VOTEPAD

Make your opinion count.

Canadians are not voting.

Recent federal elections have resulted in historically low voter turnouts. Fewer than 40% of eligible voters under 24 voted in 2011. Among the many systemic reasons for low voter turnout, one that can be addressed through design is the barrier to accessing actionable information. For civically disengaged Canadians, the overwhelming volume of political news combined with the confusing logistics of voting make casting a ballot on election day an intimidating task.

Votepad is a mobile application that provides voters with the information needed to make an informed decision. It lowers the barrier of civic engagement by summarizing politcal platforms so that it is easy for even the first-time voter to compare the positions of each party.
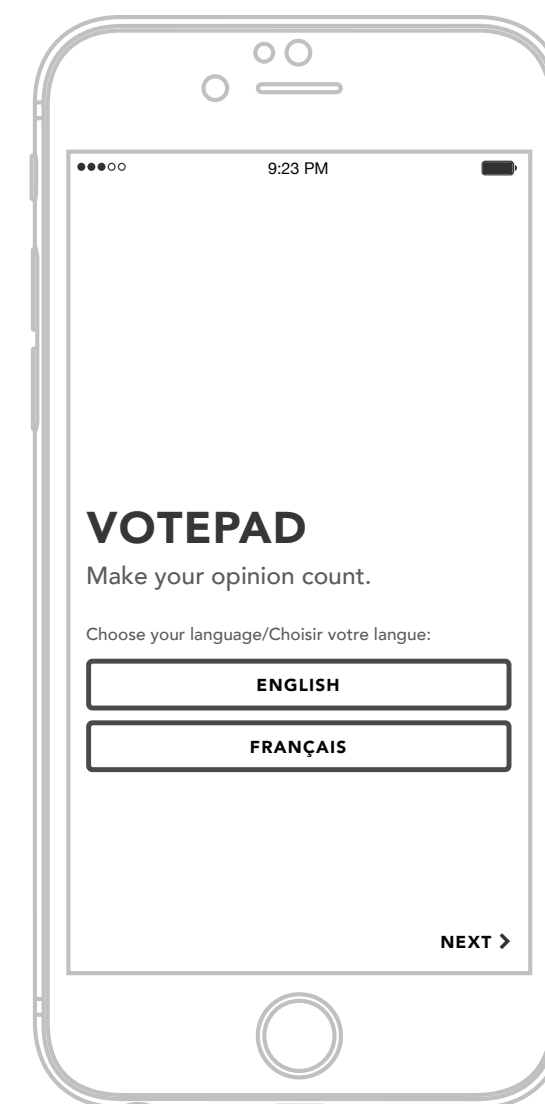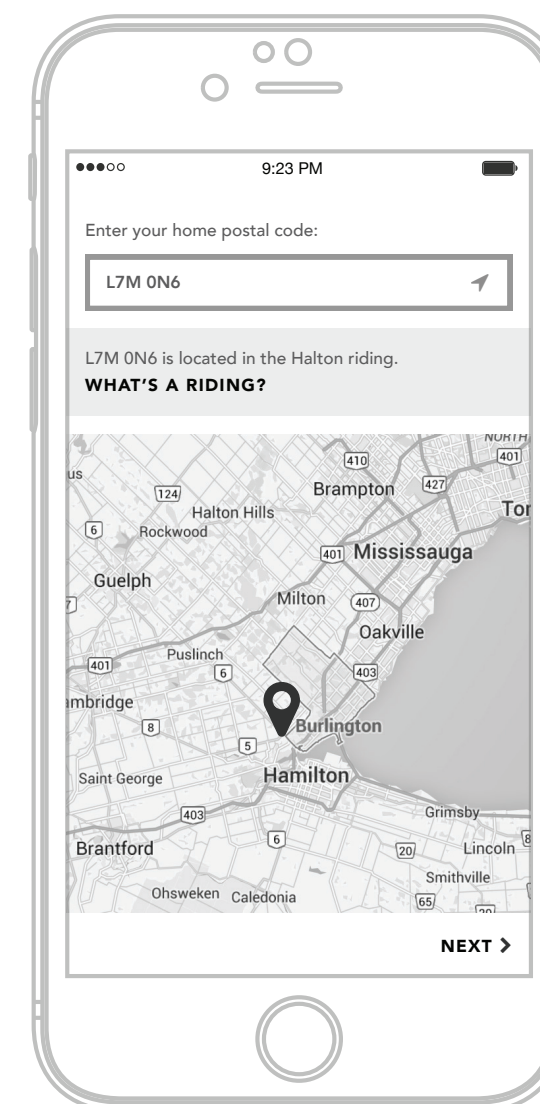

MEET ALEX.

Alex is a 21-year-old university student, just trying to figure out her place in this world.

One day, Alex hears about "The Election". "Not another one!", she exclaims. The last time she voted, she was 18 and enthused about voting, but now that a few years have passed, "elections are old news ".
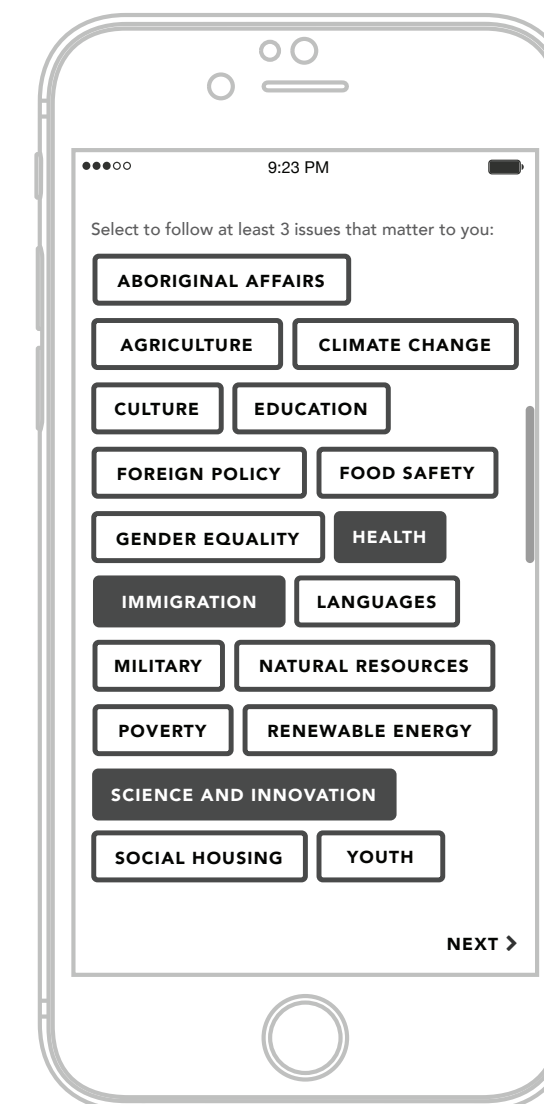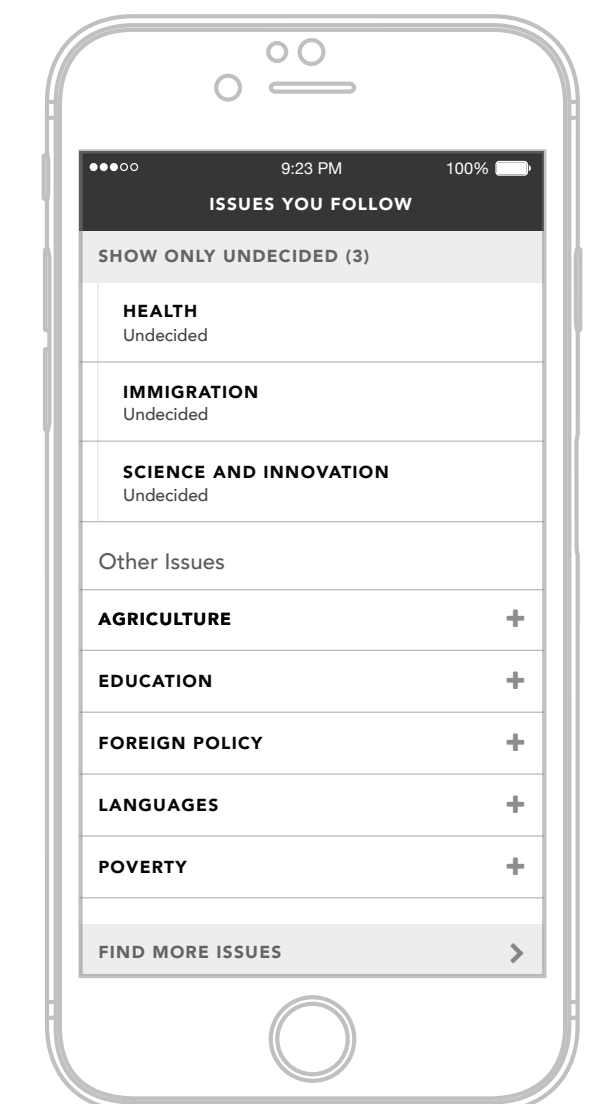
ONBOARDING

Alex hears about Votepad from a politcally-savvy friend of hers and downloads it. She opens it for the first time and is surprised by how comfortable the design is; not archaic like the government websites she is used to. She quickly selects 'English'.

Alex is asked for her postal code, but notices that it's already filled in from her phone's location settings. The map shows her home neighbourhood, and informs her of her riding, which she's voting in.
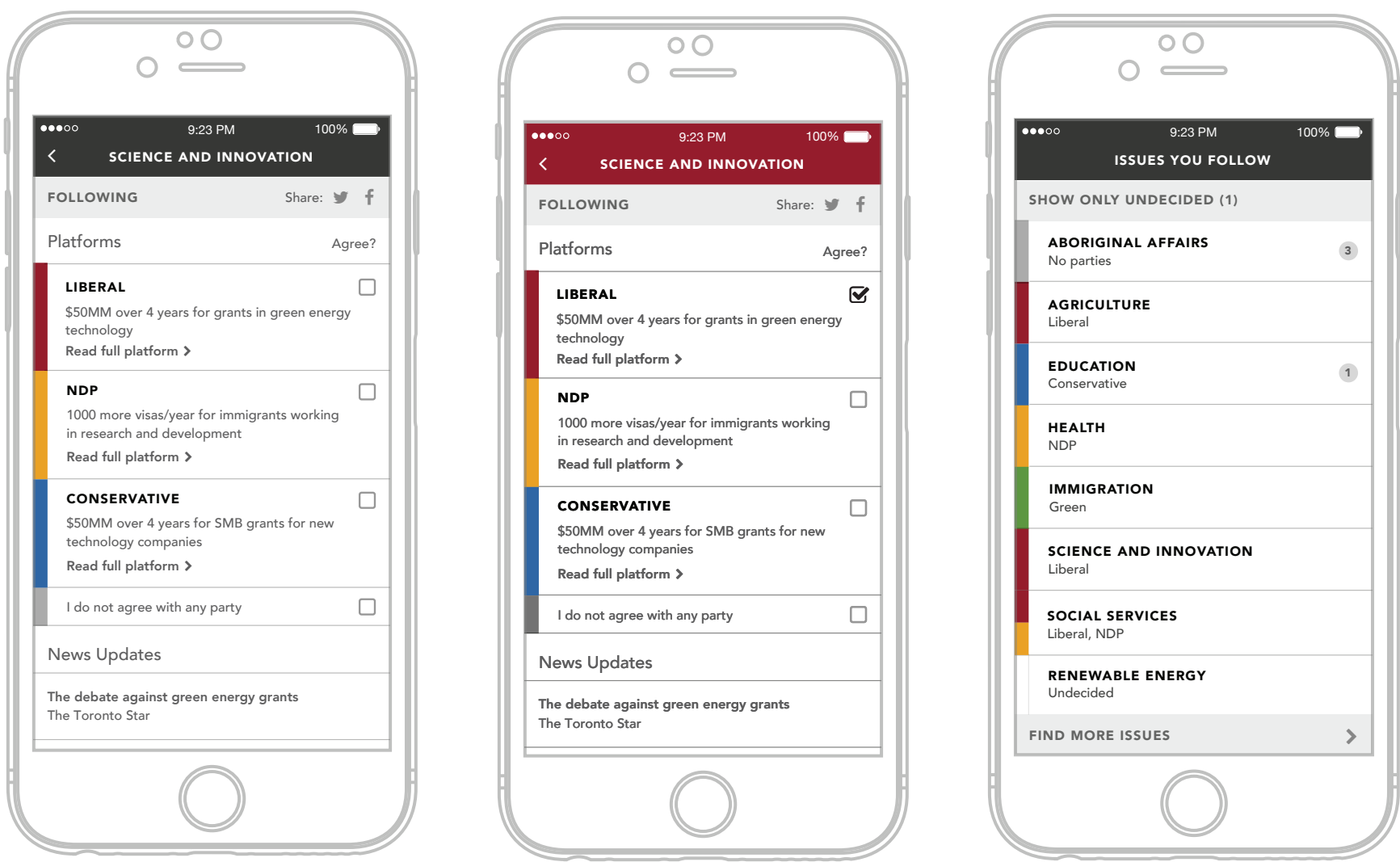
As an engineering student, she's quickly notices the "Science and Innovation" pill. She also notices a few other issues she'd like to learn more about (but otherwise would not have thought of if she didn't see them in this list).

She's now looking at all the issues that she just selected. Alex selects 'Science and Innovation', to get more info on this issue. From here, she's also prompted to follow other issues that may interest her.
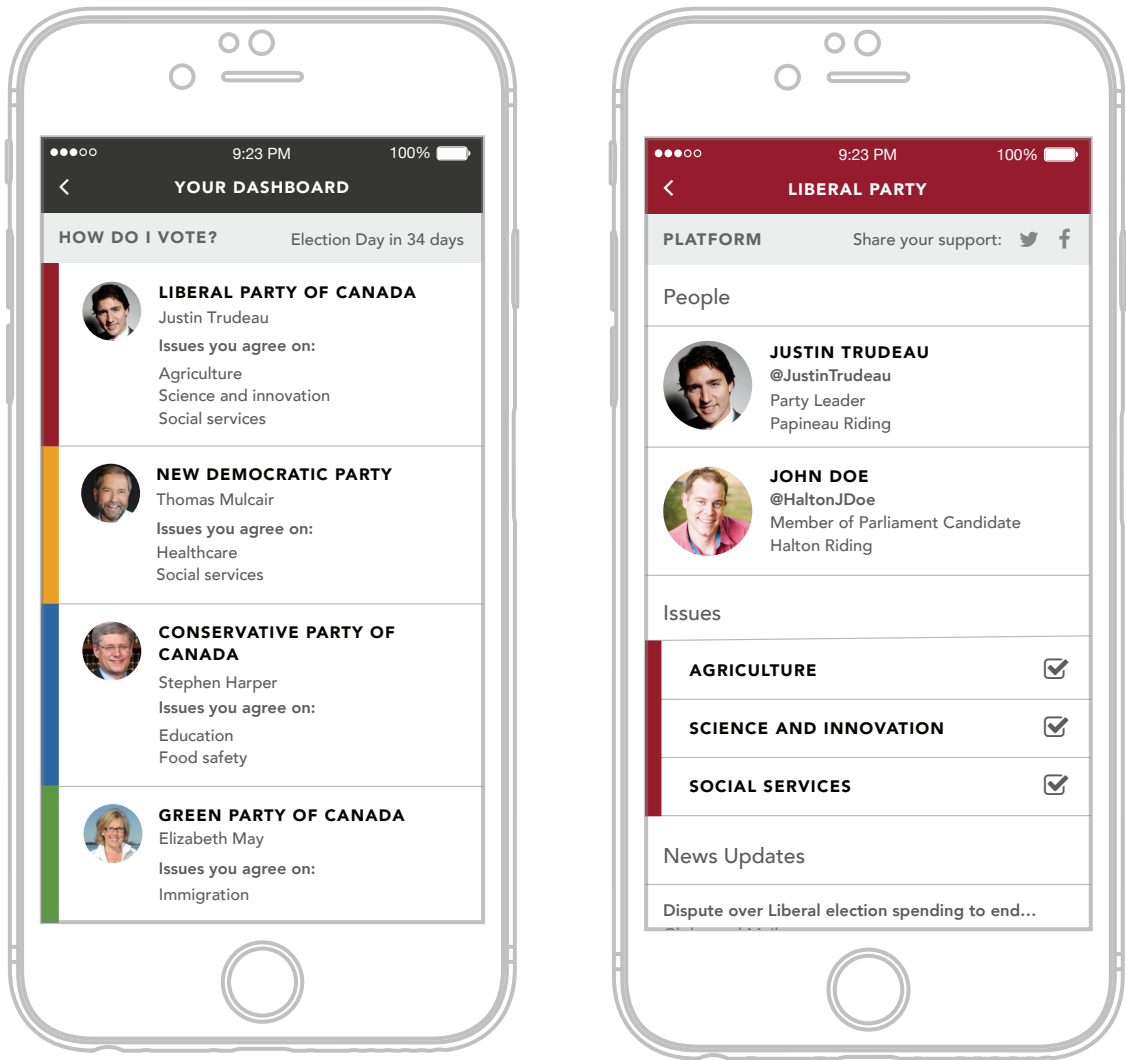
EXPLORING AN ISSUE

Alex goes to her Dashboard through her side menu. Here, each party is listed with the issues that she has agreed on, so she knows where she stands. She notices the countdown to Election Day, and also a link to "How to Vote". She taps on the Liberals' row to find out more about that party.
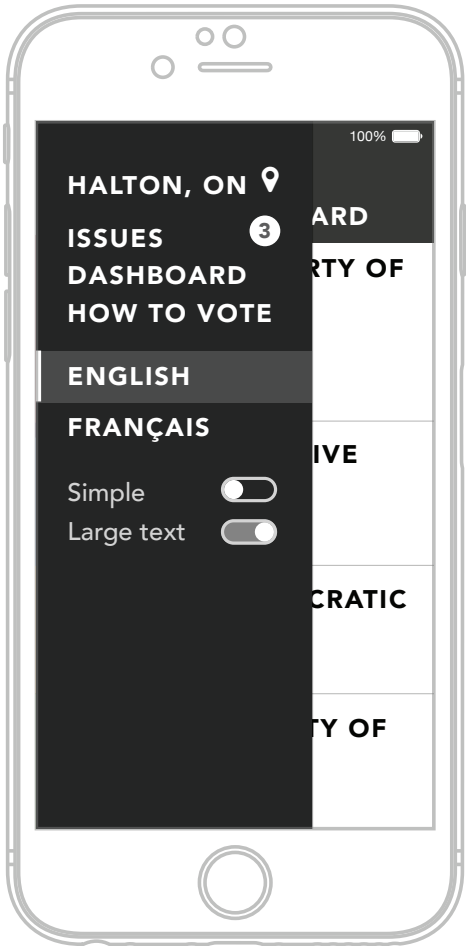

Here, Alex finds information about the party's leader, her riding's candidate, their contact information, the Liberal Party's platform, and links to news updates. She notices that she's agreed with the Liberals on issues that matter to her. She taps the Twitter icon and sends a tweet out to her followers: "This Election Day, I'm voting Liberal! #cdnpoli"

To her delight, each party's Science and Innovation platform is summarized here. It's in point form and laid out so she can easily compare the parties. She quickly decides she's interested in the Liberal party's stance, so she checks "Agree". If she had also agreed with the NDP, she could have also checked "Agree" to their platform. Alex does this for all the issues she's interested in, and develops an informed opinion on a number of issues.

Alex's page fills up with the names and colours of the parties she agrees with. When there is a news update about the issue, a notification appears so her opinion can stay up-to-date.

MEET PATTY

Patty's been working abroad for the past 3 years as a journalist.

She's recently been diagnosed with a condition that causes her eyesight to degenerate and finds small text frustrating to read. She needs a solution that will catch her up on the Canadian political news she's missed, while being considerate of her accessibility preferences.

Patty, who uses the screen reader on her iPhone, quickly notices the coherence and thoroughness of the translation. Since almost all the content is in text form, the screen reader is able to accurately inform Patty of all the information as well as the available actions to take.

From the side menu, Patty selects the "Large Font" option. The default font size changes from 14px to 24px, making it less strenuous to read. The readability is aided by the high contrast between the dark, crisp font and white background.
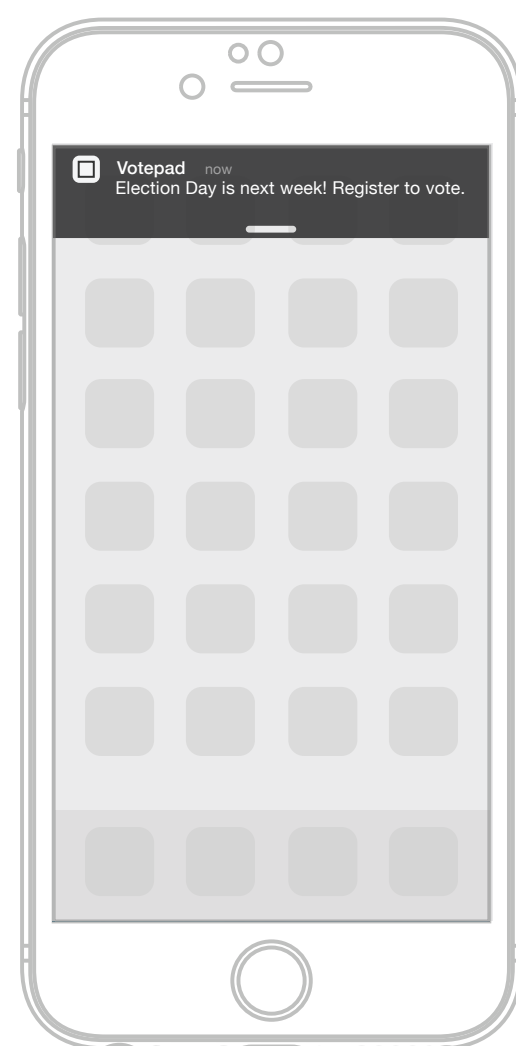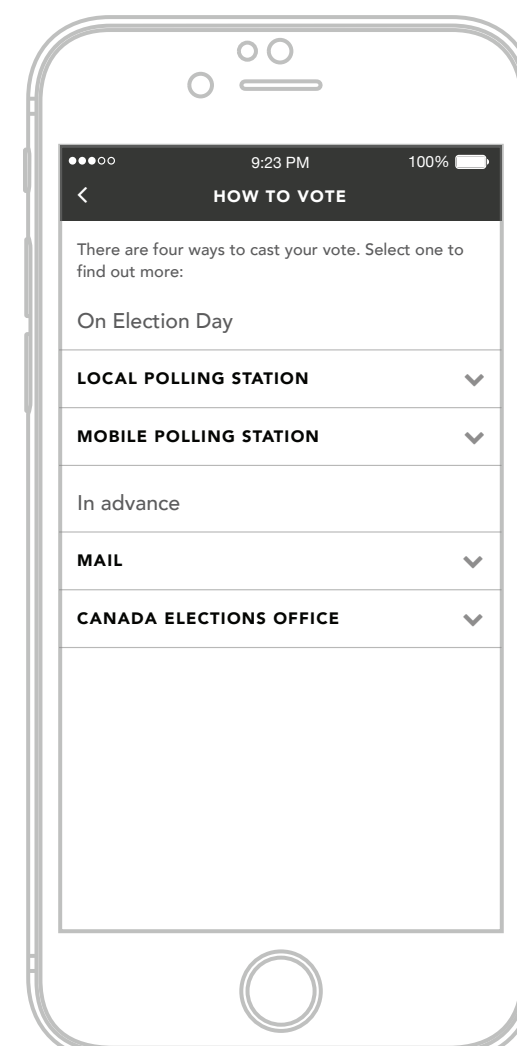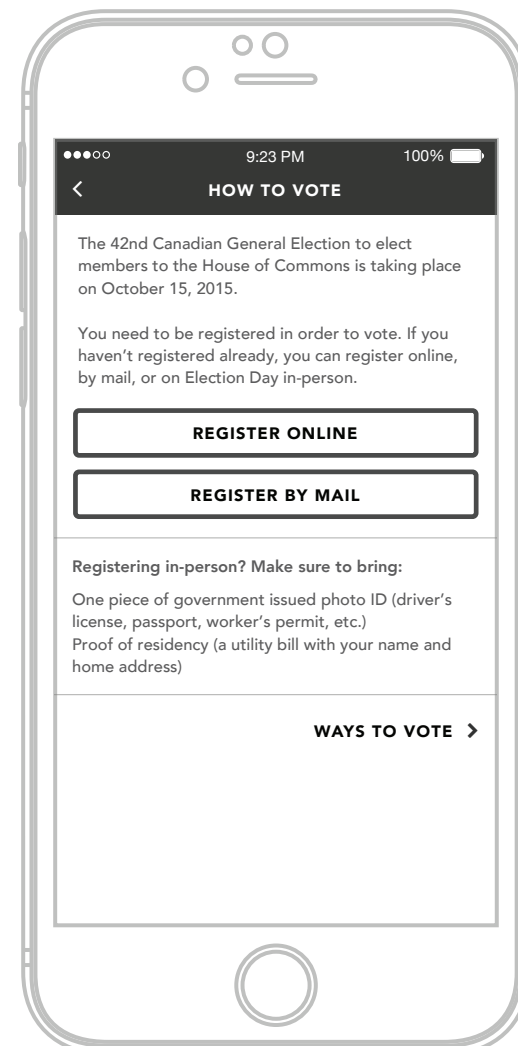
MEET WEI

Wei is excited to be voting in his first Canadian election, ever! Ever since studying for his citizenship exam, he's found the politcal process in Canada to be empowering.

This is his first time, so he's not sure how to register or where he has to go to vote. He downloaded Votepad, after seeing a commercial for it during the evening news.
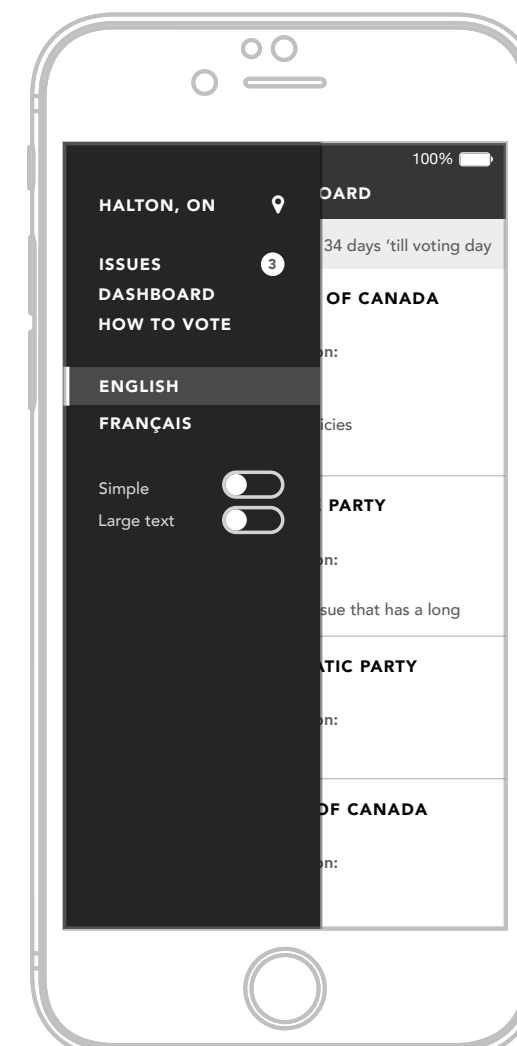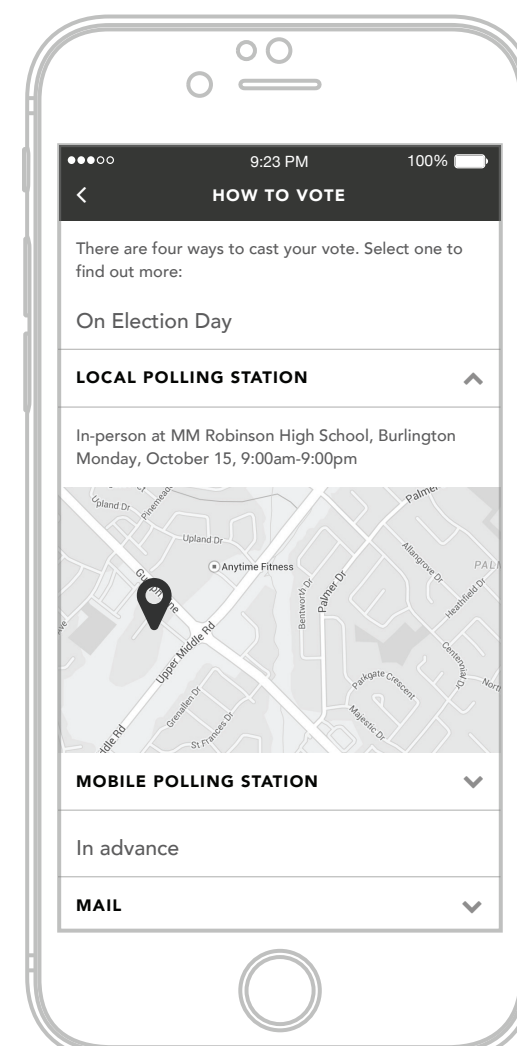
HOW TO VOTE

It's also Wei's wife's first time voting, in the coming election! English is her second language. She toggles the "Simple" option in the side menu to display all the content in simple vocabulary so it's easier for her to understand.

Toggled off, it maintains stronger speakers the option of displaying content in vocabulary they're comfortable with, too.

A week before the election, Wei gets a notification on his phone. He taps the notifcation and it navigates him to the "How to Vote" section of Votepad. He discovers the three ways he can register, and decides that registering in person is the most convenient choice for him.
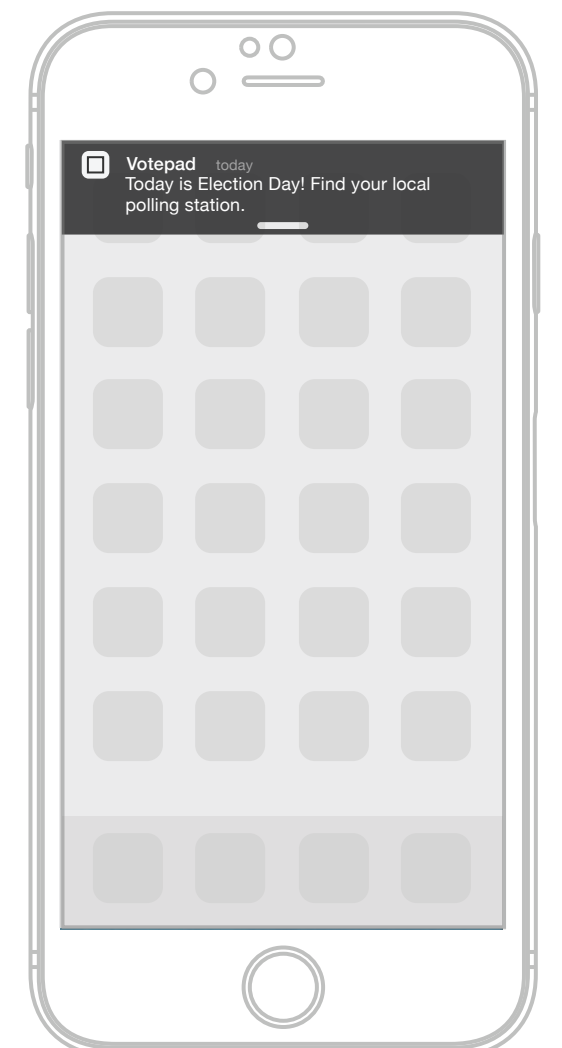
Here, Wei is presented with the four options he has to cast a ballot. He knows he's been given some time off of work to vote on election day, so he wants to know where his polling station is. He taps "Local Polling Station" to reveal where the station is, and the hours it will be open for on election day. He's all set to go!

On Election Day, Wei gets another notification, reminding him to vote. Today, Wei exercises his vote for the first time, ever!