



Elections and representation

Everything you need to know about elections including: the difference between local and general elections, how the elections process works, why you should vote and how representation works.

Local versus general elections

Let's look at the difference between local and general elections.

General elections

General elections decide who represents all New Zealanders in Parliament.

They are run by the Electoral Commission, which is independent from the government.

General elections are held every three years, but do not have a set date.

The Prime Minister is responsible for announcing the date of the general election and must do it before the three-year term is up.

All eligible New Zealanders can vote.

Who can vote in the New Zealand general elections

- People who are 18 years or older.
- People who are New Zealand citizens or permanent residents.
- People who have lived in New Zealand for 12 months or more at some time in their life.

Why you need to enrol

You might be eligible to vote but this doesn't mean you're automatically enrolled. So, you still need to enrol.

Find out more about [enrolling to vote in the general election](#).

How to enrol to vote

This video explains how to enrol quickly and easily online.

[How to enrol to vote](#).

When voting opens

Voting in the general election opens around two weeks before election day.

You can cast an early vote or wait to vote at the polling stations on election day.

You get two votes

Everyone gets two votes in the general election:

- an electorate vote
- a party vote.

Electorate vote

Use your electorate vote for the candidates you want to represent the area you live in.

There are currently 22 electorates in Auckland. This means there are 22 Members of Parliament or 'MPs' who represent Auckland.

Party vote

- Use your party vote for the political party you want to represent you in parliament.
- Leader of the party that gets the largest proportion of votes will become the Prime Minister.

Local elections

Local elections are a little bit different from general elections.

Like the general election, they are held every three years but unlike the general election, local elections have a set date.

Under the [Local Electoral Act 2001](#), local elections must be held on the second Saturday in October every three years. The next elections are in 2022. Go to the [VoteAuckland website](#) for more information.

Who can vote in Auckland local elections

- If you are on the electoral roll and live in the Auckland region, you are enrolled to vote in our local elections.
- If you live outside of Auckland but own property in Auckland, you are also eligible to vote.

To check if you are enrolled, visit the [electoral commission website](#).

How local elections are run

Councils run their own local elections and they are administered by postal vote.

This means that there are no polling stations like the general elections.

You vote to elect the members who make up your local council.

Because Auckland has a unique governance model you can cast multiple votes to decide who will represent you and your community.

Local elections in Tāmaki Makaurau

In Tāmaki Makaurau, you vote for:

- the mayor
- ward councillors
- local board members.

Local elections, local issues

When you vote in the local election, you are voting for candidates from your local area.

One mayor for Auckland

The only candidates that will be the same for all Aucklanders are those who are running for mayor.

Because the mayor represents all Aucklanders, every Aucklander gets to have their say on who this will be.

Know your ward councillors from your local board members

- Ward councillors are elected from the 13 different wards in Auckland and together with the mayor, they make up the Governing Body.
- Local board members are the elected members for the 21 local boards.



Vote for licensing trusts

If you live in an area of Auckland that has licensing trusts, then you will also have a vote for who you want to represent you on their boards.

Licensing trusts are publicly owned businesses, with privileges under the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012.

Why voting matters

Why vote? Voting in local elections is a way to make sure that you have your say on issues affecting our region, city and your local community. A democracy works best when all voices are heard and represented at the decision-making table.

Staying accountable

Elected members are accountable to their community through elections, so it is important that you are familiar with candidates' aspirations and proposals for how they will act on your behalf.

Because your vote is so important for shaping the future of Auckland and what happens day-to-day within your local community, make sure you know what your local candidates stand for and how they will represent the community.

Once all the candidates have been officially announced, you can find out more about them in the candidate profiles that will be published once nomination period is over.

What your vote influences

In the [Introduction to Auckland Council](#) section, we learnt all about Auckland Council’s services and responsibilities.

Voting in local elections is important if you want to have your say on what matters to you.

Your vote influences who is elected to make decisions for Auckland, so your vote helps shape what Auckland is like now and in the future.

The people you vote for will decide on the funding and maintenance of critical infrastructure that makes Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland such a great place to live.

Your vote can make a difference!

We deliver many services to our communities across the Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland region:



Transport

- Vital transport infrastructure
- Making it safer for cyclists and pedestrians around the city



Water, wastewater and stormwater

- The quality of water from your tap and at your local beaches



Parks and community

- Libraries, recreation centres and pools or hiring a community hall
- Play spaces for children in your local parks



City centre and local development

- How development can encourage a thriving community



Economic and cultural development

- What cultural, family and sporting events take place near you



Environmental management and regulation

- Having a say on how we monitor and protect our local environment

How local elections work

Every three years Auckland Council runs our own local elections, and the Electoral Commission works with us by always keeping the electoral rolls up to date. This is important, because the information packs that you receive are tailored to your local area and the candidates who are nominated in it.



Make sure you're enrolled

The first step before any local election is to check that you are enrolled to vote, and that your details are correct.

You can [check or update your details online](#), or call 0800 36 76 56.

Visit the [Electoral Commission website](#) to find out other ways to enrol.

Did you know?

You can enrol to vote when you are 17 so that the next time an election comes around, you are well prepared to get out and vote.

Get your voter information pack

Local elections are held by postal vote.

By enrolling or checking that your details are up to date, you are making sure that you will receive your voter information pack in the mail.

Your pack will include:

- your local area candidate information booklet
- your voting papers
- the envelope to return your voting papers.

The postage is paid on the return envelopes, so all you need to do is go to your nearest post box or voting box and drop them in before the due date.

See [Key dates for the 2022 local election](#).

How to return your completed voting papers to us

The easiest way to return your voting papers is to post them in the envelope provided in your voter information pack.

There are also a few other ways that you can get this done.

Mobile voting boxes

These will be collection boxes for voting papers at your local spots like libraries, supermarkets, and transport stations.

All you need to do is drop in your completed voting forms and you're done! Make sure to keep an eye out for these boxes appearing in your neighbourhood.

One Stop Shops

At One Stop Shop locations, you can:

- enrol to vote
- vote

- hand in your completed voting papers.

We will publish the locations of One Stop Shops soon.

Assisted participation

Blind or low vision voters can register for assisted voting.

Information about candidates will be available via a Telephone Information Service.

You can also request a visit from a trained volunteer to help you to fill in your voting papers.

Find out more about [\[Assisted voting\]](#)



How we ensure all Aucklanders are represented

So, you might be asking yourself who decides who your local candidates are? To answer this question let's look at representation arrangements in Auckland.

How local representation is arranged

Much like the 22 electorates for the general election, your local board and ward areas are determined by where you're registered to vote.

You can only vote for local board candidates and ward councillors from the area your address is registered to. There are 21 local boards and 13 wards in the Auckland region.

Because the mayor's role is Auckland-wide, the list of mayoral candidates will be the same for all Aucklanders.

How local board and ward boundaries are decided

The boundaries for the local boards and wards are related to population.

We conduct a review of ward boundaries and population every six years by ‘representation review’.

What is a representation review

Representation reviews take a close look at the population within each ward and the subdivisions within them, compared to the number of elected representatives for that area.

These reviews may change the ward boundaries to reflect changes in population and achieve a fair ratio of elected members.

How we keep things fair

It isn't all down to numbers though. There are exceptions for communities that have either a low or high population within them but share a common community aspect – meaning that rearranging these areas would misrepresent the communities.

These exceptions usually apply to island or isolated communities and rural areas. It is important for communities to feel that they are accurately represented by their elected members.

What representation reviews do

Auckland Council's local board boundaries can only be reviewed through a representation review.

Representation reviews offer a chance for us to look at the current local boards and wards and make sure that they are represented fairly and effectively.

The next representation review will be before the 2025 local elections which will include an opportunity to introduce Māori wards.

Learn more about Māori wards in the [\[link to Māori wards info\]](#)



L4: Elections and representation

Teacher resource

 This lesson requires access to the internet.

This lesson includes everything you need to know about elections including: the difference between local and general elections, how the elections process works, why you should vote and how representation works.



Activity 1 – What’s the difference between general and local elections?

Curriculum alignment

Curriculum	Achievement Objectives
The Literacy Learning Progressions Reading	<p>Year 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gathering, evaluating, and synthesising information across a small range of texts. <p>Year 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using strategies such as skimming, scanning, note-taking, annotating, mapping, coding information, and rephrasing in order to locate, evaluate, analyse, and summarise information and ideas within and across a range of texts.
English Language Learning Progressions	<p>Oral Language - Input Stage 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum content that reflects what their peers are learning in mainstream classes. Some complex sentences. <p>Stage 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connected text with several ideas or text sequences. Extended passages of natural speech in familiar and unfamiliar curriculum and social contexts. <p>Writing Stage 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Texts include a range of different sentence beginnings and structures (such as use of relative clauses). <p>Stage 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topics are sustained and organised logically and coherently in stages. Ideas are linked with appropriate use of a range of connectives (e.g. ‘however’, ‘therefore’). Texts may follow a model closely.

Procedure:

- By the end of this activity, students will have a much deeper understanding of the differences between general and local elections.
- Firstly, have students read all the information in the section [‘Local versus general elections’](#). Emphasise that they will need to read very closely.
- Once students have read through the content, have them look at the questions in the table and fill in the blanks, referring to both general and local elections in Auckland.
- When they are ready, have them share and compare their answers with a partner and make any changes if they think they need to.

- Now go through the answers, as shown in the table below, with the class asking students to explain their answers, looking for reference to source material or general knowledge.

1. Who can vote?	
General elections	Local elections in Auckland
Any New Zealand citizen or permanent resident who is 18 years or older and has lived in New Zealand for 12 months or more at some point in their life are eligible to enrol and vote from anywhere in New Zealand	Anyone who is eligible and enrolled to vote in the general elections and lives in Auckland or owns property or a business based in Auckland
2. Who can you vote for?	
General elections	Local elections in Auckland
You can vote for a party and for an electorate	You can vote for the mayor, the councillor(s) in your ward and the local board members for your local area. In some areas, you can also elect Licensing Trust members
3. When do the elections take place?	
General elections	Local elections in Auckland
Every three years, at a date determined by the Prime Minister	Every three years, on the second Saturday of October
4. Who runs the elections?	
General elections	Local elections in Auckland
The Electoral Commission	Auckland Council
5. How do you vote?	
General elections	Local elections in Auckland
In person (booth voting)	By post (postal voting) or in person
6. How can you get ready to vote?	
General elections	Local elections in Auckland
By enrolling with the Electoral Commission	By enrolling with the Electoral Commission

Activity 2 – What matters to me?

Curriculum alignment

Curriculum	Achievement Objectives
Social studies	<p>Level 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how people view and use places differently. <p>Level 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how formal and informal groups make decisions that impact on communities. Understand how people participate individually and collectively in response to community challenges.
Learning Through Talk Years 4-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiates and sustains group discussions.

Procedure:

- Firstly, have the students read the section '[Why voting matters](#)' to help them start to think about what matters to them for the rest of the activity.
- In small groups, students should discuss things they care about.
- Using the graphic organiser, they should include things at a personal, school, family, community, local, national and global level. You can also use the organiser and model it on a whiteboard or go through the activity as a class.
- Brainstorm with your students ways that we can use our voices and have our opinions heard (e.g. protests, petitions, letters to the editor, social media, referenda, writing to local MP). You might want to use any recent examples in the media. Ask them to write a list next to their graphic organiser

Activity 3 – Defining key issues

Curriculum alignment

Curriculum	Achievement Objectives
Social Studies	<p>Level 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how people make decisions about access to and use of resources. <p>Level 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how formal and informal groups make decisions that impact on communities. <p>Level 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how systems of government in New Zealand operate and affect people’s lives, and how they compare with another system.
Literacy Learning Progressions	<p>End of Year 8</p> <p>Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliberately choosing a clear and logical text structure to suit their purpose and audience, sometimes innovating in order to achieve this. <p>End of Year 10</p> <p>Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieving coherence and cohesion in paragraphs or in longer sections on their writing (e.g. by inserting a subheading, by using a topic sentence, or by using discourse markers such as although and furthermore to make meaning clear and to link clauses. Initiates and sustains group discussions.

Procedure

In this activity, students will learn some ways of identifying the key issues that are relevant for Auckland and themselves, and how they would frame their own position if they were candidates for election. This links to the final activity, where students get the chance to participate in a ‘mock’ election.

- Get students to read the section [‘Why voting matters’](#) and have a look at the 10-year budget. It is a key guiding document for Auckland Council that outlines the key challenges for our city and how we can respond to them. It is available online [here](#).
- Get students to gather and synthesise key information about each activity theme covered in the 10-year budget using the table in the student resource. This could be done individually or in groups.
- Once completed, students should discuss and compare answers with the class.
- Then, each student should select one to three issues or challenges they would prioritise if they were running for election and describe in their own words how they would address them as an elected member of Auckland Council.
- You could get students to debate their views on these issues or to write a short campaign speech, which could be very useful for the final activity, where students can participate in a ‘mock’ election.

Activity 4 – Time to vote

Curriculum alignment

Curriculum	Achievement Objectives
<i>Social Studies</i>	<p>Level 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how people make decisions about access to and use of resources. <p>Level 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how formal and informal groups make decisions that impact on communities. <p>Level 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how systems of government in New Zealand operate and affect people’s lives, and how they compare with another system.

Procedure

- Students get to vote in a mock election, using the attached voting document.
- Before starting the activity, have students look up the ward and local board area that your school is in by using the finder on the [Auckland Council website](#). Fill in the blank spaces on the voting papers accordingly.
- This activity could be done as a follow-up from Activity three, using the students as candidates, after they have developed their priorities for Auckland and prepared their campaign speeches. If you would like to do this, follow the below steps.
 - Firstly, have students present their campaigns, as developed in Activity three. This could be done individually or in groups.
 - Add in the students’ names to the voting paper for mayoral candidates in the blank spaces provided.
 - Have the students fill in their voting papers by ticking for their preferred candidate.
 - Count results and announce the new ‘mayor’!
- If you prefer to complete this activity as a standalone task that does not include the students as candidates, you can use the mock voting paper and candidate booklet provided. Both are recreations of real electoral documents and can help prepare students for the act of voting in a local election in the future. If you would like to do this, follow the steps below.
 - Have students read the candidate statements included in the candidate booklet. This could be done individually or in groups.
 - Talk through the voting paper with the class and what each elected member position is.

- Have the students fill in their voting papers by ticking for their preferred candidate/s.
- Count the results and announce the new mayor, ward councillors and local board members!

The Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission have a range of resources available to help our young people understand democracy, how voting works and how they can participate. With Local Body Elections taking place later this year, now is a great time to encourage our Year 13 Rangatahi to get involved.

The team from the Electoral Commission can provide a range of resources and information to support you with this. They have developed a range of curriculum-based teaching resources to help make your students active, enthusiastic citizens.

The team can visit your kura and explain to students how they can enrol to vote. They'll also attend local events to help spread the word.

To arrange a visit to your kura or event, contact the Electoral Commission team at Auckland.Youth@elections.govt.nz


For more information and resources visit www.vote.nz





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Student resource

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This lesson includes everything you need to know about elections including: the difference between local and general elections, how the elections process works, why you should vote and how representation works.



Activity 1 – What’s the difference between general and local elections?

- Firstly, read all the information from the section '[Local versus general elections](#)' very carefully.
- Once you have read through the content, fill in the answers to the questions in the table below, referring to both general (central government) and local elections (local government) in Auckland.
- When you are done, share and compare your answers with a partner and make changes if required.
- Finally, go over your answers with your teacher.

1. Who can vote?	
General elections	Local elections in Auckland
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2. Who can you vote for?	
General elections	Local elections in Auckland
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3. When do the elections take place?	
General elections	Local elections in Auckland

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4. Who runs the elections?

General elections	Local elections in Auckland
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5. How do you vote?

General elections	Local elections in Auckland
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6. How can you get ready to vote?

General elections	Local elections in Auckland
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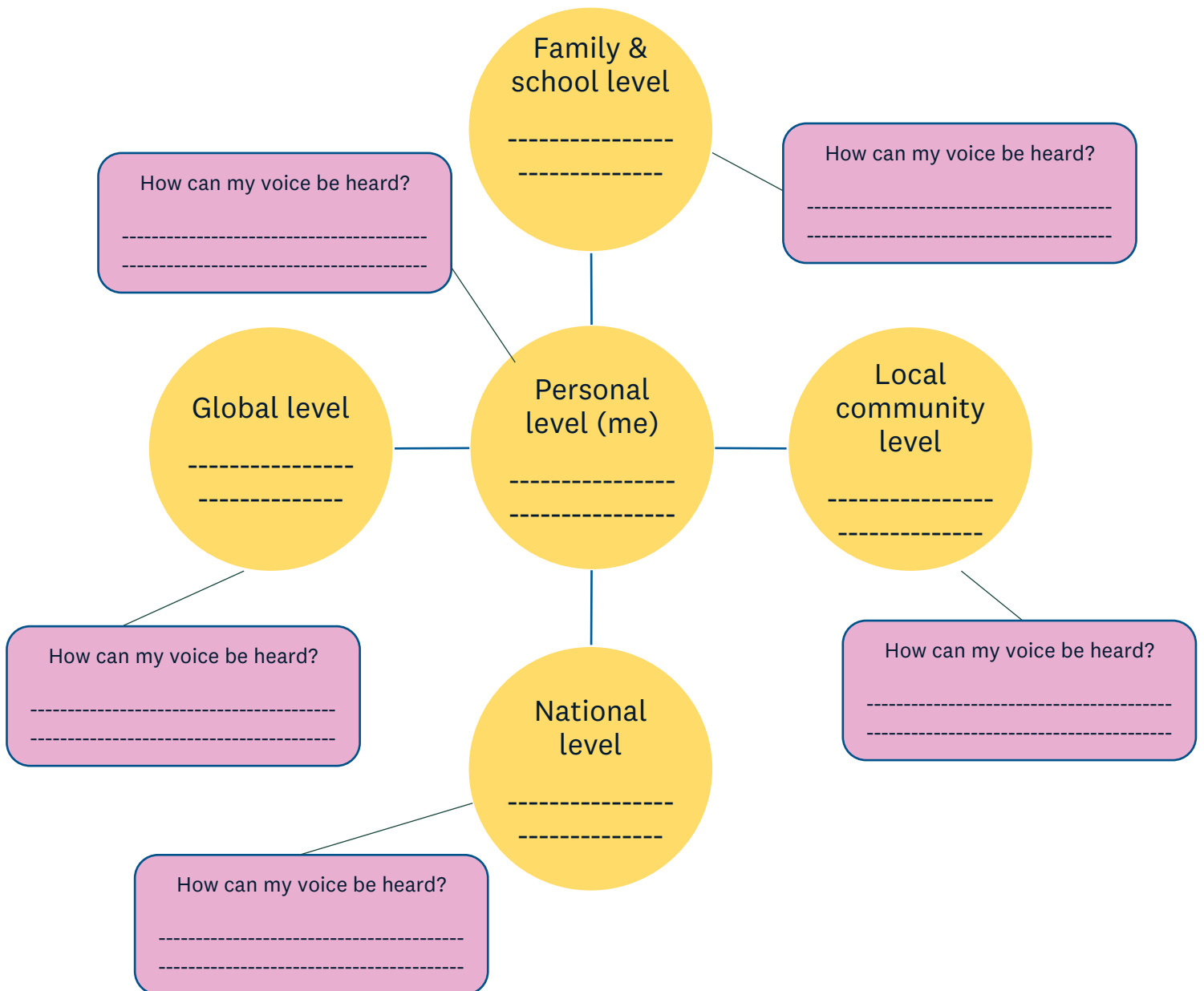
Activity 2 – What matters to me?

As we learned in lesson three, along with voting, there are a lot of different ways that you can have your voice heard and engage in local issues that are important to you. All people in New Zealand have the right to be vocal about issues that affect them.

For this exercise, go through to the content section [‘Why voting matters’](#) and think about issues you care about at a personal, school/family, community, local, national and global level

In a small group, discuss and write one issue that you care about in each circle in the organiser below.

Brainstorm together how you might have your voice heard about the things you care about. Add these ideas to your organiser.



Activity 3 – Defining key issues

In this activity, you will learn how to identify and talk about the key issues that are relevant for the future of Auckland. You will get to role-play being a candidate for election and use your own personal views for your mock campaign.

- Read the content section ‘[Why voting matters](#)’ and have a look at the 10-year budget. It is a key guiding document for Auckland Council that outlines the key challenges for our city and how we could respond to them. It is available online [here](#).
- You will need to gather and synthesise key information about each activity theme covered in the 10-year budget using the table below.

Activity theme	Key challenges for Auckland
Transport	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Three waters	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Parks and community	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Centres development	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Economic and cultural development	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Environmental management	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Other activities	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

- Now, select one to three issues or challenges that are the most important to you, that you would prioritise if you were a candidate running for election. Using the table below, describe in your own words how you would address each issue. The following questions could help you with framing your opinion:
 - What do you think should be done about the issues?
 - How would you bring some change?
 - How would you convince Auckland voters that you are the right person to solve the problems?

My top priorities	How I would address them
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- Finally, you can debate your views on these issues with your classmates or use your notes in the table above to write your own campaign speech.

Activity 4 – Time to vote!

In this activity you will get to vote in a mock election.

- Before starting the activity, look up the ward and local board area that your school is in by using the finder on the [Auckland Council website](#). Fill in the blank spaces on the attached voting papers accordingly.
- Your teacher will take you through the rest of the exercise as a class.
- Have fun!

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