

Policy.

for Schools

General resources for using the Policy.nz tool



This teacher resource is designed to provide starting points when guiding students to engage with the policies on Policy.nz, the complete guide to the 2022 local elections

- Go to policy.nz and find the elections in your area
- Choose an election and browse the candidates' profiles to learn about who is standing
- Browse the candidates' policies across a range of topics
- Save your favourite candidates and policies by clicking the heart icon

We suggest that you first model the process with your students (you choose one issue and move through this together as a class) and then ask them to carry-out their own social inquiry into a particular policy area or series of policies that are meaningful to them.

For each of the issues, you will need to guide students through a discussion of values, priorities, impacts upon different groups of people – both potential benefits and harms. These discussions will help to strengthen students' ability to make value-based decisions and understand why different people and groups make decisions that are different to their own. It is also important that students see the varied positions that people have on the policy issues. When you lead discussions and set activities, move away from simplistic for/against arguments and foster critical thinking that grapples with the complexities of the issues.

You may like to bring the structure of local government into your lessons. New Zealand has:

- **62 city and district councils** responsible for infrastructure, planning, parks, and services
- **11 regional councils** responsible for environmental planning and rules
- **Five unitary authorities** (including Auckland), with the combined responsibilities of both a city or district council and a regional council
- **67 mayors** – one for each city, district, and unitary authority area
- **110 community boards** responsible for advocating to the council on local issues (in Auckland, these are called local boards, and have slightly greater responsibilities)

This is the perfect opportunity to critically evaluate what it means to have representation or be represented on a council, local board or community board; to look at policies of the candidates and discuss why it is important for all candidates to have a voice.

Throughout this process the role of the teacher is to make it clear that there are no right or wrong answers. Remind students to keep to the issues. Disagreement and dissent is a necessary part of the democratic process, but personal attacks are not acceptable.

For further professional reading we recommend 'Issues-based social inquiry in social studies and citizenship education' by Andrea Milligan, Philippa Hunter and Michael Harcourt: chapter 3 in [Teaching social studies for critical, active citizenship in Aotearoa New Zealand](#).



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Questions for understanding political agendas

1. Find an election, choose a topic, and compare the candidates' policies.
 - Can you tell what priorities each candidate has? Discuss.
 - What do the set of policies each candidate has tell us about who they are appealing to?
 - What demographics do you think different policies appeal most to?
 - What insight do the candidates' policies give us into their overarching political agenda?
2. Next, browse the candidate's profile pages.
 - What sorts of backgrounds do the candidates have?
 - Are there any similarities or differences between the candidates?
 - Do the candidates' policies seem to line up with their histories or life experiences?

Questions for looking at policies through different lenses

3. Select an issue that you are interested in and compare two candidates' policies.
 - What are the differences in the policy?
 - How do you think these will affect your community?
4. On an issue of interest to you – save the policies that you agree with. Explain what you perceive the benefits of these policies to be. Discuss with another person in the class.
 - Have you learnt anything new about this person?
 - Have you learnt anything new about yourself?
5. As a class, select a topic that affects children and young people. Save the policies that you think will clearly benefit children and young people.
 - Do you have any suggestions for how to make the policies on your chosen issue more beneficial for young people's lives?
6. Find an environment-related topic and save the policies that you think are good for the environment. Find another person and talk to them about why they made their selections.
 - What have you learned about their values (what is important to them)?
 - Has the conversation made you think about why you chose the policies you did?
 - Has it made you want to change the policies you have selected?
 - Do you have any suggestions about how to make the policies on your chosen issue more beneficial for the environment?



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Continuum activity: take a stance and be prepared to justify it

Note for teachers: This activity should be completed after students have completed their inquiry into the issue and can be used to prompt meaningful reflection.

Students could also draw a continuum and place themselves on it initially, before browsing the Policy.nz tool, and then place themselves on the continuum again in a different colour after the inquiry to reflect upon any changes to their position on the statements. Doing this privately rather than publicly will encourage deeper reflection.

1. People should vote for the candidates that benefit them the most personally.
2. People should vote for the candidates that will have the most benefit for the most people.
3. People should vote for the candidates that will benefit the most vulnerable.
4. People should vote for the Mayor they want rather than the Mayor whose policies appeal to them.
5. People should only take candidates' policies into account when deciding who to vote for.
6. Policies are not important. It is more important that voters trust the people they vote for.
7. Policies are not important, because after the election the Mayor or the councillors don't necessarily enact the policies they campaigned on.
8. The life experiences of a Mayor or a councillor are more important than their level of expertise in policy.
9. Policy expertise is the most important quality a Mayor or a councillor should have.
10. The most important issue in this year's local elections is housing.
11. The most important issue in this year's local elections is transport.
12. The most important issue in this year's local elections is climate change.
13. The voting age should be reduced to 16.
14. The voting age should be reduced to 12.