



SOUTH AFRICA



Universal Ballot Template



The Electoral Commission (IEC), together with the South African National Council for the Blind (SANCB), has developed a voting aid, the Universal Ballot Template (UBT), to assist persons with disabilities and special needs to have an independent and secret vote during elections.

1. What is the UBT?

The Universal Ballot Template is a voting aid made of hard, black plastic into which a ballot paper is inserted. The template is not a Braille ballot paper.

The right front of the template has a flap which has cut-out windows numbered in Braille and in large, raised white print. When the ballot paper is inserted into the template, each window aligns to a particular candidate or party and the voter is free to make his or her secret and independent mark accurately.

2. How does the UBT work?

The instructions on the use of the UBT appear in raised print on the back of the template.

The UBT is flat with raised ridges along three sides to hold a ballot paper firmly in place. The left front of the template is flat and open. The right front forms a flap, under which the ballot paper is to be inserted. The ballot paper fits into the template from the open, unridged area at the bottom. Once the ballot paper is inserted and aligns with the very top of the template, the cut-out windows on the flap will contain the marking blocks on the ballot paper where the voter's mark needs to be made.



3. Who can use the UBT?

- Blind and partially-sighted people
- Low-vision users
- People who are dyslexic
- The elderly
- People with low literacy
- People with motor and nervous conditions which do not allow for a steady hand

4. When can the UBT be used?

- National and Provincial Elections
- Local Government Elections
- By-elections

5. Can the UBT be used for special votes?

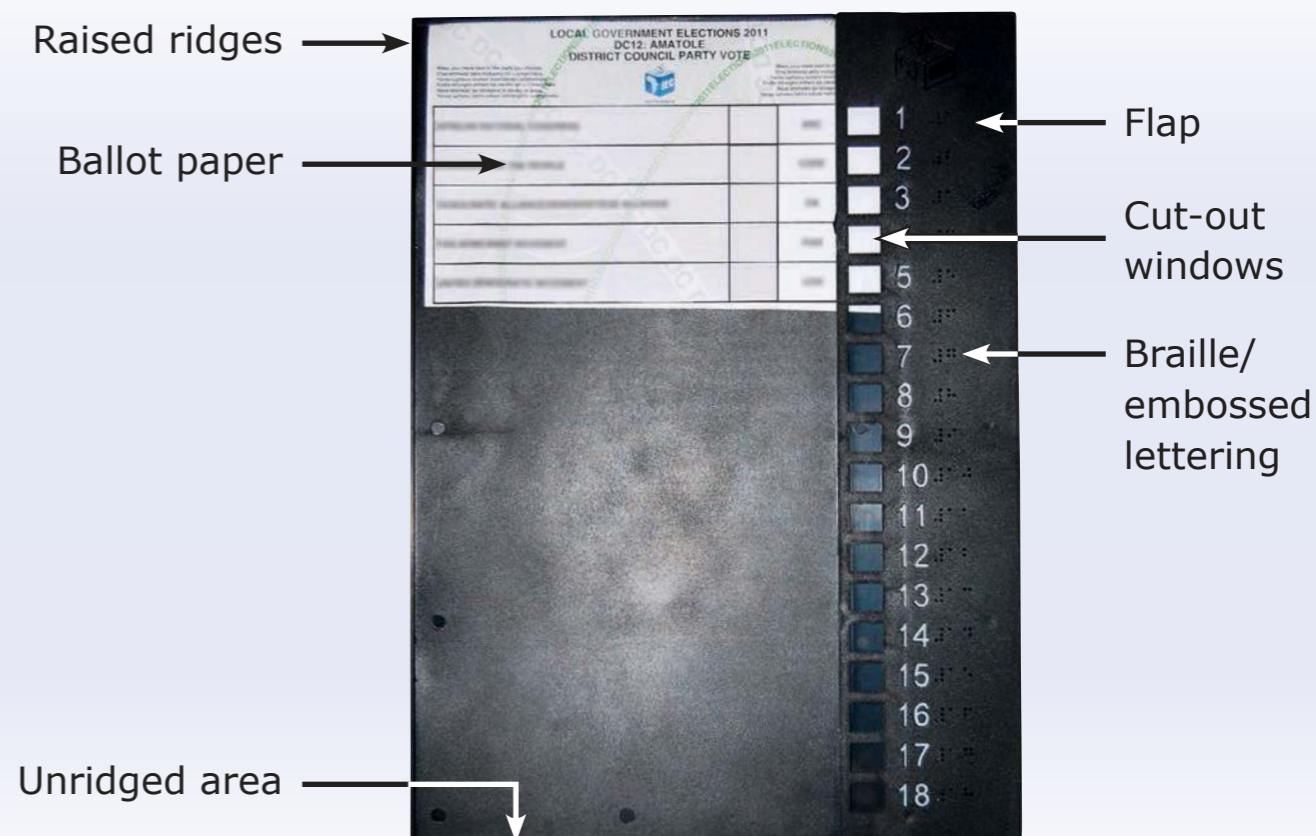
Yes, it can be used at the voting station and for home visits.

6. How would you cast your vote using the UBT?

You must be able to mark your ballot in a manner that is absolutely private and consistent with your intended selection(s).

After receiving the ballot paper at the voting station, you must place the ballot paper in the UBT as follows:

- Insert the ballot paper into the template from the open, unridged area at the bottom.
- Ensure that the top edge of the ballot rests against the top edge of the template.
- Check the correct positioning of the ballot by feeling the top right corner of the ballot paper through the cut-out triangle at the back of the UBT.
- Ensure that the marking squares on the ballot are aligned with the UBT windows.
- Please ask for help if needed.



The voting official must then:

- Explain to you which ballot is being used in the template.
- Ask if you want to know the order in which the names of the parties or candidates appear on the ballot.
- Read out loudly and accurately the parties or candidates on the ballot.
- Ensure that the numerical sequence in which they appear is clearly understood.
- Allow you an opportunity to make your mark in private.

You, the voter, must then:

- Use the windows on the UBT to identify the number corresponding to your choice of party or candidate.
- Remove the ballot from the UBT and fold it in private.
- Repeat the process in the event of more than one ballot.
- Leave the UBT in the booth to be collected by the voting official.
- Be directed to the ballot box(es) and deposit the folded ballot(s).

7. Assistance to make your mark

Voters with disabilities or special needs may ask for assistance from a companion to mark their ballot paper(s).

Such a companion must be:

- Eighteen (18) years or older
- Not a party agent, candidate or observer

NOTE

- No witnesses (party agents, candidates, or observers) are necessary when a companion assists a voter.
- The presiding officer must remind the companion that she or he is not allowed to disclose any information that may compromise the secrecy of the vote cast by the voter.
- If a voter has no companion, then the voting official or presiding officer may provide such help. This should be done in the presence of two party agents from different parties and one accredited observer, if available. Where such witnesses are not available, assistance can be rendered in their absence.

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