

Civic Education Student Workbook

Republic of Vanuatu

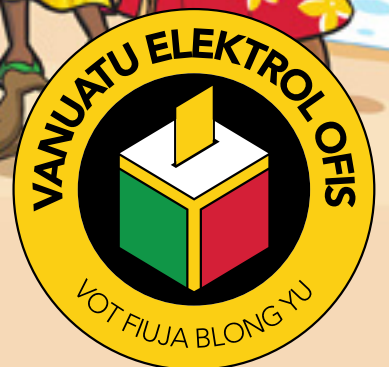
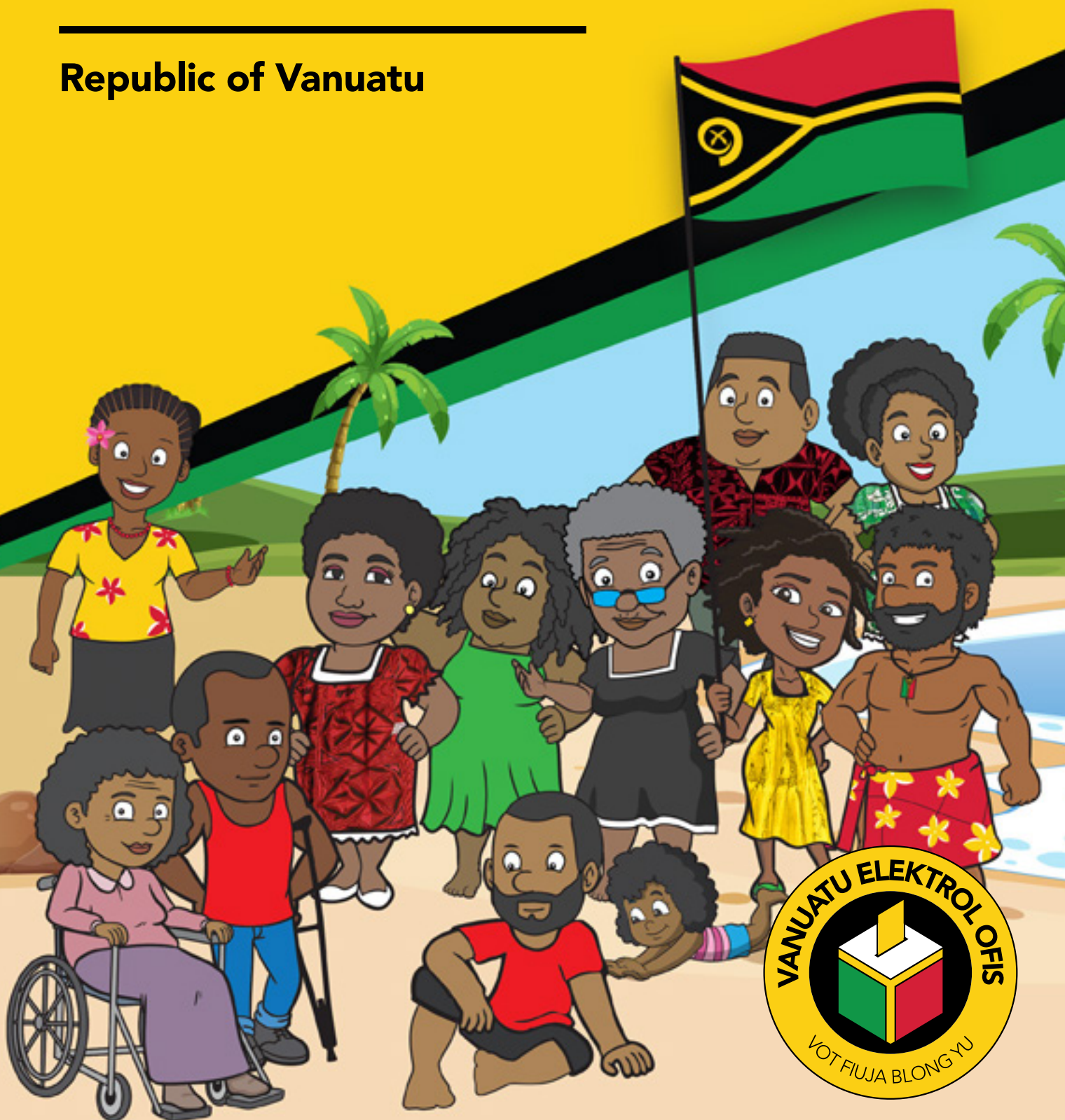
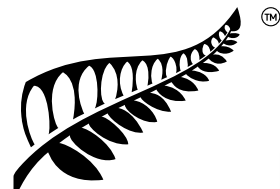


Table of Contents

Introduction	02
Lesson 1: What is democracy?	04
Lesson 2: What is citizenship?	08
Lesson 3: What makes a good citizen?	10
Lesson 4: Rights and responsibilities in a democracy	12
Lesson 5: Human rights	14
Lesson 6: Civil Society	18
Lesson 7: Media & social media (misinformation, disinformation)	20
Lesson 8: Our system of government in Vanuatu	24
Lesson 9: What makes a good leader?	28
Lesson 10: Elections in Vanuatu	31
Lesson 11: Including everyone in a democracy	33
Lesson 12: Voting	36
Lesson 13: Election offenses & the importance of voting	42

This book is published by:

Vanuatu Electoral Office and Vanuatu Curriculum Development Unit.
With the support of the Vanuatu Electoral Environment Project (VEEP)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pacific Office
©UNDP 2020 all rights reserved



Your Civic Education Student Workbook

Welcome to the Student Workbook to accompany you through the Civic Education course you are about to start.

Very soon you will turn 18 which means you are on the threshold of a new life as a grown up. At 18, you become an adult and as such, you will be fully recognised as a legally responsible citizen. This comes with many new rights, freedoms and responsibilities.

The right to vote is one of the most important aspects of becoming an adult. It means you can fully take part in the political life of the country and play an active role in the life of the community and country.

In preparation for this big step, there are many important things you need to know about how our country functions and what your rights and responsibilities are as a citizen. This course will help you to be ready to exercise your right to vote and therefore choose who represents you as a citizen. You will be entrusting these people with the responsibility to manage the way our country is run at a local, provincial and national level, and defend your interests and those of the community. So you must learn to choose wisely, understand the rules and be an informed voter.

It is very important to realise that young people have an important part to play in politics, because the decisions of today will affect how tomorrow will be. Young people also have the energy to work hard and think ahead. Youth can and should take an interest in politics and learn about how the system works. This course will show you how as a young person, you can participate shaping the Vanuatu of tomorrow.

The future is in your hands. Vanuatu blong yu!

Please look after this Workbook and do not write in it, as it will be used by other students after you.





Lesson 1: What is Democracy?

Vanuatu is a democracy

A Democracy means government by the people for the people, not by a king or queen, not by a dictator, not by a rich man or woman and his or her friends, but government by the people (also called the citizens).

Democracy is the form of government in which the people of a country decide how they want to be governed. They also decide who should govern them. Citizens choose their representatives through regular elections. In their day-to-day life, the people have all the basic freedoms like of freedom speech, association, assembly, conscience, etc. They also have responsibilities as citizens.

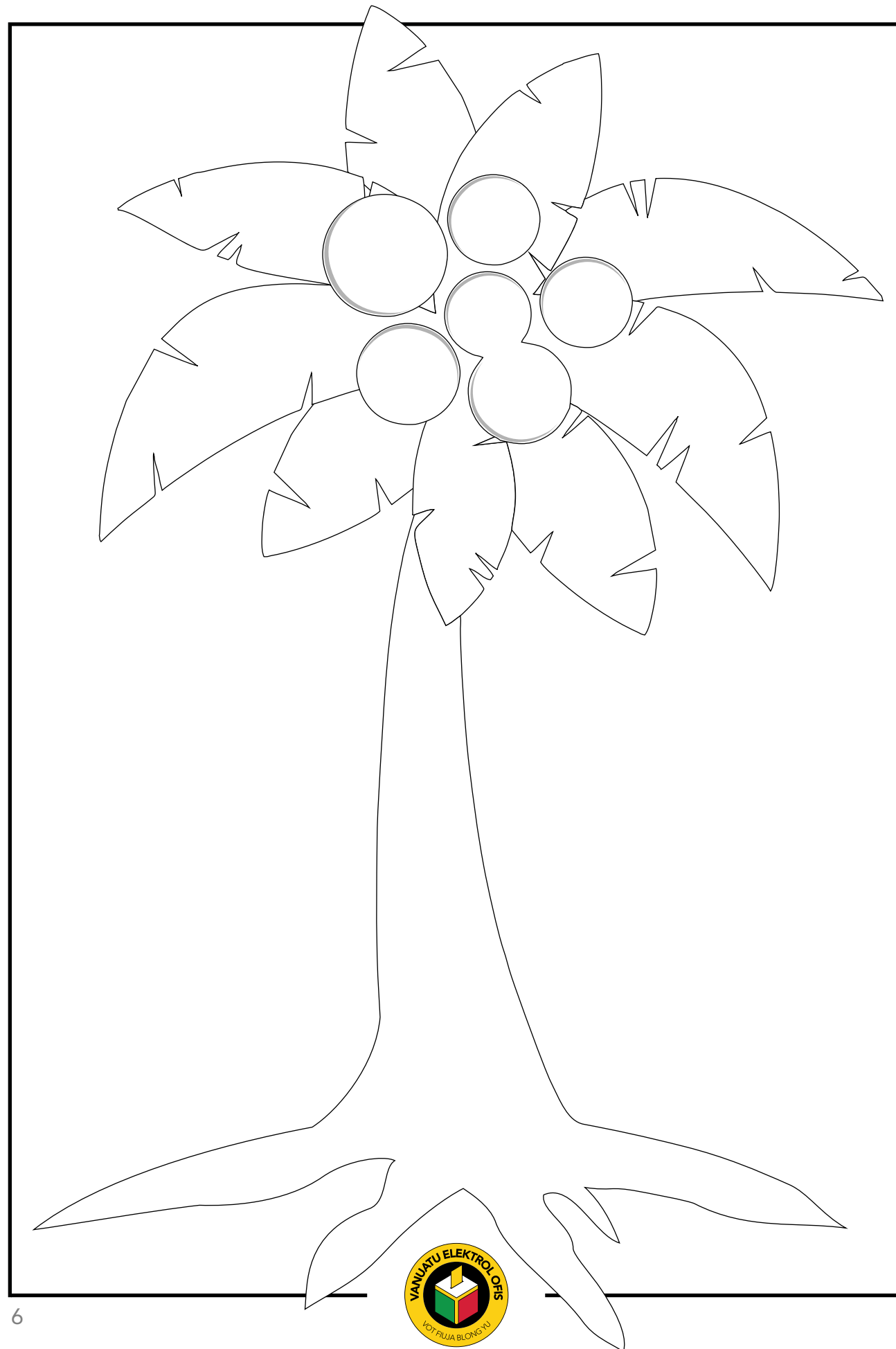
Elections take place periodically. This is when all eligible citizens over the age of 18 who have registered to become voters go to the polls to vote on election day.

In addition, institutions such as an independent judiciary, a free press and an active Civil Society also protect the citizens and their rights.

Demos = The People Kratos = To Rule
Rule by the people



The Democracy Tree



The Democracy Tree

A tree is a living thing, growing, strong but vulnerable at the same time. If it is looked after it will yield benefits and fruit. The fruit rely on all the other parts of the tree working together. The tree and its fruit need constant attention.

The roots of the democracy tree

The 4 main principles of democracy are like the 4 main roots of the tree:

1. People are in control;
2. Equality among people;
3. Constitutional Government;
4. Individual freedom.

The trunk of the democracy tree

The trunk of our democracy tree holds the branches and fruits and is made up of institutions that allow it to stand tall, spread and bear fruit.

The key democratic institutions are the following:

- Elections;
- The Constitution;
- Parliament;
- Justice system;
- Civil Society (social movements and interest groups);
- Political parties;
- Media, Right to Information & Civic Education;
- Local Government;
- Executive and public administration.

The fruit of the democracy tree

- Peace;
- Prosperity;
- Less poverty;
- Less violence;
- More vibrant communities;
- Dignity for all humans;
- Human beings and societies reaching their fullest potential;
- Improved quality of life;
- Freedom.



Lesson 2: What is Citizenship?

What is Citizenship?

Citizenship is the status of a person being a legal member of a nation.

What is your identity?

A person has their own individual identity and identity based on the group or community they belong to. Some parts of a person's identity are fixed and they choose others. Identity can also be defined as the characteristics, traditions and beliefs used by an individual or group to define themselves as being the same as or different from other individuals or groups.



Write in your exercise book answers to these questions:

1. What makes the Ni-Vanuatu national identity?
2. What does it mean to be a The ratu?
3. Where does a nation's identity come from?
4. How can individuals with so many different identities come together to form a national identity?



Legal identity



“Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.”

Article 6 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The importance of legal identity

- Being recognised by the authorities as a citizen
- Rights and responsibilities as a citizen
- Access to government services
- The right and ability to vote
- Travel/obtain a passport
- Facilitation of official dealings

Write a sentence using the word “Citizenship” in your exercise book



Lesson 3: What makes a good citizen?



Why is it important to be a good citizen?

Write the answers in your exercise book.



How to be a Good Citizen

1. Volunteer in your community
2. Be honest and trustworthy
3. Follow rules and laws
4. Respect the rights of others
5. Be informed about the world around you
6. Respect the property of others
7. Be compassionate
8. Take responsibility for your actions
9. Be a good neighbour
10. Protect the environment
11. Respect the national symbols
the flag and anthem
12. Donating blood / plasma if needed
13. Vote

Task: What makes a good citizen (Ranking Exercise)

My top 3 qualities of a good citizen.

Write the numbers 1 to 3 in your exercise book and write your answers.

Task: Essay

Write up to 400 words in your exercise book on the topic:

Why is it important to be a good citizen?





Lesson 4: Rights and Responsibilities in a Democracy

Our democratic rights come with responsibilities

A responsibility is a duty or obligation.

It is something you should do in order to respect, promote and maintain certain rights. For example, the right to vote comes with the responsibility to cast a ballot in an informed manner.

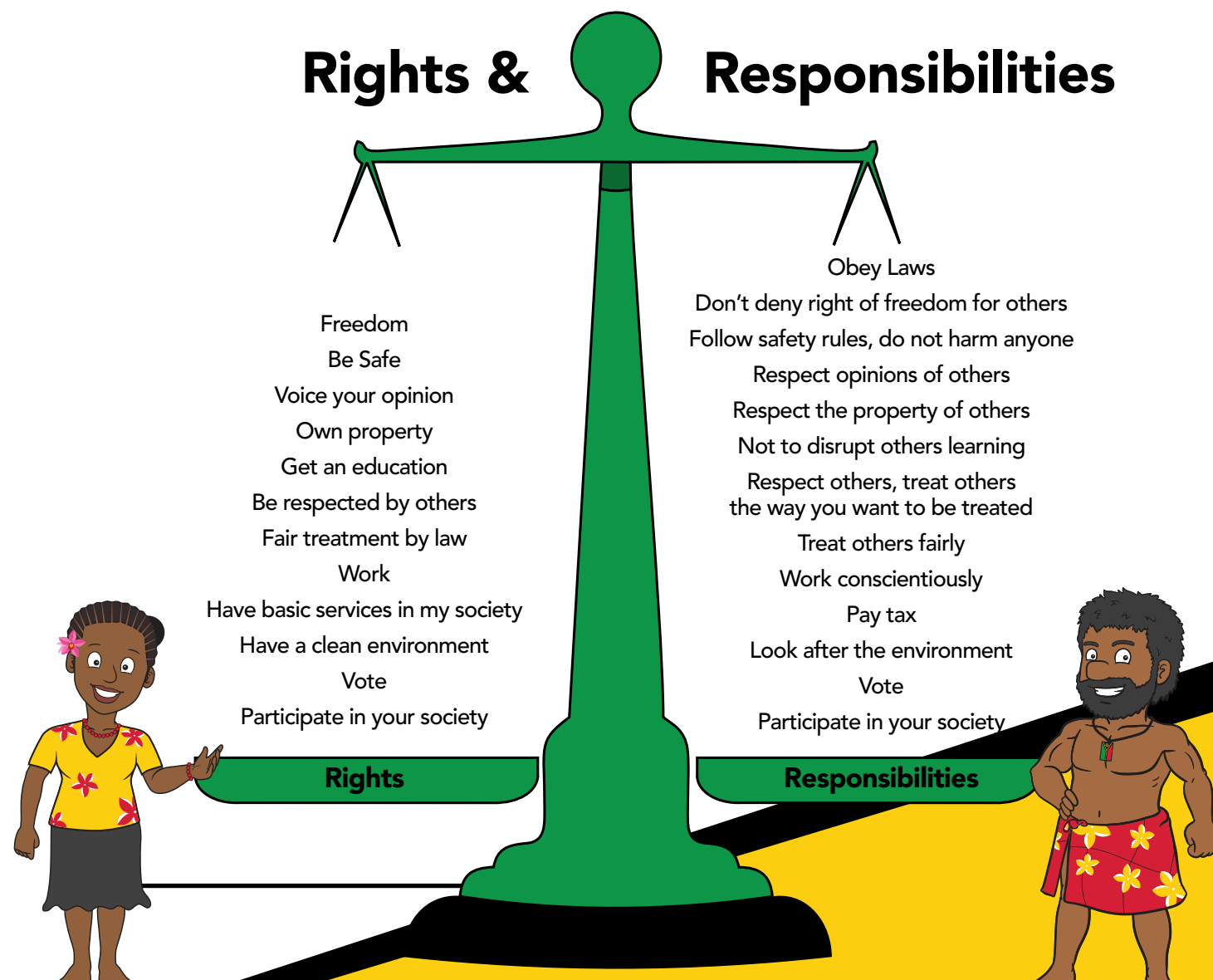
With all rights come responsibilities. A responsibility is a duty or obligation. It is something you should do in order to respect, promote and maintain certain rights. For example, the right to vote comes with the responsibility to cast a ballot in an informed and purposeful manner.



Rights

- Freedom of movement:** You have the right to move freely from country to country and within countries.
- Freedom of speech:** You have the right to state your opinions and ideas without being stopped or punished.
- The right to privacy:** You have the right to live in private and keep your personal life-style choices private, within your own home.
- Freedom of thought, conscience and religion:** You have the right to form your own opinions, express yourself, think for yourself, and choose your own philosophy and religion.
- Freedom of assembly (or association):** You have the right to demonstrate in public as long as you don't threaten life or property.
- Freedom from slavery:** You should not be forced to work under the threat of penalty or punishment (and for which you have not offered to do voluntarily).
- The right to vote:** You have the right to participate in our democracy by choosing your representatives through elections. You can vote in Vanuatu when you have turned 18 and have registered to be on the electoral roll.

Rights & Responsibilities





Lesson 5: What are Human Rights?

Human rights are the rights and freedoms which everybody has from the moment of birth, simply because they are human beings.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights sets out 30 rights that apply to every human being in the world.

These rights are not privileges which need to be won and they apply equally to everybody, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, wealth or social standing. Because they are rights, they cannot be taken away from anyone including the government.



Task: Characteristics of Human Rights

True or False?

In your exercise book, write the number 1 to 5. Read the statements below, reflect on whether they are true or false. Write "true" or "false" against each number.

Human rights are:

1. Those entitlements that a person has because he/she is human (right to life, education, food, shelter, etc.) Human rights do not have to be bought, earned or inherited; they belong to people simply because they are human.
2. The natural and God-given rights.
3. The basic standards without which people cannot live in dignity.
4. Rights that cannot be taken away; no one has the right to deprive another person of them for any reason. People still have human rights even when the laws of their countries do not recognise them, or when they violate them - for example, when slavery is practiced, slaves still have rights even though these rights are being violated.
5. They are the same for all human beings regardless of race, sex, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin. We are all born free, and equal in dignity and rights - human rights are universal.

"Treat others as you wish to be treated."

When we say that each person has human rights, we are also saying that each person has responsibilities to respect the human rights of others.

Homework

Choose one among the 3 categories of Human Rights and write a short essay about what it means to you and how it applies to Vanuatu.

The three categories of Human Rights are:

1. Civil and political rights;
2. Economic and social rights;
3. Environmental, cultural and developmental rights.



Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<p>1 We Are All Born Free & Equal We are all born free. We all have our own thoughts and ideas. We should all be treated in the same way.</p>	<p>2 Don't Discriminate These rights belong to everybody, whatever our differences.</p>	<p>3 The Right to Life We all have the right to life, and to live in freedom and safety.</p>
<p>4 No Slavery Nobody has any right to make us a slave. We cannot make anyone our slave.</p>	<p>5 No Torture Nobody has any right to hurt us or to torture us.</p>	<p>6 You Have Rights No Matter Where You Go I am a person just like you!</p>
<p>7 We're All Equal Before the Law The law is the same for everyone. It must treat us all fairly.</p>	<p>8 Your Human Rights Are Protected by Law We can all ask for the law to help us when we are not treated fairly.</p>	<p>9 No Unfair Detainment Nobody has the right to put us in prison without good reason and keep us there, or to send us away from our country.</p>
<p>10 The Right to Trial If we are put on trial this should be in public. The people who try us should not let anyone tell them what to do.</p>	<p>11 We're Always Innocent Till Proven Guilty Nobody should be blamed for doing something until it is proven. When people say we did a bad thing we have the right to show it is not true.</p>	<p>12 The Right to Privacy Nobody should try to harm our good name. Nobody has the right to come into our home, open our letters, or bother us or our family without a good reason.</p>
<p>13 Freedom to Move We all have the right to go where we want in our own country and to travel as we wish.</p>	<p>14 The Right to Seek a Safe Place to Live If we are frightened of being badly treated in our own country, we all have the right to run away to another country to be safe.</p>	<p>15 Right to a Nationality We all have the right to belong to a country.</p>

<p>16 Marriage and Family Every grown-up has the right to marry and have a family if they want to. Men and women have the same rights when they are married, and when they are separated.</p>	<p>17 The Right to Your Own Things Everyone has the right to own things or share them. Nobody should take our things from us without a good reason.</p>	<p>18 Freedom of Thought We all have the right to believe in what we want to believe, to have a religion, or to change it if we want.</p>
<p>19 Freedom of Expression We all have the right to make up our own minds, to think what we like, to say what we think, and to share our ideas with other people.</p>	<p>20 The Right to Public Assembly We all have the right to meet our friends and to work together in peace to defend our rights. Nobody can make us join a group if we don't want to.</p>	<p>21 The Right to Democracy We all have the right to take part in the government of our country. Every grown-up should be allowed to choose their own leaders.</p>
<p>22 Social Security We all have the right to affordable housing, medicine, education, and childcare, enough money to live on and medical help if we are ill or old.</p>	<p>23 Workers' Rights Every grown-up has the right to do a job, to a fair wage for their work, and to join a trade union.</p>	<p>24 The Right to Play We all have the right to rest from work and to relax.</p>
<p>25 Food and Shelter for All We all have the right to a good life. Mothers and children, people who are old, unemployed or disabled, and all people have the right to be cared for.</p>	<p>26 The Right to Education Education is a right. Primary school should be free. We should learn about the United Nations and how to get on with others. Our parents can choose what we learn.</p>	<p>27 Copyright Copyright is a special law that protects one's own artistic creations and writings; others cannot make copies without permission. We all have the right to our own way of life and to enjoy the good things that art, science and learning bring.</p>
<p>28 A Fair and Free World There must be proper order so we can all enjoy rights and freedoms in our own country and all over the world.</p>	<p>29 Responsibility We have a duty to other people, and we should protect their rights and freedoms.</p>	<p>30 No One Can Take Away Your Human Rights</p>

United Nations





Lesson 6: Civil Society

Civil Society

Civil Society is made up of these organisations that are not associated with government. They also include some schools and universities, advocacy groups, professional associations, labour unions, churches, and cultural institutions. Civil Society offers an environment for social movements, self - organizing groups and individuals, to operate relatively independently from the state.

Task: Discussion

What Civil Society organisations do you know in Vanuatu?

Task: Poster

With your class mates, create a poster representing an active Civil Society.

If you don't have a big piece of paper to make a large poster, you can stick several sheets of A4 together.

What is Civil Society?

Civil Society is made up of ordinary people working together as a group. These groups are called Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and also Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Faith Based Organisations (FBOs).





Lesson 7: Media and Social Media in a Democracy



Media is collective word to describe the main means of mass communication: broadcasting, on radio and TV, publishing in newspapers and magazines and the Internet.

The media plays an important role in raising public awareness and providing information that shapes attitudes and public opinion.

The media is a powerful tool whether it's television, radio, or the internet. Social media is quickly expanding its influence on all aspects of our lives.



Social Media:

Refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. Some of the main social media include:



Beware of Social Media

Understand that social media has the following pitfalls:

Confirmation bias:

Our judgments about what is true or credible are often shaped by how well the new information aligns with what we already believe (we are more likely to believe something to be true if it aligns with our existing beliefs).

Echo chamber:

We see and hear more of what we already agree with on our social media feeds (so those feeds become an "echo chamber" - our own opinion just echoes all around us).

Fake news:

Refers to false stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke.

Misinformation:

Is when false information is shared, but no harm is meant.

Disinformation:

Is when false information is knowingly shared to cause harm.

Remember when writing, liking, and sharing on social media:

“Nothing you do or say online is guaranteed to be private, and everything you do or say online is forever.”



HOW DO WE SPOT FAKE NEWS*



Consider the Source

Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.



Read Beyond

Headlines can be outrageous in an effort to get clicks. What’s the whole story?



Check the Author

Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?



Supporting Sources?

Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.



Check the Date

Reposting old news stories doesn’t mean they’re relevant to current events.



Is it a Joke? Research

If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.



Check Your Biases

Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.



Ask the Experts

Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.

* Source: IFLA.org





Lesson 8: Government and Leadership: Our system of Government in Vanuatu

In Vanuatu, there are three official arms of power:



Legislature

The first arm is called the **LEGISLATURE**. These are our Members of Parliament who have the power to make the laws of the country because they have been elected by the citizens.



Judiciary

The second arm is the **JUDICIARY**. These are the courts, lawyers, magistrates and judges who interpret the laws of the country.



Executive

The third arm is called the **EXECUTIVE**. This is the arm that puts into practice the laws and policies of the government. The Executive is made up of the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers, which form the Government.

Separation of Powers

The 3 branches of government – the legislature, the executive and the judiciary - have separate, independent powers and responsibilities so that those of one branch are not in conflict with those of the other branches. This is usually called the Separation of Powers.

Three levels of government: National, Provincial and Municipal

In Vanuatu we have three bodies that represent the people at national, provincial and municipal level.



Vanuatu is a democratic state

Our Constitution says: "National sovereignty belongs to the people of Vanuatu which they exercise through their elected representatives."



1. National Parliament

The National Parliament of Vanuatu is made up of 52 members. They are called Members of Parliament, or MPs for short.

The Parliament is made up of representatives elected by the people. When they win an election because the people have voted for them, they become MPs. They serve for four years.

2. Provincial Councils

There are six provinces in Vanuatu and each has a Provincial Council:

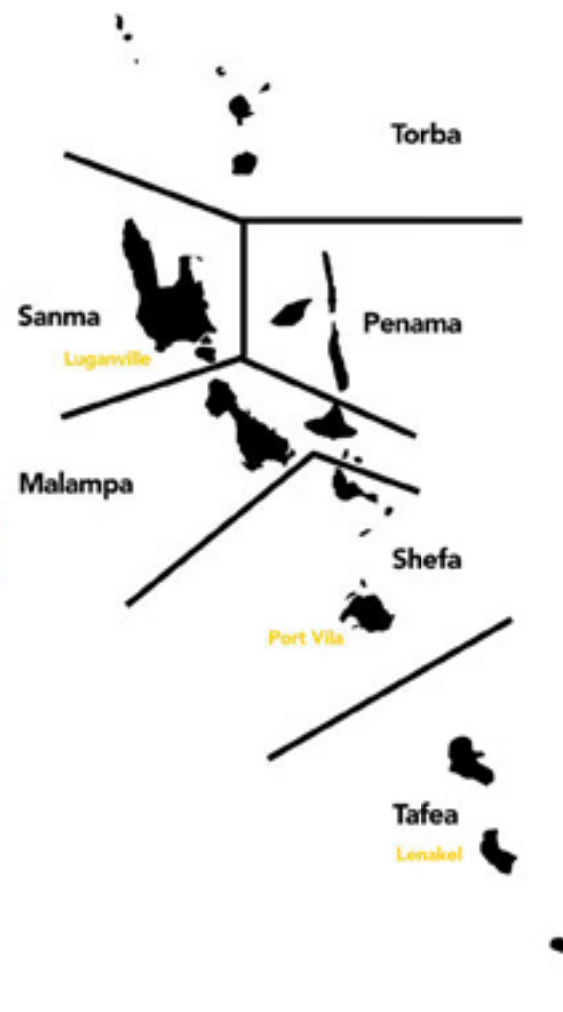
Torba
Sanma
Penama
Malampa
Shefa
Tafea

The Provincial Government Councils are elected by the people for a four-year term. There are also members appointed by the Minister of Internal Affairs to represent chiefs, churches, women and youth. The Council is headed by a Chairman who is elected from among the councillors.

3. Municipalities

There are three municipalities in Vanuatu:

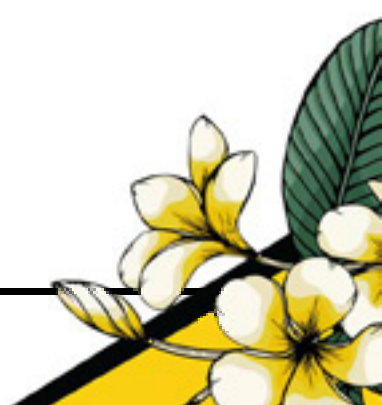
Luganville (Espiritu Santo)
Port Vila (Efate)
Lenakel (Tanna)



Task: Questions

In your exercise book, write the answers to the following questions:

- What is the name of the Prime Minister?
- What is the name of the Member of Parliament (MP) for your constituency?
- What is the work of a Member of Parliament?
- What is the "Separation of Powers"?





Lesson 9: What makes a Good leader?



**Question for class discussion
(or think/pair/share):**

Are leaders born or made?



A Good Leader



Task: Qualities of a good leader

List the qualities that make a good leader in your exercise books. A good leader is someone who:

- listens to the people and cares about their needs;
- put the needs of the people first;
- is honest and does not engage in corruption;
- uses government money to improve the lives of people in the community;
- makes sure the community gets what it needs like roads, schools and health clinics;
- is fair and treats everyone equally and with respect;
- fights to improve the lives of the poor, the smaller communities, the weak and the disabled;
- cares about nature and the environment.

A person's character is more important than their looks, gender, marital status, relationship to you, to the community etc.

Each of us has different views on what is most important and everyone is entitled to their own opinion. But in order to vote or choose your leader wisely, you should take time to find out as much as possible about the candidate.



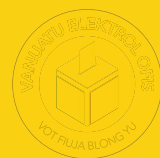
Women make good leaders

All around the world, women are becoming more confident and people are realising women make good leaders.

Women make good leaders because they put their children and communities first. They think about the future because they think about their children and plan ahead.

Many women in professional positions are respected because they are honest, well organised, efficient and knowledgeable.

Half of the population is made up of women. Vanuatu has many hard working talented and professional women. Even though it is harder for a woman, we have many qualified women who could do a great job of representing their community and fighting to improve living conditions.



Lesson 10: Elections in Vanuatu

An election is the procedure by which citizens of a country choose their representatives and leaders.

Elections must be held regularly so that elected officials remain accountable to the people. If they do not uphold their responsibilities to the electorate, they can be voted out of office in the next election.

A democracy is characterised by the fact that all state authority or power is derived from the people. The people decide.

We vote for individuals (our representatives) to do what we need and want them to do. If we like how they represent us, we can vote for them again. If we don't like how they represent us, we vote for someone else.



Free and fair, genuine and credible

Democracy is much more than holding elections. However, free and fair elections are one of its fundamental conditions. In a democracy, power is exercised and transferred during regular, equal, free and secret elections. An election is regarded as genuine and valid in a democracy, only when it offers real alternatives. Freedom of speech, free information, protection of minorities and free opposition are all fundamental conditions of a democratic election.

What is a Free & Fair Election?

When an election is free it means that people can nominate anyone who is legally entitled to be nominated as a candidate, and people can vote for these people without fear of punishment.

When an election is fair it means that all voters and candidates are treated equally. There is no miscounting, bribery or fraud. A fair election is also one in which all voters have an equal opportunity to register, and everyone who is entitled to vote can do so without impediment or intimidation. An election is fair when all votes are counted, and the announced results reflect the actual vote totals.

Elections must offer a real choice, that is, the voters must be free to choose between alternatives. In addition to these basic criteria, democratic elections should be regular, equal and secret.

Homework:

Write the three questions below in your exercise book. Write a detailed answer for each question. Each answer should be a paragraph long.

1. What is the purpose/function of elections in a democracy?
2. What are the purpose/functions of representatives in a democracy?
3. How would you go about choosing the best candidate to vote for in an election?



Lesson 11: Including everyone in a democracy

Disability is not inability

Democratic societies emphasise the principle that all people are equal.

Equality means that all individuals are valued equally, have equal opportunities, and may not be discriminated against because of their race, beliefs, class, religion, ethnic group or gender.



Groups Potentially Excluded or Marginalised in Society



Discrimination...

is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, religion, age, gender, disability etc.

Equality...

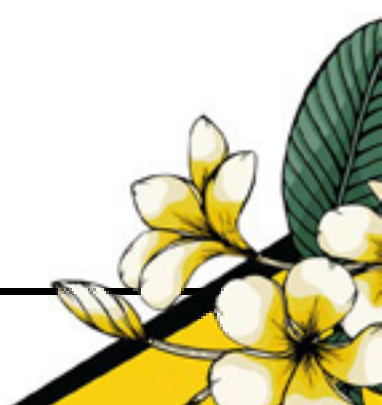
is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. It is also the belief that no one should have poorer life chances because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability.

Social Inclusion...

is about people - particularly for people who are disadvantaged - being able to participate in society, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources and respect for rights. A socially inclusive society is defined as one where all people feel valued, their differences are respected and their basic needs are met so they can live in dignity.

Social Exclusion...

is a form of discrimination. It occurs when people are excluded from participating in the economic, social and political life of their community, based on their belonging to a certain social class or category on the grounds of race, religion, age, gender, disability etc. A socially exclusive society occurs when people are wholly or partially excluded from participating in the economic, social and political life of their community, based on their belonging to a certain social class, category or group.





Lesson 12: Voting

Voting in elections gives you the chance to have a say on who represents you in the government.

When you vote, you are choosing a candidate that you think will best represent you and your wishes. Every vote is important. Even if the candidate you choose does not win, your vote expresses what is important to you and your community.

An election is the procedure by which citizens of a country choose their representatives and leaders. Elections must be held regularly so that elected officials remain accountable to the people; if they do not uphold their responsibilities to the electorate, they can be voted out of office in the next election.



What is Voting?

When you turn 18 you will be able to register as a voter and take part in elections. Voting is the most important thing you can do to be part of the life of the country. If you don't vote, it is like keeping silent when you have something to say. Remember everyone has the right to express their choice through the ballot box. As a young voter, your voice will be important in determining the future of the country.

Choose wisely

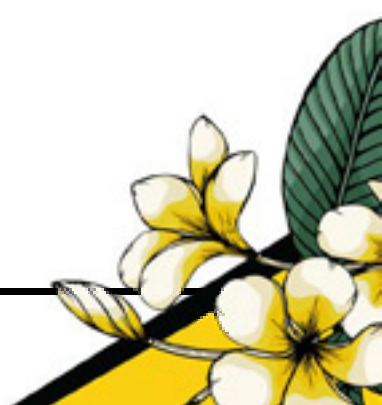
When making up your mind about who to vote for, remind yourself about what makes a good leader. We want our leaders to be honest, hard-working and trustworthy people who don't engage in corruption. We want them to put the needs of the people first and work to improve life in our community. Our leaders should care about the rights of women, people from the smaller communities, minorities and people with disabilities. Our leaders should care about education, health care for the people and employment opportunities for youth. It is important that the candidate who will represent you cares about youth and also works to preserve the environment in our islands and villages.

Young people can influence political parties and independent candidates. Youth votes count a lot in an election. Don't forget, your vote is worth just as much as the vote of an older person.

What are the three most important things politicians should do for the country?

Note your top three ideas in your exercise book.

Do you know the name of the MP for your constituency?



Voting

Generally, there is one Polling Station in each polling district, although in populated areas (mostly urban) there can be more than one Polling Station in a district. Polling Stations are located mostly in schools and community centers, and are managed by staff from the Vanuatu Electoral Office. Police provide security at polling locations.

Voting Steps on Election Day

Voting days are set on official days, never on a weekend. Polling in Vanuatu takes place in a single day, from 7:30am to 4:30pm.

Voting procedures are the same for national, provincial and municipal elections. Remember that you must register before you can vote on election day. Make sure you have your National Identity Card and register when you turn 18. When you register, your name will appear on the Voter Roll at your Polling Station. If your name is not on the Roll, you will not be able to vote.

Who might you find in a Polling Station?

3 officials:

- **Presiding Officer:**
The Presiding Officer (PO) is responsible of the overall management of the voting process ensuring the procedures are carefully followed before, during and after polling.
- **Polling clerk 1:**
Is responsible for the Identification of voters and issuing of ballot papers.
- **Polling clerk 2:**
Is responsible for inking voters.

Other people are allowed in the Polling Station during voting, but they must be accredited by the Vanuatu Electoral Office. They must not interfere with the process or see who voters are voting for. They include:

- Media;
- Candidate agents;
- Observers from local or international observer groups.

Candidate agents and observers are allowed to sit in a designated area to watch the process and ensure everything is being done correctly.

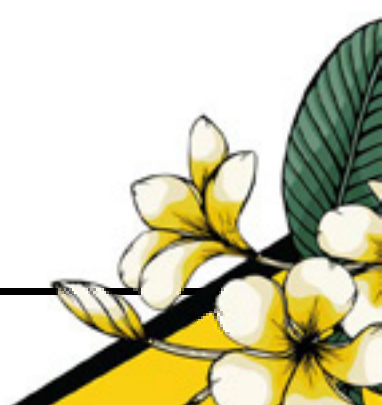
Task: Voting Steps - Election Day

Write the numbers 1 to 12 in your exercise books. Look at the voting steps below and then match the step with the correct number.

- Look at the ballot paper carefully find the person you want to vote for. You can find it by looking for their photo or their symbol.
- Give the Polling Clerk your left thumb and get it inked.
- Show the Polling Clerk that you have one ballot only.
- Put your ballot into the ballot box.
- Go to the Voting booth.
- The Polling Clerk gives you a ballot paper.
- Leave the Polling station.
- The Polling Clerk looks for your name on the Voter Roll.
- Take your National ID card back.
- Tick the name of the candidate you want to vote for.
- Show your National ID card to the Polling Clerk.
- When the Polling Clerk has found your name and has checked your identity, he or she will place a tick next to your name and number.

Voters must present their National ID Card to the polling clerk in order to cast their vote. If a person does not present his/ her National ID Card, he/she will not be able to vote. The polling clerk then checks the electoral roll to confirm that the voter's name is on the roll, and that the voter is at the right Polling Station. If a person's name is not found on the electoral roll, they cannot vote, irrespective of whether they have a valid ID Card. The polling clerk checks the details on the ID card to satisfy themselves that the individual corresponds to the information (age, gender etc.). If satisfied, the polling clerk places a tick at the left-hand margin of the roll against the voter's number.

The Vanuatu Electoral Office (VEO) has a policy of making the voting procedure for people with disabilities as easy as possible. Any voter with a physical disability may designate a person of their choice – who must be a registered voter.



Your vote is secret

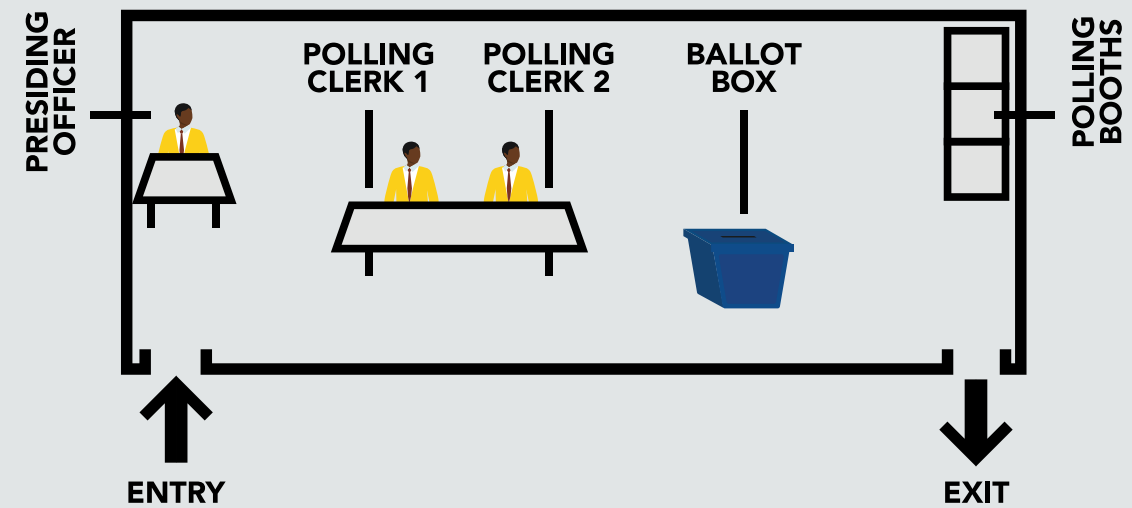
Nobody will know who you vote for and you are not obliged to tell anybody. Your vote is secret. If someone tries to threaten you or frighten you or force you to say who you are voting for, report them to the police.

Polling Station Layout

Regular Polling Station

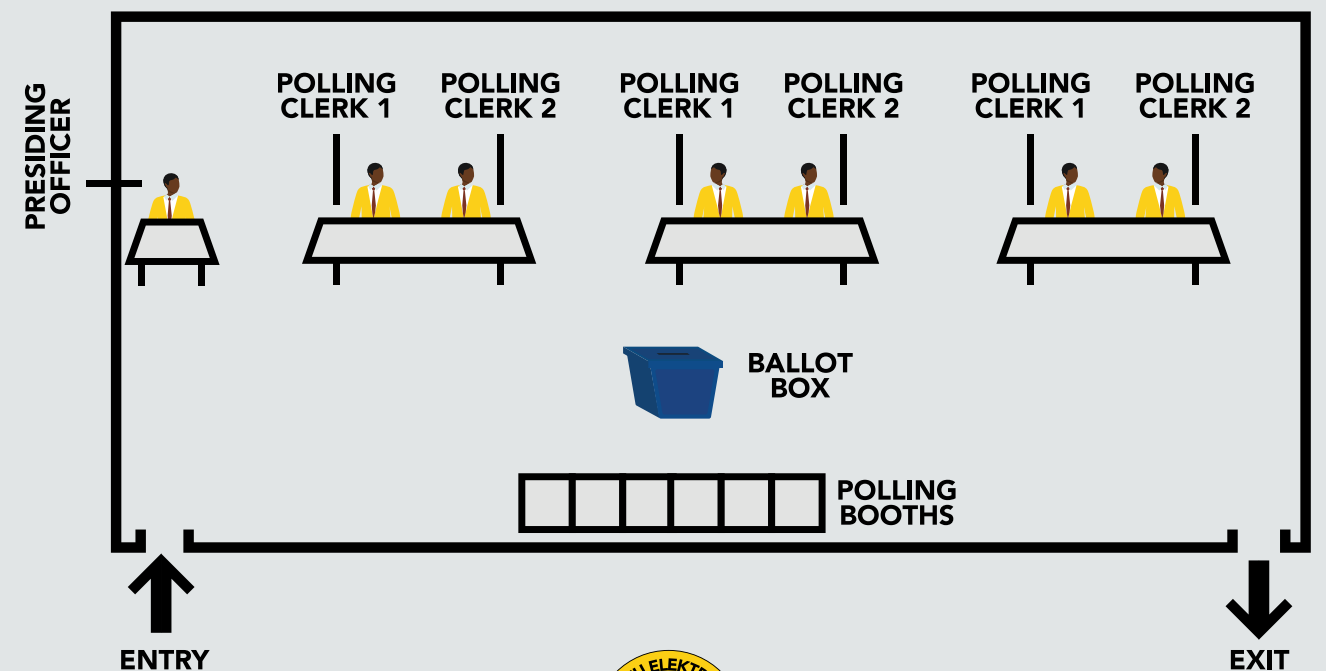
The Polling Station is managed by at least three officials:

- Presiding (returning) officer (PO)
- Two polling clerks (a pair of polling clerks make a checkpoint)



Mega Polling Station

In big ("mega") Polling Stations (mostly in urban centers), there may be several checkpoints to speed up the process, as well as a queue controller to assist with the flow of voters.





Lesson 13: Election offenses & the importance of voting

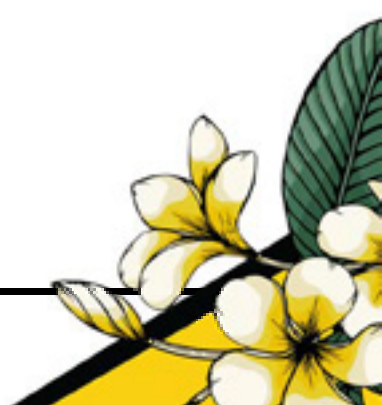
There are many laws, rules and regulations surrounding elections. These are important because we all want the election to be free, fair, transparent, trustworthy and peaceful. It is everyone's responsibility to obey the law and avoid doing anything illegal. Doing something wrong is called an offense and can mean you could be liable to a fine or even imprisonment.



Task: Right or Wrong?

Write the numbers 1 to 12 in a column in your exercise book. Look at the statements below and decide: right or wrong? Note your answer for each statement in your exercise book.

1. I voted in my Polling Station and ran to the other side of the island and voted again in my friend's Polling Station. I'm really happy because my vote is worth twice as much!
2. I can vote in any Polling Station in my district.
3. Pretending to be someone else and using their National ID Card to vote is a serious offense.
4. My vote is worth a lot: a candidate gave me 2000 Vatu to vote for him.
5. Treating is part of our culture. I can accept gifts of food, drink and other treats from a candidate, and promise to vote for them even if I don't. The vote is secret, they will never know!
6. Freedom of expression is my right. I can say what I want about a candidate, even if it's not true.
7. Preventing an electoral officer from doing their work will be punished, even if she or he is doing something wrong.
8. Destroying or stealing ballot papers will get me into serious trouble.
9. I can take a photo of my ballot paper and send it to my friends or my favourite candidate to show them I have voted.
10. Giving false information to the electoral authorities is lying and unacceptable.
11. The ballot box or and other election material can only be handled by election officials.
12. My sister looks a lot like me. I can take her ID card and vote in her place. It's all right because we are family.



What are the main electoral offenses?

1. Voting more than once.
2. Voting in a place that is not your assigned Polling Station.
3. Pretending to be someone else and voting in their place.
4. Bribery: taking money from a candidate and promising to vote for them.
5. Treating: accepting gifts of food, drink or anything else in exchange for voting for a particular candidate.
6. Making false statements about candidates.
7. Preventing an electoral officer from doing their work.
8. Destroying or stealing ballot papers.
9. Doing something that means voting is not secret anymore.
10. Giving false information to the electoral authorities.
11. Interfering with the ballot box or any other election material.



There are other offences that apply to candidates and rules about what they can and cannot do. During campaign time, they can hold rallies, make posters and leaflets and other things to persuade people to vote for them. If a candidate offers money or treats in exchange for a vote or tries to frighten or intimidate voters, this is an offence.

It is the right of any citizen to report any electoral offence by lodging a case through the normal courts, no later than 21 days from the date the alleged offence took place.

It is the right of any candidate or citizen to lodge an electoral petition challenging the results of elections. The electoral petitions must be presented within 21 days of the publication in the Official Gazette of the results of the election. Petitions are handled directly by the Supreme Court.

Why Vote?



Task: Class Debate

Should voting be compulsory?

Compulsory voting is born from a fundamental belief that participation is an essential, non-negotiable aspect of democracy — a civic duty (responsibility) and not just a right.

Most democratic governments consider voting in elections as a citizenship right. Some believe that participation in elections is also a citizen's civic responsibility. Some countries have made voting compulsory by law and go as far as to impose punishments like fines on people who do not vote. The degree to which compulsory voting is enforced varies from country to country.



Debate:

The FOR team argues that voting should be compulsory.
The AGAINST team will argue against it.

You do not need to personally agree with the statement to argue for it.

The Chairperson manages the process, inviting speakers to speak in turn, and checking the time. Each speaker has a maximum of 2 minutes.

The Chairperson checks the time carefully. They give a sign when a speaker has 10 seconds left. After 2 minutes, the speaker may finish their sentence then must stop.

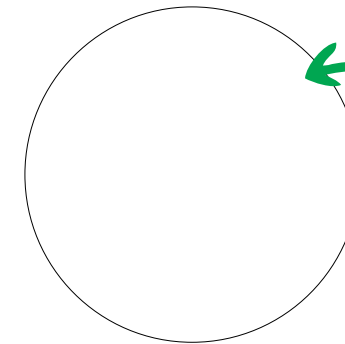
After both sides have spoken, both teams will have 2 minutes to prepare a rebuttal and summary.

Firstly, the AGAINST team presents their arguments and then FOR presents their 2-minute rebuttal and summary.

The debate is then finished.

Debate topic: Voting should be compulsory

Our Position:



Here are our reasons:

1.

.....

.....

.....

.....

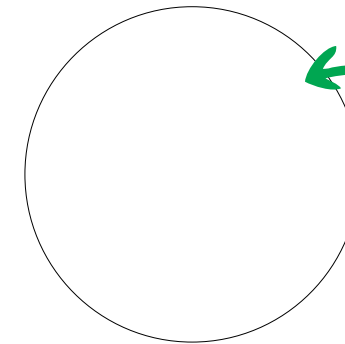
.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



2.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

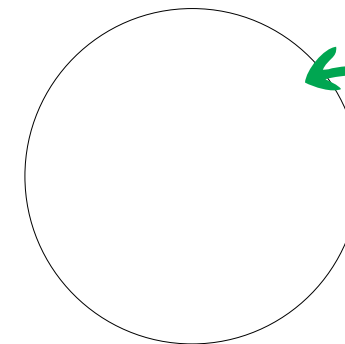
.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



3.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Evidence to back up our reasons:

Rebuttal:

They might argue that

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Arguments for both sides

FOR

- Voting is a necessary part of the duties of citizenship, just like jury duty, paying taxes, compulsory education.
- Parliament reflects more accurately the “will of the electorate.”
- Governments must consider all voters in policies and management.
- Candidates can concentrate their campaigning on issues, rather than encouraging people to vote.
- Gives greater legitimacy to the elected government.
- Candidates winning seats win most of the people’s votes.
- In countries with low turnout, candidates can win with a small % of the total vote.
- Low turnout raises questions about the legitimacy of the entire political system: “What right does an elected leader have to rule if most people didn’t vote for them?”
- In a democracy that is by and for the people, everyone must have their say.
- With compulsory voting, Australia has one of the highest civic participation in the world (95% turnout), compared with Tonga (67%) and United States of America (USA) (57%) in the US presidential election.
- Encourages greater participation in groups with low participation rates. In voluntary voting, poorer, and less educated people tend not to vote, moving politics toward the rich and educated. As they don’t vote politicians do not make policies for them, increasing their marginalisation.
- With compulsory voting, candidates must take notice and consider their needs.
- Compulsory voting increases people’s political education because they pay more attention to politics if they know they must vote.
- Compulsory voting does not force a choice. People can always put a spoiled ballot or blank ballot in the box. The voter isn’t forced to vote for anyone because voting is secret.
- Compulsory voting keeps the politics more responsive to the people. Candidates who lack money don’t need to spend money just to persuade voters to come out and vote.

AGAINST

- Citizens have the right to choose to vote or not.
- It is undemocratic to force people to vote and a violation of freedom.
- The democratic legitimacy of governments elected under compulsory voting can be put into question if people have been forced.
- Compulsory voting reduces the legitimacy of elected MPs as they win from the votes of uninterested and ill-informed people who vote just because they have to.
- It increases the number of “donkey votes” (votes for a random candidate by people who must vote by law but don’t think about the candidates they vote for).
- It may increase the number of invalid votes (ballot papers which are spoilt or not marked correctly).
- Voters in countries with compulsory voting seem to be no more politically educated (and are perhaps less so) than voters in voluntary voting countries (i.e. Australia vs. New Zealand).
- Compulsory voting forces people to vote for someone even if they do not like any of the candidates on offer.
- Voluntary voting does not necessarily produce bias to the wealthy or well educated. In many countries, poor and uneducated can be organised in large numbers and back candidates who support their concerns.
- Compulsory voting has made the political system unresponsive. If voting were made voluntary, it would shake up the political system. Parties and candidates would have to try harder and do more to convince people of the merits of their policies to get voters to the polls.
- It costs a lot of money to manage elections with the whole adult population voting (including the costs for managing the fines of non-voters).
- It is much cheaper to have voluntary voting.



