

Who Are Your MLAs?

Area of Learning:

Learning for Life and Work: *Local and Global Citizenship*

Learning Intentions

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

- explore the basic characteristics of democracy and ways to participate through gameplay;
- research ways to influence democratic processes by creating a 'Have Your Say Leaflet'; and
- make a presentation to the class and contribute to peer evaluation.

Statutory Requirements

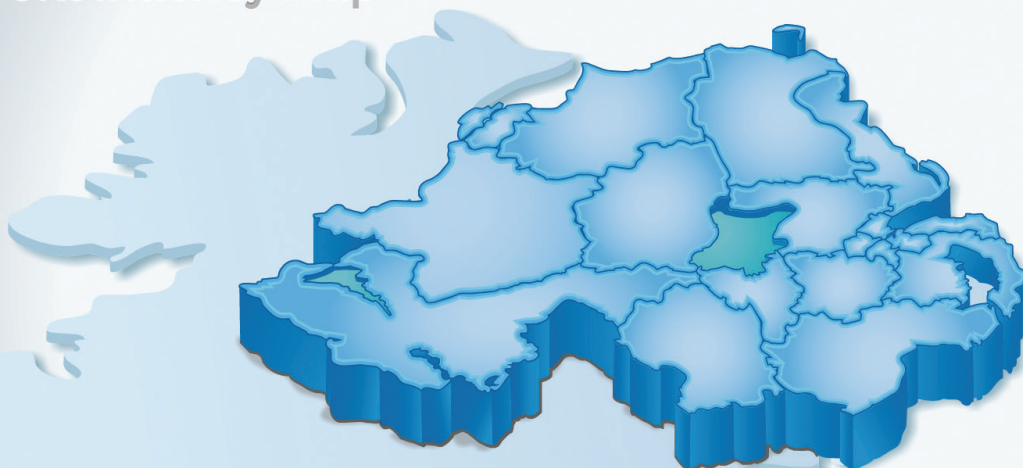
The online and class activities will contribute to the following statutory requirements:

Learning for Life and Work: *Local and Global Citizenship*

Pupils should have opportunities to:

- investigate the basic characteristics of democracy; and
- investigate various ways to participate in school and society.

Constituency Map



● Antrim East	● Belfast East	● Belfast West	● Foyle	● Newry & Armagh	● Strangford
● Antrim North	● Belfast North	● East	● Lagan Valley	● North Down	● Upper Bann
● Antrim South	● Belfast South	● Fermanagh / South Tyrone	● Mid-Ulster	● South Down	● West Tyrone



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:

Managing Information	By using the constituency activity as a starting point for further research on the characteristics of democracy, pupils will have the opportunity to develop their skills in managing information, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using their own and others' ideas to locate sources of information; and • using a range of methods for collating, recording and representing information.
Using ICT	The Follow-Up Activity, where pupils produce a 'have your say' leaflet or website, gives pupils the opportunity to develop their Using ICT skills in either desktop publishing or web design.

Overview

The Constituency Map activity under the **Who Are Your MLAs?** link in the **Years 8–10** section of the [Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/education/) website, is an interactive map representing the constituencies used for the Northern Ireland Assembly elections. The six MLAs elected by each constituency and the names of their parties are also viewable by clicking on each constituency.

The Starter Activity introduces pupils to the basic characteristics of democracy and methods of participation using games and discussion based on the Local and Global Citizenship Folder (CCEA, 2005). This resource can be found in the **Key Stage 3, Local and Global Citizenship** section of the Northern Ireland Curriculum website at: www.nicurriculum.org.uk

The Follow-Up Activity develops on the principle of citizen participation by asking pupils to create a 'Have Your Say' website or leaflet, then present and discuss it with the class.



Starter Activity

Lead into the online Constituency Map activity using the Local and Global Citizenship Folder (CCEA, 2005). This resource can be found in the **Key Stage 3, Local and Global Citizenship** section of the Northern Ireland Curriculum website at: www.nicurriculum.org.uk. Introduce basic characteristics of democracy and ways of participation through Unit 7: What Do We Mean By Democracy? and Unit 8: How Can I Play A Part?

Ask pupils to play the The Race to Democracy (7.2b) Game (Unit 7).

When pupils finish playing the game, discuss the kinds of things that hinder and help democracy.

Ask them to consider whether Northern Ireland is a democracy. Use the following prompt questions (based on the Stop and Go (7.2c) questions from the Local and Global Citizenship resource):

- How do they know that Northern Ireland is a democracy? For example, does everyone have a chance to participate in Northern Ireland? How?
- Are people in Northern Ireland able to vote for more than one party?

Follow on from the discussion by going to the Constituency Map activity under the **Who Are Your MLAs?** link in the **Years 8–10** section of the [Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk) website.

Online Activity

In pairs, pupils use the interactive Constituency Map under the **Who Are Your MLAs?** link in the **Years 8–10** section of the [Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk) website to research the different constituencies in Northern Ireland:

- Review the instructions by clicking on the information button.
- Explore the different constituencies and the associated MLAs.
- Complete the Constituency Research Sheet (Resource 1).

Getting to know your representative...

Regular, free and fair elections are a principle of democracy. On completing the Constituency Research Sheet, pupils will know the names of the elected representatives for their constituency:

- If pupils live near constituency borders and are not sure what their constituency is, they can use the Postcode Tool on the Where is My Public Servant? (WIMPS) website to find their representative at: www.wimps.tv
- Pupils can research how to contact local MLAs on the main [Northern Ireland Assembly](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk) website at: www.niassembly.gov.uk
- Resources such as street view on [Google maps](http://www.google.co.uk) could enable them to view constituency offices at: www.google.co.uk



Getting to know your constituency...

Researching detail on a map from Google maps and comparing it alongside the Constituency Map could help address the following questions:

- How could your constituency be best described, for example rural or urban, or a mixture of both?
- Can you name the major towns etc? The main industries in the area etc?
- Are you aware of any current issues or concerns in your constituency?

With the information they have previously researched, pupils could contact local MLAs to ask about the issues they are dealing with in the constituency.

Related Activities

The **Years 8–10** section of the [Northern Ireland Assembly Education Service](http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/education-service/) website contains other multimedia resources related to this activity:

Who Decides What?

Different levels of our democracy make decisions that affect life in Northern Ireland. Do you know who is responsible for the areas you come across every day?

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.

How Do We Elect MLAs?

This video explains the Single Transferable Voting system used to elect representatives in the Northern Ireland Assembly Elections.

Follow-Up Activity

Citizen participation is a key principle of democracy. Although KS3 pupils have to wait a few more years to vote for the MLAs who represent them, it is important to know the other ways they can get involved in decision making.

Divide the class into groups to produce a 'Have Your Say' website or leaflet.

The purpose of the website/leaflet is to show young people (under 18s) how they can participate and have their say in decisions that affect their lives.

You may find Unit 8: How Can I Play A Part? from the Local and Global Citizenship Folder (CCEA, 2005) useful. This resource can be found in the **Key Stage 3, Local and Global Citizenship** section of on the Northern Ireland Curriculum website at: www.nicurriculum.org.uk



Present the groups with the following subheadings for their website/leaflet:

- **‘Having your say’ and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**
Explain what the UNCRC has to say about children’s rights, in particular adults’ responsibility to listen to children’s concerns.
- **Why should you ‘have your say’?**
Show how decisions made at school, local and national level affect young people’s lives and why it’s important that young people’s voices are heard.
- **How can you ‘have your say’?**
Give young people information on how they can participate in the democratic process (in school, locally and nationally). Consider how new forms of social media provide young people with a platform to have their say.
- **Useful websites and addresses**
This section should include the information that was gathered earlier on the location of MLA offices for the pupils’ constituency. They should also include contact information for the other democratic institutions applicable to them, for example local MP/MEP office, local council address, school council representatives.

Alternatively, you could assign each group a sub-section or heading to research, eventually producing one class website or leaflet.

The following websites and resources may be useful for pupil research:

- The Democracy Cookbook (Northern Ireland Special), Electoral Commission NI, www.dopolitics.org.uk
- Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY), www.niccy.org
- School Councils UK, www.schoolcouncils.org
- United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/crc/simplified.html

When each group has completed their leaflet/website, they should present their work to the rest of the class.

Ask the class to discuss which aspects of each group’s work were successful. If the class has produced one leaflet or website, discuss how you could publicise and distribute the work to its target audience.

Resource 1: Constituency Research Sheet

1. Explain what a constituency is.

2. How many constituencies are there in Northern Ireland for the Assembly elections?

3. How many MLAs are elected in each constituency?

4. What is the name of your constituency?

5. Who are the MLAs representing you?

MLA's Name	MLA's Party
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

