

Teaching notes and key

Year group	Year 7/8/9
Key concepts	1.1.a.
Range and content	d.
Curriculum opportunities	b.; c.

Outcomes

These **two lessons** are about enabling students to engage with some of the issues surrounding the politics of elected mayors.

- Students appreciate some basic concepts regarding the election of mayors.
- Students give an opinion on voter turnout.

Resources

You will need:

- access to YouTube on the internet:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxDwxNcURTU>
- the accompanying PowerPoint, downloadable from www.citizenshipteacher.co.uk
- the information sheet on pp.4-5 below
- the 'manifesto sheet' on p.6 below
- some small slips of blank paper and a 'ballot box'
- the letter template on p.6 below
- the address of your local council.

Lesson 1

Starter: class discussion (5 minutes)

1. Ask students, 'Have you heard of Boris Johnson?'.
Show the YouTube clip of him getting stuck on a zip wire during the opening of the London Olympics: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxDwxNcURTU> (available at the time of writing).
2. Ask students, 'What does he do?' Brainstorm ideas and put them on the board.
3. Hand out the job description from the information sheet or display slide 1 of the PowerPoint. Discuss similarities and differences compared to the students' own ideas.

Activity 1 (20 minutes)

Ask students, 'How many cities do you think have elected mayors?'

Hand out the list of elected mayors or display slide 2 of the PowerPoint.

Ask students:

1. 'Are you surprised by the number that do? Why?'

Students may not realise there were so many.

2. 'What do you notice about the people who were elected mayor?'

Suggested answer: They are almost all men, three of them are lords and there seems to be only one from an ethnic minority.

3. 'Why might cities want an elected mayor?'

Suggested answer: To have an active leader in local government who is chosen directly by the people rather than by the council – i.e. to make the system more democratic – and to promote the city, as Boris Johnson does for London.

4. 'Why do you think only Bristol actually voted to elect a Mayor?'

Suggested answer: Perhaps people in the other cities are happy with the system they already have, or simply don't like change, or feel they don't know enough about local politics to choose a mayor. Some people in Bristol were not happy with the way the local council was working and felt things were not getting done. There were some strong mayoral candidates in Bristol, who had clear ideas and promoted themselves well.

5. 'What is meant by voter turnout?'

Suggested answer: the number/percentage of people who go to vote.

6. 'Why might voter turnout be low?'

Suggested answer: People are not interested in what they are voting for, or don't feel they know enough about it.

Hand out 'Powers of a local mayor' from the information sheet or display slide 4 of the PowerPoint.

7. 'What could be the disadvantages of having an elected mayor?'

Suggested answer: The mayor and the council could disagree about what needs to be done and the amount of money which should be spent on it.

Activity 2 (25-30 minutes)

Brainstorm ideas for improving your local area.

Tell students they are going to write a 'manifesto' (= a written statement of what a political party or politician believes and wants to do) to be elected mayor.

In pairs, students choose the best ideas from their brainstormed list or from the list on slide 5 of the PowerPoint.

They make notes on rough paper then fill in the 'manifesto' worksheet with their chosen ideas.

Collect in the worksheets and bring them back the following lesson.

Plenary (5 minutes)

Ask students to write definitions of 'voter turnout', 'manifesto' and/or 'referendum'. They then pass their definitions to the student on their left for additions and corrections. Invite three different students to read out one definition each.

Suggested answers (see slide 6 of the PowerPoint):

- **Voter turnout** = the number or percentage of people who go to vote
- **Referendum** = a vote when people decide about an issue, rather than choosing electing a politician or party
- **Manifesto** = a written statement of what a political party or politician believes and wants to do

Lesson 2

Activity 1 (30 minutes)

Display the worksheets around the room. One student stays with the worksheet to explain the pair's ideas. The other goes to 'visit' the other worksheets and ask questions.

The pairs then swap roles.

Activity 2 (5 minutes)

Ask students to sit back down. Give each student a slip of paper and ask them to write the names of the pairs who had the best ideas. They cannot choose themselves!

Count the votes while students are doing activity 3.

Activity 3 (20 minutes + homework if necessary)

Students choose one of the improvements discussed (they don't all have to choose the same one) and write a letter to the local council explaining why they would like to see it introduced.

Plenary (5 minutes)

Announce the results of the class vote from activity 2.

Information sheet

The role of the Mayor of London

There are several parts to the Mayor of London's job, but his/her main role is to make London a better place to live.

He/She is in charge of developing plans and setting the budget for:

- transport
- planning and development (= new building projects)
- housing
- regeneration (= improving run-down areas)
- culture and tourism
- the environment.



However, he/she must ask Londoners their views about many of his/her plans before making the changes. He/She also works closely with the Metropolitan Police, Transport for London and the London Fire Brigade.

adapted from www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/mayor/role

Elected mayors before May 2012

	City	Mayor's name	Political party
1	Bedford	Dave Hodgson	Liberal Democrat
2	Doncaster	Peter Davies	English Democrats
3	Hackney	Jules Pipe	Labour
4	Hartlepool	Stuart Drummond	Independent
5	Leicester	Sir Peter Soulsby	Labour
6	Lewisham	Sir Steve Bullock	Labour
7	Liverpool	Joe Anderson	Labour
8	London	Boris Johnson	Conservative
9	Mansfield	Tony Egginton	Independent
10	Middlesbrough	Ray Mallon	Independent
11	Newham	Sir Robin Wales	Labour
12	North Tyneside	Linda Arkley	Conservative
13	Salford	Ian Stewart	Labour
14	Torbay	Gordon Oliver	Conservative
15	Tower Hamlets	Lutfur Rahman	Independent
16	Watford	Dorothy Thornhill	Liberal Democrat

adapted from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Directly_elected_mayors_in_England_and_Wales#Powers

Referendum on elected mayors – May 2012

On 3 May 2012, 10 of the largest cities in England held referendums to decide whether or not to have a directly elected mayor. The cities were:

- Birmingham
- Bradford
- Bristol
- Coventry
- Leeds
- Manchester
- Newcastle upon Tyne
- Nottingham
- Sheffield
- Wakefield.

Bristol was the only city which chose to have an elected mayor.

The voter turnout was 28%.

Sources:

- The Guardian Reality Check Wednesday 2 May 2012:
www.guardian.co.uk/politics/reality-check-with-polly-curtis/2012/may/02/mayoral-elections-london-mayoral-election-2012
- BBC News Bristol: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-20340154

Powers of a local mayor

An elected mayor has powers similar to those of a leader of a local council. With the council, the mayor sets the local authority's annual budget and decides what the city does about areas of local importance such as libraries, hospitals, schools, children's services, and crime and disorder. To change or reject a mayor's proposals, the council must agree by a two-thirds majority.

Most elected mayors also appoint up to nine councillors as members of a cabinet and can delegate powers to cabinet members *. In practice, the mayor takes personal responsibility for decisions and so most mayors delegate very little.

* Other mayors choose a council leader who appoints the cabinet.

adapted from:

- Wikipedia Directly elected mayors in England and Wales:
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Directly_elected_mayors_in_England_and_Wales#Powers
- New Local Government Network: www.nlgn.org.uk/public/elected-mayors/mayoral-briefing/

Manifesto sheet



Name:

If am elected mayor, I will ...

.....
.....
.....

because

.....
.....

Letter template



Your address

Address of your local council

Date

Dear Mr/Ms

Opening paragraph: Include why you are writing and your main suggestion.

Development paragraphs: Explain why you are making the suggestion, including examples as appropriate.

Closing paragraph: *Thank you for your time. I look forward to receiving your response to my suggestions.*

Yours sincerely,