

## Framework for Planning Your Classroom Rep Day Meeting

Here are some tips and suggestions to make your Rep Day meeting a success!

### Things to do in advance

- Engage students in [preparatory activities](#) to improve background knowledge and spark discussion about current issues.
- Review a few [reminders](#) on how to be an active listener.
- Plan student questions in advance and organize them in order to ensure a variety of questions.
- Share your students' questions, along with any requests for particular topics of discussion, with the elected official before the visit.
- Decide on a location and which class(es) will attend.

### Preparation

- Consult your administration regarding the meeting and review any related policies.
- Confirm the agenda and any icebreaker activities with your elected official's staffer prior to the meeting.
- Provide information about the grade level of the students and number of participants as well. The more information you share, the better prepared the elected official will be.
- Let students know expectations regarding their professionalism.
- Review the [social media toolkit](#) to plan how to best share your Rep Day visit online.

### Event Format

- Choose a moderator (teacher/student) to keep the visit on schedule and organized.
- Develop a format for the visit and determine the length of each portion.
- Review in advance with the elected official.

### Format Suggestions

- For a small class size, a round-table discussion may be possible.
- For larger class sizes, consider a presentation by the elected official followed by a Q&A period.
- The following is a suggested framework, based on a one-hour class visit:

### Debrief Suggestions

After your elected official visit, consider dedicating some additional class time to discussing the visit. Feel free to use the debrief and follow up activities with your elected official to keep the conversation going.

1	Welcome (2min)	Moderator should welcome the elected official and outline the structure of the meeting.
2	Opening Introduction (10-15 min)	<p>Brief introductory statement from the elected official.</p> <p><i>“What do you think politicians are like?”</i>  <i>“Why do you think people decide to run for political office or want to become a politician?”</i>  <i>“Show of hands – Have you ever met one of your elected representatives before?”*</i></p>
	Icebreaker Activity - Warm-up Statements (5 min)	<p>Include the elected official in an icebreaker activity with the students :</p> <p><i>Four Corners (instructions on following page)</i></p> <p>Start with 2-3 light, fun statements and have students move to the corner that represents their response.</p>
3	Personal questions and/or questions about the role and experience as a local council member (15 min)	<p>Start with short answers and personal questions to get better acquainted. For example, these could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What do you like best about our municipality?</li> <li>● Why did you want to run for local government?</li> <li>● How would you describe your job? Is your role a part-time or full-time position?</li> <li>● What is the most rewarding and challenging part of your job?</li> <li>● How do you navigate opposing perspectives and opinions from your constituents as an elected representative? How, if at all, has social media played a part in this?</li> <li>● Do you have any memorable experiences you can share, or projects you have been part of in our community? What different roles within government have you served?</li> </ul> <p><i>“Show of hands – Who here has ever thought about running for office?” Discuss more in-depth with those who respond that they have.</i></p>
	Icebreaker Activity - Policy Statements (5 mins)	<p>Move on to more meaningful issue statements for the Four Corners activity. Ask the visiting elected official to explain their choice to the group.</p> <p><i>“What would you do if you were an elected representative?”</i></p> <p><i>“Politics can make people upset, which can make it hard to talk to each other. What are some things we can do to make these discussions easier?”</i></p>

4	Questions about current political issues (15 min)	<p>Prepare a list of questions and determine who will pose them to the elected official. Select questions that relate to issues of interest, nationally and locally.</p> <p><i>“Can you please share some of your priorities and/or values for our community?”</i>  <i>“What are some of the ways you can be involved in your community? If you don’t feel you can get involved, what would need to change to make that possible?”</i></p> <p><i>As issues are shared, take some time to explain how the municipal government can address those issues, where applicable. Allow some time for the audience to respond, and offer their own suggestions for what could be done, or improved.</i></p>
5	Closing remarks (3-5min)	Final words from the elected official.
6	Thank you (2 min)	Plan a formal “Thank You” from designated students.
7	Debrief (after visit)	After the meeting, debrief with the class. Consider the ‘Put your Two Cents In’ Discussion Activity from Lesson 5 - Visit Debrief and Follow-Up.

### Four Corners Discussion Activity

This activity requires students and the visiting elected official to take a stand on a specific topic and defend their positions. It can work well as a warm-up or debriefing activity.

Before starting the activity, you can have students generate a list of statements that they want to hear their elected official’s stance on. These statements should be ones that someone can agree or disagree with, rather than being open-ended questions (see examples below). Have students come up with two sets of statements: one that is light and fun, and one that addresses issues they are concerned with.

1. Place signs in the four corners of the room: “Strongly Agree”, “Agree”, “Disagree”, “Strongly Disagree”. For each round, the teacher will read out a statement. Each person will choose their response by moving to the appropriate corner of the room.
2. Start with warm-up statements first in order to break the ice and get students used to the activity before moving on to more substantial issues. For the warm-up round, participants should simply move to the corner that represents their response; they do not need to explain their answers.

The teacher may choose from among the list generated by students, or one of the example statements below. Choose 4 or 5 statements for the warm-up round:

Example Warm-up Statements (approx. 5 minutes)

- Pineapple belongs on pizza
  - Summer is better than Fall
  - PS5 is better than Nintendo Switch
  - LeBron James is the greatest basketball player of all time
  - I consider myself to be a “Swiftie”
  - The best thing about our municipality is \_\_\_\_\_
  - Our community offers opportunities for youth to get involved (volunteering, recreation clubs and programs)
  - Local government affects our daily lives more than other orders of government
3. Next, move on to more meaningful issues. For this round, after participants choose their corner, select individuals from each group to provide a brief explanation of why they made their choice. Encourage participants to change corners if they are influenced by someone’s arguments.

The teacher may choose among the list generated by students, or one of the example statements below. Choose 2 or 3 statements for the second round:

Example Policy Statements (approx. 5 minutes)

- The government needs to do more to address climate emergencies
  - Municipal services and infrastructure need to be developed to prepare for growth in our community
  - Local school boards should implement increased safety measures for students
  - Local government should propose more bylaws to address housing issues in our municipality
4. Finally, ask the visiting elected official to explain their choice to the group.