

Voting demonstration 2

One of a series of simple audience participation demonstrations. This one shows how the Alternative Vote works compared with First-Past-The-Post.

This demonstration shows how an ineffective candidate in a safe seat is less safe under AV.

There are four candidates: Adams, Brown, Clark, and Davis and a set of 8 A5 voter profile pages, each giving a summary of the situation and particular voters opinion of each of the candidates.

- Hand out a voter profile page and a ballot paper to each participant. The pages are numbered and should be used in order for best effect. If there are more than 8 use another set of pages.
- Tell the participants that it is clear from the situation that a first-past-the- post election gives Brown a clear majority. Davis may have lost his deposit.
- Ask the participants to vote according to the alternative vote system and put the numbers 1 to 4 in the boxes in order of preference.
- Collect the voting slips and sort them into piles according to first preference.

Adams for the Minority party should get the least number of votes. The voting slips in this pile are redistributed according to the second preference, ie the candidate with a 2 in their box.

There are now three piles and smallest is almost certainly Clark. The voting slips in this pile are redistributed according to either the second preference where the first choice was for Clark or the third choice where the first and second choices were for Adams and Clark in either order.

There are now just two piles and Davis should be the clear winner.

- Ask for a show of hands for:
 - Is the election of Davis rather than Brown a better outcome?
 - Do you feel you had more influence over the result under AV?

You could add that Brown strongly opposes AV.