

UK to give 16-year-olds the vote

Warm-up

- What is the voting age in your country?
- What are the pros and cons of this age limit?
- What is the political system in your country? How does it work?
- What are the main political parties in your country?
- Let's create a list of 10 words connected with elections and politics.

Do you think people can be too young or too old for these things? Why?

- driving
- alcohol
- getting married
- voting
- starting a new career
- becoming a parent
- moving out from your parents' house
- retirement
- using social media
- working as a politician

Match the words and the definitions

Word	Meaning
A. electorate	1. Done by machines or computers without people
B. reform	2. All the people who are allowed to vote
C. seismic	3. A change or improvement to a system or law
D. manifesto	4. A time when people vote for a person or party
E. automated	5. Treating people equally and honestly
F. election	6. A list of ideas and promises from a political party
G. fair	7. The army, navy, and air force of a country
H. military	8. Very large, important changes



“UK Lowers Voting Age to 16 in Big Election Reform”

voting - election - England - supporters - age - taxes - fair - million - bank - young
- seismic -certificate

On 17 July 2025, the UK government announced an important change to its voting laws. From the next general (1) _____, 16- and 17-year-olds will have the right to vote in the UK. This will be the first time in history that teenagers so young can vote in (2) _____ and Northern Ireland. In Wales and Scotland, 16-year-olds can already vote in local and national elections.

The last time the UK changed the voting (3) _____ was in 1969, when it was lowered from 21 to 18. The government now says it is time for another change. Many young people already work, pay (4) _____, and can even join the military at 16. Because of this, the government believes it is (5) _____ to give them the right to vote.

This reform is part of a larger plan to make elections more modern and accessible. Other changes include:

- Accepting (6) _____ cards as a form of voter ID.
- Creating a digital voter (7) _____ that people can show on their phones.
- Introducing automated voter registration, so people are automatically added to the electorate when they turn 16.

The government believes these changes will add around 1.5 (8) _____ new voters aged 16 and 17 to the voting lists. The Minister for Elections called this a (9) _____ reform, meaning it is a very big and important change for democracy.

However, not everyone agrees. Some people think that 16-year-olds are too (10) _____ to understand politics and make good (11) _____ choices. Others believe that young people are interested in the future of their country and should have a voice in how it is run.

Many European countries, like Austria and Germany, already allow 16-year-olds to vote in some elections. (12) _____ of the reform say it is time for the UK to follow this example.

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/16-year-olds-to-be-given-right-to-vote-through-seismic-government-election-reforms>



True or false?

- 1.The UK government announced the voting age change in July 2025.
- 2.From now on, 16-year-olds can vote in all UK elections.
- 3.The voting age in the UK was lowered from 21 to 16 in 1969.
- 4.The government believes the change is fair because young people already pay taxes and can join the military.
- 5.Only a passport will be accepted as voter ID in the new reforms.
- 6.About 1.5 million new voters aged 16–17 will be added to the electorate.
- 7.The government will introduce automated voter registration to help people register more easily.

Let's talk!

- 1.What is democracy? Can you explain it in your own words?
- 2.What is, in your opinion, the best political system?
- 3.Do you think it's a good idea to lower the voting age to 16? Why or why not?
- 4.What are political parties? Can you name any parties in your country?
- 5.Should voting be compulsory? Why or why not?
- 6.What can governments do to help more young people vote?
- 7.Do you think young people are interested in politics? Why or why not?
- 8.What influences our political choices?



Answer key

“UK Lowers Voting Age to 16 in Big Election Reform”

On 17 July 2025, the UK government announced an important change to its voting laws. From the next general **1. election**, 16- and 17-year-olds will have the right to vote in the UK. This will be the first time in history that teenagers so young can vote in **2. England** and Northern Ireland. In Wales and Scotland, 16-year-olds can already vote in local and national elections.

The last time the UK changed the voting **3. age** was in 1969, when it was lowered from 21 to 18. The government now says it is time for another change. Many young people already work, pay **4. taxes**, and can even join the military at 16. Because of this, the government believes it is **5. fair** to give them the right to vote.

This reform is part of a larger plan to make elections more modern and accessible. Other changes include:

- Accepting **6. bank** cards as a form of voter ID.
- Creating a digital voter **7. certificate** that people can show on their phones.
- Introducing automated voter registration, so people are automatically added to the electorate when they turn 16.

The government believes these changes will make it easier for people to vote. They also say the changes will add around 1.5 **8. million** new voters aged 16 and 17 to the voting lists. The Minister for Elections called this a “**9. seismic** reform”, meaning it is a very big and important change for democracy.

However, not everyone agrees with the decision. Some people think that 16-year-olds are too **10. young** to understand politics. They say that teenagers do not have enough life experience to make good **11. voting** choices. Others believe that young people are interested in the future of their country and should have a voice in how it is run.

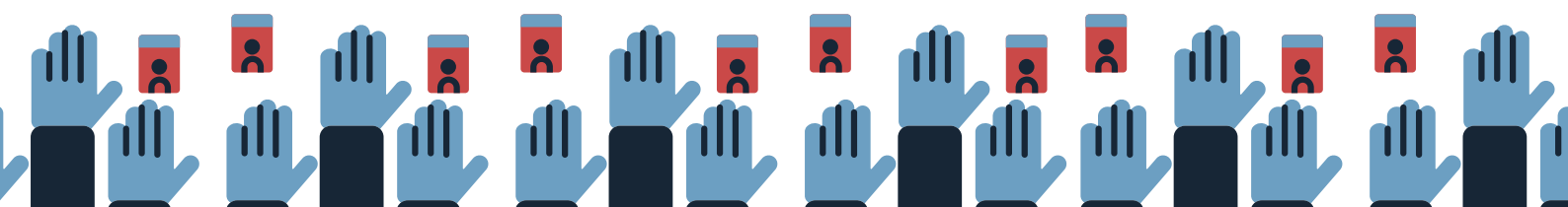
Many European countries, like Austria and Germany, already allow 16-year-olds to vote in some elections. **12. Supporters** of the reform say it is time for the UK to follow this example.

Vocabulary

A 2
B 3
C 8
D 6
E 1
F 4
G 5
H 7

True or false

1. True
2. False (It will start from the next general election)
3. False (It was lowered from 21 to 18 in 1969)
4. True
5. False (Bank cards will also be accepted)
6. True
7. True



Vocabulary list - example

1. Vote
2. Election
3. Voter
4. Ballot
5. Candidate
6. Political party
7. Government
8. President
9. Prime Minister
10. Mayor
11. Parliament
12. Law
13. Leader
14. Council
15. Citizens
16. Democracy
17. Dictatorship
18. Campaign
19. Debate
20. Majority
21. Minority
22. Opposition
23. Member of Parliament (MP)
24. Constitution
25. Referendum
26. Electoral system
27. Polling station
28. Polling booth
29. Election day
30. Term (of office)
31. Run for office
32. Political program/manifesto
33. Coalition government
34. Electoral fraud
35. Political ideology
36. Legislative branch
37. Executive branch
38. Judicial branch
39. Separation of powers
40. Electorate

