

Mathematics Level 7

Chapter 1 — Government and democracy

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

Attribution: Classbasics Pty Ltd, vwx.au

Curriculum codes refer to the *Victorian Curriculum F–10 Version 2.0*, published by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). Classbasics is not affiliated with the VCAA; the VCAA does not endorse this resource and makes no warranties regarding it.

Distribution note: this document may be distributed, and whole pages may be removed from it, provided only WHOLE pages are removed (never part of a page). This allows teachers to remove tests, exams and subtopics they do not want to issue.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content has been excluded as accuracy cannot be guaranteed, and it is better to be respectful than cover the entire curriculum inaccurately.

Significant effort has been made to ensure this content is legal. Please send any areas of concern to admin@vwx.au with appropriate document/legal references so errors can be verified and changes be made.

Contents

Section	Page
Who decides, and what matters	2
How communities decide: one person, or the whole group?	13
Local government: its services and how you use them	24

Who decides, and what matters

Victorian Curriculum 2.0 · Civics and Citizenship · Levels 3 and 4 · Knowledge and Understanding, Government and democracy · VC2HC4K01 — VC2HC4K01.E01, VC2HC4K01.E02 and VC2HC4K01.E03.

Theory

1. Someone is always deciding

Every day, someone decides something that matters to you. At home, someone decides what is on for dinner. At school, someone decides when lunch starts. In the streets around your school, someone decides how fast cars may go.

The person or group who decides is called the **decision-maker**. A decision-maker is the person, or the group of people, who makes a decision.

Different places have different decision-makers:

- At **home**, your parents or your family decide things for your family.
- At **school**, the principal and the teachers decide things for the school.
- In the **area where you live**, the **government** decides things for everyone.

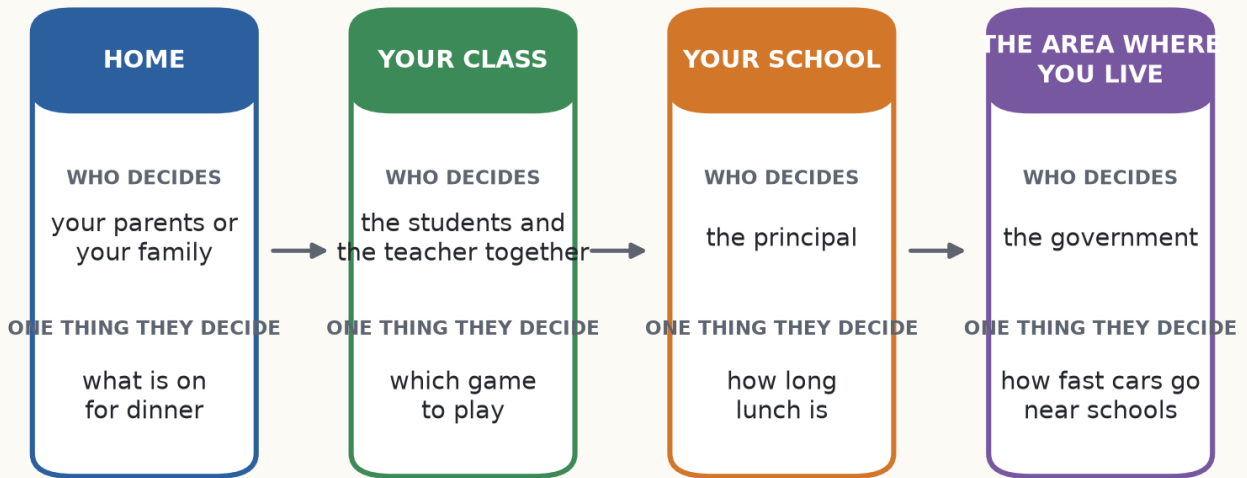
The **government** is the group whose job is to make decisions for a whole area and for all the people who live in that area.

Why do these people get to decide?

- Parents decide at home because they look after the family.
- The principal decides at school because running the school is their job.
- The government decides for an area because its job is to think about everyone who lives there — not just one family or one school.

Where decisions happen

Every place has a decision-maker — the person or group who decides



The places get bigger — from your family to everyone in the area

Where decisions happen: at home, in your class, at your school, and in the area where you live

Who decides — and why

Match each decision to its decision-maker

Decision	Who decides	Who is it for	Why them
What is on for dinner tonight	your parents or your family	your family	they look after the family
Which book the class reads next	the class, by a vote	that class	the book is for the students
How long lunch is	the principal	the whole school	running the school is their job
How fast cars go near schools	the government	everyone in the area	the government decides for the whole area

The decision-maker is the person or group whose job it is to look after that place and those people

A table of decisions, showing who makes each one, who it is for, and why that person decides

2. Laws are rules for everyone

The government makes **laws**. A **law** is a rule made by the government that everyone in the area must follow. A **rule** tells people what to do in one place or one group. Your class has rules. They are for your class only. A law is not just for one class or one school. It is for everyone. Section 2A looks more at how rules and laws are different.

Here are some real laws in Victoria that touch students, parents, teachers and schools.

- **Going to school.** In Victoria, every child from 6 to 17 years old must go to school — or learn at home instead. Parents must make sure their child goes to school every school day. Source: Victorian Government, ‘Attendance and missing school’ and ‘Home school your child’, retrieved 2026-08-26.
- **Helmets.** When you ride a bike or a scooter, you must wear a helmet. If you do not follow this rule, you can get a **fine**. A fine is money you have to pay because you did not follow a law. Source: Transport Victoria, ‘Bicycle helmets’, retrieved 2026-08-26.
- **Seat belts.** In a car or a bus with seat belts, everyone must wear one — grown-ups and children. The driver must make sure everyone has theirs on. Source: Transport Victoria, ‘Seat belts’, retrieved 2026-08-26.
- **Teachers.** Before a person can teach in a Victorian school, they must be on a list kept by a body called the Victorian Institute of Teaching. This body checks that the person can teach, and it works to keep children safe. Source: Victorian Government, ‘Get a teaching job’, and Victorian Institute of Teaching, ‘Home’, retrieved 2026-08-26.
- **Slow streets near schools.** The government decided that in many streets near schools, cars may go only 40 km/h. Drivers must slow down. This is a decision the government made for a particular area — the area around schools. Source: Transport Victoria, ‘Speed limits’, retrieved 2026-08-26.

Real laws in Victoria

A law is made by the government, and everyone must follow it

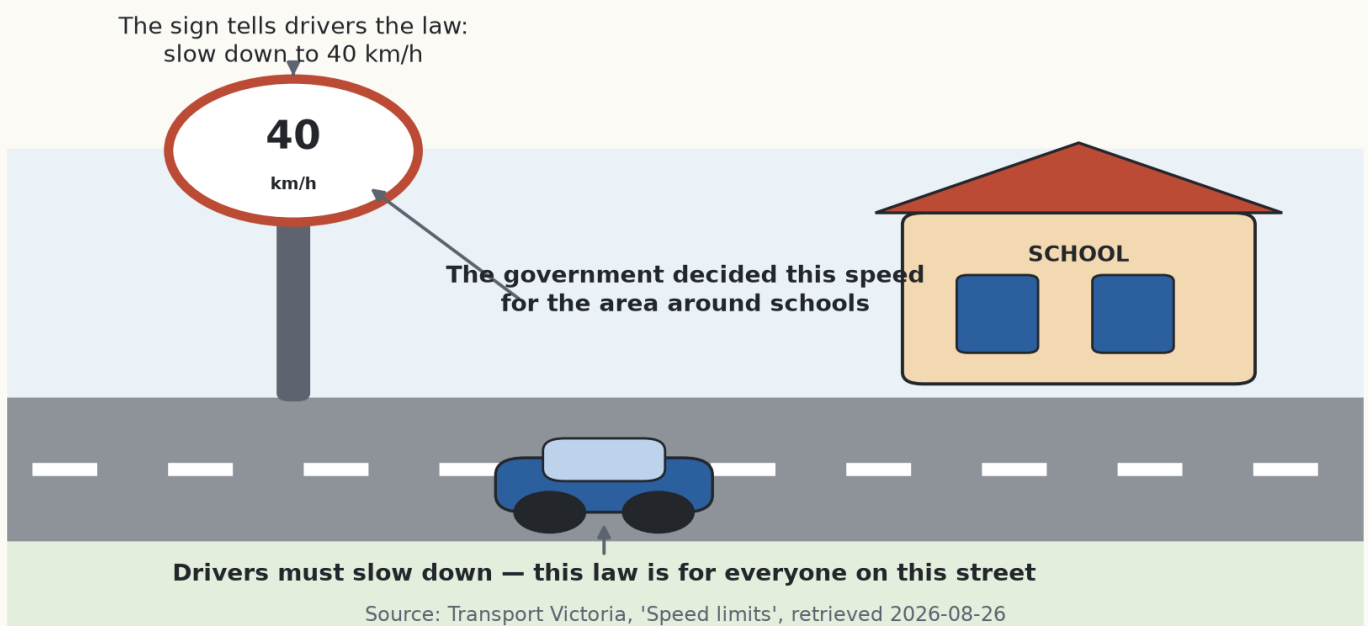
The law	Who is it for
Every child from 6 to 17 years old must go to school, or learn at home	children and parents
Children must go to school every school day	parents must make sure of it
Wear a helmet when you ride a bike or scooter	everyone who rides
Wear a seat belt in cars and buses with seat belts	everyone in the car or bus
Teachers must be on the list kept by the Victorian Institute of Teaching	teachers in Victorian schools
Cars may go only 40 km/h in streets near schools	every driver

Source: Victorian Government, Transport Victoria and Victorian Institute of Teaching, retrieved 2026-08-26

A table of real Victorian laws, showing who each law is for

A government decision for one area: the school zone

In Victoria, many streets near schools are 40 km/h zones



A 40 km/h school zone sign on a street near a school, showing a government decision for one area

3. Freedom, fairness and equality

Before we look at these three big words, one more word comes first.

Democracy is a way of deciding things where everyone gets a say. Something **democratic** belongs to a democracy, or works like one. The government in Australia is democratic: its decisions belong to all the people. Section 1B looks at how groups make decisions in democratic ways.

Every democracy stands on big ideas that people care about. These big ideas are called **values**. A value is something you think is important. Freedom, fairness and equality are key democratic values. The Victorian Curriculum uses these three words but does not give exact meanings, and people do not always use them in exactly the same way. In this book, we use them like this:

- **Freedom** means you can make your own choices, say what you think, and be who you are. At school, you are free to pick a book you like from the class library. You are free to say your idea in class.
- **Fairness** means being treated in a way that is right — with no favourites. Fair does not always mean exactly the same for everyone. Sometimes fair means giving extra help to someone who needs it.
- **Equality** means everyone counts the same. Everyone's say counts as much as anyone else's say. In a class vote, each student's vote counts once. No one's vote counts more than anyone else's.

Three key democratic values

How this book uses the words freedom, fairness and equality

FREEDOM	FAIRNESS	EQUALITY
WHAT IT MEANS HERE You can make your own choices, say what you think, and be who you are.	WHAT IT MEANS HERE You are treated in a way that is right — with no favourites.	WHAT IT MEANS HERE Everyone counts the same. Everyone's say counts as much as anyone else's.
AT SCHOOL, IT LOOKS LIKE You are free to pick a book you like from the class library.	AT SCHOOL, IT LOOKS LIKE The rules of a game are the same for both teams. No one gets extra turns.	AT SCHOOL, IT LOOKS LIKE In a class vote, each student's vote counts once. No one's vote counts more.
You meet this value at home, at school, and at the park	You meet this value at home, at school, and at the park	You meet this value at home, at school, and at the park

Three cards for freedom, fairness and equality, each with a school example

These values live in your own life — at home, at school, at the park, and in the teams and groups you belong to. When you choose something for yourself, that is freedom. When the rules of a game are the same for both teams, that is fairness. When every vote in a class vote counts once, that is equality.

One person deciding, or everyone deciding?

Look at the decision-makers above again. At home, one or two people decide for the family. In a class vote, the whole group decides together. Both ways happen. Each way has good points, and each way has hard points.

Two ways to decide

Each way has good points — and hard points

ONE PERSON DECIDES

Good points

- + It is fast.
- + The answer is clear.

Hard points

- Only one person's ideas are used.
- Others may not get a say.

Works well when a choice must happen now.

EVERYONE DECIDES TOGETHER

Good points

- + Everyone's ideas get heard.
- + Everyone's say counts.

Hard points

- It takes time to talk it out.
- It can be hard to agree.

Works well for big choices that touch everyone.

The best way to decide can depend on the decision

Two ways to decide: one person decides, or everyone in the group decides, with good points and hard points for each

In Section 1B you will look at how groups make decisions together, and why deciding together can take longer but can also be more fair.

Worked examples

Example 1 — with help

Find the decision-maker, and say why it is them.

Here are three situations. For each one, work out who decides, and why that person or group is the one who decides.

Situation	Who decides?	Why them?
Your family is choosing what to have for dinner.	Your parents or your family.	They look after your family at home. Home decisions belong to the family.
Your class wants to know if lunch can be five minutes longer.	The principal.	Running the school day is the principal's job. One class cannot decide for the whole school.
Cars are going too fast past the school gate.	The government.	The streets belong to the whole area. The government decides for everyone in the area.

Notice the pattern: the decision-maker is the person or group whose job it is to look after that place and those people.

Example 2 — with help

Law or not a law?

Use two questions to test each one: *Did the government make it?* and *Must everyone follow it?*

Is it a law?	Did the government make it?	Must everyone follow it?	Verdict
You must wear a helmet when you ride a bike.	Yes.	Yes — every bike rider.	Law.
You must walk quietly in the hallway.	No — your school made it.	Only people at that school.	School rule, not a law.
Everyone in a car must wear a seat belt.	Yes.	Yes — everyone in the car.	Law.
No ball games in the classroom.	No — your class or school made it.	Only in that classroom.	Rule, not a law.

A law is for everyone, and it comes from the government. A rule is for one place or one group.

Example 3 — on your own

Which value is it?

Read each situation. Say which value it shows — freedom, fairness or equality — and why.

1. *The teacher lets each student choose their own topic for a drawing.* This shows **freedom**: each student can make their own choice.
2. *In a board game, every player follows the same rules, and no one gets extra turns.* This shows **fairness**: the game is the same for everyone, with no favourites.
3. *The class votes on a book to read. Every student's vote counts once, including the quiet students and the loud students.* This shows **equality**: everyone's say counts the same.

Example 4 — on your own

Is it better if one person decides for the whole group?

Here is the strong side of each answer.

The strong case for one person deciding: One person deciding is fast. There is no long talk, and the answer is clear. When a choice must happen now — like when someone is hurt and needs help — one person deciding can be the best way.

The strong case for everyone deciding: Everyone deciding means every person's ideas get heard. The choice can be better, because many people see things one person does not. It is also more fair, because no one person gets all the power.

So which is better? A good answer is: **it depends on the decision.** For small, fast choices, one person deciding can work well. For big choices that touch everyone, deciding together is usually more fair. What matters is that the way of deciding fits the choice.

Practice questions

With help

Q1. Write the decision-maker for each place. Choose from: *the government, the principal, your parents or your family.*

- a) your home
- b) your school
- c) the area where you live

Q2. Name two decisions your family makes at home.

Q3. Finish the sentence: *My parents decide things at home because ...*

Q4. Copy and finish this table.

Decision	Who decides?	Who must follow it?
What time you go to bed on a school night		
The rules for the school pool		
Everyone in a car must wear a seat belt		

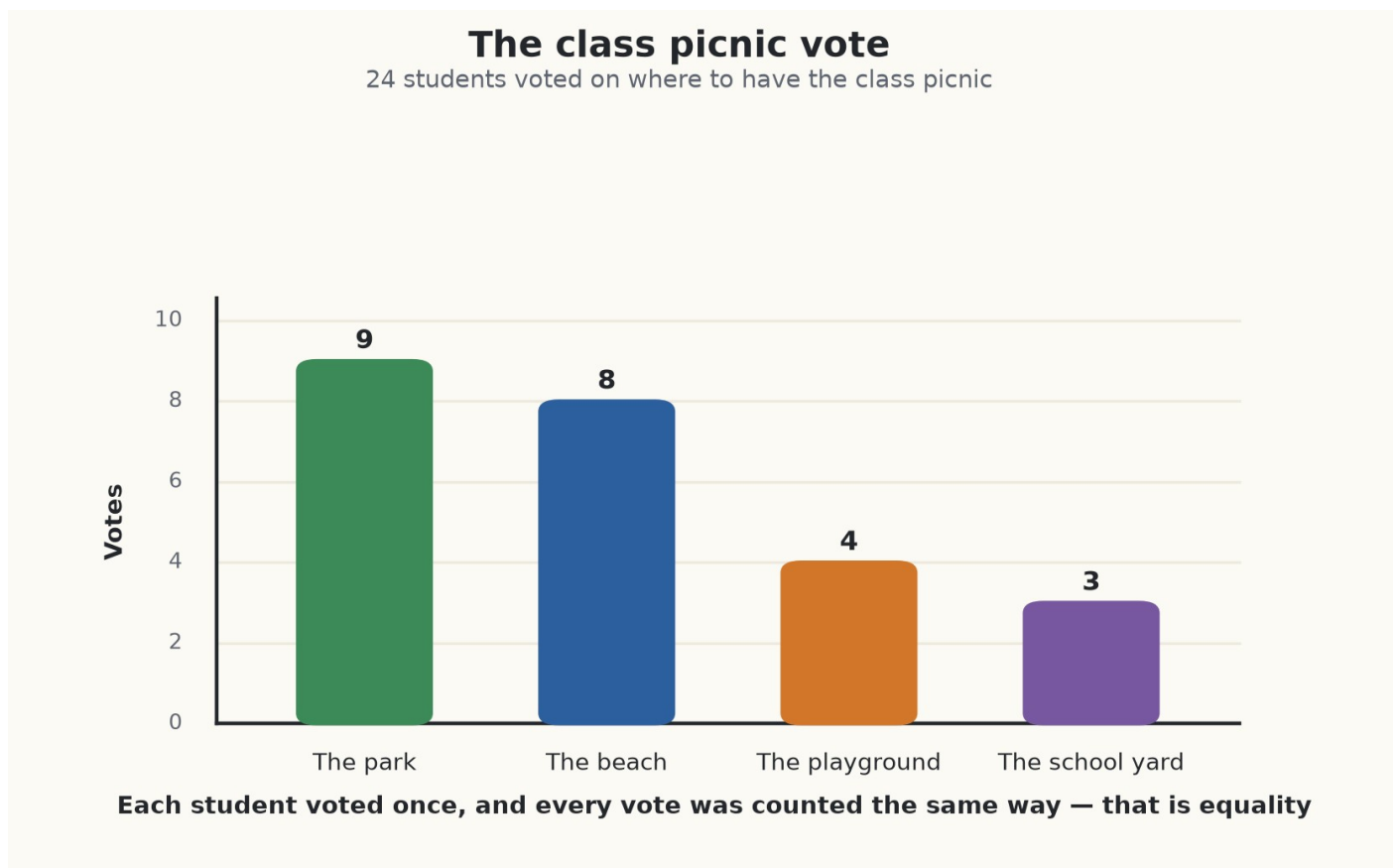
Q5. Law or rule? Write *law* or *rule* next to each one.

- a) Every child from 6 to 17 years old must go to school, or learn at home.
- b) Hats off in the classroom.
- c) When you ride a bike, you must wear a helmet.
- d) Line up at the door after lunch.

Q6. Finish the sentence: *In Victoria, children from ... to ... years old must go to school, or learn at home.*

Q7. Write one law you follow on your way to school. Say who made that law.

Q8. Look at the class vote in Figure 7.



A bar chart of the class picnic vote, showing how many students voted for each place

- a) How many students voted in all?
- b) Which place got the most votes?
- c) Did every student's vote count the same? How do you know?

On your own

Q9. The government — not the principal — decides how fast cars may go in the streets near school. Explain why. Use the words *whole area* and *everyone* in your answer.

Q10. *The government decides for a whole area.* Write one decision the government could make for the area where you live. Then say who that decision is for.

Q11. Write one example of each value from your own life.

- a) freedom — a time you made your own choice
- b) fairness — a time you were treated in a fair way, or saw fair treatment
- c) equality — a time everyone counted the same

Q12. Priya says, “Fair means everyone gets exactly the same.” Sam says, “Sometimes fair means giving extra help to someone who needs it.” What do you think? Use an example in your answer. (You may agree with Priya, with Sam, or with part of both. The mark is for your reasons, not for which side you pick.)

Q13. Read the model text in Figure 8. Now write two or three sentences of your own: *Who decides things in the area where you live, and what is one decision they make?*

Model text — who decides where I live?

An answer to Question 13, with a checklist

A student's answer

Where I live, the government makes decisions for our whole area. It decided that cars may go only 40 km/h in the streets near our school, to keep people safe. That law is for every driver — parents, teachers and visitors all must follow it.

WHAT MAKES IT GOOD

- ☒ It names who the decision-maker is
- ☒ It gives one real decision
- ☒ It says who the decision is for

Use the checklist when you write your own answer

A model text answer about who decides where you live, with a checklist of what makes it good

Q14. Some people think it is best when one person decides for the group. Others think it is best when the whole group decides together.

- a) Write one good reason for one person deciding.
- b) Write one good reason for the whole group deciding.
- c) Which way do you think is better for choosing a class game — and why?

Answers

Q1. a) your parents or your family · b) the principal · c) the government.

Q2. Answers will vary. Example: what is on for dinner; what time lights go out.

Q3. ... they look after our family.

Q4. Row 1: your parents or your family — you. Row 2: the principal (or the school) — everyone at the school. Row 3: the government — everyone in a car.

Q5. a) law · b) rule · c) law · d) rule.

Q6. 6 to 17.

Q7. Answers will vary. Example: I wear a helmet when I ride my bike. The government made that law.

Q8. a) 24 students. b) The park. c) Yes — each student voted once, and every vote was counted in the same way.

Q9. See the model answer below.

Q10. See the model answer below.

Q11. See the model answer below.

Q12. See the model answer below.

Q13. See the model answer below.

Q14. See the model answer below.

Model answers

Q9. The streets near school are not just for one school or one family. They are for the whole area, and everyone uses them — drivers, parents, teachers and students. The government is the decision-maker for the whole area, so it is the government that decides the speed. The principal's job is the school, not the streets.

Q10. The government could decide to plant more trees along the main street. This decision is for everyone who lives in or visits the area. (Any decision about a shared place is fine, as long as it says who it is for.)

Q11. One model answer:

- a) Freedom: at the library, I chose a book about sharks all by myself.
- b) Fairness: in our relay race, every team ran the same distance, so no team had an easier turn.
- c) Equality: when our class voted on the name of our class mascot, every student got one vote — even the teacher voted just once.

Q12. One model answer: I agree more with Sam. Fair does not always mean exactly the same. If a student cannot see the board from the back, moving them to the front is fair, even though not everyone moves. Everyone gets what they need. (A good answer can also start from Priya's side — for example, in a race, fairness means everyone starts at the same line — as long as it gives a real example and a reason.)

Q13. Model text (the one in Figure 8): *Where I live, the government makes decisions for our whole area. It decided that cars may go only 40 km/h in the streets near our school, to keep people safe. That law is for every driver — parents, teachers and visitors all must follow it.* Your own two or three sentences should name the government as the decision-maker and give one real decision.

Q14. a) One person deciding is fast, and the answer is clear. b) The whole group deciding means everyone's ideas get heard, and everyone's say counts. c) For choosing a class game, the whole group deciding is better, because the game is for everyone. A class vote lets every student's say count the same. (Any answer is fine if it gives one real reason for each side and a clear reason for part c.)

How communities decide: one person, or the whole group?

Victorian Curriculum 2.0 · Civics and Citizenship · Levels 3 and 4 · Knowledge and Understanding, Government and democracy · VC2HC4K02 — VC2HC4K02.E01, VC2HC4K02.E02 and VC2HC4K02.E03.

Theory

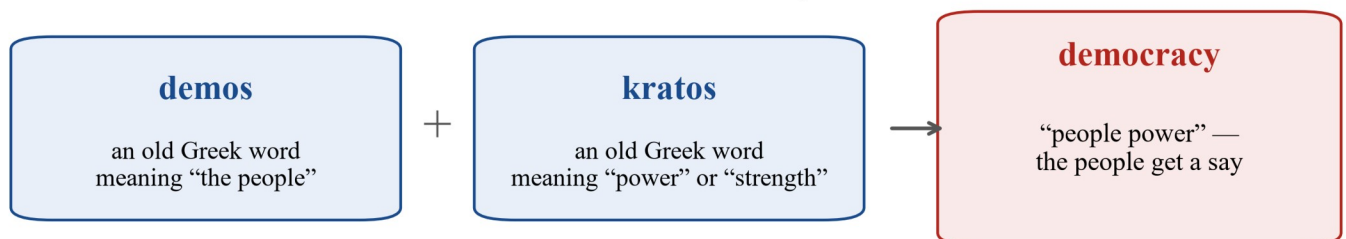
1. What does it mean to decide democratically?

Section 1A looked at *who* decides things — at home, at school, and in the area where you live. This section looks at *how* groups decide, and *why* they decide that way.

Democracy is a way of deciding things where everyone gets a say. Something **democratic** belongs to a democracy, or works like one. When your class decides something together, that is democratic. When one person decides for everyone without asking anyone, that is not democratic.

The word **democracy** is very old. It comes from two Greek words: *demos*, which means “the people”, and *kratos*, which means “power” or “strength”. Put them together and democracy means “people power” — the people get a say. Source: Wikipedia, ‘Democracy’, retrieved 2026-08-26.

Where does the word “democracy” come from?



The word is very old. It was first used about 2,500 years ago in Greece.

*Two old Greek words, **demos** meaning the people and **kratos** meaning power, joining to make the word democracy*

Australia is a democracy. So the big way of deciding in this country is: the people get a say. This section starts close to home — in your class, your family and your community — and then looks at the same idea in whole countries.

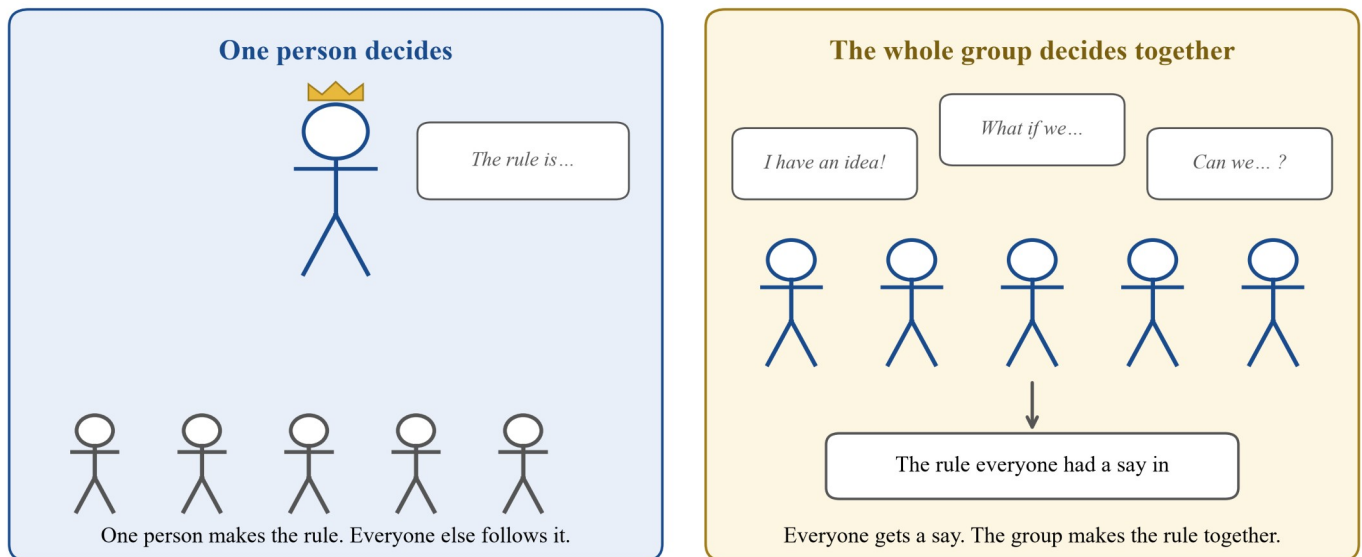
2. One person decides, or the whole group?

There are two simple ways a group can decide.

Way 1: One person decides. The teacher asks one student to write the rules for the classroom. That one student writes the rules alone, and the rest of the class follows them.

Way 2: The whole group decides. Every student in the class can share an idea. The class talks about the ideas, and then the class decides the rules together. Everyone had a say.

Both ways happen in real life. Each way has good points, and each way has hard points.



Two ways a group can decide: one person makes the rule for everyone, or the whole group shares ideas and makes the rule together

Both ways of deciding can work		
	One person decides	The whole group decides together
What is good about it	• It is quick. • It is clear who decides.	• More ideas to pick from. • It feels more fair. • More people follow the rule.
What is hard about it	• Only one person's ideas are used. • Others can feel it is unfair.	• It takes longer. • Not everyone gets the idea they wanted.

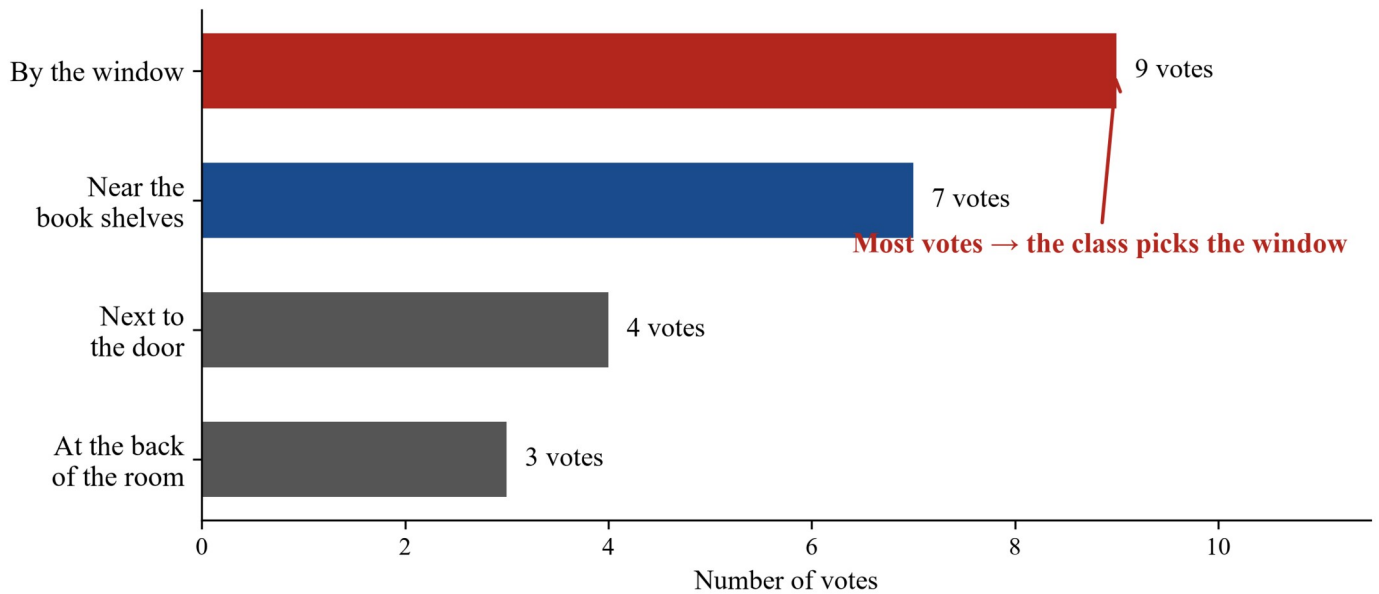
A table of what is good and what is hard about one person deciding, and about the whole group deciding together

3. Voting: counting everyone's say

One common way for a group to decide together is to **vote**. To vote is to show your choice. Each person picks one option. Then the group counts all the choices. The option with the most votes becomes the group's choice.

Here is a class vote. The class needs to decide where to put the new reading corner. The teacher writes four options on the board. Each student picks one. The class counts the votes.

A class vote: Where should we put the new reading corner?



23 students voted. Each student picked one option.

A bar chart of a class vote for where to put the new reading corner, showing how many students voted for each option

Two things matter about a vote.

- **Every vote counts once.** Loud or quiet, each student gets one vote. Everyone counts the same — one of the values in Section 1A.
- **Everyone follows the decision,** even if they voted for a different option. That is what makes it the *group's* decision, not just the winner's.

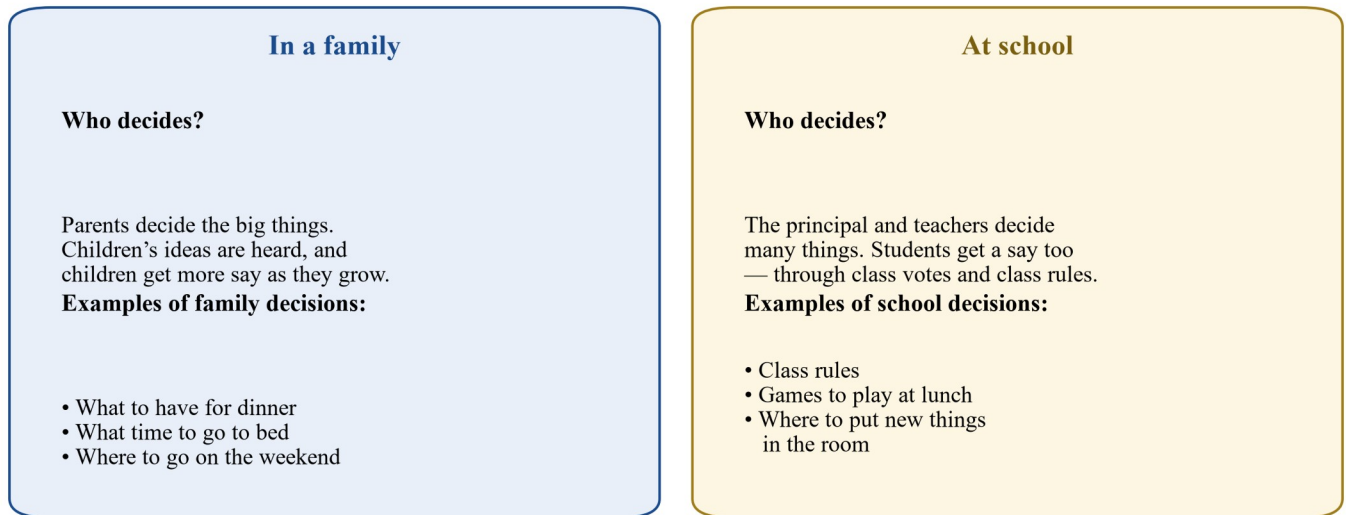
4. Families and schools decide in different ways

Your family and your school are both groups, and both make rules. But the people in the groups are different, so they decide in different ways.

In a **family**, the parents decide the big things, like where the family lives and what time you go to bed. Children's ideas are heard too, and children get more say as they grow.

At **school**, the principal and the teachers decide many things, like the school day and the school rules. But students get a say too — through class votes, class rules and student leaders.

Two groups, two ways of deciding



Both are groups. Both make rules. The people in the groups are different, so they decide in different ways.

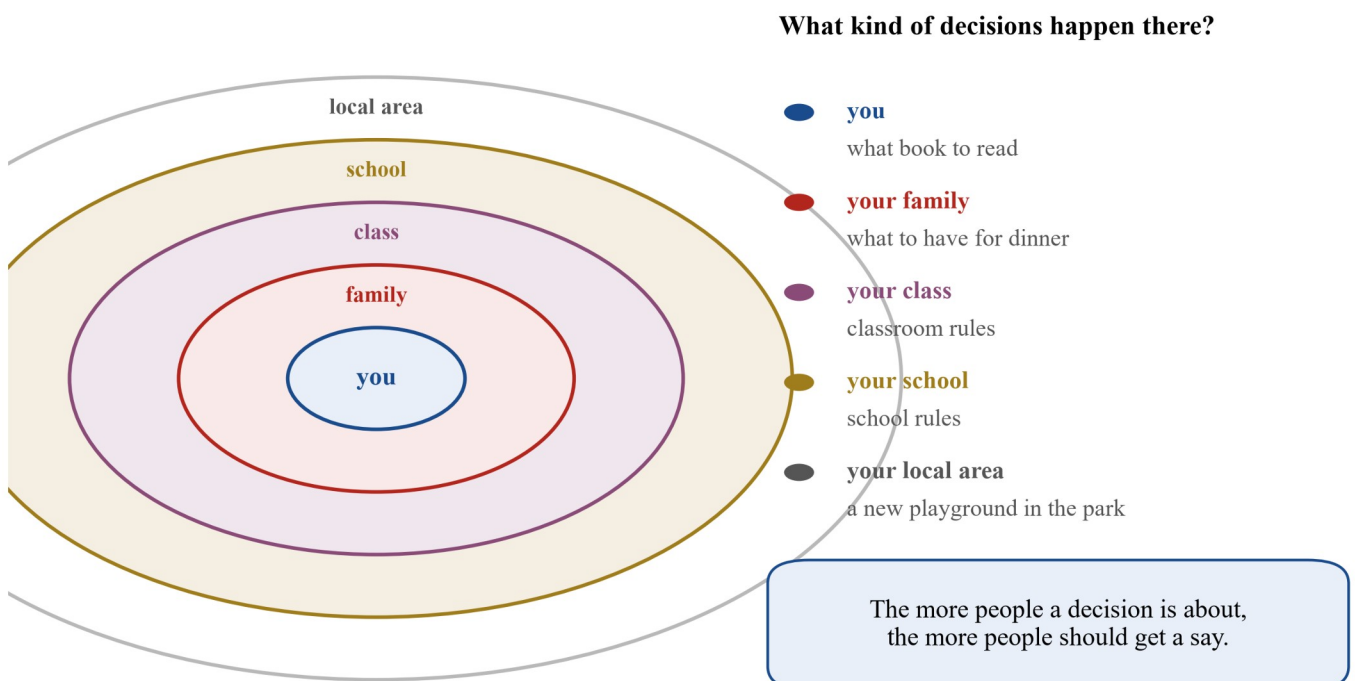
Two cards comparing decisions in a family with decisions at school, showing who decides and examples of each

Think about one decision at home and one at school. Who decided each one? Did anyone else get a say?

5. Decisions in your community

A **community** is a group of people who share something. Your family is a community. Your class is a community. Your school is a community. So are the teams and clubs you belong to, and the area where you live.

Decisions in your circles of community



Circles of community from you, to your family, class, school and local area, with an example decision for each circle

Here is a good rule to remember: **the more people a decision is about, the more people should get a say.**

- What book *you* read is your decision.
- What your family has for dinner is a family decision.
- The rules of your classroom are a class decision.

- A new playground in the park is a decision for the whole area.

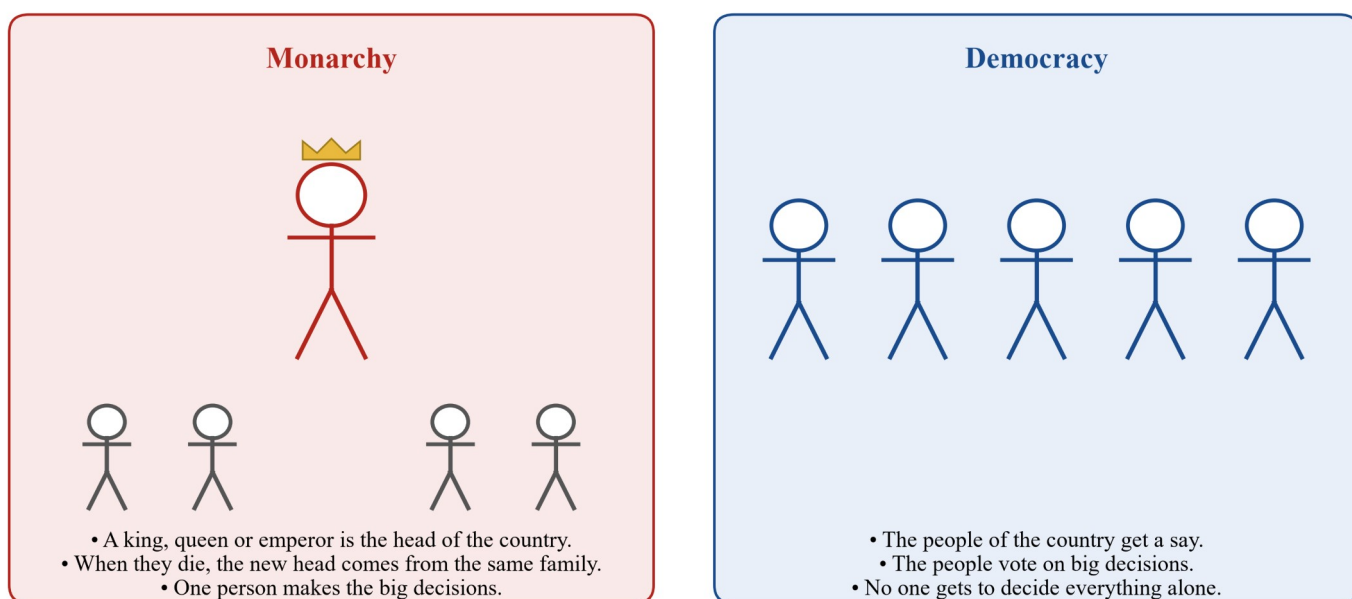
Section 1C looks at the group that makes decisions for the area where you live — **local government**, the group whose job is to decide things for your part of the city or town.

6. A true story: from kings to people power

The way countries decide things has changed over time.

A long time ago, most countries had one person in charge: a king, a queen or an emperor. This way of running a country is called a **monarchy**. A monarchy is a country with a king, queen or emperor at its head. In most monarchies, when the king or queen dies, the new head comes from the same family. In a monarchy, one person makes the big decisions.

Over time, in many countries, the people said: *we want a say too*. Bit by bit, countries moved from one person deciding, to the people getting a say.



Two panels: a monarchy, where one person is the head of the country, and a democracy, where the people get a say

Here are four true stories.

France. Long ago, kings ruled France. In 1789, the people of France said they wanted change. From 1792, France had no more kings. Today, the people of France get a say in how their country is run. The system France uses now started in 1958. Source: Wikipedia, 'French Fifth Republic', retrieved 2026-08-26.

The United States of America. Long ago, America was ruled from far away by the king of Britain. In 1776, the people there said: *we will run our own country*. The new country had no king. Its first big set of rules was written in 1787 and started in 1789. The people pick a leader called the president. Source: Wikipedia, 'George III', and Wikipedia, 'United States Constitution', retrieved 2026-08-26.

The United Kingdom. Some countries are a mix. The United Kingdom still has a king — King Charles III, who became king in 2022. But the king does not decide alone. A group picked by the people — called Parliament — makes the laws. Source: Wikipedia, 'Charles III', and Wikipedia, 'Constitutional monarchy', retrieved 2026-08-26.

Japan. Japan is a mix too. Japan still has an emperor — Emperor Naruhito, who became emperor in 2019. The emperor is the symbol of the country, but he does not decide alone. A group picked by the people — called the National Diet — makes the laws. Source: Wikipedia, 'Emperor of Japan', and Wikipedia, 'Constitutional monarchy', retrieved 2026-08-26.

From kings to people power: four true stories

France

CHANGED

- Long ago, kings ruled France.
- In 1789, the people said they wanted change. From 1792, no more kings.
- Today, the people get a say. The system France uses now started in 1958.

United States of America

CHANGED

- Long ago, America was ruled from far away by the king of Britain.
- In 1776, the people said: we will run our own country. The new country had no king.
- Its first rules were written in 1787 and started in 1789. The people pick a leader called the president.

United Kingdom

A MIX

- The United Kingdom still has a king — King Charles III, king since 2022.
- The king is the head of the country, but he does not decide alone.
- A group picked by the people — called Parliament — makes the laws.

Japan

A MIX

- Japan still has an emperor — Emperor Naruhito, emperor since 2019.
- The emperor is the symbol of the country, but he does not decide alone.
- A group picked by the people — called the National Diet — makes the laws.

Four story cards for France, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Japan, showing how each country's way of deciding changed over time

France and America changed from a king's rule to people getting a say. The United Kingdom and Japan kept a king or an emperor — but the people get a say too.

7. Why decide democratically?

Why do so many groups — classes, clubs, teams and countries — decide things the democratic way? Here are the big reasons.

- **More ideas.** Many people see things one person does not. More ideas can mean a better choice.
- **It is more fair.** Every person counts the same. No one gets all the power.
- **People follow the decision better.** If you had a say, you are more ready to follow the rule — even if the answer was not your first pick.
- **People feel they belong.** When your voice is heard, you feel part of the group.

But here is the honest side too. Deciding together takes time. Everyone has to get a turn, and everyone has to listen. Sometimes one person deciding is the right way — when the choice must happen now, when the choice is small, or when it is that person's job to decide. What matters is that the way of deciding fits the decision.

8. How a group decides together: five steps

When a group wants to decide together, these five steps help.

How a group can make a decision together



Five steps for a group to make a decision together: name it, share ideas, listen, decide, and have a go

In Section 3D, your class will do this for real. You will work together on a decision for your own classroom, and you will keep going until you find an answer everyone can say yes to.

Worked examples

Example 1 — with help

How did the class decide?

Look at the class vote in Section 3 above, where the class decided where to put the new reading corner. Answer the questions about it.

Question	Answer
What was the decision?	Where to put the new reading corner.
How did everyone get a say?	Each student voted for one option. Every vote counted once.
What were the votes?	Window 9, book shelves 7, door 4, back of the room 3. 23 students voted in all.
What was decided, and why?	The window, because it got the most votes.
Was it democratic?	Yes — every student had one say, and the whole class follows the choice.

Notice the pattern: the decision was made *by the group*, not by one person, and everyone's say counted the same.

Example 2 — with help

A family decides the weekend.

A family of four wants to decide what to do on Saturday. Each person names one idea, and the family talks about them.

Person	Idea	What others liked about it
Mum	Walk in the park	Everyone likes the park, and it costs nothing.
Dad	Visit the museum	Fun, but it is far and the day is short.
Older sister	Play football at the park	Good — and it can happen at the park too.

Person	Idea	What others liked about it
Little brother	Stay home and play games	Nice, but everyone wants to go out this time.

The family looks for an idea everyone can say yes to. The park walk wins — and they take the football too. Two ideas became one plan. This is a family deciding together: everyone names an idea, everyone listens, and the group finds one answer they can all live with.

Example 3 — on your own

The team's end-of-season party.

A sports team has 12 players. The season is over, and the team wants a party. The captain could just pick a day and a place alone — or the team could decide together.

Write a fair way for the team to decide. Use the five steps from Section 8. In your answer, say:

1. How will every player get a say?
2. How will the team count or compare the ideas?
3. What will happen if a player's idea is not picked?

Practice questions

With help

Q1. Finish the sentence: *Democracy means the people get a ...*

Q2. The word *democracy* comes from two old Greek words. What does *demos* mean? What does *kratos* mean?

Q3. Finish the sentence: *To vote is to show your ...*

Q4. Copy and finish this table about the two ways of deciding.

Way of deciding	One good point	One hard point
One person decides		
The whole group decides together		

Q5. Name one decision a family makes at home, and one decision a school makes.

Q6. True or false? *In a monarchy, the people vote on all the big decisions.* If it is false, say who decides in a monarchy.

Q7. Look at the class vote in Section 3. a) How many students voted in all? b) Which option got the most votes? c) How many votes did the door get?

Q8. Match each country to its story. Write *France, the United States of America, the United Kingdom* or *Japan* next to each one.

- Still has an emperor, but a group picked by the people makes the laws.
- Changed from kings' rule; had no more kings from 1792.
- Was ruled from far away by the king of Britain, then started its own country.
- Still has a king, but a group called Parliament makes the laws.

On your own

Q9. Your class must pick a new game to play at lunch. There are two ways to decide: the teacher picks the game, or the class votes.

- a) Write one good point and one hard point for the teacher picking.
- b) Write one good point and one hard point for the class voting.
- c) Which way would you pick, and why?

Q10. Sam says, “Deciding together takes too long. One person should always decide.” Priya says, “Everyone should get a say, even if it takes time.” What do you think? Use an example in your answer. (You may agree with Sam, with Priya, or with part of both. The mark is for your reasons, not for which side you pick.)

Q11. France and America both changed from a king’s rule. What happened in France in 1789? What happened in America in 1776? What is the same about the two stories?

Q12. The United Kingdom and Japan are called “a mix”. What do they both still have? What do they both *not* let that person do?

Q13. Think of a decision in one of your communities — your class, your team, your club or your family. What is the decision, and who should get a say in it? Use this idea in your answer: *the more people a decision is about, the more people should get a say.*

Q14. Write two or three sentences answering this question: *Why is it good for a class to make its rules together, instead of letting one student make them alone?*

Answers

Q1. ... a say.

Q2. *Demos* means “the people”. *Kratos* means “power” or “strength”.

Q3. ... choice.

Q4. See the model answer below.

Q5. Answers will vary. Example: a family decides what to have for dinner; a school decides the school rules.

Q6. False. In a monarchy, one person — the king, queen or emperor — makes the big decisions.

Q7. a) 23 students. b) By the window. c) 4 votes.

Q8. a) Japan · b) France · c) the United States of America · d) the United Kingdom.

Q9. See the model answer below.

Q10. See the model answer below.

Q11. See the model answer below.

Q12. See the model answer below.

Q13. See the model answer below.

Q14. See the model answer below.

Model answers

Q4. One person decides — good point: it is quick; hard point: only one person’s ideas are used. The whole group decides together — good point: everyone gets a say, so it is more fair; hard point: it takes longer. (Any true good point and hard point are fine.)

Q9. a) The teacher picking is quick, and the teacher knows what games are safe. The hard part: no student gets a say, so some students may not like the game. b) The class voting gives every student a say, and more ideas are shared. The hard part: it takes longer, and not everyone’s pick wins. c) One model answer: the class voting, because the game is for everyone, so everyone should get a say. (Any answer is fine if it gives real points for both ways and a clear reason for part c.)

Q10. One model answer: I agree more with Priya, but not for every decision. When a decision is about everyone — like our class rules — everyone should get a say, because everyone has to follow the rules. That is more fair. But Sam has a point too: if a choice must happen right now, like what to do when someone is hurt, waiting for everyone’s say is not the best way. So the way of deciding should fit the decision. (A good answer can also start from Sam’s side, as long as it gives a real example and a reason, and it is fair to the other side too.)

Q11. In 1789, the people of France said they wanted change, and from 1792 France had no more kings. In 1776, the people in America said they would run their own country, with no king. The same thing is in both stories: the people said they wanted a say, and their country stopped being ruled by one person.

Q12. They both still have a king or an emperor as the head of the country. But they do not let the king or emperor decide alone — a group picked by the people makes the laws. (For the United Kingdom, that group is Parliament. For Japan, it is the National Diet.)

Q13. One model answer: My football team needs to pick the day for training. Every player should get a say, because the decision is about all of us — we all have to come. If only the captain picked a day, some players might not be able to come at all. The more people a decision is about, the more people should get a say. (Any real community and decision are fine, as long as the answer says who should get a say and why.)

Q14. One model answer: When the class makes the rules together, every student gets a say, and more ideas are shared. Students are more ready to follow rules they helped to make. If one student made all the rules alone, the rest of the class might feel it is unfair. (Any two or three sentences that give real reasons are fine.)

Local government: its services and how you use them

Civics and Citizenship 4 · Chapter 1 — Government and democracy · Section 1C

Big idea

Look around your town. The bins get picked up. The park has swings. The library has your favourite books. Someone looks after all of that. That someone is your **local government**.

In this section we ask three questions:

1. What is local government, and how is it chosen?
 2. What does it do?
 3. How do people like you use its services and have a say about them?
-

1 · What is local government?

A **community** is all the people who share one area — the people who live, work and play in the same place. A **local government** is the group that makes decisions for one local area, like your town or city. In Victoria, the law that sets the rules for local government is the **Local Government Act 2020** (Vic).

The people who do the deciding are called **councillors**. The whole group of councillors is called the **council**. A council also has workers — people with jobs like picking up bins, running the library, and fixing the park — to do the day-to-day work.

Local councils in Victoria

79

local councils
in Victoria

One example: City of Greater Geelong

the area is split into 11 wards
voters chose 11 councillors
each councillor serves a four-year term

Some councils are called cities. Some are called shires. Each one makes decisions for its own area.

Source: Victorian Electoral Commission, vec.vic.gov.au; City of Greater Geelong, geelongcity.vic.gov.au (checked 26 August 2026)

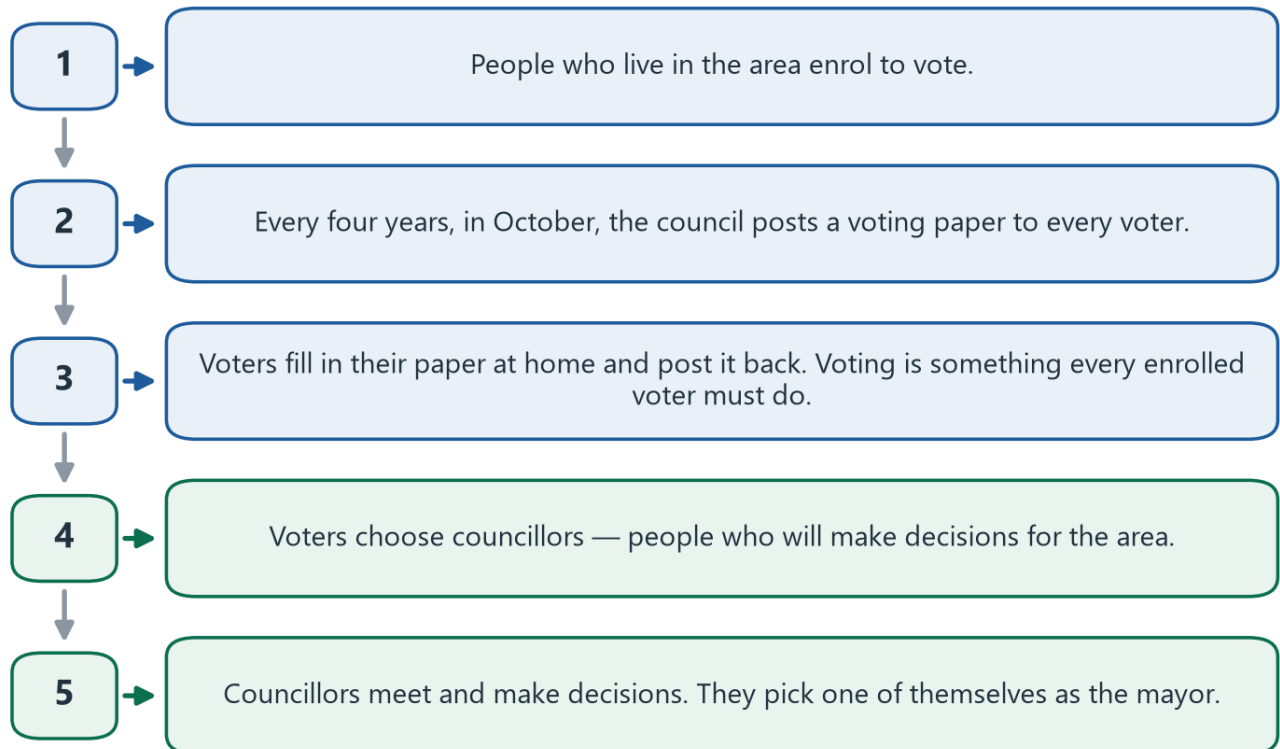
Fact panel showing that Victoria has 79 local councils, and that the City of Greater Geelong is split into 11 wards with 11 councillors.

Victoria has 79 local councils. Some are big cities. Some are small country areas, called **shires**. Each one looks after its own area. Bigger areas are split into **wards** — smaller parts of the area — so each part has its own councillors.

2 · How is local government chosen?

Councillors are not born into the job, and they do not just take it. People choose them. Here is how it works.

How is local government chosen?



Source: Victorian Electoral Commission, vec.vic.gov.au; City of Greater Geelong, geelongcity.vic.gov.au (checked 26 August 2026)

Flow diagram of how a local council is chosen: people enrol to vote, voting papers come by post every four years in October, voters fill them in and post them back, voters choose councillors, and the councillors choose a mayor.

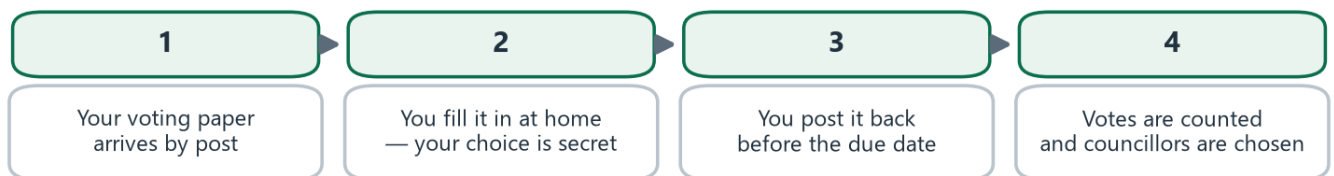
In Victoria, council elections happen every four years, in October. An **election** is the time when voters choose who will be on the council. The Victorian Electoral Commission — an office that runs elections in Victoria — posts a voting paper to every voter.

Who votes, and how?

Most voters are people who live in the area and are enrolled to vote.

People who own or use property in the area can also enrol to vote in council elections.

All voting in council elections is by post. There is no voting booth to go to.



Source: Victorian Electoral Commission, vec.vic.gov.au (checked 26 August 2026)

Panel showing who can vote in a council election and the four steps of voting by post.

Most voters are people who live in the area and are **enrolled** — their name is on the voters' list. People who own or use property in the area can also enrol. In Victoria, every enrolled voter must vote. Voting is not a maybe.

The people who get the most votes become councillors. Then the councillors choose one of themselves to be the **mayor**. The mayor leads the council and speaks for it at special times, like opening a new library.

Think: This is the same big idea as Section 1B — the whole group deciding, not just one person — grown up to a whole town: the area's voters choose the people who decide.

3 · What does local government do?

A **service** is something the council gives or runs for everyone in the area to use. The table below shows the main services, with real examples from one real council — the City of Greater Geelong.

What does local government do?

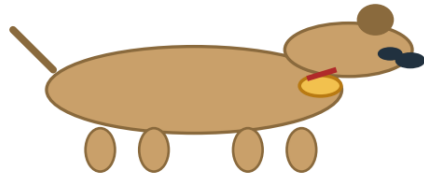
Service	What it is	A real example (Geelong)
Libraries	Books to borrow, story times, computers, homework help	The council's libraries around the city
Parks	Parks, gardens, playgrounds, sports grounds	Parks and sports grounds all over the area
Pools and sport places	Swimming pools, sports halls, stadiums	Seven council pools and aquatic centres, and Geelong Arena
Health services	Nurses and support for babies and young children (maternal and child health)	The council's Maternal and Child Health service
Environment and waste	Rubbish and recycling bins, keeping streets and reserves clean and healthy	Bin days for every house; the Resource Recovery Centre
Cultural events	Festivals and events that bring people together	The council's events calendar — art nights and community days
Arts	Galleries, museums, arts centres	Bellarine Arts Centre and the National Wool Museum
Pet management	The council's pet list and tags, rangers who help lost pets	Every cat and dog must be on the pet list from 3 months old

Service list from VC2HC4K03.E02; examples from City of Greater Geelong, geelongcity.vic.gov.au (checked 26 August 2026)

Table of eight council services — libraries, parks, pools and sport places, health services, environment and waste, cultural events, arts, and pet management — each with what it is and a real example from Geelong.

Look again at the last row. **Pet management** is a council job too. Rangers are council workers who help with pets and keep parks safe.

Pets and your council



a council tag

Every cat and dog must be on the council's pet list once it is 3 months old.

The pet list starts a new year on 10 April. Owners update their pet's place on the list each year.

The tag on the collar shows the pet is on the list. If the pet gets lost, the tag helps it get home.

Rangers are council workers who help with pets and keep parks safe.

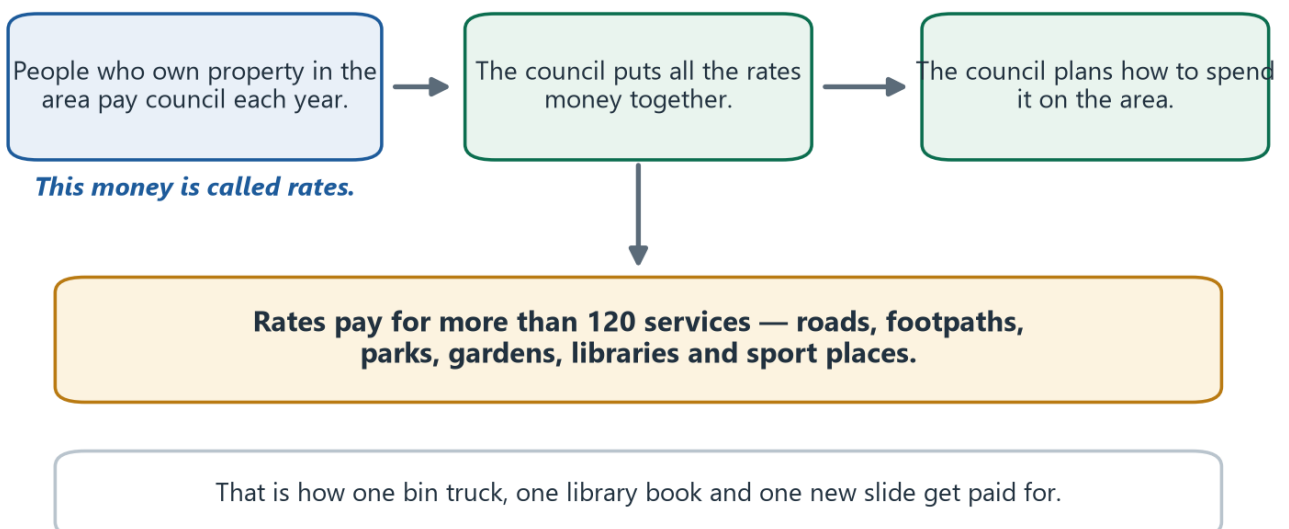
Source: City of Greater Geelong, geelongcity.vic.gov.au (checked 26 August 2026)

A dog with a council tag, beside facts about the pet list: every cat and dog must be on it from 3 months old, and the tag helps lost pets get home.

4 · Where does the money come from?

All of these services cost money. Most of it comes from **rates**. Rates are the money that people who own property — like a house or a shop — pay to the council each year. The council puts all the rates money together and plans how to spend it on the area.

Where does council money come from?



Source: City of Greater Geelong, geelongcity.vic.gov.au (checked 26 August 2026)

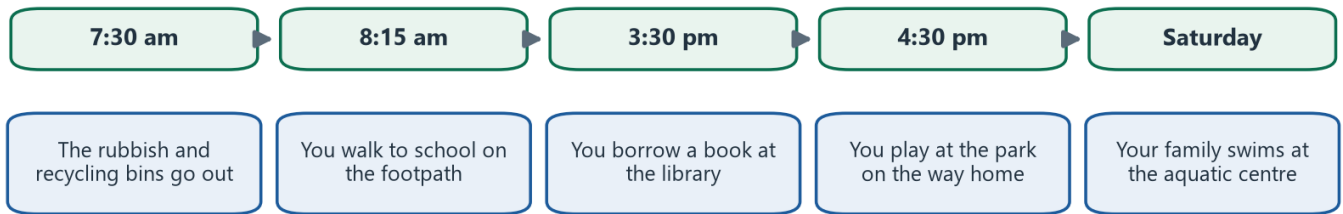
Flow diagram: people who own property pay rates each year, the council puts the money together, and it pays for more than 120 services such as roads, footpaths, parks, gardens, libraries and sport places.

That is how one bin truck, one library book and one new slide get paid for. When the community pays rates, the community is **contributing** — giving something that helps everyone.

5 · Local government in your day

You might not pay rates or vote. But you use local government every week.

Council services in one day



Five services in one day — and every one of them comes from local government.

Service examples from City of Greater Geelong, geelongcity.vic.gov.au (checked 26 August 2026)

One day of a student with five council services: the bins go out at 7:30 in the morning, the walk to school on the footpath at 8:15, the library at 3:30, the park at 4:30, and the pool on Saturday.

Think: Name two more council services you used this month. Maybe you went to an **event** — something planned that people go to, like a festival or a fair. Maybe your family got help from the council's health nurses when a new baby came home.

6 · Using your voice

Councils make decisions about your area, and your ideas can reach them. Here are ways people use their voices.

Ways to use your voice

Talk	Talk about a service with your family, your class or your friends.
Write or draw	Write or draw a letter to the council about what you like or what you would change.
Answer a survey	When the council asks people for ideas, you and your family can answer.
Join in	Join a local group that cares for a park, a garden or the bush.
Vote, later	When you turn 18, you can enrol and vote in council elections.
Real example: the City of Greater Geelong has a Youth Council where young people 12 to 25 years old have a say. <i>Real example: City of Greater Geelong Youth Council, geelongcity.vic.gov.au (checked 26 August 2026)</i>	

Five ways to use your voice — talk about services with family and friends, write or draw a letter to the council, answer a council survey, join a local group that cares for a park, and later vote when you turn 18 — plus a real example: the City of Greater Geelong Youth Council for young people 12 to 25 years old.

Sometimes a council has to choose between two good ideas, and people hold different views. Good listening means hearing both sides before deciding.

One council decision, two fair views

The council has money for one new thing near your school. What should it be?

View A: fix up the playground

- little kids and big kids all use it
 - families visit every day
- old equipment can get unsafe

View B: build a skate park

- older kids need a good place too
 - skating is sport and exercise
- it keeps kids active after school

Both views give real reasons. Talk it through: is there one plan that works for both sides?

A class discussion, based on the kind of decision local councils make

Two fair views about one council choice: view A fixes up the playground because kids of all ages use it every day; view B builds a skate park because older kids need a place too. Both give real reasons.

And when we use a service, we also look after it. That is what **responsible** means: doing what is right and looking after the things you use. Choices like these keep services — and the **environment**, the air, water, land and living things around us — good now and for kids after you.

Responsible choices about services



Put rubbish in the bin, and the right things in the recycling.



Put bins out on collection day so the truck can empty them.



Keep your pet's tag up to date, and pick up after your dog.



Look after park toys, seats and gardens so everyone can enjoy them.



Tell a trusted adult if something in a park is broken.



Save water and energy when you use council places.

Choices like these look after services and the environment — now and for kids after you.

Ways students and families can help council services work well

Six responsible choices: put rubbish in the bin and the right things in the recycling, put bins out on collection day, keep pet tags up to date and pick up after your dog, look after park toys and gardens, tell a trusted adult about broken things, and save water and energy at council places.

Look ahead: In Section 3C you will use what you know from this section to describe a local council and say why it matters.

A model text

Here is one good way to put this section's ideas into a short piece of writing. Notice how each sentence adds one clear idea.

Model text: describing local government

1. Local government makes decisions for the area where people live.
2. Voters choose councillors, and the councillors meet to decide what the area needs.
3. The council provides services such as bins, libraries, parks, pools and events.
4. It pays for these services with money called rates.
5. Families and students can use the services and have a say about them.
6. That is why local government matters to our community.

A model paragraph. Notice how each sentence adds one clear idea.

A model text of six numbered sentences: local government makes decisions for the area where people live; voters choose councillors who meet to decide what the area needs; the council provides services such as bins, libraries, parks, pools and events; it pays for them with money called rates; families and students can use the services and have a say; that is why local government matters to our community.

Word bank

Word	What it means here
local government	the group that makes decisions for one local area
council	the local government of an area; the group of councillors
councillor	a person chosen by voters to help decide things for the area
mayor	the councillor chosen to lead the council
community	all the people who share one area
service	something the council gives or runs for everyone to use
rates	money people who own property pay the council each year
election	the time when voters choose who will be on the council
voter	a person whose name is on the voters' list
ward	a smaller part of a council area
contribute	to give something that helps, like money, time or ideas
environment	the air, water, land and living things around us
democracy	a way of deciding where the people get a say
responsible	doing what is right and looking after the things you use

Activities

A1. Look at the services table. Tick the services your family has used this month.

A2. These five steps of choosing a council are mixed up. Rewrite them in the right order.

- A. Voters choose councillors.
- B. People enrol to vote.
- C. The councillors choose a mayor.
- D. Voting papers arrive by post.
- E. Voters fill in their paper and post it back.

A3. Match each story to a service from the table.

- - a. Mia's baby brother gets checked by a council nurse.
- - b. Tom's grandad pays his rates for the year.
- - c. Ava's cat gets lost and a ranger helps find her.
- - d. Kim's class walks to the pool for swimming lessons.
- - e. Ben borrows three books before school.

A4. Rates pay for some things and not others. Tick the things rates pay for.

- a new slide at the park · your new school shoes · the library van · the council picking up your bins · a birthday cake

A5. Draw or list three council services you will use this week. Next to each one, write who looks after it.

A6. A friend says "My dog does not need to be on the council's pet list because he never gets lost." Use the pet facts to give one reason why he still needs to be on the list.

A7. Look at the two views about the playground and the skate park. Talk it through with your class. Then answer: is there one plan that works for both sides? Give your reasons. Remember — a good answer listens to both views.

A8. Finish this letter to your council about a park or playground you know. Use two or three of your own ideas.

Dear Mayor and councillors,

The park I care about is _____. One thing I like about it is _____. One thing I would change is _____, because _____. Thank you for listening.

From, _____

Answers

A1. Answers will be different. Any honest ticks are right — libraries, parks, pools, bins and events are all council services.

A2. B, D, E, A, C.

A3. a — health services. b — not a service: rates are how the money comes *in*. c — pet management. d — pools and sport places. e — libraries.

A4. Rates pay for: the new slide, the library van, bin pickup. They do not pay for school shoes or a birthday cake — those are family things.

A5. Answers will be different. Check each one names a real council service (bin pickup, footpaths, the library, parks, pools, events, pet management, health nurses) and that a council worker looks after it.

A6. Any one reason is right: the list helps a lost dog get home *if* it gets lost; and the law says every dog and cat must be on the list from 3 months old, even a dog that stays home.

A7. Any plan that answers both views is a strong one — for example, fixing the playground *and* building a smaller skate park in another corner, or fixing the playground now and saving for the skate park next year. Marks are for giving reasons from both sides, not for which plan you pick.

A8. Check that your letter names a real park, gives one like and one change, and gives a reason. Polite words matter too — this is how a community talks to its council.

Curriculum coverage (for teachers and auditors)

This section owns exactly one content description: VC2HC4K03 (Knowledge and Understanding, Government and democracy, Levels 3 and 4).

Elaborations drawn on (codes only; VC2 wording not reproduced):

- VC2HC4K03.E01 — how a council is chosen, and who chooses it (taught in part 2)
- VC2HC4K03.E02 — the services councils run, as listed in the part 3 table (taught in part 3)
- VC2HC4K03.E03 — how council services touch students' lives, and how local groups and students can speak up and choose responsibly about the services and environment around them (taught in parts 5 and 6; carries the Sustainability cross-curriculum priority tag VC2CCPSIS3, which is taught, not excluded)

Achievement standard: this section is assessed against the Levels 3 and 4 standard for VC2HC4K03; the standard's wording is not reproduced here.

Cross-references: this section supplies the institution that Section 3C describes and evaluates; it builds on the decision-making ideas of Sections 1A and 1B.

Sources

Real-world facts in this section were checked on 26 August 2026 against:

- Victorian Electoral Commission, *Local council elections* and *Local councils* pages, vec.vic.gov.au — elections every four years in October, voting all by post, enrolled voters must vote, 79 councils, wards.
 - Local Government Act 2020 (Vic), legislation.vic.gov.au — the law that sets the rules for Victorian councils.
 - City of Greater Geelong, geelongcity.vic.gov.au — 11 wards and 11 councillors on a four-year term; rates paying for more than 120 services (roads, footpaths, parks, gardens, libraries, sport places); pet list from 3 months old, new year from 10 April; Maternal and Child Health service; pools and sports places; arts places; events calendar; Youth Council as a way young people have a say.
-