



Session One

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

Where Do You Stand? From Personal Values to Shared Ideologies

To understand our electoral system, students need to understand the central role political parties play. Political parties are important for two reasons:

- Firstly, political parties are groups of people with a shared vision of how Aotearoa should be. The fundamental choice we all face on election day is between competing visions of Aotearoa.
- Secondly, political parties are a formal part of our electoral law. Parties must register to take part in an election – and the Party Vote determines the overall make-up of Parliament. We explore this role in session 3.

This session introduces students to the more fundamental role parties play – as the holders of different visions of Aotearoa. It starts by exploring the student's own values, ideas and opinions through politically neutral topics. It then explores student preferences in relation to public policy ideas, before drawing attention to the fundamental role parties play in our system.

Political parties don't start with issues. **They start with people who share a similar lens on the world they want, who then seek the power to have those views represented in parliament.**

Overview

This lesson is designed as a movement-based learning experience that gradually stretches students' thinking.

- This session starts by exploring values, ideas and opinions through politically neutral topics – such as pie flavours or leisure activities. Students stand on a continuum to indicate their preferences.
- Students then repeat the activity, but in relation to two public policy continuums:
 - long term policy goals vs short term policy goals
 - individual rights vs collective rights



Session One

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

- Students then explore how political parties form – namely, as alliances of people who share similar values or visions of how society should operate.

The lesson uses values as the vehicle for understanding – however, this is a proxy for the broader concept of an ideology – or a vision of how Aotearoa should be.

The final learning outcome of this session is recognising that political parties are simply a group of people with a shared ideology – and when it comes to political power – it's the vehicle for making our voices heard.

Step One "Choose a Side" (Warm up)

Breaking the ice and introducing choice

Mark two sides of the room. There is no middle. Students must choose one side or the other to get them moving and recognising that people naturally prioritise different things.

Possible warm-up questions include:

- Would you prefer meat or fruit pies?
- Would you rather have summer all year or winter all year?
- Would you rather own the newest phone or have unlimited free food?
- Would you rather play sport or play video games?
- Would you rather have one close friend or lots of acquaintances?
- Would you rather stay up late or get up early?

After one or two rounds, consider; *Did everyone choose the same answer?* Students quickly notice that even simple preferences divide the room.

Transition: "Some decisions are simple preferences. Others involve weighing up what we value most. Let's look at how we make bigger decisions."

Step Two Values Continuum; Beyond "Yes" and "No"

The X-Axis: Time: Short-Term vs. Long-Term

Lay a five-point continuum across the room. Explain that there are no wrong answers – just different ways of prioritising time.

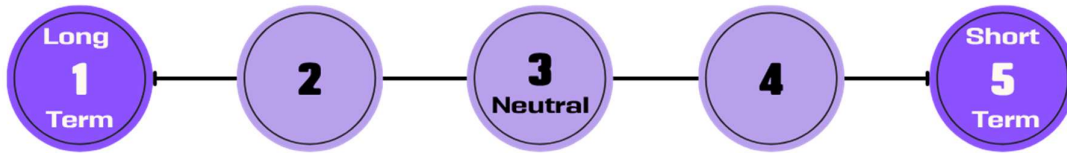
- **Short-Term (5):** Enjoying the benefits right now.
- **Long-Term (1):** Investing for the future.



Session One

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

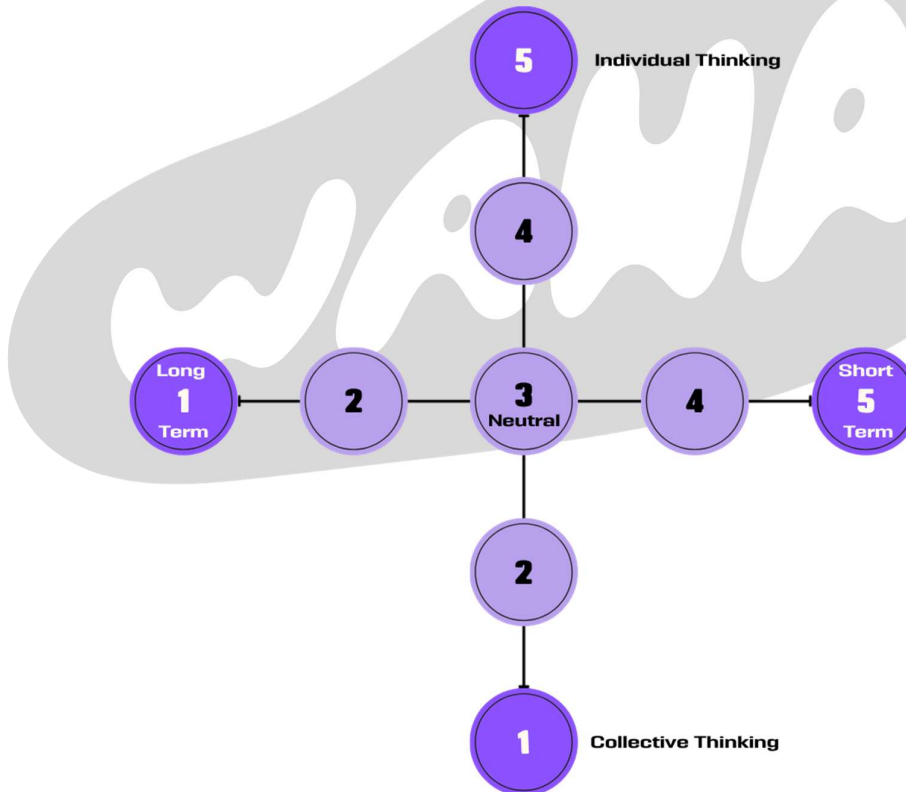
Using the **first set** of scenarios from the **Scenario Table** below (pages 4-5), ask students to position themselves along the continuum and record their number on a scorecard. After the final scenario, they calculate their average score.



Step Three A Second Way of Thinking

The Y-Axis: People: Individual vs. Collective Rights

Introduce a second continuum that crosses the centre of the first to create a large cross/grid.



- **Individual (5):** Focusing on what benefits you or gives you personal choice.
- **Collective (1):** Focusing on what benefits the wider group equally.



Session One

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

One end focuses on what benefits the individual. The other focuses on what benefits the wider group. Students again respond to the same scenarios, but this time through a different lens.

Using the **second set** of scenarios from the Scenario Table, students again respond to a new set of scenarios through this lens and calculate their average score.

Scenario Table:

Step Two: Thinking Beyond "Yes" and "No" Short-Term Thinking ↔ Long-Term Thinking	Step Three: A Second Way of Thinking Individual Rights ↔ Collective Rights
Scenario 1 – School Camp Your school receives \$20,000 . Short-term (5): Spend it all this year on an amazing ski camp for the current students. Long-term (1): Spread the money over the next five years so every year level gets a good camp.	Scenario 1 – School Camp Fundraising Individual (5): The money you personally raise pays only for your own camp costs. Collective (1): All fundraising is pooled so every student receives the same financial support.
Scenario 2 – Food Choices You have enough money to buy lunch every day. Short-term (5): Choose your favourite takeaway or treat every day because you enjoy it now. Long-term (1): Choose healthier food most days because it helps your health over time, even if it's less exciting.	Scenario 2 – Food Individual (5): Everyone buys whatever food they want for themselves. Collective (1): The school helps create a shared vegetable garden that everyone can use and learn from.
Scenario 3 – School Environment Your school has funding to improve the grounds. Short-term (5): Build an exciting outdoor recreation area that everyone can enjoy immediately. Long-term (1): Plant hundreds of native trees and restore a	Scenario 3 – Sports Equipment Individual (5): Students buy their own sports equipment so they can choose exactly what they want. Collective (1): The school purchases shared equipment that everyone can borrow.



Session One

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

wetland that will take years to mature but benefit future students and wildlife.	
Scenario 4 – Technology The school has funding for digital learning. Short-term (5): Buy the newest devices for current students immediately. Long-term (1): Upgrade devices gradually so future students also benefit and equipment lasts longer.	Scenario 4 – School Devices Individual (5): Families provide their own laptops, so students choose the device that suits them best. Collective (1): The school provides the same device for everyone so all students have equal access.
Scenario 5 – Community Project Students have raised money for the school. Short-term (5): Spend it all on a big end-of-year celebration. Long-term (1): Invest it in something permanent, like outdoor seating, shade areas or sports equipment that future students can also enjoy.	Scenario 5 – School Rewards Individual (5): Students who earn rewards keep all of the prizes they win. Collective (1): Rewards contribute to a whole-class celebration that everyone enjoys together.

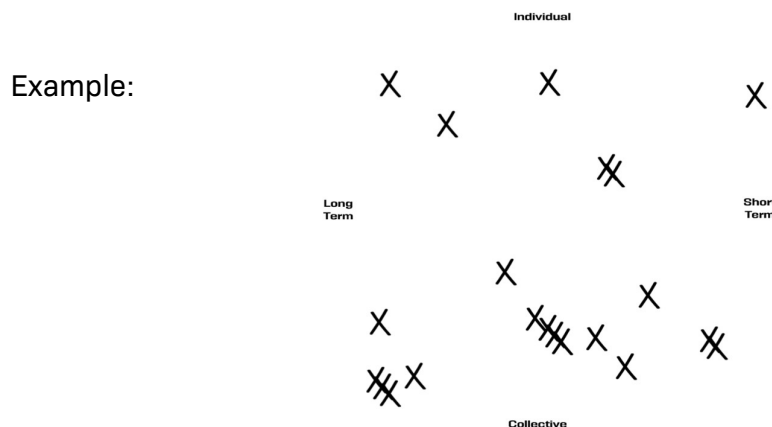
Step Four Mapping Our Values

The visual reveal

Students now look at both of their average scores and find their exact coordinates on the grid.

- **X-Axis:** Stand at your average score for Time (Short/Long).
- **Y-Axis:** Stand at your average score for People (Individual/Collective).

The room becomes a living values map. Remove all floor markers except the 4 end points. Have them look around in silence first.





Session One

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

Prompt discussion:

- Who is standing near you? Does that surprise you?
- Are there clusters of people? Is anyone standing on their own?

Key Insight: There are no "correct" positions – only different lenses for viewing the world.

Step Five Finding Your Tribe

Values in action

Students move towards the 3-4 classmates closest to them on the map. Explain that these are not political parties yet– they are simply groups whose values naturally align.

Group Kōrero:

- What do we seem to value most? (e.g. freedom, community, innovation, kaitiakitanga, fairness).
- If we had to choose just *three* shared values to define us, what would they be?
- What could we name our group?

Groups might identify values such as:

Fairness, responsibility, freedom, opportunity, sustainability, equality, community, independence, innovation, respect.

Step Six Recognising Your Ideology

Expanding on values

You've discovered something important today. You didn't stand together because you all wanted exactly the same solutions. You stood together because you shared similar values.

But values are only one part of how people think about the world.



Session One

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

An analogy could look like:

"Think of it like building a house."

- **Values** are the foundation.
- **Beliefs and ideas** are the design.
- **Ideology** is the whole blueprint.
- **Policies** are what you actually build.

"Think of it like a tree."

- Roots = values
- Trunk = beliefs and ideas
- Tree = ideology
- Fruit = policies

The Tree Metaphor

Explain that standing together doesn't mean they want the exact same solutions; it means they share a similar *lens* on the world. Introduce the metaphor of a tree:

- **Roots (Values):** What matters to us deeply? (e.g. fairness).
- **Trunk (Ideology):** Our connected belief about how society should work. (e.g. "Society is strongest when everyone is looked after equally.")
- **Fruit (Policies):** The practical actions we take. (e.g. "Free school lunches.")

Activity: Have the groups act as architects. Based on their three shared values, have them write down **three practical policies** they would implement in the school or local community. (use the Tree Ideology worksheet attached below)

OR

Venn Diagram

Groups have already identified shared values. Now get them to fill in the below Venn diagram. Think about what their beliefs and ideas might be. Notice these are no longer just values – they're statements about how society should work.

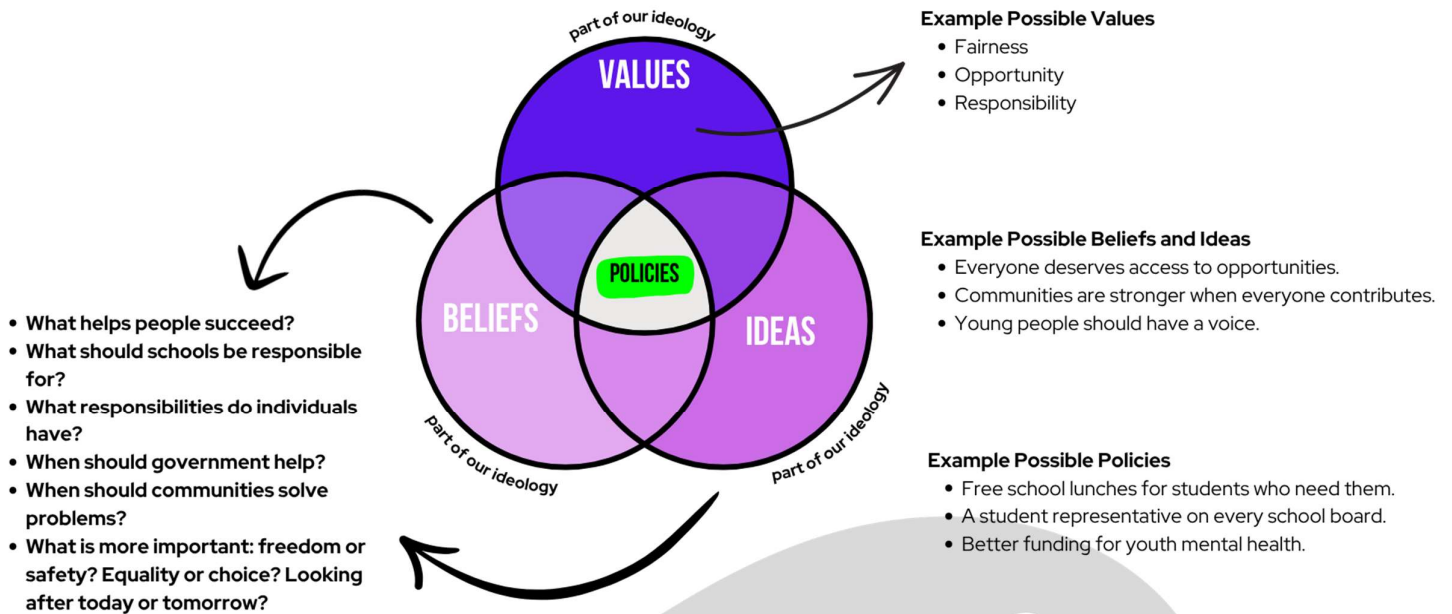
*When a group of people shares similar values, beliefs and ideas about how society should work, we call that an **ideology**.* These ideologies inform the policies we choose – what are we actually going to do.

If those are your values and beliefs, what are three things you would actually do?



Session One

WHERE DO YOU STAND?



Students work through values and beliefs in an ideology, to create three simple policies. For example:

Values

- Fairness, community, opportunity

Beliefs

- Everyone deserves access to opportunities.
- Communities are stronger when everyone contributes.
- Young people should have a voice.

Possible policies

- Free school lunches for students who need them.
- A student representative on every school board.
- Better funding for youth mental health.

The emphasis isn't on whether the policies are "good" or "bad." The learning is that policies should logically flow from an underlying way of thinking.

People don't usually create a political party by sitting down and asking, 'What policies should we have?'



Session One

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

Instead, they begin by finding other people who share similar values. As they talk, they realise they also share many beliefs and ideas about how society should work. Together, those values, beliefs and ideas form an ideology. Their policies are simply the practical actions that grow from that ideology.

Step Seven When Does a Group Become a Political Party?

The pursuit of power

There is one important distinction between **a group of people who happen to think similarly** and **a political party**.

A book club, sports club, environmental group, gaming community, or cultural organisation may all share an ideology or a common set of values and beliefs. What makes a **political party** different is that it seeks to gain **political power** so it can put those ideas into action through government.

You've naturally formed groups because you discovered people who think in similar ways.

Many groups in society are formed like this. Sports clubs, environmental groups, youth organisations, cultural groups and charities all bring together people who share similar values, beliefs or interests.

But sharing an ideology doesn't automatically make you a political party. **"So what's the difference?"** Students speculate before revealing the key idea.

The Key Difference

A political party is a group of people with a shared ideology who seek political power so they can turn their ideas into action.

Lots of groups want change. Political parties want something more. They want to be elected so they can make decisions, create laws and influence how New Zealand is governed.

Debrief

Bring the class back together and ask:

- Did your group agree on everything?
- What connected you?



Session One

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

- What values kept coming up?
- Why did some people naturally end up together?

People don't usually come together because they all have the same solution to every problem. They come together because they share similar values and ways of thinking.

Those naturally aligned groups of people are the starting point for political parties.

Parties begin with shared values. Policies come later.

Summary Explanation

Your group has already worked out what matters to you and what you believe. You've even come up with some ideas for what you would do. That's your ideology taking shape.

If you decided to enter an election because you wanted those ideas to become real decisions for New Zealand, your group would no longer just be a group of people with similar values – it would be becoming a political party.

Next lesson we'll explore the next question: **How does a political party gain the power to put those ideas into action?**

The Ideology Tree – Worksheet

Group Name: _____

Group Members: _____

Like a tree, political parties don't start from the top down. They grow from the roots up. Work with your group to map out how your shared values grow into real-world rules.

1. THE ROOTS (Our Values)

The hidden foundation. What matters to us most? (Examples: Fairness, freedom, community, kaitiakitanga, innovation, equality)



Session One

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

Our Top 3 Shared Values:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

2. THE TRUNK (Our Ideology)

The core structure. Based on our roots, what is our shared belief about how our community or society should work? (Example: "We believe society is strongest when everyone is looked after equally, even if it means sharing our resources.")

Our Ideology Statement: "We believe that..."

3. THE FRUIT (Our Policies)

The visible results. If you had the power to make the rules at school or in your local community, what practical actions would grow from your tree? (Example: "Provide free bus passes for all students," or "Ban all single-use plastics in the canteen.")

Our Top 3 Policies:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The Final Question: A sports team, a kapa haka group, or a charity might have this exact same tree. What is the **one thing** your group needs to turn this tree into a *political party*?

Answer:

(Hint: It means seeking the ability to write the laws!)