

Voting Age Bill

Stuck for ideas? Use this bill for the Make a law – House of Representatives classroom activity. The Voting Age Bill works well with high school classes.

This page includes a master script for the teacher and individual scripts for students who have been given roles for this activity.

Master script

The Clerk stands up and rings the bell.

Clerk: Honourable members, please stand.

The Serjeant-at-Arms, carrying the Mace, leads the Speaker into the room. The Speaker sits.

The Serjeant-at-Arms places the Mace on the table and sits down.

Speaker: Members, please sit down. The House is now in session. The rules of the House must be obeyed. Clerk, please read out the rules.

The Clerk stands.

Clerk: Always stand up to speak. Begin your speech with the words ‘Thank you Speaker’. Members should not interrupt each other. The Speaker keeps order.

The Clerk sits.

Speaker: Clerk, read the title of the bill.

The Clerk stands.

Clerk: The Voting Age Bill. A Bill for an Act to lower the voting age to 16.

The Clerk sits.

Speaker: I call the Prime Minister to introduce the bill.

The Prime Minister stands.

Prime Minister: Thank you Speaker, I am pleased to introduce this Bill to the House. It will allow Australian citizens from 16 years up to make decisions about the future of our country. At the moment they can be married, leave home, obtain a driver’s permit and pay taxes - yet 16 year olds are not allowed to vote! This Bill will give young Australians a say in who they want to represent them.

The Prime Minister sits.

Speaker: I call the Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition stands.

Leader of the Opposition: Thank you Speaker, I am going to vote against the Bill. My party does not believe it is fair to ask the youth of Australia to take on such responsibility. 16 year olds have not yet fully developed their vital decision-making skills.

The Leader of the Opposition sits.

Speaker: I call the Member for Forde.

The Member for Forde stands.

Member for Forde: Thank you Speaker, I am going to vote for the Bill. Many young people in my electorate have sent me emails and used Facebook and Twitter asking for the voting age to be lowered. With easy access to information through the internet and programs in schools, young people believe they are now better informed than previous generations. They are quite capable of voting responsibly.

The Member for Forde sits.

Speaker: I call the Member for Bendigo.

The Member for Bendigo stands.

Member for Bendigo: Thank you Speaker, I am going to vote against the Bill. The opposition knows that young people have easy access to sources of information. However, most 16 year olds are still at home and busy with school and studies. They will vote the way their parents do. This Bill is really giving parents an extra vote.

The Member for Bendigo sits.

Speaker: I call the Member for Denison.

The Member for Denison stands.

Member for Denison: Thank you Speaker, I agree that 16 and 17 year olds should have the vote. However I am concerned that not all young people will be able to make informed decisions. I will support the bill if the government agrees to include voting education programs in all Australian high schools. Later, I will suggest this amendment to the bill.

The Member for Denison sits.

Speaker: Are there any other comments on this bill? Stand if you wish to speak.

Members who wish to speak stand.

Speaker: I call the Member for _____ (the first name of somebody who is standing).

The called member stands and gives their speech.

The Speaker repeats "stand if you wish to speak" and continues to call upon members until everyone has had a turn or time is up.

Speaker: Order! A vote on the bill will now be taken. Those who support the bill move to the right of the Speaker's chair. Those who oppose the bill move to the left of the Speaker's chair. Whips, count the vote.

The independent and minor party members choose a side and sit down.

The Whips stand up and count the votes on their side of the chamber. They tell the count to the Speaker.

The Speaker stands.

Speaker: Order! Result of the division. The number of votes for the bill is _____ .

The number of votes against the bill is _____. The bill is agreed to. Clerk, read the title of the bill again.

The Clerk stands.

Clerk: The Voting Age Bill. A Bill for an Act to lower the voting age to 16.

The Clerk sits.

Speaker: Order! The House is now adjourned.

The Serjeant-at-Arms collects the Mace from the table and leads the Speaker out of the room.

Individual scripts


The Voting Age Bill

A Bill for an Act to lower the voting age to 16


- All Australian citizens sixteen years of age and over must register with the electoral office.
- Voting will be compulsory for all people registered.

THE SPEAKER

When you are led in by the Serjeant-at-Arms, sit down and say:

 Members, please sit down. The House is now in session. The rules of the House must be obeyed. Clerk, please read out the rules.

After the Clerk has read out the rules, say:

 Clerk, read the title of the bill.

Then say:

 I call the Prime Minister to introduce the bill.

Wait for the speech to be read.

 I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Wait for the speech to be read.

 I call the Member for Forde.

Member speaks.

 I call the Member for Bendigo.

Member speaks.

 I call the Member for Denison.


Member speaks.

 Are there any other comments on this bill?

Stand if you wish to speak. (wait for people to stand)

I call the Member for _____ (say the first name of someone who is standing, then let them speak)

When the time for debating is over, say:

 Order! A vote on the bill will now be taken.

Those who support the bill move to the right of the Speaker's chair.

Those who oppose the bill move to the left of the Speaker's chair.

Whips, count the vote.

When the whips have counted the votes and told you the result, stand up and say:



Order! Result of the division:

The number of votes for the bill is _____

The number of votes against the bill is _____

The bill is agreed to. Clerk read the title of the bill again.

To end the session, say:




Order! The House is now adjourned.

Follow the Serjeant-at-Arms out of the chamber.

THE CLERK

Stand up, ring the bell and say:

 Honourable members, please stand.

When the Speaker asks you to read the rules, stand up and say:


 Always stand up to speak.

Begin your speech with the words 'Thank you Speaker'.


Members should not interrupt each other.

The Speaker keeps order.


The Speaker will ask you to read the title of the bill. Stand up and say:

 The Voting Age Bill. A Bill for an Act to lower the voting age to 16.

Later, the Speaker will ask you to read the title of the bill again. Stand up and say:

 The Voting Age Bill. A Bill for an Act to lower the voting age to 16.

When the Speaker says 'the House is now adjourned', stand and say:

 Honourable members, please stand.

SERJEANT-AT-ARMS

When the Clerk rings the bell, lead the Speaker into the chamber, carrying the Mace on your right shoulder. Say:

 Honourable members, the Speaker.

Place the Mace on the table, then sit down.

When you hear the Speaker say 'the House is now adjourned' stand up, take the Mace from the table and lead the Speaker out of the room.

PRIME MINISTER



Thank you Speaker,

I am pleased to introduce this Bill to the House.

It will allow Australian citizens from 16 years up to make decisions about the future of our country.

At the moment they can be married, leave home, obtain a driver's permit and pay taxes - yet 16 year olds are not allowed to vote!

This Bill will give young Australians a say in who they want to represent them.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION



Thank you Speaker,

I am going to vote against the Bill.

My party does not believe it is fair to ask the youth of Australia to take on such responsibility.

16 year olds have not yet fully developed their vital decision-making skills.

MEMBER FOR FORDE – GOVERNMENT BACKBENCHER



Thank you Speaker,

I am going to vote for the Bill.

Many young people in my electorate have sent me emails and used Facebook and Twitter asking for the voting age to be lowered.

With easy access to information through the internet and programs in schools, young people believe they are now better informed than previous generations.

They are quite capable of voting responsibly.

MEMBER FOR BENDIGO – OPPOSITION BACKBENCHER



Thank you Speaker,

I am going to vote against the Bill.

The opposition knows that young people have easy access to sources of information.

However, most 16 year olds are still at home and busy with school and studies.

They will vote the way their parents do.

This Bill is really giving parents an extra vote.

MEMBER FOR DENISON – INDEPENDENT MEMBER



Thank you Speaker,

I agree that 16 and 17 year olds should have the vote.

However I am concerned that not all young people will be able to make informed decisions.

I will support the bill if the government agrees to include voting education programs in all Australian high schools.

Later, I will suggest this amendment to the bill.

GOVERNMENT WHIP

When the Speaker says 'Whips, count the vote', stand up and count the members on your side.

Don't forget to count yourself and the Prime Minister.

Go and tell the Speaker the results.

OPPOSITION WHIP

When the Speaker says 'Whips, count the vote', stand up and count the members on your side.

Don't forget to count yourself and the Leader of the Opposition.

Go and tell the Speaker the results.