from experts to support your argument



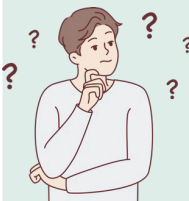
Decide on rules for your debate

- Speak politely/don't raise your voice
- Avoid interrupting others
- Respect everyone's opinions and ideas
- Keep to your allotted time



Follow a debate format

- Divide into two groups: For and Against
- For group has five minutes to present their position
- Against group has three minutes for their rebuttal/response
- Against group has five minutes to present their position
- For group has three minutes for their rebuttal/response



Concluding the debate

- Allow time for questioning at the end of the debate
- Both groups present their closing statements to end the debate - summarise your argument
- Judge the debate - who do you think made the strongest points? Who spoke articulately, passionately and persuasively? Who was well-researched?

Debate topic: 'Voting should be compulsory for all citizens'

What is your initial response? Start by listing everything you can think of, for and against this statement. This will make it easier to see whether you are for or against.



I with this statement.

Reason One	Reason Two	Reason Three
Supporting Evidence:	Supporting Evidence:	Supporting Evidence:
Supporting Evidence:	Supporting Evidence:	Supporting Evidence:
Supporting Evidence:	Supporting Evidence:	Supporting Evidence:

Topics for a classroom debate



'It is important to have freedom of speech in a society including a free press. For example, newspapers and TV can say what they want - they are not controlled by the government'. Explain your view on this.

Some people think that the voting age should be lowered to age 16. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Voting is compulsory in some countries and people who don't vote have to pay a small fine. Do you agree or disagree with this?

'Leaders across the globe should be held accountable for actions that contribute towards climate change'. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

Some people think that young people should do more to help in their communities. What do you think?

More needs to be done to protect the rights of animals. What are your thoughts on this topic?

'Social media has caused more harm than good to human communication and connection'. Are you in favour of or against this statement?

Some people have suggested that junk food and fizzy drinks should be taxed (cost more money) to help prevent a health crisis. What are your thoughts?

'Artificial intelligence is dangerous to society' - do you think the benefits outweigh the dangers?

'Voting is one of the most important things you can do to support democracy'. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Appreciating Different Cultures



1. Discuss the images above. Which different countries and cultures might the images link to? Why might these be important to citizens?
2. What do you understand about the meaning of the words 'culture' and 'citizenship'?
3. What is unique about Pacific and Fijian culture?

Fiji's Voting History

Fiji's electoral system is the result of complex negotiations conducted over the years leading up to and following independence from British colonial rule.

1874: During colonial times, the British authorities established a Legislative Council.



1904: Only European males were allowed to vote. Fijians were represented by two chiefs chosen by the colonial Governor from a list of six nominees submitted by the Great Council of Chiefs.



1917: Indian immigrants and their descendants were granted one seat.

1954: Europeans, Indo-Fijians and indigenous Fijians were allocated an equal number of seats on the Legislative Council. However, the mode of election was different. Voting rights were given to European men and male members of the Indo-Fijian wealthy elite. Indigenous Fijians were represented by nominees of the Great Council of Chiefs.



1963: The 1963 General Election was the first time that indigenous Fijians voted directly for their own representatives. In the 1960s, campaigning began for universal franchise on a common voter roll to ensure that all votes were worth the same.



1970: Fiji gained independence from British colonial rule and established a parliamentary democracy.

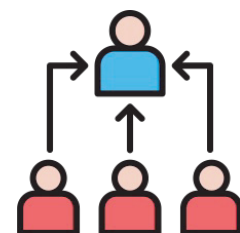
1997-1998: The 'First-past-the-post' voting system used until this time when the constitution replaced it with an alternative vote system.



Fiji's 'communal voting' system was criticised for creating tensions and a lack of a strong feeling of shared national identity and citizenship due to the way that votes were distributed. A change to a 'one man, one vote' system was proposed and Fiji eventually moved towards a new system of proportional representation in which each ethnic community would be represented in Parliament in proportion to its numbers within the population.



2013: A new constitution was introduced amending the electoral system and abolishing communal voting. A proportional representation system has since been used with the whole nation voting for a 55-member unicameral Parliament.



There continue to be changes and reforms to voting and elections in Fiji.

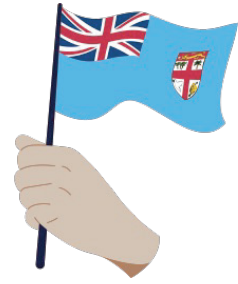
Civic Pride and Fijian



1. What makes the 'Fijian' culture unique?
2. What ceremonies and events are significant in Fiji?
3. Which images do you think are important? What do you think is missing?
4. What makes you proud to be a citizen of Fiji?



Different Voting Systems Culture



1. Decide how to vote as a class on the following topics: favourite fruit, favourite sport, country you would most like to visit.
2. How will you conduct your vote? How will you make sure your voting system is fair? How will you determine the results?

Different countries around the world use different voting systems to choose their leaders, and each system works in its own way. In a proportional representation system, the number of seats a party gets in parliament matches the percentage of votes it receives. For example, if a political party gets 30% of all votes, it gets about 30% of the seats.

Another common system is first-past-the-post, used in countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, where the candidate with the most votes in a certain area of the country wins. Each system has its advantages and disadvantages. Proportional representation helps smaller parties get fairer representation, but it can lead to unstable governments. First-past-the-post is simple and quick but can leave smaller political parties with little or no voice. Preferential voting lets voters express their true preferences, but it can be more complicated to count.



First-Past the Post System (FPTP) - used in India

In this voting system, voters place a mark beside their preferred candidate. The candidate who receives the highest number of votes, is declared the winner

The name 'First-Past the Post' describes a competition where a candidate wins the race by being the first person to reach the finish line (just like in a horse race!)

Advantages: There is usually a clear win for one party + the system is simple and easy to understand. Disadvantages: The winning party is usually elected by less than 50% of the voters. Tactical voting can take place.



Preferential Voting - used in Australia

In this voting system, voters must indicate their preferences by ranking several candidates. For example, if there are X4 candidates, voters are required to place the number 1 next to their first choice, known as their preference. Voters are then required to place the numbers 2, 3 and 4 against the other candidates in order of their preference.

Advantages: No votes are wasted as your preferences are taken into account. Allows people to make a choice about their preferences. Disadvantages: It is a complex system + it takes a long time to count the vote.

Different voting systems



Activity:

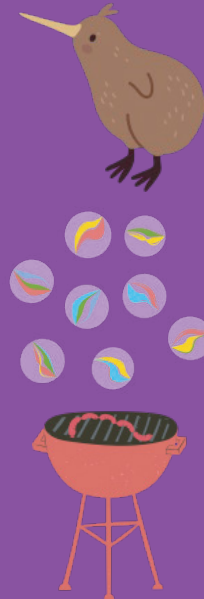
1. What voting system is used in Fiji and when did Fiji begin using this system?
2. Describe and explain three different voting systems and how they operate.
3. Find out what voting systems are used in New Zealand, America, Indonesia, England, Finland and a country of your choice.
4. List the advantages and disadvantages of X3 different voting systems.

New Zealand enfranchised its female citizens in 1893, making it the first nation or territory to formally allow women to vote in national elections.

Until recently, voting with marbles was a thing. Since the 1960s, Gambia used a unique system for voting. Voters would drop a glass marble into the color-coded metal barrel of the candidate they'd like to vote for, triggering the ringing of a bicycle bell. This fun method was introduced to allow illiterate citizens to vote, but in 2017, officials decided to switch back to paper ballots as more Gambians started participating in elections, and the cost and effort involved in the marble method became too high.

Australians host a BBQ party at the polls. There is often a festive atmosphere at polling sites which can involve throwing a 'democracy sausage' on the barbie. Perhaps that's one of the reasons that Australia has a voter turnout of around 90%.

Did You Know?



- Can you find examples of voting systems where candidates with the most votes don't necessarily win the election?
- What do you think is meant by 'tactical voting'?
- Which countries have compulsory voting? Do you think compulsory voting ensures that more people engage in democracy?



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