

Alternative Vote

For the purpose of preferenda, we use a system called the Alternative Vote (AV). With AV, you'll be asked to rank candidates in order of preference.

When we count the votes, there will be a number of "rounds" - after the first count we'll be able to see which stance is the least popular. But the people who voted for that stance haven't wasted their vote, because their votes will now be given to their second choice.

This process continues until either there is one stance remaining, or a stance reaches a majority.

EXAMPLE

There are four options for who should have a statue erected outside the Students' Union. The options are Colossus, Tommy Toast, a VK bottle and Emily Wilding Davison. After the votes are counted, the breakdown is as follows:

- **Colossus – 50**
- **Tommy Toast – 360**
- **VK bottle – 260**
- **Emily Wilding Davison – 330**

While Tommy Toast has the most votes, they only have 36% of the votes, which means that 64% of voters are unhappy. But with AV, the least popular candidate is eliminated, which in this case is Colossus. Colossus voters listed Emily Wilding Davison as their second choice, and so their votes now go to her. This is what the second round of counting looks like:

- **Tommy Toast – 360**
- **VK bottle – 260**
- **Emily Wilding Davison – 380**

This leaves the VK bottle as the least popular candidate, and their votes, in accordance to their second choice, also goes to Emily Wilding Davison. The next round of voting looks like this:

- **Tommy Toast – 360**
- **Emily Wilding Davison – 640**

Now that we have a candidate with a clear majority, we can declare a winner! Whilst Emily Wilding Davison didn't receive the most first choice votes at the start of the election, AV has been able to calculate that she would be the most representative candidate.

Now naturally AV is slightly more complicated than this, as not every voter for one candidate will have the same second choice, but that's the general idea!