



How Democracy Works and Why We Vote

KS3 CITIZENSHIP Ages 11-14 🕒 4 min read

What Is Democracy?

Democracy comes from two Greek words meaning 'people power.' It's a way of running a country where ordinary people—not just a king or dictator—get to make decisions about how things are run. In a **democracy**, everyone has a voice, and that voice matters.

The idea is simple: **power belongs to the people**. Instead of one person deciding everything, a **democracy** lets citizens choose their leaders and vote on important questions. It's supposed to be fair and equal—one person, one vote.

Think of it like a school council. Instead of just the headteacher deciding everything, students vote for representatives to speak for them. Everyone gets a say, not just one person.

Why Do We Vote?

Voting is how we make our voice heard in a **democracy**. When you vote, you're choosing who you want to lead your country or deciding on important issues that affect everyone. **Voting is your power to shape the future.**

We vote because no single person can know what's best for everyone. Different people have different ideas, and voting lets us find leaders who share our values. It's also a way to hold leaders accountable—if they don't do a good job, we can vote them out next time.

How Does Voting Work?

In the **United Kingdom**, adults aged **18 and over** get to vote. Every few years, there's an election where people choose their **Members of Parliament (MPs)**. Each area is divided into constituencies, and people vote for the candidate they want to represent them.

On election day, voters go to polling stations and mark a ballot paper to choose their preferred candidate. The votes are counted, and the candidate with the most votes in

each area becomes the MP. **The party with the most MPs gets to form the government and make decisions for the whole country.**

Think of it like choosing team captains in PE. Everyone votes for who they want leading the team. Whoever gets the most votes becomes captain.

Why Is Voting Important?

Voting protects our freedom. It means ordinary people like you (when you're old enough) can decide what happens in your country instead of being ruled by someone you didn't choose. It's what makes **democracy** different from a dictatorship.

When more people vote, the government is more likely to listen to what ordinary people want. That's why voting is sometimes called a right—something precious that people fought hard to win, and something we should treasure.