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Historic: Elections in these four countries could tilt the balance of power towards China.

Will 2024 change history? This year will see elections held in 64 countries and the European Union.

What's happening?

You have probably heard that there are big **elections** taking place in the UK and USA this year.

But you might not know that this is the biggest election year in the world ever. In 2024, around four billion people will vote in a national election.

Find out more

Here are eight of the most important elections around the world this year:

Taiwan In January, the **Taiwanese** people chose Lai Ching-te as president. He is likely to cut more links to China.

Pakistan When Pakistan went to the polls this month, **Imran Khan** won a shock victory.

Indonesia The latest big vote was last week in **Indonesia**. Prabowo Subianto, who wants Indonesia to move away from the West, took an early lead.

India India will hold the biggest election of all, with 912 million possible voters. Some fear **Narendra Modi** may use a win to weaken Indian **democracy**.

Mexico In June, Mexicans are likely to elect their first female and first Jewish president, Claudia Sheinbaum. She supports LGBT+ rights.

EU The **European Parliament** result is unlikely to change much — but organising an election in 27 countries with 24 official languages is a big task.

South Africa Since the end of **apartheid** in 1994 the **African National Congress** has won every election. Now that could change.

Ukraine The election had been cancelled because of the war. However, **Volodymyr Zelensky** may call one anyway.

Will 2024 change history?

Some say

Yes! In many countries, voters have a choice between a leader who wants ties to the West and a leader who wants ties to China. The results could change history.

Others think

No! Many of the votes are not really free or fair — so they will change nothing at all. And even when voters have a free choice, many leaders do not make huge changes.

Some people say

“The people who cast the votes don’t decide an election, the people who count the votes do.”

Joseph Stalin (1878 – 1953), Russian dictator

What do you think?

Six steps to discovery

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - How many of these elections had you heard about? Which one do you think is the most important?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: Is democracy the best system for running a country?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain and one thing we cannot say for sure about this story.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - Is there an election happening in your country? Do you know who you would vote for if you were old enough to vote?

5. Express

What do others believe? - In many countries, the voting age is 18. Do you think it should be lowered? Discuss as a class.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Imagine you are running to be leader of your country. Make a poster telling people why they should vote for you.

Glossary

Elections - When a vote is held to decide who should represent a group of people.

Taiwanese - From Taiwan, an island country in east Asia. China still claims to be the legitimate owner of Taiwan, while the Taiwanese government until recently claimed to be the legitimate government of the whole of China.

Imran Khan - A former international cricketer who became the prime minister of Pakistan in 2018, until April 2022.

Indonesia - A country in south-east Asia, made up of over 17,000 islands.

Narendra Modi - The prime minister of India. He inspires passionate support from many in his country, but his critics regard him as populist, anti-Muslim and authoritarian.

Democracy - A system of government based on the idea of rule by the people.

European Parliament - The EU's law-making body. Its members are directly elected by EU voters every five years.

Apartheid - A system of legally-enshrined racial discrimination and oppression which existed in South Africa from 1948 until the 1990s. It denied non-white South Africans basic human rights.

African National Congress - A South African political party, which has ruled the country since 1994. It was the party of Nelson Mandela.

Volodymyr Zelensky - Zelensky won more than 73% of the vote to become Ukrainian President in April 2019. Incredibly, he once starred in a satirical drama in which his character accidentally wins the Ukrainian presidency.

