

# APPENDIX

## Political decision-making

This document allows you to easily print the different elements you will need to organize the activity, including:

- Fact sheet for each decision-making method
- Exercise - Summary Table

# Fact sheet for each decision-making method

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## Random Draw

Definition: a random draw is a decision-making process where the result is random.

Information for the secretary:

1. Note each object name (knife, box of matches, fishing equipment) on a paper and place it in the centre of the table (folding the paper and mixing them up, so as not to guess which piece of paper has which object).
2. The person on your right chooses a random piece of paper.
3. The object drawn will be brought to the desert island.

In France: A random draw is used to assign jurors, but not for deciding on elected representatives.

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## Referendum

Definition: A referendum is a voting procedure where voters are directly asked a question or asked to approve a text, where they may only reply by 'Yes' or 'No'. The question or text is only approved if more than half of votes cast are for 'Yes'.

Information for the secretary:

1. Place a ballot box at the centre of the table (or anything else that works as a ballot box such as a bag, hat, empty pencil case...).
2. Each participant writes either 'Yes' or 'No' to the following question: "Do you agree with taking only the box of matches onto the desert island?"

In France: The French constitution allows for the use of a referendum, but its use is often criticized, and therefore is uncommon. A referendum may be held in the following cases:

- Passing a law
- Changing the constitution
- A state entering the European Union

Local referendums can also be organised, for example by the town hall or local council.

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## Election by Universal Suffrage, using a simple majority run-off election with two rounds

Definition: universal suffrage implies that all citizens can vote.

A simple majority election is the oldest method of appointing elected officials. This method allocates one or many seats to the candidate or candidates who received the most votes. In some cases, votes have a second round called a 'run-off'.

Information for the secretary: Since the vote is by universal suffrage, everyone can vote.

1st round: Each person writes the object that they choose on a piece of paper: box of matches, knife or fishing equipment. If there is an absolute majority (half + one vote) for any of the objects, this object wins and the group takes it to the desert island. For example, if there are 10 voters, and the knife is chosen by 6 or more of you, it has an absolute majority (more than half the votes) and is taken to the desert island. If there is no absolute majority, the two objects that got the most votes enter the second round or 'run-off'.

2nd round: Each person votes again, but this time only for one of the two objects which gained the most votes in the first round. The object that receives the most votes in the run-off round is the object that the group takes to the desert island.

In France: Simple majority run-off elections are used for the presidential elections as well as elections of Deputies to the legislative chamber in France.

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### **Election by male census suffrage, through a single-round simple majority**

Definition: census suffrage implies that only certain people have the right to vote, in this case men. Among men, only those whose total taxes paid exceed a certain amount, meaning only the rich, are allowed to vote.

Information for the secretary: In the envelope you will find 'rich/poor' labels as well as 'Man/Women' labels.

1. Hand them out at random, face down to the group members.
2. Only those who got both a 'Man' and 'Rich' ticket can take part in the vote.
3. The object that gets the most votes is taken by the whole group to the desert island.

In France: following the French Revolution (1789), France was ruled by a constitutional monarchy, which was in place until 1791. Under this regime, the nation was sovereign, but the right to vote was restricted. This was called 'census suffrage', and only rich men had the right to vote. In 1848, this suffrage was replaced by universal male suffrage (all men had the right to vote). It was not until 1944 that women were granted the right to vote.

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### **Consensus**

Definition: a consensus is an agreement between several people on a given subject, without resorting to a vote. Consensus is achieved through discussions, overcoming obstacles and divisions to arrive at a compromise acceptable to everyone.

Information for the secretary: You must agree on an object to take on the desert island, without holding any kind of vote... Each group member can express their opinion by taking a 'talking stick' (you can use a pen). As secretary, you are in charge of moving the stick from person to person.

At the end of the discussion, and based on what everyone said, try and come to a compromise that is acceptable to all parties.

In France: our country is a key part of the European Union, in which certain decisions are in practice sometimes adopted by consensus (for example in the cases of foreign and security policy). However, consensus-based decision-making doesn't appear in any of the official rules of the European Union. This practice is more common in civil society, for example within co-operatives or non-profit organisations.

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### Authoritarian Decision-making

Definition: Authoritarian decision-making is when all decisions are made by a single individual (for example the king, emperor or dictator...).

Information for the secretary: the participant whose surname is first in the alphabet is awarded the title of king or queen. As such, this person decides alone which object the group takes to the desert island.

In France: Authoritarian decision-making was in common use during monarchical times.

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### Qualified majority

Definition: We use the term 'qualified majority' to indicate the minimum requirement in an electoral system to win a vote (for example to take a decision or to decide the winner of an election). This minimum requirement implies that more than a simple majority is needed.

*Example: 55% of voters must vote for the same thing / the same person for the vote to be won. In this example, a qualified majority is 55%.*

Information for the secretary:

1. Calculate how many votes will be needed for a 55% qualified majority.  
The formula is:  $55 \times \text{number of voters} \div 100$ . Round upward to the nearest integer.

*Example: with 5 participants:  $(55 \times 5) \div 100 = 2.75$  -> This means that 3 members of the group must have voted for the same object for that object to be chosen.*

2. Proceed to the vote.
3. Announce the results: if no object obtains 55% of the votes, no decision is made.

In France: We sometimes use qualified majority voting, for example when a vote is held to amend the Constitution. In this case, the constitutional amendment must be voted on and win at least 3/5 (three fifths) of votes cast by Deputies and Senators.

Currently, there are 577 deputies and 348 senators, which is a total of 925 members of parliament. To be able to amend the constitution through Congress, the governing party must be able to count on 555 Members of Parliament.

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### The principle of double majority

Definition:

Double majority is a specific type of qualified majority, used by certain European institutions to take decisions.

Qualified majority voting is commonly used by the Council of the European Union, which represents the governments of the different Member States.

Specifically, when the Council vote on a proposal from the European Commission, a qualified majority must meet two conditions:

- 55% of Member States vote in favour (currently 16 out of 28 countries)
- Member States representing at least 65% of the total population of the EU must vote in favour

Information for the secretary:

You will find in the envelope label "country", giving the **fictional** percentage of the European Union represented by each country.

- 1) Hand out the labels at random, face down to the group members.
- 2) Calculate how many votes will be needed for a 55% qualified majority.  
The formula is:  $55 \times \text{number of voters} \div 100$ . Round upward to the nearest integer.  
*Example: with 5 total participants from the group:  $(55 \times 5) \div 100 = 2.75$  -> This means that 3 members of the group must have voted for the same object for that object to be chosen.*

3) Hold the vote

For example, each person can write the object that he or she votes for on the back of their label.

4) Results

- Announce the results: if no object obtains 55% of the votes, no decision is made.
- If any object gets over 55% of votes → the first condition is met. Now check if the second condition is also met. To do this, add up the percentages on the 'country' labels of the voters who voted in favour.

*Example: 3 members of the group of 5 voted for the same object (they represent more than 55% of the total number of voters, so the first condition is met). In addition, the population percentages on their three 'Country' labels must add up to more than 65% of the population of the EU.*

- If the total is at least 65%: the object they voted for is chosen.
- If the total is less than 65%: no object is chosen.

## Political decision-making

### Summary Table

Decision-making method used in your group	Final Decision: matches, knife or fishing equipment?	People allowed to express an opinion	Advantages and / or disadvantages