

Suggestions for follow up

Look at the information in the background material on democracy on page 458 and also find out in which year women first got the vote in your country. You could also find out which groups in your society do not have the vote today (for example – children, immigrants or prisoners). Discuss the reasons behind this, and whether you think it is fair.

You could also arrange a debate with other groups or schools about whether the age at which young people can vote should be altered.

In a democratic society, there are many opportunities for people to take action about issues that concern them. The activity, “Power Station”, on page 251 gives participants a chance to think about ways to promote social change.

Ideas for action

Organise a celebration of the day on which women were granted the right to vote in your country.

If you found groups in your society without the right to vote and you felt that this was unjust, write a letter to your Members of Parliament expressing the concern of your group. Try to get other signatures as well.

Further information

You may be interested to learn about Dotmocracy as a tool for promoting participation by voting. Dotmocracy, an equal opportunity and participatory group decision-making process, is an established facilitation method for collecting and prioritising ideas among a large number of people. Participants write down ideas and apply dots under each idea to show which ones they prefer. The final result is a graph-like visual representation of the group’s collective preferences. <http://www.dotmocracy.org/>

Handouts

Notes on how to conduct the survey

Finding interviewees

Approach prospective interviewees at random: in other words, you should not “select” people to be included or excluded from the survey because they are young, old, nice-looking, or female, and so on. Try to avoid bias.

Ask the person you want to interview whether they would mind answering a couple of questions for a survey. Explain who you are, say that answers will be anonymous, and that the results of the survey will not be made public; they are only for the use of this particular group.

Recording the interview

If the person being approached agrees to take part in the survey, then ask them whether they used their vote in the last elections. If the answer is “no”, then fill out sheet 1, the “non-voter” sheet. If the answer is “yes” then fill out sheet 2, the “voter” sheet.

Question 1: Participants should only give their age if they are happy about doing so. Otherwise, a tick should be put in the last column.

Question 2: Show the interviewees the options and ask them to choose one. If they have a different reason, write it down in column E. Note: The difference between B and C is that B is a reason involving a particular person and C is a reason involving a party.

The marks should be clear, so that they can be counted later on. As many people as possible should be registered on one sheet. Only one mark should be made against each question for each person.



Survey sheet 1: non-voters

Question 1. In which age group are you? (Optional)

	Under 25	25 – 40	40 – 60	Over 60	Would rather not say
MALE					
FEMALE					

Question 2. What was your main reason for not voting the last time there were elections?

- A. I thought it wouldn't make any difference to the result
- B. There wasn't anyone I wanted to vote for
- C. I didn't agree with any of the policies being proposed
- D. I couldn't be bothered
- E. Other reason (give details):

A	B	C	D	E

Survey sheet 2: voters

Question 1. In which age group are you? (Optional)

	Under 25	25 – 40	40 – 60	Over 60	Would rather not say
MALE					
FEMALE					

Question 2. What was your main reason for voting the last time you did so?

- A. I felt it was my democratic responsibility
- B. I wanted to vote for [a person]
- C. I wanted to vote for [a party]
- D. I didn't want [a different person / party] to win
- E. Other reason (give details):

A	B	C	D	E