



vote



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### vote (n.)



mid-15c., "formal expression of one's wish or choice with regard to a proposal, candidate, etc.," from Latin *votum* "a vow, wish, promise to a god, solemn pledge, dedication," noun use of neuter of *votus*, past participle of *vovere* "to promise, dedicate" (see **vow** (n.)). The meaning "totality of voters of a certain class or type" is from 1888.

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### vote (v.)



1550s, "give a vote to;" 1560s, "enact or establish by vote;" see **vote** (n.). Earlier it meant "to vow" to do something (mid-15c.). Related: *Voted*; *voting*.

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### revote (v.)



also *re-vote*, "to vote again or a second time," by 1865, from **re-** "back, again" + **vote** (v.). Related: *Revoted*; *revoting*.

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### outvote (v.)



also out-vote, "exceed in the number of votes given, defeat by a greater number of votes," 1640s," from **out-** + **vote** (v.). Related: *Outvoted*; *outvoting*.

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## voter (n.) >

1570s, agent noun from **vote** (v.).

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## psephocracy (n.) >

"government formed by election by ballot," by 1966, from Greek *psēphizein* "to vote" (properly "to vote with pebbles"), from *psēphos* "pebble, small stone," especially as used for counting and calculating (a word of uncertain origin, perhaps related to *psammos* "sand"), + **-cracy** "rule or government by."

The common method of voting in Greek cities was by dropping pebbles in different marked urns, and thus the word for "pebble" figures largely in the ancient Greek vocabulary of democracy (e.g. *isopsēphos* "having an equal vote"). Also a *psēphados* was "a juggler." Related: *Psephocrat*; *psephocratic*.

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## yea (adv.) >

Old English *gea* (West Saxon), *ge* (Anglian) "so, yes," from Proto-Germanic *\*ja-*, *\*jai-*, a word of affirmation (source also of German, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish *ja*), from PIE *\*yam-*, from pronominal stem *\*i-* (see **yon**). As a noun, "affirmation, affirmative vote," from early 13c.

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## suffrage (n.) >

late 14c., "prayer," especially "intercessory prayers or pleas on behalf of another," from Old French *sofrage* "plea, intercession" (13c.) and directly from Medieval Latin *suffragium*, from

Latin *suffragium* "support, ballot, vote cast in an assembly; right of voting; a voting tablet," from *suffragari* "express public support, vote for someone."

This is of uncertain origin. It is conjectured to be a compound of *sub* in some sense, perhaps "up from under" (see **sub-**) + *fragor* "crash, din, shouts (as of approval)" or its relative *frangere* "to break" (from PIE root **\*bhreg-** "to break"). One theory (Watkins, etc.) is that the notion is "use a broken piece of tile as a ballot" (as in **ostracism**). But de Vaan writes:

Clearly, these forms are based on a verb *\*sub-fragere* or a noun *\*sub-frag-o* 'support'. Since the oldest meanings all refer to the process of voting for or against a candidate, one might support the view that *\*sub-frag-* belongs to *frangere* 'to break': *\*sub-frag-* 'who shout in support of a candidate' (but *fragor* 'noise' is not attested before Lucr[etius]).

He also cites another modern theory that derives the *-fragium* from a root meaning "hind part, tail-bone" and "hypothesizes for *suffragium* a semantic change from 'support under the hind part' to 'political support'," but this he finds "too fantastic to be credible."

The meaning "a vote for or against anything" is from 1530s; specifically "a vote or voice in deciding a question or in a contest for office" by 1590s. By 1660s as "act of voting in a representative government;" the meaning "political right to vote as a member of a body" is first found in the U.S. Constitution, 1787, in reference to the states. Also sometimes "the collective opinion of a body of persons" (1570s).

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## psephology (n.) >

"the study of voting and elections," 1952, from Greek *psēphizein* "to vote" (properly "to vote with pebbles," from *psēphos* "pebble;" see **psephocracy**) + **-logy**.

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## ostracize (v.) >

"exile by ostracism, banish by popular vote," also in a figurative sense, "to exclude from society or favor," 1640s, from Latinized form of Greek *ostrakizein* "to banish," literally "to banish by voting with potshards" (see **ostracism**). Related: *Ostracization*; *ostracized*; *ostracizing*.

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