

What Is an Election?

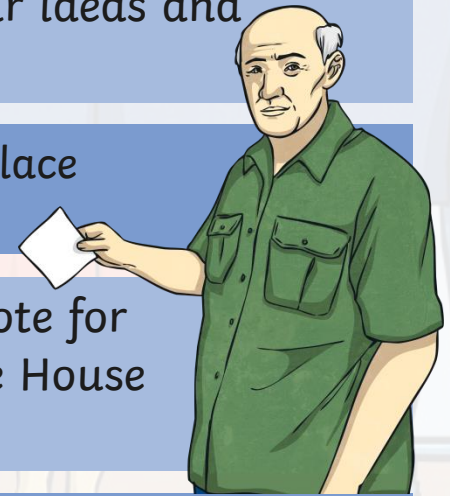
In the UK, we live in a democracy. This means people can have a say in how the country is run by voting in elections.

The UK has over 64 million people living in it and everyone has different ideas about how they think the country should be run. To make sure everyone can have a say, we elect MPs to represent our ideas and opinions in Parliament.

This happens in a general election, which usually takes place every five years.

In a general election, people who are 18 or over can vote for MPs (Members of Parliament) to represent them in the House of Commons.

There are 650 MPs in the House of Commons, and each one represents a different area of the UK.



What Happens before the Election?

Candidates stand for election in each one of the UK's 650 voting areas. They usually stand on behalf of a political group known as a party. Political parties are groups of people who share the same ideas about how the country should be run.


The ideas and promises of a political party are set out in a document called a manifesto.

Before an election, candidates from different political parties will share these ideas, telling people what they would do if they win.

They will try to persuade people to vote for them by explaining why they think their ideas are the best.

They will talk on TV and the radio, and will also meet people in their local area. They will try to persuade people to vote for them to become their MP.





Do you know
the name of any
political parties?

Have you ever
met an MP?

What Happens on the Day of the Election?

People all over the UK, over the age of 18, will visit polling stations to cast their vote.

At the polling station people receive a ballot paper with a list of candidates' names and the political parties they represent.

You mark an 'X' next to the name of the person you are voting for.

After the polling stations close, the votes get counted through the night!

What Happens after the Election?

The person with the most votes in each area (constituency) becomes an MP. The elected MP will represent people from that area in the House of Commons.

The party that has the most MPs can form a government. The leader of that party will become the Prime Minister.



What Happens after the Election?

Using what you have learnt, complete the **Elections and Voting Quiz Activity Sheet**.

Activity 1: Elections and Voting

Activity 1: Quiz

1. How old do you have to be to vote in an election?
 - a) 16
 - b) 18
 - c) 21
2. Candidates stand for election in of the UK's 650 voting areas, usually on behalf of a political group known as:
 - a) A Party
 - b) A cabinet
 - c) A committee
3. Parties announce a set of ideas and promises, which they hope will win votes. What is this called?
 - a) A white paper
 - b) A manifesto
 - c) A bill
4. On election day, people vote in places called:
 - a) Polling stations

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4. On election day, people vote in places called:
 - a) Polling stations
 - b) Petrol stations
 - c) Train stations

5. Following an election, the leader of the political party with the most MPs in the House of Commons gets to become prime minister. The prime minister is in charge of:
 - a) The bank of England
 - b) Parliament
 - c) The Government



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Quiz answers

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