

Easy English



How to Vote at a Polling Place



AEC

Australian Electoral Commission

How to use this guide

This information is written in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Some words are written in **colour**.

We explain what these words mean on [page 24](#).

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My plan



This guide will help you plan how to vote.

Read through this guide.

On some pages you will see this symbol.

This means there is a task for you to do.

The tasks are on the last page of this book.

There are 5 tasks.

When you finish these you will be ready to vote.

What is voting?



Voting is what you do on **election day**.

Voting means you help to choose who represents you in **government**.

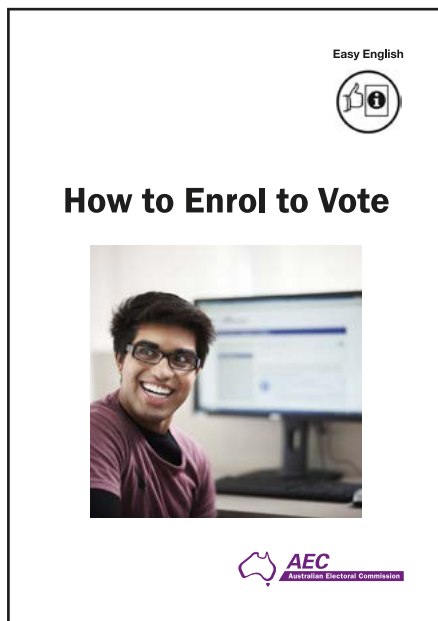
Voting lets you have your say.

Do I have to vote?



You have to **vote** if you are:

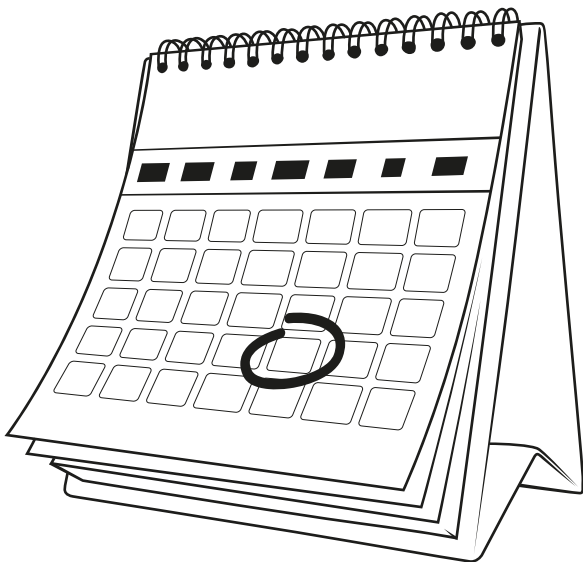
- an **Australian citizen** and
- 18 years old, or older.



Before you can **vote**, you must **enrol**.

If you want to know how to **enrol** there is another book called **How to Enrol to Vote**.

When do I vote?



The date of the next **federal election** has not been chosen yet.

When the date is chosen, it will be shown on TV.

Or you can ask a friend, neighbour or family member.

Or you can phone us on 13 23 26 and we can tell you if the date has been chosen.

Most people **vote** on **election day**.

On **election day**, you can vote from 8 o'clock in the morning.

Voting closes at 6 o'clock at night.

Where do I vote on election day?



On **election day**, you **vote** at a **polling place**.

Polling places are usually at a school or hall near where you live.

After the date of **election day** has been chosen, we will put a list of **polling places** on our website www.aec.gov.au.

Or you can phone us on 13 23 26 and we can help you find a **polling place**.

What if I cannot vote on election day?



There are 2 ways you can **vote** before **election day**:

1. You can send your **vote** to us through the mail.

This is called a **postal vote**.

If you want to know how to **postal vote**, there is another book called **How to Vote by Mail**.

2. **Or** you can vote at a special **polling place** before **election day**.

Phone us on 13 23 26 and we can find a **polling place** near you.

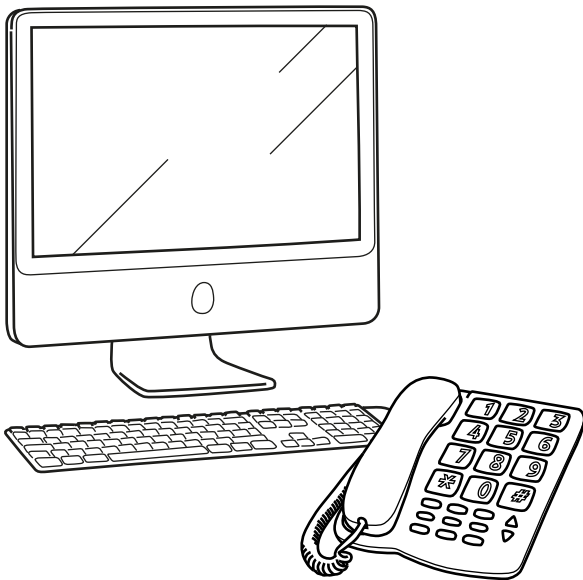


My plan

Write on the plan in the back of this book:

- The day you will go to vote
- The time you will go to vote

How do I find a polling place?



Polling places will be listed in the newspaper on the day before **election day**.

Or if you have a computer with the internet you can look on our website www.aec.gov.au

Or you can phone us on 13 23 26 and we can find a **polling place** near you.



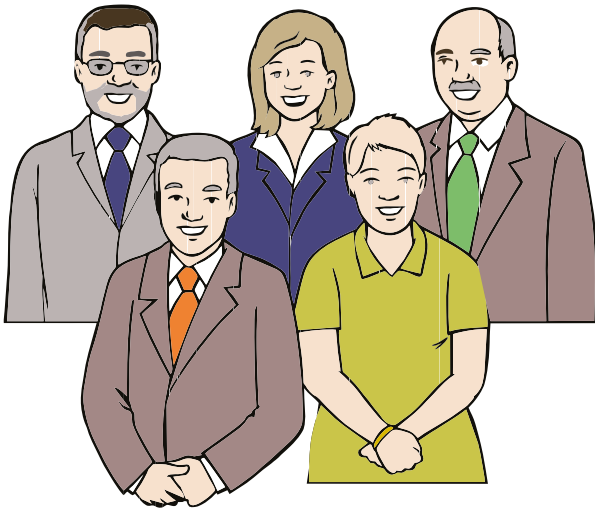
My plan

Write on the plan in the back of this book:

- The **polling place** where you will **vote**
- How you will get to the **polling place** to **vote**

What happens on election day?

Outside the polling place



There will be other **voters** like you.

There will also be people helping the **candidates**.

Candidates are the people who want to represent you in **government**.



The people helping the **candidates** may want to give you a piece of paper.

The paper will show you how to **vote** for their **candidate**.

If you want to know how to **vote** for their **candidate**, the paper can be helpful.

You do not have to take this paper.

If you do not want the paper, just say, "no thanks".

Inside the polling place



Go inside and wait in the line of people, if there is a line.

The line may be outside if it is long.

If there is no line, go to the table.

There will be an **election official** there.

An **election official** is someone who works at the **polling place**.

They will help you.

What will the election official do?



The **election official** will ask you 3 questions.

1. "What is your name?"

Tell them your first name and your last name.

This must be the name you put on your enrolment form.

2. "What is your address?"

Tell them the address where you live.

This must be the address you put on your enrolment form.

3. Then they will look at the list of the people who can **vote** on the **electoral roll**.

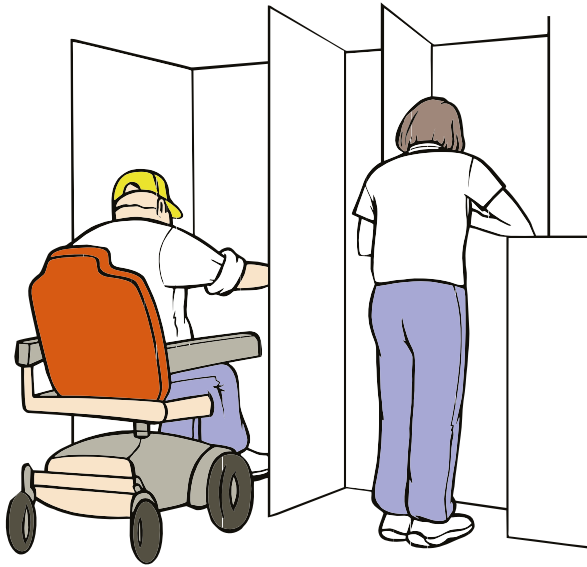
When they find your name, they will mark off your name.

4. "Have you already **voted** in this **election**?"

If you have not already **voted** in this **election**, say "no".

The **election official** will then give you 2 **ballot papers**.

Where do I mark my ballot paper?



You may see other **voters** at cardboard **voting screens**.

Voting screens let you mark your **vote** where no one else can see.

Take your **ballot papers** to a **voting screen**.

The **voting screen** will have a pencil. You can use this to mark your **vote** on your **ballot paper**.

You do not have to use this pencil. You can use your own pencil or pen.

What if I need help to mark my ballot papers?



If you need help **voting** you can take a friend with you.

Or you can ask an **election official** to help you.

The **election official** cannot tell you who to **vote** for, but they can help to mark your **ballot papers**.

If you ask an **election official** to help you, they will keep your **vote** a secret.



My plan

Write on the plan in the back of this book:

- Who your support people will be when you vote, if needed.

How do I mark my green ballot paper?

Sample ballot paper only

The green **ballot paper** is for the **House of Representatives**.

The names on the green **ballot paper** are **candidates**.

Next to each **candidate** name is an empty box.

Pick the **candidate** who is your first choice.

Write 1 in the empty box next to their name.

Then pick the **candidate** who is your second choice.

Write 2 in the empty box next to their name.

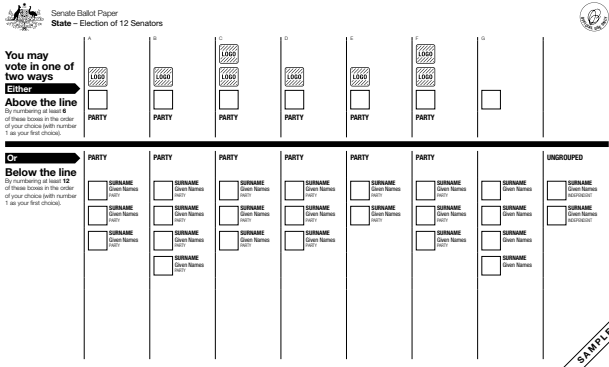
Keep going until all the empty boxes have a different number.

When all the empty boxes have a different number, you are finished filling out the green **ballot paper**.

Some **candidates** might have another box next to their name with a word or picture in it.

The picture might help you decide who to **vote** for.

How do I mark my white ballot paper?



Sample ballot paper only

The white **ballot paper** is for the **Senate**.

It has a black line on it.

Above the black line is a list of **political parties**.

Below the black line are the names of all the **candidates**.

There are 2 different ways to mark your white **ballot paper**.

You must choose 1 way:

1. If you want to **vote** for a **political party** or group you can **vote** above the black line on the **ballot paper**.

Or

2. If you want to **vote** for **candidates**, you can **vote** below the black line on the **ballot paper**.

You only choose 1 way.

To vote above the black line...

Senate Ballot Paper
State – Election of 12 Senators

You may vote in one of two ways
Either
Above the line
or
Below the line

Write 1 in the empty box of the group that is your first choice.

Write 2 in the empty box next to their name.

Keep going until 6 empty boxes have a number.

If there are less than 6 empty boxes, you must number all of them.

You can finish voting now.

Or you can keep going until all the empty boxes have a different number.

Some political parties might have another box above their name with a word or picture in it.

The picture might help you decide who to vote for.

Sample ballot paper only

Above the name of each **political party** is an empty box.

Pick the **political party** or group you want to **vote** for.

Write 1 in the empty box of the group that is your first choice.

Then pick the group who is your second choice.

Write 2 in the empty box next to their name.

Keep going until 6 empty boxes have a number.

If there are less than 6 empty boxes, you must number all of them.

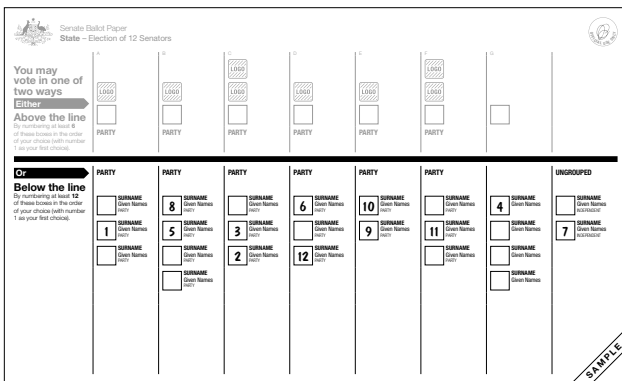
You can finish **voting** now.

Or you can keep going until all the empty boxes have a different number.

Some **political parties** might have another box above their name with a word or picture in it.

The picture might help you decide who to **vote** for.

To vote below the black line...



Sample ballot paper only

Next to each **candidate** name is an empty box.

Pick the **candidate** who is your first choice.

Write 1 in the empty box next to the **candidate** who is your first choice.

Then pick the **candidate** who is your second choice.

Write 2 in the empty box next to their name.

Keep going until 12 empty boxes have a number.

If there are less than 12 empty boxes, you must number all of them.

You can finish **voting** now.

Or you can keep going until all the empty boxes have a different number.

What if I make a mistake?



Take your **ballot papers** back to the table where you got them.

Say to the **election official**, “I made a mistake and need a new **ballot paper**”.

The **election official** will take your **ballot paper** with the mistake.

Then they will give you a new **ballot paper**.

Then you can go back to the **voting screen** and try again.

Where do I put my ballot papers?



When you have finished **voting**, take your **ballot papers** to the **ballot boxes**.

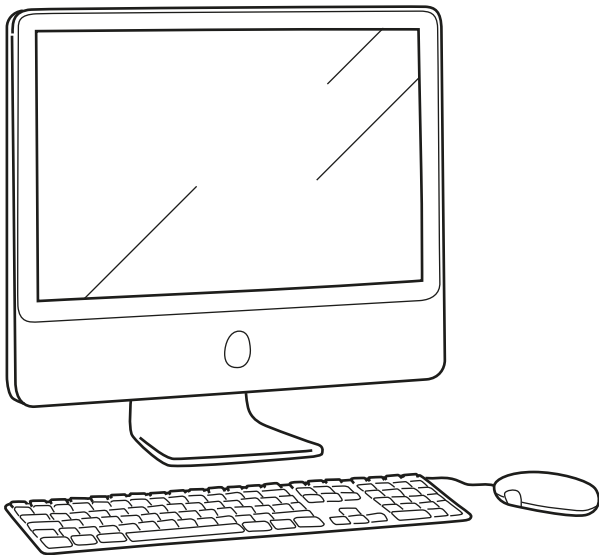
Put your green **ballot paper** in the **ballot box** which has 'GREEN' written on the label.

Put your white **ballot paper** in the **ballot box** which has 'WHITE' written on the label.

You can ask an **election official** if you need help.

Now you have finished **voting**.

Can I practise voting?



Yes.

You can practise **voting** on the internet.

Go to

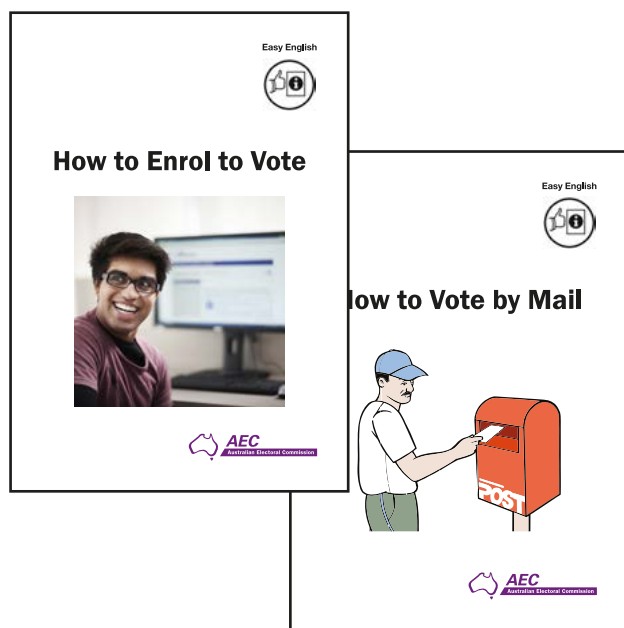
www.aec.gov.au/practice.

Remember, this is just a practice **vote**.

You will still need to **vote** in the **election**

- at a **polling place**
- **or** by mail.

How can I get more information?

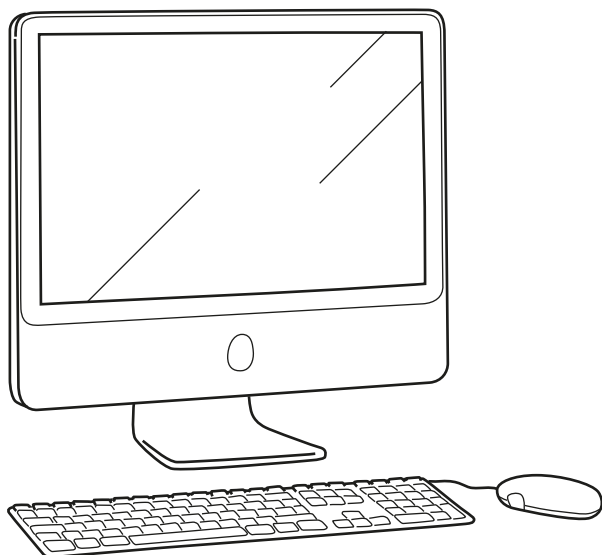


If you want to know how to **vote** by mail there is another book:

- **How to Vote by Mail**

If you want to know how to **enrol** to **vote** there is a book:

- **How to Enrol to Vote**



If you have a computer with the internet, you can look at these books on our website www.aec.gov.au/easy-english.

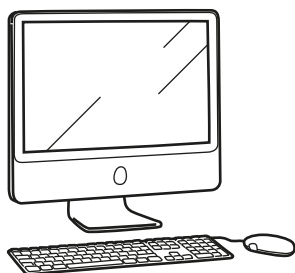
There is also information in other languages on our website.

What do these words mean?

| Word | Meaning |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Australian citizen | A person born in Australia. Or a person who was born overseas and has become an Australian citizen . |
| Ballot boxes | The box where you put your ballot papers when you have finished voting . |
| Ballot papers | The paper where you mark your vote . |
| Candidate or candidates | The people who want to represent you in government . |
| Enrol | Put your name on the list of people who can vote . |
| Election day | The day that most people vote . |
| Election official | Someone who works at the polling place . |
| Electoral roll | The list of people who vote in an election . |
| Government | A group of people who represent the people of Australia. The government makes the law. |
| House of Representatives | The group of people in government who represent each local area. |
| Political party | A group of people who have similar ideas about things. |

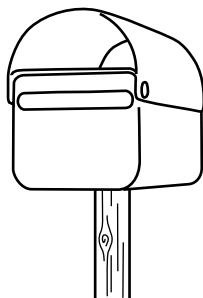
| Word | Meaning |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Polling place | <p>The place where you go to vote on election day.</p> <p>Sometimes you can vote at a polling place before election day. These are called early voting centres</p> |
| Postal vote | <p>The way you vote by mail if you cannot get to a polling place.</p> |
| Senate | <p>The group of people in government who represent each state and territory.</p> |
| Vote or voting | <p>How you choose who represents you in government.</p> |
| Voters | <p>All the people who vote in the election.</p> |
| Voting screen | <p>A tall cardboard stand where you go to write on your ballot papers.</p> <p>It lets you vote where no one else can see.</p> |

How can I get help?



Website: www.aec.gov.au

Or www.aec.gov.au/enquiry



Postal address:

AEC
Reply Paid 9867
In your capital city



Phone:

- 13 23 26
- 0011 61 2 6160 2600
(from outside Australia)



National Relay Service:

- TTY users phone 133 677 and ask for 13 23 26
- Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727
and ask for 13 23 26
- Internet relay users connect to the NRS and ask for 13 23 26



My plan for voting

Fill out this plan before you go to vote

The day I will go to vote

.....

The time I will go to vote

.....

The polling place where I will vote

.....

.....

How I will get to the polling place

.....

My support people will be

.....

.....