

6 Minute English

Women in politics

This is not a word-for-word transcript

Sam

Hello. This is 6 Minute English, I'm Sam.

Georgina

And I'm Georgina.

Sam

How do you do feel about politics, Georgina?

Georgina

Well, there's a lot around at the moment!

Sam

Yes, indeed!

Georgina

One thing I would like to see in politics, particularly British politics, is more women in parliament. About 34% of our MPs are women, which is the highest it's ever been, but it's still not close to 50%.

Sam

In order to be elected though, you first have to **stand**, don't you?

Georgina

Yes, we use the verb **stand** when you are a candidate someone can vote for.

Sam

Women in politics is our topic today. Before we get into it, today's question. Which country has the highest percentage of women in its parliament? Is it:

- a) Rwanda
- b) Sweden

c) New Zealand

What do you think, Georgina?

Georgina

I'm not sure. I know New Zealand was one of the first countries to allow women to vote and they currently have a female prime minister – but I think it's actually an African country. So I'm going to say Rwanda.

Sam

OK. We'll see if you're correct at the end of the programme. There are a number of projects in the UK at the moment trying to get more women interested in **standing for** parliament. One of these is the campaign 'sign-up-to-stand' from an organisation called 50:50 Parliament. Lucrece Grehoua is someone who has taken up that challenge and is hoping to **stand** in upcoming elections. She was a guest on the BBC Radio programme Woman's Hour. She wasn't always interested in politics, though. How does she describe it?

Lucrece Grehoua

I didn't really **see myself** in the Houses of Parliament. When we see it on TV it looks extremely boring, politics looks boring, especially as a young person and so when I saw that 50:50 Parliament were including women and including young women, including a diverse range of young women, I thought 'wow, this is really for me and it can be for me'. So I decided to #signuptostand. Ever since I've just been excited at **the prospect of me standing for** parliament.

Sam

What was her original feeling about politics?

Georgina

Boring! She thought it was boring, particularly as a young person. In fact she couldn't **see herself** as a politician. She couldn't imagine herself doing it.

Sam

She says that she is now excited at the **prospect of standing**. What does she mean by that?

Georgina

The **prospect of** something is the possibility of something. So before, she thought it was boring, now she's excited at the possibility that she could be a member of parliament.

Sam

So, what was it that made her change her mind and think that politics wasn't so boring after all? Here's Lucrece Grehoua again.

Lucrece Grehoua

I think everybody has a politician within them because we all get anger about something but unfortunately when we see it, it's all **jargon**, it's not very... words that we can understand. Even just as a working class person who hasn't, you know, been to a private school and who's come from **a disadvantaged background** and so I realised politics is for absolutely everybody, it's just the way that you speak about it has to be **tailored** to everyone.

Sam

One of the things she didn't like about politics was the **jargon**.

Georgina

Well, no one likes **jargon**, do they? **Jargon** is the very specific language and vocabulary relating to a particular profession. Inside the profession people know what it means, but from outside it can seem very complicated and confusing.

Sam

Lucrece said she came from a **disadvantaged background**. This means that when she was growing up her family didn't have very much money and that made life and study very difficult.

Georgina

But even though, or maybe because, she came from a **disadvantaged background** she has become interested in politics and thinks that it can be something for everyone, but rather than use **jargon** you have to **tailor** the way you speak for everyone. To **tailor** something is to make it fit – in the same way that a tailor makes clothes fit, you can **tailor** your language to make it easy for everyone to understand. And one way to do that is to cut out the **jargon**!

Sam

That's just about all we have time for today. But before we review the vocabulary, it's time to get the answer to today's quiz question. Which country has the highest percentage of women in its parliament? Is it:

- a) Rwanda
- b) Sweden
- c) New Zealand

Georgina, what did you say?

Georgina

I made an educated guess of Rwanda.

Sam

An educated guess and a correct guess. Well done. And well done to everyone else who got that right too! According to 2019 figures, Rwanda's parliament has over 60% women MPs. Go Rwanda! OK, let's remind ourselves of today's vocabulary.

Georgina

Of course. To **stand** is the verb we use when someone is a candidate in an election – when someone **stands for** election you can vote for them.

Sam

If you can **see yourself** as something, it means that you can imagine yourself doing that thing.

Georgina

The **prospect of** something, is the possibility of something, so for example, the **prospect of** becoming an MP is something that excites Lucrece.

Sam

Something that we all hate, except when we use it ourselves, is **jargon**. Words and language that are very specific to a particular job and which are difficult for people outside that profession to understand.

Georgina

People who grow up without enough money and without access to education can be said to come from a **disadvantaged background**.

Sam

And finally, to **tailor** something is to change it to make it suitable for a particular purpose.

Georgina

So for example, if you want to make politics accessible for more people, you have to tailor your language and cut out the **jargon**.

Sam

Indeed! Well, it's time for us to go now, but do join us again soon. Bye for now.

Georgina

Bye!

VOCABULARY

to stand

to be a candidate in an election

to see yourself (doing something)

to imagine that it is possible for you to do something

the prospect of

the possibility of

jargon

vocabulary and expressions related to a particular job

a disadvantaged background

growing up in a family situation without much money

to tailor (what you say)

to change (how you speak) to make it suitable for a particular group