



The Role of the Representative

What is a Rep?

Reps are elected by their class, form or tutor group (we'll just call these all 'classes' from now on, to make it easier) to represent those people who elected them.

They act as a link between their class and other groups - year councils, school councils and other committees.

Reps have to be willing and able to put forward other people's views even if they disagree with them.

What kind of person makes a good rep?

- Approachable.
- Good listener - everyone in the class has to feel comfortable talking to you.
- Organised - it will be your responsibility to make sure meetings happen in your class on a regular basis.
- Assertive - the opinions of your class are just as important as everyone else's.
- Efficient - class discussions must cover a lot of issues in a short space of time.
- Fair - everyone has the right to express a point of view.
- Good communicator - you need to be able to work with staff and students from across the school.

So if I were a rep what would I actually have to do?

As a rep you have three main jobs:

- Collecting the views of your class and passing them on to other committees.
- Letting your class know what goes on in the meetings you attend.
- Taking an active part in meetings.

To do these jobs well you should have regular meetings with your class where you will listen to people's concerns and issues and note them down.

Remember that not everyone likes talking in meetings, so make sure you are approachable in other ways. Make it clear that people can talk to you at break times. Have a suggestions box or suggestions email account.

With your class you should decide which of the issues can be dealt with by the class itself, and which need to go to another committee (the year council or school council). It's then your job to talk to the chair of the other committee and get your class's concerns on the agenda.

You will then need to put forward your class's views at year council or whole school council meetings. You are the link between the school/year council and your class so you need to let your class know what happened in the other meetings, any decisions that were made or questions that need to be asked.

It's particularly important to make sure you know what is happening to suggestions made by your class. It's your job to let them know that their ideas are being taken seriously.

You need to be prepared to go to meetings and make yourself heard, but also be willing to listen and discuss. Remember, you are there to represent all the different points of view that people in your class may have, so you need to spend time listening to your class and be flexible enough to put across a range of opinions.

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That's quite a job; what help can I get?

Yes, being a class rep is the most important job on the school council, but don't worry, you're not alone! Most schools elect two reps from each class who can help each other.

Some schools have class reps and deputy class reps who can help out generally but don't go to meetings unless the main rep is away. Also, make sure you use your class teacher. Without his or her help you'll find it difficult to organise meetings with your class.

Don't feel that you have to run the class council meetings. Get other people in the class to take it in turns. It's easier for you to take notes if you're not chairing the meeting as well.

How often would I be doing things?

Well, each school is different, but this is what we recommend.

When	What?	With Whom?
All the time	Listen to your classmates	The other rep in your class
All the time	Make sure there is a running agenda that classmates can add to.	The whole class
Once a week	Run a class council meeting (following the class agenda)	The whole class
Once a week	Make sure a record (called 'the minutes') is kept of what is discussed and decided	The whole class; you may ask other class members to act as secretary and chair.
Once a week	Work out which things you can do as a class and create an action plan	The whole class
Once a month or fortnightly	Take your class minutes to the year council and represent your class and their views.	The year councillors and a member of staff
Once a month or fortnightly	Report back to your class which suggestions have been actioned and what decisions were made	Your class and class tutor/teacher
Once a year	Stand for election	The whole class

Can I get any more information on being a rep?

There isn't a huge amount of information around about being a school council rep, but there are reps for all sorts of other organisations. Your MP is a rep! So there is information on how to do those similar jobs.

In our online shop at www.schoolcouncilshop.org you will see our Handbooks for primary and secondary students which give you loads more ideas about how to get things done through your school and class councils.

