

Election activity

Rationale for the activity:

- Sixth formers seem cynical about voting - they don't trust politicians.
- People don't understand AV system, hence were apathetic towards the recent referendum.

Aims of the activity:

- Try to convince students that they should vote (or at least, if they choose not to vote, it is from a considered position).
- Develop understanding of different voting systems (*including the maths underlying them*).
- Getting them to vote on something they feel strongly about potentially gets them to realise how relevant and powerful maths can be.

Structure of activity:

- Use the Election activity from HRinC to show how different candidates can win if different systems are used.
- Extend to voting on something that is relevant to students' real lives/interests, e.g. deciding the class's 'favourite film' (see teachers' notes from Election activity).
- Choosing films avoids the need to vote for individual students which might be problematic.
- Take nominations and then discuss which voting system to use, i.e. which is fairest and why?
- Might need to create ballot papers once nominations have been made for students to vote.
- *Carry out the election and reflect on the outcome. Was it fair? Why?*
- Discuss tactical voting, e.g. you can split the vote under some methods by nominating a very similar film to the one you don't want to win (nominate Hobbit 2 to stop Hobbit 1 winning).

Extensions:

- Relate to which systems we use in UK elections? *How fair is our 'first-past-the-post' system?*
- *What is the smallest percentage of the vote a party could win and still win general election?*
- Look at AV voting (could use 'Cats versus dogs' video).
- Look at data on turnout in elections, e.g. South Africa ('Born Free's in the news recently), East Timor.
- *Should voting be compulsory (as in Australia)?*
- Picture of first free South African election in 1994:

