



HANSARD
SOCIETY

HeadsUp Forum

www.headsup.org.uk

'Turnout or turn off? General Election 2005' (April 25th - May 13th 2005)

An online platform providing young people with a secure and structured space to discuss their perspectives on the 2005 general election

'Turnout or turn off? General Election 2005' was an online debate where young people could share their perspectives on the campaigning, build up, results and the significance of the UK's 2005 general election.

The general election is the most important event in British politics. It is the time when the British people vote to decide who will represent them in Parliament and govern the country. Candidates who want to become MPs must persuade electors that they are the most qualified to represent their interests in Parliament. The political parties are out to do all they can to show that they are the best choice to become the Government.

Not only is the general election the most important political event, it's also the most exciting. It's on TV, in the street and dropping into inboxes. People talk about politics more than at any other time. After just a few weeks of intensive campaigning, everything came to a head on May 5th when people made their decisions and cast their all important vote.

This year young people under the voting age could share in the excitement and public debate. In the HeadsUp Forum, the participants were free to discuss any aspects of the general election or voting and elections in general. However, the discussion was launched on the following election topics:

- How can the parties appeal to young people?
- The Election - the campaigns and reports
- Should the voting and candidacy ages be changed?
- Is voting a right or a responsibility?

The Forum opened at the start of the campaigning period. It was open during the build up, on polling day and stayed live for another week to allow young people to talk through their impressions of what had happened and their hopes for the new Parliament and Government.

The objective of the HeadsUp project is not only to facilitate peer-to-peer deliberation on topical political issues, policies or events but also to provide students with a means of informing themselves about the topic.

As with every Forum, 'Turnout or turn off?' was supported by detailed, student-centred background notes that included an election timetable, a glossary providing a breakdown of election jargon, an overview of party policies and even a summary of electoral systems.

The debate involved students from 17 schools around the UK. They were between the ages of 11 and 17. A number of students had participated in previous Forums but most were taking part for the first time. The participants made multiple visits over the duration of the debate and the number of posts totalled 268.

This report summarises the debate that took place and includes key posts from students. Conclusions from the debate are to be found at the end of this report. Special care has been taken to ensure that the report is non-partisan and representative of the views expressed by the participants in the debate.

The participating young people and the Hansard Society would like to invite interested parties, particularly parliamentarians and government, to respond to the findings.

Responses and requests for further information should be directed to:

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'Turnout or turn off? General Election 2005'

Forum Space 1

How can the parties appeal to young people?

(became 'How can the politicians and parties connect with young people?'
post-May 5th)

When it comes to young people's political engagement, the conventional wisdom is that young people find formal politics alien and inaccessible. Under 18s are said to be especially apathetic about the political parties as a result of the parties' failure to identify the issues or modes of communication that resonate with that age group.

However, political parties are instrumental in our parliamentary system and, during election periods, they are the driving force. So, against the backdrop of the 2005 general election, this first consultation space took the problem and its components and asked the young people to offer their expert analysis.

HeadsUp is not aligned to any party. Of course that doesn't mean that the forum participants can't voice their support for one party over another. All the 'Big Three' came in for praise.

Some participants were happy to be backing the incumbents:

"labour have done such a good job, and im sure things will definetly improve"

Others, however, eagerly anticipated a change in the powerbase. The Conservative party, who provided the official opposition in the last Parliament, were seen by some as a better option:

"I believe that that tories have the right policies to attract younger voters. Although Howard may not be the youngest, or for that matter the most energetic of the three major party leaders, he has some strong views"

The Liberal Democrats have often come out top of opinion polls carried out with young people and they had support from some participants in the HeadsUp Forum:

"lib dems seem to be most appealing to youth. Kennedy is the youngest of the major parties. He's laid back."

However, it would be far from the truth to say that these young people were positive about political parties. Despite occasional vocal support, each of the main parties and their leaders were on the receiving end of some very negative criticism.

The Liberal Democrats' reputation as the 'third party' did not do them many favours when some young people considered their governing credentials:

"I dont reely think that the lib dems are reely relyable to be in government. They havent reely had any experience. And are not as strong as the tory's and labours."

The Conservatives are lampooned in some sections of the media as a party of 'old, grey men'. It is an image that the party has struggled to shake off but from some of the posts it was clear they will need to address more than just cosmetic appearances if they are to win over younger voters:

"the torys can definetly not win, they are not in touch with modern society"

During the election campaign there were voters who spoke of being supportive of the Labour party but feeling let down by Tony Blair. These sentiments also found expression in the HeadsUp Forum:

"tony blair the most corrupt prime minsiter ever, uses his power for free holidays, to get his 'mates' into high powered jobs, and seems sleazy"

Though each of the leaders and their parties were criticised, the vast majority of uncomplimentary posts about the political parties were directed at their collective contribution to British politics. There were particularly damning appraisals delivered on their attempts to connect with younger citizens:

"Out of the three major parties, I haven't seen any effort put in for the vote of young people, while in the USA there were enormous campaigns run for the young vote. I don't know if this is the appropriate forum to post this comment, but I will anyway. If I could vote, I would have a hard time doing it"

Yet, in response some students questioned why the parties should bother themselves with young people, especially those under the age of electoral majority:

"there's no need for the major parties to get the vote for young people, as many can't vote, and the majority of those who can, either won't vote at all or vote for some one like the monster raving loony party"

Young people are often criticised for not taking politics seriously, and this is used as a justification for writing off the value of their participation in the

political process. However, there were young people in the Forum who set out to counter this belief through their words and actions:

“many adults refuse to believe that what we have to say counts and when we try to exercise our right to freedom of speech we are always greeted with the all too familiar 'dont back chat me' i believe that the world today is living in the past and when children were to be seen and not heard. they need to get with the times and accept that what we have to say may be true and that our say matters”

Arguments like this received wide support amongst the participants. Nevertheless, some were quick to point out that the parties would find it no small challenge to catch up on lost time with such a diverse and mobile section of society:

“It depends on what young people want. Once a party has identified what that part of the electorate wants, then and ONLY then, can it appeal to young people.”

There was clearly awareness amongst those taking part that the lack of dialogue between politicians and young people is an issue that must be addressed. What’s more, these young people were keen to show that they recognised the effort that they themselves could make to help bring about change.

However, the weight of opinion put the onus on the candidates, elected representatives or their parties. The warning from these young people was that the failure of today’s politicians to engage purposefully with their younger constituents would have long-term implications for democracy in the UK:

“if M.P's don't catch our enthusiasm, then it is, perhaps, a little worrying that we just remain ignorant of a party who is, in a way, ruling our lives.”

From this discussion it would seem that a prime time to capture that enthusiasm is during election periods. But was the opportunity squandered in 2005?

'Turnout or turn off? General Election 2005'

Forum Space 2

The Election - the campaigns and reports

(became 'Politics - campaigning and reporting' post-May 5th)

Political parties and candidates spend a lot of money, time and effort at elections trying to ensure that their messages are the most prominent and convincing. At the same time campaigners, protesters, the press and some private citizens are using the same media to highlight their agendas and to often counter those of the parties.

Britain had its first 'TV election' in 1959. Since then we have seen the onset of a media with a 24-hour appetite for information. The internet has added to the speed and variance of facts, figures and interpretations available to the electorate as it tries to determine which party and politicians to vote into power.

Young people in 21st century Britain are said to be more media-savvy than any previous generation. They are believed to be more discerning about what they are exposed to and are even capable of creating and launching their own messages. So, what was their take on the campaigning, reporting and advertising during the 2005 general election?

From the beginning of the HeadsUp debate, the participants spoke of their awareness of the election campaigning, reporting and advertising. Young people growing up in Western democracies are, of course, media literate, and it was certainly hard to avoid the election activity. There was a big build up to the announcement of the election and the media made sure that (when it was all officially underway) there was regular, rolling coverage.

The 2005 general election stood out for the quantity and range of information sources. This was acknowledged by the young people taking part on HeadsUp and some spoke with confidence about using the various sources to build up their own picture of what was going on in the election:

"there are a variety of mediums to which information can be processed to the public. it is the responsibility of the public to access this and take an interest. there are numerous newspapers, interviews etc so there is no excuse"

There was genuine surprise amongst some of the participants about the places where the election campaign was appearing. Some of the efforts designed to widen the appeal of politics were met with genuine praise:

"I believe they are starting to campaign in some of the right places. I was reading a magazine called Glamour the other day, it was the April addition and it had six pages on the election campaign two for each party!! i think this is a good way of getting young people interested in politics, and even if they are not atleast they will read the bold print and take in a little bit of knowledge!!"

Yet, despite the enthusiastic approval for the creative approaches of some sections of the media, the feeling of the majority in this discussion was of disappointment and frustration with both the campaigning and reporting.

Parliamentary politics is often criticised for being too confrontational and cynical. From the perspective of these young people, that bad practice had been carried over into the election to the detriment of the parties, their candidates and campaigns:

"i think politics couldnt get much more negative. This whole election is basically the different parties trying to prove that they are the least worse, not the best.if a positive party came along, people might actually want to vote for them, rather than not wanting to vote for the other parties"

Participants believed many of the media players were only compounding the problem. Far from providing the public with trustworthy assessments of the parties and the election, the media were accused of encouraging negative, near-sighted campaigning:

"i think alot of the reporting done by the media is negative and unproductive towards the smaller parties. its like all the reporters or news channels have an agenda and they are'nt giving the smaller parties a voice, until they decide something in their manifesto is outrageous enough for people to watch or to sell news papers as if we cant make our own minds up and form our own opinions on any other party other than the 'big' three. i think all coverage of party agendas and manifestos should be equal and non byist."

Overall, it was clear that for young people, who are increasingly adventurous in the media they access, the 2005 general election should have been an opportunity to expand on their political awareness and improve their feelings towards political coverage. For some, it was; but for a greater number, further damage was done to politics by the nature of campaigning and reporting during this election:

"if fraud,lying and more lying was an olympic sport politicians would hold the gold medal"

Nevertheless, from this discussion it was apparent that there was still plenty of opportunity for politics to reclaim lost interest and trust. Some of the responsibility was seen to lie with the public themselves (including young people) and the influence the media could have was also emphasised.

However, the greatest potential was, again, placed in the hands of the politicians and their parties. Although employing more creative approaches to the media could stimulate interest and reduce feelings of disengagement, participants were keen to stress that the most credible way for those elected in 2005 to connect with young people was to interact properly with them:

“politicians should actually listen to us and come into schools to talk to us more if they want our opinion”.

‘Turnout or turn off? General Election 2005’

Forum Space 3

Should the voting and candidacy ages be changed?

In October 2003, HeadsUp was the platform for a very popular and insightful debate by young people on proposals to change the minimum voting and candidacy ages. The transcripts from that debate were submitted as evidence to The Electoral Commission’s official investigation into the age of electoral majority. Their report and recommendations (published in April 2004) are now with the Government, which has yet to set out how it will proceed.

The debate about the voting and candidacy ages remains a long-stay in British politics. There are a wide range of organisations and voices stoking up the arguments for and against. Amongst young people, both of the camps have their supporters and against the backdrop of the 2005 general election, the HeadsUp Forum was again engaged in energetic debate.

Debate about the candidacy age was minimal. Very few participants considered the issue of whether younger people should be able to stand for election. Those who did address the question favoured keeping the minimum age at 21:

“I think the MP age should stay at 21 because it will give people a fair chance to go to university even if the do want to become an MP. Also, it

will give people an extra few years of experiencing politics before becoming as actively involved as actually being an MP."

Vastly more popular was discussion about the voting age, which currently stands at 18. Whilst only one of the participants suggested raising the minimum voting age, a sizable group argued in favour of keeping the current age.

They were challenged by an even larger number of young people who wanted to see the age reduced. A range of ages were put forward - from having the right from birth, to 17, and practically every age in between. By far the most frequently suggested minimum age was 16 years old.

The most commonly cited arguments in favour of lowering the voting age were based on participants' appraisals of the other rights that came into play when someone reached 16 years of age. These rights were seen as having significant implications on the lives of the individual and the wider community, and the burden of the vote was seen as being no weightier than the likes of joining the armed forces or paying tax:

"I think the voting age should be lowered to 16. At 16 you can leave school, get married, have kids, you shud be able to decide who's in charge of this country."

The fact that decisions were being made by elected representatives and government ministers that impacted on the lives of young people without the vote was not missed by these students. If decisions are being made by politicians about their lives, then, they argued, they should have a direct say in who those politicians are:

"I think that the age should be lowered to 16 because parliament decide on things that affect 16 year olds such as tuition fees(in a few years)and issues such as smoking etc. Also, some people will leave school at 16 so will be affected by employment laws. Parliament are making decisions that affect 16 year olds, so why shouldn't they vote?"

However, though smaller in their number, those opposed to a change were just as vocal. These participants believed that, like standing for election, taking part in an election as a voter necessitated a certain maturity that those under 18 did not possess:

"The voting age should not be changed!! i do believe in rights and that everyone should have the chance to put their view forward and their opinion. Though i do not think people younger than 18 will have enough life experiance and do not completely understand polictics and the elections."

Similarly, the need to base voting on a good working knowledge of politics, Parliament and Government was emphasised on regular occasion. Those opposed to a change in the voting age argued that under-18s lacked the

necessary political awareness to make informed decisions about how they used their vote:

"Although you can do alot of stuff at 16 you aren't an adult. there are some kids who know about politics, but what about the others?they might end up voting for someone just because theyre friends are, or because theyve heard one good thing about them. it's true that this could be the case with anyone, but most adults are responsible enough that they either look stuff up about parties before voting or just dont vote at all. 16/17 year olds just arent reliable enough, most don't know enough to put forward a reasonable vote that means something."

They acknowledged that Parliament was making decisions that would affect citizens of all ages, but they argued that the vast majority of these issues were only of direct relevance to people over the age of 18:

"The age is at the right age because everything that each campain stands for is majorly effecting people over the age of 18. Like uni fees and taxes and property prices and so on."

However, an argument about politics' lack of relevance to the lives of under-18s was confronted. Some of those campaigning for a rethink claimed that any issue concerning Parliament and Government was of concern to citizens of all ages in the UK. Whereas others argued that giving the vote to 16 year olds was the only way to ensure that young people's interests were being addressed credibly:

"someone ages ago said that the voting age should stay the same because political issues have more to do with people over 18. but then if the government made the voting age lower they would have to pay more attention to us to get our votes. they hardly target our age range at all now - if they needed our votes they would do more for us"

Searching for a compromise between the camps, some participants suggested the idea of establishing a test for those wishing to qualify for the vote. The idea was that applicants would have to prove that they would exercise their voting rights on informed, responsible grounds:

"perhaps the voting age should be given to responsible people whatever their age. I mean that you should have to pass a test to show you know that you will make a responsible vote. It prevents people from voting for stupid reasons such as "ewww, I think I'll vote for the cutest candidate!""

However, the prospect of tests did not sit well with others. Some opposed the idea on the basis of it being an affront to human rights:

"U SHUD NOT HAVE TO TAKE A TEST TO VOTE!!!!no way!!!! doesnt that just disslove all the human rights stuff?"u can only choose whos going to b in charge of the country if u r clever" it wud never never work and it will never never happen"

Whilst others looked more to the practicalities of a test and wondered if it would only aggravate the problem of low turnout at elections:

“Wont people be put off voting if they have to sit and take a test, as it is very time consuming, and people may feel it is not worth it and have better things to do!!”

Another proposal that emerged was to keep the minimum age at 18, but offer enthusiastic young people under the age of 18 the chance to apply for the vote by stating or proving their interest:

“i think voting should kept to the same age but if anyone younger did want to take part they should be able to appeal for the right. That way only people who were seriously bothered about the election would vote and people younger than 18 who don't understand wouldn't just vote randomly or not bother at all...”

The problem of how to test people's 'ability' to vote in a manner that was both objective and rigorous, and whether it was even fair to begin with was beyond the scope of this Forum.

However, on regular occasions, the problem of adequate education and access to information was raised. It was, it seemed, the one aspect of the debate that linked many of those arguing for or against a change in the age of electoral majority.

It was the lack of proper education, many argued, that resulted in below average turnout amongst those young people who currently have the vote:

“I think the reason that there is such a dismal number of 18 year olds voting in the general elections, is because they are unaware of the policies set up by the government. They have not been taught about the government or what the government entails, at a younger age, such that of 16/17. There is no need to lower the age group if people at 18 are not placing the vote. We are having a `voter apathy`, we need to be taught about the issues in hand before we are able to vote.”

So, it would seem that the message from this discussion in the General Election Forum was that education breeds awareness, and this awareness in turn leads to positive participation, such as voting in elections. Indeed, to back this up, some participants pointed to their own experiences:

“i DESPISED politics before we got citizenship lessons. i thought it was just a load of boring old men talking about money. which it is. but theres more to it!i now take an interest in politics, and i watch the ten o clock news and i am INTERested. thats the main thing.politics should be a proper compulsory lesson from year 7”

More young people's views on the age of electoral majority can be found in the report and transcripts from the 'Make Your Mark' debate, downloadable from the HeadsUp site or through the Hansard Society.

'Turnout or turn off? General Election 2005'

Forum Space 4

Is voting a right or a responsibility?

(became 'Is taking an interest in politics a right or a duty?' post-May 5th)

At the last two general elections, turnout has been by far the lowest amongst the youngest voters (18 - 24 year olds). Yet, throughout the previous topic spaces there was evidently a lot of enthusiasm about elections and voting.

In the age of electoral majority debate, most of those who posted wanted to see the voting age changed in such a way that it would give most of the participants the vote. So, against the background of the 2005 election, acknowledging that the turnout amongst 18 - 24 year olds was 21% less than the national average in 2001, this final space asked young people whether they saw voting as a casual pursuit or a vital duty?

There were some participants who thought that people should treat their vote as something that they were free to use or not use as they saw fit. However, very few of these participants simply thought the vote was completely worthless. Instead, they were eager to point out that there were a range of factors that dissuaded voters from turning out on polling day:

"Some People feel they shouldnt because of a number of reasons, these could be:

*They believe there is no party with good enough policies or prommises, to have the right to represnt everyone.

*They believe that there is no party leader capable to cope with the pressure of being prime minister or is trust worthy enough

*they do not know enough about politcs to feel they have a right to give a vote.

*They do not know how to or where to vote

*They do not truly think that voting for anyone will truly benifit them as an individual.

Can parliament, government or the voting system prevent these excusses or reasons why people are not voting?"

Posts like this placed a lot of emphasis on the role that the political institutions and representatives could play in tackling these problems. However, other students were quick to counter, believing that there was more that the people could do for themselves:

“Many people say they did not vote because they are not sure who to vote for. If you are not sure, then do some research on the policies of different parties.”

Other participants took issue with the excuse that one person’s vote couldn’t make a difference to the outcome of an election:

“in the elections groups have one by just 100's of votes and if that 100 people voted it would have just made the difference some vote!!! it's your duty”

Most of the young people posting in this debate viewed voting as a responsibility, a duty that had to be carried out whenever the opportunity arose. They cited a number of reasons to justify their thinking.

Some students argued that it was absurd not to use an opportunity to have an influence on the decision-making process:

“I think you should have to vote, because the government is going to effect you in some way. If you really don't want to make a choice you can abstain. We need to carry on voting or important choices, will be out of our hands.”

For other like-minded students, voting in an election is about doing your bit. Making the effort to vote, they said, gave you a right to participate throughout the political cycle:

“People always the first to complain, either about the buses not being on time, the N.H.S. or other things controlled by the government, yet if they didn't vote, they shouldn't technically complain as they did nothing to prevent it happening.”

Some young people looked deeper into the idea of voting as an expression of citizenship. From their perspective, voting was an effort by an individual that was of benefit to their community or society as a whole, and should, therefore, be motivated by more than just personal interests:

“i think that voting is a duty to ur country, for if i didnt vote wen i was older, i dnt reely think that I wuld feel part of a community, plus, it wuld be a privilge and i wuld feel that i had shown my opinion to others.”

As an extension of this argument, students looked to history and the sacrifices made by past generations for the benefit of those in the future:

“People have died and spent there lives so we could have a say in how our lives are run. It is an insult to them if we do not vote. Voting is a duty.”

Whereas others drew comparisons between Britain and countries elsewhere in the world as a means of emphasising that the right to vote was something that people were still striving for in contemporary times:

“people should vote as sometimes they don't realise how lucky they are living in a country where you have rights, and are able to choose who to vote for instead of being told who to vote for.”

All of these points begged the question, what could be done to encourage higher turnout and more participation, particularly amongst young people, at elections?

The participants struggled with this issue and (naturally) found it difficult to come up with concrete solutions to the problem. As posts had been comparing the British experience with those in other parts of the world, some participants suggested making voting compulsory:

“everyone should make voting a priority considering it affects everyone livilng in the country. perhaps introducing fines would direct the pubic to become fully involved in clasifying their vote.”

However, even though the students could see that compulsion might have a significant impact on turnout, they did not feel that it was an option. Forcing people to vote, they reasoned, was out-of-step with their ideas of what British democracy was all about:

“At the beginning of the 19th century, voting had been seen as a priviledge... yet it is now seen as a right. It is the publics right who to vote for. We live in a democacy and so the people should decide whether they want to vote or not. I do find it selfish if people decide not to vote because you have to think about the lives sacrificed by both men and women, so that everyone was entitled to have this vote. Making voting compulsory however in the UK should not be allowed because then we would not live in a democracy. Its not a democracy telling people what to do.”

It seemed that the discussion favoured a number of converging strategies, rather than one blanket approach. As in the previous discussions, a combined effort from politicians, media, NGOs and citizens was called on. So too was putting more effort into innovative approaches, such as experimenting with new technologies:

“their should be other ways 2 vote such as e-mail, phone, sms. this might help get the amount of ppl voting bck up”

'Turnout or turn off? General Election 2005'

Conclusions

Creativity, choice, dialogue and enthusiasm

This was a crucial Forum for HeadsUp to stage and one that was welcomed by those young people who participated. It provided a secure, structured but non-sanitised platform for them to voice their perspectives on the general election and be exposed to those of other young people from around the UK.

The timing of this Forum was deliberate. Young people have frequently complained about the lack of opportunities for them to participate in topical political discussions and events (especially elections). HeadsUp was set up in the wake of the 2001 general election to ensure that a credible platform was established for use in 2005 and beyond.

HeadsUp tackles complex political problems but is not designed make set recommendations. Like adults, young people have a range of perspectives on political events, issues and policies, and often favour different solutions. This resource was established not to give the 'definitive line'; rather it is about providing a space for people to share their views, challenge those of others and, in turn, be challenged.

It is evident from this Forum that young people were closely following the 2005 general election, listening to the parties, scrutinising the candidates and forming opinions on what was best for Britain and who was most qualified to make it happen. Therefore, it is clear that young people in the UK are far from being politically apathetic.

This is cause for encouragement about the state of political engagement but what was also clear is that there is a lot of dissatisfaction with the way British politics is carried out. There remains a considerable gulf between elected representatives, political institutions and processes and the UK's youngest citizens. As the young people themselves have emphasised in this Forum, disengagement must be addressed if representative democracy is to be reinvigorated and future low turnouts avoided.

Reading through this report and the transcripts that follow is essential reading for anyone who will be involved in politics during the lifetime of this next Parliament. It will help ensure that people are properly informed about the hopes, needs and potential of young people, and hopefully keep up the momentum on what is becoming a very productive debate about political awareness and participation in contemporary British society.

'Turnout or turn off? General Election 2005'

Transcripts

Forum Topic Transcript

Turnout or turn off?

How can the parties appeal to young people?/How can the politicians and parties connect with young people?

25/04/2009:05:00

justice

Welcome...

The election is really heating up...

Based on what you have seen from the parties' campaigns so far - and prior to the election - which would you say has done the most to appeal to young people?

Are any getting it right? Or do they need to rethink their strategies?

Why should political parties be interested in young people?

25/04/2009:33:00

RKuhn

Appeal of political parties

lib dems seem to be most appealing to youth. Kennedy is the youngest of the major parties. He's laid back. They offer free tuition fees, and high taxes on the rich.

25/04/2005 13:28:00

elena

Reply to Rkyhn

Surely the lib dems are not that appealing to the youth who's parents are going to get this extra tax and so will now struggle to support them? For these people, it costs parents far less to pay for tuition fees than to have this extra tax. There are always student loans and grants.

25/04/2005 17:08:00

eranny70

Appealing Parties

Out of the three major parties, I haven't seen any effort put in for the vote of young people, while in the USA there were enormous campaigns run for the young vote.

I don't know if this is the appropriate forum to post this comment, but I will anyway. If I could vote, I would have a hard time doing it now. I would prefer to vote for the Liberal Democrats, but as they are too far behind to have a good chance of winning, and the last thing I want is a Tory government, I would vote for a Labour MP. However, with Tony Blair's awful policies to international matters, I find it hard to vote for Labour. What a dilemma.

25/04/2005 18:34:00

littles

Theres no need

there's no need for the major parties to get the vote for young people, as many can't vote, and the majority of those who can, either won't vote at all or vote for some one like the monster raving loony party-who incidently aim to get young people involved in politics.

Still i can see why this general election is crucial for Labour after having to go through the war, I wonder if they can still hold on to the leadership??

25/04/2005 18:35:00

chilli

Not just votes?

It's a fact that if you're under 18, you can't vote. So is that the end of it?

Can young people not still influence results by talking to others, passing information around, challenging ideas?

Plus, do the parties not have to at least concern themselves slightly with young people given that the young people today are the voters at the next election?

What do you think about these views?

26/04/2005 12:39:00

AnnabelW

Are you interested?

How interested are you in your own opinion? Do you consider yourself an opinionated person?

What do you want to debate about? What rights do you have? Do you know the rules of this site?

26/04/2005 12:44:00

justice

Moderators

This is a 'safe' space to discuss political events, issues and ideas. People are going to disagree - that's politics and it's nothing to worry about.

However, just in case anyone is wondering there are clear rules for using the site and everybody should take note of them.

If you have a complaint about someone use the contact form. Everyone gets a fair hearing.

Otherwise you have trust in us - the Moderators - to take care of anyone who's not showing the proper respect due to the people using HeadsUp.

Now go get stuck in!

:-)

26/04/2005 14:38:00

hena1

names of other political parties st

what other parties are standing for election, not including the 3 main parties!?

26/04/2005 14:39:00

biged

It's a big list

There are loads of other parties standing in the general election.

Some are small. Some are made up of just one person. Only a few - like the Greens and UKIP - will make much impact on Parliament (this time around).

For a more detail on the other political parties and the election in general, check out BackUp.

26/04/2005 14:45:00

sadiya Khanum

how do parties appeal to younger

i think that all young people should get more involved with politics, votes etc and should be able to tell there views.

26/04/2005 14:58:00

chrisk

giv others a chance

yeh whys it just the main three parties that get all the publicity, after all there all renown for lying!

26/04/2005 15:59:00

Frances

lib dems appealing

I dont reely think that the lib dems are reely relyable to be in government. They havent reely had any experience. And are not as strong as the tory's and labours.

26/04/2005 19:48:00

Madeleine

Tax

I think there is a lot of tax at the moment and I think a lot of people and parents really get stressed out from it if they have a problem with it like for example they may not be able to pay enough money

niknak73

hi

the parties are coming to a good point

27/04/2005 14:11:00

5thelephant

If I had the vote:

If I had the chance I would most definitely vote for the LibDems. One person before said that they were going to tax more people so that they would not be able to support their children. On the subject of taxing LibDems seek to decrease taxes on lower paid families and taxes are only going to be increased for people earning over £100,000. On top of this LibDems are hoping to abolish paying for universities. This seems to be good for any one who wants to go into higher education. This is one good thing for the youth.

LibDems hope to abolish the system of GCSEs (this would not in any way make your qualifications invalid) and A levels in the hope of making the exams etc. more open to people who can't do subjects like maths and do have other skills.

LibDems have the best leader I believe.

Labour: Believed to have lied on many issues with lots of evidence.

Tories: Micheal Howard introduced the poll tax (I think) and his history in office is colourful to say the least + I have a natural aversion to conservatives. Sorry but it might have been Margaret Thatcher.

27/04/2005 14:20:00

niknak73

5elephant

I don't think that you have a good idea of voting

27/04/2005 14:23:00

jamesr

Appealing Parties

I believe that the Tories have the right policies to attract younger voters. Although Howard may not be the youngest, or for that matter the most energetic of the three major party leaders, he has some strong views on education, such as discipline in the classroom, which is a major problem, especially in London. Also I think that many would agree that scrapping university top-up fees will pull in the young voters. I agree with the Tories policies on immigration, being one of the few English people in my local community I think that a crack on immigrants is what Britain needs, Howard is planning on taking a leaf out of the Australian prime ministers book, John Howard, by introducing a point system and restricting the amount of immigrants coming into the country. Localising government strategies brings back power to the community and younger voters. Jimbo

27/04/2005 14:25:00

5thelephant

niknak

What is that meant to mean? Do you have an opinion or are you just disagreeing because you feel like it!?

27/04/2005 16:26:00

Madeleine

Asking a question to 5thelephant

5thelephant who are you talking about?!

27/04/2005 16:36:00

Cowell

tuition fees

I think that tuition fees should get scrapped because I think they are too high

27/04/2005 16:39:00

Allan

any

i think it does appeal to some young ones

27/04/2005 16:39:00

Graham

politakes

i think it is right

27/04/2005 16:41:00

Amer

?

i believe that the voting age is not reasonable and i think that people should get to know about politics at a young age in about year 9 or 10 because people don't know much about politics when they go into their new life and experiences

27/04/2005 16:41:00

Graham

How do the parties appeal to you

i think young people should have parties

27/04/2005 16:46:00

Allan

any

the parties should appeal to all people

27/04/2005 16:46:00

Allan

any

the parties should appeal to all people

27/04/2005 16:48:00

Quiyum

?

I think politicians should give us a proper answer. They don't even give us the exact information instead they give us some information and then they change it.

27/04/2005 16:50:00

Walker2

young people

I think that whatever the politicians are saying about young people is a load of rubbish. The politicians should give the young people more opportunities to go out and enjoy and exercise themselves instead of getting moved from everywhere they go for a game of football.

27/04/2005 16:57:00

Tate

youth targeted politics

i think Charles Kennedy and the Lib Dems are doing the right thing at the moment and have been savvy in their selection of manifesto content as they know they haven't got a chance of getting into government at the moment, have noticed calls for the age you are eligible to vote to be lowered due to voter apathy, have aimed a lot of their policies at the young knowing that in the future when the voting age is lowered which won't be that far away they'll have support.

27/04/2005 19:28:00

Frances

Parties Appeal

I don't think that the Lib Dems would be good in government coz they have never really run in my generation, so I don't really think they're reliable. Yet, I think that the Tories appeal, for they promote themselves well with their slogans and posters, also they have really good things to offer

28/04/2005 9:13:00

masterzen

In your 'hood

Has anyone met any of the candidates from their area who want to represent them at Westminster?

Say, at school or when they came knocking on the doors in your street?

Who were they? What were they like? Did they have anything interesting to say?

28/04/2009:57:00

matthew

Schools

I think the conservatives have taken the correct line with education by concerning mainly on discipline as i feel this is a major problem in schools at the moment.

Matt

28/04/2005 23:39:00

tellytubby

lib dem or labour? definetly not to

the lib dems certantly appeal more to youth, but labour have done such a good job, and im sure things will definetly improve. the torys can definetly not win, they are not in touch with morden society, and there planning to get rid of the NHS, so what are the poor people going to do when they need surgery?

02/05/2005 15:34:00

Saucy Suzi

are they appealing??

I only believe they are appealing to the young people who understand politics and are old enough to undersatnd it, like us using this site (well lets just say the majority of us using this site)

But what about the people who dont understand enough, people younger than us. are the parties appealing to them??

are they trying to simplify their means of what they are doing, so that the younger views have some knowledge of what is gong on??

i do not think they are, and if they are trying, they are making very little effort.

maybe they believe that it is not on the list of their priorities!?!??

do you all think the same??

03/05/2005 17:03:00

ellies

...

I think that the scrapping tuition fees makes the party seem appealing to young people, but the extra money needed for furthur education will be paid for in tax anyway, so either way your parents will end up paying (unless you pay your own tuition fees) so is it really worth voting for a party that promises to take away the direct costs whilst still indirectly charging you for them???

04/05/2005 10:33:00

masterzen

24

Tomorrow the polls open and votes will be cast.

If you were one of the party leaders, what would you do in the last 24 hours to convince people that you were the party to lead Britain over the next 5 years?

04/05/2005 14:12:00

jamesr

To 5thelephant

In return to 5th elephant's comment i am putting forward my opinion, not jst disagreeing because i feel like it!?! I was just putting forward a few of the facts, thast all.

Jimbo

04/05/2005 14:13:00

meera

tuition fees

lib democrats are doing most for younger people. offereing free tution fees to uni's aswell, but if parents hacve to pay more in tax i don't think its worth it.

04/05/2005 14:17:00

elliott

tony blair

the most corrupt prime minsiter ever, uses his power for free holidays, to get his 'mates' into high powered jobs, and seems sleazy, but says that most politicians do.

04/05/2005 14:19:00

matthew

Trust

Although I do not want to get into the Tony Blair is a liar debate, I am surprised to find that no one has picked up on the fact that Mr Blair denied naming Dr Kelly, but has now admitted it. This was a blatant lie that no one seems to have picked up on.

04/05/2005 14:23:00

aisha

What some of the parties are doing

The fact that they are including issues about university fees which affect many people, parents and students.

04/05/2005 14:27:00

elliots

What do Young People want?

It depends on what young people want. Once a party has identified what that part of the electorate wants, then and ONLY then, can it appeal to young people. It is ratio, when appealing to young people. Period.

04/05/2005 14:29:00

chilli

Wants and Needs

What is it that young people in the UK want from the parties?

What's your experience?

05/05/2005 10:03:00

justice

All change?

It's decision day for Britain's voters.

How do you see things unfolding?

As of Friday the focus of the Forum will shift. It will become a chance to look-back on the election and to look forward to what you hope will happen with the new Parliament and Government.

05/05/2005 16:28:00

ellies

school election

the results of our school election today proved that the party that best appeals to young people is the monster raving looney party. They are promising jelly and ice cream with the £100 prize money. What more can i say...!

06/05/2005 14:10:00

Saucy Suzi

Labour won...

Well there we have it, labour are in power again!! is this a good thing??

lets see if they appeal to us or not!!

If they do something that is going to benefit young people, then they will be connecting with us in the right way.....but do they truly understand what we want and changes we want to see??

09/05/2005 10:27:00

deanmorg

parliment

i dont think tony blair should of won

09/05/2005 10:37:00

karlybarn

labour

I think that conservertive should have one because the are trying to help everyone

09/05/2005 10:39:00

karlybarn

conservative dean i don't think to

labour are rubbish

09/05/2005 10:42:00

sabinaquan

parliament

i dont think tony blair should of won because his the one who starts everythind

09/05/2005 10:42:00

justice

The Heavies

Just remember that we have all your real names on file and too much messing around could lead to your teacher being contacted.

Don't waste an opportunity to share your opinions on important happenings in British society. Your opinions - posted here - go all the way to the top and could very well bring about a rethink.

But, if that doesn't do it for you, don't waste everyone else's time.

Sorry... we don't like ticking people off.

09/05/2005 10:44:00

sabinaquan

voting age

only under 18s should vote

09/05/2005 10:44:00

sabinaquan

sdkj3q4weqt

I think that conservertive should have one because the are trying to help everyone

09/05/2005 15:11:00

Yaniesharose

why don't children vote

children and teenagers should have a right to vote because we are humans too and are oppinions should count TOO.

09/05/2005 15:12:00

Lucyprio

vote

Children and teenagers should vote!!

10/05/2009:37:00

Ratishakama

politics

I think the politics is stupid. Lets make peace, not war

10/05/2009:40:00

Justinemill

connecting with young poeple

the government cant help yuongar cause they dont really care about us

10/05/2009:45:00

justice

Get with it

Looks to me like some of you lot haven't been prepped on what this site is about.

So, take a look around and get up to speed see what other people have been posting,
Or, expand that brain of yours by going to the BackUp section.
Nice one...

10/05/2009:45:00

biged

Connections

I've seen a few comments that say the government/politicians don't care about young people.
Can you give some examples of something they've done (or not done) that made you feel like that?

10/05/2005 9:46:00

yvettearku

anything

i think the age of voting should be 14+ because we have opinions as well not just adults

10/05/2005 9:47:00

Ratishakama

HOW?

HOW DO YOU POLITICS. I see people on tv talking about this but i just dont get it!

10/05/2005 9:48:00

Hassannade

how can the politicians properly c

i think that young people should connect with politician.

10/05/2005 9:53:00

jackayad

How can the government help

The government should make points that are more appealing to teens, as later life they will be going collage and university, they should even try to make an effort to visit schools and educate them about politics

10/05/2005 17:18:00

yvettearku

agree

i don't agree with hassannade said about young people connecting with politicians we don't govern the country or not everyone who wants to be a president so politicians should rather connect with us if they want to win elections

10/05/2005 18:39:00

hot_chocolate

'seen and not heard' ?

when my class did a mock election we all voted against labour i.e tony blair. i think that this is because that politics as a whole does not appeal to the average child. i think that politicians could talk about issues that children really care about. i think that they should ask us for our views and then instead of pretending to listen to us while the cameras are there and then doing whatever they want they should take our beliefs into consideration because i think that many adults refuse to believe that what we have to say counts and when we try to exercise our right to freedom of speech we are always greeted with the all too familiar 'dont back chat me'
i believe that the world today is living in the past and when children were to be seen and not heard. they need to get with the times and accept that what we have to say may be true and that our say matters

11/05/2005 20:06:00

shapirokb

Labour have only just held on

it is true to say that and indeed Labour have one but with a slanted majority of around 65 seats. This means that Labour are less likely to get a majority vote if they pass a law in the house of commons.

11/05/2005 20:10:00

shapirokb

Here, here!

i think that just because children can't vote doesn't mean M.P's should ignore us. Otherwise we won't be interested when we are old enough to vote and therefore we will not form our own opinions and simply vote for whoever is predicted to win.

11/05/2005 20:25:00

Josh

I still like politics but...

But I think that if M.P's don't catch our enthusiasm, then it is, perhaps, a little worrying that we just remain ignorant of a party who is, in a way, ruling our lives.

12/05/2005 9:35:00

Rubyncamp

Tony Blairs Decisions

Norville what u think of tony blair

12/05/2005 9:38:00

Jamshedahma

youths

i think they should target and pay attention to youths on the street and get them away from a life of crime

12/05/2005 9:40:00

Rubyncamp

Age to vote

We should be aloud to vote at an earlier age than 18, we are mature as it is at 14, so at sixteen we should be able to fully understand about why we vote and who to vote for

12/05/2005 9:41:00

Norvillestep

Voting

We should be allowed to vote at sixteen.

This is because we have a right ot have a say and not pople over the age of 18 years old and onwards.

We are the people of the future and if we don't have our say what will happen to our future, we have a right ot change what we don't like.

12/05/2005 9:50:00

Sallahmir

voting

I think every one should be voting next election

12/05/2005 9:54:00

Davidshay

how to get young people involved

the govenment would get young people interested in politics by making things more child friendly and not just be for adults.

12/05/2005 9:55:00

Kwadwoford

I think

I think we should vote at 16

12/05/2005 9:56:00

Sallahmir

voting from 18 years

you have to vote from 18 year old

12/05/2005 13:01:00

Georgericc

politicians

these people should visit the schools and see what us young but mature humans think about the world.

love

georgericc

12/05/2005 13:09:00

Benichoumagb

why 18?

i wanna vote too, but i can't because i'm too young. give me one reason why we can't vote

12/05/2005 13:10:00

Rochelleetie

how can they connect with us you

I DONT THINK THAT THEY TRY HARD ENOUGH TO CCONNECT WITH US YOUNG PEOPLE ,THEY DONT EXPLAIN WAT THERE TELLING US TO VOTE FOR OR GIVE US GOOD REASON TO VOTE FOR THEM TELL US WAT THEY HAVE TO OFFER FOR THE YOUNG SOCIETY

12/05/2005 13:19:00

Rochelleetie

connecting

i dnt think that the parliment try to connct with the young society dnt tell us wat weere actually voting for dnt tell us wat they have to offer for us the young society

12/05/2005 17:07:00

Josh

What about us?

I think that just because we're too young to vote it doesn't mean that we're not interested. That's the whole point of this website. So I think that politics should start to get active with our interests and needs.

12/05/2005 17:12:00

chilli

If I was the Prime Minister...

Say I was a politician looking in on the Forum (which they do, some have even promised to post in the future)...

Could you give even just one example of an issue that you think politicians should pick up on to convince young people that they're interested in their lives?

Or is their a specific gesture they could make? (like actually posting in the Forum)

12/05/2005 17:24:00

Josh

yes there is

I think that they should at least post in and tell us how the system of voting works. I already know but many others might not, so they could educate us, so that when we are old enough to vote we know how it all runs.

13/05/2005 14:50:00

Stuartsmit

younger age voters

i dont think that people under 16 should vote because if one person from a group of friends voted for lets say b,n,p all other people from the group would vote for it aswell because there 'leader' of their friends group voted for them it will be just like the cloths we wear one person wears something one wk later every one is wearing it

13/05/2005 14:53:00

Robinahnaig

younger peoples views about the

we young people should be allowed to vote and make our voices heard and not only mps and people in a higher ranking. We are the future generation of britain so we also need to help out.

13/05/2005 14:55:00

Amiejedr

voting

do you think that people such as our selves and others should vote at a young age

13/05/2005 16:34:00

justice

The Forum Sleeps

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See you then...

Forum Topic Transcript

Turnout or turn off?

Elections – the campaigns and reports/Politics – campaigning and reporting

25/04/2005 9:11:00

justice

Welcome...

It's on the TV, on the bus, in your email box and coming out your friends' mouths... the general election has got everybody hooked.

But what do you think of what we've been seeing and hearing so far? Has it been a positive or a negative campaign?

How do you rate the media coverage?

Have you been able to get the information you need to stay informed? Has the election been turning up in any unusual places?

25/04/2005 18:43:00

littles

getting involved

My school has a great way of getting us interested in politics from our age, by running a mock election within school, with pupils running for prime minister under either names of current parties (Labour, Conservative, Lib Dems, Monster raving loony party and even communists!!!!) Or under their own names as I am with the 'reality' party. Each candidate has to campaign for things within the school and if they win the vote then they are given £100 to spend on the school (with receipts) I think it's a good idea but also could prove to be a popularity contest. Last time we did an election, the money was spent on the canteen, and it has proved valuable. I can only hope I win. I won't say any more here in case of spies, but I'll keep updating you on my progress.

btw everything is done as it would be in a real election, just on a smaller scale.

26/04/2005 14:40:00

Sumana Ali

election campaigning

why is it that politicians only come knocking at our door when they want our votes?

26/04/2005 14:45:00

ElaineAird

Election campaigning

It is ridiculous the amount of 'election junk mail' that I have had through the post. This is the only time politicians get in touch with the public. Do you not think that this sends out a poor political message? Why are we not consulted at other times?

26/04/2005 14:48:00

chrisk

what our school does

our school doesnt do much to do with politics.

wev been told about this site in pse,but it doesnt seem to be impressing a lot of people :s

27/04/2005 16:41:00

Allan

Any

it has been ok

27/04/2005 16:43:00

Graham

Election campaigning, reporting a

i think thats ok

27/04/2005 16:45:00

Cowell

????

IM NOT THAT BOTHERED COS I JUST GO WIT THE FLOW!

27/04/2005 16:49:00

Tate

reporting

i think alot of the reporting done by the media is negative and unproductive towards the smaller parties. its like all the reoporters or news channels have an agenda and they are'nt giving the smaller parties a voice, until they decide something in their manafesto is outragous enough for people to watch or to sell news papers as if we cant make our own minds up and form our own opinions on any other partys other than the 'big' three. i think all coverage of party agendas and manafestos should be equal and non byist.

27/04/2005 16:50:00

Allan

any

it is very good at what tey are saying

27/04/2005 16:52:00

Brown2

couverage

the couverage is ok you can get more info on the news channels and sky active.

27/04/2005 21:42:00

ADruce

tories

in leamington there are a load of labour posters on billboards, but over the top are big stickers saying "blair lied" etc. im guessing theyve done this in other places too. . anyway, i think this is so slimy and stUPid. it makes the tories (im guessing it was them!) look weak. they know theyre not going to win because of what theyre doing, so theyre going to try and manipulate voters by telling them whats wrong about other parties. i used to support tories, but after howard being so annoying about it i cant like them anymore. what howard is doing is underhand. GRR

28/04/2005 9:20:00

gruff

Doom and gloom

Do you find a lot of the campaigning is negative?

Is it more fears than hopes?

Are there positive messages out there?

28/04/2005 12:46:00

lukeb

labour

who thinks labour should be reelected?

if so why?

28/04/2005 12:47:00

Chrisk

politics

if fraud, lying and more lying was an olympic sport politicians would hold the gold medal

28/04/2005 12:52:00

lukeb

tony blair

LOL Howard 4 GOLD Blair 4 SILVER and KENNEDY 4 BRONZE

29/04/2005 9:52:00

AButcher

blah

lukeb.do u always agree with everything chrisk says?

i think politics couldnt get much more negative. This whole election is basically the different parties trying to prove that they are the least worse, not the best. if a positive party came along, people might actually want to vote for them, rather than not wanting to vote for the other parties

29/04/2005 14:23:00

Le Chong

campaigns

it all looked as if it was going really well for the conservatives and people were finally seeing that tony blair is no good for the country...BUT then i have no idea what went wrong did they get too cocky or something?

constantly insulting blair is boring now howard, we know how you feel about him and its not going to win over any labour voters now is it?

how about concentrating on some different issues other than immigration...!!

that might actually get the party somewhere and blair out of office..

29/04/2005 14:26:00

Saucy Suzi

Campaigning in a teen mag!

I believe they are starting to campaign in some of the right places.

I was reading a magazine called Glamour the other day, it was the April addition and it had six pages on the election campaign two for each party!! i think this is a good way of getting young people interested in politics, and even if they are not atleast they will read the bold print and take in a little bit of knowledge!!

04/05/2005 10:37:00

gruff

And the winner is...

Right, we've had weeks and weeks of it.

Question...

Which party has had the best election campaign? [Why?]

04/05/2005 14:27:00

jamesp

media

there are a variety of mediums to which information can be processed to the public. it is the responsibility of the public to access this and take an interest. there are numerous newspapers, interviews etc so there is no excuse

05/05/2005 10:11:00

justice

All change?

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How do you see things unfolding?

As of Friday the focus of the Forum will shift. It will become a chance to look-back on the election and to look forward to what you hope will happen with the new Parliament and Government.

06/05/2005 14:11:00

Saucy Suzi

For the people who dont know....

Howard has resigned!!

10/05/2005 9:47:00

Ratishakama

HOW?

HOW DO YOU POLITCS. I see people on tv talking about this but i just dont get it!

10/05/2005 9:45:00

Justinemill

advertising

politian a useess and the should go to hell because they hate helpin

10/05/2005 9:47:00

justice

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So, take a look around and get up to speed see what other people have been posting,

Or, expand that brain of yours by going to the BackUp section.

Nice one...

11/05/2005 10:53:00

anuj

politics advertising

politician's should actually listen to us and come into schools to talk to us more if they want our opinion

11/05/2005 20:56:00

Josh

Although,

That is one way but it might a bit difficult. What we do at my school is we do mock elections, where you get to vote for the party you ACTUALLY believe in.

12/05/2005 9:54:00

Danieldyet

stupid

i think children should vote

12/05/2005 9:55:00

Davidfian

politicans comes into school

i agree with anuj because the more the politician come to school to about politics or campaigning yeeh will help student alot to know more about what going on parliament or what going on in the world.also politics is good as well as the world leaders the more tudent vote the more voting balot papers increase.

12/05/2005 13:04:00

Mahyargoli

who do u like in pollitics

is it tony blair is it ken livingston oo who ealse??

12/05/2005 13:04:00

Natashajone

voting age

why can't we vote the age of 16?

12/05/2005 13:16:00

Bolanieoyed

politics=campaning

shutup and talk sense

12/05/2005 13:24:00

Natashajone

we don't have rights!

How comes we can't say what we think! from where i see it, our parents can vote, decide and take interests. but for us we can't decide and give a say. it is just out of order!

12/05/2005 18:01:00

Josh

NO responsibility

I think that the only reason people don't listen to our voices is because we're 'children.' Therefore because we're 'children' we have no credibility. We should at least be able to have some sort of opinion poll for children or something of that nature.

13/05/2005 16:46:00

justice

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See you then...

Forum Topic Transcript

Turnout or turn off?

Should the voting and candidacy age be changed?

25/04/2005 09:24:00

justice

Welcome...

In 2003, HeadsUp held an important debate on changing the voting and candidacy ages. Students who took part in that debate helped to shape the debate beyond this site and were heard by government.

Now as we approach the 2005 general election, have opinions changed? Do you want to see the voting age lowered from 18? What about raised? Maybe it should stay as it is?

And what about the age at which you can stand to become an MP - too high, just right, too low?

Where do you stand on this issue?

25/04/2005 13:42:00

lemon

Voting age

This is a really difficult one. on the one hand y shudn't under 18's vote? the elected government will still be in power when current 14-year olds turn 18. However, how many 14-year olds actually know anything about politics?

I think the voting age should be lowered to 16. At 16 you can leave school, get married, have kids,

you shud be able to decide who's in charge of this country.

25/04/2005 14:25:00

AButcher

Age limit for voting

i think the age limit should be lower then 18 as the government affects everybody. not just over 18s. as for people not being educated enough about the government to vote, it should become compulsory for the government and schools to teach about politics so that it is possible to make an informed choice.

25/04/2005 14:30:00

ADruce

reply to lemon

Although you can do alot of stuff at 16 you aren't an adult. there are some kids who know about politics, but what about the others?they might end up voting for someone just because theyre friends are, or because theyve heard one good thing about them. it's true that this could be the case with anyone, but most adults are responsible enough that they either look stuff up about parties before voting or just dont vote at all. 16/17 year olds just arent reliable enough, most dont know enough to put forward a reasonable vote that means something.

25/04/2005 18:50:00

littles

Eranny70 - 10????

10 years old? Do you want the monster raving loony party voted in or something cos thats what would happen if 10 year olds had the vote. Or do you want a cat as the president...??I didn't know anything about democracy and politics when i was ten - nothing good enough for me to vote anyway.

25/04/2005 21:41:00

ADruce

oui

i agree with both of the last two comments to some degree. . maybe younger children should be allowed to vote, but not until they have been taught more about politics. maybe they should get a block vote or something, like they could get say all the 10 year olds in a school to discuss it with a teacher supervising and making sure they know what theyre voting for, and at the end they could take a vote and the majority could be taken as one vote.

25/04/2005 22:13:00

eranny70

Yes, 10!

Yes, 10. Ideally, you understand. Everyone I knew when I was ten, and everyone I know now who are ten, understand quite a bit about politics and I have seen some of them argue for an hour about political issues, mainly the war in Iraq or the Israeli-Palestinian situation.

PS: QuestionTime with Blair, Kennedy and Howard. 8.30pm Thursday BBC1

26/04/2005 14:47:00

narin_k

voting

i think voting age should stay at 18 because then you are mature enough to know what you are doing any age lower than 16 is in my opinion not acceptable

26/04/2005 14:47:00

craigl

voting

please can someone tell me when the votes are counted

26/04/2005 14:50:00

JV[AI3\$

I think

I tink da age 4 votng shood b 16 coz mst 16yr olds tend 2 tonk about wats going on around dem

26/04/2005 14:50:00

charlottel

apply to vote younger

i think voting should kept to the same age but if anyone younger did want to take part they should be able to appeal for the right. That way only people who were seriously bothered about the election would vote and people younger than 18 who don't understand wouldn't just vote randomly or not bother at all...

26/04/2005 14:54:00

EnamHoque2

Voting

I should vote at the age of 16

26/04/2005 17:24:00

Fozzyblob

Voting

I think u should b able 2 vote at the age if 16 as u r able to leave skl, get married and have babys, so u r literally classed as an adult then. also u get taught about it at skl and will know about it.

26/04/2005 17:28:00

ellies

Voting Age

I think that the age should be lowered to 16 because parliament decide on things that affect 16 year olds such as tuition fees(in a few years)and issues such as smoking etc. Also, some people will leave school at 16 so will be affected by employment laws. Parliament are making decisions that affect 16 year olds, so why shouldn't they vote?

I do not, however, think that children under the age of 16 should vote because although some people do take an interest, others will not care enough to cast a thoughtful vote. Also, I think that under 16s have enough pressure with exams and homeowrk to have to woory about who to vote for. Voting should be kept until an independant age where we are more responsible and will benefit more from the decisions we make.

26/04/2005 19:42:00

Madeleine

Age of voting

I think we should be allowed to vote at 16 because not everyone knows things about politics and at 16 you like leave school.

27/04/2005 14:13:00

shaheen

lower the voting age

I think the voting age should be lowered to 17, as teenagers at that age have already began tomake importantlife decisions about higher education and soon, therefore why cant a 17yr old be responsible enough to vote at that age?

27/04/2005 14:16:00

peter2

voting age ?

I think that peole should be able to vote as soon as they are mature enough to make a well balanced decison.

the only problem with this view is that differnt people reach this leave of maturaty at differnt ages And so this is probably why tghe age is currently set at 18 ;because this is an age that by every one has matured to a leave where they can make a well founded decision with out giving in to pir/perantal presure to vote a surtain way.

even though if the age that this maturaty is reached eirlyer by the majority then the voting age could be reduced to 16

27/04/2005 14:18:00

5thelephant

why not?

why shouldn't we vote?

There is no age on taxing and we could be married by 16. What makes an adult more informed than a school child. there is fundamentally no difference between the mental age of a 14 year old

or a 18 year old and the former can be informed in school about various parties.
People may not be responsible enough to make an informed vote but that is the essence of democracy! The vote is decided by lots of people who could be voting the same as their parents always did, what the person looks like. Your age doesn't affect this. Mabe we could boost the turnout if we kindled interest at an early age

27/04/2005 14:21:00

5thelephant

Parental pressure

I object to the idea that we vote according to what our parents think any more when we are younger than when we are older. Peter2 you may copy your parents I for one do not.
p.s. vote lib dem!

27/04/2005 14:23:00

biged

Candidacy Age

Good points for and against voting age but what about the age at which you can stand for Parliament - should it stay at 21 or be lowered to 18 as the recent report from The Electoral Commission suggested?

27/04/2005 14:25:00

kezi

Age of voting?

I think the reason that there is such a dismal number of 18 year olds voting in the general elections, is because they are unaware of the policies set up by the government. They have not been taught about the government or what the government entails, at a younger age, such that of 16/17. There is no need to lower the age group if people at 18 are not placing the vote. We are having a `voter apathy`, we need to be taught about the issues in hand before we are able to vote.

27/04/2005 14:27:00

peter2

re 5elephant

althogh now with people voting at 18 and proebly in collage/univercity perntal preure is not an issue but if the voting age was reduced to say 16 the merjorityof 16 year olds are still in school areliving at home preure to vote could be aplide very easily.

27/04/2005 15:12:00

dipsy

ofcourse

Yes,i think the age limit should be lowered. At the age of 15 you should know what the election is all about, and know who is should be our leader. And in 4-5 years time you will be an adult.

27/04/2005 16:38:00

Davies2

voting age

the ge should be for 16 to voted

27/04/2005 16:39:00

Evans

voting age

i thing that the voting age should be changed to 16?

27/04/2005 16:39:00

Mason2

the age limit

the age limit should be limited to about 16 years old in my ersonal opinion.

27/04/2005 16:42:00

Allan

any

yes the voting age should change to sixteen years old

27/04/2005 16:43:00

Walker2

age of voting.

What are the 3 parties going to do to the age of the voting. Are they either putting the age down to 16 or up to 20 I would like the age to go down to the age of 16.

27/04/2005 16:43:00

Tang

Voting Age

i think that the voting age is oer wouldhe young o.k but if the younger people want to they should be allow to vote.

27/04/2005 16:45:00

Amer

age

i think that the voting age should be changed and younger people should get to know more about politics

27/04/2005 16:45:00

Brown2

--

the voting age should be
16 and up

27/04/2005 16:45:00

Graham

should voting be change

i think it should be change so that everyone can vote

27/04/2005 16:45:00

biged

What sorts of ways?

In what sorts of ways could young people be encouraged to learn more about politics?
What are your ideas?

27/04/2005 16:48:00

Davies2

voting age

hi all i thicck the voting age shuld be for 16 ages to.

27/04/2005 16:49:00

Burnell

election

people should be able to vote by the age of 16 so people understand how politics effect our lifes.

27/04/2005 16:52:00

Mason2

abswering the teachers comment

kids between 10 up enjoy games so there could be like education gmes about politics for kids to play and learn at the same time...most obvious answer but my opinion all the same :)

27/04/2005 16:52:00

Gill2

voting age

i think that the voting age should be changed to 16 years of age.

27/04/2005 16:57:00

Tate

youth targeted politics

i think charles kennady and the lib dems are doing the right thing at the moment and have been savvy in their selection of manafeso content as they know they havnt got a chance of getting into

government at the moment, have noticed calls for the age you are eligible to vote to be lowered due to voter apathy, have aimed a lot of their policies at the young knowing that in the future when the voting age is lowered which won't be that far away they'll have support.

27/04/2005 21:33:00

ADruce

p0litlCs**~

i DESPISED politics before we got citizenship lessons. i thought it was just a load of boring old men talking about money. which it is. but theres more to it! now take an interest in politics, and i watch the ten o'clock news and i am INTERested. thats the main thing. politics should be a proper compulsory lesson from year 7

27/04/2005 22:39:00

RKuhn

voting age

perhaps the voting age should be given to responsible people whatever their age. I mean that you should have to pass a test to show you know that you will make a responsible vote. It prevents people from voting for stupid reasons such as "ewww, I think I'll vote for the cutest candidate"!

28/04/2005 09:26:00

biged

Age of Representation

What about the age at which you could become an MP?

It's 21 at the moment for any type of politician.

Is that okay?

What about if there were different ages for different types of elected rep? Say, 16 for a local councillor? 25 for an MP?

29/04/2005 09:43:00

AButcher

i agree with adruce

I hated politics before as well. i think everybody does as its just the general image of politics makes it hateable and ppl become uninterested in it. people need to learn about it, and have the opportunity to get involved in it.

as EVERYbody goes to school, it is through schools that seems the best way to get ppl interested and involved. it maybe shouldnt be a compulsory lesson from year 7, like a weekly thing, coz that would get boring for a lot of people. but there should definitely be lessons that start in year 7, maybe just like an hour every 2 weeks or something

29/04/2005 14:09:00

Saucy Suzi

Voting age

The voting age should not be changed!! i do believe in rights and that everyone should have the chance to put their view forward and their opinion. Though i do not think people younger than 18 will have enough life experience and do not completely understand politics and the elections. I am myself only 16 years old and i believe i know a lot more than most people my age, ive even tried to have sensible discussions about politics with friend and some of them really dont know what the hell im on about!! so that just proves that there are people under 18 who will vote but dont really understand why they are voting!

Saying that i dont even think some adults do!!

And I completely agree with RK uhn. It was exactly what i was thinking, a test would resolve people for stupid reasons because only the sensible people who pass the test can vote.

How ever who would make the test??

...If the government makes the test they would somehow make the questions so that all labour voter pass!! (persuming labour are in power at the time)

And another point:

Wont people be put off voting if they have to sit and take a test, as it is very time consuming, and people may feel it is not worth it and have better things to do!!

01/05/2005 17:52:00

AButcher

the test

U SHUD NOT HAVE TO TAKE A TEST TO VOTE!!!!no way!!!! doesnt that just dislove all the human rights stuff?"u can only choose whos going to b in charge of the country if u r clever"

it wud never never work and it will never never happen

03/05/2005 16:57:00

ellies

AButcher

I agree with AButcher because just because someone isn't clever then it doesn't mean they are not responsible. If we had to take a test, it means that the less academic people will have no rights over what happens in their country. Surely everyone should be equal, despite their IQ??? I do see the reasoning behind the idea, but I don't think the assumption that the cleverer you are the more responsible you are covers everyone. Intelligence is different to responsibility and political awareness.

I think that the voting age should be 16 and the MP age should be 21. I think the MP age should stay at 21 because it will give people a fair chance to go to university even if they do want to become an MP. Also, it will give people an extra few years of experiencing politics before becoming as actively involved as actually being an MP.

04/05/2005 10:39:00

gruff

Miracle Cure

A poll yesterday claimed that only 31% of the young people they asked would vote on May 5th. Is this representative of the way you see it? Or has the poll got its predictions in a twist?

Is the answer to low turnout amongst young people to reduce the voting age to 16 so that more young people can but don't vote?

I'm not so sure, but it's your opinions that count. So, let's be hearing them.

04/05/2005 14:13:00

danielf

voting age

The age is at the right age because everything that each campaign stands for is majorly effecting people over the age of 18. Like uni fees and taxes and property prices and so on. Any one voting from an age below might be irresponsible and just vote for voting sake.

04/05/2005 14:15:00

anj

voting age

I think that the voting age should be lowered to 16 as at that time young people are legally allowed to live on their own.

Young people should have the opportunity to vote.

04/05/2005 14:16:00

meera

voting age

i don't think the voting age should be lowered or raised, being 18 is the right age, if you're legal to drink and drive, then voting should be legal at that age as well.

04/05/2005 14:20:00

elliott

voting age

personally i would like to vote, im 17 at the moment and mature enough to make my own decisions over who i want to lead my country. i know many 18 year olds and over who do not vote so if you give others the opportunity to vote do it.

04/05/2005 14:21:00

sunil

voting age

i think that the voting age should be lowered as young people should have their right to have an opinion. i think the voting age should be lowered to the age of 16, because they have mature minds.

04/05/2005 14:23:00

thebest

change the voting age

i think we should change the voting age so that we can vote and have more of a part as to how the

country is run. i also think that our opinion should be valued as we are the ones who know what it is like to be our age.

04/05/2005 14:26:00

aisha

Voting age

i think it should be reduced to 16 so young people are more aware of political issues

04/05/2005 14:27:00

gruff

Other Ways

Besides giving the vote to people from the age of 16, are there other ways that young people could improve their awareness of politics?

Is there a direct link between having a vote and knowing about politics?

But, then, is politics a specialist subject?

05/05/2005 10:12:00

justice

All change?

It's decision day for Britain's voters.

How do you see things unfolding?

As of Friday the focus of the Forum will shift. It will become a chance to look-back on the election and to look forward to what you hope will happen with the new Parliament and Government.

05/05/2005 13:49:00

agowler

voting age

I think the voting age should be lowerd because more and more young people are getting involved with politics. Most of the anti-war protestors were teenagers anyway. People should definately lower the age limit to sixteen, you have to pay taxes then so you should be able to decide who runs the country.

05/05/2005 16:38:00

ellies

can't be bothered

It true that young people often can't be bothered - but if they can't be bothered then do we need their vote. Surely the vote of an enthusiastic 16 year old is worth something???

Even if verry few young people do choose to take their vote, surely they are still worth valuing.

Those few extra votes could make all the difference.

05/05/2005 20:06:00

Allan

none

yes the age shouldc change to 16

06/05/2005 14:15:00

Saucy Suzi

No!!

It should not be changed to 16, it shouldnt if people have been reading what i have wrote before you will see why..... fair enough if you are 16 years old, you feel as though you want to vote and feel as though you have a right to vote, but when you are older and reach 18 you will know and understand and see things from other prospectives and realise that you will not want 16 year olds voting!!

09/05/2005 15:13:00

Nicolleteforb

parliment

children should be able to vote at the age of five

09/05/2005 15:15:00

Ehsanyoun

every people should vote

people should have to right to vote accept 10 and lower

09/05/2005 15:40:00

Louisa Farrow

age should stay

the age limit should stay because if it is made younger then people who may not be mature enough to vote and may send the wrong party into the government.

09/05/2005 21:08:00

ADruce

AGes agoo

someone ages ago said that the voting age should stay the same because political issues have more to do with people over 18. . but then if the government made the voting age lower they would have to pay more attention to us to get our votes. they hardly target our age range at all now - if they needed our votes they would do more for us (or say they would) and we would benefit. but i still think that we are too young. my mind just contradicts itself.

10/05/2005 09:26:00

jackayad

Age Limits

I think every one deserves there say, young or old, it should start from 13+

10/05/2005 09:35:00

Justinemill

age limits

i think that when you reach high school you should be able to vote then. because it effect all of us

10/05/2005 09:39:00

scottfoul

i am 13

and i listen to the news regularly with my parents and afterwards we have large discussions about what was on the news and i would aggre that some people dont under stand but what about those who do dont they get a say

10/05/2005 09:39:00

justice

Inform yourself

Looks to me like some of you lot haven't been prepped on what this site is about.

So, take a look around and get up to speed see what other people have been posting,

Or, expand that brain of yours by going to the BackUp section.

Nice one...

10/05/2005 09:41:00

Kassandraseym

voteing

the age should change so teenages can vote

10/05/2005 09:45:00

jackayad

Politics

I think you need to read the terms and agreements, its says no off topic, but yea everyone does deserve there say cause it affects everyone, school kids, OAP, foregeners and everyone else living here

10/05/2005 09:54:00

scottfoul

to jack

she has a point some of us are poorly informed

10/05/2005 09:55:00

Kassandruseym

voting

i think that teenagers should have the right to vote because its their prime minister not just adult

10/05/2005 09:57:00

Justinemill

age limits

im think the age should b 14 years old

10/05/2005 09:57:00

yvettearku

vote at 14+

i think age doesn't really matter in politics as long as you are in high school and do citizenship and you understand it is ok to vote

10/05/2005 09:58:00

Andrewats

votting

i personally think i should vote

10/05/2005 10:02:00

chilli

Folks

What have you been learning about politics and citizenship at school?

10/05/2005 14:35:00

sarah1

Should age be lowered?

I don't think the age should be lowered as I do not think 16 year olds are capable of holding down such a big decision, especially as many as still in full-time education. 18 is the best age, but if I had the choice only 21+ should be allowed to vote.

11/05/2005 13:45:00

Saucy Suzi

Say Something interesting!!!!!!!!!!

Honestly time and time again the heads have told us the reasons we are using this site and to explain reasons for our views, but only a select few of us are doing so!!

NICOLLETEFORB on page.13:

What are you thinking dont be ridiculous how can children of the age of five vote!! that was such a stupid comment and if your not going to take things seriously then dont write anything!!

ADRUCE on page 13: I really agree with what you said, the age should stay as it is because younger people dont have the same experiences or responsibilities, such as we dont need to pay tax, i mean i know our parents do but us as individuals dont, so the parties tax policie will not effect us personally!!

12/05/2005 09:40:00

Rafayjadr

vote youngers!

i think young people who know about politics should be able to vote in the general election.

12/05/2005 09:40:00

Timothybart

age on voting

I think that voting should be allowed at 14 to those who are responsible and know what they are voting for because kids should have a say in what goes on in society.

12/05/2005 09:41:00

Demetrystew

age on voting

But some teenagers don't now whats going on or how to vote or even what the people talking

about. It should start at the age of 16+.

12/05/2005 09:42:00

Rafayjadr

vote youngers!

i think young people who know about politics should be able to vote in the general election. because it gives a chance to young people to get involved in some kind of activity

12/05/2005 09:42:00

Davidshay

the age for voting should change

i think the age to vote should be changed because the government would get a lot more votes than it is now. i also think that children about 14 should be able to vote because they are being drag in to it and they have there own thing to say about what happens.

12/05/2005 09:42:00

Schmarrahboot

age on voting

i think the age of voting should be 16 because younger people could put there ideas across.

12/05/2005 09:45:00

Aldrickdurr

voting age

voting age should be change because we as young people should have a right to make there voice's heard

12/05/2005 09:45:00

Rubyncamp

Vote

Aj wat do u think about your head

12/05/2005 09:46:00

Rafayjadr

vote 9hcr

i think every one should be voting in the next election

12/05/2005 09:48:00

Rubyncamp

Voting

Voting is confusing.

12/05/2005 09:49:00

Callanmacd

the voting age

i think the voting age should be lowed to 16 years of age to vote not 18. i am a 14 year old and i have a good opinion on how the world works abd how it is run but at the age i am i cant even hope to make that big of an impact in the world we live in so i think it should be 16.

i just hope if it becomes 16 we all use our votes

12/05/2005 09:50:00

Norvillestep

Voting Age

The voting age should be changed because we as young people should have our voices heard because we are the people of the future.

12/05/2005 09:50:00

Timothybart

voting

saucy suzi how do you know what would happen if you dont try. kids can be responsible when they are given a chance. if you are 16 and know alot that means there are others like you and know alot the should have a chance.

12/05/2005 09:50:00

Mohammedbhar

voting age

i think that it should stay the same 18

12/05/2005 09:50:00

Schmarrahboot

age for voting

Timothybart your ideas is good but could be better

12/05/2005 09:51:00

Davidshay

voting age

i think the voting age should change because everyone should be able to partisipate in the run of there country

12/05/2005 09:51:00

Aldrickdurr

voting

rafay are you insane ,everyone should'nt vote in the next election,only people 16 and over.

12/05/2005 09:52:00

Troyrams

change the voting rights

i think that you should be able to vote at a younger age it would be a better way of getting your voice out there and give the parliment an good opinion on what we want at the moment there have been alot of street crimes some are caused by a lack of activities but who,s to blame us or the people who don,t do anything about it till somebody gets hurt

12/05/2005 09:53:00

Aldrickdurr

timothy

how are u going to know that a 14 year old is responsible. 14 year old kids shouldn't be allowed to vote.

12/05/2005 09:55:00

Michaelmcta

voting age

I think that the voting age should be changed to at least 16 because whats the point in the politions trying to appeal to younger people when they cant vote

12/05/2005 09:55:00

Marcyfo

rafay

i think the voteing age should be 21+ that immature can't vote when they clearly don't care about it they just want the power to be able to half or my a quarter will actully be bothered to vote.

12/05/2005 13:05:00

Ronniekell

Age of voting.

I really think everyone who is 14 or above should be able to vote and anyway we should be able to because it effects us and really everyone.

12/05/2005 13:06:00

Tashancarr

voting age

i think you shpould be able to vote when ur young because we have to live in the country as well

12/05/2005 13:06:00

Benshaw

voting

i think people over the age of 14 should be allowed to vote as they do know what is currently going on in elections so they should be able to express there vote

12/05/2005 13:06:00

Ashleybany

voting

i think poeple at the age of 16 are allowed to vote

12/05/2005 13:15:00

Johnnyjohn

age

we should be able to vote at the age of 12 full stop!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

12/05/2005 13:16:00

mathewfeis

politacal voting age

i think that the voting ages hould be changed because people under the voting age have an opinion to and that opinion counts

people are alway sayin your to young to understand well i think im not i might be

14 but really age doesnt matter its not the age of the person that counts its the mentality of the person.

i truly think that we should just drop the government and go back to trading items for other items and having peace keepers and towns guards well that is my opinion

12/05/2005 13:19:00

Panvivate

Under 18 shud b able 2 vote!!!

i fink under 18 shud b able 2 vote!

y cant we vote? we shud!!!

we ave da rite 2 vote!!!

12/05/2005 13:22:00

Ashleybany

age

vote age of 16

12/05/2005 13:23:00

Melissajone

you shudn't b eble to change voti

we shud b able to vote at any age and any day!!!!!!

12/05/2005 13:25:00

Bolanieoyed

definatly

i think we are equal in this world. more so i thought th at most teenagers are brainy enough to know what is good for them.

for this reasons i think we teens should get the oppourtunity to vote.

12/05/2005 13:26:00

Bolanieoyed

definatly

i think we are equal in this world. more so i thought th at most teenagers are brainy enough to know what is good for them.

for this reasons i think we teens should get the oppourtunity to vote.

13/05/2005 10:44:00

Gandy

liberal democrats

i believe the liberal democrats should of been in power so the age of voting should be lowered. this is because

13/05/2005 14:49:00

Francescapres

voting ages

why do we have a voting age

13/05/2005 14:53:00

Robynsmit

voting

i think that the age of 15+ should b aloud to vote as the vote affects the whole country not just the adults of england.I do agree that some 15 year olds mite not no enuff to know hu 2 vote 4 but i think they should still have equal rites to vote because not all adults no hu 2 vote for either

13/05/2005 14:53:00

Aishacahi

should we be able to vote

i think we should be able to vote at the age of 11 because all the parliment think about is the adults. they only ask for the adults oppinions but what about us children we would like a say in what happens for our town

13/05/2005 14:54:00

mariekola

kids shouldnt be allowed to vote

young kids shouldnt be allowed to vote because we dont always know what we want,people copy what other people do,for instance,if someone votes for labour at our age then their friends might also want to vote labour because their friends are.

13/05/2005 14:55:00

Stuartsmit

younger voting age

personally i dont think that younger people under 18 should vote because they wont take it serously it will be just like a fad or a trend to vote on the same political party

13/05/2005 16:22:00

Staciebous

age for voting

i dont think age should pay a majour role in the voting. i feel kids have as much right as adults to vote. we will also have to live in the area with the changes, so we should get a say. Also all my life people have bin tellin me to stand up for what i belive in, but how can i if you can only have your say when you are 18. well adults may seem more responceible but how do you no kids arnt if you dont give them a chance.

13/05/2005 14:50:00

Stuartsmit

younger age voters

i dont think that people under 16 should vote because if one person from a group of friends voted for lets say b,n,p all other people from the group would vote for it aswell because there 'leader' of their friends group voted for them it will be just like the cloths we wear one person wears something one wk later every one is wearing it

13/05/2005 16:47:00

justice

The Forum Sleeps

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The next Forum is going to be a biggie! It's all about trade justice, to tie in with the UK's presidency of the G8. Do not miss it.
See you then...

Forum Topic Transcript

Turnout or turn off?

Is taking an interest in politics a right or a duty?

25/04/2005 09:38:00

justice

Welcome...

Not until the 1960s were all adults in the UK allowed to vote. Lots of people fought (and died) over centuries to get the vote, yet at the last election only 59% of people used theirs.

So the question here is, is it up to you when you use your vote or should you treat it like a duty?

In some countries voting is compulsory - should that be the case in the UK too?

What would happen if we all stopped voting?

25/04/2005 13:27:00

lemon

voting's a duty

I think you should have to vote, because the government is going to effect you in some way. If you really don't want to make a choice you can abstain.

We need to carry on voting or important choices, will be out of our hands.

25/04/2005 14:30:00

CHuyton

Should you vote?

People always the first to complain, either about the buses not being on time, the N.H.S. or other things controlled by the government, yet if they didn't vote, they shouldn't technically complain as they did nothing to prevent it happening. As well as this people have to take part so that the government represents the majority of the population.

25/04/2005 14:39:00

AButcher

plastic cup holders

this is like the advert that is always on saying that u cant do anything if u dont do politics.except for talk about cup holders in cars

25/04/2005 17:35:00

eranny70

Pericles

There was a greek philosopher who said that "A man who takes no interest in politics is NOT a man who minds his own business, he has no business here at all." or something along those lines. Look it up, it's called Pericles' Funeral Oration.

25/04/2005 18:52:00

littles

your choice

you cant force people to vote if they don't want to. it's their choice-if they don't vote they can't complain though, cos they wasted their choice

26/04/2005 14:43:00

JoelMcIlven

Not in my name

Surely you should only vote if there is somebody worth voting for. If no politicians are creditable or worthy of our vote, then not voting should be seen as a statement against that. People worked hard for the vote, but now politicians abuse that - a high turn out gives them the mandate to do what they want. Perhaps, if only 20% of people voted, they wouldn't be able to claim to represent the people.

26/04/2005 14:51:00

prish

not necessary

i dont think its necessary for everyone to vote.. according to me i think they shud have a choice it should'nt be compulsory compared to some countries. if some1 thinks its important to vote as it expresses their point of view.. then why not??

26/04/2005 17:36:00

Fozzyblob

Voting

I think that you shouldnt hav 2 vote but their should be other ways 2 vote such as e-mail, phone, sms. this might help get the amount of ppl voting bck up, as ppl cant b bothered to go vote, and end up not voting.

27/04/2005 16:31:00

Mason2

free speech

im well up for free speech and having the choice wether to vote or not.

27/04/2005 16:39:00

Corner

using your vote right or duty?

i think that your right to vote is there but you do not have to use it.it is up to you wether you vote and also you should inform yourself of what party that you want to vote for.

27/04/2005 16:48:00

Graham

using voting should be aduty or ri

i think it should be a right

27/04/2005 16:53:00

Amer

chm

I think you should'nt have to vote, because the government is going to effect you in some way and i don't think that they tell you enough so you don't know weather to trust them.We need to carry on voting but this does not apply to those who choose not to but important choices will have to be made.

27/04/2005 19:34:00

Frances

Voting

i think that voting is a duty to ur country, for if i didnt vote wen i was older, i dnt reely think that i wuld feel part of a community, plus, it wuld be a privlge and i wuld feel that i had shown my opinion to others.

27/04/2005 19:38:00

ellies

no point...

i think that there is no point saying people must vote - it is ADVISABLE to vote if you want the party you feel has the best policies to win, but many people, if forced would waste their vote by voting for any party without thought. It should remain a right to vote, but this should not be forced upon people. If people don't feel they want to vote, then others should respect their views and allow them not to take part in the election.

At my school with the mock election we are doing, we are not made to vote, and I think that this is good because it lets us have a choice and also avoids people who don't really care about the outcome and consequences of their vote influencing the results by voting for the most popular person.

If we are forced to vote, then votes will be used carelessly, and this is just as bad as not having a vote at all.

27/04/2005 21:47:00

ADruce

++*

it is a right and a duty. it is your right if you want to take it, but you really should, so it is your duty as well. its just that if they dont vote and then do complain about the way the country is run (like the cup holder ad) theyhave no right to do this. basically they have to shut up.for four ears. and maybe then theyll think twice about voting

27/04/2005 21:48:00

ADruce

ears?

i meant years btw incase anyone thought they had suddenly found themselves on an anatomy website.

28/04/2005 09:35:00

masterzen

To vote or not to vote

Do you think there are particular reasons why people choose not to use their vote when they can?

29/04/2005 10:01:00

AButcher

~~~

If ppl are forced to vote when they dont really wont to, they will just vote for anyone, this will basically end with votes that havent been thought about at all winning the election. People should only vote if they actually know y they are voting for them, and are sure that they want these ppl in power and not the others.otherwise the government will made up by ppl chosen by clueless people.

**29/04/2005 14:18:00**

**Saucy Suzi**

is voting a right or a duty

I believe that to vote is both a duty and a right.

Poeple who do not vote (who are of the leagal age) cannot complain if they are not happy with the way things are run by the current government if they did not take part in trying to vote someone deasent into power!!

It is your duty if you want the best for your country and want things to be run in the way you feel is the right way!!

Voting is not compulsory and should be left that way!!

**01/05/2005 11:13:00**

**eranny70**

**AButcher**

I think people seem to have taken my vote in the wrong light. It didn't mean that voting should be compuslory, it meant that if someone doesn't take part in a dmeocratic community, then they're not part of the democracy. So everyone should take part somehow, though not necessarily voting. You said that if people were forced to vote, they vote for someone randomly, and the votes will be from "clueless" people. Hmm, who in the world voted for Margaret Thatcher? Only people who knew her intentions voted for her, I'm sure of it. If you take a look at some surveys, you'll see that most people vote without knowing much about the party they're voting for.

**02/05/2005 15:24:00**

**Saucy Suzi**

People feel they souldnt vote

Some People feel they shouldnt because of a number of reasons, these could be:

\*They believe there is no party with good enough policies or prommises, to have the right to represnt everyone.

\*They believe that there is no party leader capable to cope with the pressure of being prime minister or is trust worthy enough

\*they do not know enough about politcs to feel they have a right to give a vote.

\*They do not know how to or where to vote

\*They do not truly think that voting for anyone will truly benifit them as an individual.

Can parliament, government or the voting system prevent these excusses or reasons why people are not voting?

**02/05/2005 22:39:00**

**CHuyton**

Democracy

The purpose of a democracy is so that it represents the majority of the people in that country, and if people don't vote then Britain could arguably not be a democracy. For this reason, I think that people should vote. I also think that people should vote as sometimes they don't realise how lucky they are living in a country where you have rights, and are able to choose who to vote for instead of being told who to vote for.

**04/05/2005 10:43:00**

**chilli**

get the vote out

Who do you think has the responsibility to get people voting?

The Government?

The Parties?

Parliament?

People themselves?

The Electoral Commission?

Celebrities?

All of them?

**04/05/2005 14:17:00**

**danielf**

voting is a right

A voting is a right but u should treat it as a priority as the out come can effect every person individually greatly. So everyone should use there vote, so when the outcome comes out and it is not what u wanted it to be , you can not complain . As if u did not vote u cant complain

**04/05/2005 14:17:00**

**anuj**

Right or Duty

People have died and spent there lives so we could have a say in how our lives are run. It is an insult to them if we do not vote. Voting is a duty.

**04/05/2005 14:19:00**

**elliots**

Feelings

The vote is purely a right, not a duty, because a eligible voter may not want to vote, because he/she may simply not feel that British politics is not his forum to decide, since he may have feelings for another land or state

**04/05/2005 14:19:00**

**meera**

right or duty?

i think voting is essential as government policies affect everyone at one point, but i think that if people don't vote they should not be fined for not doing so.

**04/05/2005 14:20:00**

**jamesp**

voting

i do take an active interest in politics, and as a result i can understand why people don't vote!!

**04/05/2005 14:22:00**

**shaheen**

right or duty?

i think that voting is a right however if there isn't a suitable candidate for pm it is not our duty to vote for one we do not believe can run our country.

**04/05/2005 14:23:00**

**mehmety**

vote it

I believe when voting it should be a right because this is a chance for people to give their views by voting and every vote counts

**04/05/2005 14:24:00**

**biged**

PM

It's worth noting that when people vote in the general election they are voting for the person they want to represent their area, not the whole UK.

The party that gets the most seats in the most areas becomes the government and has the most sway in Parliament.

The parties choose their own leader not the people of Britain. The leader of the winning party becomes the Prime Minister.

**04/05/2005 14:25:00**

**sunil**

Right or Duty

i think that people should take a interest in voting because it is government policies which may affect them, and this may be the same people who are complaining about issues.

**04/05/2005 14:25:00**

**kezi**

Right or duty

At the beginning of the 19th century, voting had been seen as a privilege... yet it is now seen as a right. It is the public's right who to vote for. We live in a democracy and so the people should decide whether they want to vote or not. I do find it selfish if people decide not to vote because you have to think about the lives sacrificed by both men and women, so that everyone was entitled to have this vote. Making voting compulsory however in the UK should not be allowed because then we would not live in a democracy. It's not a democracy telling people what to do.

**04/05/2005 14:28:00**

**asher**

voting right or duty??

duty.

everyone should make voting a priority considering it affects everyone living in the country.

perhaps introducing fines would direct the public to become fully involved in classifying their vote.

**05/05/2005 10:12:00**

**justice**

All change?

It's decision day for Britain's voters.

How do you see things unfolding?

As of Friday the focus of the Forum will shift. It will become a chance to look-back on the election and to look forward to what you hope will happen with the new Parliament and Government.

**10/05/2005 09:40:00**

**Norellebrig**

question

what is this vote all about i dont want tony blair to be my president bcoz he does not do nothing for this country so i think that a person in south london should be able to have a chance at that goal. what do you lot think about this text bk!!!!

**10/05/2005 09:55:00**

**Teriwill**

young people's rights

i think young people have rights as well as older people and if i had my way i would not have let tony blair win hes a idiot i don't agree with wars and he always wants to fight when we don't need to.

**10/05/2005 09:55:00**

**Kassandruseym**

voting

i think that teenagers should have the right to vote because its their prime minister not just adult

**10/05/2005 16:57:00**

**yvettearku**

right

i think taking an interest in politics is a right but not a duty because at the end of the day u would be voting at the age of 18+ and who knows u might want to be a politician

**10/05/2005 17:36:00**

**yvettearku**

politics

after all who cares weather u want to take part in politics

**10/05/2005 18:23:00**

**goose girl**

voting

Many people say they did not vote because they are not sure who to vote for. If you are not sure, then do some research on the policies of different parties. Then if you decide you dont want to vote for anyone then dont. However, make sure you are fully informed before you decide this.

People who didnt vote because they couldnt be bothered have not right to complain how the country is run. They did not even use their vote and so obviously dont care about what happens and so have no right to complain.

We need to remember that people died to get us the vote. They died so we could have some say in what happens in our country. So shouldnt we use that right?

**12/05/2005 09:49:00**

**Saqibhani**

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**12/05/2005 09:58:00**

**Davidshay**

right or duty

i think that voting is a duty because if you don't it makes you feel like you don't care about what happens to your country. so i think you should vote if you can or if your allowed.

**12/05/2005 09:58:00**

**Callanmacd**

duty to yourself

to vote is like to live if you leave a vote and think oh one vote wont make a different it will!!

in the elections groups have one by just 100's of votes and if that 100 people voted it would have just made the difference some vote!!! it's your duty

**12/05/2005 13:11:00**

**Lanceforb**

politics

i think politics is unfair

**12/05/2005 13:14:00**

**Menberfiss**

Did u vote

People are always complaining about how they are paying for tax but it aint really getting nowhere. well that is why everyone got chance to vote, if you any problem and there is someone who can solve it out there then you vote for that person thats why people go to vote so they shouldn't complain.

**25/04/2005 17:31:00**

**eranny70**

Living in a democracy...

"We do not say a man who takes no interest in politics is a man who minds his own business, we say he has no business here at all"

Pericles' Funeral Oration

The point being that everyone should take part in their democracy. If someone doesn't take interest in their government, then there's no point in democracy.

Someone said that not enough kids know about the government and politics. Well, teach them.

Show them it's interesting and show them they can change their world too. The reason so many kids don't have interests in politics is because they've been raised with the idea that politics is a grown up matter for grown up people. So, as extreme as it may seem, I think that you should be able to vote from the age of 10. That's the age when most kids become less dependent on their parents. Ideally, it should be from as soon as a child can talk but you can see how that wouldn't work, and that parents would abuse their children's vote.

**12/05/2005 09:51:00**

**Saqibhani**

voting

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