

The Election Campaign

KEY:

M: Male Speaker

M: What happens when an Assembly election is called? The campaign kicks off six weeks before the election. The Assembly is dissolved. This means that it stops its work and candidates focus on the upcoming election race. All of the seats in the Assembly are now vacant and up for grabs.

Candidates and Parties produce manifestos, telling us what they stand for and what they promise to do, if elected. Posters of candidates appear on lampposts. It's all about publicity, promoting the candidates as much as possible. The Parties also produce a political broadcast which airs on TV. It's a bit like an advert and aims to communicate the Party's key messages clearly. The Party Leaders take part in televised debates where they try to appeal to voters by scoring points over their political rivals.

As well as using traditional media like newspapers and radio, a key part of running an election campaign is maintaining a profile on social media. Many of the candidates also attend public meetings called Hustings. This is an opportunity to convince local people that they are the right person to represent them as an MLA. It's also a chance for voters to ask the candidates questions.

Opinion polls try to predict election results. While all this is going on, the candidates hit the streets, canvassing from door to door. They drop off leaflets and speak with as many voters as possible. The aim is to encourage people to vote and more importantly, to vote for them. And who gets elected? That's all down to the voters.

(MUSIC)