Mock Elections 2019
A Toolkit for Teachers

INTRODUCTION

This Standard Mock Election toolkit is a 10-step guide to enable you to create the excitement and drama of a real election in your school. It is designed to be run with a number of classes over several days using a combination of lessons, assemblies, tutor times, lunchtimes etc. The accompanying resources - Cue Cards for Pupils and Templates Pack - include all the key materials you will need.

But you do not need to run every element - it can be adapted to suit your own needs. For example, you could run a Mock Election with just one class over two lessons or a double period. Our Quick Mock Election guide details how to do this.

Mock Elections gives pupils of all age groups an insight into how the democratic process works. Students get into the campaigning spirit by running as candidates, creating manifestos, canvassing support, delivering speeches and designing campaign posters as well as casting their first votes on polling day. They also help organise and administer the election to ensure it is free and fair.

It is an active citizenship exercise and a great (and fun!) way to teach young people about elections and democracy and bring the principles and practices of our political system to life. It equips them with valuable knowledge and skills that will enable them to participate fully in future elections and fosters their ability to think critically, research issues, weigh evidence, evaluate different viewpoints, debate ideas, and take informed action.

It is an ideal vehicle for citizenship teaching, but it can also be incorporated into other classes such as IT, Art and Design, Maths, English etc.

REGISTER FOR THE NATIONAL MOCK ELECTION
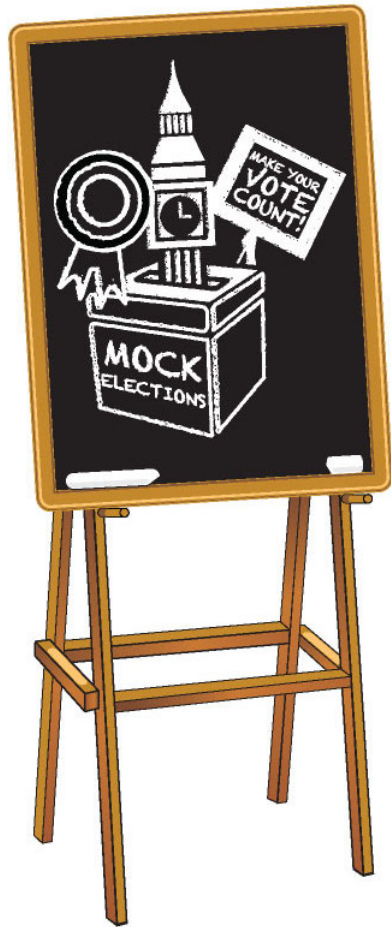
If you want your school's campaign and result to be included in the Hansard Society's national Mock Election then be sure to:

① Join in the national Mock Elections conversation – to keep up to date with the latest news, see what other schools are doing and submit photos, stories and video of your own campaign tag all your material on social media with the hashtag #mockelections2019.

② Record your school's Mock Election result with us - the **deadline is 6pm on Thursday 12 December** (but please do it before this date if you can!) We will email you a link to the results form – you can complete it online at your desk or on your phone or tablet - it is quick and easy to take part and will take just two minutes of your time.

③ Watch out for our national Mock Elections announcement – we will be tweeting about it at @HansardSociety using the hashtag #mockelections2019.

STEP 1: DECIDE THE ELECTION TIMETABLE
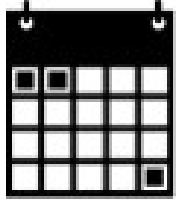
The length of the timetable will largely be determined by how you want to run the Mock Election:
- in one day or over several days?
- with just one class or involving several classes?
- with one year group or the whole school?

Decide the timetable at the start so you can inform the pupils and shape the organisation of the election around it. Key timetable decisions you need to make are:

❑ Date/time of the election (& when the result will be counted/announced)

Counting back from that:

❑ The deadline for close of nominations for candidates

❑ The deadline for electoral registration

❑ If you plan to hold one, the date/time for the hustings (at least a day before polling day)

REMEMBER: If you want your school's result to be included in the national Mock Elections result then you need to **register your result with us by: 6pm on Thursday 12 December.**

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STEP 2: PREPARATION & PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

❑ Get your staff team on board - brief them about your plans at a staff meeting – you will need their help if the election is to involve more than one class.

❑ Organise a Form Meeting or an Assembly to inform pupils of the plan – explain what's involved / and the different roles available **(Step 3, pages 7-10)**.

  o To put the general election in context, Parliament's Education Service produced a useful video in 2017 entitled '*How does the general election work?* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLiC1xpblKM&list=PLj3mInRJqIenFMlYz-zHb55sNASr8zW2O&index=6&t=0s

❑ Book a space/room(s) for use on polling day – you will need somewhere to locate the polling station(s) and to hold the count.

❑ At their best, elections are very visual! Attractive leaflets and eye catching posters can't win the day on their own but an effective visual operation can make a difference to a campaign, building that all-important sense of momentum. So you could set aside a Display Area in the school for all the candidates to display some of their campaign materials - posters, manifestos, rosettes, placards, leaflets and photos. And you could award a prize for the best in each category.

STEP 2: PREPARATION & PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT (ii)

OPTIONAL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Issue a Press Release to let the local media know about your plans. They might want to come along to observe what happens, take photos, write up a feature story. For a model draft Press Release that can be readily adapted for local use see the Templates Pack.

2. Ask your local Returning Officer (they are usually the Chief Executive of the local council) if you can borrow a proper Ballot Box for use on the day of your mock election. If not, then it's easy for pupils to make their own. For more see **Step 6(ii), page 15.**

3. Contact the local offices of the political parties – invite their candidates or their representative to visit the school to observe the hustings, election or result announcement – they may even be able to help out with resources like rosettes and badges. You can find the names of the general election candidates in your school's constituency via your local council website. Democratic Dashboard (www.democraticdashboard.com) is also a good resource. It is collecting information, including email and social media contact details, for many candidates.

STEP 3: ASSIGN ROLES
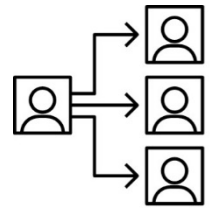
Pupils need to decide if they want to be a candidate, and the class(es) need to divide into teams.

To help pupils decide what role they would like in the election, distribute the Cue Cards for:

- **Election Administration Team** members - 1 team only required (Cue Cards p17)

- **Candidate & Party Campaign Team** members - multiple teams required (Cue Cards p3, 8-9 & p4-7 depending on which country your school is from)

- **Pressure Groups** - optional, one or more teams (Cue Cards p21)

Remind pupils of what the various roles entail and ask them to register their interest as a candidate or a member of one of the teams.

STEP 3: ASSIGN ROLES (ii)
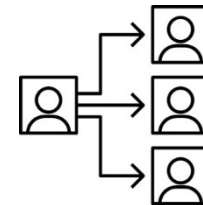
A)   The Election Administration Team - one team only (Cue Card, p17)

This team is responsible for running the election and ensuring it is free and fair.

The team needs:

- An *Election Returning Officer* (this could be you, a fellow teacher or a pupil)

- *Polling Clerks* – a minimum of 2, but ideally 3 for each polling station (the number of polling stations you need will depend on how many classes are involved)

- *Counting Clerks* – to verify and count the votes at the end. If necessary, *Polling Clerks* can double up and perform this role once the polling station(s) has closed. (Alternatively, teachers could perform this function.)

- *Stewards* (optional) – if there are a lot of students taking part in the election these may be needed at the polling stations to control the crowds!

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STEP 3: ASSIGN ROLES (iii)
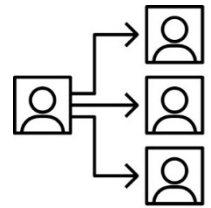
B) The Candidates and their Party Campaign Teams - multiple teams (Cue Cards p3, 8-9 & p4-7 depending on which country your school is from)

The Party Campaign Teams are the lifeblood of the campaign – without candidates and parties there is no election!
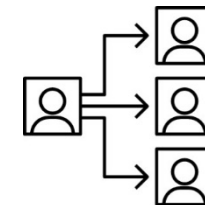
You can have as many campaign teams as desired, _**providing each candidate is nominated by at least 4 people**_.

The size of each campaign team can vary but, in addition to a candidate, it might include:

- _Canvasser(s)_

- An _agent_

- A _press officer_

- A _policy adviser_ (to write the manifesto)

- A _speech writer_

STEP 3: ASSIGN ROLES (iv)

OPTIONAL EXTENSION ACTIVITY

C) Pressure Groups (Cue Cards, p21)

Pupils who care about a specific policy issue but don't want to stand for election or campaign for a particular party could take on the role of a pressure group campaigning to influence the policy discussion.

What interests them – what do they care about?

- The environment?

- Human rights?

- Animal welfare?

- Education?

- Health?

- Poverty?

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STEP 4: CANDIDATE NOMINATIONS

Anyone wanting to run as a candidate must decide which party to stand for (or create their own).

To stand in the election *a candidate must be nominated by at least 4 other pupils*.

Distribute Nomination Forms (Templates Pack) to all those seeking to be a candidate and inform them of the deadline / arrangements for submission of their completed forms.

Information links for the main parties that are running in the four nations of the UK can be found in the Which Party? Cue Cards (pages 4-7).

Be sure to use the right Cue Card depending on which country you are in – not all parties run in each country!

Encourage students to research the parties' policies via their websites and that of leading news outlets.

BBC Election 2019 will also provide up to date information about all the main parties' activities and policy commitments : https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election/2019
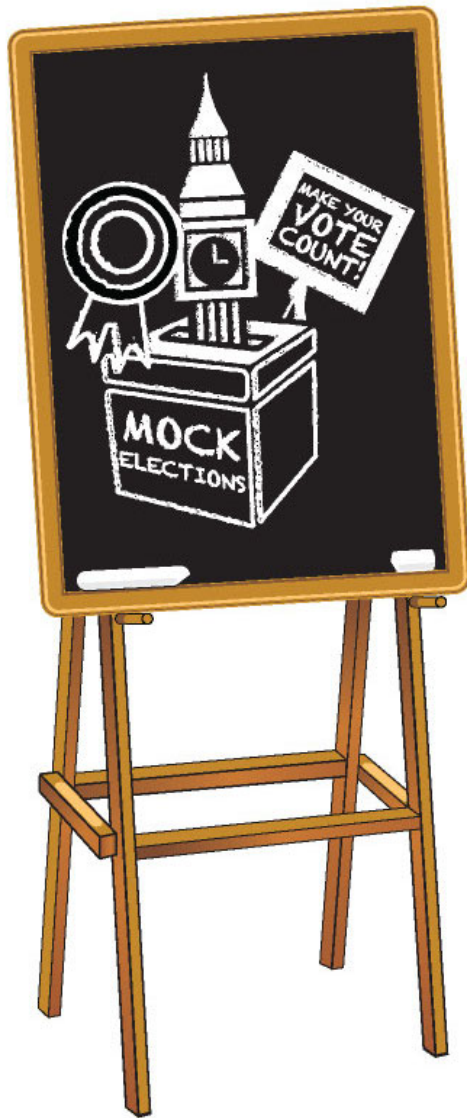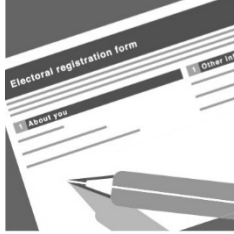
At this point…

The Election Administration Team get on with Steps 5 & 6

The Candidates and Party Campaign Teams get on with Steps 7 & 8

STEP 5: CANDIDATE AND VOTER REGISTRATION

The *Election Administration Team* should organise a meeting to discuss all the tasks that need doing and allocate jobs as necessary – use the *Get Your Election Started!* Cue Card (p17) to help with this.

They need to:

❑ 1. Collect the Candidate Nomination Forms and verify that each one has *at least 4 eligible nomination signatures.*

❑ 2. Organise Voter Registration – this can be done in classes or at lunchtime (in a busy place like the canteen) – ensure pupils know that they must be registered in order to vote. (Use the *Registering the Voters* Cue Card and the Electoral Registration Form in the Templates Pack)

❑ 3. Display Notice of Poll Posters (Templates Pack) around the school after the deadline for candidate nominations has passed. These notify pupils of when the election is to be held, where the polling station will be, and who the candidates/parties are.

Optional Extension Activity:
If any students are going to be away on polling day, you can organise postal votes for them.
A Postal Vote Application form is in the Templates Pack.

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STEP 6: POLLING PREPARATION

Use the *Preparing for Polling Day* Cue Card to plan the other tasks in advance of polling day.

The *Election Administration Team* need to…..

❑ Prepare the Polling Cards (Templates Pack) – the *Polling Clerks* should prepare one for each voter, completing the information on the front of the card – allocate each voter a registration number, then add the school name, polling station location, and date and hours of the election. These can be distributed direct to pupils or left with form teachers to keep them safe until election day.

❑ Prepare the Ballot Papers (Templates Pack) – *Polling Clerks* must add the names of the candidates in alphabetical order (by surname) and the name and logos of each candidate's party. Print up enough copies to ensure each registered voter has a ballot paper plus some spares in case any are accidentally spoilt.

❑ Once the voter registration deadline has passed, prepare a copy of the Electoral Register for use at the polling station(s) on polling day.

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STEP 6: POLLING PREPARATION (ii)

The Election Administration Team also need to prepare…..

☐ The Ballot Box

☐ The Polling Booth

☐ The Polling Station

If the local council can't lend you a Ballot Box make your own using a cardboard box with a slit at the top – cover / paint it black and secure it with a Ballot Box Seal (Templates Pack) and / or glue. (Archive storage or Photocopy Paper boxes work well!)

For Polling Booths, you can cut up a large cardboard box (remove the top and one short side as in the photo) and place it upright on a desk!

Book a room(s) for the Polling Station(s) – ensure you have a table where polling clerks can sit to cross voters off the register and distribute the ballot papers and that there is enough space for voters to vote in privacy.

Print out a few copies of the Polling Station Poster (Templates Pack) ready to display outside on election day.

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STEP 7: GET THE PARTY STARTED!

Encourage candidates to recruit as many other pupils as possible into their party and to think carefully about who is best suited to perform which tasks in their campaign team.

Designate a member of staff to support each party.

Use the *Get Your Party Started!* and *Party Campaign Team Jobs* Cue Cards to help allocate roles and responsibilities.

Candidates and parties need to think about what their policies will be and how they will campaign – suggest that they meet up at lunchtime to plan their campaign strategy!

Use the *Make Your Own Manifesto* Cue Card (p15) and the remaining *Campaign* Cue Cards (p10-12) (p13 & 14 optional) to help decide….

- <u>policy commitments </u>- manifesto pledges are a must!

and

- <u>a campaign communications plan</u> (press releases / logos / posters & leaflets etc)

STEP 8: THE CAMPAIGN

Once the Candidates and Party Campaign Teams have decided their manifesto promises, their logos, the content of their posters and leaflets they need to communicate their message to the electorate!

- Complete a Manifesto Pledge Sheet (Templates Pack) and distribute it to voters

- Design and print Posters and put them on display in designated parts of the school

- Design Rosettes (Templates Pack) and badges and distribute them to supporters to wear during the campaign

Party supporters should canvass – e.g. at lunchtimes – to get potential voters to support them. Alternatively, the campaign teams might visit different classes during form/tutor time to campaign for votes.

STEP 8: THE CAMPAIGN (ii)

OPTIONAL EXTENSION ACTIVITY: ORGANISE A HUSTINGS

The *Election Administration Team* could organise a Hustings at lunchtime or during an Assembly so that candidates can make their case to the electorate.

Each candidate should give a short speech followed by a Q&A session. Supporters should bring along their rosettes, posters & placards!

TOP TIPS.....

Ask a teacher, school governor, or local community representative to be the neutral chair.

Draw lots to decide the order of speaking.

Be sure to publicise it in advance!

STEP 8: THE CAMPAIGN (iii)

ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

The candidates could be interviewed for the school newspaper, set up a blog or social media group, or create a campaign video for YouTube. These activities could open up links with English, Media Studies or IT lessons. See the *Digital Campaign* and *Party Election Broadcast* Cue Cards (pages 13-14) for more information.

Party policy advisers (or one or more of the *Pressure Group* teams) could conduct an Opinion Poll to find out what voters are thinking and what issues matter to them most. The result can be used to inform the decision about what goes in their manifesto. This could be tied into a Maths lesson where the results are analysed and discussed. Use the *Opinion Poll* Cue Card (p16) and the model draft Opinion Poll (which can be amended for local use) in the Templates Pack.

Whatever your campaign involves, the Hansard Society Mock Elections HQ would love to hear about them – tag any social media material with the hashtag #mockelections2019

STEP 9: ELECTION DAY

The *Election Returning Officer* should hold a pre-election briefing meeting with his/her team a day or so before polling day. Use the relevant section of the *Preparing for Polling Day* Cue Card to help prepare.

On election day… the *Polling Clerks* should display the Polling Station Posters (Templates Pack) outside the polling station(s) before voting begins.

- ✓ Polling stations should be accessible to all pupils
- ✓ Pupils must be given time to vote
- ✓ Pupils must be able to vote in secret
- ✓ Candidates & parties should not be allowed to canvass inside the polling station

When a voter arrives…
- ❑ One *Polling Clerk* should cross them off the electoral register (the voter registration form)
- ❑ Another *Polling Clerk* should give them a ballot paper and point them to the polling booth
- ❑ A third *Polling Clerk* may be on hand to ensure that voters queue quietly and in an orderly fashion!

NOTE: In real elections it is not necessary for voters to present their polling card in order to be able to vote – but unless voter registration has been organised within class groups pupils may need their polling card in order to give the Polling Clerk their voter registration number so that their name can be readily located on the electoral register.

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STEP 10: COUNT & ANNOUNCE THE RESULT

Use *The Count* Cue Card to prepare.

Once polling has closed, the *Polling Clerk* should take the Ballot Box with the Electoral Register to the *Returning Officer* in the room set aside for the count.

In the presence of the *Returning Officer*, the *Polling Clerk* should break the Ballot Box Seal, empty the box and count the number of votes.

The *Counting Clerk* (or another *Polling Clerk*) should check that this number corresponds with the total number of voters recorded on the electoral register as having cast their vote at the polling station. If not, re-count!

When the numbers tally, sort the ballot papers into piles for each candidate/party plus a pile for any spoiled papers.

The number of votes for each candidate/party and the number of spoiled papers should be counted and recorded.

The totals should then be added together to check that they match the total number of votes cast.

STEP 10: COUNT & ANNOUNCE THE RESULT (ii)

A re-count may be ordered by the *Returning Officer* if the result is very close.

Electoral Commission guidelines state that in the event of a tie between two candidates the *Returning Officer* should preside over the drawing of lots in order to determine the result.

The *Returning Officer* should announce the result at a special school event or assembly. For the official words to be used at the declaration see *The Count* Cue Card.

The winner makes a short speech. They could also receive an award of some kind as well as a Mock Elections Certificate (Templates Pack).

The final act of the *Returning Officer* and *Counting Clerks* (or Polling Clerks) is to register the result with national Mock Elections HQ using the link sent to you by email.

The deadline for registering the results is 6pm on Thursday 12 December *(but please do it earlier if you can!)*

POST ELECTION EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1)   Get pupils to write a short article about the election

For example, what did they like/dislike? What changes would make taking part in an election more attractive to young people? Will they be more willing to take part in a general election when they first get the chance to vote? Do they think the voting age should be lowered to 16?

2) Tell the Press!

Send a press release announcing the results to the local media, along with any photographs.

3) Arrange a visit from your newly elected MP

Invite him/her to visit the school to meet the students to discuss their respective campaign experiences! It will be a great opportunity for the students to discuss the policy issues they campaigned on during the Mock Election and to question the MP about what they plan to do now they are at Westminster. The contact details of all the newly elected MPs will appear on Parliament's website after the election (www.parliament.uk) or you can write to them at: House of Commons, Westminster, London, SW1 0AA.

4) Visit Westminster

A 'People's Parliament Tour and Workshop' (for pupils aged 7-18 years) can be booked via Parliament's Education Service. The tours are very popular and book up very quickly so plan well ahead! http://www.parliament.uk/education/visit-parliament-with-your-school/palace-of-westminster-tour/.

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ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Managing social media
Running a digital campaign is not a necessary element of Mock Elections in Schools but if incorporated it could be used to help contribute to pupil understanding of how to use the internet/social media responsibly. Any digital campaign a school incorporates into its Mock Election should be adapted in accordance with the school's own policy on social media. Please note that most social media channels also require subscribers to be aged at least 13.

Fake news
It's always important to check facts and sources. The fact checking organisation Full Fact have produced an online toolkit, providing simple, practical tools to help people identify misinformation. https://fullfact.org/toolkit/

Dealing with an extremist political party
Occasionally during past Mock Election campaigns some pupils have expressed an interest in standing for an extremist political party (e.g. the BNP in 2005 and 2010). This is rare but if it happens in your school you may find the article below, published by the Citizenship Foundation, helpful – it is available to download from TES Resources. Some of the information on legal duties/policy guidance is now out of date but the article may be helpful to teachers wanting advice/guidance about how to manage discussion in the classroom, facilitate open debate, explore controversial issues and confront extremism. www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/dealing-with-the-bnp-and-other-radical-groups-6117418

Privacy and confidentiality
To register your school as part of the national Mock Elections campaign we need some personal information – including the name and contact details (phone/e-mail etc.) of the teacher co-ordinating the election in each school. The Hansard Society retains this data for the purposes of the Mock Elections project – we may contact you about other education / election related resources in the future but we will not pass your data to any other person / organisation without your prior permission. The Hansard Society's Privacy Policy can be found here:
https://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/about/legal/privacy-policy

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USEFUL RESOURCES / LINKS

Department for Education
Pre-election guidance for schools and multi-academy trusts.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-election-guidance-for-schools-and-multi-academy-trusts/pre-election-guidance-for-schools-and-multi-academy-trusts#activities-to-promote-political-awareness-to-pupils

Parliament's Education Service
A wide range of teaching resources and information about how to organise a school visit to Parliament.
http://www.parliament.uk/education/

Association for Citizenship Teaching
Information and resources from the professional subject association promoting excellence in citizenship education.
http://www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk

British Youth Council
Empowering young people across the UK to have a say and be heard: includes UK Youth Parliament, Young Mayor Network and Local Youth Council Network. http://www.byc.org.uk

Full Fact
The UK's independent factchecking authority. https://fullfact.org/

Shout Out UK
Award winning education site providing training and programmes on media and political literacy.
https://www.shoutoutuk.org/about/

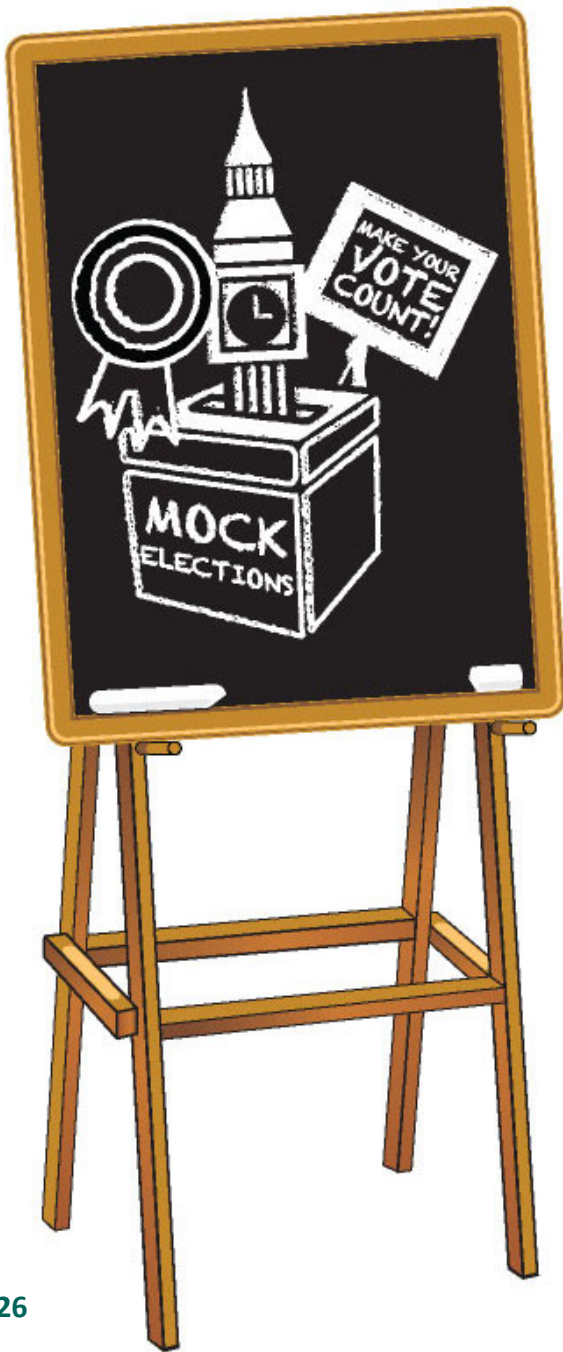**Young Citizens**
A range of resources for active democratic participation including lesson plans and mock trial competitions.
https://www.youngcitizens.org/

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Mock Elections 2019

Good luck with your election!

We hope you find this toolkit helpful. Remember to use it with the accompanying Cue Cards and Templates Pack.

Please remember to register your result using the email link we sent with this toolkit. We provide these materials free of charge. We ask only that you register the outcome of your school's election so we can compile a national result.

The deadline is 6pm on Thursday 12 December.

If you have any feedback please
email us at: contact@hansardsociety.org.uk