

HAVE YOUR SAY

LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR YEARS 5 - 8

A YOUR VOICE, YOUR CHOICE TEACHER RESOURCE



**ELECTORAL
COMMISSION**
TE KAITIAKI TAKE KŌWHIRI

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Learning experiences	8
1. Getting started – who makes decisions?	8
2. Is your voice heard?	8
3. Rights and responsibilities (rules and laws)	9
4. What is an election?	12
5. New Zealand's system of government	13
6. Representatives of the people	14
7. Going to Wellington (after the election)	15
8. Taking action	17
9. Referendums	18
10. Being part of decision-making	19
11. What do we know now?	21
Resources	22
Vocabulary list	36

Resource developed by Lift Education E tū for the Electoral Commission.



<https://facebook.com/VoteNZ>



<https://elections.nz>

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this resource is to encourage students to have a say on the decisions that affect their lives now and in the future. It is based on civics education, which promotes engagement and participation in the democratic process.

This resource supports students to learn about their rights, duties, and responsibilities in a democracy and to develop understandings of how they can influence what happens in their school and community. It focuses on promoting students' critical thinking and their knowledge of citizens' rights and responsibilities to contribute and participate in decision-making.

Ideas for curriculum-aligned learning experiences, including teacher and student support materials, are provided in the resource.

This resource is aligned to the learning area of Social Sciences in *The New Zealand Curriculum* (2007) for Years 5 - 8.

It has not been updated to align with any draft or refreshed Social Sciences curriculum content.

Have Your Say is part of the Your Voice, Your Choice suite of resources (*Be Heard*; *Votes for Women*; and *Tūranga Mua*, *Tūranga Tika*) available for download from the Electoral Commission website:

<https://elections.nz/getting-involved/teaching-voting-at-schools>



Links to The New Zealand Curriculum

Vision	This resource focuses on students being: - connected: as members of their families, whānau, and communities - actively involved: by contributing to the social, cultural, economic, and environmental well-being of their communities - lifelong learners: as critical thinkers and informed decision-makers.
Principles	This resource supports the principles of: - inclusion: being non-discriminatory - community engagement: connecting and engaging with their families, whānau, and communities - future focus: citizenship.
Values	This resource models and explores the key value of: community and participation for the common good.
Key Competencies	This resource fosters in students the key competencies of: - thinking: to make sense of information, experiences, and ideas - participating and contributing: contributing as a group member and being actively involved in their communities.

Achievement objectives

Social Sciences (Social Studies)	
Conceptual strand: <i>Identity, Culture and Organisation</i> Students learn about society and communities and how they function. They also learn about the diverse cultures and identities of people within those communities and about the effects of these on the participation of groups and individuals.	
Years 5–6	Students will gain knowledge, skills, and experience to: - understand how groups make and implement rules and laws - understand how people make decisions about access to and use of resources.
Years 7–8	Students will gain knowledge, skills, and experience to: - understand how the ways in which leadership of groups is acquired and exercised have consequences for communities and societies - understand how formal and informal groups make decisions that impact on communities - understand how people participate individually and collectively in response to community challenges.

Pedagogical approach

This resource is based on a social inquiry approach. Social inquiry is a process for examining social issues, ideas, themes, and significant aspects of human society.

Using a social inquiry approach, students may follow these steps:

- **Find out information:** ask questions, gather information and background ideas, and examine relevant current issues
- **Explore values and perspectives:** explore and analyse people's values and perspectives
- **Consider responses and decisions:** consider ways in which people make decisions and participate in social action
- **Reflect and evaluate:** reflect on and evaluate the understandings they have developed and the responses that may be required
- **So what? Now what?:** identify what they now know, what their new learning means to themselves and others, what further learning they need, and what responses they could make.

For further information on the social inquiry approach, see *Approaches to Social Inquiry* (Ministry of Education, 2008).

Developing conceptual understandings

Conceptual understandings to be developed in this resource are:

- People's beliefs and values towards issues in society can be different.
- People can have more influence on what happens if they act collectively rather than alone.
- Democracy is an inclusive process because it gives people a say in who makes the rules of a country or community.

Concepts:

- participating
- contributing
- democracy
- decision-making.

For further information on building conceptual understandings in the social inquiry approach, see *Building Conceptual Understandings in the Social Sciences: Approaches to Building Conceptual Understandings* (Ministry of Education, 2009). This can be downloaded from:

<https://newzealandcurriculum.tahurangi.education.govt.nz/building-conceptualunderstandings-in-social-sciences/5637164191.p>

Assessment

Formative assessment is an important feature of this resource. With support from you, students will reflect on their learning in order to evaluate the progress they have made towards the conceptual understandings. Activities to support their development are found throughout this resource and are followed by formative assessment questions. After individual activities or the entire learning experience has been completed, allow students time to reflect on what they have learned, identify ideas that need further work, and review key points. Encourage them to think independently about how they have learnt as well as what they have learned. These reflections will provide valuable formative assessment data.

Digital resources

Digital versions of these resources and Google Slides can be found on the Electoral Commission website: <https://elections.nz/getting-involved/teaching-voting-at-schools>

Vocabulary list

At the back of this resource you will find a collection of vocabulary terms. These terms can be used to create a range of literacy support activities. In conjunction with this list, text from the provided digital factsheets can be copied and used to create additional literacy support material for students, such as cloze activities.

Using te reo Māori in the classroom

This glossary provides phrases in te reo Māori for you to incorporate into your classroom, as part of these learning experiences and beyond.

Classroom phrases

Te reo Māori	English
Whakarongo mai	Listen to me
Titiro ki tēnei	Look at this (here by me)
Whakaarotia tēnei take	Think about this issue
Pānuitia tēnei whārangi	Read this page
Rangahautia tēnei kaupapa	Investigate this topic
Tuhia ō koutou whakaaro	Write down your ideas (to a group)
Tuhia ō kōrua whakaaro	Write down your ideas (to a pair)
Tuhia ō whakaaro	Write down your ideas (to one person)
He aha te rangatiratanga?	What is rangatiratanga ?
He aha i pēnei ai?	Why is it like this?

Te reo Māori	English
Me whakaaro pēnei	Think of it like this
Āe	Yes
Kāo	No
Kia takitoru	Get into groups of three (works for numbers 2–9)
E tū	Stand up
Taki noho	Sit down (as a group)
Kōrero atu ki tō rōpu	Talk to your group
Ka rawe!	Great, excellent!
Koinā!	That's it!
He tika tāu	You're right (to one person)
He tika a Chloe	Chloe is right

Expressing an opinion (having a say)

Te reo Māori	English
Ki ōku nei whakaaro	In my opinion
Ki a au nei,	To me, (followed by statement)
Ki tō Tama e whakapono ai...	Tama believes that...
He pai ki a au te tākaro	I like to play
Kāore i te pai ki a au te hākinakina	I don't like sports
Tērā pea	Maybe, possibly
Me kōrero Māori tātou	We should all speak Māori
He pai ake te āporo i te panana	Apples are better than bananas
He aha tō koutou whakaaro?	What do you think? (to a group)
He aha tō kōrua whakaaro?	What do you think? (to a pair)

Te reo Māori	English
He aha tō whakaaro?	What do you think? (to one person)
He aha ai?	Why?
Engari	But
Me kī pea	Let's put it this way
He aha te kai o te rangatira? He kōrero, he kōrero, he kōrero.	What is the food of the leader? It is discussion (repeated for emphasis).
Kaiurungi	Leader (person who steers the ship)

Resources for integrating te reo Māori in the classroom

Resources to learn and use te reo Māori:

<https://www.reomaori.co.nz/>

Collection of student and teacher resources:

<https://akopanuku.education.govt.nz/resources>

Resources supporting using te reo Māori in English-medium schools:

<https://tereomaori.tki.org.nz/Reo-Maori-resources>

Professional development programme for teachers:

<https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/te-ahu-o-te-reo-maori-fostering-education-in-te-reo-maori/>

Suggestions for integrating te reo Māori and tikanga Māori into your classroom programme:

<https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/supporting-akonga-maori/consider-ways-to-integrate-te-reo-maori-and-tikanga-maori-into-your-classroom-programme/>

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

The following learning experiences may be taught sequentially, but we recommend that you adapt these to meet the specific learning needs and experiences of your students.

Links to the social inquiry approach	Learning experiences	What you need
Topic 1: Getting started – who makes decisions?		
Find out information	Activity 1 Divide the class into four groups. Tell the students that each group is going to create a team game to play against another team. The only equipment they can use in the game is one ball, two hoops, and one skipping rope. The students are to decide the rules of the game and where it is played, for example, on a netball court, on a playing field, or inside the school hall. Allow ten minutes of planning time. Then ask each group to explain how the decisions were made about the game and the rules. Ask: "Was everyone part of the decision-making?" The students could play the games they designed as part of a PE lesson.	
Topic 2: Is your voice heard?		
Explore values and perspectives What do I think?	Activity 1 Explain that everyone has the right to participate in decision-making that affects them. Ask students to stand in the middle of the space. Explain that you will read out some statements and that they are to place themselves along a continuum going from "always" to "never". Read the following statements: • "Adults at home listen to what I have to say (about things that affect me)." • "Adults at school listen to what I have to say (about things that affect me)." • "Adults in the community listen to what I have to say (about things that affect me)." Have the students place themselves on the continuum (or allocate spaces in the classroom) for the following responses: always most of the time sometimes hardly ever never Give students an opportunity to discuss the kinds of decision-making they participate in/do not participate in, after each statement is read.	• Open classroom space

Links to the social inquiry approach	Learning experiences	What you need
Topic 3: Rights and responsibilities (rules and laws)		
Find out information What groups do I belong to? What are my rights and responsibilities in decision-making within these groups?	Activity 1 Ask students to think-pair-share on the following questions: • What groups do you belong to? (For example: home, school, sport, or community groups.) • What is your role in decision-making in these groups? List the groups on a chart or the board. As a class, discuss the decision-making of each group. Prompting questions may include: • Who makes the rules for these groups? • Who makes the rules at home/school/in the community? • How are students' voices heard? • Who ensures rules are followed? As a class, discuss the current class/school rules, including questions such as: • Who makes them? • What is taken into consideration when making these rules? (For example: health and safety or laws.)	(Optional) A selection of images, or videos of places and activities. These could include sports, church, Scouts, an after school programme, or clubs. You could use images from home environments such as bedtime, meals, watching TV, or using a computer. If you don't have access to local images, you can find free images on websites such as: https://pexels.com/ https://unsplash.com/ https://pixabay.com/

Links to the social inquiry approach	Learning experiences	What you need
Topic 3: Rights and responsibilities (rules and laws) (continued)		
Consider responses and decisions What are some decisions that have been made that affect me?	Activity 2 As a class, discuss some decisions that will affect students' lives, such as those that we legally need to be a certain age to make: • start school (5) • leave school (16) • get married (18) • retire (65) • drive (16) • vote (18). Divide the class into six groups and have them discuss one of the points above. Ask students: "What reasons are there for these decisions? Who decided them? Why do you think they were made? Do you agree with them? Why/why not?" In their groups, have students write an argument for or against the decision, giving four valid reasons. Ask them to include what might make them change their mind about their position (for example, changes in their views as they get older).	

Links to the social inquiry approach	Learning experiences	What you need
Topic 3: Rights and responsibilities (rules and laws) (continued)		
Reflect and evaluate What qualities do leaders have?	Activity 3 Show the students the images and, as a class, discuss who the leaders are, what they lead, what their roles are, and what makes them a good leader. List the leadership qualities that these people display. Ask: • “How did they become leaders?” • “Does a person have to be good at something to become a leader?” • “Why do people follow leaders?” Consider introducing the concepts of rangatira and rangatiratanga here. You can find content on this in Topic 3: Discovering Rangatira in the <i>Tūranga Mua, Tūranga Tika</i> resource.	Images of well-known leaders, possibly from the newspaper or online images (for example: leaders in sports, politics, the community, or the school).
	Formative assessment question Can students give an example where they have had a different belief or value than a friend or family member?	

Links to the social inquiry approach	Learning experiences	What you need
Topic 4: What is an election?		
Find out information What do we know about the electoral process?	Activity 1 Create a graffiti wall (or use the letter box strategy or a digital in-school class forum) where students can either write or post responses to the questions: • What is an election? • Why do we have elections? • What happens during an election? In groups of three, have students discuss the questions before adding their ideas to the graffiti wall. To differentiate the responses and make it easier to collate, you could assign different coloured pens or sticky notes for each question. Collate the responses, and then have the class summarise the key ideas from the responses and post them to the wall under these headings: • We think an election is ... • We think elections are held to ... • In an election ...	• Wall space • Large sheets of paper • Sticky notes • Pens

Links to the social inquiry approach	Learning experiences	What you need
Topic 5: New Zealand's system of government		
Find out information What is a democracy?	Activity 1 As a class, brainstorm what you know about the concepts of democracy, participation, and collective action. Start a "wonder wall" for these concepts, including vocabulary, definitions, and examples. Add to this during the topic study. Have students fill in the Concept circle graphic organiser. Ask them to find out what each of the four words mean and write one or two sentences to explain how they are related. Have students write "what I think it means", "what it looks like", "what it looks like in a sentence" and "what it means to me".	• Wall space • Graphic Organiser A: Concept circle (for print, see page 24)
Find out information What do we know about the New Zealand democratic system?	Activity 2 Ask students: "What do you know about how the New Zealand democratic system works?" Explain the KWL chart graphic organiser and have students think-pair-share to fill in the K (what you <i>know</i>) and W (what you <i>want</i> to know) sections.	• Graphic Organiser B: KWL chart (for print see, page 25)
Find out information How does our democratic system work?	Activity 3 Have the students read Factsheet A, either with their own copy or by projecting the digital copy for the whole class to view. Using the information on the factsheet and from the resource links, guide the class to create a mind map (you could use MindMup at https://www.mindmup.com to create a digital mind map) showing how New Zealand's democratic system of government works. Discuss how (and at which stage) the people influence the system. Include discussion of Māori participation and representation in government. You can find content on this in Topic 4: Participation and representation of Māori in Parliament in the <i>Tūranga Mua, Tūranga Tika</i> resource. Formative assessment questions 1. Can students explain why there are multiple political parties? 2. Can students explain why Members of Parliament in the same political party vote collectively?	• Factsheet A: New Zealand's democratic system of government (for print, see page 26)

Links to the social inquiry approach	Learning experiences	What you need
Topic 6: Representatives of the people		
Find out information How are we represented in decision-making?	Activity 1 Show the class the map of New Zealand electorates. Ask: "Why do you think the electorates are divided this way? Is every electorate the same?" Explain that the electoral names and boundaries are reviewed and changed after a census. Ask: "Why do you think this happens?" Have students locate their electorate on the map and then research who represents their electorate in Parliament. This could include list MPs as well as the electorate MP. Explain that Māori have the choice of two electoral rolls. For more content on discussing the Māori and General rolls, see Topic 6: New Zealand's system of voting – Activity 2: The General or Māori roll in the <i>Tūranga Mua, Tūranga Tika</i> resource.	- Map of New Zealand divided into electorates: https://vote.nz/enrolling/get-ready-to-enrol/find-your-electorate-on-a-map - Information about how electorates work: https://elections.nz/democracy-in-nz/what-are-electorates (optional)
Find out information Who can vote?	Activity 2 Ask the class: "Who can vote? What are the criteria for enrolment?" In groups, have students investigate and record their findings on the retrieval table. A good source of information is https://vote.nz/enrolling/get-ready-to-enrol/are-you-eligible-to-enrol-and-vote As a class, share the results of each group's investigations. Formative assessment question Can students explain how democracy in New Zealand includes everyone?	Graphic Organiser C: Retrieval table – who can vote (for print see page 28)

Links to the social inquiry approach	Learning experiences	What you need
Topic 7: Going to Wellington (after the election)		
Find out information Where are the decisions made?	Activity 1 Have students work in groups or as a class to investigate how Parliament works. Ask: "How are decisions made? What do parliamentarians do? What decisions are made?" To investigate: • have students visit the websites for more information on the role of Members of Parliament • have students take a virtual tour of Parliament or watch Parliament TV. If possible, organise a class visit to Parliament or to the visitor centre at Government House to find out more. As a class, revisit the democratic system mind map from Topic 5, Activity 3. Ask: "Can we add to this? For example, who makes the constitutional and law decisions?"	• Access to the websites listed in the resource links • Democratic system of government mind map • Parliament XR virtual tour https://www3.parliament.nz/en/visit-and-learn/visit-experience-parliament-virtually/ • Parliament TV https://ondemand.parliament.nz/

Links to the social inquiry approach	Learning experiences	What you need
Topic 7: Going to Wellington (after the election) (continued)		
	Activity 2 Ask students why they think people hold different values and viewpoints. Introduce the idea of the survey. Using the Explaining viewpoints survey, have students survey their family, whānau, and community (without names) and record the answers given to the survey questions. As a class, use a visual representation to summarise the collated results. (For example: a graph, table, or collaborative digital mindmap at https://www.mindmup.com) Discuss the responses. Ask: “What information did people use (such as TV, radio, social media, online news, or their own experiences) that influenced their viewpoint? Do the responses give a fair representation of views? How could you get a wider range of viewpoints?” Discuss other ways surveys are carried out. (For example: by telephone, online, and by street surveys.) Formative assessment questions Can students explain why different people have different beliefs and values towards issues in society? Can students give an example of this at a local and national level?	Graphic Organiser D: Explaining viewpoints survey (for print, see page 29)

Links to the social inquiry approach	Learning experiences	What you need
Topic 8: Taking action		
Find out information How can people have their voices heard?	Activity 1 Explain that people can have more influence on what happens if they act together rather than alone, and that groups are able to share opinions and solve problems. Have the class brainstorm types of activities that people can do to have their voices heard (such as petitions, protests, referendums, letters to the editor or action groups/interest groups). Include examples from current events. Students should also consider local, national, and global situations if appropriate.	
Find out information How can people have their voices heard?	Activity 2 Divide the class into four groups to investigate one of the following group actions: • 1975 Māori land march • 1978 Bastion Point protest • 1981 Springbok rugby tour protests • 2004 Foreshore and seabed hikoi. Ask: "What was the issue? What action did the interest/protest group take? What was the outcome of the action/protest?" Have each group create an oral or visual presentation for the class. This could be in the format of a cartoon, graphic novel, or a role play. Students could also create a radio, newspaper or television news report.	• Internet access
	Formative assessment question Can students explain why it is more powerful to act together to influence decisions?	

Links to the social inquiry approach	Learning experiences	What you need
Topic 9: Referendums		
Find out information How else can we have a say?	Activity 1 Say: "In democracy today, a petition is still the mechanism that voters can use to force an issue into Parliament. A petition can result in a Citizens Initiated Referendum, where voters can have their say on an issue that affects their community. A Citizens Initiated Referendum gives everyone who is enrolled the opportunity to vote on a specific question. A referendum is held when at least 10 percent of the people enrolled to vote sign a petition calling for one. The results of Citizens Initiated Referendums indicate the views held by voters on specific questions and are not binding on the Government." Have students use Factsheet B and online sites to investigate the referendums process and recent New Zealand Citizens Initiated Referendums and Government Initiated Referendums. Have students record their findings as a flow chart. Bring the class together and share their flow charts. Ask: "If the outcome of the referendum is not binding, have peoples' voices been heard? Why/why not?" Formative assessment question Can students explain what a referendum is and how it is part of the democratic process?	- Factsheet B: Referendums (for print, see page 30) - Access to the following websites: https://elections.nz/democracy-in-nz/about-elections/what-is-a-referendum https://elections.nz/redirect/citizens-referenda

Links to the social inquiry approach	Learning experiences	What you need
Topic 10: Being part of decision-making		
	Activity 1 Explain that the Christchurch earthquake has given Christchurch children the opportunity to be involved in decision-making. You may need to tell them about the earthquake first as they will not have been born then. Read the Connected articles ('Rebuilding Christchurch with Amazing Ideas', and 'Making Amazing Places'), and discuss the outcome of the competition with the class. Discuss why it was important for children to be involved in the design of the playground. Have students search the internet for other examples around New Zealand of what other students have done. Examples include protesting at Parliament for more to be done about climate change, approaching their council to get more road crossings, skateboard parks, or better libraries. Ask: "Can you suggest a project in the community that our class could be involved in?"	• <i>Connected</i> L3 2014 article 'Rebuilding Christchurch with Amazing Ideas': https://elections.nz/redirect/rebuilding-christchurch • <i>Connected</i> L2 2014 article 'Making Amazing Places': https://elections.nz/redirect/making-amazing-places
So what? Now what? How can we have our voices heard?	Activity 2 Read Factsheet C with the class. Discuss ways that students could comment on, and be part of, classroom and school decision-making (such as: group consultation, student council, comments box, discussion board, or forum on the school website). Discuss which would be best, and implement it for a trial period.	• Factsheet C: You can still have your say if you're not 18 (for print, see page 32) • Examples of letters to the editor (printed or online) on a range of local or national issues

Links to the social inquiry approach	Learning experiences	What you need
Topic 10: Being part of decision-making (continued)		
	Activity 3 As a class, brainstorm ways that students could have their say on decision-making in the community. Introduce the concept of a letter to the editor. Have students read your example letters for a selection of current issues. In groups, ask students to choose the issue they feel most strongly about. Have students record how they feel about this issue and write a group letter to the editor in response to this issue.	• Examples of letters to the editor (printed or online) on a range of local or national issues
So what? Now what? How can I have my voice heard?	Activity 4 Facilitate a class discussion about what would happen if: • there was a change to the voting system • people decided not to vote • enrolment was not compulsory • we no longer had elections • you lived in a country where you were unable to vote and could not have your say. (Carefully consider who you have in your class as this could be a sensitive topic in some communities.) Have students write an argument or report on one of these aspects justifying their opinion. Alternatively, have the students prepare for a class debate on one of these aspects. Have students come up with practical and interesting strategies that would encourage people to cast their vote in elections (local or national). Have them design a poster, fridge magnet, or social media post to encourage people to participate in the democratic voting process. They do not need to create a real social media post, and instead can create a picture of one based on some examples you show them. As a class, look at effective promotional posters used in previous elections or promotions. Discuss what makes these posters effective. Have students create a promotional poster to raise awareness about a school issue, such as littering or bullying, or to promote positive behaviour, being sun-smart, or wearing school sunhats.	

Links to the social inquiry approach	Learning experiences	What you need
Topic 10: Being part of decision-making (continued)		
	Activity 5 Have students identify a school or local community issue that they care about. Explore what individual and collective actions they could take to make a change. Create an action plan to follow as a class project. Formative assessment questions 1. Can students explain, with examples, why it can be useful to include children in the decision-making process about things that affect them? 2. Can students give an example of an issue that they feel strongly about and what they could do to have their voice heard?	
Topic 11: What do we now know?		
Reflecting and evaluating What have you learned? So what do we now know about participating in the electoral process?	Activity 1 Revisit the key ideas from the graffiti wall from Topic 4, Activity 1. Ask: "With what you now know, can you change, add, or delete key ideas?" This could be done using different coloured sticky notes or a different coloured pen. Have students complete the L (what I have <i>learned</i>) section of the KWL chart. Reflection on learning Have students, either independently or in small groups, reflect on what they've learned about the importance of having a voice in decision-making. Ask: • How do people have a say in decision-making in our democratic society? • In what ways can you voice your opinions to decision-makers when you are not yet eligible to vote? • What are the possible consequences of non-participation in the election process?	• Summary of key ideas from graffiti wall (Topic 4, Activity 1) • KWL chart (Topic 5, Activity 2)

RESOURCES

Resource links:

What is New Zealand's system of government: <https://www.elections.nz/democracy-in-nz/what-is-new-zealands-system-of-government>

Are you eligible to enrol and vote? <https://vote.nz/enrolling/get-ready-to-enrol/are-you-eligible-to-enrol-and-vote>

Learn how to vote in a general election, by-election, referendum or local election: <https://vote.nz/voting/how-to-vote/what-to-do>

What is MMP? <https://www.elections.nz/democracy-in-nz/what-is-mmp/>

How are MPs elected? <https://www.elections.nz/democracy-in-nz/what-is-mmp/how-are-mps-elected/>

Political parties in New Zealand: <https://www.elections.nz/democracy-in-nz/political-parties-in-new-zealand/>

Parliament: <https://www.parliament.nz/en/>

How Parliament works: <https://www.parliament.nz/en/visit-and-learn/how-parliament-works/>

How government works: <https://www.govt.nz/browse/engaging-with-government/government-in-new-zealand/>

Parliament TV and Radio: <https://ondemand.parliament.nz/>

Explore Parliament: Educators and students: <https://www.parliament.nz/learn>

Ministry of Youth Development: Youth Parliament: <http://www.myd.govt.nz/young-people/youth-parliament/>

Panorama of the parliamentary debating chamber: <https://www.nzhistory.govt.nz/media/interactive/debating-chamber>

Government House tours: <https://www.gg.govt.nz/government-house/government-house-wellington/government-house-tours>

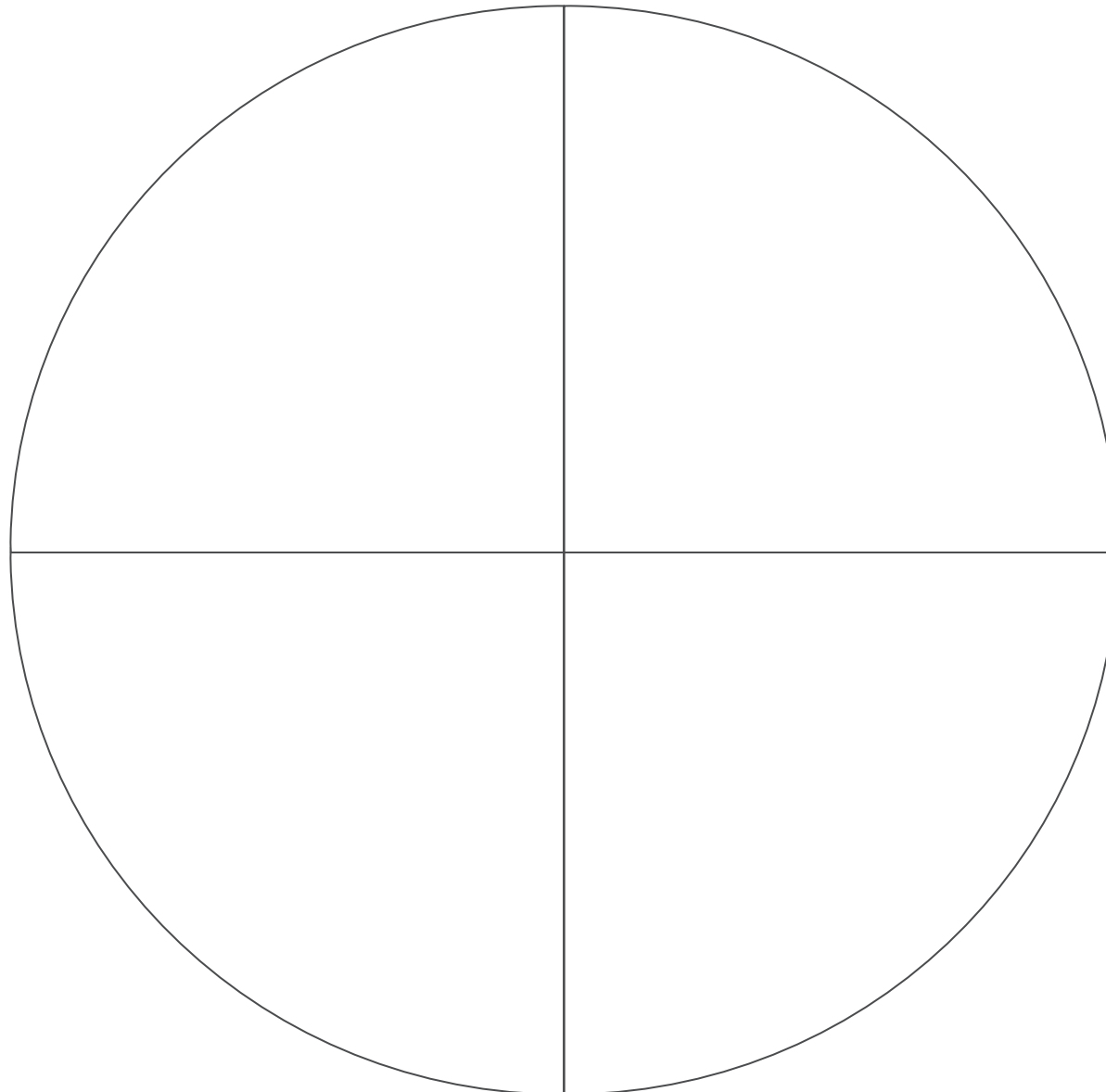
Concept circle

Decision-making

Participation

Democracy

Representation



GRAPHIC ORGANISER B

KWL chart

What I <i>know</i> about ...	What I <i>want</i> to know about ...	What I have <i>learned</i> about ...

New Zealand's democratic system of government

New Zealand is what's called "a constitutional monarchy". This means that we have a King who is our Head of State. But most of the decisions that affect our country are really made by our Government and Parliament, which the people of New Zealand elect to represent them.

Who's in charge?

The King and the Governor-General

The King is New Zealand's Head of State, and the Governor-General is his representative in New Zealand. The Governor-General has many official roles in New Zealand, but they do not participate in the day-to-day running of the country. You can find out more about the role of the Governor-General at <http://gg.govt.nz>

Government

After an election, the party that won the most seats in Parliament usually forms a government. Sometimes this party will have a majority (more than half) of all the seats. They may form a government alone, but usually they will join with one or more smaller parties to gain the majority.

The Government's job is to run the country. It does this through proposing new laws and other rules, as well as making sure everything works the way it is meant to.

Parliament – House of Representatives and Members of Parliament

Parliament is made up of the House of Representatives and the Governor-General.

The House of Representatives ("the House") is made up of a lot of different people from different backgrounds. These people are called Members of Parliament, or MPs. Each MP has a seat in Parliament, and there are (usually) 120 seats.

New Zealand has a system of laws that tells us what is legal and what is illegal. These laws are created by our Parliament. A proposed new law is called a bill. Most bills come from the Government, who can propose a new one whenever they like. But any MP can draft a bill. Members' bills are randomly selected out of a ballot. If the bill is selected it will be considered too. The bill can change a lot before it is finalised. If more than half of MPs vote for the final bill, the Governor-General signs it and it becomes a law.

MPs have another important job. They can ask the Government questions about its decisions and highlight things they think it could be doing better.

You can read more about New Zealand's system of government at <https://www.elections.nz/democracy-in-nz/what-is-new-zealands-system-of-government>

How do they get to be in charge?

You put them in charge! MPs are people that are voted in by New Zealanders to represent them in Parliament.

People over the age of 18 in New Zealand can vote for the party and person they think will represent them best in Parliament. This means they work to make the country's laws and speak up for what they think people need and want.

If you voted for the party or person who then became the Government, your views get represented there too.

You can read more about who can vote at <https://vote.nz/enrolling/get-ready-to-enrol/are-you-eligible-to-enrol-and-vote>

Mixed Member Proportional – MMP

MMP is the current system of voting that New Zealand uses for elections to Parliament.

Each voter gets two votes – one for the party they want and one for the candidate to represent their electorate. MMP is a proportional system, which means that the proportion of votes a party gets will largely reflect the number of seats it has in Parliament. For example, if a party gets 25% of the votes, they should get 25% of the seats. This is what makes a proportional system.

You can read more about the MMP system and how voting works at <https://www.elections.nz/democracy-in-nz/what-is-mmp>

There are also specific Māori seats in the New Zealand Parliament. You can read more about these here: <https://www.elections.nz/elections-in-nz/what-is-the-maori-electoral-option/>

Political parties

A political party is a group of people who believe similar things about how the country should be run. If enough people vote for them or one of their members, they get seats in the House.

Political parties represented in Parliament usually vote together on issues so their votes have more influence on the result.

MPs can either be part of a party or independent.

You can read more about historical and current political parties at <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/political-parties>

How are laws made?

A bill is a proposal for a new law. MPs introduce bills to Parliament. Once the bill is “introduced” into Parliament, MPs discuss the different issues about it. A bill must pass through several stages of being looked at and discussed as it goes through a three-stage voting process. It may change a lot through this process as the MPs work on making it better. If the bill is approved by Parliament (which means the majority of MPs agreed it should be passed) it receives Royal assent before becoming an Act of Parliament and passing into law.

Government bills

The Government has more ability to put bills through Parliament than other MPs. The Government usually introduces bills supporting their policies. Government policies can range from issues like how much money should go into education, to how we should keep our fisheries sustainable. The Minister responsible for the area introduces the bill to Parliament. For example, the Minister of Education would introduce a bill about education.

The Government is also in charge of the Ministries, which support the day-to-day running of the country.

Members’ bills

MPs who are not Ministers can also put bills before the Parliament. Members’ bills are put forward less often than Government bills (every second Wednesday during Parliament), but are still an important part of the New Zealand government system. However, because Parliament doesn’t have time to consider every bill, a ballot system is used to decide which members’ bill will be presented next.

Select committees

Select committees are set up after each general election. One of their roles is taking part in the development process of a bill. After the first vote, if the majority of MPs agree the bill could be a good thing, the bill goes to a select committee. This is a smaller group of MPs from different parties that debate the bill in more detail. This is also the chance for the public to have their say about the bill. Anyone can make a submission to a select committee to give their opinion on a bill. This makes sure that a variety of points of view are heard and that laws are effective and representative. For example, for the Marriage Equality Bill in 2012, many thousands of New Zealanders gave their opinion through the select committee, before it was passed into law in 2013.

You can read more about bills and how Parliament works at:

<https://www.parliament.nz/en/visit-and-learn/how-parliament-works/>

<https://www.parliament.nz/en/footer/about-us/>

<https://www.teara.govt.nz/en/parliament>

GRAPHIC ORGANISER C**Retrieval table – who can vote**

You can vote if you are ...	You can't vote if you are ...

Explaining viewpoints survey

I vote because ...

The issues I am most concerned about are:

- health
- environment
- education
- transport
- other _____

What information do you consider before you vote?

I vote because ...

The issues I am most concerned about are:

- health
- environment
- education
- transport
- other _____

What information do you consider before you vote?

I vote because ...

The issues I am most concerned about are:

- health
- environment
- education
- transport
- other _____

What information do you consider before you vote?

I vote because ...

The issues I am most concerned about are:

- health
- environment
- education
- transport
- other _____

What information do you consider before you vote?

In New Zealand, we usually rely on our Members of Parliament (MPs) to represent us in Parliament, consult with their communities, and decide what is best for the country. But sometimes, the Government or a group of people want to know what the whole country thinks about a particular issue. So they ask them!

What is a referendum?

A referendum is a way for the people of New Zealand to have a say on one specific issue. It tells Parliament what the people think about a particular issue, policy, or law.

What do they do?

We have binding and non-binding referendums. Binding means that the Government has to follow what the people say and the referendum vote decides whether the policy becomes law or not.

Non-binding means that the referendum is useful for the Government to consider when deciding about the policy, but the decision is made by Parliament.

Who can start a referendum?

The Government can decide to have a referendum when they choose. This is called a Government Initiated Referendum (GIR). They may decide to do this if they think the policy is controversial, or that many people feel very strongly one way or another about it. This information can help them make the best decision, or help MPs decide which way to vote on a bill.

A referendum can also be started by an ordinary citizen, if there are enough people who support having it. If you think that the Government

is not listening to the people about a particular issue, you can propose a referendum. This is called a Citizens Initiated Referendum (CIR). To make a Citizens Initiated Referendum happen you first need to design a petition. A petition is a piece of paper that people sign to say that they also want to have a referendum on the issue. 10% of the people who are enrolled to vote must sign your petition before a referendum will be held.

How do they work?

A referendum is a nationwide vote on a single question or issue. Everyone who is enrolled can vote in a referendum. Groups, individuals, or political parties may also put out information about the issue, trying to convince people to vote one way or another, but there are strict limits on how much money anyone is allowed to spend on advertising. That stops individuals or groups with plenty of money using lots of advertising to convince people of their own opinion.

Some referendums are held as part of a general election and some are done by a postal vote. In a postal vote, voting forms are posted to each registered voter. As a voter, you can take your time to consider the information given and do your own research. However the vote is held, when you've made your decision, you tick the box for the option you choose on your voting paper. If you're voting in a general election, you place your voting paper in the ballot box. If it's a postal referendum, you'll need to post it back before the voting closes.

All the votes received are then counted, and the results are presented to the public and to Parliament.

What are they about?

Referendums can be about any issue of concern. Many Government Initiated Referendums have been about our electoral system, but there have been lots of other topics as well.

- In 2015 and 2016, two Government Initiated Referendums were held and both were about which flag we should have.
- In 2015, New Zealanders were asked to choose between five selected designs of a new flag for New Zealand. The most popular was the silver fern design with black, white, and blue colours.
- In 2016, New Zealanders were asked to choose between the selected alternative New Zealand flag and the current New Zealand flag.

The fifth option in the first referendum (the Red Peak design) was added later, because many people thought the options were very similar. They started a petition and the government agreed to add the extra design.

You can read more about these two referendums and the flag options at:

Flag referendums: <https://www.nzhistory.govt.nz/politics/flags-of-new-zealand/flag-referenda>

There have also been many different topics for Citizens Initiated Referendum in New Zealand. One of these was held in 2013 and asked voters:

- Do you support the Government selling up to 49% of Meridian Energy, Mighty River Power, Genesis Power, Solid Energy, and Air New Zealand?

You can read more about referendums in New Zealand at:

<https://www.teara.govt.nz/en/referendums>

<https://www.elections.nz/elections-in-nz/what-is-a-referendum>

<https://www.parliament.nz/en/get-involved/have-your-say/seek-a-referendum/>

You can still have your say if you're not 18

Even if you are under 18 and can't vote yet, it doesn't mean you can't have your say. There are lots of other ways of letting community leaders and policy makers know what you think about issues that concern you.

As New Zealand citizens, it's our job to help build the kind of society we want to live in. If we don't like the way something works, we should try to change it. Rather than moaning about things you don't like, be constructive, get active, and start working to get some changes made.

Get in touch

Contact your electorate MP and let him or her know what issues are important to you. You can ring, email, write a letter, or even go to see them in person. It's their job to find out what the big issues are for the people in their electorate.

Find out the contact details for your electorate MP and for the list MPs who work in your area. This website will help: <https://www.parliament.nz/en/get-involved/have-your-say/contact-an-mp/>

Write

You can write to an MP at:

Freepost Parliament
Private Bag 18 888
Parliament Buildings
Wellington 6160

(You don't even need a stamp.)

If something concerns you, why not write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper? It's a good way to get other people thinking about issues.

Team up

You've probably seen protests on television or in the newspaper, or you may even have been part of one. Protesters are people who feel strongly about an issue and want to raise awareness of it by having a march or demonstration.

Sometimes people who feel strongly about an issue will form an interest group. Such groups will usually focus on a single issue and pressure decision-makers to make certain choices about it.

Choose an interest group and find out about it. What issue or issues are its members concerned about? What action have they taken? Do you agree with what they are doing?

Some interest groups you may like to check out:

Amnesty International – <https://www.amnesty.org.nz>

Federated Farmers – <https://www.fedfarm.org.nz>

Greenpeace – <https://www.greenpeace.org/new-zealand/explore/>

Grey Power – <https://www.greypower.co.nz>

New Zealand Council of Trade Unions – <https://www.union.org.nz>

Forest and Bird – <https://www.forestandbird.org.nz/>

Sign a petition

Signing a petition is an easy way of being active. It can be very effective. If enough people sign a petition approved by the Clerk of the House of Representatives, a Citizens Initiated Referendum can be held where everyone gets the chance to vote on the issue.

Sign a petition: <https://petitions.parliament.nz/>

Go to a meeting

Sometimes forums and meetings are held where people discuss particular issues that they are concerned about. Your city might have a youth council where young people discuss issues that affect people their age.

Debate the issues

People don't always agree on everything. This is what makes our society interesting. Think how boring it would be if we all thought the same. Your viewpoint on an issue will differ depending on who you are and what's important to you. If you don't agree with what's going on, it's up to you to make your voice heard. Nobody will know your view unless you make it known.

Work out your own ideas

Open your eyes to what is going on around you. What are the big issues in our society?

Find out what other people think about the issues. Then ask yourself "What do I think? Where do I stand? What kind of world do I want to live in?"

Talk over your ideas with your friends and family. If they disagree with you, don't be afraid to start a friendly debate. It's a good way of developing your ideas even further.

No one can tell you what to think. It's something that you need to work out for yourself.

Information about the different voting systems

MMP – Mixed member proportional

We currently use the MMP system to elect our Parliament.

There are 120 Members of Parliament (MPs). For the 2026 General Election, there are 71 electorates, including the 7 Māori electorates. Each electorate elects one MP, who is called an electorate MP. The other MPs are elected from political party lists. They are called list MPs.

In an election, each voter has two votes.

- The first vote is for the political party the voter chooses. This is called the party vote and it decides the total number of seats each party gets in Parliament.
- The second vote is to choose the MP to represent the electorate where the voter lives. This is called the electorate vote. The candidate who gets the most votes wins. They do not have to get more than half the votes to win.

Under the MMP rules, when a political party wins at least one electorate seat OR 5% of the party vote, they get a matching share of the seats in Parliament. Their number of seats is about the same as their share of the party vote.

For example, if a party gets 30% of the party vote, then it will get 36 MPs in Parliament (36 is 30% of 120 seats). So, if this party wins 20 electorate seats, it will have 16 list MPs to add to its 20 electorate MPs.

A party usually needs a coalition, or an agreement with other political parties to work together, to form a government.

FPP – First past the post

There are 120 Members of Parliament. Each of the 120 electorates, including the Māori electorates, elects one MP.

Each voter has one vote to choose one MP to represent the electorate where they live. The candidate who gets the most votes wins. They do not have to get more than half the votes to win.

Large parties – especially the winning party – usually win a larger share of the seats in Parliament than their share of the total votes across the country. Smaller parties usually get a smaller share of seats than their share of the total votes.

A party can usually form a government without needing a coalition, or an agreement with other parties.

PV – Preferential voting

There are 120 Members of Parliament. Each of the 120 electorates, including the Māori electorates, elects one MP.

Voters rank the candidates – 1, 2, 3, etc. – in the order they prefer them. The candidate marked “1” is their first choice.

A candidate who gets more than half of all the “1” votes wins.

If no one gets more than half the first choice votes, the candidate with the lowest number “1” votes is out of the running. These votes then go to the candidate each voter chose next, as “2”.

This process is repeated until one candidate has more than half the votes.

Large parties – especially the winning party – usually win a larger share of the seats in Parliament than their share of total votes ranked first. It's hard for smaller parties to win seats in Parliament – but votes for smaller party candidates may change who wins the seat due to second and third rankings, etc.

A party can usually form a government without needing a coalition, or an agreement, with other parties.

STV – Single transferable vote

There are 120 Members of Parliament. Each electorate has more than one MP. This includes the Māori electorates. It's likely the 120 MPs would be divided between 24–30 electorates. Each electorate would then have 3–7 MPs.

Each voter has a single vote that is transferable. Voters either rank the candidates – 1, 2, 3, etc. – in the order they prefer, OR they vote for an order chosen by the political party they prefer. The party would publish their chosen order before the election.

MPs have to reach a minimum number of votes to be elected. This is known as the quota. The quota is based on the number of votes in each electorate and the number of MPs to be elected.

Candidates who reach the quota from first choice votes are elected.

If there are still electorate seats to fill, then there is a two-step process.

Step one:

Once elected candidates have reached the quota, the extra votes they didn't need are transferred to the candidates ranked next on those votes. Candidates who then reach the quota are elected.

Step two:

If there are still electorate seats to fill, the candidate with the fewest votes is removed. Their votes are transferred to the candidates ranked next on those votes.

This two-step process is repeated until all the seats are filled.

The number of MPs elected from each political party roughly matches the party's share of all their first choice votes across the country.

A party usually needs a coalition, or an agreement with other political parties to work together, to form a government.

SM – Supplementary member

There are 120 Members of Parliament. There are 90 electorates, including the Māori electorates. Each electorate elects one MP. They're called an electorate MP. The other 30 seats are called supplementary seats. MPs are elected to these seats from political party lists and would be called list MPs.

Each voter has two votes.

- The first vote is to choose the MP to represent the electorate where the voter lives. This is called the electorate vote. The candidate who gets the most votes wins. They do not have to get more than half the votes to win.
- The second vote is for the political party the voter chooses. This is called the party vote. Each party's share of the party vote decides how many of the 30 supplementary seats each party gets.

For example, if a party gets 30% of the party vote, it'll get about 9 list MPs in Parliament (9 is 30% of the 30 seats). It doesn't matter how many electorate seats a party wins.

This makes SM different from MMP. In MMP, a party's share of all 120 seats matches its share of the party vote.

In SM, one of the major parties would usually have enough seats to govern alone. Sometimes, though, they may need a coalition or an agreement with other parties.

VOCABULARY LIST

COMPLETE RESOURCE VOCABULARY LIST

Act of Parliament	a written law that has been passed by Parliament
ballot	a system of voting secretly in writing
bill	a draft of a proposed law presented to Parliament for discussion
candidate	a person who has put themselves forward for election to Parliament or local council – they are chosen for that position if they get the most votes in an election
census	an official count or survey of a population usually undertaken in New Zealand every 5 years
citizens	people that belong to a particular country
coalition	when two or more parties join together to have a majority of the votes, for the purpose of forming a government
collective action	an organised social or political act carried out by a group of people in order to address their needs
community	a group of people living in the same place or having a characteristic in common
democracy	a system of government in which the people get to vote for the person and/or party they want to govern
election	people choose someone to represent them in government by voting

electorate	a voting area for general elections – every place in New Zealand is covered by both a general electorate and a Māori electorate
Government	the group of people responsible for the day-to-day running of the country
Government House	the official house where the Governor-General lives
Governor-General	the person who represents the King, because New Zealand recognises the King as the Head of State
House of Representatives	the part of Parliament that consists of the 120 elected MPs, excluding the Governor-General
illegal	not allowed by law
laws	the set of rules that people in a country must follow
legal	allowed by law
list MP	a member of Parliament who is elected from a party list rather than by winning an electorate
MP – Members of Parliament	the people who are elected to Parliament
MMP – Mixed Member Proportional	the voting system used to elect New Zealand's Parliament
Parliament	the institution that makes the laws in New Zealand
participation	when people join in an activity
petition	a formal written request, usually signed by many people, asking for something to change

policy	a set of ideas or plans that is used for making decisions
political party	an organised group of people who have similar beliefs and who want to make decisions and run the country
Prime Minister	the head of Government
PV – Preferential Voting	a system of voting where voters write down their first choice to their last choice in numerical order from the candidates standing for that position
referendum	a vote on a single question or issue
responsibilities	things that you are personally accountable for, such as a task or a job
rights	basic freedoms or things that people can expect to have, such as clean water, shelter and health-care
select committee	a small group of Members of Parliament that are set up to investigate a specific issue, policy or law in detail
SM – Supplementary Member	a voting system where a person is elected to one of the seats left over after candidates have been elected by their electorates – political parties will elect people to these seats from their lists
STV – Single Transferable Vote	a voting system where a vote can be transferred to a second or third choice candidate if a voter's first choice reaches the total number of valid votes
supplementary seats	the seats left over once candidates have been elected by their electorates – political parties will elect people to these seats from their list
survey	to gather information about someone or something
vote	choosing between two or more options

FACTSHEET A – NEW ZEALAND’S DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

Act of Parliament	a written law that has been passed by Parliament
ballot	a system of voting secretly in writing
bill	a draft of a proposed law presented to Parliament for discussion
election	people choose someone to represent them in government by voting
electorate	a voting area for general elections – every place in New Zealand is covered by both a general electorate and a Māori electorate
Government	the group of people responsible for the day-to-day running of the country
Governor-General	the person who represents the King, because New Zealand recognises the King as the Head of State
House of Representatives	the part of Parliament that consists of the 120 elected MPs, excluding the Governor-General
illegal	not allowed by law
laws	the set of rules that people in a country must follow
legal	allowed by law
MP – Member of Parliament	a person who is elected to Parliament

MMP – Mixed Member Proportional	the voting system used to elect New Zealand's Parliament
Parliament	the institution that makes the laws in New Zealand
political party	an organised group of people who have similar beliefs and who want to make decisions and run the country
responsibilities	things that you are personally accountable for, such as a task or a job
rights	basic freedoms or things that people can expect to have, such as clean water, shelter and health-care
select committee	a small group of Members of Parliament that are set up to investigate a specific issue, policy or law in detail
vote	choosing between two or more options

FACTSHEET B – REFERENDUMS

citizens

people that belong to a particular country

Government

the group of people responsible for the day-to-day running of the country

MP – Member of Parliament

a person who is elected to Parliament

Parliament

the institution that makes the laws in New Zealand

petition

a formal written request, usually signed by many people, asking for something to change a

policy

set of ideas or plans that is used for making decisions

political party

an organised group of people who have similar beliefs and who want to make decisions and run the country

referendum

a vote on a single question or issue

vote

choosing between two or more options

FACTSHEET C – YOU CAN STILL HAVE YOUR SAY IF YOU'RE NOT 18

citizens	people that belong to a particular country
community	a group of people living in the same place or having a characteristic in common
electorate	a voting area for general elections – every place in New Zealand is covered by both a general electorate and a Māori electorate
House of Representatives	the part of Parliament that consists of the 120 elected MPs, excluding the Governor-General
MP – Member of Parliament	a person who is elected to Parliament
Parliament	the institution that makes the laws in New Zealand
petition	a formal written request, usually signed by many people, asking for something to change
policy	a set of ideas or plans that is used for making decisions
vote	choosing between two or more options

FACTSHEET D – INFORMATION ABOUT THE DIFFERENT VOTING SYSTEMS

candidate	a person who has put themselves forward for election to Parliament or local council – they are chosen for that position if they get the most votes in an election
coalition	when two or more parties join together to have a majority of the votes, for the purpose of forming a government
electorate	a voting area for general elections – every place in New Zealand is covered by both a general electorate and a Māori electorate
Government	the group of people responsible for the day-to-day running of the country
list MP	a member of Parliament who is elected from a party list rather than by winning an electorate
MMP – Mixed Member Proportional	the voting system used to elect New Zealand's Parliament
MP – Member of Parliament	a person who is elected into Parliament
Parliament	the institution that makes the laws in New Zealand
political party	an organised group of people who have similar beliefs and who want to win elections in order to make decisions and run the country
PV – Preferential Voting	a system of voting where voters write down their first choice to their last choice in numerical order from the candidates standing for that position
SM – Supplementary Member	a voting system where a person is elected to one of the seats left over after candidates have been elected by their electorates – political parties will elect people to these seats from their lists

STV – Single Transferable Vote

a voting system where a vote can be transferred to a second or third choice candidate if a voter's first choice reaches the total number of valid votes

supplementary seats

the seats left over once candidates have been elected by their electorates – political parties will elect people to these seats from their lists

