

Britain to decide on AV ballot system

On Thursday, May 5, the British public will be asked to decide whether they want to retain the first-past-the-post system or the alternative vote which requires the winner to have the support of a majority of voters

Imagine an election with 100 voters and four candidates...

First-past-the-post system

VOTE FOR ONE CANDIDATE ONLY

Candidate A
Party A

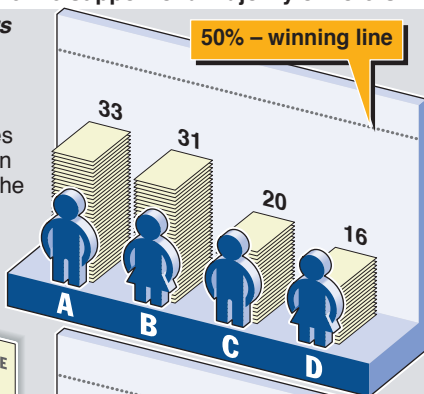
Candidate B
Party B

Candidate C
Party C

Candidate D
Party D



Candidate A has most votes and wins, even though 67 of the 100 voters haven't voted for him



Alternative vote

Voters are asked to rank candidates in order of preference – to put 1 by their favourite candidate and 2 by their second choice...
Voters are free to vote for as many or as few candidates as they like

VOTE IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE
Vote for as many or few candidates as you wish

Candidate A
Party A

Candidate B
Party B

Candidate C
Party C

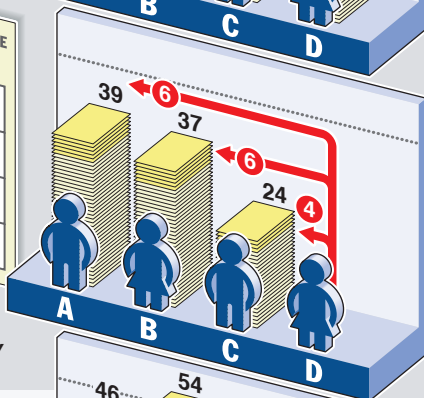
Candidate D
Party D

4

1

3

2



The count: Voters' first preferences are counted as before. As no candidate has 50% support the last placed candidate, **D**, is eliminated, and her 16 supporters' second preferences are transferred to the others

Still no candidate has 50% support, so candidate **C** drops out and his 24 supporters' second choices are transferred. **B emerges with majority support. She wins!**

