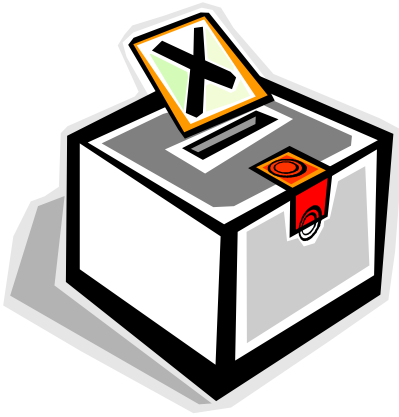


Choosing to vote

Not everyone has the chance to vote, but even when they do, some people choose not to.

These are the voices of two very different voters. Tony has never voted – he doesn't see the point. Jane always votes – she believes that her vote makes a difference.



Tony, a non-voter

I get up in the morning, take the kids to school and go to work. Sometimes, in the evening, I might go to a bar and play some pool with my friends. At the weekend we usually have a family trip, and occasionally we go away on holiday. That's my life. Now you tell me what do politicians have to do with any of that? They can talk about what they think is important as much as they like – but I won't listen. As far as I am concerned, all that money spent on elections would be better used to build more hospitals and schools.

Fact bank

- Countries where people vote for their governments are called democracies.
- There are more democratic countries in the world now than ever before.
- People become eligible to vote in the UK at 18. Only 65% of these voted in the 2010 General

Ask yourself this...

1. How would you describe Tony's attitude towards politics and politicians?
2. In which ways does politics affect your life? Who do you think makes decisions about hospitals and schools?

Jane, a voter

Democracy is such a precious thing and we're so lucky to have it. "We the people" have the chance to choose our leaders. That means politicians know if they don't do a good job, then they're out! There are many people in the world who can only dream of having such power. In those countries it's the people who serve the government, but where I live it's the members of the government who are the servants, because every few years they are answerable to us. Besides, if you don't vote, then how can you complain if you don't get the government you want?

Fact bank

- Women in Saudi Arabia have only been granted the right to vote in the last few years.
- In early-19th-century Britain very few people had the right to vote. Only 3% of the population!
- There were more votes cast during the 2010 X Factor than there was in the General Election.

Ask yourself this...

3. If democracy is "such a precious thing", as Jane says, why do you think so many people who have the chance to vote in elections choose not to?
4. How do you think more people could be encouraged to vote?

