



Election Day

Area of learning

Learning for Life and Work: Local and Global Citizenship

Learning intentions

By completing the activities, pupils will have the opportunity to:

- Present their party manifestos to the class; and
- Participate in a class election to gain an active understanding of the Single Transferable Voting system used in Northern Ireland.

Statutory Requirements

The online and class activities will contribute to the following statutory requirements:

Learning for Life and Work: Local and Global Citizenship

Pupils should have opportunities to:

- Investigate the basic characteristics of democracy.

Cross-Curricular Skills/Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities

The online and class activities will provide pupils with the opportunity to develop the following skills and capabilities:

Communication:

- listen to and take part in discussions, explanations, role-plays and presentations;
- contribute comments, ask questions and respond to others' points of view;
- communicate information, ideas, opinions, feelings and imaginings, using an expanding vocabulary;
- structure talk so that ideas can be understood by others;
- speak clearly and adapt ways of speaking to audience and situation; and
- use non-verbal methods to express ideas and engage with the listener.

Thinking skills – Managing information:

- select, classify, compare and evaluate information; and
- communicate with a sense of audience and purpose.

Using Mathematics:

- find, organise and interpret relevant information.

This sequence of activities gives pupils an opportunity to present their manifestos. They will have the opportunity to communicate information and ideas in a clear and organised way.

Pupils will vote and tally the results using the Single Transferable Vote system.



RACE TO STORMONT 2016



Overview

This sequence of activities follow on from the activities found in the Campaign teachers notes. Pupils will learn about the voting system in Northern Ireland and take part in a mock election process. Pupils will:

- Register to vote;
- Present their party speech and view party manifestos;
- Vote;
- Tally the ballots; and
- Discuss the results.

Prerequisites

To get the most out of this sequence of activities complete the Campaign teacher notes activities, in particular Activity 3: Party manifesto and Activity 4: Campaign tactics.



Activity 1 - Register to vote

To take part in an election, eligible citizens must register to vote. To do this you must return a registration card (either by post or online). Ask pupils to complete the Electoral Register form (pupil resource 1). If you're not registered you can't vote! Afterwards you will receive your polling card. You may wish to show pupils the mock polling card – see resource 2.

Activity 2 - Voting system in Northern Ireland

The Single Transferable Vote video in the Years 8–10 section of the Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service website explains and demonstrates a simplified version of the voting system we use in Northern Ireland. The following activities give pupils an opportunity to vote for candidates using the Single Transferable Vote system explained in the online video.

Explain to pupils that voting in an election is the system we use to choose the people to represent us and is an important way to participate in democracy.

The Single Transferable Vote video animation under the How do we elect MLAs? link in the Years 8–10 section of the Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service website, describes the voting system used in Northern Ireland: a form of proportional representation (PR).

The video animation plays for 1 minute 41 seconds, to view most effectively on a whiteboard:

- Click on the full screen button at the bottom right of the video player to play the video animation full screen.
- When finished, press the Esc button to exit full screen mode.

Related Activities

The Years 8–10 section of the Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service website contains other multimedia resources which may be related to this activity:

How Do We Elect MLAs?

The interactive Constituency Map can be used to explore the names/location of the constituencies of the Northern Ireland Assembly elections, as well as research the MLAs/parties representing each constituency.

Evolution of Devolution

This is a timeline of historical events 1900–1999, including the implications of partition on constituency boundaries and proportional representation in early Northern Ireland.

MLA for a Week

Get the bigger picture of what an MLA does in the week by taking on that role. As well as juggling a busy diary, other tasks to participate in include writing a speech, question time and press conferences.

The Democracy Cookbook – Northern Ireland Assembly Special contains additional information and activities related to the Northern Ireland Assembly elections and the Single Transferable Vote system, including the 'Voting timeline – Northern Ireland' activity on page 21 and the 'Single Transferable Fruit' game on page 29.

The Democracy Cookbook can be found in the Northern Ireland section of the Electoral Commission website at: www.dopolitics.org.uk.



Activity 3 - Ballot paper

Ask pupils to add in their party slogans to the ballot paper template – see resource 3. Distribute the ballot sheets to the whole class.

Activity 4 - Presenting party manifesto and speech

In the previous lesson plan, Campaign - Activity 3: Party manifesto the pupils nominated a leader for each party to stand as the candidates for election. Each leader should now give their speech to the class and present their manifesto, with the rest of the party supporting by displaying their poster and slogan. If time permits, each leader may take questions from the class.

Activity 5 - Vote

When each party has had the opportunity to present its manifesto and speech, and take questions, recap how the class will now elect two representatives by voting for the candidates using the Single Transferable Vote system.

As an alternative to the paper method detailed below, the class could use one of the many STV ballot counters available on the internet to vote. You can find an example of an STV ballot counter in Session 4, Activity 2 section of the EU4U resource. This resource can be found in the Key Stage 3, Learning for Life and Work section of the CCEA website at: www.ccea.org.uk

Vote

Using Resource 3 - ballot paper ask pupils to mark '1' beside their first preference candidate, '2' beside their second preference candidate and so on.

Encourage them to vote according to the policies and performance of candidates. They do not have to vote for the group they belonged to – the result of the first count will be a foregone conclusion if they do. There are two seats available. When they have voted, they should submit their ballot sheet.

To decide on the two candidates elected, use the following simplified version of STV:

- Sort the ballot papers into bundles, according to first preferences (number one votes) and count these.
- The candidate with the highest number of first preference votes is declared the first elected candidate.

Keep a note of the totals.

- Set all of the ballot papers aside except the bundle of winning first preference votes.
- Sort these ballot papers into piles according to second preference (number two votes).
- Count them and add the total for each candidate to their first count total – the candidate with the highest number is the second elected candidate.

Congratulate the successful parties and evaluate why the pupils in the class voted for their manifesto.

Extension activity

Consider re-running the election but ask 5 pupils to vote differently to see if there is a different result. For example, if the 5 pupils change their first and second preferences what would happen?

Extension activity

Discuss the results

In small groups ask pupils to discuss their reason(s) for voting for their chosen party.

Activity 6 – Plenary

In small groups ask pupils to prepare short answers to these questions:

- Why is it important to vote?
- How are votes counted?
- Do some “what if” thinking:
 - Discuss what would happen if we didn't have elections?
 - What would happen if you weren't allowed to vote unless you owned your own house?
 - Suggest another 'what if' of your own and answer it.



Pupil resources

Resource 2: Poll card

You receive a Poll Card when your details have been added to the Electoral Register. Having a Poll Card means that you can vote at the Polling Station.

Your name:	
Registration number:	
Class:	
Polling date and time	

Congratulations on registering your vote

1. Fill out this card and take it to the Counting Clerks on polling day.
2. The Election Officer will give you an officially stamped ballot paper.
3. Go to the polling booth.
4. Follow the instructions on the ballot paper and cast your vote.
5. Fold the ballot paper in two, put it in the ballot box.
6. If you make a mistake, show the Election Officer the spoiled ballot paper, and get another one.
7. Remember that you do not have to tell anybody who you voted for!



Pupil resources

Resource 3: Ballot Paper

Put the numbers 1–5 beside the parties you want to vote for, with 1 for your first choice, 2 for your second choice and so on...

Party Name	Party Slogan	Your Slogan
Violet Party		
Indigo Party		
Crimson Party		
Ultramarine Party		
Jade Party		