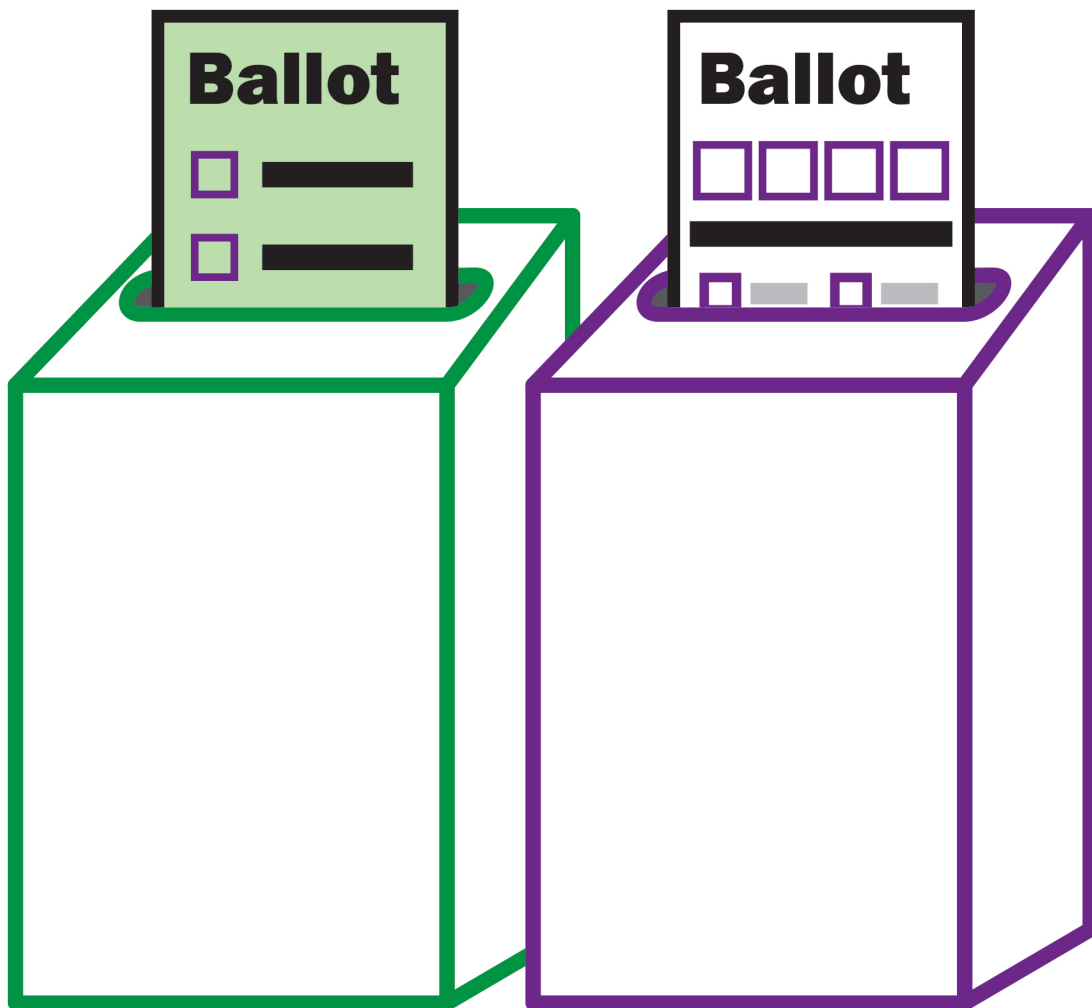


How to vote at a polling place

Easy to read guide



How to use this guide



The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) wrote this guide. When you see the word 'we', it means AEC.



We have written this guide in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.



We have written some words in **bold**. We explain what these words mean. There is a list of these words on page 29.



You can ask for assistance to read this guide. A friend, family member or support person may be able to assist you.

What's in this guide?

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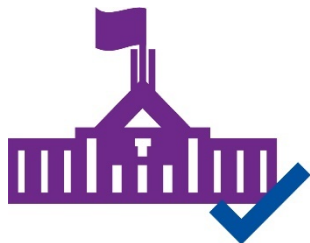
Voting in an election



In Australia we have a **federal election** about every 3 years.



A federal election is for the whole country.



It's how we choose Australia's government.



The Governor-General chooses the date for the election. Election day will be on a Saturday.



On that day, Australian people will **vote**.

When you vote, you help to choose who is part of Australia's government.



You must vote if you are:

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



A citizen is someone who is given the rights and freedoms of the country where they live.



Voting lets you have your say about who runs our country.

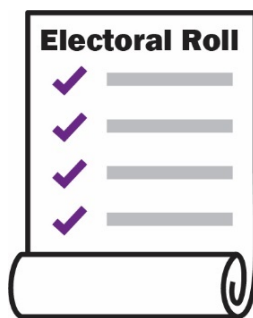
Enrolling to vote



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



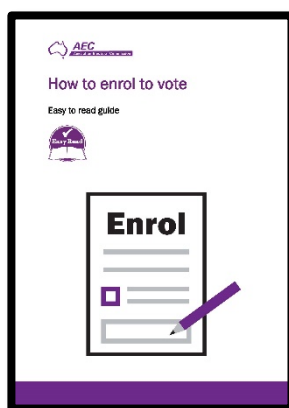
When you enrol, we put your name on a list of **voters** – people who can vote.



This list is called the **electoral roll**.



To go on the electoral roll, you must fill out an enrolment form.



You can read our guide that tells you how to enrol – *How to enrol to vote*.

When do you need to vote?



The Governor-General chooses the date for the election.



We will tell people what the election date is when it has been chosen.



If you want to find out when election day is, you can:

- visit our website www.aec.gov.au
- ask a family member, friend or neighbour
- watch the news on TV
- search online
- call us on **13 23 26**.



8am

On election day, voting opens at 8am.



6pm

On election day, voting closes at 6pm.



You must vote before voting closes.

What if you can't vote on election day?



Sometimes, people can't vote on election day.



This might be because they are going away on holiday.



Or maybe they will be in hospital.



If you can't vote on election day, you can vote before the election.

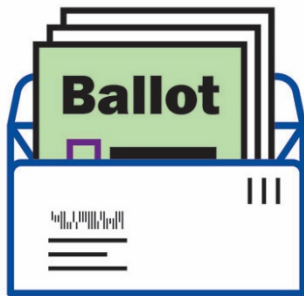


You can vote at some polling places before election day.



If you call us, we will assist you to find one near you.

13 23 26



You can also send us your vote in the mail.

This is called a **postal vote**.



You can read about how to vote by mail in our guide – *How to vote by mail*.

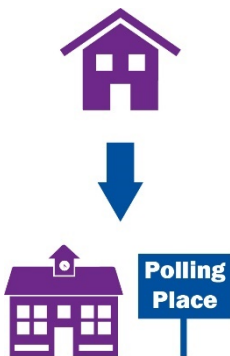
Where do you go to vote?



On election day, you go to a **polling place** to vote.



A polling place is a building, such as a school or community centre, where people go to vote during an election.



You will usually find a polling place near your home.



When election day has been chosen, we will put a list of polling places on our website.

www.aec.gov.au



Or you can call us and we will assist you to find a polling place.

13 23 26



You can vote at any polling place in the state or territory where you live.



If you are in a different state or territory on election day, you can vote at an interstate voting centre.

What happens on election day?

Outside the polling place



Outside the polling place, you will see:

- **voters** – people who can vote
- people who support the **candidates**.



A candidate is a person who wants to be part of the Parliament.



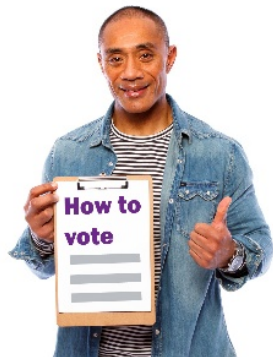
You vote for the candidate you want to win the election.



The people who support the candidates will be handing out *How to vote* cards.



How to vote cards suggest how you might choose to vote for each of the candidates.



A *How to vote* card might assist you to:

- choose the candidate you want to vote for
- vote in the right way for that candidate.



You don't have to take any *How to vote* cards.

Inside the polling place



When you get inside the polling place, there will be **election officials**.



Election officials are people who work at polling places on election day.

It is their job to assist you.



When you get inside the polling place, you might need to wait in line.



If there is no line, you can go straight to a table and talk to an election official.

What will the election official do?



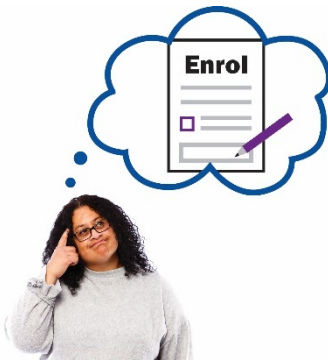
The election official will ask you 3 questions.

1. What is your full name?



Tell the election official your:

- first name
- last name.



You must tell them the same name you told us when you enrolled to vote.

2. Where do you live?



Tell them the address of your home.



You must tell them the same address you told us when you enrolled to vote.



The election official will look for your name on the electoral roll.

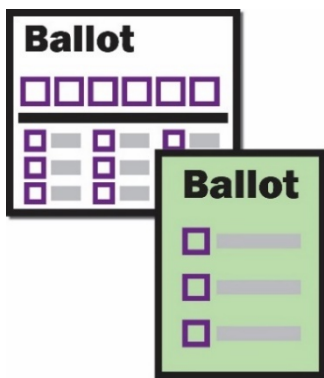
When they find your name, they will mark it off the electoral roll.

3. Have you voted before in this election?



Say "No" if you haven't already voted:

- on election day
- before election day, such as by a postal vote.



The election official will give you 2

ballot papers:

- a white one
- a green one.

Ballot papers:

- are forms that you fill out to show who you want to vote for
- have the names of the candidates printed on them.



What do you do with your ballot papers?



When you have your ballot papers, take them to one of the cardboard voting screens.



The screens let you fill out your ballot papers where no one else can see.



There will be a pencil for you to use.

But you can use your own pen or pencil if you want to.

How do you fill out your green ballot paper?



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

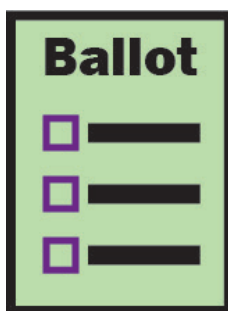
The House of Representatives:



- is 1 of the 2 houses of Australia's Parliament – the house in which government is formed



- includes 151 people voted for by the Australian people.



Your green ballot paper has:

- a list of candidates' names
- empty boxes.

1



Pick the candidate who you want to vote for the most.

Write 1 in the empty box next to their name.

2

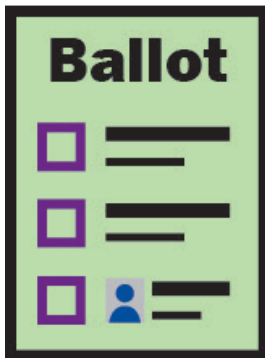


Pick the candidate who you want to vote for next.

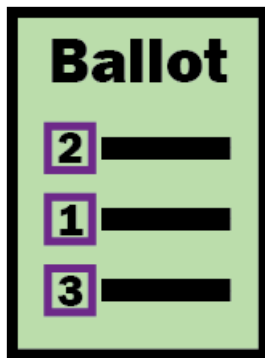
Write 2 in the empty box next to their name.



Keep choosing candidates and writing numbers until all the boxes are filled out.



Some candidates might have words or pictures next to their names.



Each box should have a different number in it.



When every box is full, your ballot paper is finished.

How do you fill out your white ballot paper?



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

The Senate:



- is 1 of the 2 houses of Australia's Parliament – it is known as the upper house
- includes 76 people voted for by the Australian people to represent each of the:
 - 6 states
 - 2 territories.



Your white ballot paper has a black line on it.



There is a list of groups above the black line.



Most of the groups are **political parties**.

A political party is a group of candidates who:

- share the same ideas
- agree on how government should run our country.



There is a list of candidates below the black line.

There are 2 ways to fill out your white ballot paper:



- put numbers in the boxes above the black line and vote for groups

or



- put numbers in the boxes below the black line and vote for candidates.

Voting above the black line



Pick the group who you want to vote for the most.

Write 1 in the empty box next to their name.



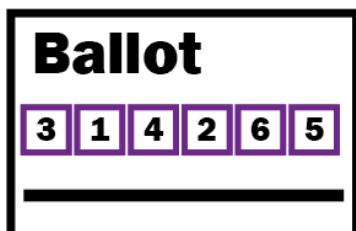
Pick the group who you want to vote for next.

Write 2 in the empty box next to their name.

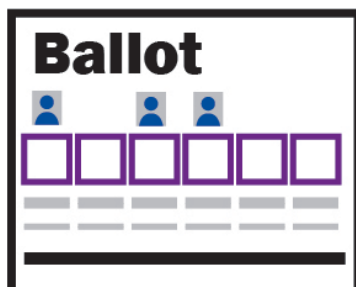


Keep choosing groups and writing numbers until 6 boxes are filled out.

You can finish at 6 or keep going.



If there are less than 6 empty boxes, put a number in every box.



Some groups might have words or pictures next to their names.

Voting below the black line



Pick the candidate who you want to vote for the most.

Write 1 in the empty box next to their name.



Pick the candidate who you want to vote for next.

Write 2 in the empty box next to their name.



Keep choosing candidates and writing numbers until 12 boxes are filled out.

You can finish at 12 or keep going.



If there are less than 12 empty boxes, put a number in every box.

What if you need assistance to fill out your ballot papers?



If you need assistance when you vote, you can:

- take a family member or friend with you
- ask an election official.

The election official:



- can assist you to fill out your ballot paper



- can't tell you who to vote for

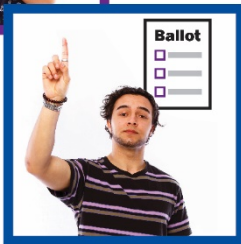


- will keep your vote a secret.

What if you make a mistake?



If you make a mistake when you fill out your ballot papers, take them back to the election official who gave them to you.



Tell the election official that you:

- made a mistake
- need a new ballot paper.



The election official will:

- take the ballot paper with the mistake
- give you a new ballot paper.



You can take the new ballot paper and fill it out.

Where do you put your ballot papers?



When you have filled out your ballot papers, you need to put them in a **ballot box**.



A ballot box is a sealed box where voters put their ballot papers once they have filled them out.

There will be 2 ballot boxes:

- 1 for the green ballot paper
- 1 for the white ballot paper.



Your green ballot paper goes in the ballot box that says: Green.



Your white ballot paper goes in the ballot box that says: White.



If you need assistance, ask an election official.



When you have put your votes in the ballot boxes, you have finished voting.

Can you practise voting before the election?



If you want to practise voting, you can visit our website.

www.aec.gov.au/practice



Your practise vote doesn't count.



You still need to vote:

- at a polling place
- or
- by mail.

How can you get more information?



If you want to find out more about voting, we have 2 other guides you can read:

- *How to enrol to vote*
- *How to vote by mail.*



You can find these guides on our website.

www.aec.gov.au/assistance



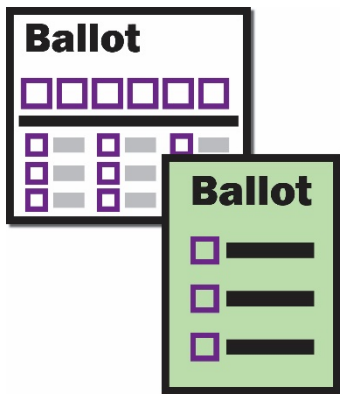
We also have information on our website for people who speak languages other than English.

Word list



Ballot box

A ballot box is a sealed box where voters put their ballot papers once they have filled them out.



Ballot papers

Ballot papers:

- are forms that you fill out to show who you want to vote for
- have the names of the candidates printed on them.



Citizen

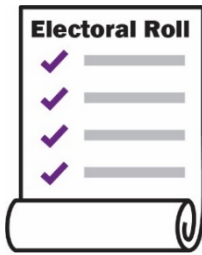
A citizen is someone who is given the rights and freedoms of the country where they live.



Election officials

People who work at polling places on election day.

It is their job to assist you.



Electoral roll

A list of voters.



Enrol

When you enrol, we put your name on a list of voters.



Federal election

A federal election is for the whole country. It's how we choose Australia's government.



House of Representatives

The House of Representatives:

- is 1 of the 2 houses of Australia's Parliament – the house in which government is formed
- includes 151 people voted for by the Australian people.

Political party



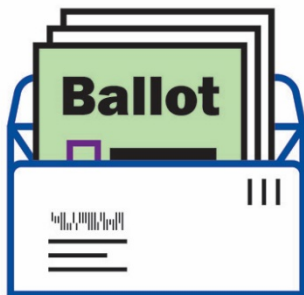
A political party is a group of candidates who:

- share the same ideas
- agree on how government should run our country.



Polling place

A polling place is a building, such as a school or community centre, where people go to vote during an election.



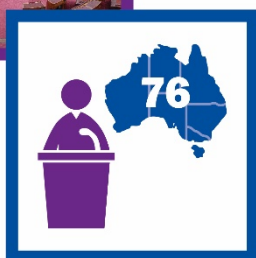
Postal vote

You send us your vote in the mail.

Senate

The Senate:

- is 1 of the 2 houses of Australia's Parliament – it is known as the upper house
- includes 76 people voted for by the Australian people to represent each of the:
 - 6 states
 - 2 territories.





Vote

When you vote, you help to choose who is part of Australia's government.



Voters

People who can vote.

Contact us



National Relay Service

TTY users:

- Phone 13 36 77
- Ask for 13 23 26



Speak and listen users:

- Phone 1300 555 727
- Ask for 13 23 26



Internet relay users:

- Connect to the NRS
- Ask for 13 23 26



Other languages:

- Phone 1300 720 153



www.aec.gov.au



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[@auselectoralcom](https://www.instagram.com/auselectoralcom)



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Authorised by the Deputy Electoral Commissioner, Canberra.