

Length 2,000 words, plus or minus 200. Not inclusive of reference list.

Referencing: APA, 7th edition, is preferred. See https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1328396/Referencing-APA-7.pdf
But any in-text referencing style is fine, so long as it is consistent, and contains all the required information.

We are often asked about the appropriate number of sources to reference. There is no precise number, as this depends a lot on specific topics and the approach you choose to take to them. It's more important that those sources are the most relevant and useful ones. About ten references might be a useful rule of thumb, with variation on either side.

1. Describe the main gender gaps in political participation. How have these gaps changed over time, and what explains the gap between men and women in terms of turnout, political participation, and/or vote choice?
Starting points: Grasso & Shorrocks (2025); Kittilson (2016); Albaugh et al. (2024); Abendschön & Steinmetz (2014); Dassonneville & Kostelka (2020)
2. How has party identification changed in Western democracies in recent decades? What are the key factors driving any such change, and what are its consequences for electoral politics?
Starting points: Dalton, chapters 7 & 9; Fieldhouse et al. (2019); Dalton (2021); Garzia et al. (2022); Muirhead & Rosenblum (2020)
3. "Compulsory voting infringes on democratic principles and offers only minor improvements to representation". Do you agree or disagree? Justify your answer with reference to both empirical evidence and normative arguments.
Starting points: "Fixing Democracy: Compulsory Voting" Podcast (good to get your bearings on the topic, although be sure to do further reading afterwards);
Umbers (2020); Cepaluni & Hidalgo (2016); Chapman (2019); Singh (2025)
4. Drawing on what political science research finds to be the reasons why people vote or don't vote, explain why might one expect turnout to go up or go down at the 2026 New Zealand general election.
Starting points: Dalton, chapter 3 and 4 (remember to access through the link in the introduction section of the reading list); Bhatti, Hansen & Wass; Garnett 2018; Vowles 2010; Team of Five Million, chapter 4); RNZ 2025, 2026.
5. 'Election campaigns are nowhere near "a level playing field"'. Discuss this statement in the context of recent elections in at least one high-income democracy.
Starting points: For New Zealand, explore the Electoral Commission's website and the RNZ stories referenced in the lecture; Edwards 2024; Integrity Institute; Rashbrooke, Money for Something. For the US, Brewer & Maisel 2024; Schulz 2018, Mazer & Kuhner 2018; Dawood, Annual Reviews.
6. 'The use of micro-targeting and psychometric data in election campaigns poses a serious threat to democracy'. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?
Starting points: Lee et al; Laterza 2021; Fink 2024 ; Simon 2019; Nickerson & Rogers 2014; various other sources on Reading List

Essays and test answers are assessed according to the following criteria. Their weights are not equal as some are more important than others, generally following the order below.

- Answering the question
- Coherence of arguments
- Inclusion of relevant theories
- Reference to empirical evidence
- Reference to sufficient and relevant academic literature
- Standard of introduction and conclusion
- Fluency of writing