

Electoral Systems Terms

1. How many politicians are elected in each district? (District magnitude)
2. How is a seat won? (Electoral formula)
3. How do voters make choices (Ballot structure)

1. How many politicians are elected in each district? (District magnitude)

Voters can vote in a:

- Single member district (one politician is elected)
- Multi-member district (more than one politician is elected)
- Single member and a regional multi-member district

2. How is a seat won? (Electoral formula)

The winner gets:

- One more vote than any other candidate (Plurality)
- 50% +1 vote (Majority)
- Seats that match the party's share of the vote (Proportionality)

3. How do voters make choices? (Ballot structure)

Voters get to:

- Choose one candidate or party (Categorical)
- Rank the parties or candidates (Ordinal)
- Choose one party and one candidate (Mixed)

A fourth component is the size of the legislature—How many seats available to be won?

System Families

1. Single Member Plurality

Example: First past the post

- Single member districts
- Candidate with the most votes wins each seat
- Voters make one choice

2. Majority

Example: Alternative vote

- Single member districts
- Candidate with 50% +1 of the votes wins the seat
- Voters rank all candidates

3. Proportional Representation

Example: List proportional representation

- Multi-member districts
- Seats are allocated based on party's proportion of the vote
- Closed list PR: Voters choose one party

4. Single transferable vote

- Multi-member districts
- Proportional
- Voters rank candidates (regardless of party)

5. Mixed systems

Example: Mixed-member proportional

- Single and multi-member districts
- Plurality + party seats

- Vote for one local candidate and one party