

Proportional representation (PR)

- Used in almost 100 countries worldwide.
- Used almost exclusively in partisan elections where parties organize political races.
- Proportional representation is based on the premise that all votes should count toward the makeup of government and that parties or candidates should get a share of representation that corresponds to their respective percentage of the vote.
- Most countries with proportional representation use a [party-list system](#). This means your ballot already has preselected candidates on it who have been nominated by their respective parties. There are both [open-list](#) and [closed-list](#) systems. Open-list systems give voters some influence over the order in which candidates are selected, whereas closed-list systems have no such flexibility.
- Ireland and Malta use [single transferable vote](#). Australia also uses this voting method for its Senate and several multiple councils. It involves a ranked ballot and is the inspiration for the [ranked choice voting movement](#) in the United States. STV can be used for both partisan and nonpartisan elections.
- Proportional representation is primarily used in parliamentary systems with several political parties. In order to govern, the parties must form coalitions with each other because no party has a simple majority of the vote. A coalition government can be made up of several parties. If I use Sweden as an example, the governing coalition might be the Social Democrats (the most popular party) plus the Left Party and the Green Party. The opposition coalition might be the Conservative Party (second most popular), the Center Party, the Liberal Party, the Christian Democrats and the Nationalist Party.
- In order to protect the system from fringe or joke parties/candidates, proportional systems usually have a minimum percentage of the vote needed to be elected, such as 5% of the total vote.

Learn more about proportional representation:

[Rose City Reform post about proportional representation](#)

[Video about proportional representation in Australia, which uses STV.](#)