



Teacher Resource

Voting Age

Focus Questions

Discuss the BTN story as a class and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following:

1. What is the minimum voting age in Australia?
2. For a long time in Australia, the minimum voting age was 21. True or false?
3. Which country has NOT lowered the voting age to 16?
 - a. Brazil
 - b. Austria
 - c. England
4. Why are some people against the idea of lowering the voting age?
5. Do you think the voting age should be lowered to 16 in Australia? Why or why not?

Activity: Class discussion

Before watching the BTN Voting Age story record what students know about voting on a mind map. What questions do they have about voting and elections? Use the following questions to help guide discussion.

- Have you ever voted? Discuss in pairs.
- Who can vote at an election?
- How old do you have to be to vote in Australia?
- Do you think being able to vote is important? Why or why not?



After watching the BTN story ask students what they would like to know and learn about voting. Use the following framework to explore their knowledge on this topic.

What do I <u>know</u> ?	What do I <u>want</u> to know?	What have I <u>learnt</u> ?	<u>How</u> will I find out?

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KEY LEARNING

Students will develop their understanding of the voting process. Students will develop a persuasive argument for or against lowering the voting age in Australia to 16.

CURRICULUM

HASS – Year 4

Sequence information about people’s lives, events, developments and phenomena using a variety of methods including timelines.

HASS – Year 5

The key features of the electoral process in Australia.

Sequence information about people’s lives, events, developments and phenomena using a variety of methods including timelines.

HASS – Year 6

The responsibilities of electors and representatives in Australia’s democracy.

Civics and Citizenship – Year 7

Reflect on their role as a citizen in Australia’s democracy.

Activity: Glossary

Create your own classroom glossary about voting. Start by brainstorming words as a class using a mind map to record your responses. Add to your list of words by downloading the BTN Voting Age story transcript and highlighting all the words that relate to voting. Find definitions for each word. Here are some words to get students started.

BALLOT BOX	CAMPAIGN	ELECTORATE
POLITICAL PARTY	ELECTORAL ROLL	ELECTION

Activity: Class Vote

Ask your students if they have ever voted. Students will think of different situations where they have been able to have their vote. For example, in the classroom with hands-up voting, at home in family decisions or at clubs voting for new members. Does your school hold elections? [Get Voting](#) is everything you need to run a free and fair election for your class or school. Visit the Australian Electoral Commission to [download step-by-step resources](#).

Further investigation

Individually or in small groups, students will choose one of the following projects to work on and then present their findings to the class.

Flowchart

Create a flowchart which shows the steps in the voting system. You could use Australia's federal voting system, or a voting system that your school might use.

Timeline

Research the history of voting in Australia and record significant events on a timeline. Which dates on the timeline do you think are especially significant? Why?

Class Poll

Run a class poll to find out if your classmates would like to lower the voting age to 16. Alternatively, run a poll on another issue that interests you.

Quiz

Create a quiz about voting and the electoral process. Test your classmates. Alternatively, make a word search using voting and election lingo!

Activity: Opinion Poll

Students will conduct their own opinion poll on the issue of lowering the voting age. Working in groups, students will need to decide who their sample group will be and how many people will be polled.

- What method they will use to conduct the poll? (Face to face interviews or written responses).
- Ask students to graph the opinion poll results and display in the classroom. Students can reflect on how reliable they think the results were. What would they do differently next time?
- Students may want to film their interviews and then create a movie to present to other students.

Activity: Persuasive Text

Students will explore the issue of changing the voting age in Australia and develop a **persuasive text** for or against the following statement: *The voting age should be lowered to 16*. Encourage students to research the issue using a range of sources. The following may help students to structure their argument.

Tips

- Who is your audience? For example, are you directing your argument at kids, teachers, or politicians?
- Explore how language choices can have a big impact on persuading your audience.
- Which language devices give the report credibility and authority?
- Which are designed to create an emotional response in the listener?
- Provide facts and evidence to support your argument.
- Write in the present tense.
- Check your spelling and punctuation.

Use this *Read Write Think* [persuasion map](#) to plan your exposition text.

Introduction

- What is the point you are trying to argue?
Construct an introductory paragraph which states the issue or topic.
- Introduce the arguments that will be developed in the body of the text.

Body

- Construct arguments that support your point of view.
- Each paragraph starts with a topic sentence which introduces each point.
- The rest of the paragraph gives more reasons.
- Arguments can be ordered from strongest to weakest.

Conclusion

- Restate your position on the argument.
- Construct a concluding paragraph that provides a summary of your arguments and a call to action.

Reflection

- How difficult was it to think of points to support one side of the argument?
- Do you think you would have done a better job supporting the other side of the argument?
- Was I able to convince others of my opinion?
- Did my opinion change?
- What did you learn from this activity?

Useful Websites

- [History of Voting](#) – BTN
- [Voting Age](#) – BTN
- [Voting Age Experiments](#) – BTN
- [Voting Age Experiment Results](#) – BTN
- [Democracy Rules](#) – AEC
- [Practise Voting](#) – AEC
- [Why do we enrol to vote?](#) – BTN Newsbreak