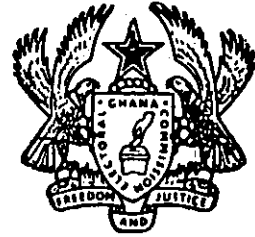


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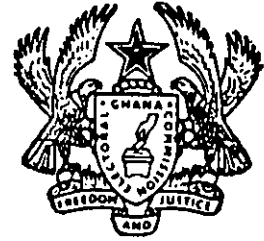


Electoral Commission of Ghana



**VOTER AWARENESS
GUIDE**

Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, 1996



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International Foundation for Election Systems

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Message from the Chairman

The members of the Electoral Commission believe that the entire Ghanaian people bear collective responsibility for ensuring free and fair elections in December 1996, and at any other time for that matter. Precisely for this reason, we see a very important role for you, as a Voter Educator, in helping to create in the larger society the sufficient awareness about what is required to be done to ensure free and fair elections.

We have thus selected you for a special and very important assignment. We are sending you to educate sections of the Ghanaian voter population that usually does not have easy access to electoral information. Your duty is to give people relevant information that will make it possible for them to participate meaningfully in the coming and subsequent elections.

You must view your selection as an honour, and your position as one of great trust and responsibility. You must at all times display absolute political neutrality. Please, use the information contained in this Guide as the basis for your work; but do not be afraid to use your ingenuity and to adapt to the circumstances of the local situation, if that will make you more effective.

We at the Commission are hopeful that you will discharge your important duty with honesty and dedication in the name of Mother Ghana.

Dr. K. Afari-Gyan
Chairman
ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Introduction to the Voter Educator's Guide for the Voter Awareness Programme

The Public Education and Training Department (PET) of the Electoral Commission is determined to carry out an effective and clean Presidential and Parliamentary elections, in December 1996. To ensure that this is achieved, the attempt will be made to reach the entire Ghanaian populace through a public education programme dubbed "Voter Awareness Programme". This programme is aimed specifically at people living in the remote areas where communication lines are very poor (i.e. there is little access to radio, TV, newspapers, etc.).

The settlements targeted for the programme have been selected on the following criteria:

- Towns and villages without electricity;
- Towns and villages accessible only by bush path, tractor routes or bicycle tracks;
- Where medium of communication is mainly in the local dialect;
- Where there are market days on which large numbers of local inhabitants assemble.

You are, as Voter Educators, recruited from the relevant localities and trained to educate the local populace on the voting procedure, in their own language, for successful elections. You will be provided with materials to explain the election process and demonstrate the activities involved. The **materials** include the following:

1. Voter Educator's Guide
2. Posters depicting various pictorial messages about the election:
 - ◆ Be Tolerant
 - ◆ Women! Vote!
 - ◆ The Future is in Our Hands
 - ◆ Voting Steps
 - ◆ Vote Early
 - ◆ How to Mark the Ballot
 - ◆ Protect Your Vote
 - ◆ Farmer
 - ◆ Voting is for Every Adult
3. Large size Voting Steps Poster

The Voter Educator's Guide includes a Question and Answer section, which you are urged to familiarise yourself with to be able to respond correctly on questions raised to you during your work.

You must, as a Voter Educator, also organise an Outreach Programme.

Outreach Programme

Your key duty is to organize the local people in your target area into viable groups and get them interested in learning about the elections. For you to be successful, it is suggested that as soon as you are assigned to a specific area, you should do the following:

A. Start with preliminary organisation

1. Contact the chief and elders first, introduce yourself and explain your assignment to them, asking for their support and co-operation.
2. In consultation with the chief and elders with the community leaders, including women and the youth, identify the most suitable day when the entire community can assemble for the function.
3. Use the opportunity to assess the probable number of individuals you would expect for your awareness programme.
4. Look around for an appropriate venue and make sure you have appropriate places where you can hang:
 - a. The Speaker Banner
 - b. The Posters
5. Confirm the date for the first meeting with the people and announce the meeting place and time for the meeting.

B. On the Day of the Outreach Programme

6. Go to the venue 30 minutes to one hour earlier and see to it that the place is clean and set it up for your purpose, making sure that all your materials are ready.
7. Make sure that you have become very familiar with the main points to be discussed with the community and revise them well before the day for the meeting.
8. First, take time to explain carefully to the people why it is important for each of them to register their votes.
9. Allow them to ask questions. If the questions deal with what you have prepared for the day, simply tell them that that is a good question; that it is one of the main reasons for the meeting; and that you would be dealing with it in detail soon.

10. Using the large-size Voting Steps Poster, demonstrate the steps through which they will all have to go on polling day. Where possible, use actual tables and improvised containers and cardboard, to give a life-size demonstration of the procedure. Emphasise the four tables and let them understand what they are expected to do when they come to each.
11. Take the posters one by one and explain the significance of each to the group. You may invite some of the participants to explain the posters to their colleagues. Several individuals, male and female, should be given the opportunity to share in the explanation of each poster after you are satisfied that your own explanation has gone down well.
12. Allow them to ask questions when they find any aspect unclear. Playing it by the ear, satisfy yourself that most of the questions bothering them have been asked.
13. Finally, go over the possible electoral offences that are likely to occur and caution them about doing everything to avoid any of these in the community.
14. Give them a final opportunity to ask questions or make contributions.
15. Summarise the main points and wrap up.

Session #1. **Why People Must Vote**

Objective: To impress upon the rural people that all those who have registered should make sure that they vote on 7 December 1996.

Duration: 30 minutes

Materials: A Voter ID Card
Blackboard or Flipchart
Chalk or Felt Pens

Sequence:

1. Greet the people in the traditional fashion used in the area. Be particularly careful when you greet the chiefs so as not to offend them and their people.
2. Tell the group the reason why it is necessary for you to be commissioned to come and have a discussion with them on the forthcoming elections. (To make sure no one is misled by any other person as to what exactly to do during the elections in December)
3. Introduce the main question for the day. **Why should people vote?** Allow members of the group to make contributions on the question. You must carefully guide the discussion so that it does not go off-target. Allow 5 minutes for this discussion.
4. Make sure that the following points come out:
 - (a) To allow a free expression of opinion on:
 - who should lead the nation as President,
 - who should represent us in parliament.
 - (b) To provide us with a safe and peaceful channel for changing political leadership.
 - (c) To create an opportunity for deciding on things affecting our lives and the welfare of our children.

Write these points down to help you in summarising. Also other useful points raised during the discussion should be noted and added.

5. Raise the next question: **Who qualifies to vote?** Stress the point that **only those who have registered** can vote! Let them understand that the only evidence is the ID Card and everyone should keep it carefully to be used on the day of voting. Let them understand that, not until there is a fresh registration, this is the ID Card that we shall use for all elections.
6. Caution them on what to look out for on polling day, i.e. good orderly behaviour.

Session #2. **Explaining the Posters**

Objective: To use the Posters prepared by the Commission to clarify some basic issues regarding the poll and correct some of the known misconceptions that confuse voters on election day.

Duration: 30 minutes

Materials: All relevant Posters

Sequence:

1. Follow this **pattern** with all the posters as you cover them one by one:
 - a. Put up the Poster so that each person can see it very clearly.
 - b. Ask the group to describe what they see in the poster (Guide the discussion).
 - c. Make sure that the key elements in each picture are brought out.
 - d. List all the relevant points on the blackboard or flipchart.
 - e. Get into the discussion on the particular poster, emphasizing **the main message**.

2. Treat the Posters in this order:
 - A. “Women! Vote!” Poster**
 - ◆ Every woman is entitled to vote, provided she is registered as a voter.
 - ◆ Nobody can stop a registered woman from voting.
 - ◆ Women should be encouraged to vote because they make a substantial contribution to the economy and constitute 50% of the population.

 - B. “Protect Your Vote” Poster**
 - ◆ Stress that the voter must not sell his or her vote for money.
 - ◆ Stress that the voter should not collect gifts to influence his or her choice of candidate.

 - C. “Be Tolerant” Poster**
 - ◆ We should respect each other's opinions and avoid violence when we differ on any point. We come from different regions, and have different religious beliefs.

 - D. “Vote Early” Poster**
 - ◆ Vote early in the day. Do not wait till the last minute, you may be late.

E. "Voting is for Every Adult" Poster

- ◆ You may be disabled but once you have registered, you are entitled to vote.
- ◆ If you need any assistance on polling day, you are allowed to be assisted by a person of your own choice, or you may approach the Presiding Officer, he is there to advise you and help you through.

F. "Farmer" Poster

- ◆ No matter how busy you are and no matter how important your work is, you need to take time off and cast your vote on polling day.

G. "The Future is in Our Hands" Poster

- ◆ Young registered voters are the future leaders of this country. They must be urged to vote as they have to be a part of the decision making process

H. "Voting Steps" Poster

- ◆ Follow how the voting will work on polling day.
- ◆ Stress that both Parliamentary and Presidential elections are held on the same day: Saturday, 7 December 1996

I. "How to Mark the Ballot" Poster

- ◆ A correct way of marking your ballot paper will make it a valid one
- ◆ Stress that incorrectly marked ballot papers will be rejected.

3. Summing up

(a). Although there shall have been much discussion during the introduction of each poster, you should make room for more discussion at this point to resolve doubts and other points of clarification that the participants may require.

(b). Stress the importance of each individual keeping his or her ID Card very securely. No one should part with the ID Card to any other person under any circumstance. It must be made clear to them that this Card is the insurance to their right to vote and they must not lose it. Caution them that each of them should write down the correct ID Number somewhere else so that in case anyone mistakingly takes their Cards, they should be able to report using the correct numbers which will be important. Make them aware that even **party officials are not allowed to collect ID Cards from their party members.**

4. Make sure you end the session by thanking the Chief, the Elders and the whole gathering for their patience and let them know that it is only when people are prepared to listen to all shades of opinion that democracy can thrive.

5. Remind them of the slogan: **Your Vote is your Right** and you may add that they should also remember that to vote **Your ID Card is Your Licence.**

Session #3. The Voting Procedure

Objective: To clarify for the voters the simple steps through which they are expected to go on polling day.

Duration: 30 minutes

Materials: Large size Voting Steps Poster

Sequence:

1. Bring out the uniqueness of this year's election to the people - for the first time in Ghana:
 - (a) Both the Presidential and Parliamentary elections will take place on the same day and at the same venue.
 - (b) Ghanaians will use ID Cards for voting.
2. Explain to the participants that because of these innovations, voting will tend to look different for many people hence the need to go through the entire process with them so that nobody wastes his/her votes.
3. Display the large sized Voting Step Poster and present briefly the set up of the polling station; the queue, the Security Officer, the various tables, etc.
4. Patiently go through the steps, saying clearly what voters should expect at each point. Allow the group to ask questions regarding the process.
5. Recapitulate:
 - (a) Table 1: Present your Voter ID Card for your name to be checked. Then proceed to:
 - (b) Table 2: Your left thumb will be wiped and the electoral stain applied around the nail.
 - (c) Table 3: Collect a stamped ballot paper for the Presidential ballot. Proceed to the screen and make your thumbprint against the candidate of your choice.
 - (d) After marking the candidate of your choice, fold the Ballot Paper and put it into the Presidential Ballot Box.
 - (e) Table 4: Collect another stamped ballot paper for the Parliamentary ballot. Proceed to the screen and make your thumbprint against the candidate of your choice.
 - (f) Fold the ballot paper and drop it into the ballot box for the Parliamentary candidate.
 - (g) Quietly walk away from the polling station.
 - (h) Inform the public that counting of votes is done at the polling stations after 5 p.m. and results declared after the counting has been completed.

6. **Caution the voters against the following:**

- ◆ Do not attempt to vote twice on the same day;
- ◆ Do not use another person's ID Card to cast your vote, use your own only.
- ◆ Do not get intoxicated when you are coming to the polling station;
- ◆ Never attempt to vote if you have not registered;
- ◆ It is strictly prohibited to campaign for a candidate at the polling station or near it;
- ◆ It is an offence to do anything that will disrupt or interfere with the voting process;
- ◆ You should not seek to find out the candidate for whom a voter intends to vote or the one for whom he/she has voted;
- ◆ No party symbol should be used or worn to the polling station;
- ◆ You must not seek to influence any person to vote for a particular candidate.

You may mention that the Presiding Officer and the Polling Agents are present at the polling station to observe and detect any possible inappropriate behaviour of the voters.

6. Q. I am not convinced the election is to get quality leadership. Should I abstain from voting ?
- A. It is unpatriotic to abstain from voting. Voting is the only channel through which you can choose good leaders.
7. Q. Is it necessary for me to urge others to go and vote?
- A. Yes. As a patriotic citizen, you have to encourage others to go and vote.
8. Q. I am a blind man. How am I going to vote?
- A. That is no problem. You can get someone you trust to help you make your choice. On the other hand, if you manage to get to the polling station, the Presiding Officer could help you vote if you so wish. This applies to any voter who is physically handicapped in any way.
9. Q. I am one of the security persons involved in ensuring free and fair elections. How will I cast my vote, since I may be sent far away from my polling station?
- A. You will be allowed to vote on a special day before the election day before you will be sent out of your constituency. Your superior officer will have to submit your name to the Returning Officer of your constituency to enable you vote accordingly.
10. Q. My father has been admitted in the hospital and will not be able to go to the polling station to cast his vote. Is there any way he can vote?
- A. He can collect Proxy Forms from the Returning Officer for his Constituency and appoint someone else (a proxy) to vote for him.
11. Q. What is Proxy Voting?
- A. A registered voter who, because of ill-health or absence from his constituency, will be unable to go to the polling station on election day may apply to the Returning Officer to allow someone to vote on his behalf. The application must be made not later than 14 days prior to the election day.
12. Q. What is "Transferred Voters List"?
- A. It is the list of voters who have transferred their votes from where they originally registered to their present, new residence, where they must have lived for at least two months.
13. Q. What is the "Absent Voters List"?
- A. When a voter transfers his vote from his original polling station, his name will appear on an 'Absent Voters List' at the original station, meaning he or she will not be there to vote.
14. Q. Will I be allowed to vote if someone else votes in my name?
- A. You will be able to vote by the use of a tender ballot paper.
15. Q. May I know the meaning of the secrecy of the ballot?
- A. It is the right of a voter to make his or her choice of candidate in complete secrecy.

Questions and Answers on Presidential and Parliamentary Elections

1. Q. What are the 1996 general elections about?

A. The elections are meant for registered voters to elect the President and members of Parliament.

2. Q. When will the elections take place?

A. The Presidential and Parliamentary elections will be held on the same day on Saturday, 7th December, 1996 from 7.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

3. Q. What is the procedure for the voting?

A. The procedure is very simple.

1. When you arrive at the polling station, go to the first table where your name will be checked.
2. If your name is found, you will move to the next table where your left thumb nail will be marked with indelible ink.
3. Then you will move to the next table where you will be issued with a Presidential ballot paper.
4. You will move into the presidential polling booth and secretly place your thumbprint in the box next to the candidate of your choice on the ballot paper.
5. Then you will come out and drop the folded ballot paper into the Presidential ballot box in the open.
6. Thereafter, you will move to the next table where you will be issued with a Parliamentary ballot paper.
7. You will then go into the parliamentary polling booth and secretly place your thumbprint in the box next to the candidate of your choice on the ballot paper.
8. You will come out and drop the ballot paper into the parliamentary ballot box in the open, then you can leave the polling station.

4. Q. Who is qualified to vote?

A. You must be a Ghanaian, 18 years old or older and you must have your name in the voters register.

5. Q. Where must I go to vote?

A. You must vote where you registered and later checked your name during the exhibition of the voters register.

- 16. Q. What is the Electoral Commission doing to prevent people from voting twice?**
- A. The indelible ink will be applied on your left thumb nail to indicate that you have voted.
- 17. Q. What effort is the Electoral Commission making to ensure that the ballot boxes are not stuffed with ballot papers before the election?**
- A. Before the commencement of the voting, the Presiding Officer will show the inside of the ballot box to all present, including the candidates' agents. Moreover, transparent ballot boxes will be used during the polls.
- 18. Q. What roles are the party agents supposed to play during the election?**
- A. They are to observe the elections and report any irregularity, like impersonation.
- 19. Q. How are the results declared?**
- A. At the close of poll, the Presiding Officer, with the help of the polling Assistants, will audibly count the ballots for each candidate. When the result is known, a Declaration of Results Form will be completed and countersigned by candidates' agents. Thereafter, the results will be announced verbally at the polling station. After that the results will be sent to the constituency centre for coalition and the winner will be announced. The result is forwarded from the constituency centre to the Regional office for onward transmission to the Headquarters in Accra, where the final results are announced in the case of the Presidential election.
- 20. Q. Is there any way the Commission can detect if results are falsified on its way to the constituency centre and the Headquarters?**
- A. Yes, candidates' agents will be required to sign Declaration of Results forms after the count and they will be given copies of the results so that they can later challenge any discrepancies in the results.
- 21. Q. In 1992, some Candidates' Agents refused to append their signatures on the Results Sheet. Will the results be genuine if Candidates' Agents refuse to append their signatures during the Elections?**
- A. Yes. The results could be declared genuine. If a candidates' agents refuses to append his or her signature, he or she should explain in writing why he refused to sign. The Commission can then look into the matter and make a decision. The candidates' agent has the right to complain on any irregularity to the Presiding Officer, who will note it on the Declaration of Result Form.
- 22. Q. And what measures is the Commission taking to deter Candidates' Agents from refusing to append their signatures on the Result Sheet?**
- A. The appointment of agents is the responsibility of the various candidates and not the Electoral Commission. The agents will however be sworn to abide by the rules of the elections. Candidates are also to advise their agents to behave responsibly.

- 23. Q. Can I object to someone voting during the Election on the ground that the person is not qualified?**
- A. No. You were given this opportunity during the registration and Exhibition exercises. However, you may expose someone for impersonation (pretending to be somebody else) or multiple voting (voting more than once).
- 24Q. Has any candidates' agent the right to challenge a voter in the queue on the grounds that he is not qualified?**
- A. No! An agent can challenge a voter only on suspicion that the voter is an imposter. (impersonation) or has already voted, but he or she must do so through the Presiding Officer.
- 25. Q. What will be done to the challenged person? Will he be allowed to vote?**
- A. If he denies the charge, he will be allowed to vote but the Presiding Officer will require the suspect and the challenger to complete the appropriate form for investigation by the Police. If the challenge is found to be true, the person will be arrested.
- 26. Q. Can a candidates' agent decide to open the boxes containing voting materials in the absence of the presiding officer?**
- A. No. Party Agents are not to handle electoral materials or take part in conducting the elections.
- 27. Q. I am 18 years; can I campaign for a Political Party?**
- A. Yes. Every citizen of Ghana is free to join and campaign for any Political Party of his choice.
- 28. Q. Can a pregnant woman or a nursing mother suffer any harm when she goes to vote?**
- A. No. Any doctor or health official will assure you that women cannot be harmed when they go to vote. They may, in fact, be given preference at the polling station because of their condition.
- 29. Q. Should a husband decide whom his wife must vote for?**
- A. No husband has got the right to dictate to the wife whom she must vote for.