

## Election issues ARE youth issues!

### Key Stage 4 Citizenship

#### Learning objectives:

- To explore the power of the vote and how the right to vote has been won by different groups in our community.
- To consider whether young people should be given the right to vote.
- To consider how young people can ensure their voices are heard in the 2010 General Election.

#### National Curriculum:

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

#### Resources (contained within):

- 'Who's got the power?' cards
- 'The Arguments game' cards
- 'Taking Action' strategies & action plan template

More information available on the 'Votes at 16' campaign see; <http://www.co-operative.coop/ethicsinaction/Young-people/Votes-at-16>

#### ACTIVITIES

##### Starter: Who's got the power?

Hand out the character cards to students, ask them to arrange them into who they believe has the most power in our community.

Discuss the following:

- How did you make your decision?
- What did you base your decision on? (money, education, position to make decisions that affects lots of people)
- What if you were to base your decision on the right to vote? Is this a form of power? Would this change your order?
- Has it always been this way? Which of these people has had to fight for the right to vote in the past?

Explain that over time many different groups of people have been denied the right to vote, including women, young people under the age of 21 and people who did not own property. It was not until 1969 that 18 year olds could vote, this could mean that even your grandparents might have had to fight for the right to vote!

## **Main: The argument game!**

1. Ask students to choose one of the characters who have been previously denied the right to vote. In pairs, brainstorm the reasons why they may have been denied the right to vote. Also consider, if you were in their situation what arguments might you have used to challenge these views?
2. Some people believe that young people should be given the vote at 16. Take a quick class vote to see who agrees with this. Explain to students that they will play a game to explore the arguments and test how superior their arguing skills are!

Students are to arrange themselves in groups of three. Each group will be given a set of cards outlining the reasons why young people should not be allowed to vote. The cards should be placed facedown in a stack on the table. Each student selects a card and presents the argument to their group. The other students must come up with views to challenge the argument. Students can score each team player, for each challenge they make they are awarded one point.

Discuss with students:

- Were there any arguments that were hard to challenge?
- Were any of the arguments similar to those that might have been used to deny other people the vote in the past? Which ones?
- Have any of your opinions changed? Why?
- At what age do you think young people should be able to vote? Why?
- If given the opportunity, would you vote in the 2010 General Election? Why?
- Are young peoples concerns and issues addressed in election campaigns? How? Should they be?
- Do you need the vote to get your voice heard in an election? Why?
- What other ways can young people use to get their voices heard in the election?

## **Plenary: Take real action!**

Explain that there has never been a better time than in the lead up to the 2010 General Election to make sure that young people's voices are heard.

Hand out the 'taking action' ideas resource sheet. Ask students to rate each of the actions on how effective they think each would be. There are two empty spaces for them to add their own ideas. Take a class vote as to which action they would like to take. Decide the next steps with the group using the action plan template to put these ideas into action.

**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 power?

A 40 year old man who  
owns a house

A 15 year old girl

A 36 year old mum

A 53 year old man who  
does not own a house

A 25 year old male  
from China

An 18 year old college  
student

The prime minister

A 19 year old currently  
in prison

## The 'Arguments game'

Young people are too lazy to vote.

Young people do not know enough about politics to vote.

Young people are too easily influenced and would vote for who others told them to.

Young people should be concentrating on studying, not worrying about voting.

Adults are the best people to make decisions about issues that affect young people

Young people do not have enough experience of life to vote.

Most young people pay very little tax. They do not have the right to say how the country is run.

Young people are not interested in politics

## Taking Action!

Rank each of the nine actions below on how effective you think they would be in getting young people's views listened to in the 2010 General Election.

**1 = most effective, 9 = least effective**

Use the two empty spaces to add your own ideas.

<b>Strategy</b>	
	Write directly to your local candidates sharing your concerns. Also send this letter to the local newspaper, inviting responses from other people in the community
	Start a Facebook group asking your friends what they think are the top priorities / concerns. Invite the candidates to join the group and respond to your views.
	Start a blog on what issues are important to you in your community. Invite local candidates to comment.
	Use youth campaigning sites that are already out there like Battlefront, to share your views. <a href="http://www.battlefront.co.uk">www.battlefront.co.uk</a>
	Find out what your candidates policies are on issues important to you. Most political parties have a youth site which you can find information on. Get yourself informed and then let as many adults as you can know what you think. This may even help them to make up their mind as well.
	Get involved in the Votes at 16 campaign, <a href="http://www.votesat16.org.uk">www.votesat16.org.uk</a>
	Organise a debate at school, with students representing each of the political parties running in your constituency.
	Invite candidates into school to explain how the elections run and how they take the views of young people on board.
	Run a mock election in your school, with student candidates from each political party represented. Compare your results to those of the General Election. The Hansard Society has all the resources you need, <a href="http://www.mockelections.co.uk">www.mockelections.co.uk</a>

### Action plan - Election issues are Youth Issues!

Strategy	Steps we will need to take	Who will be responsible?	Who can we go to for help?	By when?