

## U.K. to lower voting age from 18 to 16

21st July 2025



The British government has announced a lowering of the voting age to 16. This is two years lower than the current age at which a person can cast their vote. This "seismic" change is part of a package of reforms that will give the electoral system greater integrity,

while including more young people in the democratic process. The first chance 16- and 17-year-olds will have to exercise their right to vote will be in the UK's next general election. The government said: "We are modernizing our democracy, so that it is fit for the 21st century. By [extending] the vote to younger people, we are taking a generational step forward in restoring public trust and boosting engagement in UK democracy."

There has been mixed reaction in Britain to the change. Supporters contend that 16-year-olds in Britain work and pay taxes, so they should be allowed to vote. UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer agreed. He said: "If you pay in, you should have the opportunity to say what you want your money spent on." The UK's deputy prime minister said: "Young people already contribute to society by working, paying taxes and serving in the military. It's only right they can have a say on the issues that affect them." However, there are many critics. Some point to the fact that 16-year-olds cannot drink alcohol, buy a lottery ticket, or get married without their parents' consent, but they will be able to vote.

Sources: [apnews.com](https://apnews.com) / [gov.uk](https://gov.uk) / [foxnews.com](https://foxnews.com)

## Writing

People should not be allowed to vote until they are 18.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

the voting age / seismic / change / reforms / electoral system / integrity / step / trust / mixed reaction / supporters / 16-year-olds / paying taxes / the military / society

## True / False

- 1) The UK will make voting for 16-year-olds mandatory. T / F
- 2) The article said the lower voting age will create a political earthquake. T / F
- 3) Sixteen-year-olds will be able to vote from the next general election. T / F
- 4) The UK said it wants 16-year-olds to be fitter by voting. T / F
- 5) A vast majority of Britons are behind the lowered voting age. T / F
- 6) The UK prime minister said people who pay taxes should get a vote. T / F
- 7) The deputy prime minister said people in the military should get a vote. T / F
- 8) In the UK, 16-year-olds can get married with their parents' approval. T / F

## Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. <b>announced</b>   | a. chance        |
| 2. <b>seismic</b>     | b. soundness     |
| 3. <b>integrity</b>   | c. collection    |
| 4. <b>fit</b>         | d. declared      |
| 5. <b>engagement</b>  | e. army          |
| 6. <b>reaction</b>    | f. significant   |
| 7. <b>package</b>     | g. response      |
| 8. <b>opportunity</b> | h. participation |
| 9. <b>military</b>    | i. agreement     |
| 10. <b>consent</b>    | j. suitable      |

## Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) How important is voting?
- c) Should voting be compulsory?
- d) Who has better decision-making when voting, a 16- or 90-year-old?
- e) Should anyone who pays taxes be allowed to vote?
- f) From what age should someone be allowed to get married?
- g) What issues do you think are important to 16-year-olds?
- h) What questions would you like to ask a 16-year-old about voting?

## Phrase Match

- |                              |                           |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. a person can cast         | a. right to vote          |
| 2. give the electoral system | b. in the military        |
| 3. exercise their            | c. in UK democracy        |
| 4. so that it is fit         | d. their parent's consent |
| 5. boosting engagement       | e. greater integrity      |
| 6. There has been mixed      | f. to say what you want   |
| 7. have the opportunity      | g. that affect them       |
| 8. serving                   | h. for the 21st century   |
| 9. have a say on the issues  | i. reaction in Britain    |
| 10. get married without      | j. their vote             |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of voting?
- Should we tell people who we vote for?
- From what age should people be allowed to vote?
- Is it more important for a 16-year-old or 90-year-old to vote?
- What do you think of your country's electoral system?
- What is democracy and how important is it?
- How much faith do you have in democracy?
- How much faith do you have in your country's government?

## Spelling

- nucnaedon a lowering of the voting age
- this eisscmi change
- give the electoral system greater yrnigetit
- people in the democratic cpesors
- taking a laegeninotar step forward
- boosting geneemgatn in UK democracy
- supporters encntdo that
- the UK's deyput prime minister
- young people already btcoitrneu to society
- serving in the liartmyl
- there are many icrtsci
- get married without their parent's netosnc

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. d	2. f	3. b	4. j	5. h
6. g	7. c	8. a	9. e	10. i

## Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions.  
(Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	What is the current age from which people in the UK can vote?
2.	What does the UK government want to give the electoral system?
3.	When will 16-year-olds have their first chance to vote?
4.	What did the UK government say it is modernizing?
5.	What does the UK want to restore?
6.	What kind of reaction has there been to the lowering of the voting age?
7.	Why does the UK leader think 16-year-olds should be able to vote?
8.	Who said young people contribute to society by serving in the military?
9.	What kind of ticket did critics say young people cannot buy?
10.	What do people in the UK need to be able to get married at 16?

## Speaking – Youth Issues

Rank these with your partner. Put the most pressing issues for 16-year-olds at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                               |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| • Anxiety about global crises | • Peer pressure |
| • Stress from studying        | • The future    |
| • Social media likes          | • Having things |
| • Bullying                    | • Money         |

### Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	T	4	F	5	F	6	T	7	T	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.