

Preferential (Ranked) Voting: How to read the results

Voters ranked candidates in order of preference, with “1” being their first choice, “2” their second choice, and so on. Voters ranked as many or as few candidates as they wished.

1. First choice votes were counted for each candidate.
2. If a candidate received more than 50% of active valid votes, they were elected.
3. If no candidate received a majority, the candidate with the fewest first choice votes was eliminated.
4. Ballots cast for the eliminated candidate were transferred to each voter’s next highest-ranked candidate still in the election.
5. This process continued until one candidate received a majority of active votes.

Example of results and how votes move between rounds

Round 1

Candidate A 41% (205 votes)

Candidate B 10% (50 votes) **X** Eliminated → Votes transfer to each voter’s next-ranked candidate

Candidate C 18% (90 votes)

Candidate D 31% (155 votes)

Round 2

Candidate A 45% (208 votes)

Candidate C 18% (84 votes) **X** Eliminated → Votes transfer to each voter’s next-ranked candidate

Candidate D 36% (168 votes)

Final Round

Candidate A 47% (212 votes)

Candidate D 53% (235 votes) **✓** Elected

Frequently Asked Questions

Why didn’t the candidate leading in the first round win?

Another candidate received more transferred vote preferences as the rounds progressed.

Why did the total number of votes appear to decrease in later rounds?

Some voters ranked only a few candidates. Once all of the candidates they ranked had been eliminated, their ballot could no longer be transferred. These are considered **exhausted ballots** and are no longer included in subsequent rounds.

What happens if no candidate reaches 50%?

In a preferential (ranked) voting process, it is rare that 50% is not achieved. However, if no candidate achieves a majority after all preferences had been counted, HSAA would re-run the election.

What does abstained mean?

On a voter's ballot, they had the option to select "Abstain", which means they did not vote for any candidate. Abstentions count toward voter turnout numbers. They do not count as active valid votes when determining whether a candidate has achieved a majority.

What is an active ballot?

Active votes are ballots that still have at least one ranked candidate remaining in the election.

What is an exhausted ballot?

A ballot that is no longer counted because all of the candidates ranked by the voter have been eliminated.