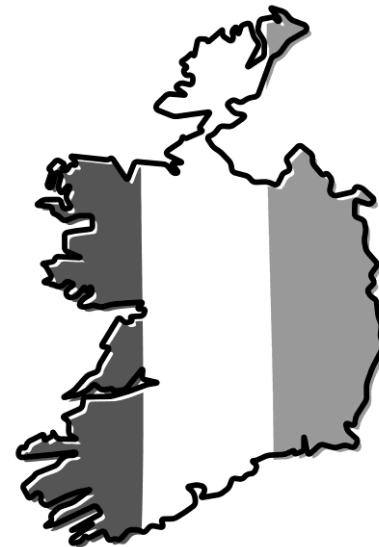


# Ireland's

# Democracy

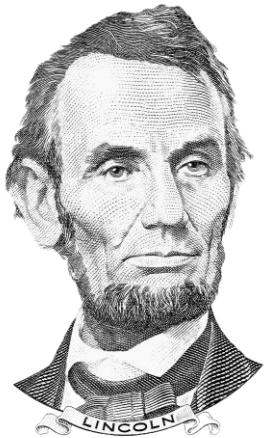


Name:

### What is a Democracy?

In Ireland we live in a democracy. Democracy is a form of government. The word "democracy" comes from two Greek words: "demos" meaning "people" and "kratos" meaning "power". So, democracy means "rule by the people" – the people decide who is to run the country. They usually do this by voting in an election.

### Abraham Lincoln



Abraham Lincoln, a famous American president defined democracy as "government of the people, by the people and for the people".

### Political Parties

A Political Party is made up of people who share the same ideas on how the country should be governed. The plans they agree upon are called their Policies. Whichever political party has the most TDs after an election decides to form a government.

If a political party has not got enough TDs after an election to form a government on their own, they may join up with another party or parties to form a Coalition Government. The rest of the TDs become the Opposition. A TD who doesn't belong to any political party is known as an Independent TD.

There are currently 31 political parties registered to contest elections in Ireland and in the 2020 General Election saw nine different parties win seats in the Dáil.

### The Government

Article 28 of the Irish Constitution says that the Government shall consist of not less than seven and not more than fifteen members. The government is the group of people who rule the country and make new laws. An Taoiseach is the leader of the government and An Tánaiste is the deputy leader of the government. An Taoiseach nominates a team of Ministers who have responsibility for different areas of the running of the country.

your  
VOTE  
COUNTS



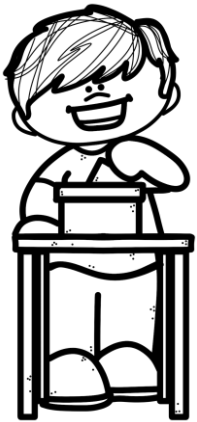
### What is the Constitution?

When a new state is established, one of its first duties is to draw up a Constitution. A Constitution is like a set of laws that determine how the country is to be ruled. The government of the time must abide by these rules. The people can change or amend the Constitution by a vote known as a Referendum. The Irish Constitution was first drawn up in 1937 by Éamon De Valera who was the Taoiseach at the time. It was approved by the Dáil, proposed to the Irish people and accepted by them.



## The President

Article 12 of the Irish Constitution provides for a President for the country. Uachtarán na hÉireann is elected by a direct vote of the people. Every Irish citizen over 35 years of age is eligible to stand for the office of President. The President's term of office is seven years, although he/she may be re-elected or nominated for a second term of seven years.



The official residence of the Irish President is Áras an Uachtaráin in the Phoenix Park, Dublin. An tUachtarán is our head of state and represents the Irish people when acting in an official capacity. As citizens of this country, we owe our president every respect.

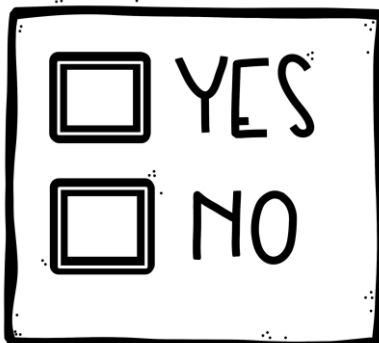
## Voting

Every Irish citizen who is over 18 years of age has the right to vote in an election. On Polling Day, a person goes to a Polling Booth or Polling Station to cast their vote. If their name is on the Electoral Register they are given a Ballot Paper. Voting takes place by Secret Ballot. The person marks their ballot paper 1, 2, 3 etc. in order of their choice. In Ireland, a system called Proportional Representation determines which candidate is elected. This means that the candidate who receives the most votes does not necessarily win a seat in the election. A candidate must reach a Quota to be elected.

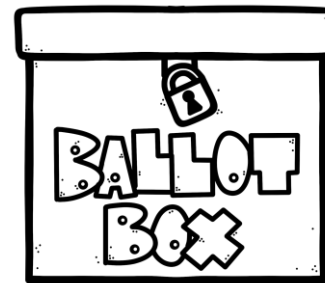
# ELECTION

**Elections**

As part of our democracy, a General Election must be held at least every five years. For the purposes of a General Election, the country is divided into areas, called constituencies. At present there are 43 constituencies in the country, 12 of those are in Dublin. The level of population in an area determines the size of constituencies. Constituencies may elect three, four or five people in an election.

**An tOireachtas**

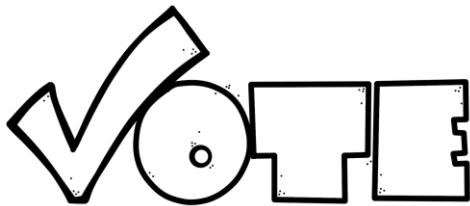
Our parliament is known as "An tOireachtas". It consists of the President and two houses - Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann. The president and the Dáil are elected by direct vote of the people, whereas the Seanad is not. The Dáil and the Seanad meet at Leinster House, Dublin. The first Dáil met in the Mansion House, Dublin on January 21st, 1919. The Mansion House is now the official residence of the Lord Mayor of Dublin.

**Fact**

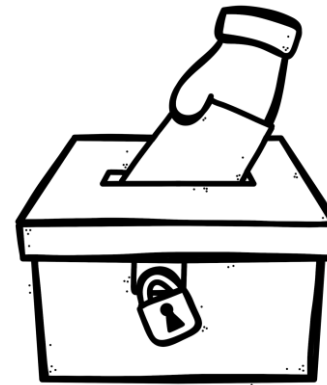
Leinster House, previously called Kildare House, was the Dublin residence of the Duke of Leinster.

**An Dáil**

Dáil Éireann is the more powerful and democratic of the two houses in the Oireachtas. It has 174 members called "Teachtaí Dála" (TDs) elected in 43 different constituencies. Every citizen of Ireland over 21 years of age who is not disqualified by the Constitution or by law is eligible to be elected to the Dáil. Every citizen over 18 years of age is eligible to vote for TDs in a General Election. TDs are paid 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.

**An Seanad**

Seanad Éireann has 60 members. It is less democratic than the Dáil because its members are not elected by the votes of all the people. 11 are nominated by An Taoiseach; 6 elected by the graduates of the universities and 43 elected by the TDs, outgoing senators and members of the Local Authorities. The Seanad acts as an advisory body to the Dáil.



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