



Candidate Name	
Current School	

# Politics

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## Lower Sixth (Year 12) Entry Examination **SAMPLE PAPER**

Time allowed: 45 minutes

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The total for the paper is 45 marks, so you should be aiming to spend:

- 5 minutes on each of the 5 mark questions
- 10 minutes on the 10 mark question
- 20 minutes on the 20 mark question

**Read the following extract from *The Economist* and answer the questions below:**

Young people's disenchantment with the ballot box matters because voting is a habit: those who do not take to it young may never start. That could lead to ever-lower participation rates in decades to come, draining the legitimacy of governments in a vicious spiral in which poor turnout feeds scepticism towards democracy, and vice versa.

The disillusionment has many causes. The young tend to see voting as a choice rather than a duty (or, indeed, a privilege). The politically active tend to campaign on single issues rather than for a particular party. Politicians increasingly woo older voters—not only because they are more likely to vote but also because they make up a growing share of the electorate. Many young people see elections stacked against them. It is no surprise, then, that many of them turn away from voting.

Some countries make voting compulsory, which increases turnout rates. But that does not deal with the underlying disillusionment. Governments need to find ways to rekindle the passion, rather than continue to ignore its absence. A good step would be to lower the voting age to 16, ensuring that new voters get off to the best possible start.

This would be no arbitrary change. The usual threshold of 18 means that young people's first chance to vote often coincides with finishing compulsory education and leaving home. Away from their parents, they have no established voters to emulate and little connection to their new communities. As they move around, they may remain off the electoral roll. Sixteen-year-olds, by contrast, can easily be added to it and introduced to civic life at home and school. They can pick up the voting habit by accompanying their parents to polling stations. In Scotland, where 16- and 17-year-olds were eligible to vote in the independence referendum in 2014, an impressive three-quarters of those who registered turned out on the day, compared with 54% of 18- to 24-year-olds. In 2007 Austria became the only rich country where 16-year-olds could vote in all elections. Encouragingly, turnout rates for under-18s are markedly higher than for 19- to 25-year-olds.

A lower voting age would strengthen the voice of the young and signal that their opinions matter. It is they, after all, who will bear the brunt of climate change and service the debt that paid for benefits, such as pensions and health care, of today's elderly. Voting at 16 would make it easier to initiate new citizens in civic life. Above all, it would help guarantee the supply of young voters needed to preserve the vitality of democracy. Catch them early, and they will grow into better citizens.

*From 'Why the voting age should be lowered to 16', from *The Economist*, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2017*

- 1. What do you understand by the term 'democracy' (Line 4)? (5 marks)**
- 2. What do you understand by the term 'legitimacy' (Line 3)? (5 marks)**
- 3. What do you understand by the term '[political] party' (Line 7)? (5 marks)**
- 4. Using the source, explain three arguments in favour of lowering the voting age to 16 (10 marks)**
- 5. Make a case against lowering the voting age to 16 (20 marks)**