



# ENGLISH FOR LIVING LESSON

## 11: WORKSHEETS

Voting and Elections

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## Lesson 11: Voting and Elections

In this lesson you will hear an interview which has been divided into four parts. Each part is followed by explanations of vocabulary and exercises. You may wish to take notes while you are listening. If you are using the podcast you can listen to each part more than once or you can pause the recording as you answer the questions.

### Part A: Different types of elections in Ireland

***In this part Iain from 92.5 Phoenix FM is interviewing Michaela Benassi from the Citizens Information Centre in Blanchardstown and asking her about elections in Ireland and how to get your name on the electoral register.***

<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>OK! Micheala, can you tell us a little bit about voting in Ireland?</i></b>
Michaela	Yes! Em... First of all who can vote in Ireland? Em... Depending on who you are, who may vote at different elections. So for example if you are an Irish citizen so somebody is born in Ireland from Irish parents you can vote at any of the elections, whether it is referendum, presidential election, government election, local election, EU election. So that is very straight forward. If you are a naturalised Irish citizen you have the same rights ... as someone who came in from another country and applied for citizenship and has received citizenship you can then vote in any of the above elections providing that you get your citizenship a certain time before that election. So then we have for example European citizens who live and reside in Ireland have the right to vote in local elections and the European elections and non EU citizens who are residing in Ireland can vote at local elections. So it is important to know which category applies to you.
<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>and you were saying that if you want to vote in referenda and other , eh... The national election ...that you have to be nationalised a period before, before the election.. how long is that?</i></b>  <b><i>and for people who aren't naturalised Irish people, how long do they have to be naturalised before they can vote?</i></b>
Michaela	So! If you are a new Irish citizen you have to make sure that you have enough time, em... from when you get your certificate of naturalisation to the time, to the deadline for being recorded on the electoral register, so that would be 15 days , your last chance would be 15 days for the voting day.

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	<p>The electoral register is published every year and names are collected throughout the country and you have the possibility to fill in the form that you receive by post from the local authority or you can actually do it yourself. You can download the forms at <a href="http://checktheregister.ie">checktheregister.ie</a> or you can go to the local authority directly to make sure that your name is down as soon as is possible to make sure that it is included. Emm... usually the national register closes in February, but you can then if your name is not down by that day you can enter the supplemental register and in that case you have up to 15 days before the voting day to put your name down.</p>
<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>Ok! So you can, it's pretty much the same as someone who is just not registered to vote in Ireland, an Irish person.</i></b>
Michaela	<p>Yes! It would be, emm, eh... Similar to someone who is registered to vote for the very first time, so for example if you are em... an Irish citizen for instance who turns 18 to be included in the, eh Electoral Register have to be 18 by the 15<sup>th</sup> February, because that is the closing date for the register. Again it would be an option to use the supplemental register. Similarly somebody who comes in from the EU and they want to register because maybe there is an election, eh... they can, em... contact the Council or go on line and <a href="http://checktheregister.ie">checktheregister.ie</a> where they would also have to fill in a form to notify that they are here that they can vote. Em... it is important to remember that if you are coming to Ireland and as a new resident you must be in Ireland from the 1<sup>st</sup> September the year before to qualify you to vote for that election.</p>
<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>OK! So that's in the case of the European, and all of the lections or just the European?</i></b>
Michaela	<p>All of the elections! So if for Irish people, actually you must be resident in Ireland to vote, so that Irish people who are planning to go abroad, em... If they are returning and they want to vote and if they haven't been living here on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September that year they wouldn't have the right to vote in that election. But similarly if they are moving somewhere in Europe they may be able to vote in the local election or the EU election there, but not the government election.</p>

**A.1 Language focus:**

***Did you understand these words and expressions?***

**Election:** An election is held in a country to allow the people to choose who will rule the country

**Local Elections:** These are held to choose people who will sit on county councils, and city councils, in other words local government. The people elected are then referred to as councillors.

**General Elections:** A general election is held to choose people who will sit in the House of Representatives which is called the Dáil. A person elected to the Dáil is called a TD from the Irish *Teachta Dála* meaning a 'deputy to the Dáil'. The general public does not vote for the second house of Parliament, the Senate or Seanad.

**EU Elections:** European elections are held to choose representatives for the European Parliament from each country in the European Union. The people elected are called MEPs or Members of the European Parliament.

**Presidential Elections:** In Ireland there are elections for the president every seven years.

**A referendum:** This is where people vote yes or no to a specific question, usually related to making a change in the constitution of the country. The plural of referendum is referenda, so we would talk about one referendum, but several referenda. You will also hear people say 'referendums'.

**A citizen:** An Irish Citizen is someone who is entitled to an Irish passport either as a birthright or through a naturalization process.

**The electoral register:** This is an official list of people in the country who are entitled to vote. You must apply to get your name on the electoral register.

**Resident:** This term is used to indicate someone who is officially living in a country as opposed to someone who is just here on holidays.

**A.2 Comprehension**

**Listen to this piece of the interview again.**

**Did you understand the information in the interview? Answer true or false to these questions**

- |                                                                                                         |             |              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Michaela mentions four different types of elections.                                                 | <b>True</b> | <b>False</b> |
| 2. Naturalized Irish citizens have different voting rights to people born in Ireland.                   | <b>True</b> | <b>False</b> |
| 3. EU citizens who are not Irish can only vote in European Elections                                    | <b>True</b> | <b>False</b> |
| 4. Non-EU citizens can't vote at European Elections                                                     | <b>True</b> | <b>False</b> |
| 5. If you are a new Irish citizen you have to wait a year to vote.                                      | <b>True</b> | <b>False</b> |
| 6. An Irish citizen has to be 15 by the 18 <sup>th</sup> of February to vote                            | <b>True</b> | <b>False</b> |
| 7. You can find out about registering online.                                                           | <b>True</b> | <b>False</b> |
| 8. You have to be living in Ireland from the 1 <sup>st</sup> of September in order to register to vote. | <b>True</b> | <b>False</b> |

**A.3 Language Development**

**How much do you know about the language of voting in Ireland? Find the correct word to complete each of the sentences below. The missing words are provided below.**

city – county – councilors – Dáil - European – local – local – naturalized - no – rights – TDs – town  
–yes      February – September –fifteen – seven

1. All Irish citizens have the same voting \_\_\_\_\_ regardless of whether they have been born in Ireland or \_\_\_\_\_.
2. In local elections people vote for people to represent them on two types of councils, these are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ councils.
3. People elected to councils are called \_\_\_\_\_.
4. In local or general elections, people vote for people to represent them in the parliament which in Ireland is called the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. People elected to the Dáil are called \_\_\_\_\_.
6. In Ireland presidential elections are held every \_\_\_\_\_ years.

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7. A referendum is where people have to answer \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ to a particular question usually to do with changing the constitution.
8. EU citizens can vote at two types of elections: \_\_\_\_\_ elections and \_\_\_\_\_ elections.
9. Non-EU citizens can only vote at one type of election: \_\_\_\_\_ elections.
10. In order to register to vote, you have to be resident in Ireland from the 1<sup>st</sup> of \_\_\_\_\_ of that year.
11. The closing date for the electoral register is the 15<sup>th</sup> of \_\_\_\_\_ .
12. If you become an Irish Citizen after the closing date you can go on the supplemental register up to \_\_\_\_\_ days before the election day.

**Part B: How to vote**

***In this part Michaela explains what is involved in voting in an election.***

<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>OK! ..and with the European elections , if someone is , they're not naturalised , em... They are here from another EU nation do they vote for our candidates or do they vote for the candidates from their own country</i></b>
Michaela	They will vote for the Irish candidates. So similarly at the local elections, the local candidates are the ones that, eh... you can vote for, and it's important to remind people that , em... when some EU countries allow you voting by correspondence so you may be able to vote in the political election in your home country and they may still have you in the register there. So! When you register here as a new resident in the electoral register the officials here actually notify your country of origin to make sure that there is no double voting in the European election. But obviously you can go back to your home country to vote for the national elections or use the postal vote if you have that option in your country.
<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>OK! And the countries who offer the postal vote. How does a postal vote work?</i></b>
Michaela	Eh! For a lot of countries, em... that have the possibility for citizens of their country who live abroad to vote, the way it usually works, you need to register with your local embassy. So for example if you are coming from an EU country, em... You need to find out from your embassy - do you have the possibility to vote by post? Usually the em... embassy would have a register of their, their citizens living in that particular country, and eh... you will receive the information by post about papers by post you will send it back then to the embassy and then usually they send it back to the country ... and sometimes that can happen even before the election in that country. Sometimes it is not necessarily on the same day. So each country has its own rules so it is important that you get in touch with your embassy to find out.
<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>..and if people are a bit confused as to how the voting in their specific country works can they come to the citizen information and ask?</i></b>
Michaela	They can certainly come and we would be able to give them information about voting in Ireland, eh, we would refer them back to their own embassy for their own voting rights in their own country as that would be outside our jurisdiction! Certainly if they are confused about whether they can vote in Ireland and for which election they can vote, how to register we can certainly do that!



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<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>OK! And once somebody has registered as you said they go onto the electoral register... is that right ?</i></b>
Michaela	That's right! Yes, you can view the electoral register actually in the local authority offices, police stations , eh... or in the some of the libraries just to make sure that your name is there and the correct address is there and if not if you want to go online and checktheregister.ie to check that your name is there and that your most up to date address is there and if not you can also download all the forms and re-register .
<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>Ok! So there are plenty of ways to check anyway?</i></b>
Michaela	There is certainly.
<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>So there is really no excuse, if you will!</i></b>
Michaela	No excuse not to vote actually! Laugh...
<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>Once you are on the register, what happens next?</i></b>
Michaela	What happens is a certain amount of time before the eh voting day. You are sent out a ballot paper, the paper, the authority, that gives you the authorisation to vote and that paper will have will have a letter next to your name, which will indicate which election you can vote so if for example could be for the European elections. Eh! You then go to your em... To the place, the ballot, em... The ballot place, usually it's a school or library and the paper you receive at home will tell you were to go and the times that em... You can vote from. When you go there, em... There will be some official, public official there em... It will be quite clear who you need to talk to and show them your paper and some form of ID, usually a photographic ID such as a driver's licence or a passport would be best. Eh...if you don't have an ID you may not have the right to vote, so it's important that em... That all those , sometimes it's not always checked for example there is small communities you may always be checked but it is very important that you have it. And there is a private space in which you can vote so you are given the ballot papers, em... You go to a em... a specific area, usually a booth or some type of private space eh... You vote usually by putting a number next to the candidate you want to give your first preference, your second preference and your third preference to , eh... you close your paper so that your vote is not visible and give it back to the officials who put it in the ballot box and then your duty is done.

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<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>OK! And there are different ways of voting in different countries and you mentioned that in Ireland we use numbers. How does that work?</i></b>
Michaela	Usually the way it works is that em... you can give preferences to candidates so there is a system to calculate that are a certain amount of votes are allocated to each of the candidates so that usually you can give up to three preferences, em... So usually the candidates are also listed in alphabetical order more than in party order so that's important for people to know. Some countries, some people em... may get confused as well because a lot of countries have em... cross systems so that you have cross in a box... And other countries have different systems so it is important that maybe people familiarise themselves. Usually there is quite a lot of publicity the few days before and if you are not sure just ask somebody there if it's your first time.
<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>There is a lot of people around the voting area to, to help you out... isn't that right?</i></b>
Michaela	There is yeah! Public officials that are there to make sure that everything runs smoothly and that everything is collected. Also each candidate can nominate a representative there, so that most of the electoral parties have a representative there to make sure that everything is run according to procedures, so there are plenty of people around to ask.
<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>So! If you are confused about anything just ask basically.</i></b>
Michaela	That's like in everything else yes, just ask if you are confused.

### B.1 Language focus:

#### ***Did you understand these words and expressions?***

**Candidate:** this is a person who puts themselves forward for something, in this case as a public representative. This person hopes to be elected and become a councilor, TD, MEP, or President. People who apply for jobs are also **candidates** for the position they have applied for.

**Postal vote:** this means that you can get voting papers from your embassy, choose your preferred candidate and send the papers back to the embassy by post.

**Local Authority Office:** this is the administrative centre of the County, or City Council.

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**Ballot paper:** The ballot paper is the official paper that you vote on. In elections it is a list of candidates with photographs and the name of the political party they belong to.

**Authorization to vote:** Before an election you will be sent a paper which gives you the authorization to vote. This is called a **polling card** (Or voting card) and you must bring this with you to vote.

**A ballot box:** When you have decided which candidates you want to vote for, you write 1, 2, 3 etc. after their names, fold the paper and put it in the ballot box. .

**Polling Station:** the place where the ballot takes place is called a polling station. Usually schools or libraries are used as polling stations. You need to bring your **polling card** with you to the polling station.

**A booth:** this is a small private place where you can vote without anyone seeing who you are voting for. We also talk about telephone booths, which are public telephone boxes in the street, at post offices etc.

**Preference:** In Ireland you don't just vote for one candidate, you can vote for several candidates. Even if you only want to vote for one candidate, you need to put a '1' opposite this candidate's name, not an 'X' as is often the case in other countries. You can continue with 2, 3, 4, 5, etc. if you also like these candidates. If your first preference candidate is not elected, his votes will be re-distributed so that the second preference candidate now gets your vote and so on. This system is called Proportional Representation.

**A public official:** this is a person employed by the State to deal with members of the public in an official capacity. At elections there are public officials at the polling stations to help you understand how to vote.

### B.2 Comprehension

*Listen to this piece of the interview again.*

*Did you understand the information in the interview? Choose the correct answers to the following questions:*

1. If someone is not Irish but from the EU do they vote for Irish candidates or candidates from their own country in European elections?
2. Can you be registered to vote in EU elections in both your home country and in Ireland, or is it one or the other?

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3. If you are living in Ireland, can you vote in general elections in your home country? Yes or no?
4. If you want to vote by post, should you contact the Irish authorities or your embassy?
5. If you vote by post does this happen on the same day or on a day before the election in the home country?
6. Can the Citizens Information Centre give you information on voting in Ireland and voting in your home country?
7. According to Michaela, where can you check the Irish National Electoral Register? Answer yes or no for each of the following:

			<i>Correct answer</i>
Local authority offices	Yes	No	
Police Station	Yes	No	
The Citizens Information Centre	Yes	No	
Online at checktheregister.ie	Yes	No	
In your embassy	Yes	No	
In libraries	Yes	No	

8. On the ballot paper are candidates listed according to their political party or in alphabetical order?
9. When you are voting in Irish elections do you put an X or a number opposite the candidate you wish to vote for?
10. If you are confused about how to vote when you get to the polling station, should you ask a public official or a representative of one of the political parties?

**B.3 Language development**

***Provide the missing word in the following sentences which outline the process involved in voting in Ireland***

1. Before election day a paper is sent out to you in the post, this is your polling card which is your authorization to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. There will be a letter next to your name which tells you which \_\_\_\_\_ you can vote in.
3. You go to the Polling station where the ballot takes place, this is usually a \_\_\_\_\_.
4. You need to show the official at the polling station your authorization to vote and some form of photographic \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The official then gives you a \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_.
6. You go to a private area to vote without being seen, this is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
7. You choose your preferred candidates by placing a \_\_\_\_\_ beside their name.
8. You fold the ballot paper, bring it back to the official and put it in the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

***Do you remember the process for using a postal vote? Put these stages in the correct order.***

a. The embassy sends the voting papers back to your home country.	
b. The Embassy sends you voting papers in the post.	
c. You contact the embassy to see if you can have a postal vote.	
d. You decide who you want to vote for and mark this on the voting paper.	
e. The Embassy checks to see if you are on their register of citizens in Ireland	
f. You send the voting paper back to the embassy.	

Part C: To vote or not to vote?

<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>And Micheala can you tell us is there anybody who is not allowed to vote?</i></b>
Michaela	Well if you can vote according to the category, to your category, so that if you are an EU citizen and you know, for local elections and EU election, Irish citizen at the other election and non EU at the local election, em... Unfortunately, I suppose, you can't vote if you are an Irish citizen but you are living abroad, eh... And you have not been living in Ireland from the 1 <sup>st</sup> of September of the year of the election. Em... There is not a postal system in those cases yet. The only people abroad who are able to vote may be some diplomats, people working the diplomatic service or if they are posted in some of the other missions or the army for instance – they can actually vote. If you are a regular Irish citizen living abroad unfortunately you can exercise some rights there but not back in Ireland.
<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>Not voting rights anyway!</i></b>
Michaela	Yes! You may be able to vote there in the local elections or the EU elections, but not for the government elections either.
<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>and what about people who might not be able to get to the school to, to the library as you said to do their voting?</i></b>
Michaela	There are also a special list of em... electors and in some cases people may be allowed to em... use a postal vote system, for example some people with disabilities maybe have that requirement eh... people that are in institutions or in prisons for example may use the postal service while other people maybe can't go to the polling station they may be actually in a situation that the polling station is actually there in a hospital or in a nursing home there may actually be a polling station organised and you can exercise your votes there.
<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>OK! And you say that people in prison can vote, that wouldn't be the same in other countries? Or in some other countries, would it?</i></b>
Michaela	No! Again a lot of countries have different rules around who can vote and what does that mean, and where there is an obligation to vote, for example in Ireland you can vote if you are in prison at that time. You don't have any penalties if you decide not to vote, while other countries for example if you are not recorded as having voted it may disqualify you for certain public offices jobs for instance. So, em... each country has their own their own regulations, rules around this.

<i>Iain</i>	<i>Em... And why do you think that people should go out and vote? Or why should people who are being nationalised why should they take up the voting?</i>
Michaela	Well I think there are two em, there are two rights, and there are two sides to it! First there is your privilege eh... and it is also your duty I suppose. One thing that people need to remember is that it is one of the few occasions that you can actually say what you think and it is very important that people not only exercise their vote but, I suppose, take part em... in the political world of their community, whether it is at local level, or European level or at a political level and it is one of the only ways that people can make some changes and em... It's a privilege that we have and em..., em... Personally I feel that we are quite lucky to have that privilege.
<i>Iain</i>	<i>It is something that, that Irish people who have lived here all their life forget that other people don't always have the right to vote!</i>
Michaela	Emm... Exactly and I suppose really one thing to remember is that, you know, it may not be a perfect system, but a lot of people say it's the only system we have at the moment and also a lot of people had to fight very hard to get it, when you think of some minorities for example who may have no voting rights em... or women for example who acquired it a hundred years ago so it is very important to use it as it still has a value.

**C.1 Language focus:**

***Did you understand these words and expressions?***

**A diplomat:** this is a person who represents their state abroad. Usually they will work in the embassy of that country.

**Disqualify:** as a consequence of certain actions you may no longer be allowed to do certain things for example if you are caught driving with high levels of alcohol, you are disqualified from driving. In some countries if you do not vote, this disqualifies you from applying for certain public service jobs. These are the **penalties** for your actions.

**A privilege:** this means that you are lucky or fortunate to have the possibility of doing something. It is a privilege to be able to vote, because in some countries you can't vote.

**A duty:** This means that you are under a moral obligation, that you should do something. It is our duty to be good citizens. As good citizens, we should vote, it is our duty to vote.

**C.2 Comprehension**

**Listen to this piece of the interview again. Did you understand the information in the interview? Answer these questions.**

1. Can Irish citizens use a postal vote if they are living abroad? \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. Can an Irish person living in another country vote in elections there? \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. Name three types of people who may be able to use a postal vote within Ireland:  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
4. Do all countries have the same rules around voting or not voting? \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. Michaela says that there are two sides to voting – firstly it is a \_\_\_\_\_ and secondly it is a \_\_\_\_\_ .
6. Michaela mentions two types of people who have not always had the right to vote. These are certain \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ who only got the vote 100 years ago.

**C.3 Language development**

**Look again at the language around privilege and duty. A privilege is something that is available to you and we often use the verb ‘can’ to indicate that you have the freedom to avail of this ‘privilege’. A duty involves moral obligation and we often use the verb ‘should’ to indicate that there are certain behaviours involved in doing your ‘duty’.**

**Listen to each of these sentences and decide which ones refer to duties and which ones refer to privileges.**

	Privilege	Duty	Answer
1. You can send your children to school for free in Ireland.			
2. You should send your children to school every day			
3. If you lose your job you should try to find a new one as soon as possible			
4. You can get unemployment benefit if you lose your job			
5. You can vote in local elections if you are living in Ireland			
6. You should vote for candidates who you believe will make your community a better place.			
7. You should only go to the doctor if you are really sick, it’s important not to waste his time.			
8. You can get a free GP card if you are not earning a lot of money and that means you don’t have to pay for the doctor.			



Part D: Voting for candidates and becoming a candidate

<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>And just finally Micheala how do people decide who to vote for?</i></b>
Michaela	OK! Good question, em... Typically in the run-up to an election there would be quite a lot of talk, eh... in all the media, it's a government election obviously, the radio, the newspapers, the TV will invite candidates eh ... to explain their programme for government that they will commit to once they get elected. So that's one of the easiest ways to get news, is either on the radio, TV or read the newspapers to find out what people are saying . At local elections it is slightly different em... Although there is a lot of actually canvassing from em... during government elections but at local elections it is even more important because you may actually have a lot more opportunity to meet the candidates in person most of the candidates would have em... some type of involvement in the community already they may be previous candidates so that they may have maybe a clinic where you can go and meet them em... at certain times during the week, usually they do the rounds, they would go to public events eh... and maybe open days or eh... community events they, they sometimes go door to door and you have the possibility to talk to them and have questions to question them as you feel you need to know in order or you to make a good decision.
<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>OK! .and Micheala if you want to run for election is there any limits on that.</i></b>
Michaela	So if you want to be a candidate as well as voting in an election, first of all you need to be of a certain age, so that you need to be 18 to run in a local election, 21 in the government and European election and 45 to run for president. Em... Also you have to be ordinarily resident in Ireland, which means that usually you have to be at least a year in the country. For local elections em... You don't have to be an Irish citizen, so that, like we had said that non Irish citizen can vote, they can also stand for election once they meet the residency criteria, em... obviously before the government one is a different situation. You also need to register your interest four weeks in advance and em... You need to pay a fee, usually €50 or €100 depending on whether it is a city or town or county council and there is a form that you need to fill in. Em... Maybe it's interesting for people to remember that you don't have to run with the parties or if you have no party affiliation you can run as an independent candidate.
<b><i>Iain</i></b>	<b><i>OK! so you don't have to be an Irish citizen to run in the local elections you said.</i></b>

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Michaela	No you don't! You just have to be here for a certain amount of time that means you would have been deemed to be ordinarily resident, usually that is taken to be a year for example, if you were, em... accessing medical em... emergency medical care they would look at you as being a resident of Ireland if you were here for a year ... as a general rule of thumb if you take a year, but if you are interested and you have been here for less em... If you contact the Citizens Information we will find out.
<b>Iain</b>	<b><i>the Citizen Information is in Blanchardstown and what is the address again?</i></b>
Michaela	We are on the Snugborough Road, West End Office Park, our phone number 0761075040 or if you go to the website <a href="http://www.citizeninformation.ie">www.citizeninformation.ie</a> you have a list of all the centres and you can find the one in Blanchardstown.
<b>Iain</b>	<b><i>OK! Micheala Benassi thank you for speaking with us!</i></b>
Michaela	Thank you!

### D.1 Language focus:

#### ***Did you understand these words and expressions?***

**The media:** this term is used to cover the various ways in which news and information are communicated and include the radio, television, newspapers and increasingly the internet and social media, such as (Facebook etc)

**Programme for government:** before an election each political party puts forward a programme for government which means that they make certain promises about how they will rule the country if they are elected. Programmes for government are often very idealistic to encourage people to vote for a particular party, and often parties find it difficult to keep these promises after the elections have taken place.

**Canvassing:** In Ireland before elections candidates and their supporters call to people's doors or go **door-to-door** to ask them to vote for them and to discuss issues. This is called canvassing – the politicians are trying to canvas people's votes, they are asking them for their votes.

**Clinic:** A clinic is usually used in a medical context, it is a place where you can go and see a doctor and get help with medical problems. The word is also now used in a political context, where you can go and see a politician and ask for help with various kinds of problems. Politicians usually hold clinics once a week in each community.

**Party Affiliation:** most candidates running for election have a party affiliation, this means that they belong to a particular political party. However other candidates who do not have party affiliation can also run as **independent candidates** and these are often very successful.

### D.2 Comprehension

*Listen to this piece of the interview again.*

*Did you understand the information in the interview? Answer true or false to these questions*

1. The media help candidates for general elections to get their message across to the public. True   False
2. Canvassing is where candidates go door-to-door asking for votes True   False
3. In local elections, the candidates are usually not well known in the locality. True   False
4. You need to be 21 to be a candidate in a local election. True   False
5. You need to be 21 to be a candidate in a general election. True   False
6. You need to be 25 to be a candidate in European elections. True   False
7. You need to be 25 to be a candidate in a presidential election. True   False
8. You need to be an Irish citizen to be a candidate in a local election. True   False
9. You need to belong to a political party to be a candidate in an election. True   False
10. You can get more information about running for election from the Citizens Information Centre. True   False

### D.3 Language development

*Do you remember the words for the following?*

1. The collective term for the radio, TV and newspapers is the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Before an election politicians make certain promises about how they will rule the country and this is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
3. When candidates call to your door asking you to vote for them this is called \_\_\_\_\_.

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4. When politicians make themselves available to meet with local people to discuss problems once a week this is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
5. If you want to run as a candidate in a local election, you don't need to be an Irish \_\_\_\_\_.
6. If you belong to a political party, you have what is called party \_\_\_\_\_.
7. If you don't belong to a political party, you can still run for election as an \_\_\_\_\_ candidate.
8. Michaela Benassi works for the \_\_\_\_\_ Centre.

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***For more information on voting and elections in Ireland you can go to:***

[http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/government\\_in\\_ireland/elections\\_and\\_referenda/](http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/government_in_ireland/elections_and_referenda/)

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/ViewDoc.asp?fn=%2Fdocuments%2Fa-misc%2Fdeputy.htm>