



LESSON PLAN

Voting

Learning outcome 3.4

Use the correct terminology to describe Irish and European democratic institutions, structures, political parties and roles

Students will learn

- ▶ About voting in Ireland
- ▶ About elections and referendums
- ▶ To use the correct terms to describe political processes

Materials

- ▶ Slide show
- ▶ Keyword revision cards 1 to 5 – one copy
- ▶ Worksheet: Crossword – one copy for each student

Assessment for learning/Key skills

- ▶ Analysis of an election count
- ▶ Working with others
- ▶ Being creative



1 Recap: Shaping a country

Divide the class into five groups and give each group a keyword revision card (see pages 5-7). Allow five minutes for the students to work together to complete the cards with relevant keywords.

Ask students to pass their completed worksheets to the next group moving in a clockwise direction. Then ask students to assess their classmates' efforts.

Keyword revision cards – suggested answers

DEMOCRACY

Citizens, elections, president, TDs, Senators, Councillors, MEPs, political parties, Bunreacht na hÉireann

PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

Presidential election, seven-year term, commander-in-chief, representative, bill, law, Bunreacht na hÉireann

OIREACTHAS COMMITTEES

Public, examine, monitor, special interest, Government business, the committee system, journalists, four committee rooms, review, petition

DÁIL ÉIREANN

TDs, Ministers, Ceann Comhairle, Taoiseach, Tánaiste, legislation, general election, Government, majority, executive, debate, bills

SEANAD ÉIREANN

Senate, Cathaoirleach, Senator, debate, bill, panel, order paper, motion for earlier signature, legislation

SLIDE 3-4

Finish up the recap by asking students to match the images with the descriptions.

2 One-minute paper

SLIDE 5

Introduce elections by asking the students to do a one-minute exercise where they write down answers to the three questions presented on the slide.

Briefly discuss the students' answers and allow this to lead into the next slide describing Ireland's key democratic institution, the Oireachtas.

3 Explain representative democracy

SLIDE 6

Discuss the three components of the Oireachtas: the President, Seanad Éireann and Dáil Éireann. Explain how these make up the Oireachtas. This is the only institution in the State that can make laws. The people in these democratic institutions are elected to their positions by us, the citizens, to represent us, hence the phrase representative democracy.

4 Discuss elections

SLIDE 7

Discuss the key elections that take place in Ireland: Dáil, Seanad and Presidential. Show the short video.

SLIDE 8

Extend the discussion to examine other ways people can interact with the State.

5 Explain the process of voting

SLIDES 9-13

Explain the process of voting in national elections. Keywords are highlighted in each slide.

Show the short video.

Note: The PR-STV system is explained in more detail in the democracy action pack.

6 Crossword

OPTIONAL

Give a copy of the Crossword worksheet (see page 8) to each student and ask them to complete it.

Solution

ACROSS: 1. Polling / 3. Constituency / 5. Referendum / 6. Ballot

DOWN: 2. General / 4. Quota

7 Explain referendums

SLIDE 14

Discuss when the public needs to be consulted on an issue via referendum.

Show the six-minute video. It describes how and why referendums happen and the State bodies that work to ensure citizens can have their say on referendum day.

Note: Referendums are explained in more detail in the democracy action pack.

8 Hold a class discussion

SLIDE 15

Hold an open discussion with the class asking their opinions on the referendum process. Ask them about previous or upcoming referendums. Discuss a referendum result from the Referendum Commission website www.refcom.ie.

→ Extension activities

Investigate some general election results or referendum results in your own constituency.

www.housing.gov.ie/search/archived/current/category/local-government/sub-topic/referenda/sub-type/results/topic/voting/type/publications

www.electionsireland.org/results/general/32dail.cfm

www.electionsireland.org/results/referendum/index.cfm

www.housing.gov.ie/voting

Keyword revision cards

1

Keyword revision card

Democracy

2

Keyword revision card

President of Ireland

Keyword revision cards

3

Keyword revision card

Dáil Éireann

4

Keyword revision card

Seanad Éireann

Keyword revision cards

5

Keyword revision card

Oireachtas Committees



Worksheet

Crossword

Across

1. The card that comes in the post before an election
3. The geographical area that a TD represents
5. A vote to change the Constitution
6. The _____ box is where a vote is placed in a polling station

Down

2. The _____ election when TDs are elected usually occurs every five years
4. The number of votes a candidate needs to be elected

