

Citizenship in Maths

How did people vote in the last general election?

Teachers' Notes

The KS3 citizenship programme of study states that all students should have opportunities to explore... key features of parliamentary democracy and government in the constituent parts of the UK and at local level, including voting and elections.

Prerequisite knowledge needed:

Calculate one number as a percentage of another.

Calculating a percentage increase/ decrease.

Initial discussion

How many of the class know the name of their member of parliament?

Which constituency do they live in?

Talk about the *first past the post* voting system operated in the UK.

Main part:

See questions on the attached worksheet. The sheet asks students to compare the percentage of seats with the percentage of votes gained in both the UK as a whole and England. The results of the election in Maidstone and the Weald are also analysed, including turnout figures..

Plenary:

Discuss the consequences of the first past the post voting system. Briefly explain how proportional representation operates. Why do some people want proportional representation for general elections in the UK? Why do some parties prefer first past the post?

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How did people vote in the 2005 general election?

United Kingdom Results

1) The number of seats in the Houses of Commons obtained by each political party in that general election were as follows:

Party	Labour	Conservative	Lib Dem	DUP	SNP	SF	Other
No. seats	356	198	62	9	6	5	10

Work out the percentage of seats that each party secured.

2) The number of votes cast for each party in the election were as follows:

Party	Labour	Conservative	Lib Dem	DUP	SNP	SF	Other
No. votes (thousands)	9567	8786	5985	242	412	175	1982

Work out the percentage of votes secured by each party.

Compare the percentage of votes with the percentage of seats. How are they similar or different?

Results in English constituencies

3) The number of seats and votes gained by each political party in English constituencies was as follows:

Party	Labour	Conservative	Lib Dem	UKIP	Green	Other
No. seats	286	194	47	0	0	2
No votes (thousands)	8043	8116	5201	592	251	510

Comment on how the number of seats and the number of votes agree here.

How do the results in the English constituencies compare with the country as a whole?

Results in Maidstone and the Weald

4) The election results for the Maidstone and the Weald constituency were as follows:

Party	Conservative (Widdecombe)	Labour (Breeze)	Lib Dem (Corney)	UKIP (Robertson)
No. votes	25670	10814	10808	1463

Every candidate that stands in the general election has to pay a deposit (£500). The deposit is returned to the candidate if they get more than 5% of the vote. Did any of the candidates in the Maidstone and the Weald constituency lose their deposit?

5) The number of people who voted in the Maidstone constituency in 2005 was 48,755.

The number of people who were eligible to vote was 74096.

Turnout in the whole of the United Kingdom was 61.3%.

How does this compare with the turnout in Maidstone?

6) In the 2001 General Election Ann Widdecombe secured 22621 votes. By what percentage did her number of votes increase by between 2001 and 2005?