

Community Electoral Education Kit

Speaking notes and Optional activities

TOPIC 4: What happens on election day?

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Goal

On completion of this topic, participants will know what to expect when they attend a polling place on a federal election day.

How to use this kit

It is important that all Australian citizens understand how to participate in the Australian electoral system. Thank you for your role in helping your community find out more.

The Community Electoral Education Kit provides everything needed to conduct engaging and informative electoral awareness workshops. The kit covers five topics which seek to answer questions participating groups might have about the Australian electoral system:

- Topic 1: Australian democracy
- Topic 2: Do I have to enrol and vote?
- Topic 3: Where do I go to vote?
- Topic 4: What happens on election day?
- Topic 5: How do I make sure my vote gets counted?

Each of the topics features:

- speaking notes in plain English
- presentation slides
- background notes to support deeper understanding.

Some topics also feature engaging learning activities.

The kit is designed to be flexible. Presenters can deliver all topics in a single session, or pick and choose the elements most relevant to their community. The topics are numbered in the order they are intended to be followed.


Topics may require preparation, such as printing activity resources or arranging projectors and screens. We recommend presenters allow at least a day to read each topic and prepare before presenting it to an audience.

Background notes can be found at the end of this topic. Supporting resources and further information can be found on the Australian Electoral Commission website at www.aec.gov.au/community.

You can email any questions to community@aec.gov.au, and you will receive a response within three business days.

Please note: If you run the optional activity, this topic should take about twenty minutes. If you do not run the activities, it should take about five minutes.

Preparation Checklist

<i>These tasks should be completed prior to presenting this session</i>	
<i>Task</i>	
Read the topic content in full to ensure you are comfortable with the speaking notes.	
Print off hard copies of the workshop topic and speaking notes.	
Download Topic 4 'What happens on election day?' slide show presentation from www.aec.gov.au/community	
Prepare your presentation space, including any technology you are planning to use.	
Ensure you are comfortable with the speaking notes and any activity procedures.	
<i>You may wish to add further checklist items below:</i>	

Background notes

Voting in a polling place

Polling day is always on a Saturday. Polling places open between 8am and 6pm and are usually located in local schools, church halls or public buildings.

When you enter the polling place, a polling official will direct you to an issuing table as one becomes available. There you will speak to a ballot paper issuing officer who will ask you three questions before you are issued with your ballot papers.

You will then be directed to one of the polling booths set up around the room for you to cast your vote in private. As you approach the exit there will be two ballot boxes into which you place your completed ballot papers. One is for the House of Representatives ballot paper and the other is for the Senate ballot paper. These will be clearly marked and a person will be at the ballot boxes to assist.

How-to-vote cards

Volunteers from political parties stand outside polling places distributing how-to-vote cards. These cards show voters how political parties or candidates would like you to vote. They may be taken into the polling place to assist in marking ballot papers.

Although how-to-vote cards may encourage voters to mark their preferences in a particular order, the final choice on how to complete the ballot paper is up to you.

Questions you will be asked at the issuing table

Question 1: 'What is your full name?' This enables the polling official to look up your name on the certified list which is a copy of the electoral roll for that electorate. If your name is on the certified list, you will be asked the next question.

Question 2: 'Where do you live?' If the address given is the same as that shown on the certified list you will be asked the next question.

Question 3: 'Have you voted before in THIS election?' If you have not voted before in this election, you will be issued with ballot papers – one for the House of Representatives and one for the Senate. If you have already voted in this election, you are not entitled to cast another vote and will not be issued with ballot papers.

Casting your vote

The polling official will initial each ballot paper on the front near the top right-hand corner.

The polling official will give you your ballot papers when there is a vacant polling booth available so you may mark the ballot paper in secret.

You will be advised to:

- proceed to a vacant polling booth
- read the instructions printed on the ballot papers
- fill in the ballot papers

- fold the ballot papers to conceal your vote
- put each ballot paper separately in the appropriate ballot box
- leave the polling place when finished
- be aware that assistance is available if required.

The polling place closes

The doors of the polling place close at exactly 6pm sharp. Any person still in the polling place still has a right to vote. The counting of votes or 'scrutiny' begins in the polling places as soon as the poll closes.

What if I need assistance to vote?

Assistance is provided if the polling official in charge of the polling place is satisfied that you are unable to vote without help. The following electors may seek help:

- the elderly;
- people with a disability (including visual impairment);
- non-literate people;
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Polling staff are trained on how to assist you.

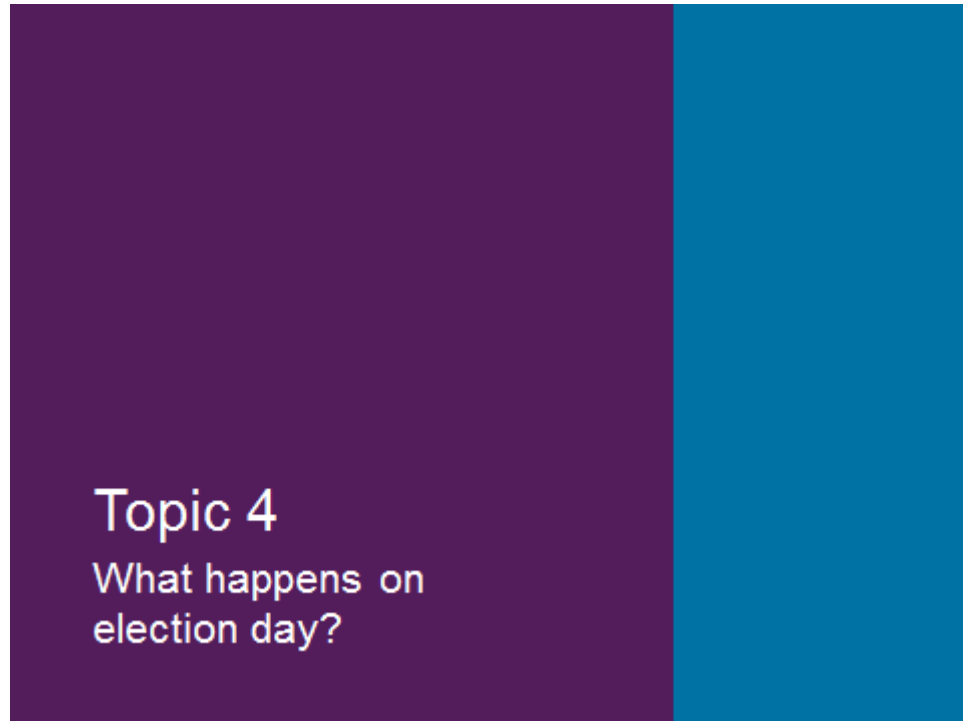
You can nominate any person (except a candidate) to assist. This person could be a friend or relative, a scrutineer or a party worker. If you do not nominate someone, then the polling official in charge will provide assistance.

If the polling official in charge is the one providing assistance, Scrutineers have the right to be present while the ballot papers are filled in.

If assistance is being provided by a person nominated by you, you and the nominated assistant enter an unoccupied polling booth. The assistant helps to complete, fold and deposit the ballot paper in the ballot box. In this situation Scrutineers ARE NOT allowed to enter the polling booth while the ballot paper is being completed.

Speaking Notes

Slide 1 of 15 What happens on election day?



- In this topic we are going to have a look at what happens at a polling place on election day so that will you know what to expect.

Slide 2 of 15 What happens on election day?

Introduction

- This presentation has been developed by the AEC to help communities understand the electoral system and the important part played by each voter.
- The person presenting the information does not work for the AEC or represent the AEC.
- Any views expressed by the presenter during this session do not necessarily reflect those of the AEC.
- For more information, go to the AEC's website or ring 13 23 26

- This presentation was developed by the Australian Electoral Commission, or AEC.
- The AEC is responsible for:
 - delivering federal elections and referendums
 - maintaining the Commonwealth electoral roll
 - providing electoral information and
 - providing education programs.
- I do not work for the AEC, and I do not represent the AEC.
- Any opinions I express are my own, and do not necessarily reflect those of the AEC.

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Topic 4: What happens on election day?



1. Arrive at the polling place

- Federal elections in Australia usually happen once every three years, and are always held on a Saturday.
- Polling places are open between 8am and 6pm.
- When you arrive at a polling place, it could be quite busy.

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Topic 4: What happens on election day?



2. You may be offered how-to-vote cards

- Volunteers from political parties stand outside polling places and distribute how-to-vote cards to voters.
- You do not have to accept any how-to-vote cards.
- If you do accept a card, you do not have to follow the instructions on it.
- Your vote is entirely your decision.

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Topic 4: What happens on election day?




3. You may need to line up

- When you enter the polling place, you may need to line up and wait.

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Topic 4: What happens on election day?




4. Go to the issuing table

- When it is your turn, a polling official will direct you to an issuing table.

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Topic 4: What happens on election day?




5. Answer three questions

- At the issuing table you will be asked three questions:
 - What is your full name? (this means first name and last name);
 - Where do you live? (this means your street address); and
 - Have you voted before in this election?
- If your name is not found on the list, don't worry, you will still be able to vote. The official will tell you what you should do next.

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6. You will be given two ballot papers

- You will be given two ballot papers - a green one for the House of Representatives election, and a white one for the Senate election.

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Topic 4: What happens on election day?




7. Go to a voting screen

The image shows four individuals at a voting station. From left to right: a man in a blue tank top and dark shorts, a person in a teal shirt and dark shorts, a person in a yellow shirt and dark shorts sitting in a wheelchair, and a man in a yellow tank top and patterned shorts. They are all facing away from the camera, looking at a ballot inside a white privacy screen. The screens are arranged in a row, and the floor is carpeted.

- You will then be directed to one of the voting screens set up around the room. There will be a pencil for you to use.
- The voting screen has high sides so that no one can see how you vote. Your vote is secret and you are safe to vote however you like.
- No one else can tell you who to vote for. It is always your decision.

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Topic 4: What happens on election day?




8. Fill in the ballot papers - follow the instructions

- Before you fill in your ballot papers you should read the instructions on each of them. The instructions will be different on each ballot paper. By following the instructions you will ensure your vote gets counted.
- Instructions may be provided in different languages at the polling place, but the ballot papers are only printed in English.
- If you don't understand the instructions, or can't fill in the ballot papers, you can ask a polling official or another person that you trust to assist you.
- If you make a mistake on a ballot paper you can ask for another one.

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Topic 4: What happens on election day?



9. Fold the ballot papers, put them in the ballot boxes

- When you have completed your vote, fold each ballot paper in half. There will be two ballot boxes for you to place your completed ballot papers in. One is for the green House of Representatives ballot paper, and the other is for the white Senate ballot paper.
- The boxes will be clearly marked, and an official will be there to assist you.
- Ballot boxes are kept locked until the end of election day, when it is time to count the votes.
- When you have finished voting you can leave.

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Topic 4: What happens on election day?




10. Community Events

- There might be community events happening at your local polling place. You are welcome to stay and participate in these events or not, as you choose.

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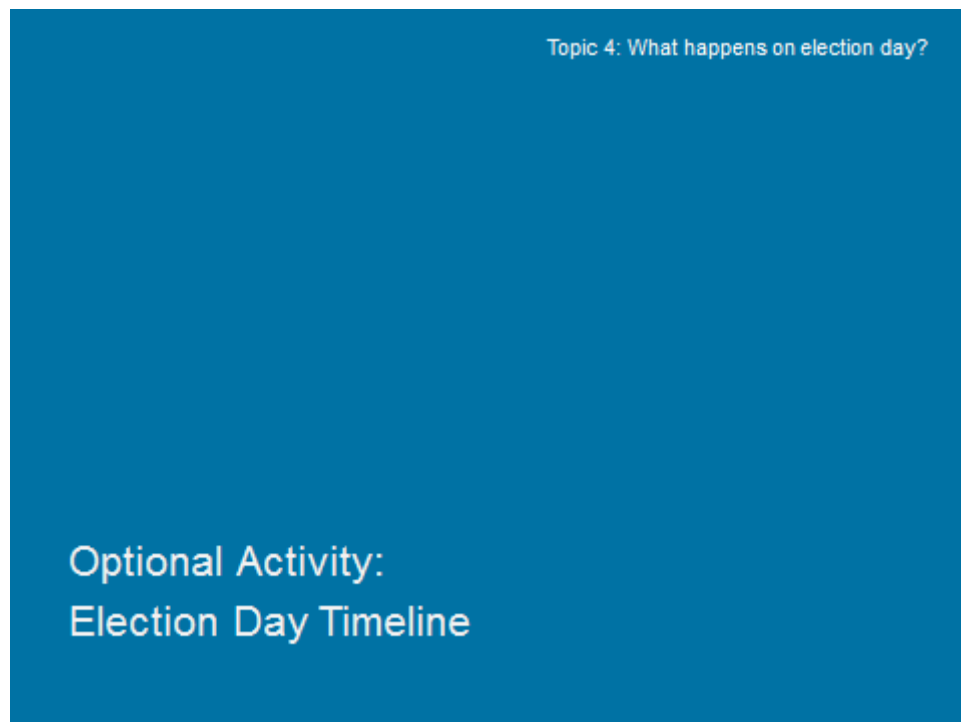
Topic 4: What happens on election day?



You can ask for help at any time

- Polling places are staffed by officials who will be wearing purple vests.
- In some places, officials who speak languages other than English will be on hand to assist non-English speaking voters.
- Some places will have officials available who are trained to assist Indigenous Australians.
- These officials are employed by the Australian Electoral Commission, and are trained to make sure everything goes smoothly and according to the rules. You can ask for help from a polling official at any time.

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Now is a good time to run the optional activity 'election day timeline'

Activity instructions and resources are provided on the website at www.aec.gov.au/community

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Topic 4: What happens on election day?

Conclusion
Topic 4: What happens on election day?

Question?

Visit www.aec.gov.au
or
Phone [13 23 26](tel:132326)



- That concludes Topic 4.
- If you have any questions you can visit the Australian Electoral Commission website or call their information hotline.

Optional activity: Election day timeline

Time required

15 minutes

Resources and preparation

Print and cut one copy of the 'election day timeline activity cards' per small group of participants (2 to 5 people). If you have several groups you will need several copies. It is vital that these are cut up into separate sets, and the cards in each set shuffled before the activity begins.

Procedure

1. Split your participants into groups (2-5 per group works best).
2. Give each group a set of election day timeline activity cards (these need to be already cut up and shuffled).
3. Instructions to the group(s): "You need to put the cards into the correct order from the first thing that will happen on election day to the last thing that will happen".

When the groups are finished, discuss the correct order and the 'I ask for help' card, which can be used anywhere on the timeline.

Correct order

1. I arrive at the polling place.
2. I may see people distributing 'how-to-vote' cards. I do not have to accept them.
3. I may need to line up.
4. I go to the issuing table.
5. I answer three questions.
6. I am given two ballot papers.
7. I go to a voting screen.
8. I fill in the ballot papers according to the instructions.
9. I fold the ballot papers and put them into ballot boxes.
10. I leave and may enjoy community events.

The 'I ask for help' card may be placed anywhere.

Optional activity: Election day timeline resources

I arrive at the polling place.



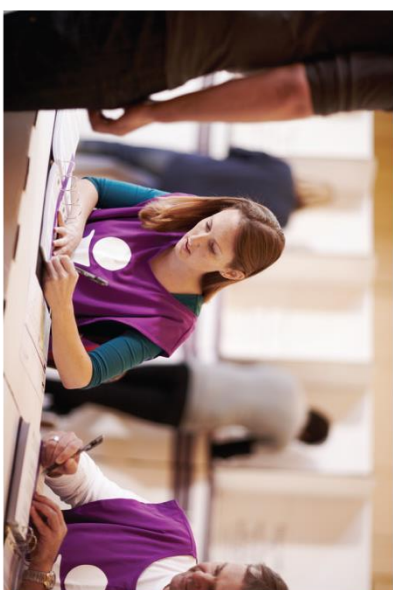
I may need to line up.



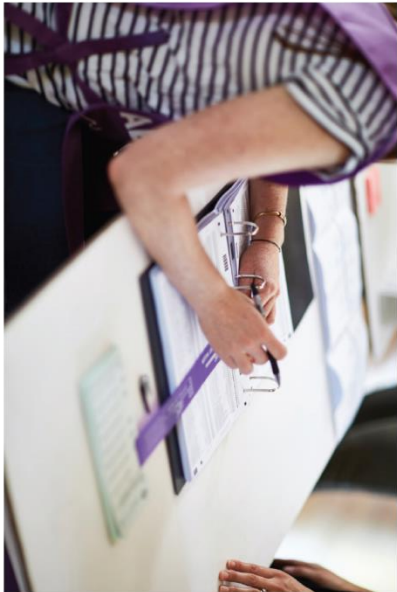
I may see people handing out 'how-to-vote' cards. I do not have to accept them.



I go to the issuing table.



I answer three questions.



I am given two ballot papers.



I go to a voting screen.



I fill in the ballot papers according to the instructions.



I fold the ballot papers and put them into ballot boxes.



I leave and may enjoy community events.



I ask for help.



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