

Voting

You will hear a discussion between a man and a woman. For questions 1 to 6, decide whether the opinions you hear are expressed by only one of the speakers, or whether the speakers agree. Write M for man, W for woman or B for Both, where they agree. You now have sixty seconds to look at the questions.

Man	I'm always frustrated when I hear about voter turnout after a General Election.
Woman	What does voter turnout mean?
Man	It's the percentage of people who actually bother to vote in an election. It is often less than 50 percent. For example, in the last General Election, approximately 60 percent of eligible voters cast ballots and that was the highest turnout in almost 40 years ³ . I just can't believe that the other 40 percent of people can be so lazy.
Woman	Well, laziness is certainly a part of the problem but it isn't everything ⁴ . Some people, especially young people, don't feel that voting matters. They don't see much difference between candidates ⁵ , and they don't think that politics affects their lives. It seems difficult, maybe impossible, to change their minds.
Man	Taxes, the economy, education, health are all controlled by various levels of government, and politicians have to be elected by voters. It is essential that all voters participate in order to ensure that the best people are chosen ¹ and the best choices are made.
Woman	I agree about the importance of participation but I don't see a solution.
Man	I suggest that the government demand participation. It should be a law that everybody over the age of 18 has to vote in every General Election ² .
Woman	You would make it a law? That seems extreme. What would be the penalty for breaking it and not voting?
Man	I don't recommend that people be arrested or sent to jail. Instead, I suggest that they pay a fine if they refuse to vote. It would be like paying a parking ticket but only more important and expensive. This is the solution used in Australia, where almost everyone votes. Parliament could demand that lazy voters pay a fine of say £200.
Woman	Some wealthy voters might just pay the fine and avoid voting ⁶ . Also, people don't like the government forcing them to do anything.
Man	Of course that's all true but fines would also become an extra source of revenue for the government. The law would be one way that the government could actually make money from people's laziness. Secondly, people accept the rule of law. If the law requires that someone vote, he or she will ⁷ .
Woman	It still seems excessive to me
Man	It isn't. There are laws about caring for children, constructing buildings, and many other activities that society relies on. The law requires that a parent cares for a child and doesn't neglect him or her. Also, the government requires that buildings be built with certain materials and dimensions ⁸ . All this is to protect society. Mandatory voting would do the same thing.