

## Teacher's Guide

Key Elements of a Democratic Government

Period 1

Based on the NCERT curriculum for Standard VI



JANAAGRAHA CENTRE FOR CITIZENSHIP & DEMOCRACY

Janaagraha's initiative to improve citizen engagement in India's democracy through their civic learning program

Developed in collaboration with Young Leaders for Active Citizenship (YLAC)

## Key Elements of a Democratic Government | Teacher’s Guide (1/3)

### Period 1

Class VI  
 Board – CBSE  
 Subject – Civics  
 Textbook – Civics Textbook for Class VI (NCERT)  
 Chapter 4 – Key Elements of a Democratic Government  
 Number of periods – 03  
 Length – 70 minutes

#### Section I: What are we going to learn and why is it important

##### **Learning objectives**

Students will:

- Understand that voting is a right one has as a citizen of a country.
- Learn that voting is one of the key forms of participation in the process of government.
- Understand why voting is important.
- Understand the role of the government in ensuring free and fair elections.
- Learn about the other ways to engage with the government.

##### **Learning outcomes**

- Understand the need for them to exercise their vote once they are 18 years of age.
- Understand how as citizens they can work with their government for an effective democracy.

##### **Key terms**

Democracy	Civil Society	Voting	Suffrage
Citizen Participation			

## Section II: How are we going to learn?

### **Understanding voting as a key element of participation in a democracy**

Time: 15 mins

Note to the teacher: This section will use activities, pictures and videos to help students understand the importance of elections and voting in a democracy and the role played by citizens and the government in making democracies more effective.

#### Facilitation notes:

- There are three key elements that make democracies more effective
  - People's participation through voting and other means of engagement
  - Government's active role in resolving conflict
  - Commitment to the elements of equality and justice
- In today's session, we will focus on the first element - **People's participation through voting and other means of engagement**



#### Facilitation notes:

*Please ask students the following questions:*

- Do your parents vote?
- Why do you think they vote/ don't vote?
- What will happen if people don't vote? Why is it important to vote?

Note to the teacher: Engage students in a discussion and add points from below that may have been missed. Emphasize that participation is the most important element of a democracy and voting is the most systematic way of doing it.

#### Facilitation notes:

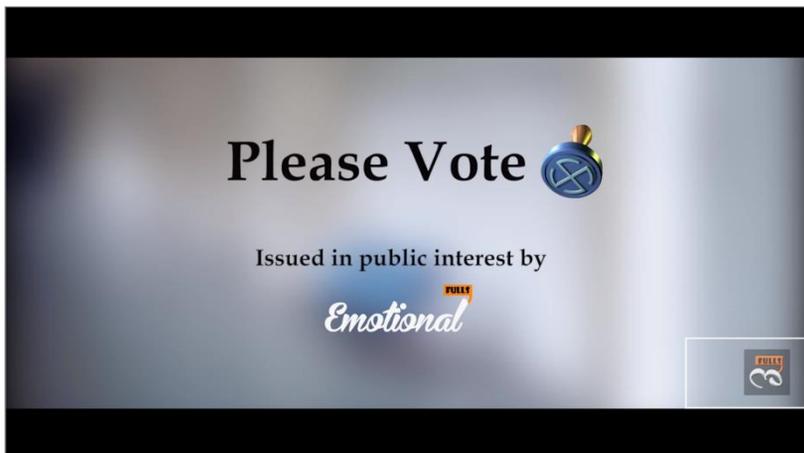
- Democracy is a system of government where a government is appointed through elections and people vote to elect their representatives.
- Voting ensures citizens have a say in the government set up.
- Democracies can work only if citizens make the effort to elect their representatives.
- Voting helps get the right leaders in power and also helps remove leaders not liked by citizens.
- If people don't vote, power can go into the wrong hands and may be misused.

### **Democracy**

*Democracy is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Democracy falls into two basic categories, direct and representative. In a direct democracy, people directly are involved in decision making whereas in the representative democracy, citizens elect other people to represent them through the process of voting.*

Source: [NCERT](#)

Please play the video below to help students think about the importance of voting in their own context.



Video: Importance of Voting

This video in Hindi is a short and fun piece that uses the interaction between a class monitor and two students to highlight the importance of voting.

Link: [Youtube](#)

Note to the teacher: Ask students the following questions and engage them in a discussion:

- Why can only people above 18 years of age vote in an election?
- Why does everyone have only one vote? Is everyone's vote equal?
- Who decides all of this? How do people vote in other countries?

**Understanding the history of voting: Universal Suffrage**

Time: 10 mins

Facilitation Notes:

- Universal suffrage means the right to vote of all adult citizens, regardless of property ownership, income, race, or ethnicity.
- Today, in India we enjoy universal suffrage and all of us have an equal right to vote. But, do you think that was always the case? Were all people given an equal right to vote from the very beginning?
- Actually no! People faced several restrictions globally to be able to vote including gender, race, and ownership of property. Earlier only people with land were allowed to vote. In countries such as the US, only white people could vote for the longest time and African Americans were denied that right. In fact, they were exploited as slaves and treated as objects that could be owned by white people.
- Even women were denied the right to vote till very recently!



Image source: [Biograph](#)

### Women's Suffrage movement in the US

American women were granted the right to vote in August 1920. In 1848, the movement for women's rights was launched on a national level by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott. The demand for the vote became a centerpiece of the women's rights movement. During America's early history, women were denied so many of the basic rights enjoyed by male citizens. For example, married women couldn't own property and had no legal claim to any money they might earn, and no female had the right to vote. Women were expected to focus on housework and motherhood, not politics.

In contrast, India gave all its citizens –poor, rich, men and women an equal right to vote when it got independence.

Source: [History](#)

### Learning about the voting process in India

Time: 5 minutes

#### Do you know?

- The first General Elections in India were held in 1951-52. [Source: [Employment News](#)]
- In the 2014 General Elections, around 55 crore people voted in India. [Source: [Election Commission of India](#)]
- Anlaythu, Ladhakh is India's highest polling booth located at an altitude of 15,000 ft. [Source: [Hindustan Times](#)]

Facilitation Notes:

Now let's understand how the election process works in India

**Who can vote?**

- As you know, all Indian citizens **above 18 years of age can vote in India.**
- This right is universally granted; one person has one vote and all votes are equal.
- The Election Commission is responsible for conducting free and fair elections.
- The Election Commission registers voters. Each voter is issued a voter ID card that can be used to cast one's vote on the day of elections.

Note to the teacher:

Please ask students if they have seen people and family around them voting in elections. Ask them if they have ever been to a polling booth and witnessed the voting process. *[Take a few responses. Students are likely to share experiences of accompanying their families etc. Show them the images below and engage them in a discussion]*



Source: [Live Mint](#)

Voters standing in a queue outside the polling booth. For voting, the registered voters need to have their Voter IDs as seen the image above.



Source: [DNA India](#)

Women voter at the polling booth, the vote is done through a secret Ballot. This means that your vote is anonymous and others cannot know how you cast your vote.



Source: [Hindustan Times](#)

After voting, the officials on duty at the polling booth put a blue ink mark on one of the fingers. This is to ensure that an individual is casting his/her vote only once.

## Different ways of participating in a democracy

Time: 10 minutes

Note to the teacher: The section uses a mix of photos, videos and activities to explain the different ways in which citizens can engage and participate in a democracy.

### Facilitation Notes:

- Voting is of course an important way through which citizens participate in a democracy. Through voting, people elect leaders to take decisions on their behalf.
- But voting is not the only way to influence decision making or improve the working of the government. There are other ways in which this can be done too. Let's look at some of these now.



Source: [Hindustan Times](#)

### **Assisting the government in its work**

Citizens can volunteer to help the government do its job better, either by providing important information or by working alongside it in its operations.

For instance, citizens of Gurgaon have been working with the Gurgaon traffic police in the better management of traffic in the city. Similarly, other citizens have been helping the municipal corporation in waste collection.

*Letter  
to the  
editor*

Source: [Maple Valley Reporter](#)

**Letters to the Editor/ Raising issues through TV, Radio and Newspapers**

One way to influence decision making is to get more public support for your cause. People often use the media – newspapers, radio and TV to talk about issues and generate support. Some even write letters to editors with their opinions. In the case of newspapers, these are often published. In the case of TV/ radio, they are often read out loud.



Source: [New Indian Express reporter](#)

**Signature Campaign**

Citizens in a democracy often make their voices heard through signature campaigns. This is a peaceful way to demonstrate support for a cause and make an appeal to the government. A large number of people come together, draft a common demand and add signatures to show support.

Examples include signature campaigns by people, including school students, for reducing the usage of plastics and banning firecrackers to reduce pollution.



Source: [United Nation Information Centre](#)

### Rallies and protests

When people want to be heard, they sometimes show their strength by organizing rallies in prominent public spaces or outside government offices. Rallies essentially involve people gathering in one physical location and raising their demands. They could also be organized as marches.

Many rallies are peaceful. In some extreme cases, when people feel that they are not being heard, rallies can also take the form of protests. In these cases, people may raise slogans against leaders, block roads, prevent normal work, or engage in violence.

An example of a peaceful rally is students gathering together for a cleaner and greener India. We'll talk about an example of protest in the next section.

### Facilitation notes:

- Debrief by asking the students if they have ever been a part of any such initiative?
- *If someone says yes, ask students to share more details? (What was it about, what they did, how many people were involved etc)*

### Case Study – Anti-Corruption Movement

Time: 10 minutes

### Notes to the teacher:

- Divide the class into groups of 5
- Ask each group to read through the given case, discuss in their group and note down the responses
- At the end of the activity, ask one student from each group to present their answers and have a brief discussion in class about the case

**CASE – Anti-corruption movement in 2011**



The idea of an anti-corruption body to look into allegations of corruption against government officials and elected representatives has been around for over five decades now. Corruption in India is rampant, and yet there are not strong systems to deal with it. While citizens had been complaining about corruption, the government did not pay much attention until citizens decided to raise their voice and hold a nationwide protest under the leadership of activist Anna Hazare. Let's see a video to understand this better

Video: India's growing anti-corruption movement

Link: [Youtube link](#)

**Questions to discuss**

1. What was the role citizens played here?
2. Why was it important for citizens to act?
3. If citizens would not have protested, do you think the government would have reacted in a similar fashion?

Facilitation Notes:

Debrief the activity

- Voting is only one form of participation. Citizens can participate in many other ways – writing letters, organizing signature campaigns or rallies and even protests.
- You can also participate in a democracy by working with the government to help it perform better – for instance, by working with your municipality and assisting it in garbage collection.
- Even asking questions to the government and holding it accountable is a very important form of participation.
- All these ways ensure that you, as a citizen, participate in the democracy and help it perform better.

### Section III: Assessment

#### Case Study

Time: 10 minutes

**Scenario:** Government has recently increased the electricity rate and you'll now have to pay almost double of what you were paying earlier without any reasonable explanation. You are from a middle income household and this has affected your monthly budget. You have recently met a lot of other people who are in the same situation as yours. What can you do about it? Note: Include as many participatory ideas as you can think of. Feel free to discuss with the person sitting next to you.

Note to the teacher:

To help students think in the right direction, ask them to think on the lines of:

- How can they get in touch with the elected representative?
- How can they get all the residents together to send in a request to the concerned department?
- If things are not changing, how can people come together and protest?

#### Quiz

Time: 5 minutes

Note to the teacher:

- Divide the class into groups of 5
- Hand over the following worksheets to each group.
- Give them 4 minutes to fill in their responses.
- Score all the teams and discuss answers.
  - Plus one for every correct answer
  - Minus one for every wrong answer

#### QUIZ

1. In India, all governments are elected for a fixed period of time (Tick the correct option – True/ False)
2. General Elections are held once in \_\_\_\_\_ years (Fill in the blank)
3. Anyone who is above \_\_\_\_\_ years of age can vote in elections (Fill in the blank)
4. The next general election in India will take place in \_\_\_\_\_
5. Tick the correct sentence
  - a. In India, only men can exercise their right to vote

- b. In India, only men and married women can exercise their right to vote
- c. In India, men above 18 years of age and women above 21 years of age can exercise their right to vote
- d. In India, men and women who are above 18 years of age can exercise their right to vote

**Answer Key**

1. True
2. Five
3. 18
4. 2019
5. Option (d) - In India, men and women who are above 18 years of age can exercise their right to vote

**Homework**Neighbourhood survey:

Ask students to undertake a neighbourhood survey of about 5-8 people, through door to door interactions to learn about their voting behavior.

**Note** - talk to people who are over 18 years of age.

Share the following sample questions with students:

- Is voting important? Why or why not?
- Did you vote in the last state or national elections?
  - If no, why not?
- How do you take the decision to vote for a representative?
- In addition to voting, what else can we as citizens do to be more active? How can we participate in decision making?
- Have you ever taken part in any protest/ rally? If yes, please share more details.

**Section IV: Closure**

Summary by students

Note to the teacher: Select a student at random to summarize the key points of the session and why this particular session is important.

Recap by the teacher

Time: 5 minutes

Recap with key points

- Participation is a key element for the effective functioning of a democracy.
- It is important for people in the country to exercise their right to vote to elect the right kind of representatives.
- The Election Commission is responsible for free and fair elections and adopts several measures to do so.
- Besides voting, there are many other ways in which people can participate and engage. This includes writing letters, signature campaigns, protests, asking questions, assisting the government etc.

## **Section V: Additional Resources**

### **Resources for students**

1. Reading: For all information related to elections, check out the website of election commission of India  
Link: <https://eci.nic.in/>
2. Video: Importance of voting  
Short video on the #PledgeToVote here to understand the importance of voting  
Link: [Youtube](#)

### **Resources for teachers:**

1. Video: Key features of a Democracy  
This video talks about the different features of a Democracy in detail.  
Link: [Civics Academy](#)
2. Video: Evolution of the electoral system of India  
This link talks about the Election Commission, its constitution and the evolution of the electoral system in India  
Link: [Employment News](#)
3. Video: Election Commission of India  
This video covers the key features of the election process in India  
Link: [Youtube](#)

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