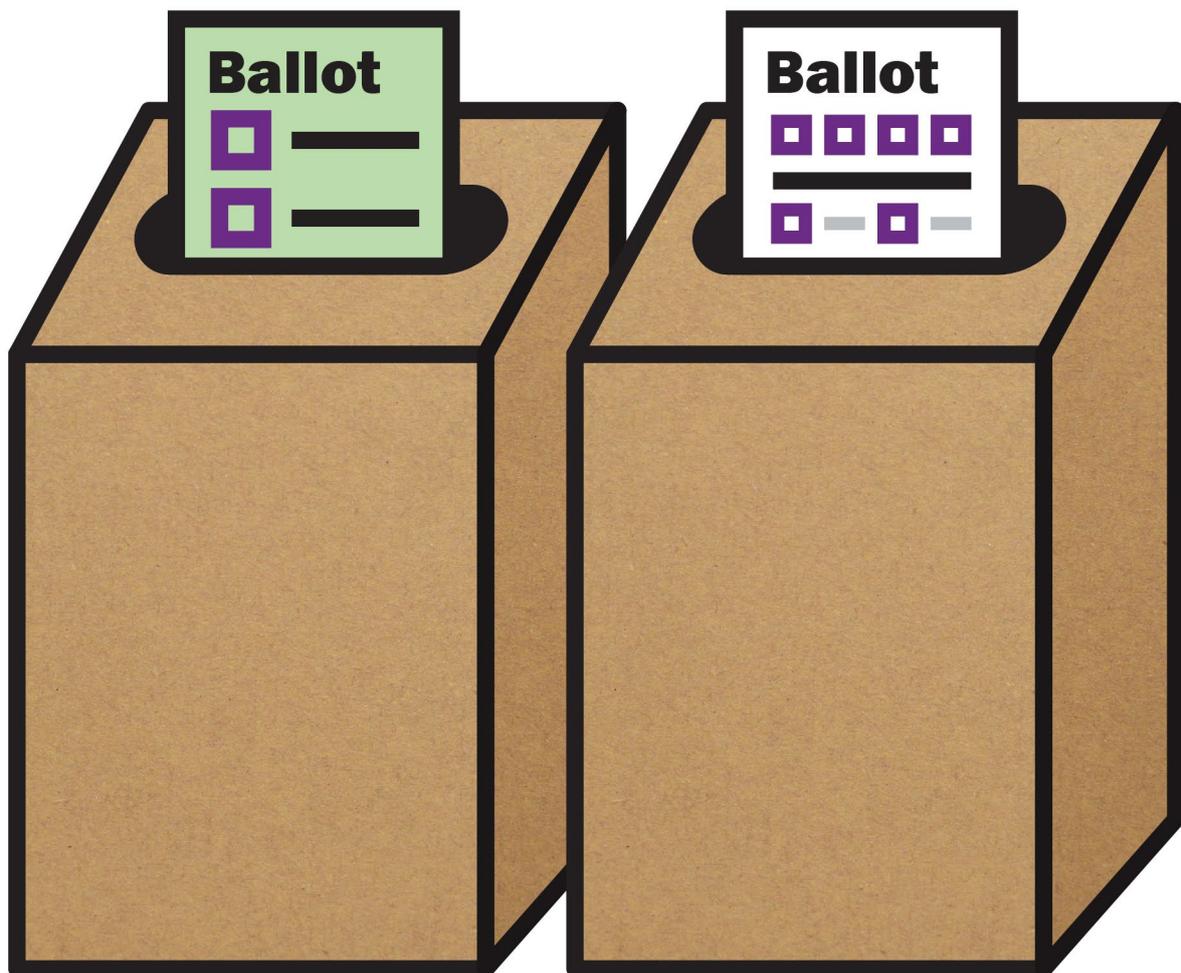


# How to vote at a polling place

Easy read version



## How to use this guide



The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) wrote this guide. When you see the word 'we', it means AEC.



We wrote this guide in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

**Bold**

We wrote some important words in **bold**.

Not bold

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these bold words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 31.



You can find other Easy Read guides on our website.

[www.aec.gov.au/assistance](http://www.aec.gov.au/assistance)



You can ask for support to read this guide. A friend, family member or support person might be able to help you.

## What's in this guide?

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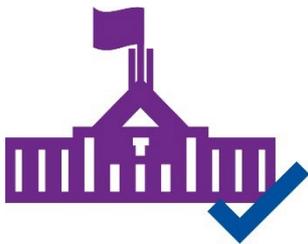
## What is a federal election?



In Australia there is a **federal election** about every 3 years.



A federal election is for the whole country.



It's how Australia's government is chosen.



On the election day, Australian people will **vote**.

When you vote, you help to choose who is part of Australia's government.



You must vote if you are:

- an Australian **citizen**
- and
- aged 18 years old or older.



A citizen is someone who has the rights and freedoms of the country where they live.



Voting lets you have your say about who runs our country.

## How do you enrol to vote?



Before you can vote, you **enrol**.

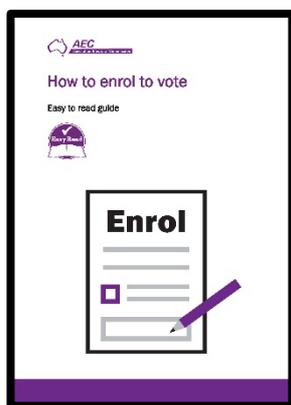


When you enrol, we put your name on a list of **voters** – people who can vote.

We call this list the **electoral roll**.



To go on the electoral roll, you must fill out an enrolment form.



We made a guide that explains how you can enrol to vote.

You can find it on our website.

[www.aec.gov.au/About\\_AEC/Publications/easy-read/](http://www.aec.gov.au/About_AEC/Publications/easy-read/)

## When do you need to vote?



We will tell people what the election date is once we know.

This is usually about a month before the election day.

You can also:



- ask a family member, friend or neighbour



- watch the news on TV



- search online.



On election day, voting opens at 8 am.



And it closes at 6 pm.



You must vote before voting closes.

## What if you can't vote on election day?



Sometimes, people can't vote on election day.



This might be because they are going away on holiday.



Or maybe they will be in hospital.



If you can't vote on election day, you can vote before the election.



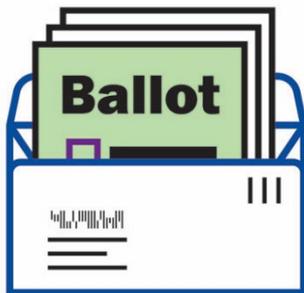
We explain where you can go to vote in the next section.

You can go to some of these places before the election day.



If you call us, we will help you find a place where you can vote early near you.

**13 23 26**



You can also send us your vote in the mail.

We call this a **postal vote**.



We made a guide that explains how you can vote by mail.

You can find it on our website.

[www.aec.gov.au/assistance](http://www.aec.gov.au/assistance)

## Where do you go to vote?



On election day, you go to a **polling place** to vote.

A polling place is a building where people go to vote.



For example, a:

- school
- community centre.



When we know the date of the election, we will put a list of polling places on our website.

[www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)



If you call us, we will help you find a polling place.

**13 23 26**



You can vote at any polling place in the state or territory where you live.



If you are in a different state or territory on election day, you can vote at an interstate voting centre.

## What happens on election day?

### Outside the polling place



Outside the polling place, you will see:

- voters
- people who support the **candidates**.



A candidate is a person who wants to be part of the Parliament.



You vote for the candidate you want to win the election.



The people who support the candidates will be handing out *How to vote* cards.



*How to vote* cards suggest how you might choose to vote.



A *How to vote* card might help you:

- choose the candidate you want to vote for
- vote in the right way for that candidate.



You don't have to take any *How to vote* cards.

## Going into the polling place



When you go into the polling place, there will be AEC staff.



They are people who work at polling places on election day.

It is their job to help you.



You might need to wait in line.



If there is no line, you can go straight to a table and talk to the AEC staff.

## What will the AEC staff do?



The AEC staff will ask you 3 questions.

### 1. What is your full name?



Tell the AEC staff your:

- first name
- last name.



You must tell them the same name you told us when you enrolled to vote.

### 2. Where do you live?



Tell them the address of your home.

You must tell them the same address you told us when you enrolled to vote.



The AEC staff will:

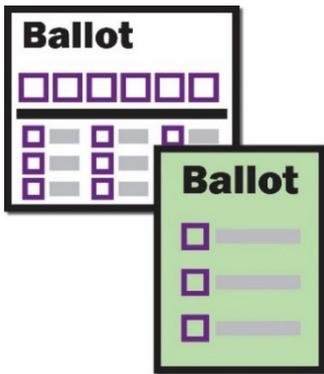
- look for your name on the electoral roll and
- mark it off.

### 3. Have you voted before in this election?



Say “No” if you haven’t already voted:

- on election day
- before election day, such as by a postal vote.



The AEC staff will give you 2 **ballot papers**:

- a white one
- a green one.



Ballot papers are forms that you fill out to show who you want to vote for.

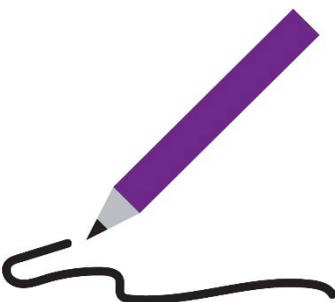
## What do you do with your ballot papers?



Take your ballot papers to one of the cardboard voting screens.



The screens let you fill out your ballot papers where no one else can see.



There will be a pencil for you to use.

But you can use your own pen or pencil if you want to.

## How do you fill out your green ballot paper?



Your green ballot paper is for the **House of Representatives**.

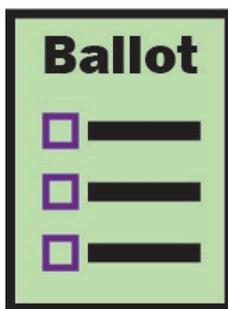
The House of Representatives:



- is 1 of the 2 houses of Australia's Parliament – the house in which government is formed



- includes the people voted for by the Australian people.



Your green ballot paper has:

- a list of candidates' names
- empty boxes.

**1**



Pick the candidate who you want to vote for the most.

Write 1 in the empty box next to their name.

**2**

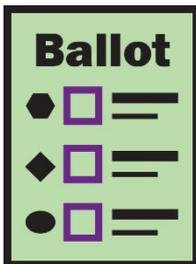


Pick the candidate who you want to vote for next.

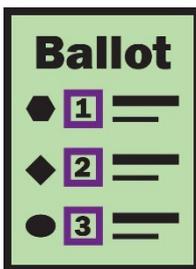
Write 2 in the empty box next to their name.



Keep choosing candidates and writing numbers until you have filled out all the boxes.



Some candidates might have words or pictures next to their names.



Each box should have a different number in it.



When every box is full, your ballot paper is finished.

## How do you fill out your white ballot paper?



Your white ballot paper is for the **Senate**.

The Senate:



- is 1 of the 2 houses of Australia's Parliament – it is known as the upper house
- includes the people voted for by the Australian people to represent each of the states and territories.



Your white ballot paper has a black line on it.



There is a list of groups above the black line.

Most of the groups are **political parties**.



A political party is a group of people who:

- share some of the same ideas
- work together on a plan for how the government should run our country.



There is a list of candidates below the black line.

There are 2 ways to fill out your white ballot paper:



- put numbers in the boxes above the black line and vote for groups

or



- put numbers in the boxes below the black line and vote for candidates.

## Voting above the black line



Pick the group who you want to vote for the most.

Write 1 in the empty box next to their name.



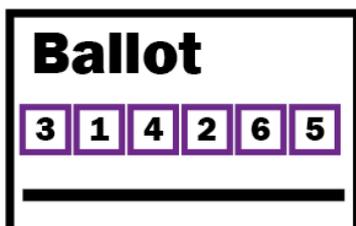
Pick the group who you want to vote for next.

Write 2 in the empty box next to their name.

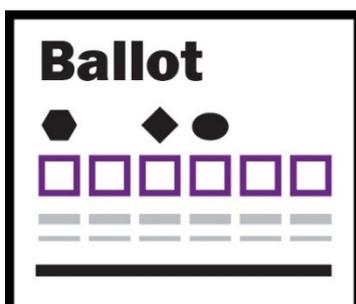


Keep choosing groups and writing numbers until you have filled out 6 boxes.

You can finish at 6 or keep going.



If there are less than 6 empty boxes, put a number in every box.



Some groups might have words or pictures next to their names.

## Voting below the black line



Pick the candidate who you want to vote for the most.

Write 1 in the empty box next to their name.



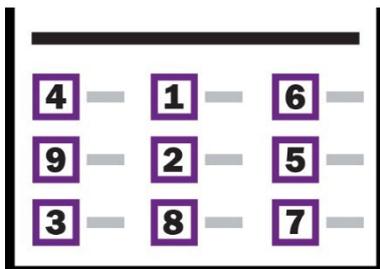
Pick the candidate who you want to vote for next.

Write 2 in the empty box next to their name.



Keep choosing candidates and writing numbers until you have filled out 12 boxes.

You can finish at 12 or keep going.



If there are less than 12 empty boxes, put a number in every box.

## What if you need help to fill out your ballot papers?

If you need help when you vote, you can:



- take someone you know with you, like a friend



- ask the AEC staff.



The AEC staff can help you fill out your ballot paper.



They can't tell you who to vote for.



They will keep your vote a secret.

## What if you make a mistake?



If you make a mistake when you fill out your ballot papers, take them back to the AEC staff who gave them to you.

Tell the AEC staff that you:



- made a mistake



- need a new ballot paper.



The AEC staff will:

- take the ballot paper with the mistake
- give you a new ballot paper.

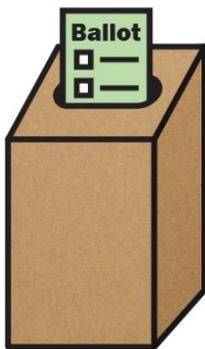


Take the new ballot paper and fill it out.

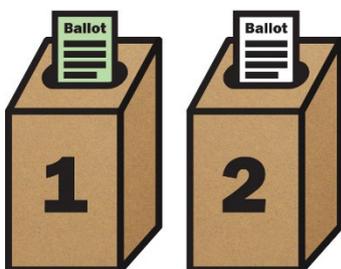
## Where do you put your ballot papers?



When you have filled out your ballot papers, you need to put them in a **ballot box**.



A ballot box is a sealed box where voters put their ballot papers once they have filled them out.



There will be 2 ballot boxes:

- 1 for the green ballot paper
- 1 for the white ballot paper.



Your green ballot paper goes in the ballot box that says: Green.



Your white ballot paper goes in the ballot box that says: White.



If you need help, ask the AEC staff.



When you have put your votes in the ballot boxes, you have finished voting.

## Can you practise voting before the election?



If you want to practise voting, you can visit our website.

[www.aec.gov.au/practice](http://www.aec.gov.au/practice)



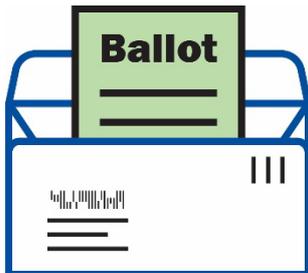
Your practise vote doesn't count.

You still need to vote:



- at a polling place

or



- by mail.

## How can you get more information?



If you want to find out more about voting, we have 2 other guides you can read:

- *How to enrol to vote*
- *How to vote by mail.*



You can find these guides on our website.

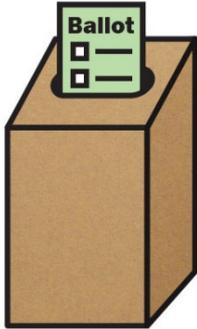
[www.aec.gov.au/assistance](http://www.aec.gov.au/assistance)



We also have information on our website for people who speak languages other than English.

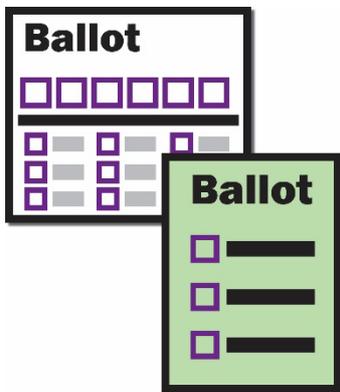
## Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



### **Ballot box**

A ballot box is a sealed box where voters put their ballot papers once they have filled them out.



### **Ballot papers**

Ballot papers are forms that you fill out to show who you want to vote for.



### **Candidates**

A candidate is a person who wants to be part of the Parliament.



### **Citizen**

A citizen is someone who has the rights and freedoms of the country where they live.



## **Electoral roll**

A list of voters.



## **Enrol**

When you enrol, we put your name on a list of voters.



## **Federal election**

A federal election is for the whole country. It's how Australia's government is chosen.

## **House of Representatives**

The House of Representatives:

- is 1 of the 2 houses of Australia's Parliament – the house in which government is formed
- includes the people voted for by the Australian people.



## Political party



A political party is a group of people who:

- share some of the same ideas
- work together on a plan for how the government should run our country.

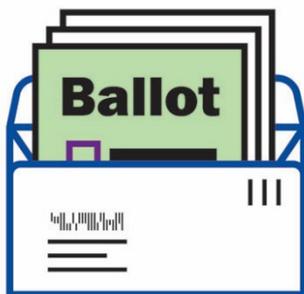
## Polling place



A polling place is a building, where people go to vote.

For example, a:

- school
- community centre.



## Postal vote

You send us your vote in the mail.

## Senate



The Senate:

- is 1 of the 2 houses of Australia's Parliament – it is known as the upper house
- includes the people voted for by the Australian people to represent each of the states and territories.



## Vote

When you vote, you help to choose who is part of Australia's government.



## Voters

People who can vote.

## More information



You can call us for more information.

**13 23 26**



You can visit our website.

[www.aec.gov.au](http://www.aec.gov.au)



You can find us on Facebook.

[www.facebook.com/AusElectoralCom/](http://www.facebook.com/AusElectoralCom/)



You can find us on Twitter.

[@AusElectoralCom](https://twitter.com/AusElectoralCom)



You can find us on Instagram.

[@auselectoralcom](https://www.instagram.com/auselectoralcom)



You can find us on YouTube.

[www.youtube.com/@AECTV](http://www.youtube.com/@AECTV)

## National Relay Service



You can call the National Relay service if you:

- are deaf or hard of hearing
- find it hard to speak using the phone.



TTY  
**13 36 77**



Speak and Listen  
**1300 555 727**



Ask these services to connect you to our  
phone number.

**13 23 26**

## Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)



If you speak a language other than English, you can call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS).

**131 450**



Tell them what language you speak.



Ask them to connect you to our phone number.

**13 23 26.**



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Quote job number 5712-C.

Authorised by the Electoral Commissioner, Canberra.