

# General Elections



## In Ireland

# What is a General Election?

- A **General Election** is when people living in a country vote on who they want to represent them in the national parliament.
- The national parliament in Ireland is called **Dáil Éireann**



# When is a General Election Held?

- A General Election is held at least every five years – this rule is laid out in the **Irish Constitution**
- Sometimes elections are held more often
- In 1982, there were two general elections in the same year, February and November



# Voting for a Teachta Dála (TD)

- 160 TDs are elected by people in different areas around the country
- Each of these areas is called a **Constituency** and there are currently 39 of these throughout the country
- Constituencies can elect 3, 4 or 5 TDs, depending on the size of its population



# Voting in a General Election

- TDs are elected by the direct vote of the people
- Voting is by secret ballot on the **Single Transferable Vote** system – this means voters indicate their preference by indicating 1, 2, 3 on the ballot paper
- The names of the candidates appear in alphabetical order on the **Ballot Paper** along with the name of their political party



# Who Can Stand for Election?

- Every citizen of Ireland over 21 years of age who is not disqualified by the Constitution or by law is eligible to stand for election to Dáil Éireann
- Usually candidates seek a **nomination** from a **Political Party** to stand for election
- Those not belonging to a political party can stand for election as an **Independent**



# Who Can Vote?

- Every citizen over 18 years of age is eligible to vote for TDs in a General Election
- If you wish to exercise your vote, you have to make sure that your name is on the **Electoral Register**
- The register comes into force on February 15th each year



# Why Should You Vote?

- If you are over 18 years of age, it is your democratic right to vote
- If you don't vote, then you don't have a say in what TDs are elected
- Consequently, you don't have a say in how the country is run





# How to Vote in an Election?

- If you are on the Electoral Register, a **Polling Card** will be posted to your home prior to the election
- The Polling Card tells you the date of the election, where your **Polling Station** is and at what time it is open
- You bring the Polling Card, as well as ID, with you to the Polling Station



# How to Vote in an Election?

- The Polling Station is usually in a local school or hall
- When you arrive at the Polling Station, you give the **Polling Clerk** your Polling Card
- The Polling Clerk will give you a **Ballot Paper** – this has the names of all the Candidates standing for election in your constituency



# How to Vote in an Election?

- You take your Ballot Paper to a **Polling Booth**, where you can vote by **Secret Ballot**
- You number the Ballot Paper in order of your preference, giving your favourite No. 1, your second favourite No. 2 etc.
- You can choose to mark as many boxes as you wish
- You then place your Ballot Paper in the locked **Ballot Box**



# Counting of Votes

- The counting of votes commences at 9am on the day after the election
- The **Quota** (the number of votes necessary for election) is calculated by the **Presiding Officer** in each constituency
- The quota is calculated by dividing the number of valid votes by the number of seats + 1 and then add 1



# Electing of TDs

- If a candidate exceeds the quota, the Presiding Officer announces publicly that they have been elected as a TD for the constituency
- TDs are currently paid €96,189 per year and they attend meetings of Dáil Éireann that are held on about 90 days of the year
- They discuss the problems of the country and pass laws to try to solve these problems.



# After the Election

- When all TDs have been elected, they gather in Dáil Éireann
- The political party with the most TDs will try to form a **Government**
- If they do not have enough TDs, they will try to join with another party or parties to form a **Coalition Government**



# After the Election

- The leader of the government becomes the new **Taoiseach**
- S/he will appoint the **Tánaiste** who is the deputy leader of the government
- The Taoiseach will also appoint between seven and fifteen **Ministers** who will be responsible for different areas eg. Education, Health etc.



# After the Election

- The new government will try to pass laws to enact policies that they promised during the election campaign
- The new government will attempt to stay in power for the next five years





## Resources used in this file:

 depositphotos <https://depositphotos.com/>

