



# THINGS

POLITICAL

A PRACTICAL GUIDE  
TO NEW  
ZEALAND POLITICS



# INTRODUCTION

## POLITICS

Politics. POLITICS! An interesting, complicated, and important part of our lives.

Every 3 years we make the difficult decision of granting a group of people the power to run our country. Our beautiful New Zealand, held in the hands of 120 politicians?! If we're going to let one political system make decisions regarding our future, as a first-time voter, it's important to at least know what's going on.

So, what actually is politics? Who makes our political system? How does our political system work? What are we voting for? Whom are we voting for? Why is it important to vote? And above all else, how can we, as up and coming political youth, get politically involved beyond voting.

I know all too well how hard it is to get politically involved when all you really need is a breakdown of all things political.

So, start reading young one!

# POLITICS BREAKDOWN

Politics can be many things, there is no single definition that everyone in the world will agree on. It is a loaded term that can hold many meanings and is occasionally viewed as a 'dirty' word. However, despite this, we can attempt to break it down.



- Politics can be defined as
1. The activities associated with the governance of a country or area.
  2. The central concept of power in a country



This means that it is a system of processes created to help a country function. It is created to meet the needs of a population. It is also the granting of authority under a certain system, that is, who gets what, when and how.



It's tricky, politics is subjective and personal to every individual. No individual could possibly have the exact same view on politics because we have all lived completely different lives. That is why politics is controversial and topical. Controversiary is good though! Keeps life interesting

Politics is a case of conflict and cooperation. It is a competition between opposing forces, reflecting a diversity of opinions, preferences, needs or interests. However, it is also working together, achieving goals through collective action. Politics is about recognizing that in order to influence society or ensure that progressive change is made, they must work with others.



Politics is about everyone! Not only is politics about the government and their choices, but also about citizens and their contribution. Politics goes far beyond voting; it includes any and all aspects of society.



# BUT WHAT ABOUT NEW ZEALAND POLITICS?

New Zealand politics is one unique version of politics. Every country has a different political system based on its own unique history. Our political system is based on an old-timey Westminster system brought to us by British colonisers.

However, we have modified it over time and implemented an electoral system that is more representative and progressive. That is our

Mixed-member proportional system (MMP).

## NOTABLE THINGS THAT MAKE NZ UNIQUE:

1. 7 Reserved seats for Māori

2. First country to give women the vote

Proportional representation (MMP)

3. Voters have two votes: 1 for an electorate, 1 for a party.

4. "The queen reigns but the government rules"

• NZ is a constitutional monarchy



# WHO ARE WE VOTING FOR

There are many different parts of New Zealand's political system that help to make it run. These come under three main branches of government; the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary.

Understanding these positions will help you to understand where your vote actually goes.

## WARNING!

The following information will contain various new words and concepts! It may be difficult, but hold steady for a prize at the end.



\* Governor-general: New Zealand is a constitutional monarchy meaning we have sovereign representation in New Zealand.

\* I.e The governor-general  
\* Amongst many things, the governor-general signs laws on behalf of the Queen.

\* They are part of the legislature (Parliament) but not The House of Representatives.

We do not vote for the Governor-general. This is decided by the Queen



NOTABLE

SUPER  
STAR





## Legislature:

The supreme law-making body.

The house of representatives + select committees + governor-general = legislature

The legislature makes new laws and updates old ones. This is done through careful consideration and implementation of new bills (which become laws when they're passed).

## Parliament:

Governor General + the HOR = Parliament.

Collectively, they pass all the laws in New Zealand. The house of representatives make the laws and the governor-general signs them off.

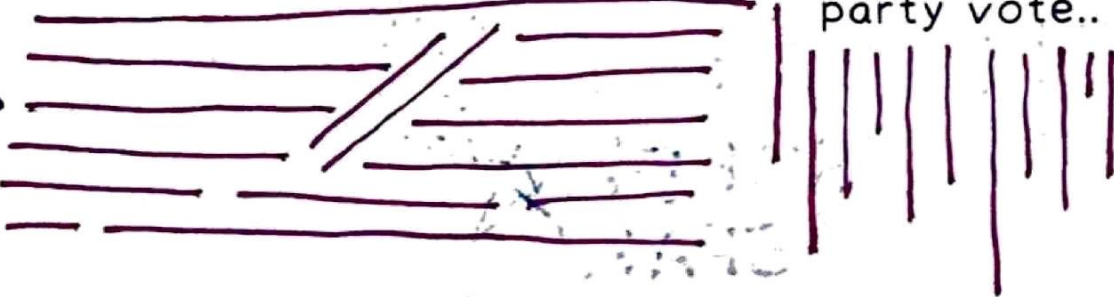
## The house of representatives: (HOR)

The assembled body of 120 elected members of parliament (MP's). The HOR is decided by the party vote, hence it includes ALL elected MPs (including List MPs) from ALL parties with more than 5% of votes - not just MPs from the government of the day. The only difference between the HOR and Parliament is the governor-general. The governor-general is not a part of the HOR.

## List MP:

A member of the house of representatives who is not a minister.

Elected from party lists according to the party vote..





## Executive:

# 2

Makes day-to-day decisions on how and what NZ should spend its money on. They decide on policies, propose laws, and administer the law. The executive consists of all the ministers and their government agencies. These are formed from the government of the day.

- E.g If Labour and Green are the coalition government of the day they will elect ministers from their party.

## Ministers:

An MP who is part of the executive. They are responsible for one or more government department or agencies.

- E.g The minister for health runs the ministry for health

## Electorate:

The area represented by one Member of Parliament

## Political Party:

group of people who stand by and advocate for the same beliefs

E.g The Labour Party

## Judiciary:

# 3

All judges and the courts. They interpret and apply the law in cases that come before them through hearings.

We don't vote for the Judiciary.

Some politicians play for both teams. They are members of the legislature AND the executive. However, others are just members of the legislative. This is called the Incomplete separation of powers

For example, Jacinda Adern is a member of the legislature as MP for Mt Albert.

**BUT** she is also a member of the Executive as Prime Minister.

This is because ministers (the executive) are selected from the government of the day, whereas the legislature is a collection of all MPs based on party votes.

CONGRATULATIONS

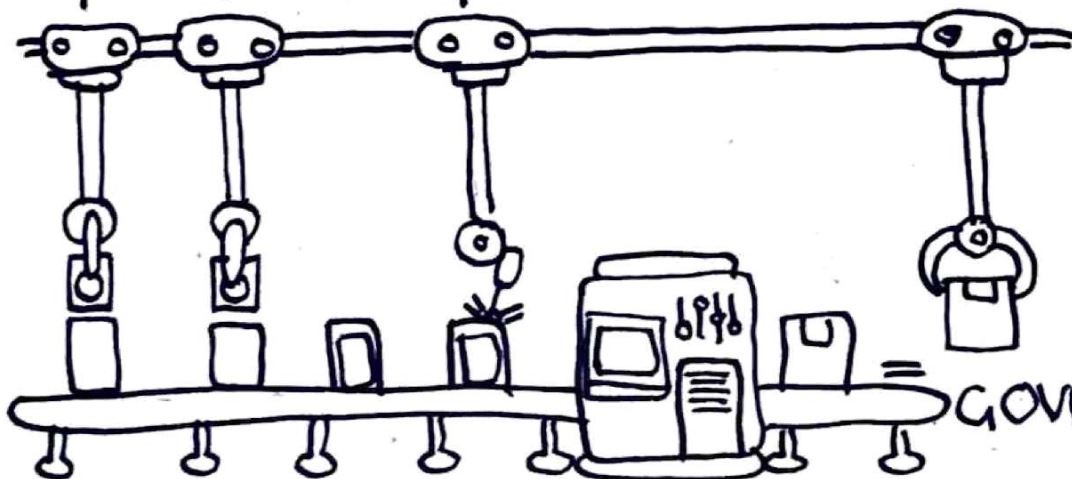
You made it through the tricky bit.

Here is your prize and a picture of how all the different parts of government work together:



LEGISLATURE

EXECUTIVE  
+ | +  
JUDICIARY



SIDE NOTE: ALL MINISTERS ARE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATURE

# OUR ELECTORAL SYSTEM

MMP - or mixed-member proportional - is the system we use to choose the people and parties we want to represent us in Parliament. Parliament has 120 seats for its MPs (The house of representatives).

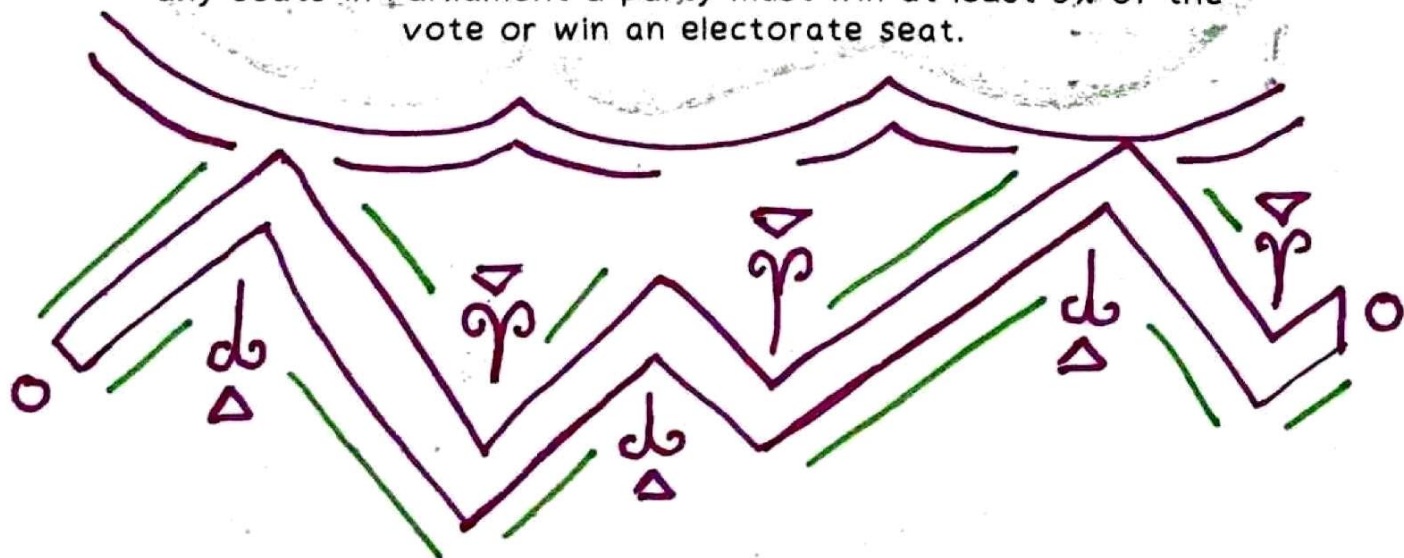
## HERES WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU:

Under MMP you get two votes every general election.

Your first vote is for the political party you support - this is called the party vote - it is who you believe should be able to have input in government decisions.

The more votes a party gets the more seats it will have in parliament.

For example, if 40% of us vote for the apple party it will get around 40% of all seats in Parliament if 15% of us for the orange party it will get about 15% of the seats. To get any seats in Parliament a party must win at least 5% of the vote or win an electorate seat.



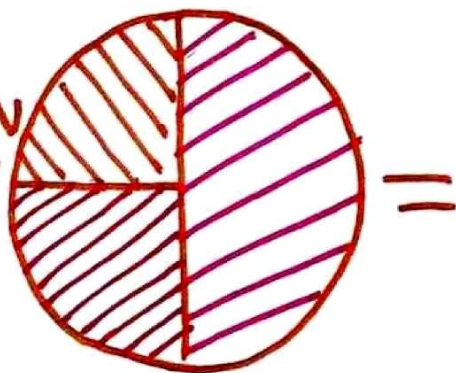
# THATS WHERE <sup>YOUR<sup>ND</sup></sup> VOTE COMES IN... 2

Your second vote is to choose a member of Parliament to represent the area you live in - this is your electorate vote. The candidate who gets the most votes in your electorate will become your local MP.

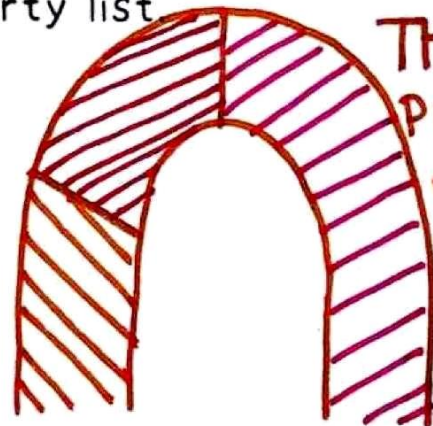
So if a party win 4% of the party votes but no electorate seats, they have no members in parliament.

But if they win 4% of the party votes but they win one electorate seat they get 4% of the seats in parliament. This is made up of their one electorate MP with the rest being list MPs from their party list.

THE  
PROPORTION  
OF PARTY  
VOTES

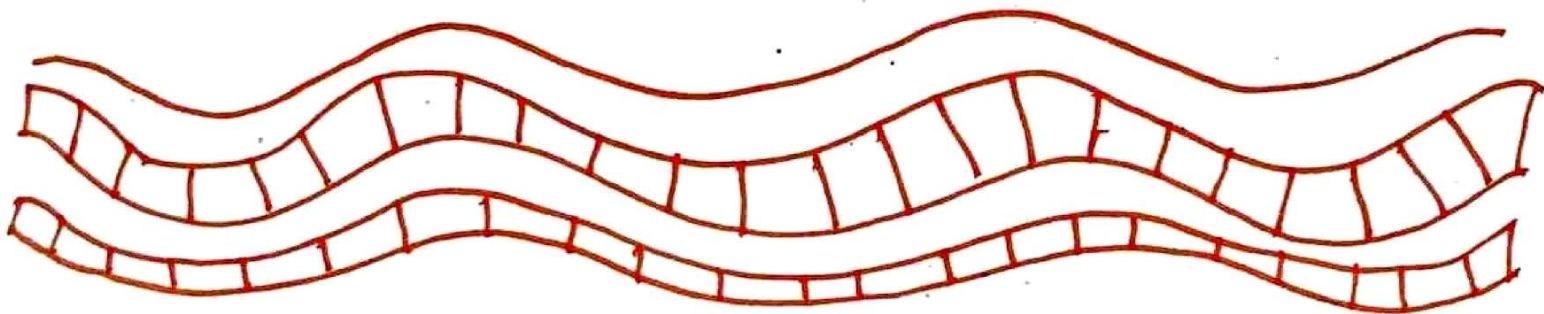


=



THE SAME  
PROPORTION  
OF SEATS  
IN  
PARLIAMENT

! Pro tip: Electoral commission has a calculator that breaks down seats in parliament based on each parties electorate and party vote wins.



PSSST...

A Party list is a list of candidates from a certain party ranked.

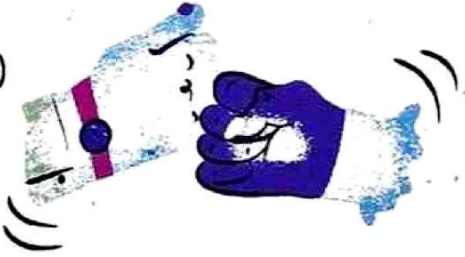


Because MMP is a proportional system there can be a range of big and small parties in parliament. Every candidate who wins an electorate gets a seat in parliament. The remaining seats are filled from party lists according to the share of party vote.



Under MMP it is common for parties to not have enough votes to govern alone. This is where small parties come in! Parties can combine their votes with other parties to form a coalition.

The political party or group of parties (coalition) with more than half the seats become the government. (woohoo!!)



47%

4%

+

49%



47%

53%

△△△△△△△△△△  
Voting is important! And MMP makes it worth it. Under MMP we can make informed and select decisions on who we want in parliament.

MMP has allowed the chance for smaller parties to hold positions in parliament through party votes. The percentage of votes a party must get in order to have a seat in government is low (5%), meaning that one vote (your vote) can make a huge difference in whom we see in parliament.

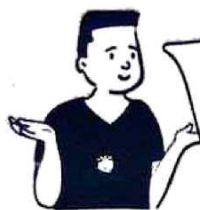
Under MMP you can vote for parties that fully represent your morals (rather than a party you only partially agree with) and have that represented in parliament.

MMP has created a political system that is increasingly more diverse, representative, and responsive of modern New Zealand society.

☆ Following the 2005 election, there were 39 women, 21 Māori, 4 Pacific and 2 Asian MPs among Parliament's 121 members. The 2020 election returned 58 women (48% of MPs), 25 Māori, 11 Pacific and 8 Asian MPs among 120 members.

☆  
So yes,  
MMP rocks!  
△△△△△△△△△△





Can you break that down again?

MMP is our voting system, under MMP you get two votes



These two are your party vote and your electorate vote

MMP is a proportional system



This means that the parliament is split based on the proportion of votes each party wins



Ahh I see. But where do our votes go?

Our vote determines who makes up the legislature and the executive



We do not directly vote for the ministers or the judiciary

Ministers are chosen from party lists



WOW! MMP seems cool

It is! Its representative and has increased diversity within parliament



# COMIC BREAK

# HOW TO VOTE:

Now that you understand our voting system you're probably thinking 'damn that's so cool I want to be a part of that!'.

Well good news is you can!

Every three years New Zealand holds a general election that (almost) everyone can participate in!

This is where you vote for the people who you want to represent you on issues that matter to you. So it's all about YOU!

You can vote in New Zealand provided you are:

- o Over 18
- o A New Zealand resident or a permanent resident
- o Have lived in New Zealand for 12 months or more at some time in your life

Voting is a gift from the government for turning 18. However, in order to claim this gift, you must enrol. You can enrol before or on voting day.

Its better to enrol before voting day!



It's super easy to enrol! Flip to the next page and Ill run you through it:

THIS WAY





# Voting in NZ.

1. Go to  
vote.nz

3.

† If you're Māori  
continue to 4,  
if you're not  
continue to 6

2.

† Get your new Zealand  
drivers license, new  
Zealand passport, your  
real me a verified identity,  
or if you don't have any  
of these fill out the online  
form on vote.nz and have  
it emailed or posted to  
\* you to sign

4.

You can choose  
whether you wish  
to be on a Māori  
roll (Continue to  
5) or the general  
roll (Continue to  
6).

5.

\* Enrol in the Māori roll on  
vote.nz There you'll  
vote for a candidate in  
a Māori electorate.  
(Continue to 7)

6.

† Enrol in the  
general roll on  
vote.nz. There  
you'll vote for  
a candidate in  
the general  
electorate

7.

\* Show up  
and VOTE !

IT IS IMPORTANT TO VOTE

(ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE MĀORI OR A WOMAN)

It is important for Māori to vote. If more Māori enrol on the Māori roll, the number of Māori electorates could increase, forming a more representative government.



It is important for women to vote, as they haven't always been able to. New Zealand was the first country to grant women the right to vote in 1893. This is a big milestone and a memorable part of New Zealand's political history.

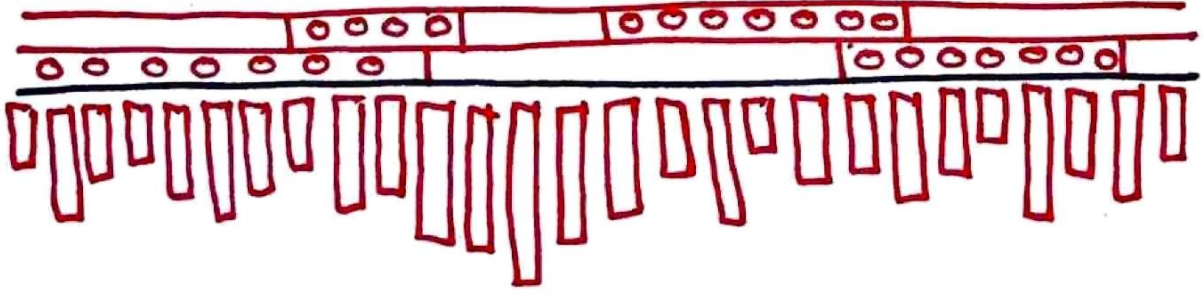
SO =



In tribute to this milestone, and the hard work of Kate Sheppard and the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). **WHO FOUGHT FOR THE WOMEN'S VOTE!**

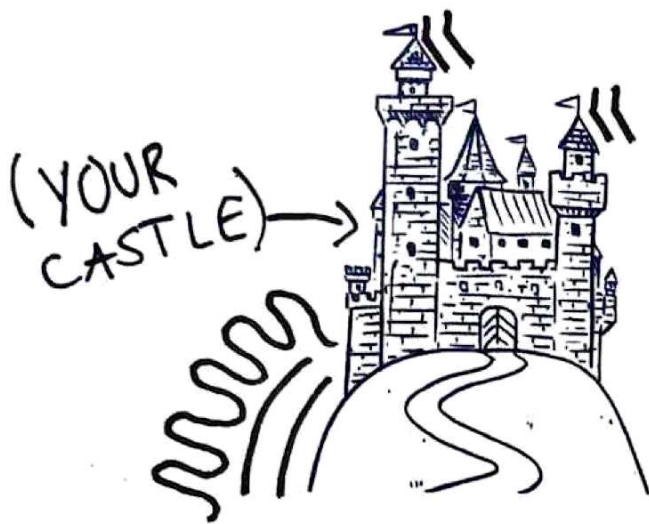


**ALL** women should exercise their vote.



# HOW TO GET INVOLVED

## - BESIDES VOTING



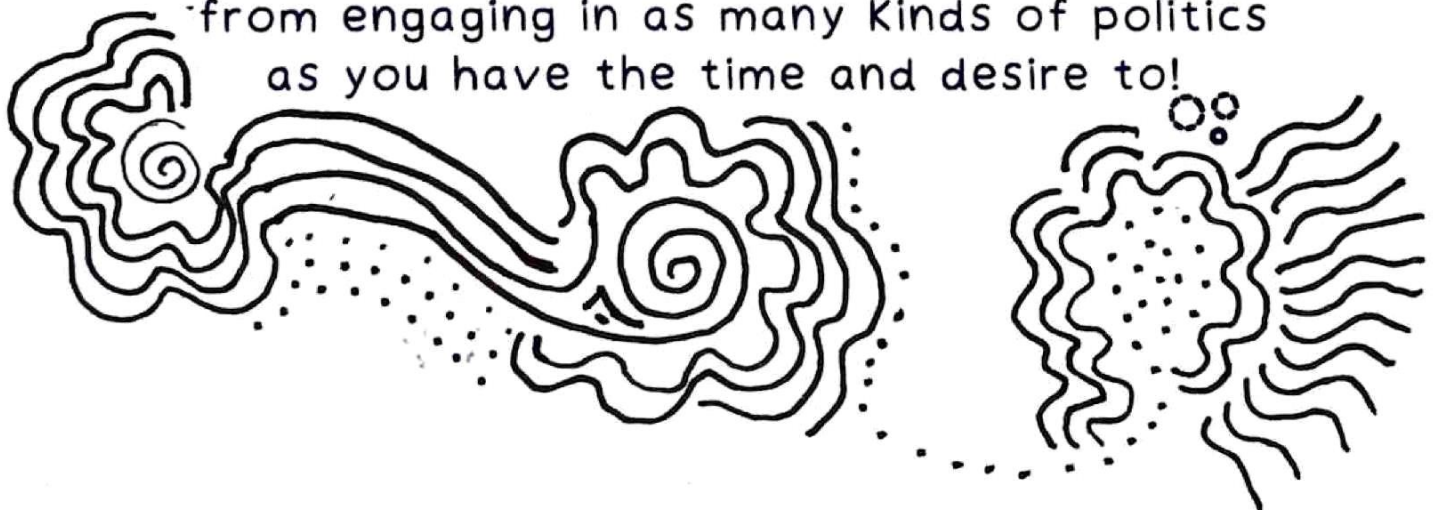
Now you have a understanding of New Zealand politics and our voting system, you can build your political activity castle atop of it.

Politics plays a huge role in nearly every aspect of our life, whether we like it or not. If we learn about politics and get involved, we can attempt to mould the political system to our liking.



Youth involvement is even more important in order to make a difference in the long term. It is essential that young people are engaged and communicating what they want to see in the future. They can do this through voting, but also through plenty of other activities.

There are many opportunities to engage in political activity outside of voting, and there is certainly nothing to prevent you from engaging in as many kinds of politics as you have the time and desire to!



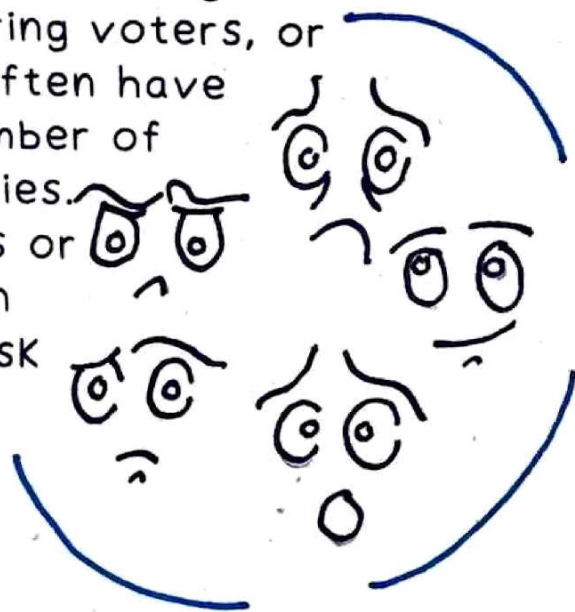
### Protests/rallies

This is a more unconventional way of getting politically involved. However, they can often be a good way to meet local politicians or other politically involved youth. Get talking to the person next to you at a protest. Compliment their sign or the volume of their chant and chances are you might hear about another political stunt you can get involved with.



### Volunteer for political parties:

This is another way to connect with local politicians. This could mean volunteering at their headquarters, or registering voters, or campaigning. Political parties often have mailing lists that put out a number of different volunteer opportunities. Often, they will also have talks or question times during campaign season - this means you can ask all your hard burning questions and watch their reaction!





Social media is one of the easiest ways to stay politically involved. Following Facebook pages, Instagram pages, and Twitter handles focused on political ideas is an excellent way to stay in the loop. Most politicians actively post on social media. Sometimes their posts are to do with work, but often they are also to do with their day-to-day lives, this can really help you to connect with those running our country. Social media can also be an effective way to spread political news about petitions, rallies, and law changes.



- Pro Tip: Follow news outlets on social media.
- This helps to give you a daily dose of news without disrupting your 6 pm plans.



Have difficult discussions

Show off your new knowledge of politics and have some tricky conversations with grandpa at dinner. Get talking to friends, family, teachers, random people on the train and build up your knowledge of political parties.



This will help you to grasp a deeper understanding of why different governments make the choices they do, and how those choices align with their party morals.



