

CLASS 5

In this class students are lead through the democratic process, step by step using the story of one girl and her journey to becoming a member of the Student Council. Key words are highlighted and explained and students will become familiar with how a person can become an elected representative be it on the Student Council or local or national government.

ACTIVITY

- This activity can be done individually, in pairs or in groups.
- Photocopy the sheets headed Student Council Elections and the Election Steps.
- Distribute the Student Council Elections to each student.
- Either read the sheet aloud with students or allow the students to read the sheet themselves or in their groups.
- When the students have finished reading and you are happy that they have understood it, distribute the Election Steps sheet.
- Explain the instructions on the bottom of the sheet and ask the students to work individually, in pairs or in groups.
- When the sheet is completed ask a selection of the students or groups to identify the steps to election.

FOLLOW – UP ACTIVITY

Ask the students to pick one of the following characters that have been involved in Lena 's election process and ask them to write a paragraph about the process from their perspective:

Ms Casey - Mr Dunne - the Principal - Lena 's friend - another student

STUDENT COUNCIL ELECTIONS



Hi, my name is Lena, I am in 2nd year and I want to tell you all about our Student Council Elections.

First of all we did some work in CSPE about Student Councils and we about what they are for and how important they can be in the school.

Two weeks ago the Principal told us that the teachers would be taking names of people or nominations for candidates for the Student Council

I talked it over with my friends and I decided that I would like to be a member of the Student Council. On the nomination day, one of my friends suggested my name and then my other friend backed this up. The teacher accepted the nomination and gave me a nomination form with my name and the names of my two friends the first who proposed me and the other who seconded me. In our school you have to go the year head to get the nomination form signed. If he didn't sign it then I couldn't go forward as a candidate.

When I went to Mr Dunne (my year head) to ask him to sign the form, he was quite happy to do it. He asked me why I wanted to be on the Student Council and I told him it was because students had lots of ideas and suggestions to make and this was a way that these ideas could be heard. When I was finished talking to him I handed in my completed nomination form to the Student Council Liaison teacher - Ms Casey.

The following day a list of candidates was put up on the notice board. There were eight people looking to be elected in my year but only three could get a place on the Student Council.

I now had to think about how I was going to get the students to vote for me. The election was only a week away. My friends helped me to make some election posters saying **Vote for Me Lena. Your Voice is My Voice on the Student Council.** I had to put together a manifesto saying what I would do for my class on the Student Council if I got elected. In the manifesto I promised to work hard for the students and that I would keep them informed of everything I was doing. I also told them I would be looking for their ideas to bring to the meetings

I canvassed as many people as I could from my year to try and get them to vote for me (this just means I talked to people and tried to persuade them that I was the best person for the job.) Some people said they would and others were honest and said they were supporting one of the other candidates.

On the day of the election one of the 2nd year classrooms was being used as a Polling Station. They had set up three polling booths in the station so that people could vote in private - secret ballot. Ms Casey had asked a friend of hers to come in for the day as the Presiding Officer to make sure that the election was run fairly and properly.

My class queued up at the registration desk. The students there had a list of names and as you went up they crossed off your name and handed you a ballot paper. This is to make sure that you don't vote more than once.

This was the first time I had seen the ballot papers and there was my name on it. I went behind one of the screens that made the polling booth and I put a number 1 in the box beside my name. I was going to fold it up and put it in the ballot box when I started thinking about who would I like to get elected if I didn't. I looked down through the list of candidates and I decided who I would like (after me of course) and I gave them a number 2, and then just in case that didn't work out I put a number 3 beside the next person. This type of voting is called Proportional Representation and means that you have some chance of having voted for the people who get elected.

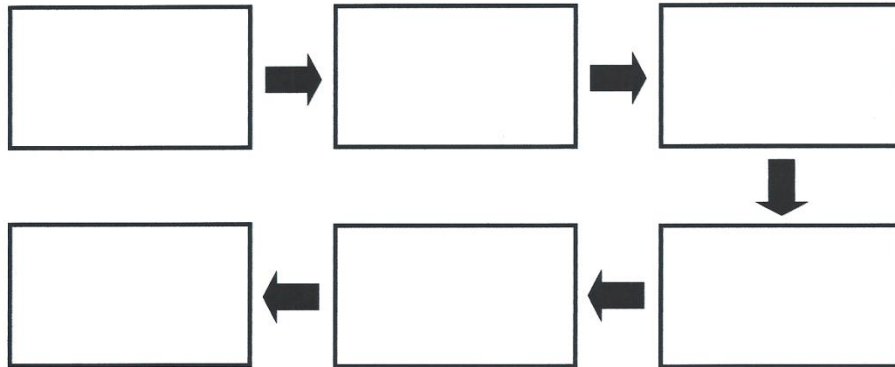
When all of the classes had voted, the ballot boxes were opened and the votes counted. The counters found out how many people voted first so that they could work out a quota - this is the smallest number of votes that you need to get elected. Once the quota was worked out they could now count how many votes each candidate got.

As I was a candidate I was allowed to watch the count. It was very exciting and I didn't know right up to the last count whether I had been elected or not.

I was very lucky, I was the second candidate elected which means that I will now be a Student Council member.



ELECTION STEPS



In the boxes above place key words or symbols to show Lena's journey to being elected to the Student Council step by step.

All of the words in the cloud are key words to help us to talk about democracy. Lena being elected to the student council was democracy in action.

1. For all of the words above in the cloud, write down what they mean in your copy. You can use Lena's story to help you.

OR

2. Come up with a symbol or a picture to match each of these words in your copy.

EVALUATION OF CLASS 5

What comments do you have on this class? Activity, timing, suitability for the level of the class – suggestions for change, recommendations...

Did the activity lead to a discussion about how a Student Council should be elected?

Did the students have any suggestions regarding the how the election of students to the Student Council should take place?

Could you please write down some of the students' comments on this class?
