

# Lesson Plans

## Lesson 1: Political Parties

### Overview:

This activity gives young people the chance to think about the nature of political parties, how their aims affect policy and to consider what aims they would have for their own political party.

### Curriculum Areas Covered:

#### Citizenship:

- 1 Knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens; *the work of parliament and government; the importance of playing an active part in democracy*
- 2 Developing skills of enquiry
- 3 Developing skills of participation and responsible action

#### English:

Reading for information

Terms of speech – writing to inform / persuasive language

Speaking & listening (group discussion)

*Extension Activities:* Speaking & listening

### Resources Required:

- + Either  
ICT access to student area at [www.mockelections.co.uk](http://www.mockelections.co.uk)  
or  
print outs from the key party websites.
- + Worksheet 1 or Worksheet 2

### Activity:

#### Starter:



10 minutes

#### Discussion:

##### Key Stage 4:

What issues are important? Either as an open discussion with older students or values line (see below).

##### Key Stage 3:

Place the words **IMPORTANT** and **UNIMPORTANT** on two sides of the room. Read out key issues and ask the students to stand somewhere between the two words based on how important they feel it is. If this is likely to cause havoc ask representatives to be a swing-o-meter with the class calling out directions.

#### Key Issues to call out:

- |             |                  |
|-------------|------------------|
| + EDUCATION | + SHOPPING       |
| + CRIME     | + EUROPE         |
| + HOSPITALS | + WAR ON IRAQ    |
| + ID CARDS  | + GLOBAL WARMING |
| + RECYCLING |                  |

Add and remove with current examples as is appropriate to your students.

Pick up the discussion as to why some issues are more important to them. Then ask if they know the names of any particular parties and what those parties might think about these issues.



15 minutes

- + Ask the students to compare 3 parties filling in the table on worksheet 1 (**Key Stage 4 – high ability**) or worksheet 2 (**Key Stage 3 – lower ability**), looking at: student area at [www.mockelections.co.uk](http://www.mockelections.co.uk)  
or  
using a print out of the key political party sites.

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# Lesson Plans

## Lesson 1: Political Parties continued

(continued)



30 minutes +

*In groups of 4 to 6:*

Set the students the challenge of designing their own party.

- + **What would they call it?** How will its name reflect their aims and identity? For example the Green Party has 'green' values and cares about the environment.
- + **What will its aim (ethos) be?** This should be one or two sentences which describe the types of issues that are important to it and which people or groups in society it hopes to represent.
- + **What policies will it have?** These should be 3 to 5 key things they will do to achieve its aims.
- + **What will the manifesto say?** This should be a statement to say what the party would do if it were elected, you might want to include responses to other issues that are not related to your aims but other parties.

For **Key Stage 3** use the basics of this activity but simplify to include party name, party colours and three policies on a selection of key issues (i.e. **EDUCATION, HEALTH, CRIME, ENVIRONMENT**) which they think would be most important and ask them to add one of their own (i.e., vote at 16).

### Extension Opportunities:

Students should work as a team to prepare a presentation which could lead to a whole class discussion on the best party. Alternatively students could prepare their manifestos for a display. If you have the facilities you could ask the groups to prepare for a Newsnight Special which could be recorded and a representative from each group discuss their views towards different issues.



# Lesson Plans

## Lesson 1: Political Parties – Worksheet 1

Name of Party	Aim of Party	Policies	Manifesto
Colour and logo design	What do you think they want to achieve?	Things it wants to do to achieve its aims	What has it promised to do if it's elected?



# Lesson Plans

## Lesson 1: Political Parties – Worksheet 2

Name of Party	Colour	Design of Logo	Most Important Issues

# Lesson Plans

## Lesson 2: Who Should Represent Me?

### Overview:

Students consider the different qualities and characteristics that make a good leader and representative by role playing individuals involved in the selection and election process.

### Curriculum Areas Covered:

#### Citizenship:

- 1 Knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens; *the work of parliament and government; the importance of playing an active part in democracy*
- 2 Developing skills of enquiry
- 3 Developing skills of participation and responsible action

#### English:

Writing – planning & drafting; directed writing

Speaking & listening – group discussion

### Resources Required:

- + Worksheet 3.  
This could be drawn up on to the board for students to copy down
- + White board and paper

### Activity:

#### Starter:



5 minutes

#### Discussion:

Using a spider diagram on the board, ask students what types of representatives they have come across, such as **FORM REP**. Expand on this by asking what other types of group leader they know of such as **SPORTS CAPTAIN** or **FORM PREFECT**. If they have not been mentioned, ask students to think about representatives outside school, for example **MP** or **COUNCILLOR**.

What skills do these individuals have? What personal qualities make them good at their role?



30 minutes

Tell the students that in the general election there are 659 seats available in the House of Commons and each seat represents one area of the country, in which there are just under 70,000 voters. The different political parties all want one of their representatives to be elected. The MP elected then represents the views of all the people living in their constituency – not just those that voted for them.

Split the class into groups of about 4.

#### Step 1:

Ask the students to fill in the table (worksheet 3) in groups discussing what they think are the most important characteristics for a political representative under the headings **SKILLS, CHARACTERISTICS, KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE**.

#### Step 2:

Each group takes the role of a political party interviewing for new members to stand at the forthcoming election. (This could follow on from the Political Parties Activity.)

#### Key Stage 4:

*Dependent on ability, some groups could take alternative roles as:*

- Pressure Groups like Fathers for Justice
- Trade Unions such as the National Union of Teachers
- Newspaper journalists.

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# Lesson Plans

## Lesson 2: Who Should Represent Me? continued

*(continued)*

One group will be **Representatives**; this group should have the same number of students as there are in all the other groups.

Each group then uses the ideas from the worksheet to create up to 10 questions to establish whether your interviewee would be a suitable candidate for your party.

### **Key Stage 4:**

*Students should try to include questions to also identify political views. Lobbyists, Pressure Groups, Trade Union groups and Media Journalists should consider what they would want to know from a prospective MP and pay particular attention to their views on policy in areas they care about. This might require the groups to identify what their Lobby or Pressure group is about, what field of work their trade union represents such as nursing staff or what political affiliations their newspaper or media company has.*

During the writing of questions the representatives should prepare their answers by thinking of examples which would show them to be trustworthy etc and (**Key Stage 4**) deciding on their political affiliations and what types of policy they would favour.



20 minutes

Representatives should circulate each group and at the end all groups feedback on their experiences.



# Lesson Plans

## Lesson 2: Who Should Represent Me? – Worksheet 3

**Skills:**

**Knowledge:**

**Characteristics:**

**Experience:**

# Lesson Plans

## Lesson 3: Who should vote?

### Overview:

Students participate in a debate to explore the different arguments for and against reducing the voting age.

### Curriculum Areas Covered:

#### Citizenship:

- 1 Knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens; *the work of parliament and government; the importance of playing an active part in democracy*
- 2 Developing skills of enquiry
- 3 Developing skills of participation and responsible action

#### English:

Speaking & listening  
Reading to understand  
Writing to inform and persuade

### Resources:

- + Who should vote cards

### Activity:

#### Starter:



10 minutes

Write the following ages up on the board.

16 years

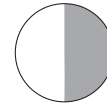
17 years

18 years

21 years

Ask the students to list as many things that young people are able to do at each of the ages listed (verbally, on the board or in groups). Discuss why the law stipulates an age for driving, drinking etc. Which ones do the students think are fair and which are unfair? Which ones would they change and how?

#### Debate:



30 minutes +

Tell the students that over time, the voting age has been lowered and recently, reducing the voting age to 16 has been discussed. What are the arguments for and against lowering the voting age to 16?

Hand out the **WHO SHOULD VOTE** cards.

#### Key Stage 3:

Ask the students to identify which arguments are for and which are against.

Split the class in half with a **FOR** group and an **AGAINST** group. Each half then breaks into a further three groups. The subgroups on either half should be named **Starters**, **Seconders** and **Concluders**. Every student should contribute a sentence to their subgroup, the group should work together to bring these sentences into a flowing statement and nominate a spokesperson. **Starters** from each group will start the debate with simple sentences, introducing the main points. **Seconders** should follow and expand on the points in more depth using concrete examples. **Concluders** finish off by summarizing all points made and using a punchy closing sentence. In a confident class, those who were not nominated as a spokesperson could ask questions during the debate, alternatively in a less confident class, they could make a display of their arguments.

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# Lesson Plans

## Lesson 3: Who should vote? continued

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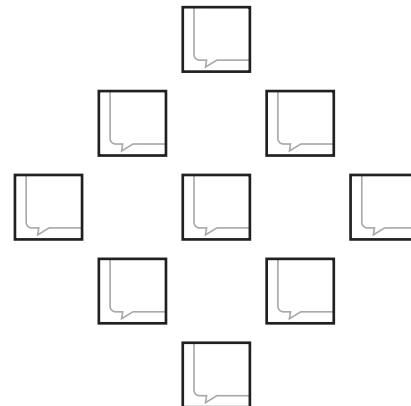
### Key Stage 4:



45 minutes

Give half the class **FOR** cards and half the class **AGAINST** cards.

In groups, ask students to use a diamond shape to prioritise the arguments. They should put the strongest argument at the top and the weakest at the bottom of the diamond.



They should try to think of examples and an explanation as to why they think the ones at the top are more important.

Then tell the students they are going to have a debate. Students with **FOR** cards will be arguing for reducing the voting age and those with **AGAINST** cards will be arguing against. Tell the students it does not matter what they actually believe as this is a debate where they will be marked on their skills, not on their opinions.

Split each of the groups into 3 sub-groups. The **FOR** group will be split into **Proposers**, **Seconders** and **Concluders**. The **AGAINST** group will be split into **Opposers**, **Seconders** and **Concluders**. The debate begins with **Proposers** from the **FOR** group giving an introduction and outlining their argument. They are followed by **Opposers** from the **AGAINST** group who then summarise their argument. Next, **Seconders** from both sides take it in turns to present a speech with lots of detail backing up the basic argument using examples. There should then be an opportunity for questions from the floor. Finally the **Concluders** from each group give their closing speech. They should prepare a draft speech before the debate but will need to amend this in response to what has been said during the debate.

Each sub-group will work collaboratively to create the speech and one person should present it. During the speeches all the students not making speeches could ask questions from the floor.

# Lesson Plans

## Lesson 3: Who should vote? – FOR cards

Many adults are not as mature as 16 year olds so maturity should not be an argument against young people voting.

Reducing the voting age would get young people more interested in politics. They wouldn't feel so excluded and care more about the world they live in.

You can pay tax at 16 so you should be able to vote for how your tax money is spent.

If you are old enough to get married, then surely you are old enough to vote.

At 16 you can join the army, so it's crazy that you aren't old enough to vote for the people who decide how to use the army.

Young people have a lot of financial power and can be very independent. They should be able to have political power too!

Voting at 16 would be at the same time most young people take their main school exams including Citizenship, it would be a right of passage to award them the vote at the same time.

Young people today are more mature than before; there is very little difference between 16 and 18.

Most rights change at 16, so it makes sense that Voting should be one of them!



# Lesson Plans

## **Lesson 3: Who should vote?** – AGAINST cards

**Sixteen is too young – many sixteen year olds are just not mature enough to have this responsibility.**

**You can't let 16 year olds vote – they can't even buy a drink or get married without parental permission. They get these privileges at 18 which is when they should vote.**

**Sixteen year olds are not politically aware and would just copy their parents' vote.**

**The concept of voting is very difficult. What if they don't understand?**

**Many sixteen year olds are very susceptible and many just 'throw away' their vote – they are easily misled!**

**Sixteen year olds may not have the same values as older people and therefore won't vote wisely.**

**Sixteen year olds deserve the time to be a child and not be burdened with extra responsibility.**

**Just because some policies might affect you doesn't mean you should vote – policies affect prisoners and they don't have the right to vote.**

**Very few 18 year olds vote anyway so why reduce the age? Young people aren't interested in politics.**