



Are you going to vote?

Free and secret elections are an integral and fundamental part of a democracy, but many democratic countries are struggling with disinterest, disenchantment with politics and a lack of trust, which often is displayed through falling voter turnout. The aim of this exercise is to take a look at elections, compulsory voting and voter turnout, and to practise argumentation. The exercise prepares students for the following role play.

Procedure for the argumentation exercise:

Students take on the role of democracy activists and practise argumentation on the topic of voting in general. They deal with the following topic: Do you vote? Each person draws a comments card, stands in front of the class and reads it out loud. The class then reflects together about how democracy activists would react to this statement. Will they approve or disagree? What counter-argument, if any, can be formulated? Students can also do research to formulate a response.

Role play procedure:

Character cards are distributed to the class: There are two equal groups.

- People who are convinced of the meaning and purpose of municipal or legislative elections.
- Passers-by who are approached by the democracy activists. The passers-by should stick to their role during the conversations, but they can develop it.

The passers-by also draw one of the comments cards discussed in advance. They are asked to express this opinion during the conversation. They can also change their opinion if their counterpart brings up a good argument.

The teacher plays music. Students move around the classroom until the music stops. Everyone seeks out a conversation partner. When the music stops again, they all look for a new interlocutor.

Alternative discussion method - speed dating:

Set up chairs with an inner and an outer circle and an even number of seats. Discussion takes place in pairs. At the instructor's signal, the outer circle moves one chair to the right and the inner circle one chair to the left. The following questions help to evaluate the simulation:

- What problems have come up? Did the argumentation training help you?
- Which arguments do you remember or think are good? Gather them on the board or on a poster.



PASSERBY
8

You are 27 years old in Luxembourg for 1 are not from the EU I voted. There are el home country, but I only tick one name I are rigged anyway. I are not interested if really need or want I asked for your opin like to talk about pol know who is listenin you say could be ha your fant

Note: The group should familiarise themselves with Luxembourg electoral law in advance. Also talk to the class about the responsibilities of a municipality so that they can address issues that may be of interest to passers-by. French and German worksheets can be found in the first (*Municipalities and Elections*) and second (*Legislative Elections*) editions of *duerchbléck!*.



<https://zpb.lu/duerchbleck/>



Opinion cards

“



I don't trust the election results. I'm sure they are falsified.

“

Everything is fine the way it is. I don't need to vote.

“

My freedoms are important to me, but elections do not affect me.

“

I think it's good that there is compulsory voting.

“

You can't say what you think anymore anyway. Therefore, I won't vote anymore.

“

I am powerless. I cannot change anything.

“

I don't want to get up on Sunday morning to vote.

“

I actually like to have a say in what happens in my neighbourhood/ community.

“

In a community, all members should help.

“

Everyone else is voting, I don't have to.



Opinion cards

”

Everyone for themselves.

”

Politics is a dirty business.

”

I'm only in Luxembourg temporarily. I expect to return to my home country. Voting should be for people who want to stay here forever.

”

Those in power do what they want anyway.

”

It is my right to not want to vote. Compulsory voting restricts my freedom.

”

Someone like me is not in charge here anyway. So why vote?

”

A lively democracy needs people who are committed to it.

”

It doesn't matter who you vote for. They're all the same.

”

I don't know the parties and the debates are in Luxembourgish. It's impossible for me to find out who to vote for.

”

I don't know any politicians. I don't know who to vote for.



Character cards



DEMOCRACY ACTIVIST

You are convinced that elections are the only way to change something without resorting to violence in your community or country. There are enough countries where there are no democratic elections, so you think that voting is not only a right but a moral duty. You have certain concerns that you want to raise, and areas where you also hope to see changes in politics. Of course, you are actively involved in the life of your community, neighbourhood or village, e.g. you are involved in associations.

List a few of the issues you care about and which you can use as examples in the conversation:

PASSER-BY

2

You are 29 years old, married, live in a village and work at a public administration in Luxembourg City. You have two children who go to primary school and childcare centres in your community.

Unfortunately, both facilities are in the neighbouring village, which is inconvenient. When reading the news, you are interested in topics like the economy, immigration and security.

PASSER-BY

1

You are 21 years old, born in Luxembourg and live in a city in the North. You have not yet voted in any elections. You are a member of the volunteer fire brigade and active in the local basketball club. You are also interested in cycling, cinema and hiking. You are currently studying sports education in Cologne. You only come to Luxembourg City occasionally, on weekends. You are concerned about where you will work later and whether you will be able to afford a flat.

PASSER-BY

3

You are 20 years old and were born in France. You live with your family in a city in the Minett. You went to primary and secondary school in Luxembourg and you will complete your education here. Your parents never voted in an election in Luxembourg because they did not feel affected. Since they never really learned Luxembourgish, they felt excluded from political discussions in the media or even among neighbours. So far, you haven't thought about elections. Your mother always votes in French presidential elections. Maybe you want to do the same.



PASSER-BY

4

You are 31 years old, single and work at a bank. You are from Sweden.

You've lived in Luxembourg for five years. You work in Kirchberg. You came to Luxembourg because the job pays well. You had hardly heard of the country before. You like living here, but you are not sure whether you will stay here or take a job in another country. You like to cycle to work and to explore bicycle paths in your free time.

You are used to not needing a car for everyday life because it was like that in other cities. Apart from that, you are interested in going out, vegan food, theatre and art. You like shopping and you think there should be more small, independent shops instead of shopping malls on the outskirts.

PASSER-BY

5

You were born in Luxembourg and are a Spanish citizen. You are 28 years old, but you haven't participated in an election yet, either in Spain or in Luxembourg, apart from the elections for the student committee, which you were a member of at your school for four years. In your free time, you enjoy sports and cultural activities like going to museums and music festivals in your city. Together with your partner you are thinking about having a child. That's why concerns about your salary, working hours, childcare, job security, school and safety have been playing a bigger role in your life lately.

PASSER-BY

6

You are 18 years old, a Portuguese citizen and still at school. You are thinking about the future, whether you should study or pursue an apprenticeship. In general you doubt that politicians are seriously interested in fighting climate change. You ask yourself what you can actually do as an individual. You like to skateboard in your free time. You think it is a pity that there is no youth centre in your community and that there are hardly any other leisure activities.



Character cards

PASSER-BY

7

You live in Luxembourg City, are 48 years old and are in a stable relationship. You refused to vote in the last elections, in protest. What bothers you most is that you can never find parking spaces in the city centre. It was different in the past. Yet most flats in the centre today are not occupied, while housing prices continue to rise unchecked. And you don't really like the noise outside cafés and clubs on weekends, especially in good weather, late in the evening or even at night. You spend your free time walking your dog. Every year you help organise the neighbourhood festival in your neighbourhood.

PASSER-BY

8

You are 27 years old and have lived in Luxembourg for five years. You are not from the EU and have never voted. There are elections in your home country, but either you can only tick one name or the elections are rigged anyway. Those in power are not interested in what people really need or want. You are never asked for your opinion. You don't like to talk about politics. You never know who is listening and anything you say could be harmful to you or your family.

PASSER-BY

9

You are 19 years old, have dual citizenship and don't really want to get into politics. You have no idea what you want to do after school and you are not particularly interested in any subject. You don't think politics affects you personally. The main thing is to chill! You like your mobile phone, social media and meeting friends.