

DEMOCRACY - what does it mean?



The word "democracy" comes from the Greek words "demos" and "kratia," which literally mean "people power." (1)

Ezra Pound [asserted](#) in "The ABCs of Economics," written in 1933, that democracy is actually a responsibility of the people to protect their rights against the government through the careful selection of their leaders. (2)

- **What are the benefits of democracy?**
Well, in some way it [upholds](#) the principle of [equality](#); each of us (when we're old enough) has one and only one vote. Voting is one of the few times when all grown-ups in the U.S. have an equal say. So, no matter how much money you have or who your friends are, you only get one vote. (3)
- **Each vote sends a message.**
Even if the person you vote for loses, your vote matters because it lets winners and losers know who supports their points of view. (4)

- **Politicians notice who is and isn't voting.**

In the U.k, the highest voter **turnout** is among the over 60's, so it's no surprise that politicians are going to spend a lot of time on issues that are important to older people, like Pensions and the Health Service. Younger voters, like 18-24 year-olds, haven't voted in high numbers recently, so it's easier for politicians to pay less attention to the issues that are important to young people. (5)

- **Whoever wins has the power to impact your life.**

The government is in charge of making important decisions that impact almost every aspect of your life, like...

Your school, such as what gets taught, how many kids are in your class

- The environment including how clean your air and water will be, how we'll deal with global warming problems
- Your health including how much it costs to go to the doctor or to buy prescription drugs
- Your safety including how big your police and fire departments are
- How much money we spend on the military and whether we go to war (6)

What happens now has a great effect on the future.

If you think that your opinion doesn't matter about who is in government now, think again! The people in government now are making decisions that will affect your life now AND later! This is why it's important to get involved and be heard now, even when you can't vote. (7)

Activities:

- 1. Vocabulary – find out the meaning of the words in blue.**
- 2. Where does the word ‘democracy’ come from? (1)**
- 3. What is good about democracy? (3)**
- 4. Why is it important for everyone to vote?**

Discussion:

It states in the article that a lot of young people between the ages of 18 and 24 do not vote. Why do you think that is the case?

What do you think what make more young people vote?