



Running an election

1. Prepare ballot papers –

Prior to election day you will want to have confirmed your candidates/parties so you can prepare the ballot papers (we recommend where possible 5 candidates).


We recommend using the AEC's "Get Voting" ballot paper generator:

<https://getvoting.aec.gov.au/ballotpaper>

When using the generator be sure to tick the option to "show instructions for full preferential voting" before creating your ballot paper.

The program will generate 3 ballot papers per A4 page, print and cut the papers prior to the lesson.

Example ballot paper:

VEC HIGH SCHOOL - YEAR 7 HUMANITIES
<i>Number the boxes from 1 to 5 in order of your choice.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Health Party
<input type="checkbox"/> Animal Welfare Party
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability Party
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Services Party
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights Party


2. Set up the room –

Before students arrive, you will want to set up the space accordingly and assign students or teachers (depending on the purpose of your election) specific election official roles to help everything run smoothly.

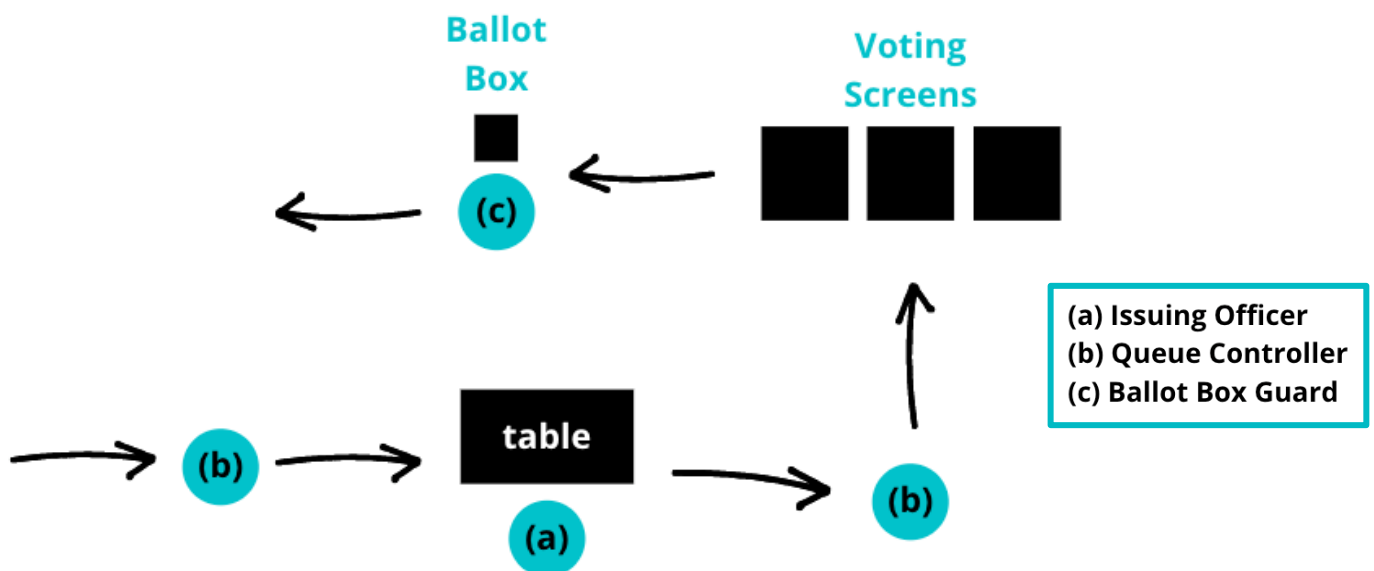
Roles:

(a) Issuing Officer = crosses off each name from the electoral roll (your class list) and hands out the ballot papers to voters.

(b) Queue Controllers = manage the flow of voters to the issuing officers and the voting screens.

(c) Ballot Box Guard = ensures no tampering occurs as voters submit their completed ballot papers for counting.

When setting up the voting centre ensure voting screens are located in a space that offers voters privacy from other people in the room.



3. Conduct the vote –

Direct voters through the centre following the arrows on the above diagram.

Voters will approach the issuing officer as directed by a queue controller and have their name marked off the role and be handed a ballot paper. A queue controller will then indicate when they can approach a voting screen (only 1 person per voting screen at any given time). Voters should complete their ballot while standing within a voting screen and then place their completed ballot in the ballot box under the supervision of the ballot box guard.

4. Counting the votes –

We recommend inviting student volunteers to assist with counting and sorting the ballots, one student to track each candidate's progress makes the counting process easier.




Step 1: Empty the ballot box onto a table ensuring no votes are missed.

Step 2: Count how many formal votes have been cast. If you find any 'informal votes' discard them. Record the total number of formal votes received and calculate the absolute majority*.

*To win an election one candidate must have an absolute majority. Which means the winner needs 50% of formal votes + 1. So, if 50 formal votes are cast, a candidate needs 26 votes to win.

*Informal votes includes those ballots that are not completely numbered, entirely blank, have duplicate/missed numbers or contain information that identifies the voter.

Examples of informal ballot papers:

VEC HIGH SCHOOL - YEAR 7 HUMANITIES	VEC HIGH SCHOOL - YEAR 7 HUMANITIES	VEC HIGH SCHOOL - YEAR 7 HUMANITIES
<i>Number the boxes from 1 to 5 in order of your choice.</i>	<i>Number the boxes from 1 to 5 in order of your choice.</i>	<i>Number the boxes from 1 to 5 in order of your choice.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Health Party	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Health Party	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Health Party
<input type="checkbox"/> Animal Welfare Party	<input type="checkbox"/> Animal Welfare Party	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Animal Welfare Party
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability Party	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Sustainability Party	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Sustainability Party
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Services Party	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Services Party	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Community Services Party
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights Party	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Human Rights Party	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Human Rights Party
		 <i>Nathan Phillip</i>

Step 3: Sort the formal votes into their first preferences by giving each student volunteer the votes which have a number 1 next to their candidate.

Student volunteers count the number of first round votes their candidate has received, record this information on a whiteboard using the following template, sample figures have been used:

Initial Count -

Candidates	The Count	1 st Distribution	2 nd Distribution	3 rd Distribution
Health	7			
Animal Welfare	5			
Sustainability	14			
Community Services	11			
Human Rights	13			

Total Formal Votes	50
Absolute Majority	26

Step 4: If no representative has reached the absolute majority, exclude the candidate with the fewest votes. Their votes are then redistributed to the remaining candidates by looking at the indicated second preference on their ballot papers.

*If two candidates tie for the lowest number, flip a coin to decide which is eliminated.

1st Distribution – (Animal Welfare excluded)

Candidates	The Count	1 st Distribution	2 nd Distribution	3 rd Distribution
Health	7	$7 + 2 = 9$		
Animal Welfare	5			
Sustainability	14	$14 + 1 = 15$		
Community Services	11	$11 + 1 = 12$		
Human Rights	13	$13 + 1 = 14$		

Total Formal Votes	50
Absolute Majority	26

Step 5: Continue counting, excluding the lower polling candidate, and redistributing votes until an absolute majority is reached.

2nd Distribution – (Health excluded)

Candidates	The Count	1 st Distribution	2 nd Distribution	3 rd Distribution
Health	7	7 + 2 = 9		
Animal Welfare	5			
Sustainability	14	14 + 1 = 15	15 + 1 = 16	
Community Services	11	11 + 1 = 12	12 + 7 = 19	
Human Rights	13	13 + 1 = 14	14 + 1 = 15	

Total Formal Votes	50
Absolute Majority	26

3rd Distribution – (Human Rights excluded)

Candidates	The Count	1 st Distribution	2 nd Distribution	3 rd Distribution
Health	7	$7 + 2 = 9$		
Animal Welfare	5			
Sustainability	14	$14 + 1 = 15$	$15 + 1 = 16$	$16 + 5 = 21$
Community Services	11	$11 + 1 = 12$	$12 + 7 = 19$	$19 + 10 = 29$
Human Rights	13	$13 + 1 = 14$	$14 + 1 = 15$	

Total Formal Votes	50
Absolute Majority	26

After the 3rd distribution 'Community Services' has won the election with 29 votes, well above the 26 required. 'Community Services' was in third place after the initial count with only 11 votes however after these distributions they ended up winning. Theoretically, a voter whose first preference was 'Animal Welfare' could have ended up with their fourth preference coming into play - if they had their second as 'Health' and third as 'Human Rights' as all three candidates ended up excluded and had their votes redistributed.