

does democracy need elections?

A Make Votes Count + X-Change @ ERS essay competition

What's it all about?

Choosing our government through elections has always been the central part of our democracy, and democracies throughout the world. But fewer and fewer people are going out to vote. Instead they are becoming more interested in 'issue politics' such as Make Poverty History, or student fees. Because of this more and more people are turning away from traditional politics. There are plenty of efforts being made to try and get people interested in politics again, but many of them now concentrate on ways of getting involved other than taking part in voting.

So can we have a democracy without elections? Should we make elections the most important part of our democracy? If so, how?

How should I answer the question?

We want you to begin to answer these questions. You can choose to answer the essay in any way you would like. We're not looking for a balanced and academic article – more of an opinion piece that you might find in the Comments section of a newspaper. For sources of inspiration or information, check out the links below.

What should I look at to help me start?

These relevant sites may give you some inspiration for your essay. Entries will **not** be judged on their specific knowledge of or reference to the content of these sites – you should look at as many or as different sources of information as you like. Don't forget to check out the MVC and X-Change websites too!

The **POWER** report
Electoral Reform Society
Electoral Commission

www.powerinquiry.org
www.electoral-reform.org.uk
www.dopolitics.co.uk

What could I win?

The winner will be awarded £150, and have their essay published.
The first runner up will be awarded £75
Runner up prizes will be awarded to short-listed competitors.

The essays will be judged by a panel of three judges;

- Lord Tyler, a member of the House of Lords
- Bano Murtuja, a member of the Power Commission,
- A journalist (not yet announced)

Who can take part in the competition?

You must be 18 years of age or younger on 31st May 2006. (If you're older, you can enter in the older age group)

Your essay should be between 1000 and 1500 words.

Send your entry to x-change@reform.demon.co.uk

All essay entries must contain the competitors name, date of birth, contact e-mail, contact telephone number, and their school or college if applicable.

Entries must be received by **12noon on Wednesday 31st June.**
The winner will be announced by the end of June.



The small print

All essays become the property of MVC/X-Change with the right to publish in part or whole.

The decision of the judging panel is final and is not subject to appeal. Quotes and references must be clearly marked throughout the essay and properly cited.

Each participant can only submit one essay.