



Elections and democracy

Election participation: A guide



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1. Democracy

- Iceland is a democratic country.
- Democracy means that we can all have an influence on the community.
- Democracy means for example that people vote for members of parliament and for the president.
- Democracy can also be practised in schools and associations.
- Democracy also means that people can influence decisions of the people in power.

2. Political parties, candidates and the right to be elected

- In political parties, there are people who have similar ideas about laws and policies in the country.
- Political parties have, for example, different views on how much tax we should pay, and how much money should be spent on schools, hospitals and other services that many people use.
- You can elect political parties in parliamentary elections (see section 4) and in local government elections (see section 8).

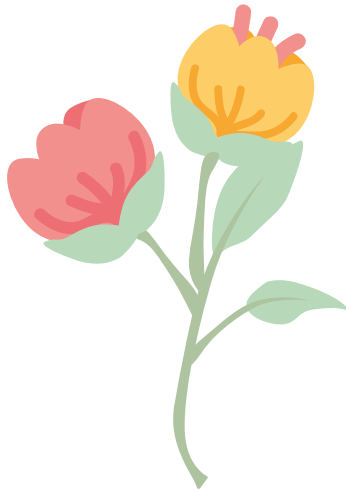
Candidates

- There are people in political parties that wish to work in Parliament or in local government.
- These people are called candidates.
- Candidates wish to work for the whole nation or for their municipality.
- Examples of municipalities are: Reykjavík, Akureyri, Ísafjörður.
- One can see the political parties and candidates on political party websites or in newspapers.

- You are also able to meet the people and talk to them.
- Political parties usually advertise when it is possible to meet candidates.
- It is also possible to send enquiries to the parties' email addresses.
- You can participate in deciding which candidates are chosen for the parties' lists.
- You usually need to register with political parties, but the rules can differ between parties.

Eligibility to be elected

- Eligibility is the word for the right to stand for office in elections.
- If you are able to vote in elections in Iceland and you have an unblemished reputation, you may stand for office in an election. To have an unblemished reputation means you have not had a serious conviction for a crime.



3. Parliament, the government and ministers

- Members of parliament work at the Parliament.
- Members of parliament are people in political parties that we have elected to Parliament.
- In Parliament, members of parliament discuss for example education, housing, medical service and other matters that are important to all people in Iceland.
- Parliament passes laws in Iceland on all those matters that Parliament discusses.

The Government

- The government is formed after parliamentary elections. Normally in Iceland, the parties in government are those who have received the majority of votes cast by electors in an election.
- Political parties in government, usually agree on the main issues in the community.

Ministers

- Parties that form a government, choose ministers that are responsible for various issues in the community.
- For example the minister of health and the minister of justice.
- The minister of health is for example responsible for the country's hospitals. The minister of justice is for example responsible for the police in Iceland.

4. Parliamentary elections

- All those who are 18 or older and are Icelandic citizens may vote in parliamentary elections.
- You may vote for whatever party you wish. You have the right to tell no one which party you voted for.
- You may only vote for one political party in each election.





What am I voting for?

- In parliamentary elections, you vote for the political party you want to have in Parliament.
- In parliamentary elections you can for example choose from political parties that have varying views on how society should be.



Where do I vote?

- Polling stations are in many places across the whole country. Your polling station depends on where you live.
- You must take identification with you to the polling station. Identification is a document with your photo and other information.

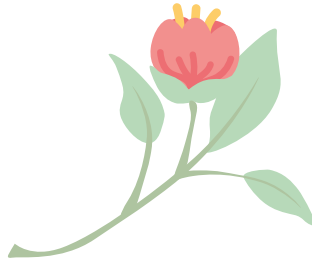
Examples of identification are a passport and an identity card.

5. President of Iceland

- The president is Iceland's national leader.
- The president should unite the nation.
- The president cannot make new laws himself but if Parliament passes a new law, the president can refer it to a referendum.
- The president presents Iceland to people from other countries.



- The president regularly meets the presidents of other countries, kings, queens and others.
- The president awards the Order of the Falcon each year. People who receive the Order of the Falcon are for example people who have done their work in an outstanding manner for many years.



6. Presidential elections

- All those who are 18 or older and are Icelandic citizens may vote in presidential elections.
- You may only vote for one candidate in each presidential election.

Where do I vote?

- Polling stations are in many places across the whole country. Your polling station depends on where you live.
- You must take identification with you to the polling station. Identification is a document with your photo and other information.

Examples of identification are a passport and an identity card.





7. Municipalities

What is a municipality?

- In all towns and cities in Iceland, there is a local council. In Reykjavik, there is Reykjavik City Council.
- The mayor is the manager of the City of Reykjavík, and is appointed by the City Council.

What do local councils do?

- Local councils decide where buildings should be built in the city, for example, apartments, swimming pools and sports fields.
- They also manage issues related to primary schools and preschools.
- Local councils also manage services for disabled people and senior citizens.



8. Local government elections

- All those who are 18 or older and have legal residence in the municipality they wish to vote in may vote in local government elections.
- If you are a citizen of Denmark, Finland, Norway or Sweden, you can also vote in local government elections, if you are 18 or older.
- You also need to have your legal address in the municipality where you wish to vote.

- You may also vote in local government elections if you are a citizen of another country. You must have had your legal address continuously in Iceland for a period of three years prior to the elections.

You also need to be 18 years or older and have your legal address in the municipality where you wish to vote.

- You may vote for whatever party you wish. You have the right to tell no one which party you voted for.
- You may only vote for one political party in each election.



Where do I vote?

- Polling stations are in many places across the whole country. Your polling station depends on where you live.
- You must take identification with you to the polling station. Identification is a document with your photo and other information.

Examples of identification are a passport and an identity card.

9. Help with voting

- You can get help with voting in all elections if you need assistance because of a disability.
- You can get help with voting from the ballot officer or from an assistant who accompanies you to the polling station.
- An assistant can for example be a parent, sibling or partner.
- A voter's assistant signs a confidentiality agreement. This means that the assistant may not tell other people how you voted.

Personal spokesmen for the disabled are people that you can talk to if you need help to vote. You can find information about personal spokesmen on the website **www.rettindagaesla.is**.

10. At the polling station

- A polling station is the place you go to for voting.
- When you arrive at your polling station, the staff can give you information about where to vote. The polling station is divided into a number of voting departments.
- There are staff in your voting department that give you the ballot paper and show you into a polling booth where you cast your vote.

- Inside the polling booth there are pencils and a sheet of paper with the names of the political parties and the candidates.
- You go into the polling booth and put an X by the political party you wish to vote for on your ballot paper.
- If you have an assistant with you, they can help you mark X on the paper.
- When you have cast your vote, you leave the polling booth and put your vote in the ballot box.

Example of a ballot

<input type="checkbox"/> H Listi Hamingjuflokksins	<input type="checkbox"/> A Listi Sólarflokksins
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Guðjón Sigurjón Traustason2. Sigrún Gunnarsdóttir3. Kolbeinn Rúnar Finnsson4. Nicolai Cuevas5. Fríða Rún Sigurðardóttir6. Norður Rakelar Hedman7. Guðjón Guðjónsson8. Snorri Línuson	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Natalia Monika Dąbrowska2. Sigurður Lúðvíksson3. Gunnar Gunnarsson4. Alexandra Sigurðsdóttir5. Pálína Rúnarsdóttir6. Þórður Geir Finnbogason7. Sólveig Jóna Ragnhildardóttir8. Frost Sigríðar

T

Listi Tjarnarflokksins

1. Guðrún Lína Guðrúnardóttir
2. Magnús Þór Garðarsson
3. Jakub Kazlauskas
4. Inga Sólveig Jónsdóttir
5. Blær Halldórsson
6. Benedikt Ingvar Ágústsson
7. Soffía Rósudóttir
8. Waraporn Pensri

É

Listi Byggingaflokksins

1. Aziza Ahmed
2. Wojciech Stefánsson
3. Unnur Ásta Auðardóttir
4. Friðrik Sævar Ingvarsson
5. Fatima Sól Ayad
6. Hilmar Baldur Harðarson
7. Kristjana Hjördís Guðjónsdóttir
8. Haraldur Brynjarsson

11. Absentee voting

If you cannot vote on the election day then it is possible to vote before that. This is called absentee voting.

District commissioners advertise where and when absentee voting takes place.

- You need to show identification when you cast your absentee vote.
- Identification is e.g. a driving licence or passport.
- You receive a ballot paper and an envelope.

- In the polling booth, there is either a pencil or rubber stamps for the parties standing for election.
- You need to go into the polling booth and write or stamp the letter for the party you wish to vote for, on the ballot paper.

(Remember that it is possible to get help with voting, see Section 9).

- Then you need to put the vote in the envelope, which you close and take to the ballot officer.
- Then finally you put the vote in ballot box.



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