

An Action Project for  
Civic, Social &  
Political  
Education  
(CSPE)

**ELECTION '11**





© Conor Harrison & PDST, 2010

This **General Election '11 Action Project** resource has been adapted by  
Conor Harrison, Professional Development Service for Teachers, from  
**VOTE: Exploring Democracy, Equality, Participation and Elections**  
written by Deirdre Phelan, 2005  
and published by

The Gender Equality Unit of the Department of Education and Science  
and The CDVEC Curriculum Development Unit

The original **VOTE** resource is available on the  
Civic, Social & Political Education (CSPE) Starter Pack CD-Rom, 2008



**Cultural and Environmental Education**

Co. Wexford Education Centre,  
Milehouse Road,  
Enniscorthy,  
Co. Wexford.

**National Co-ordinator: Conor Harrison**

☎ 087 - 240 5710

✉ conorharrison@pdst.ie

**Administrator: Angela Thompson**

☎ 053 - 923 9121

☎ 053 - 923 9132

✉ angela@ecwexford.ie

# ELECTION



# '11

## CLASS 1: ISSUES AND POLITICAL PARTIES

### Teacher's Notes

This class gives students the opportunity to understand how political parties are formed and to highlight issues that are important to them and how they would make other people aware of these issues. Part of the exercise is for the students to come up with campaign strategies, which would advertise the issues and encourage people to vote for them. Put a five-minute limit on each task to focus students. This should allow enough time for feedback on the activity. Some groups may need some prompting to get them thinking about what is required. Give each group a copy of the party logos sheet and the manifesto sheet.

### Activity

*1. As a group decide on an issue. You have five minutes to make your decision. Your issue can be:*

- *Something that makes you very angry*
- *Something that you think is unfair*
- *Something you want to change*
- *Something that should be changed*
- *Something you feel strongly about*

*This issue could be something you have experienced yourself, it could be something to do with school, it could be something in your community or town where you live, an issue surrounding fairness and equality or an issue that has been raised in the previous classes, it can be anything you want...*

*2. Once you have decided on your issue you are going to start a political party with people who also feel strongly about this issue. You have ten minutes in your group to decide the name of your political party and come up with a logo. Fill it in on the **Party Symbols/Logos Worksheet**. Nominate a party leader within your group. You also need to come up with some party principles and a slogan. Your party principles will say who can join, have you a policy on equality, how do you make decisions? Make up a slogan that suits your policy principles.*

## Party Logos/Symbols Worksheet



These are the names and logos / symbols of some of the main political parties in Ireland. There are other parties too, such as The Christian Solidarity Party, The Communist Party, Muintir na hÉireann, The National Party, The Natural Law Party, Republican Sinn Féin, The Socialist Worker Party, The Workers Party, etc.

Use the box below to write the name of your party with the symbol you would use. Explain what your symbol means.

| Party Logo/Symbol | We chose this logo/symbol because: |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
|                   | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>            |

# ELECTION



# '11

## Activity continued

*3. On the **Party Manifesto Worksheet** you now must write down three points about your issue and why you have chosen it. Why should people support your party?*

*4. Now that you have a party name and logo and an issue that your party feels strongly about how do you campaign to get publicity for your issue and to try and get people to vote for you so that you will be able to do something about your issue once elected? What are your campaign strategies?*

*5. How would you present yourself during this campaign remembering that people will be voting for YOU and your ISSUE? What do you want people to see when they look at you? What is your image?*

*When students have completed the exercise ask the party leaders to stick their work up on the wall, present it to the class and talk through what they have done.*

## Homework / Follow-up Activities

1. Ask the students to find out the names of the leaders and deputy leaders of the parties named.
2. Ask the students to collect photographs of the party leaders.
3. Ask the students to collect election literature coming through their letterboxes.
4. Ask students to collect newspaper articles about the election campaign.

## Party Manifesto Worksheet

**NAME OF PARTY**

---

**PARTY SLOGAN**

---

**ISSUE**

---

**THREE POINTS ABOUT YOUR ISSUE**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**PRESENTATION AS A CANDIDATE**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# ELECTION



# '11

## CLASS 2: THE MECHANICS OF VOTING

### Activity

*This activity can be done in pairs or in larger groups. Photocopy **The Steps in the Voting Process Cards** enough for each group and cut into the individual sections. Give each group a set of mixed up Steps Cards and ask them to sort them into chronological order. When students have completed the task correct and discuss.*

### Teacher's Notes

This activity introduces students to many of the terms used to describe the different items they need to be familiar with in order to vote:

- Register of Electors
- Polling Station
- Polling Card
- Presiding Officer
- Ballot Paper
- Secret Ballot
- Ballot Box
- Candidates
- Returning Officer

You may wish to show your students what a Polling Card looks like!

| POLLING INFORMATION CARD - CÁRTA VÓTAÍOCHTA  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| NUMBER <input type="text"/>  | <input type="text"/> |
| YOU VOTE AT:-<br><input type="text"/>  | <input type="text"/> |
| POLLING DAY <input type="text"/>   | <input type="text"/> |
| <b>THIS CARD IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY: IT IS <u>NOT</u> AN IDENTITY CARD. BE SURE TO BRING EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY WHEN YOU GO TO VOTE - <u>SEE BACK OF THIS CARD.</u></b> |                      |

## The Steps in the Voting Process Cards

Your name must be on the **Register of Electors** if you want to have a vote in an **Election** or **Referendum**. Every year people go around to the houses to check the names and addresses and of everybody over 18 years living in a house and the list of all of these names and addresses is called the Register of Electors – in other words the people who are entitled to vote.

People with their names on the Register of Electors will receive a **Polling Card** in the post a short time before the day of the election/referendum. This card will have your name and address and the name of the place where you must go to cast your vote.

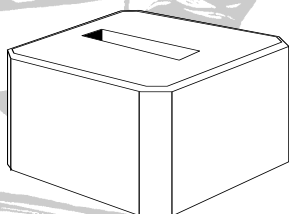
The day of the election or referendum you will go to a **Polling Station** to cast your vote. Usually these are primary schools or local halls, which have been set up for the day of the elections.

When you get to the **Polling Centre**, before you can vote you must check in with the **Presiding Officer** and show your Polling Card. This person will cross your name off a list taken from the Register of Electors and give you a ticket. This is to make sure everybody only votes once!

You take your **Ballot Paper** to a desk behind a screen so that you can vote in private. This is called a **secret ballot** because nobody knows whom you have chosen to vote for.

On the ballot paper will be a list of all the **Candidates** with a photograph of each. You pick the person you like best write the number 1 in the boxed space beside their name and details. Then you pick the person you like second and give your number 2 vote to him/her and continue like that until you have voted for all of the candidates that you wanted in order of preference.

When you have finished picking the people you want to vote for fold your ballot paper and put it into the **Ballot Box**, which will be beside the Presiding Officer.



At the end of Polling Day all the ballot boxes will be brought to a Central Count Centre in your area. The boxes will be opened, the ballot papers unfolded and counted one by one. Results will be known later that night or the following day. The results will be announced by the **Returning Officer**.

# ELECTION



# '11

## Activity

Give the students the following parties and figures (on the board or call it out) and ask them to answer the questions. Explain to students that this is an example of a Simple Majority or First Past the Post voting system. Using this system the White Party won this election by a small margin. (This system is used in the U.K. and U.S.A.)

|                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| <b>White Party</b>  | <b>1000 votes</b> |
| <b>Blue Party</b>   | <b>999 votes</b>  |
| <b>Yellow Party</b> | <b>998 votes</b>  |

What proportion of the votes did the White Party get?  
What proportion of the votes did the losing parties combined get?  
Does the winning party represent the voters?

## Teacher's Notes

In Ireland we use a system called Proportional Representation with a Single Transferable Vote. For the voter this means choosing candidates from 1 to whatever number of candidates there are. It is the voter's choice as to how this vote is used.

For counting purposes, however, this is slightly more complicated. Each candidate

### How to work out the Quota

$$\text{Quota} = (\text{Valid Poll} \div \{\text{Number of Seats} + 1\}) + 1$$

Total Poll = 33,333  
Invalid Ballot Papers = 8  
Total Valid Poll = 33,325  
Number of Seats = 4

$$\text{Quota} = (33,325 \div \{4 + 1\}) + 1$$

**Quota = 6,666**

has to reach a certain amount of votes before being elected – this is called the **Quota**. If someone reaches the quota on the first count then that person is elected and those votes are recounted and the second preferences redistributed to the other candidates as a percentage of the surplus (votes over the quota.) When the people with the lowest votes are eliminated their second preference votes are counted and redistributed as well. After the

first count each subsequent count looks at second preference votes, then third preference votes and so on until elected candidates have filled all of the available number of seats.

# ELECTION



# '11

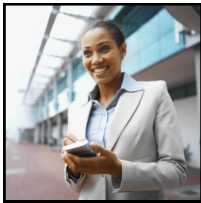
## Activity

Divide the students into groups of three or four. Photocopy **The Ballot Papers**.

- Ask the students to examine the way each person has voted and ask them to suggest reasons why they have voted in this manner. Take feedback from students.
- Ask students to think of other combinations of voting patterns based on these cards, which would suggest that people are voting in a particular manner for a particular reason.

The point of the exercise is to show students that every vote counts and that by doing voting in this way Louise, Liam and Linda are using and making their Single Transferable Vote work for them. In Ireland the majority of people who vote succeed in electing their first or second choice candidate – your vote means your choice of representative.

## Teacher's Notes



**Louise's** preference is voting for a Fianna Fáil government. She also likes the Independent Candidates! She definitely does not want The Green Party, Fine Gael, The Labour Party or SinnFéin in government, as she gives no vote to them at all!






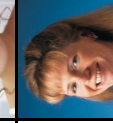






**Liam's** preference is definitely for a Fine Gael/Labour Party government. He does not wish his vote to transfer to any other party or individual, which might help someone from another party to get elected.




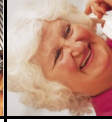
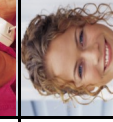
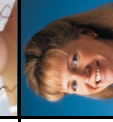






**Linda** does not vote for any particular party. In fact she would appear to have no party preference at all. It seems from her selection that her first choice candidates were all women stating that her desire was to see at least one of them elected and involved in decision-making processes. She possibly feels that women would better represent her, so she voted for individual women that she liked and did not care which party they belonged to.











### Louise's Ballot Paper

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>BUTLER - FIANNA FÁIL</b><br>(Mary Butler of The Meadows, Bandon, Co. Cork; Company Director)             |    | 2 |
| <b>DELANEY - LABOUR</b><br>(Ned Delaney of Wheatfield House, Mallow, Co. Cork; Farmer)                      |    |   |
| <b>FLEMING - FIANNA FÁIL</b><br>(John Fleming of Riverside Estate, Fermoy, Co. Cork; Public Representative) |    | 1 |
| <b>GORDON - NON-PARTY</b><br>(Katie Gordon of The Rise, Blackrock, Co. Cork; Shopkeeper)                    |    | 5 |
| <b>GRACE - FINE GAEIL</b><br>(Miriam Grace of Muskerry Estate, Ballincollig, Co. Cork; Accountant)          |    |   |
| <b>KEATING - FINE GAEIL</b><br>(Pamela Keating of Oak Road, Curraheen, Co. Cork; Doctor)                    |    |   |
| <b>MAUGHAN - SINN FÉIN</b><br>(Charlie Maughan of Patrick Street, Cork; Bank Official)                      |   |   |
| <b>PHELAN - FINE GAEIL</b><br>(Joe Phelan of Chestnut Park, Bandon, Co. Cork; Company Director)             |  |   |
| <b>O'KELLY - NON-PARTY</b><br>(Ross O'Kelly of Seaview, Kinsale, Co. Cork; Construction Worker)             |  | 4 |
| <b>SAVAGE - GREEN PARTY</b><br>(Diane Savage of Model Farm Road, Bishopstown, Co. Cork; Interior Designer)  |  | 3 |

### Liam's Ballot Paper

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>BUTLER - FIANNA FÁIL</b><br>(Mary Butler of The Meadows, Bandon, Co. Cork; Company Director)             |    |   |
| <b>DELANEY - LABOUR</b><br>(Ned Delaney of Wheatfield House, Mallow, Co. Cork; Farmer)                      |    | 4 |
| <b>FLEMING - FIANNA FÁIL</b><br>(John Fleming of Riverside Estate, Fermoy, Co. Cork; Public Representative) |    |   |
| <b>GORDON - NON-PARTY</b><br>(Katie Gordon of The Rise, Blackrock, Co. Cork; Shopkeeper)                    |    |   |
| <b>GRACE - FINE GAEIL</b><br>(Miriam Grace of Muskerry Estate, Ballincollig, Co. Cork; Accountant)          |    | 2 |
| <b>KEATING - FINE GAEIL</b><br>(Pamela Keating of Oak Road, Curraheen, Co. Cork; Doctor)                    |    | 3 |
| <b>MAUGHAN - SINN FÉIN</b><br>(Charlie Maughan of Patrick Street, Cork; Bank Official)                      |   |   |
| <b>PHELAN - FINE GAEIL</b><br>(Joe Phelan of Chestnut Park, Bandon, Co. Cork; Company Director)             |  | 1 |
| <b>O'KELLY - NON-PARTY</b><br>(Ross O'Kelly of Seaview, Kinsale, Co. Cork; Construction Worker)             |  |   |
| <b>SAVAGE - GREEN PARTY</b><br>(Diane Savage of Model Farm Road, Bishopstown, Co. Cork; Interior Designer)  |  |   |

### Linda's Ballot Paper

|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| <b>BUTLER - FIANNA FÁIL</b><br>(Mary Butler of The Meadows, Bandon, Co. Cork; Company Director)             |    | 5  |
| <b>DELANEY - LABOUR</b><br>(Ned Delaney of Wheatfield House, Mallow, Co. Cork; Farmer)                      |    | 8  |
| <b>FLEMING - FIANNA FÁIL</b><br>(John Fleming of Riverside Estate, Fermoy, Co. Cork; Public Representative) |    | 9  |
| <b>GORDON - NON-PARTY</b><br>(Katie Gordon of The Rise, Blackrock, Co. Cork; Shopkeeper)                    |    | 1  |
| <b>GRACE - FINE GAEIL</b><br>(Miriam Grace of Muskerry Estate, Ballincollig, Co. Cork; Accountant)          |    | 4  |
| <b>KEATING - FINE GAEIL</b><br>(Pamela Keating of Oak Road, Curraheen, Co. Cork; Doctor)                    |    | 3  |
| <b>MAUGHAN - SINN FÉIN</b><br>(Charlie Maughan of Patrick Street, Cork; Bank Official)                      |   | 6  |
| <b>PHELAN - FINE GAEIL</b><br>(Joe Phelan of Chestnut Park, Bandon, Co. Cork; Company Director)             |  | 7  |
| <b>O'KELLY - NON-PARTY</b><br>(Ross O'Kelly of Seaview, Kinsale, Co. Cork; Construction Worker)             |  | 10 |
| <b>SAVAGE - GREEN PARTY</b><br>(Diane Savage of Model Farm Road, Bishopstown, Co. Cork; Interior Designer)  |  | 2  |

# ELECTION



# '11

## CLASS 3: THE GENERAL ELECTION

### Activity

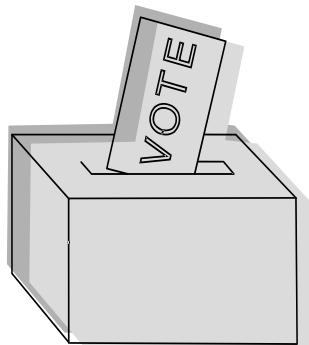
*Divide the class into groups of 2, 3 and 4. Give each group election campaign leaflets, that have been collected, to try and cover as many students as possible within the class. Give out the **General Election Candidate Profile Sheet** to each group and ask them to fill it in for the candidate that they have. When students have finished ask them to present their profiles to the rest of the class. Make a note on the board of the names of the candidates, their party affiliation and the issues that concern them.*

### Teacher's Notes

Listed here are some questions which may be useful to pose relating to the campaign literature:

- How many female candidates are running for election?
- How many male candidates are running for election?
- How many people have been elected previously and are running again?
- What are the ages of the candidates?
- What political parties are represented in the literature?
- What other parties/candidates are contesting the election in your constituency?

When students have finished this activity why not display the leaflets and the profiles which students have completed on the walls of the classroom.



# GENERAL ELECTION CANDIDATE PROFILE SHEET

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

CONSTITUENCY: \_\_\_\_\_

POLITICAL PARTY: \_\_\_\_\_

JOB/PROFESSION: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME TWO ISSUES THAT THIS CANDIDATE FEELS STRONGLY ABOUT:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

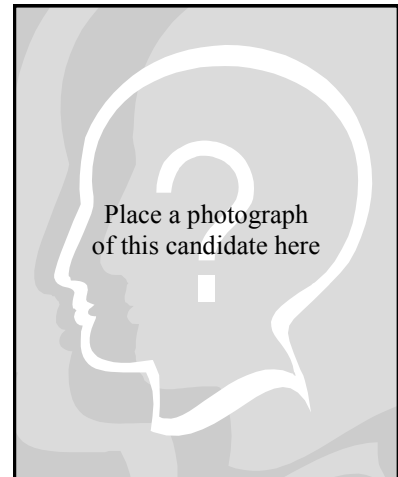
2. \_\_\_\_\_

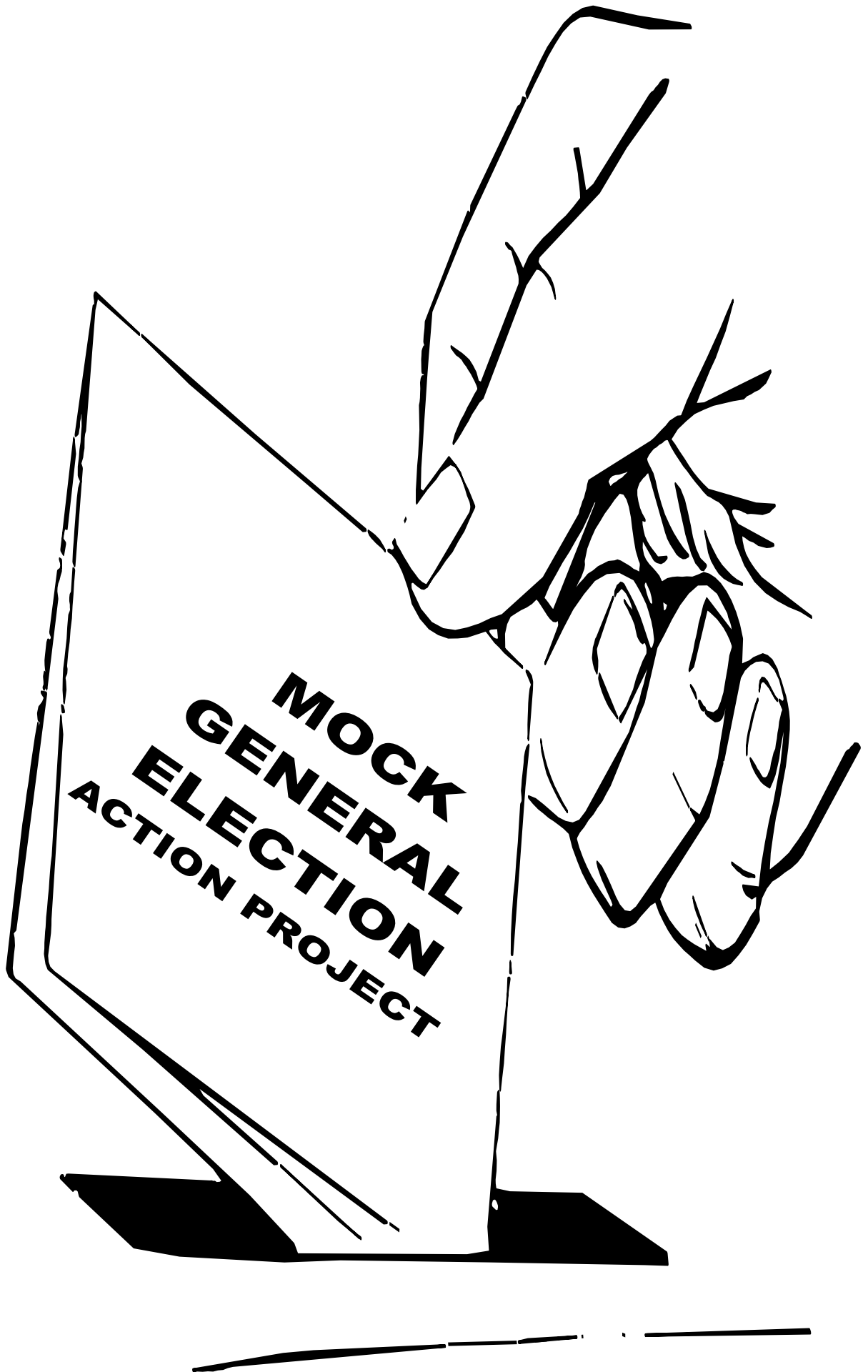
OTHER INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THIS CANDIDATE:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





# ELECTION



# '11

## MOCK GENERAL ELECTION ACTION PROJECT

### Teacher's Notes

Here you will find some tips to organising a mock general election action project, should you decide to carry out one with your students.

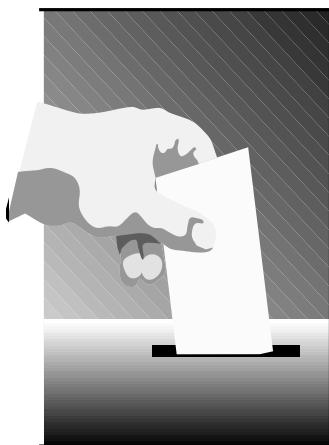
You can carry out a mock general election with your own CSPE class but for the purposes of voting you might consider including some of the following combinations of classes in your mock general election:

Class Group/s  
Year Group/s  
The Whole School

Democracy is not a spectator sport and an Action Project such as this encourages students not only to be participative in their learning but will empower them with the knowledge and skills necessary to access the procedures and structures of their democratic system in the future.

What follows is a suggestion for some of the groupings/committees/tasks you might consider having in order to run the mock general election. Within these groups or committees students should have their own individual task, which is their responsibility.

Students learn many different skills participating in any Action Project. Following the list of possible committees is an example of some of the skills that students may be using while engaging in this Action Project. This list is by no means exhaustive and there are many other skills that students may use throughout the process.



See Possible Committees on pages 16 and 17

For further information on  
Action Projects and Skills  
consult the *CSPE Teacher Guidelines*  
available at  
<http://cspe.slss.ie> or  
[www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)

# ELECTION



# '11

## POSSIBLE COMMITTEES/GROUPS/TASKS

### Teacher's Notes

The following committees/groups/tasks may prove useful in carrying out your Mock General Election:

#### 1. REGISTER OF ELECTORS COMMITTEE

Collect names and details from everyone intending to vote.  
Put together a Register of Electors.  
Produce in alphabetical order.

#### 2. ADVERTISING COMMITTEE

Make colourful eye catching posters to advertise the upcoming mock general election.  
Make posters or stick up fliers for the candidates.  
Inform participating classes of the time and date of the mock election

#### 3. POLLING CARD COMMITTEE

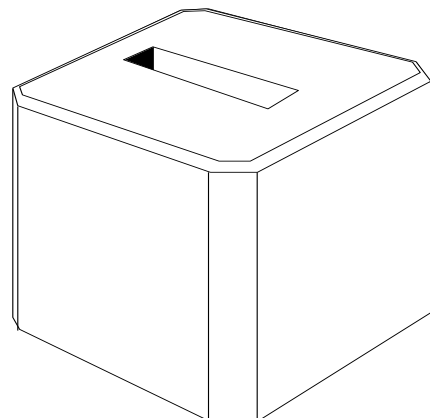
Using the template of a polling card given with this section, photocopy enough for all voters.  
Using the data from the Register of Electors fill out a polling card for every name.  
Issue the polling cards in time for the mock election.

#### 4. BALLOT PAPER COMMITTEE

Using the example of the ballot paper given in this resource, design your own ballot paper for your election.  
Photocopy and have enough ready for the day of the mock election.

#### 5. BALLOT BOX COMMITTEE

Get a cardboard box e.g. a banana box.  
Put the box into a black refuse sack and cut and fold to fit.  
Cut out an opening in the sack and or box for ballot papers to be placed inside.



# ELECTION



# '11

## MORE POSSIBLE COMMITTEES

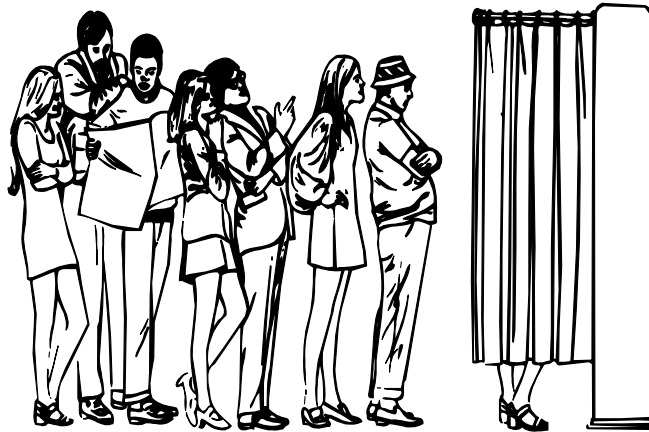
### Teacher's Notes

#### 6. PRESIDING OFFICERS COMMITTEE

This committee will have overall responsibility for running the election on the day.

Tasks may include

- setting up the tables in the polling station (classroom or hall)
- setting up a screen so that students can make a secret ballot
- checking names off the register as students vote and making sure that nobody votes twice.
- watching over the ballot box to make sure that nobody interferes with it or puts anything other than a ballot paper into the box!



#### 7. THE COUNT COMMITTEE

It is this committee's job to work out who has been elected. They will need to:

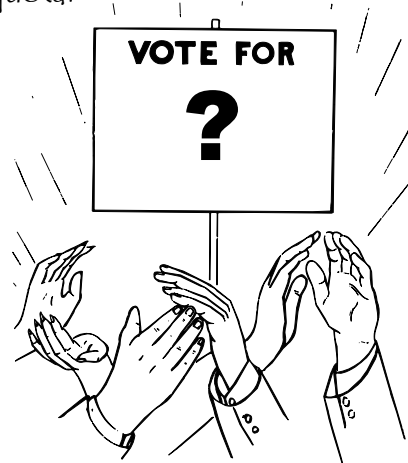
Count the votes.

Subtract any invalid or spoiled votes and work out the quota.

Count and recount.

Declare the winner/s.

Some templates for Polling Cards and Ballot Papers are included on Page 17



# ELECTION




# '11

## Polling Card Template

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>POLLING INFORMATION CARD - CÁRTA VÓTAÍOCHTA</b>   | NO STAMP<br>REQUIRED  |  |
|  | NUMBER <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/><br>YOU VOTE AT:- <input style="width: 100px; height: 40px;" type="text"/><br>POLLING DAY <input style="width: 50px; height: 20px;" type="text"/> |  |
| <b>THIS CARD IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY: IT IS NOT AN IDENTITY CARD. BE SURE TO BRING EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY WHEN YOU GO TO VOTE - SEE BACK OF THIS CARD.</b> |   |  |

## Ballot Paper Template

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>BUTLER - FIANNA Fáil</b><br>(Mary Butler of The Meadows, Bandon, Co. Cork; Company Director)             |    |  |
| <b>DELANEY - LABOUR</b><br>(Ned Delaney of Wheatfield House, Mallow, Co. Cork; Farmer)                      |    |  |
| <b>FLEMING - FIANNA Fáil</b><br>(John Fleming of Riverside Estate, Fermoy, Co. Cork; Public Representative) |   |  |
| <b>GORDON - NON-PARTY</b><br>(Katie Gordon of The Rise, Blackrock, Co. Cork; Shopkeeper)                    |  |  |
| <b>GRACE - FINE GAEL</b><br>(Miriam Grace of Muskerry Estate, Ballincollig, Co. Cork; Accountant)           |  |  |
| <b>KEATING - FINE GAEL</b><br>(Pamela Keating of Oak Road, Curraheen, Co. Cork; Doctor)                     |  |  |
| <b>MAUGHAN - SINN Féin</b><br>(Charlie Maughan of Patrick Street, Cork; Bank Official)                      |  |  |
| <b>PHELAN - FINE GAEL</b><br>(Joe Phelan of Chestnut Park, Bandon, Co. Cork; Company Director)              |  |  |
| <b>O'KELLY - NON-PARTY</b><br>(Ross O'Kelly of Seaview, Kinsale, Co. Cork; Construction Worker)             |  |  |
| <b>SAVAGE - GREEN PARTY</b><br>(Diane Savage of Model Farm Road, Bishopstown, Co. Cork; Interior Designer)  |  |  |

# ELECTION



# '11



## Democracy, Elections and Voting:

[www.irlgov.ie](http://www.irlgov.ie) - The Irish Government (Dáil and Seanad Éireann)

[www.oireachtas.ie](http://www.oireachtas.ie) - The Houses of the Oireachtas

[www.president.ie](http://www.president.ie) - The President of Ireland

[www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie) - Department of the Environment & Local Government (Elections, Proportional Representation)

## Political Parties:

[www.fiannafail.ie](http://www.fiannafail.ie) - Fianna Fail

[www.finegael.ie](http://www.finegael.ie) - Fine Gael

[www.labour.ie](http://www.labour.ie) - The Labour Party

[www.greenparty.ie](http://www.greenparty.ie) - The Green Party

[www.sinnfein.ie](http://www.sinnfein.ie) - Sinn Féin

[www.socialistparty.net](http://www.socialistparty.net) - The Socialist Party

## European Union:

<http://europa.eu.int> - European Parliament website.

<http://europa.eu.int> - European Union website

## Student Representation:

[www.studentcouncil.ie](http://www.studentcouncil.ie) - Information on establishing Student Councils from The Office of the Minister for Children

[www.dailnanog.ie](http://www.dailnanog.ie) - For information about the Youth Parliament in Ireland.

[www.youth.ie](http://www.youth.ie) - The National Youth Council of Ireland

[www.ussonline.net](http://www.ussonline.net) - Union of Secondary Students (umbrella organisation for second level students and student councils)

