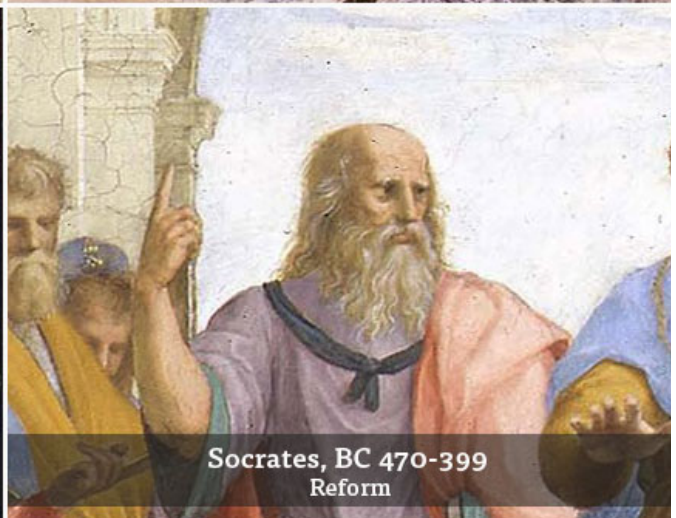
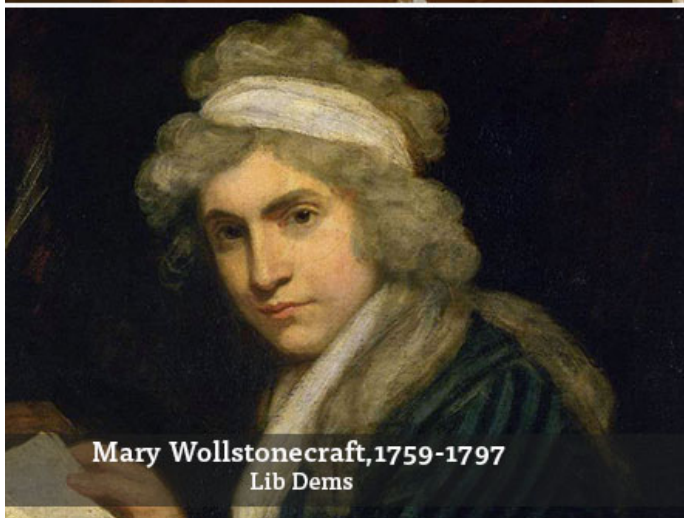
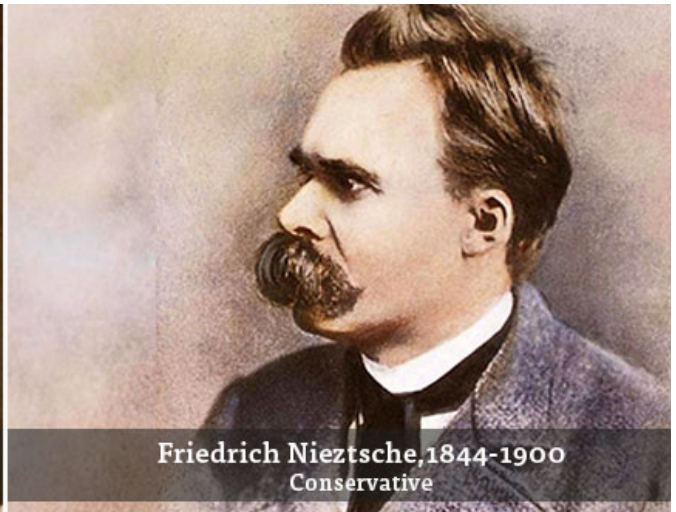


# How Socrates would vote in the UK election

[theday.co.uk/how-socrates-would-vote-in-the-uk-election-4](https://theday.co.uk/how-socrates-would-vote-in-the-uk-election-4) 1 July 2024



*Philosophical: They lived between 2,400 years and 125 years before polling day.*

**Is there a right and wrong way to choose? The election is almost upon us and many are finding it difficult to decide how to vote. Maybe some philosophers could help?**

## What's happening?

People have been voting for their rulers for thousands of years. The first recorded formal election took place in Sparta all the way back in 754 BC.

Even so, people still find it very difficult to work out who to vote for. To make it easier, the *Day* has imagined how four thinkers might pick their parties this Thursday:

## Find out more

**David Hume – Labour** Hume believed in a slow reform of society, making small steps at a time. He also died believing he had achieved very little.

**Friedrich Nietzsche – Conservative Party** Nietzsche was very negative about the future, just as many Conservatives are about the election. He believed society should be run by the elite, so he would not have wanted taxes on private schools.

**Mary Wollstonecraft – Liberal Democrat** As a firm believer in caring for other human beings, Wollstonecraft would have approved of the Lib Dems' promise to spend on social care.

**Socrates – Reform** Socrates thought his role was to criticise the government. He admired authoritarian rulers.

But how does a philosopher choose which way they will vote?

Some would tell you to vote for the party whose policies would help you the most. Others would say it is no use voting for a politician who will not keep their promises, so the most important thing is pick a party you trust.

**Is there a right and wrong way to choose?**

## Some say

Yes! Voting is a serious thing. People should think carefully about who would make the best leader and who has the best ideas to change the country.

## Others think

No! Your vote is your own. You can vote for whoever you think has the best fashion sense, if that is what you want to do. In democracies, we do not say there is a "right" way to choose how to vote.

## Some people say

*"In a democracy, the highest office is the office of citizen."*

**Felix Frankfurter (1882 – 1965), member of the US Supreme Court**

*What do you think?*

## Six steps to discovery

### 1. Connect

**How do you feel about this story?** - Whom will or would you vote for in this Thursday's election?

### 2. Wonder

**What questions do you have?** - For example: Should teenagers be able to vote?

### 3. Investigate

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

### 4. Construct

**What is your point of view?** - If you started a new party, what would its ideas be?

#### 5. Express

**What do others believe?** - Hold a class vote. You could do a secret ballot if you would like. Which party does your class want to win the election?

#### 6. Reflect

**What might happen next?** - You are interviewing a person from history of your choice about their thoughts on the election. Pick your thinker and write down some questions you would ask them.

## Glossary

**Election** - A vote in which someone is chosen to represent a group of people.

**Sparta** - Another of the great classical city-states, best known for its uncompromising martial culture.

**David Hume** - The Scottish philosopher argued that all human knowledge is acquired through experience and therefore embracing the unknown is a fundamental part of being human.

**Labour** - Britain's main left-of-centre political party.

**Friedrich Nietzsche** - In 1869, the German philosopher became the youngest person ever to hold the University of Basel's Chair of Classical Philology. He was 24.

**Conservative party** - A British political party. Members are known as Tories.

**Taxes** - There are three main ways for governments to obtain money: print it, borrow it or collect taxes.

**Private schools** - Schools that educate pupils in return for a fee.

**Mary Wollstonecraft** - A British writer who is often called the mother of feminism. In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* she argued for equal rights for both genders.

**Liberal Democrat** - Also known as the Lib Dems, a liberal political party in the UK.

**Socrates** - Considered by some to be the greatest philosopher in history, Socrates is credited with developing the whole notion of critical reason.

**Reform** - Officially Reform UK, a political party set up in 2018 as the Brexit Party. Its most prominent figure is Nigel Farage.

**Government** - The group of people who govern - or lead - the country.

**Authoritarian** - Enforcing strict obedience to authority.

**Democracies** - Countries which have a system of government based on the idea of rule by the people.