

Election issues ARE youth issues!

Key Stage 3 Citizenship

Learning objectives:

- To identify issues important to young people in the 2010 General Election.
- To consider how young people can ensure their voices are heard in the 2010 General Election.

National Curriculum:

KEY PROCESSES	KEY CONCEPTS
Critical thinking & enquiry 2.1 a, b, d Advocacy & representation 2.2 a, b, c Taking informed & responsible action 2.3 a, b, c	Democracy & justice 1.1 a, b, c, d Rights & responsibilities 1.2 a, b Identities & diversity 1.3d

Resources (contained within):

- Candidate character cards
- Manifesto / wish list template (optional)

ACTIVITIES

Starter: Say your mind!

Ask students when the next General Election might be called. Encourage students to share their first impressions of this. What does this mean for young people?

Post two posters on opposite sides of the room labelled 'agree' and 'disagree'. Present students with the following statements and ask them to move to where the side of the room they most agree with. For each statement, take one view from each opposing side.

- A General Election has nothing to do with young people.
- Political parties do not listen to the views of young people in elections.
- Young people should be able to vote in the General Elections.
- You don't need the vote to get your voice heard in an election.

Main: Election time 'The L Factor'

1. Explain to students that the 'L Factor' is a bit like the 'X Factor' but instead of searching the nation for Britain's best singer or band we are going to consider who might be the best leader.

2. Ask students to form five groups. Hand each group a different character card. Explain that each character is a candidate in the upcoming election. Taking on the role of the character they must present their political parties policies in a class husting, persuading the class to vote for them. Give each group time to familiarise themselves with their candidate, to decide who will

present the policies and to prepare for their short presentation. They should target their hustling speech at young people, outlining what their political party would do for young people should they be elected.

3. Each group to give their speech in a class hustling. After hearing from all five candidates take a vote on who students would most likely vote for.

4. Facilitate a class discussion asking students:

- What did they consider when making their decision?
- Which candidates did they think would best represent young people? How?
- Which candidates did they think would least represent young people? Why?
- What issues did each candidate identify? (record these on the board)

5. Explain to students that these candidates were not based on any political parties current policies. When the election is announced and the candidates confirmed, each political party will outline their policies on a range of different issues.

6. Decide as a class, which of the issues identified by the characters are most important to young people. Are there any other issues they think are important that political parties should address?

7. If time permits (or ideally in a second lesson) and in groups, ask students to create an election manifesto or 'wish list' outlining the top three issues they would like a candidate to address and suggesting ways to solve the issue. A sample template is attached for assistance. For some ideas share with students the British Youth Council's recently launched General Election Manifesto. This can be found at: <http://www.byc.org.uk>

8. This could be turned into a year level / school competition by asking other classes to also create a manifesto. Vote as a class on the best manifesto that they would like to put forward to the year group / school. Then take a vote in assembly on the best manifesto and lastly and most importantly send this to all the candidates standing for election in your constituency and invite their feedback.

Plenary: Take real action!

Explain to students that they may be too young to vote but that this shouldn't stop them getting their voices heard.

As a class, brainstorm all the ways they can share their manifesto with the wider community and their election candidates. Encourage students to take responsibility for the identified strategies.

Potential ideas could include:

The **co-operative** good for everyone

- Starting a Facebook campaign, asking young people to sign up to their manifesto or / and share what they think are the top concerns and priorities. Your local candidates can then be invited to post their comments and questions to young people on this campaign.
- Send your manifesto to your local newspaper and suggest they publish it.
- Write a letter to the letters page of your local newspaper. Not only do politicians read these pages but so do other members of the community. Invite others in the community to reply.
- Create a short film and approach your regional BBC news team who may be happy to screen it.

Teachers be aware!

It is against the law for election candidates to campaign in schools or colleges. The law also states that teachers must ensure they are bi-partisan. However don't be put off! Invite election candidates to come and explain the election process and what steps they are taking to make sure that they have taken young people's views onboard. More advice on these issues can be accessed from The Hansard Society. For guidance on dealing with extreme political views in the classroom go to: <http://www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/main/news.php?n783>

Who's got 'The L Factor'?

Stephanie is a 32 year old mother of two teenage sons. She has been involved in her community for many years and until recently was a local councillor. She feels that women need a greater voice in Parliament. Her party supports cheaper public transport and believes that swimming pools and gyms should be made free to young people. They are also worried about teenage pregnancy and the rise of sexually transmitted infections in young people. Her political party has vowed that should they win they will make sure condom machines are in every school.

Kwesi is a 24 year old builder. He has lived in the community since his family arrived from Africa when he was a child. He is proud of his local community and wants to give something back to his country. His political party thinks the age to vote should remain at 18 as by this age young people are more mature to make the right decision. His party is concerned about youth unemployment and young people not achieving at school. Should his party be elected they would set up a work experience scheme so that everyone when leaving school gets a six month placement in either the reserve army or a voluntary organisation doing charity work. If they complete this they will then be entitled to free university. His party would also remove rules on young people getting credit cards allowing anyone to borrow money from the banks if they would like to.

Ahmed is a 22 year old student who doesn't feel the government is doing enough to stop climate change. His political party has promised to provide all young people with bikes. If elected they would start a national car sharing scheme. They believe a new compulsory subject should be introduced at school called 'environmental studies' so that everyone knows what they can do about climate change. They also believe that all workers, regardless of age, should receive the same pay for the same work and that all schools should have to consult with young people if any changes are being made. This would include every school having a young person in a position of leadership, as a shadow Head Teacher. They would bring in a law to give young people the vote at age 16.

Dave is a 60 year old Solicitor. He has been the local Member of Parliament for the past 8 years. His political party is very concerned about youth crime and anti social behaviour and believes that there should be a youth curfew on any young people cautioned by the police. If elected they will create more places for young people at university and will provide financial assistance to families to have their children at home until their whole education is complete. They also believe that the voting age should remain at 18 and that citizens should pass a test to allow them to vote.

Laila is a 40 year old school teacher. Her political party is worried about young people 'losing their childhood' and believes that sex education should be taught at home. Her party, if elected, would remove sex education from the curriculum. They also believe that primary, secondary schools and colleges should be joined together so that young people go to the same place for education from the age of 5 to 18. They would raise the legal age to buy cigarettes and alcohol and to vote to age 21. They would create more funding to help families in trouble stay together.

ELECTION 2010 MANIFESTO

Candidates! Hear our voices, our concerns and our solutions!

1. We would like you to address the issue of

Our vision is a country with

.....

.....

.....

To solve this you could

.....

.....

2. We would like you to address the issue of

Our vision is a country with

.....

.....

.....

To solve this you could

.....

.....

3. We would like you to address the issue of

Our vision is a country with

.....

.....

.....

To solve this you could

.....

.....