

BLM 4 Preferential voting

There are different voting systems used throughout the world. Many countries use a *simple majority system* (also known as first past the post) to elect representatives to parliament. Simple majority means that the person with the most votes is elected to the position. Countries that use this system include Great Britain,

An example of simple majority:

Twenty five students voted for the JSC/SRC class representative

4 voted for candidate 1

6 voted for candidate 2

10 voted for candidate 3

5 voted for candidate 4

Most people voted for candidate 3. In a country that uses a simple majority vote candidate 3 would be elected as the representative because they received the greatest number of votes.

Australia uses *preferential voting* to elect representatives to parliament. Voters must list candidates in order of their preference on the ballot paper. For example, most preferred candidate -1, second preferred candidate-2 and so on. A candidate must receive over 50% of the vote- an *absolute majority* to be elected. In the above example candidate 3 would not be elected because they had not received over 50% of the vote (that is 13 votes.) because 15 students did not vote for candidate 3. If a voters first preference is unable to secure enough votes to be elected, their second preference is counted during a second count. For example candidate 1 only received 4 votes, so the voters' vote would be transferred to their second preference.

The same example using preferential voting system with absolute majority:

	1st count	2nd count	3rd count
Candidate 1	4	-----	
Candidate 2	6	6+1 = 7	7+ 2 9
Candidate 3	10	10+2 =12	12+4 16
Candidate 4	5	5+1 = 6	-----
Total	25	25	25

A simple way of explaining preferential voting: Imagine you are going to the shop to buy your favourite chocolate bar but the shop has run out. You are most likely then to choose your second preference or even third if necessary because you still want a chocolate bar. This is the same with preferential voting. You want a certain candidate but if they are not going to be elected you still want to be involved and choose another!