



KIDS VOTING USA

6-8 CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

OVERVIEW

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

INDEX TO ACTIVITIES BY SKILL AND DISCIPLINE

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

ELECTIONS AND VOTING

DEMOCRACY AND THE PEOPLE

THE RIGHT TO VOTE

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

LOCAL INFORMATION



KIDS VOTING USA K-8 EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



Copyright © 2005 Kids Voting USA, Inc. All rights reserved.

The materials contained herein are protected by copyright laws, and may not be reproduced, republished, distributed, transmitted or otherwise exploited in any manner without the express prior written permission of Kids Voting USA.

The Kids Voting USA name and logo and all related trademarks, trade names, and other intellectual property are the property of Kids Voting USA and cannot be used without its express prior written permission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AN OVERVIEW	2
SCOPE AND SEQUENCE	6
INDEX TO ACTIVITIES BY SKILL	8
INDEX TO ACTIVITIES BY DISCIPLINE	11
INDEX TO ACTIVITIES BY ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES	13
THE TEACHER AND THE TOWN	14

AN OVERVIEW

WHAT IS KIDS VOTING USA?

Kids Voting USA (KVUSA) is a national nonprofit organization working to secure the future of democracy by preparing young people to be educated, engaged voters.

KVUSA operates through a national network of community-based affiliates that partner with schools and election officials. The program offers students in kindergarten through high school a wide range of opportunities for civic learning.

It is the combination of classroom instruction, family dialogue, and an authentic voting experience throughout a young person's formative years that makes Kids Voting USA a powerful strategy for achieving long-term change in voting behavior.

DESCRIPTION OF KIDS VOTING USA CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Kids Voting USA offers two resources for the classroom, one for primary school educators, *Kids Voting USA Classroom Activities: K-8*, and one for secondary school educators, *Kids Voting USA Classroom Activities: 9-12*. The information in this guide pertains to the *Kids Voting USA Classroom Activities: K-8* resource.

Kids Voting USA Classroom Activities: K-8 is designed to facilitate primary school teachers in addressing civic learning objectives, especially those that relate to voting and elections. The resource is comprised of engaging activities that foster group discussion and the use of critical thinking skills.

The goals of Kids Voting USA classroom activities are for students to:

- ✓ Cultivate information-gathering and decision-making skills
- ✓ Develop higher-order thinking skills
- ✓ Develop empathy towards others
- ✓ Gain a knowledge and appreciation of suffrage, democracy, citizenship, and elections
- ✓ Understand and participate in the direct voting process

The activities are designed to emphasize self-discovery in a cooperative setting. This is effective because:

- ✓ Students master and retain knowledge and concepts better and develop problem-solving skills, creativity, verbal skills, and empathy — all of which are important for voters
- ✓ Group problem-solving provides a model of democracy

In sum, Kids Voting USA's resource for primary school educators, *Kids Voting USA Classroom Activities: K-8*, is designed to train students to live as thoughtful, active citizens in a democracy.

HOW ARE THE ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED?

Within *Kids Voting USA Classroom Activities: K-8*, activities are organized by three grade-level divisions:

- ✓ Lower Elementary, Grades K-2
- ✓ Upper Elementary, Grades 3-5
- ✓ Middle School, Grades 6-8

Within each of these grade level divisions, activities are arranged by four themes:

- ✓ Elections and Voting
- ✓ Democracy and the People
- ✓ The Right to Vote (for 3-5 and 6-8)
- ✓ Active Citizenship

To learn more about each theme, please refer to the “Scope and Sequence” section of this guide.

Each theme within each grade level division has its own organization and consists of the following sections:

1. **Introduction to Theme:** a short description of the theme that includes the theme’s main learning objectives
2. **General Activities:** a collection of activities, organized by main concepts, that address specific civic learning objectives within the theme
3. **Overarching Questions:** lists of questions, organized by main concepts, that you can use to prepare for or to revisit an objective students have mastered
4. **Literature Connection Activity:** an activity that aligns a piece of literature with a civic learning objective
5. **Culminating Activity:** an activity that is a meaningful summarization of the theme’s main learning objectives

Activities are marked by grade level, theme, and name. The time needed to complete an activity is specified under the name of the activity. Activities generally have the same format across grade-level sections and themes:

1. **Objective:** a short and specific learning goal
2. **Materials:** a list of resources necessary for the activity
3. **Get Ready:** instructions for you to prepare the activity
4. **Instructions:** instructions for you to carry out the activity
5. **Discussion Questions:** questions you can use to evaluate students’ attainment of the objective
6. **More!:** item(s) the class may undertake to further explore the objective
7. **Vote Quote:** an inspiring quote that relates to the activity

A final feature of *Kids Voting USA Classroom Activities: K-8* is the Additional Resources section. This section is comprised of the Appendix, Glossary, and Bibliography.

HOW DO I USE THE ACTIVITIES?

Kids Voting USA Classroom Activities: K-8 allows for great flexibility of use as multiple teachers can use the same theme in a variety of ways. Some teachers may use only a few activities at a specific time of the year, such as before an election. Others may thoroughly investigate a theme with their class over a longer period of time; these teachers may incorporate many activities, including literature connection and culminating activities, into their short- and long-term plans.

This resource takes into account that every class and year is different, though there are multiple things you may want to consider in any given year:

- ✓ The Elections and Voting theme is integral to the Kids Voting USA program. Make sure that you and your students investigate this theme prior to any elections.
- ✓ Consider investigating the Democracy and the People theme in preparation for teaching about elections and voting. This will provide an invaluable context.
- ✓ Investigate The Right to Vote theme with your class to enhance your students' appreciation of voting, elections, and democracy. Consider using this theme during February, African-American History Month, or March, Women's History Month.
- ✓ Take advantage of the Active Citizenship theme at any point in the school year to underscore to your students that being a proactive citizen is not limited to voting.

It will be helpful for you to treat the themes as menus, not recipes: You should pick and choose what works for your classroom as opposed to following a prescribed formula. Take a look at each theme, consider where the activities fit into your plans, and make modifications where you deem them necessary. (Take advantage of the indexes and other tools included in this guide to help individualize the Kids Voting experience for your class.)

If you are concerned about finding time for these activities, just remember that Kids Voting USA activities are not an add-on to an already very busy day. The learning involved is required learning as outlined in the *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* and your *State Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*. (To see how our activities align to the national standards, go to the "In the Classroom" section of our Web site, www.kidsvotingusa.org, and click on Educator's Guide. For state standard correlation, check with your local Kids Voting USA affiliate.)

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON THE ACTIVITIES

It is important to note that while *Kids Voting USA Classroom Activities: K-8* is designed to address civic learning objectives, many of the activities reinforce the work teachers are doing with their students in regard to language arts and math.

Moreover, Kids Voting USA activities often make connections to service. Kids Voting USA places high value on activities that bridge the classroom to the community. (To find activities that incorporate language arts, math, and/or service-learning, refer to the indexes in this guide.)

Some final things to be aware of are supplemental activities that can be found on the Kids Voting USA Web site. (To access them, go to the “In the Classroom” section of www.kidsvotingusa.org, and select Supplemental Activities.) They include:

1. Family activities
2. Spanish-language activities

HOW DO I ACCESS THE ACTIVITIES?

Your local Kids Voting USA affiliate will make the classroom activities available to you in one of a few ways. You may receive a CD version of *Kids Voting USA Classroom Activities: K-8*. You may alternatively receive some or all of the themes as a hard copy. A final way to access the activities, which is especially important in the case that you do not have a CD version or a complete hard copy, is to access the activities through the Kids Voting USA Web site. Just log onto the Kids Voting USA Web site at www.kidsvotingusa.org and click “In The Classroom.”

WHAT IF I NEED HELP?

Each school should have a coordinator who works directly with the Kids Voting USA affiliate staff in your area. If a coordinator is not available, call your local Kids Voting USA affiliate. The number is listed on the Kids Voting Web page at www.kidsvotingusa.org or in your telephone directory.

WHAT IF KIDS VOTING USA NEEDS MY HELP?

We do! Please send us your ideas, your photographs, your stories of success, your challenges and concerns, and your comments. We use your ideas as we continue to revise the activities. Our address is:

Kids Voting USA
Superstition Office Plaza
3933 S. McClintock Dr., Suite 505
Tempe, AZ 85282

Use the following sections of this guide to familiarize yourself with the four themes and to locate activities by skill, discipline, and additional categories.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

THEME: ELECTIONS AND VOTING

Description: The intent of this theme is to educate students about elections, from gaining an appreciation of the power of voting to studying the candidates and issues to understanding the registration process and participating in an election. The theme's activities fall under four concepts:

CONCEPT	K-2	3-5	6-8
My Vote Gives Me Power	Students implement their vote and discover its power	Students experience and articulate the power of the vote	Students experience, examine, and articulate the power of the vote
I Study the Candidates and Issues	Students discover the benefits of seeking information before making (voting) decisions	Students gather and analyze political information	Students gather and analyze political information to make informed voting decisions
I Register and Vote	Students register and vote at the polls	Students identify their precincts, register, and vote at the polls	Students identify their precincts, register, advocate the vote, and vote at the polls
I Continue to Make a Difference	Students articulate civic ideals	Students articulate and promote civic ideals	Students become involved in ongoing political processes

THEME: DEMOCRACY AND THE PEOPLE

Description: The intent of this theme is to provide an understanding of and a context for American democracy and citizenship, from the rights and responsibilities of students in their local, state, and national communities to the world beyond. The theme's activities fall under four concepts:

CONCEPT	K-2	3-5	6-8
What is Democracy?	Students learn how democracy is powered	Students learn the characteristics of a democratic society	Students learn the characteristics of a democratic society and how it impacts their lives
Democracy in America	Students learn the nature of American democracy	Students examine American ideals and learn about the democratic experience	Students learn about the democratic experience and the impact of American democracy
A Citizen's Rights and Responsibilities	Students investigate responsibility and relate it to citizenship	Students identify rights guaranteed to American citizens	Students identify and examine rights common to all Americans
Democracy in the World	Students explore aspects of another democracy	Students compare American democracy to that of another country	Students compare and contrast American democracy to other democracies around the world

THEME: THE RIGHT TO VOTE

Description: The intent of this theme is for students to understand what suffrage is and how and when it was granted to different populations over the course of American history. The theme's activities fall under three concepts:

CONCEPT	K-2	3-5	6-8
What is Suffrage?	NA	Students understand the concept of suffrage, the right to vote	Students consider the concept and practice of suffrage, the right to vote
Expanding the Right to Vote	NA	NA	Students learn about the expansion of voting rights
Suffrage Today	NA	Students analyze the state of voting rights in America today	Students analyze and evaluate the condition of the right to vote in present-day America

THEME: ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Description: The intent of this theme is for students to learn how to evaluate information and to intelligently form, communicate, and act on the decisions they make. The theme's activities fall under four concepts:

CONCEPT	K-2	3-5	6-8
Gathering and Weighing Information	Students learn how to gather information and make good decisions	Students learn to analyze the credibility of information and make informed decisions	Students learn how to become critical consumers and informed decision-makers
Communicating Your Position	Students advocate their points of view	Students advocate and debate causes and issues	Students learn to effectively communicate to classmates and the greater community
Working Together	Students learn to cooperate and work together	Students learn to cooperate and work together towards a cause	Students learn to work together to plan and execute various projects
Having an Impact	Students learn what it is to make a difference in their community	Students learn how to create positive change in their community	Students learn how to identify and assess community problems and work toward solutions

INDEX TO ACTIVITIES BY SKILL

TO LOCATE THE LISTED ACTIVITIES BY THEME, USE THE FOLLOWING ABBREVIATIONS:

- ✓ EV = Elections and Voting
- ✓ DP = Democracy and the People
- ✓ RV = The Right to Vote
- ✓ AC = Active Citizenship

K-2

SKILL	ACTIVITIES
Decision Making	Voting Chain (EV); Yes Or No Game (EV); Car-Car (DP); Which Hand? (EV); Three Changes (EV); Marking A Ballot (EV); I Heard, I Think, I Know (AC); The Odd Vote (EV); If I Were...(DP); Literature Connection Activity: Miss Rumphius (AC); Culminating Activity: What's The Problem? (AC); Culminating Activity: I Go To The Polls (EV); Culminating Activity: Democracy And Me (DP)
Media Savvy	Which Hand? (EV); Marking A Ballot (EV); Election Bulletin Board (EV); It's News To Me (AC)
Gathering Information	Which Hand? (EV); Marking A Ballot (EV); I Heard, I Think, I Know (AC); Targeting Problems In My Community (AC); Friends Afar (DP); Democracy In The Print (DP); Three Changes (EV); Election Bulletin Board (EV); Culminating Activity: What's The Problem? (AC); It's News To Me (AC)
Self-Discipline	Three Changes (EV); Pencil Flags (EV); The Wish Tree (EV); Pinwheels (DP); The Odd Vote (EV); Culminating Activity: Democracy And Me (DP)
Civic-Mindedness	Voting Chain (EV); Car-Car (DP); Kids Voting Registration (EV); Marking A Ballot (EV); Marking The Winners (EV); The Wish Tree (EV); Postcards (AC); The President's Hats (DP); If I Were...(DP); "I Can Vote" Song (DP); Democracy In The Print (DP); Literature Connection Activity: Miss Rumphius (AC); Culminating Activity: I Go To The Polls (EV); Literature Connection Activity: D Is For Democracy (DP); Culminating Activity: Democracy And Me (DP)
Cooperation	Voting Chain (EV); Car-Car (DP); Kids Voting Registration (EV); Zoo Animal Cages (AC); Two On A Crayon (AC); Match Community Helpers (AC); The President's Hats (DP); "I Can Vote" Song (DP); Culminating Activity: What's The Problem? (AC); Literature Connection Activity: Duck For President (EV); Literature Connection Activity: D Is For Democracy (DP); Culminating Activity: Democracy And Me (DP); It's News To Me (AC)
Knowledge of Institutions	Voting Simulation (EV); Marking A Ballot (EV); Pencil Flags (EV); Marking The Winners (EV); Pinwheels (DP); The President's Hats (DP); If I Were...(DP); Friends Afar (DP); Democracy In The Print (DP); The Odd Vote (EV); Culminating Activity: I Go To The Polls (EV); Literature Connection Activity: D Is For Democracy (DP)
Knowledge of Social Issues	Marking The Winners (EV); If Elected (AC); What's For Kids? (DP); Democracy In The Print (DP); Targeting Problems In My Community (AC); Culminating Activity: What's The Problem? (AC)
Communication Skills	Car-Car (DP); Three Changes (EV); Pencil Flags (EV); The Wish Tree (EV); Kids Voting Registration (EV); Marking A Ballot (EV); Marking The Winners (EV); Robots (AC); Friends Afar (DP); Spokespeople For Kids Voting USA (AC); Literature Connection Activity: Duck For President (EV); Zoo Animal Cages (AC)

3-5

SKILL	ACTIVITIES
Decision Making	Voting Simulation (EV); Polling Place Mural (EV); Voter Apathy Experience (EV); Nonvoter Simulation (RV); Wish Tree (EV); Where Did You Hear That? (EV); Two Ballots (EV); Judging Propaganda (AC); Things To Do On My First Day In Office (AC); Dollars And Sense (AC); Voting Graphs (EV); Know The Vote (RV); Culminating Activity: Learn And Serve (AC); Culminating Activity: I Go To The Polls (EV); Literature Connection Activity: Ideas Of The Modern World: Democracy (DP); Culminating Activity: Go Ask City Hall! (DP); Our Town: A Role Play (DP); Around The World (RV)
Media Savvy	Where Did You Hear That? (EV); Meet The Candidates (EV); Watching The Returns (EV); Promises To Keep (EV); Using The World Wide Web (AC); Student Reporters (AC)
Gathering Information	Where Did You Hear That? (EV); Two Ballots (EV); Using The World Wide Web (AC); Judging Propaganda (AC); In Their Words (DP); Meet The Candidates (EV); Watching The Returns (EV); Promises To Keep (EV); Culminating Activity: Learn And Serve (AC); Literature Connection Activity: The Vote: Making Your Voice Heard (EV); Culminating Activity: Go Ask City Hall! (DP); Student Reporters (AC)
Self-Discipline	Voter Apathy Experience (EV); Polling Place Mural (EV); The Wish Tree (EV); Know The Vote (RV); Freedom Connection (DP)
Civic-Mindedness	Voter Apathy Experience (EV); Voting Simulation (EV); Nonvoter Simulation (RV); The Wish Tree (EV); Where Did You Hear That? (EV); Meet The Candidates (EV); The President's Hats (DP); Democracy: What Is It And What Does It Have To Do With Me? (DP); Our Homes, Our Town, Our Country (DP); My Life (DP); Freedom Connection (DP); Pledge Anew (DP); The Name Game (EV); Polling Place Mural (EV); Promises To Keep (EV); Suffrage Timeline (RV); Around The World (RV); Culminating Activity: I Go To The Polls (EV); Culminating Activity: Get Out The Vote! (RV); Our Town: A Role Play (DP)
Cooperation	The President's Hats (DP); Ice Cream In A Bag (AC); Building A Story (AC); Eleusis (AC); Polling Place Mural (EV); Culminating Activity: Learn And Serve (AC); Literature Connection Activity: The Vote: Making Your Voice Heard (EV); Culminating Activity: Get Out The Vote! (RV); Suffrage Timeline (RV); Around The World (RV)
Knowledge of Institutions	Polling Place Mural (EV); Meet The Candidates (EV); Where Did You Hear That? (EV); Voter Apathy Experience (EV); Nonvoter Simulation (RV); Voting Simulation (EV); The President's Hats (DP); Democracy: What Is It And What Does It Have To Do With Me? (DP); Our Homes, Our Town, Our Country (DP); My Life (DP); Freedom Connection (DP); Culminating Activity: Go Ask City Hall! (DP); Our Town: A Role Play (DP); Suffrage Timeline (RV); Vote Quotes (RV); Around The World (RV)
Knowledge of Social Issues	Nonvoter Simulation (RV); Bumper Stickers (AC); Things To Do On My First Day In Office (AC); Dollars And Sense (AC); In Their Words (DP); Pledge Anew (DP); Meet The Candidates (EV); Promises To Keep (EV); Suffrage Timeline (RV); Across The World (RV); Culminating Activity: Learn And Serve (AC); Culminating Activity: I Go To The Polls (EV); Literature Connection Activity: The Day Gogo Went To Vote (RV); Our Town: A Role Play (DP)
Communication Skills	Polling Place Mural (EV); Where Did You Hear That? (EV); The Wish Tree (EV); Bumper Stickers (AC); Spokespeople For Kids Voting USA (AC); Debates For Classroom Decisions (AC); E-mail, Snail Mail (AC); In Their Words (DP); Literature Connection Activity: Ideas Of The Modern World: Democracy (DP); Culminating Activity: Go Ask City Hall! (DP); Culminating Activity: Get Out The Vote! (RV); Vote Quotes (RV)

6-8

SKILL	ACTIVITIES
Decision Making	Who Has The Power? (RV); Poll On Apathy (EV); Solutions (EV); Rate The Candidates (EV); Our National Symbol (EV); The Decision-Making Chart (AC); Judging Propaganda (AC); Complaints And Solutions (AC); Citizen's Jeopardy (DP); If Elected...(DP); Democracy: Who? What? Where? (DP); Apathy Cartoon Analysis (EV); Party Planks (EV); 1965 Alabama Literacy Test (RV); Culminating Activity: I Go To The Polls (EV)
Media Savvy	The Decision-Making Chart (AC); Solutions (EV); Rate The Candidates (EV); Watching The Returns (EV); Election Accountability (EV); Newspaper Scavenger Hunt (AC)
Gathering Information	"How're We Doin'" (AC); Targeting Problems In My Community (AC); Historical Debate-Women's Suffrage (RV); Design A Sign (AC); Complaints And Solutions (AC); Rate The Candidates (EV); Solutions (EV); Election Accountability (EV); Judging Propaganda (AC); Poll On Apathy (EV); Party Planks (EV); The Decision-Making Chart (AC); Evaluate A Web Site (AC); Student Interviews (AC); Political History Interview (DP); Democracy: Who? What? Where? (DP); Pen Pals (DP); A Declaration (DP); Voting Barriers (RV)
Self-Discipline	Poll On Apathy (EV); Rate The Candidates (EV); The Decision-Making Chart (AC); Election Accountability (EV); Newspaper Scavenger Hunt (AC); If Elected...(DP)
Civic-Mindedness	Poll On Apathy (EV); Voting Simulation (EV); Apathy Cartoon Analysis (EV); Polling Places (EV); Election Accountability (EV); Design A Sign (AC); A Body Of Information (DP); Rate The Candidates (EV); Registration Simulation (EV); Political History Interview (DP); Citizen's Jeopardy (DP); If Elected...(DP); The "Right" Way (DP); A Declaration (DP); Solutions (EV); A Message From Nelson Mandela (DP); Party Planks (EV); Our National Symbol (EV); Culminating Activity: I Go To The Polls (EV); Culminating Activity: Democracy, Taking a Stand (DP); A Declaration (DP); Part Of The Franchise (RV)
Cooperation	Who Has The Power? (RV); Suffrage Sequence Cards (RV); Design A Sign (AC); Our National Symbol (EV); The Decision-Making Chart (AC); Complaints And Solutions (AC); Student Interviews (AC); Citizen's Jeopardy (DP); Democracy: Who? What? Where? (DP); Apathy Cartoon Analysis (EV); Literature Connection Activity: Fight On! (AC); Culminating Activity: Toward A More Perfect Community (AC); Literature Connection Activity: Landslide! (EV); Newspaper Scavenger Hunt (AC); You Can Vote (AC); Voting Barriers (RV)
Knowledge of Institutions	Party Planks (EV); Rate The Candidates (EV); Registration Simulation (EV); Polling Places (EV); Voting Simulation (EV); Complaints And Solutions (AC); Types Of Government (DP); Pen Pals (DP); A Body Of Information (DP); If Elected...(DP); The "Right" Way (DP); A Message From Nelson Mandela (DP); Literature Connection Activity: Government: How Local, State, And Federal Government Works (DP); A Declaration (DP); Vote Quotes (RV); The Long Journey (RV); Part Of The Franchise (RV); 1965 Alabama Literacy Test (RV)
Knowledge of Social Issues	Who Has The Power? (RV); Poll On Apathy (EV); 1965 Alabama Literacy Test (RV); Suffrage Sequence Cards (RV); Decision-Making Chart (AC); Election Accountability (EV); Historical Debate-Women's Suffrage (RV); Design A Sign (AC); Rate The Candidates (EV); Targeting Problems In My Community (AC); Citizen's Jeopardy (DP); A Message From Nelson Mandela (DP); Solutions (EV); Culminating Activity: I Go To The Polls (EV); Literature Connection Activity: A Time For Courage: The Suffragette Diary Of Kathleen Bowen (RV); Culminating Activity: Use It Or Lose It! (RV); If Elected...(DP); The Long Journey (RV); Part Of The Franchise (RV); 1965 Alabama Literacy Test (RV); Voting Barriers (RV)
Communication Skills	Who Has the Power? (RV); Poll On Apathy (EV); Debate The Issue (AC); Our National Symbol (EV); Pen Pals (DP); It's Official (AC); Complaints And Solutions (AC); Student Interviews (AC); Design A Sign (AC); Targeting Problems In My Community (AC); Political History Interview (DP); Democracy: Who? What? Where? (DP); Apathy Cartoon Analysis (EV); Historical Debate-Women's Suffrage (RV); Literature Connection Activity: Fight On! (AC); Culminating Activity: Toward A More Perfect Community (AC); You Can Vote (AC); Vote Quotes (RV); Voting Barriers (RV)

INDEX TO ACTIVITIES BY DISCIPLINE

TO LOCATE THE LISTED ACTIVITIES BY THEME, USE THE FOLLOWING ABBREVIATIONS:

- ✓ EV = Elections and Voting
- ✓ DP = Democracy and the People
- ✓ RV = The Right to Vote
- ✓ AC = Active Citizenship

K-2

DISCIPLINE	ACTIVITIES
Reading	Pencil Flags (EV); I Heard, I Think, I Know...(AC); "I Can Vote" Song (DP); Democracy In The Print (DP); Spokespeople For Kids Voting USA (AC); If Elected...(AC); Literature Connection Activity: Miss Rumphius (AC); Literature Connection Activity: Duck For President (EV); Literature Connection Activity: D Is For Democracy (DP); Culminating Activity: Democracy And Me (DP); It's News To Me (AC)
Writing	Kids Voting Registration (EV); Postcards (AC); If I Were...(DP); Friends Afar (DP); Spokespeople For Kids Voting USA (AC); If Elected...(AC); Literature Connection Activity: Miss Rumphius (AC); Literature Connection Activity: Duck For President (EV); Culminating Activity: What's The Problem? (AC)
Math	Voting Chain (EV); Yes Or No Game (EV)

3-5

DISCIPLINE	ACTIVITIES
Reading	Where Did You Hear That? (EV); Democracy: Who? What? Where? (DP); Literature Connection Activity: The Day Gogo Went To Vote (RV); Literature Connection Activity: The Kids' Guide To Social Action (AC); Literature Connection Activity: The Vote: Making Your Voice Heard (EV); Literature Connection Activity: Ideas Of The Modern World: Democracy (DP); Student Reporters (AC); Suffrage Timeline (RV); Vote Quotes (RV)
Writing	Culminating Activity: I Go To The Polls (EV); Judging Propaganda (AC); Spokespeople For Kids Voting USA (AC); Things To Do On My First Day In Office (AC); Democracy: What Is It And What Does It Have To Do With Me? (DP); In Their Words (DP); My Life (DP); Pledge Anew (DP); Pen Pals (DP); Culminating Activity: Go Ask City Hall! (DP); Democracy: Who? What? Where? (DP); Literature Connection Activity: The Kids' Guide To Social Action (AC); Culminating Activity: Learn And Serve (AC); Student Reporters (AC); Building A Story (AC); Freedom Connection (DP); Vote Quotes (RV)
Math	Voting Graphs (EV); Two Ballots (EV); Ice Cream In A Bag (AC); Eleusis (AC); Dollars And Sense (AC); Culminating Activity: Go Ask City Hall! (DP); Culminating Activity: Get Out The Vote! (RV)

6-8

DISCIPLINE	ACTIVITIES
Reading	Solutions (EV); Literature Connection Activity: Landslide! (EV); The Decision-Making Chart (AC); Literature Connection Activity: Fight On! (AC); Literature Connection Activity: Government: How Local, State, And Federal Government Works (DP); Culminating Activity: Democracy, Taking A Stand (DP); Historical Debate-Women’s Suffrage (RV); Complaints And Solutions (AC); Student Interviews (AC); Democracy: Who? What? Where? (DP); A Message From Nelson Mandela (DP); Literature Connection Activity: A Time For Courage: The Suffragette Diary Of Kathleen Bowen (RV); Culminating Activity: Use It Or Lose It! (RV); Newspaper Scavenger Hunt (AC); A Declaration (DP); The Long Journey (RV)
Writing	Culminating Activity: I Go To The Polls (EV); Judging Propaganda (AC); It’s Official (AC); Pen Pals (DP); Political History Interview (DP); If Elected...(DP); Complaints And Solutions (AC); Student Interviews (AC); Democracy: Who? What? Where? (DP); A Message From Nelson Mandela (DP); Literature Selection: A Time For Courage: The Suffragette Diary Of Kathleen Bowen (RV); Literature Connection Activity: Fight On! (AC); Culminating Activity: Toward A More Perfect Community (AC); Literature Connection Activity: Government: How Local, State, And Federal Government Works (DP); Culminating Activity: Democracy, Taking A Stand (DP); Election Accountability (EV); Types Of Government (DP); A Declaration (DP); Vote Quotes (RV); The Long Journey (RV); Part Of The Franchise (RV)
Math	Poll On Apathy (EV); Design A Sign (AC); “How’re We Doin’?” (AC)

INDEX TO ACTIVITIES BY ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES

TO LOCATE THE LISTED ACTIVITIES BY THEME, USE THE FOLLOWING ABBREVIATIONS:

- ✓ EV = Elections and Voting
- ✓ DP = Democracy and the People
- ✓ RV = The Right to Vote
- ✓ AC = Active Citizenship

K-2

CATEGORY	ACTIVITIES
Service-learning	Spokespeople For Kids Voting USA (AC); Culminating Activity: What's The Problem? (AC); The Wish Tree (EV); Targeting Problems In My Community (AC); Literature Connection Activity: Miss Rumphius (AC); Culminating Activity: Democracy And Me (DP)
Local Elections	If Elected...(AC); Postcards (AC); If I Were...(DP); Election Bulletin Board (EV); Marking A Ballot (EV); Culminating Activity: I Go To The Polls (EV); Match Community Helpers (AC); What's For Kids? (DP)

3-5

CATEGORY	ACTIVITIES
Service-learning	Spokespeople For Kids Voting USA (AC); Culminating Activity: Learn And Serve (AC); Democracy: What Is It And What Does It Have To Do With Me? (DP); Culminating Activity: Go Ask City Hall (DP); Culminating Activity: Get Out The Vote! (RV); The Wish Tree (EV); Literature Connection Activity: The Kids' Guide To Social Action (AC)
Local Elections	Things To Do On My First Day In Office (AC); Meet The Candidates (EV); Where Did You Hear That? (EV); Promises To Keep (EV); Culminating Activity: I Go To The Polls (EV); Our Homes, Our Town, Our Country (DP); E-Mail, Snail Mail (AC); Dollars And Sense (AC); Our Town: A Role Play (DP); Culminating Activity: Get Out The Vote! (RV)

6-8

CATEGORY	ACTIVITIES
Service-learning	Targeting Problems In My Community (AC); Culminating Activity: Toward A More Perfect Community (AC); Literature Connection Activity: Fight On! (AC)
Local Elections	Complaints And Solutions (AC); Design A Sign (AC); Targeting Problems In My Community (AC); If Elected...(DP); Solutions (EV); Rate The Candidates (EV); Election Accountability (EV); Culminating Activity: I Go To The Polls (EV); "How're We Doin'?" (AC)

THE TEACHER AND THE TOWN

A unique and wonderful aspect of Kids Voting USA is that it ties the classroom, the home, and the town together. However, there are some important preplanning considerations to keep in mind while you forge these links as a classroom teacher:

1. PROTECT THE NONPARTISAN CHARACTER OF YOUR SCHOOLS AND THE KIDS VOTING USA PROGRAM.

Some sample scenarios: When you invite candidates to speak on your campus, invite all candidates for the office to participate. If a candidate cannot attend, ask that some representative of the campaign speak instead, or request a position statement to use with the students. Do not hand out campaign literature to students. Students may be assigned to gather information about candidates and issues; campaign literature may be a part of this assignment. Allow students to gather and disseminate all information, including literature. Your role should be as a guide or facilitator. Direct discussion and assure that all sides are represented equally.

2. BE SENSITIVE TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS WHO ARE UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO VOTE.

There may be family members of students who are unable or unwilling to participate in the vote due to religion, illegal status in this country, fear of elections due to experience in other countries, criminal records, etc. Please be sensitive to these issues, encouraging the involvement of everyone and providing support in appropriate situations, but never forcing or overextending the invitation.

3. KEEP PARENTS/GUARDIANS “IN THE LOOP.”

Communicate with parents regarding the Kids Voting USA program. Some possibilities include sending home a letter about the program (samples of parent letters can be found on our Web site, www.kidsvotingusa.org; just go to the “In the Classroom” section and select Educator’s Guide) or involving families in suitable Kids Voting USA classroom activities.

4. BE CREATIVE! BRING THE COMMUNITY IN OFTEN.

Invite candidates to observe and then address the school’s Student Government election assembly. Hold a Candidate Forum on the cable TV local access channel, where kids pose questions to local candidates. Have students shadow candidates and/or elected officials for a day and report back to the class. Everyone benefits when the community is involved!

“The only title in our democracy superior to that of President is the title of citizen.”
– Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis

KIDS VOTING USA

6-8

ELECTIONS AND VOTING



INTRODUCTION TO THEME

The intent of this theme is to educate students about elections, from gaining an appreciation of the power of voting to studying the candidates and issues to understanding the registration process and participating in an election. The theme’s activities fall under four main learning objectives:

- Students will develop an appreciation for the power and influence of voting.
- Students will learn how to study the candidates and issues relevant to an election.
- Students will understand what is involved in the registration and voting process.
- Students will learn how to stay involved with civic affairs after an election.



GENERAL ACTIVITIES

CONCEPT 1: MY VOTE GIVES ME POWER

Poll On Apathy 2
 Apathy Cartoon Analysis 4

CONCEPT 2: I STUDY THE CANDIDATES AND ISSUES

Solutions 8
 Rate The Candidates 10
 Party Planks 14

CONCEPT 3: I REGISTER AND VOTE

Registration Simulation 16
 Polling Places 20
 Our National Symbol 22
 Voting Simulation 24

CONCEPT 4: I CONTINUE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Watching The Returns 26
 Election Accountability 28



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

Questions for Concept 1: My Vote Gives Me Power 29
 Questions for Concept 2: I Study the Candidates and Issues 29
 Questions for Concept 3: I Register and Vote 29
 Questions for Concept 4: I Continue to Make a Difference 29



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

Landslide! A Kid’s Guide to the U.S. Elections by Dan Gutman 30



CULMINATING ACTIVITY

I Go To The Polls 31



POLL ON APATHY

(A few minutes a day for several days)

OBJECTIVE

Students poll voters to examine voter responsibility.

MATERIALS

Poll On Apathy handout; construction paper; bulletin board

GET READY

- ✓ Copy the *Poll On Apathy* handout for each student.
- ✓ Prepare a bulletin board to resemble the Poll Graph illustrated below.
- ✓ Cut 1/2-inch construction paper squares for graphing the results of the poll.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Discuss the meaning of the word *apathy* (apathy: lack of interest or concern, especially concerning matters of a general importance or appeal; indifference).
- ✓ Give a copy of the *Poll On Apathy* handout to each student. Each handout consists of four sets of the same polling questions. Determine the number of adults you want your students to interview and instruct them accordingly.

- ✓ Instruct them to poll teachers, parents, relatives, and neighbors (with supervision) and to return the handouts within a certain amount of time.
- ✓ Let each student place squares on the bulletin board to indicate the information polled.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What can we determine by the results of our polls?*
- ★ *In our poll, what reasons did adults give for not voting? Is this apathy?*
- ★ *What are some solutions to their reasons?*
- ★ *What would be the benefits if everyone voted?*
- ★ *Do you think our poll is large enough and random enough to be accurate for the whole United States? Might there be other reasons for apathy in other places? What are they?*
- ★ *Why should citizens vote? What happens when there is a low voter turnout?*
- ★ *How do our votes give us power?*

MORE!

Have your students graph the results of their polls individually. (You may have your students continue their polling for a longer period.)

QUESTION #1		QUESTION #2		QUESTION #3		QUESTION #4	
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
QUESTION #5							



POLL ON APATHY

QUESTIONS	YES	NO
1. Have you ever voted?		
2. Are you registered to vote now?		
3. Did you vote in the last election?		
4. Do you plan to vote in the next election?		
5. If the answer to any question is no, what are your reasons?		

QUESTIONS	YES	NO
1. Have you ever voted?		
2. Are you registered to vote now?		
3. Did you vote in the last election?		
4. Do you plan to vote in the next election?		
5. If the answer to any question is no, what are your reasons?		

QUESTIONS	YES	NO
1. Have you ever voted?		
2. Are you registered to vote now?		
3. Did you vote in the last election?		
4. Do you plan to vote in the next election?		
5. If the answer to any question is no, what are your reasons?		

QUESTIONS	YES	NO
1. Have you ever voted?		
2. Are you registered to vote now?		
3. Did you vote in the last election?		
4. Do you plan to vote in the next election?		
5. If the answer to any question is no, what are your reasons?		



APATHY CARTOON ANALYSIS

(30-45 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students analyze political cartoons portraying apathy to examine the value of voting.

MATERIALS

Political Cartoon Analysis handouts 1 and 2;
Apathy Cartoons handout

GET READY

- ✓ Copy the *Political Cartoon Analysis* forms for each student or group. Copy a political cartoon for each student or group.
- ✓ See “Voter Apathy” in the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Divide the class into groups of three.
- ✓ Decide which of the political cartoons each group will analyze (mix it up so different groups have different cartoons).
- ✓ Give the students time to complete the *Political Cartoon Analysis 1* handout. If time allows, students can exchange cartoons and complete another analysis.
- ✓ When the forms have been completed, have the groups share their analysis with the rest of the class.
- ✓ For homework, consider giving your students the task of finding a political cartoon on their own and analyzing it with the *Political Cartoon Analysis 2* handout.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What is the purpose of these political cartoons?*
- ★ *What are some reasons for voter apathy in this country?*
- ★ *How do these cartoons remind us of the power of voting?*
- ★ *Can these political cartoons help encourage people to vote?*
- ★ *What are the responsibilities of citizens in a democracy? How can you prepare for these responsibilities?*
- ★ *What can happen to a democracy when citizens are not responsible and don't use their right to vote?*

MORE!

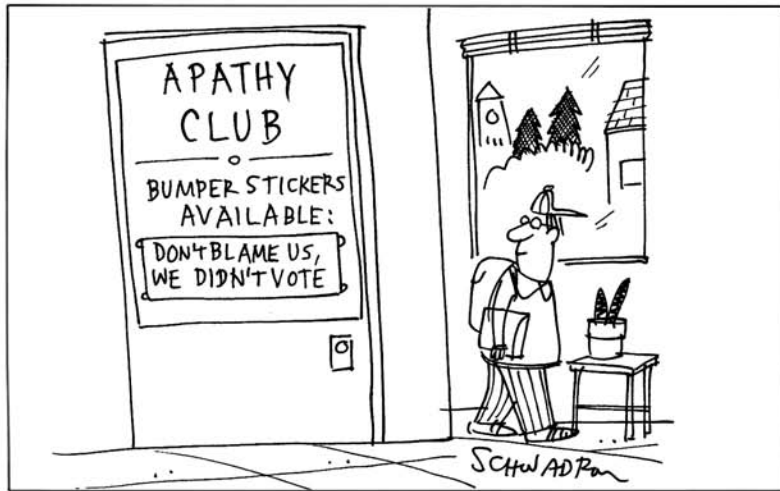
Encourage students to make their own political cartoons about any issue.

VOTE QUOTE

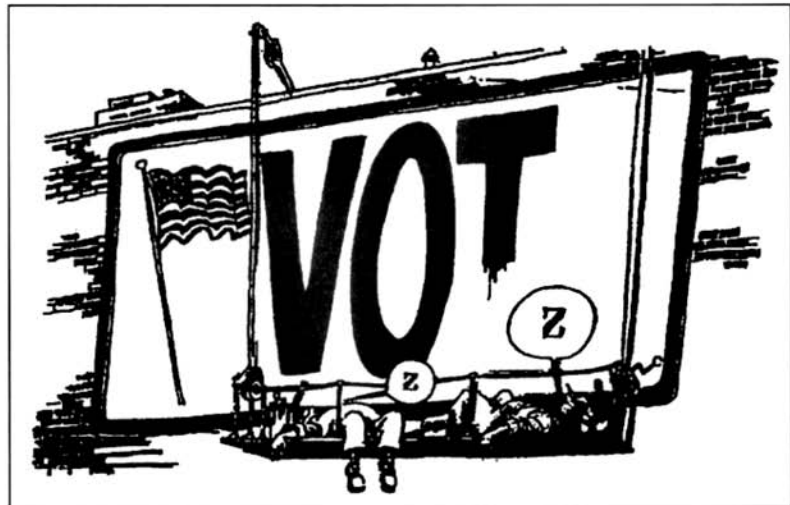
“The Greek word for idiot, literally translated, means ‘one who does not participate in politics.’ That sums up my conviction on the subject.” –Gladys Pyle



APATHY CARTOONS



www.CartoonStock.com





POLITICAL CARTOON ANALYSIS 1

Cartoons are a way of expressing an opinion. Cartoons have been used in publications for hundreds of years. Early cartoons were used to give messages to people who could not read.

Editorial cartoons have certain characteristics. Check to see how many of the following characteristics your cartoon has:

Presents a problem, not a solution	
Deals with one issue at a time	
Has people drawn as caricatures	
Uses exaggeration to prove a point	
Shows institutions, such as the government, as people	

Cartoonists use several techniques to get their message across.

Check the techniques your cartoon includes:

Caricature – changing or distorting a person’s features in a way that makes the person recognizable	
Exaggeration – overemphasizing an event or situation	
Stereotyping – showing all persons of the same group looking and acting the same	
Symbols – using a sign or object to stand for something	
Satire – using wit and ridicule to make fun of something that seems wrong	
Labeling – using written words to identify figures and causes	



POLITICAL CARTOON ANALYSIS 2

Name of Publication:

Date of Publication:

Page:

Do you agree with the opinion expressed in the cartoon? Explain.

What is the issue in this cartoon?

Whom or what do the characters represent?

Are any symbols used to add meaning? What are they?

Are any labels used to add meaning? What are they?

Is there a caption? What meaning does it add to the cartoon?

Is the cartoon humorous? What makes it so?

What seems to be the cartoonist's opinion on this issue?

Do you agree with the opinion expressed in the cartoon? Explain.



SOLUTIONS

(30-40 minutes over two to three days)

OBJECTIVE

Students gather information to prepare to vote.

MATERIALS

We Elect Leaders to Help Solve Society's Problems handout

GET READY

- ✓ Copy the *We Elect Leaders to Help Solve Society's Problems* handout for each student.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Assign your students to watch, listen to and read the news; to ask questions of teachers, family members and friends; and to gather information about the candidates.
- ✓ In discussion, ask students what they consider their society's, community's, state's, or nation's greatest problems. Have students list them in the left column on the activity sheet (in addition to the three already listed: economy, pollution, crime).
- ✓ As they learn the views of the candidates on the issues, have the students list them on the activity sheet. This could be done with quotes, news reports, or their own words. Students can additionally list their own solutions to the problems.
- ✓ Ask your students to put an asterisk next to a problem they could work on now.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *How do you feel about Candidate A's solutions?*
- ★ *How do you feel about Candidate B's solutions?*
- ★ *Did any of your solutions match those of a candidate? Might this be a good reason to vote for a candidate?*
- ★ *What should/could you do if you feel you have a good idea for a solution?*
- ★ *Who would you vote for when considering the issues on the activity sheet?*

MORE!

Make an election scrapbook. Collect articles, cartoons, etc., and place them in the scrapbook. Donate it to the school library upon completion to serve as a historical document.

VOTE QUOTE

"I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion by education." –Thomas Jefferson



WE ELECT LEADERS TO HELP SOLVE SOCIETY'S PROBLEMS

Problems	Candidate A's Solutions	Candidate B's Solutions	Our Solutions
Economy			
Pollution			
Crime			



RATE THE CANDIDATES

(45 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students carefully study the candidates to make a voting decision.

MATERIALS

My Concerns and the Issues in This Election handout; *Rate the Candidate's Experience* handout; *Rate the Candidates' Characteristics* handout

GET READY

- ✓ Copy *Rate the Candidates' Stands on the Issues*, *Rate the Candidate's Experience*, and *Rate the Candidates' Characteristics* for each student. You will need at least two copies of the *Rate the Candidate's Experience* handout for each student.
- ✓ Use the *Rate the Candidate's Experience* handout only if your students are rating presidential candidates, or adapt it to the race that your students are studying.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Lead students in a discussion on the differences between a candidate's characteristics, experience and qualifications, and stands on the issues, using some of the questions provided if appropriate.
- ✓ Help students find information to fill out the work sheets. This can include information on the candidates' stands on the issues and their personal characteristics and/or experience.
- ✓ Have your students share their opinions on the various candidates from their findings on the handouts.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What are some characteristics of a good candidate?*
- ★ *What are some experiences and qualifications of a good candidate?*
- ★ *What are some stands on issues you have heard expressed?*
- ★ *Which of these three (characteristics, experience, stands) if any, are most important to consider when making a decision?*
- ★ *Could you make a wise voting decision based only on characteristics, stands, or experience? Or should you look at all three together?*
- ★ *Is there anything else you need to know to make a wise decision?*
- ★ *Is there anything you can do if your personal concerns are not issues in a campaign, but you feel they should be addressed?*

VOTE QUOTE

"It is better to know some of the questions than all of the answers." –James Thurber



MY CONCERNS AND THE ISSUES IN THIS ELECTION

The major **issues** in this election are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

ISSUE 1

Candidate: _____ Stand: _____

Candidate: _____ Stand: _____

Candidate: _____ Stand: _____

The candidate I prefer here is: _____

ISSUE 2

Candidate: _____ Stand: _____

Candidate: _____ Stand: _____

Candidate: _____ Stand: _____

The candidate I prefer here is: _____

ISSUE 3

Candidate: _____ Stand: _____

Candidate: _____ Stand: _____

Candidate: _____ Stand: _____

The candidate I prefer here is: _____

If I made a decision based solely on the candidates' stands on this paper, I would vote for:



RATE THE CANDIDATE'S EXPERIENCE

Fill in the candidate's name, their experiences, and as many qualifications as you can find. Match any experience the candidate has had with the role to which it may apply. (Some may match more than one role.) Fill this form out for each candidate you are evaluating and then decide which candidate best fits the various roles of the president.

Candidate's Name	
Role Match	Candidate's Experience
<input type="text"/>	1.
<input type="text"/>	2.
<input type="text"/>	3.
<input type="text"/>	4.
<input type="text"/>	5.
<input type="text"/>	6.
<input type="text"/>	7.
<input type="text"/>	8.
<input type="text"/>	9.
<input type="text"/>	10.

ROLES OF THE PRESIDENT:

1. **HEAD OF STATE:** Hosts ceremonial activities and dinners for foreign dignitaries, gives medals, holds press conferences, makes official visits to other nations.
2. **CHIEF DIPLOMAT:** Proposes foreign policies, makes treaties, appoints ambassadors, participates in international meetings.
3. **COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF:** Commands the armed forces, appoints military leaders.
4. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE:** Carries out laws, provides leadership to the executive branch, selects the Cabinet and the White House staff of advisers, recommends laws and budgets, signs or vetoes laws.
5. **PARTY CHIEF:** Campaigns for others in party, heads political party.

If I made a decision based solely on the candidate's experience, I would vote for:



RATE THE CANDIDATES

RATE THE CANDIDATES' CHARACTERISTICS

Write the names of two candidates in the spaces in the table on each side of the word "candidate," then write the office they are running for. Next, rate the candidates by placing a number from one to five in the spaces beside the characteristics listed, one being a poor rating and five being an excellent rating.

	◀ CANDIDATE ▶	
	◀ OFFICE ▶	
RATING: 1=POOR; 5=EXCELLENT	CHARACTERISTICS:	RATING: 1=POOR; 5=EXCELLENT
<input type="text"/>	BRAVE	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	CARING	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	COOPERATIVE	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	CURIOUS	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	FRIENDLY	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	HARD-WORKING	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	HONEST	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	SMART	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	HEALTHY	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	TOTAL	<input type="text"/>

If I made a decision based solely on the candidates' characteristics, I would vote for:



PARTY PLANKS

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students examine the concepts of parties and party planks.

MATERIALS

Party Planks handout

GET READY

- ✓ Draw two sets of planks on the board as shown in the illustration on the *Party Planks* handout. Place a party label above them as shown or have your students name them.
- ✓ You may need to define for your class:
Political Party – an organized group who control or seek to control a government.
Platform – an outline of what the party intends to accomplish if they win an election.
Plank – one issue in the platform.
- ✓ See “Political Parties” in the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Say to your students: *Have you ever had to choose between two things that seemed pretty good or two things that seemed pretty awful? Sometimes joining a political party is like that. Often a party member may not agree with all the planks in his or her party platform.*
- ✓ Invite your students to give you fun ways to improve their school. Write an idea on each plank beneath each party name as shown on the *Party Planks* handout.

- ✓ Ask your students to declare which party they would join by signing their names anywhere on the planks.
- ✓ Now that your students are familiar with the concepts of parties, recreate on the blackboard the illustration you just used. This time, write Republican Party and Democratic Party as the party labels.
- ✓ Have your students bring in information about the parties (from newspapers, the Internet, etc.) and fill in the party planks as best they can.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Which plank on your party’s platform do you like most? Least? Why?*
- ★ *How did you decide which party to join?*
- ★ *How is this activity like joining a political party?*
- ★ *What information were we able to gather about the Republican and Democratic parties? What are the differences between the two?*
- ★ *What can a person do if they don’t want to join any political party, but want to vote?*
(Declare himself/herself an independent)

VOTE QUOTE

“By mutual confidence and mutual aid great deeds are done, and great discoveries made.”
– Homer, *The Illiad*



PARTY PLANKS

Eagles

less homework

fast food at school

snack break every day

new equipment

Liberty Bells

one more recess a day

no timed tests

chewing gum allowed

no detentions



REGISTRATION SIMULATION

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students simulate registration to become familiar with the process.

MATERIALS

Voter Registration Application handout;
Application Instructions handout; *Kids Voting Registration Form* handout; lined paper

GET READY

- ✓ Download the national mail voter registration form and instructions from www.lwv.org/ and make a copy for each student, or use the copy and instruction sheet provided.
- ✓ Copy a *Kids Voting Registration Form* for each student to use at the polls.
- ✓ Fold a piece of lined paper down the middle and ask your students to sign their names on the left side. (This will act as a registration sheet for the voting simulation activity.)

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Help your students fill out the forms and registration sheet reminding them that this is only a simulation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Discuss questions that arise from the activity plus the following:

- ★ *Why are registration requirements different in each state? Should they be? Or should there be a federal law?*
- ★ *What criteria do you think is essential for registration?*
- ★ *Why might some people be reluctant to register?*
- ★ *Are changes being made in state registration policies? What?*
- ★ *As of the summer of 1999, the California State Assembly had passed a bill allowing registration on voting day. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this?*
- ★ *Could you influence anyone to register? How?*

MORE!

Go to www.rockthevote.org/ for information on volunteering to help citizens register. Information is available for organizing a registration day at school for parents as well as request forms for stickers, posters, etc.



REGISTRATION SIMULATION

VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION – FOR U.S. CITIZENS

Please print in blue or black ink

1	Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms.	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name	Circle One Jr Sr II III IV	
	2 Address (see instructions) – Street (or route or box #)		Apt. or Lot #	City/Town	State	Zip Code
3	Address Where You Get Your Mail If Different From Above			City/Town	State	Zip Code
4	Date of Birth ____/____/____ Month Day Year	5	Telephone Number (optional)	6	ID Number (see item 6 in the instructions for your State)	
7	Choice of Party (see item 7 in the instructions for your State)			8	Race or Ethnic Group (see item 8 in the instructions for your State)	
9	I swear/affirm that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am a United States Citizen. • I meet the eligibility requirements of my state and subscribe to any oath required. (see item 9 in the instructions for your State before you sign.) • The information I have provided is true to the best of my knowledge under penalty of perjury. If I have provided false information I may be fined, imprisoned, or (if not a U.S. citizen) deported from or refused entry to the United States. 			Please sign your full name (or put your mark) <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 60px; width: 100%; margin-top: 5px;"></div>		
				Date	____/____/____ Month Day Year	



APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Box 1 – Name

Put in this box your full name in this order – Last, First, Middle. Do not use nicknames or initials.

Box 2 – Home Address

Put in this box your home address (legal address). Do not put your mailing address here if it is different from your home address. Do not use post office box or rural route without a box number.

Box 3 – Mailing Address

If you get your mail at an address that is different from the address from Box 2, put your mailing address in this box.

Box 4 – Date of Birth

Put in this box your date of birth in this order – Month, Day, Year.

Box 5 – Telephone Number

Most states ask for your telephone number in case there are questions about your application. However, you do not have to fill in this box.

Box 6 – ID Number

Many states use an ID number for record-keeping purposes. To find out what ID number, if any, you need to put in this box, see item 6 in the instructions under your state.

Box 7 – Choice of Party

In some states, you must register with a party if you want to take part in that party's primary election, caucus, or convention. To find out if your state requires this, see item 7 in the instructions under your state. If you want to register with a party, print in the box the full name of the party of your choice. If you do not want to register with a party, write in "no party" or leave the box blank. Do not write in the word "independent" if you mean "no party" because this might be confused with the name of a political party in your state.

Box 8 – Race or Ethnic Group

A few states ask for your race or ethnic group, in order to administer the Federal Voting Rights Act. To find out if your state asks for this information, see item 8 in the instructions under your state. If so, put in Box 8 the choice that best describes you from the list below.

- American Indian or Alaskan native
- Asian or Pacific Islander – not Native Hawaiian
- Black; not of Hispanic Origin

- Hispanic
- Multi-racial
- Native Hawaiian
- White, not of Hispanic Origin
- Other

Box 9 – Signature

Review the information in item 9 in the instructions under your state. Before you sign or make your mark, make sure that:

1. You meet your state's requirements, and
2. You understand all of Box 9.

Finally, sign your full name or make your mark, and print today's date in this order – Month, Day, Year.

Box 10 – Name of Assistant

If the applicant is unable to sign, put in this box the name, address, and telephone number (optional) of the person who helped you.

If your **STATE INSTRUCTIONS** are unavailable, use the generic instructions.

6. ID Number. The last 4 digits of your social security number and your Indian Census number (if you have one) are requested.

7. Choice of Party. You must register with a party if you want to take part in that party's primary election, caucus, or convention.

8. Race or Ethnic Group. Leave blank.

9. Signature. To register you must:

- be a citizen of the United States
- be a resident of this state at least 29 days preceding the next election
- be 18 years old on or before the next general election
- not have been convicted of treason or a felony (or have had your civil rights restored)
- not currently be declared an incapacitated person by court of law

(If you were actually registering you would now mail or take your registration to the local voter registration office.)



KIDS VOTING REGISTRATION FORM

Voter Registration	Is this a new registration? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> (Please Print) Last Name First Middle </div>	
<hr/> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> City State ZIP County Precinct # </div>	
<hr/> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> School District School Grade Date of Birth </div>	
Party Preference (optional): <input type="checkbox"/> Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 5px;">Name of Party</div>	<hr style="border: 0.5px solid black;"/> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Applicant's Signature</p>

Voter Registration	Is this a new registration? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> (Please Print) Last Name First Middle </div>	
<hr/> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> City State ZIP County Precinct # </div>	
<hr/> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> School District School Grade Date of Birth </div>	
Party Preference (optional): <input type="checkbox"/> Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 5px;">Name of Party</div>	<hr style="border: 0.5px solid black;"/> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Applicant's Signature</p>



POLLING PLACES

(5-10 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students find their polling places to prepare to vote.

MATERIALS

Polling Place Forms handout

GET READY

- ✓ Make and cut apart enough copies of the polling place forms on the following page for each student.
- ✓ Locate the polling places within your school district and write them across the chalkboard.
- ✓ See “Elections” in the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Instruct your students to take a polling place form home, fill it out with an adult, and return it the next day.
- ✓ Have them sign in under the polling places written on the board.
- ✓ Precinct maps are often printed in the newspaper. Help students who couldn’t get the information at home find their polling places.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS







- ★ *What sorts of buildings allow polling places? (Churches, schools, hotels, etc.)*
- ★ *Why are polling places located in these buildings?*
- ★ *Have you ever been to a polling place with an adult? If so, what was it like?*
- ★ *What if a voter is not sure what to do at a polling place? (Officials there are helpful.)*
- ★ *Who chooses the polling places? (The election board)*
- ★ *Who runs the polling places? (Citizens chosen and paid by the election board)*

VOTE QUOTE

“Eternal vigilance is the price of Liberty.”
– Unknown



POLLING PLACE FORMS

<p style="text-align: center;">My Polling Place</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Precinct number _____</p> <p>Name of polling place _____</p> <p>Address of polling place _____</p> <p>THIS INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED THROUGH THE CITY CLERK, COUNTY CLERK, LOCAL NEWSPAPER, STATE ELECTIONS BOARD, PUBLIC LIBRARY, POST OFFICE, CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE, OR PARTY HEADQUARTERS.</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">My Polling Place</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Precinct number _____</p> <p>Name of polling place _____</p> <p>Address of polling place _____</p> <p>THIS INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED THROUGH THE CITY CLERK, COUNTY CLERK, LOCAL NEWSPAPER, STATE ELECTIONS BOARD, PUBLIC LIBRARY, POST OFFICE, CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE, OR PARTY HEADQUARTERS.</p> 
<p style="text-align: center;">My Polling Place</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Precinct number _____</p> <p>Name of polling place _____</p> <p>Address of polling place _____</p> <p>THIS INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED THROUGH THE CITY CLERK, COUNTY CLERK, LOCAL NEWSPAPER, STATE ELECTIONS BOARD, PUBLIC LIBRARY, POST OFFICE, CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE, OR PARTY HEADQUARTERS.</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">My Polling Place</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Precinct number _____</p> <p>Name of polling place _____</p> <p>Address of polling place _____</p> <p>THIS INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED THROUGH THE CITY CLERK, COUNTY CLERK, LOCAL NEWSPAPER, STATE ELECTIONS BOARD, PUBLIC LIBRARY, POST OFFICE, CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE, OR PARTY HEADQUARTERS.</p> 
<p style="text-align: center;">My Polling Place</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Precinct number _____</p> <p>Name of polling place _____</p> <p>Address of polling place _____</p> <p>THIS INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED THROUGH THE CITY CLERK, COUNTY CLERK, LOCAL NEWSPAPER, STATE ELECTIONS BOARD, PUBLIC LIBRARY, POST OFFICE, CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE, OR PARTY HEADQUARTERS.</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">My Polling Place</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Precinct number _____</p> <p>Name of polling place _____</p> <p>Address of polling place _____</p> <p>THIS INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED THROUGH THE CITY CLERK, COUNTY CLERK, LOCAL NEWSPAPER, STATE ELECTIONS BOARD, PUBLIC LIBRARY, POST OFFICE, CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE, OR PARTY HEADQUARTERS.</p> 



OUR NATIONAL SYMBOL

(45-50 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students participate in a primary election simulation and in a caucus simulation to explore and compare the processes.

MATERIALS

Paper for ballots

PART ONE: HOLD PRIMARY ELECTIONS

GET READY

- ✓ Tell students that the bald eagle, our national symbol, has decided to retire after years of public service. Our country's animals are gathering to decide who should run for the office of the new national symbol.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Divide your students into two groups. Tell them that half of them will be the bird party and half of them will be the mammal party. Explain that a party is a group of people who have some of the same political beliefs. Tell them the birds believe that since the symbol has always been a bird there is no reason to change it, and the mammals believe it is time for a change.
- ✓ Instruct them to gather into the two groups and hold a primary election to produce candidates. Explain that a candidate is someone who would like to be elected to a government office. If students need help,

possibilities for the bird candidate are: Great Horned Owl – wise, Mourning Dove – peaceful, Wild Turkey – independent; possible candidates for the mammals are: Raccoon – clever, Coyote – independent, Grizzly Bear – strong .

- ✓ Help each party vote to choose a candidate.
- ✓ Write the candidates on the board and discuss the pros and cons for each. Inform the students that they can now vote outside their party and must choose the national symbol they feel is best.
- ✓ Hold a general election with a secret ballot and choose a new national symbol. Celebrate!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Was your favorite mammal or bird chosen?*
- ★ *Was this a fair way to vote? Why or why not?*
- ★ *Was this democratic, meaning did every one get to participate in the decision?*
- ★ *Can you think of a better way to choose a national symbol?*
- ★ *Is this the way we choose candidates in our state?*



OUR NATIONAL SYMBOL (continued)

PART TWO: HOLD CAUCUSES

GET READY

- ✓ Tell your students that there is another way to choose a national symbol for our country — the caucus system.
- ✓ Share with your students the definition of a *caucus*: a meeting of local members of a political party that select delegates to a convention or register preferences for candidates running for office.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Divide your students into two groups, half will be the bird party and half will be the mammal party.
- ✓ Organize each party into four groups (caucuses) of three or four students. Ask each student to choose and announce in their caucus which bird or mammal he or she thinks is best and why. Help each caucus choose one delegate to go to the party convention. Explain that the delegate will cast a vote for their caucus.
- ✓ Hold the party conventions one at a time in front of the class. There should be four delegates to the bird convention and four to the mammal convention. Have the class watch and listen quietly as the delegates choose a candidate.

- ✓ When each party has a candidate, hold a secret general election. Either have the students close their eyes and raise their hands to vote or provide a paper ballot.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Was your favorite mammal or bird chosen?*
- ★ *Was this as fair as the primary election? Why or why not?*
- ★ *Was this democratic, meaning did every one get to participate in the decision?*
- ★ *Can you think of a different way to choose a national symbol?*

MORE!

Repeat the process with other questions or actual decisions the class could make such as what to play at recess or which subject could be skipped today.



VOTING SIMULATION

(30-40 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students vote in a simulated polling place to become familiar with the voting process.

MATERIALS

Paper for ballots; material for a ballot box and voting booth; *Polling Place Diagram* handout

GET READY

- ✓ Choose an issue that will impact the students rather quickly. For instance, vote on what to have for homework that night or something fun like having a 20-minute break one day or two 10-minute breaks over two days.
- ✓ Prepare ballots or figure out a way to vote on blank pieces of paper.
- ✓ Prepare a simple ballot box and voting booth.
- ✓ Arrange a corner of the classroom to resemble a polling place as shown in the diagram.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Explain the duties of the precinct workers and assign students to play the roles of the workers. Seat them as shown in the diagram.
- ✓ Give one of the judges the registration sheet derived from the registration simulation.
- ✓ Give the clerks lined paper to record the voters as they come in.
- ✓ Hand the ballots to the other judge.

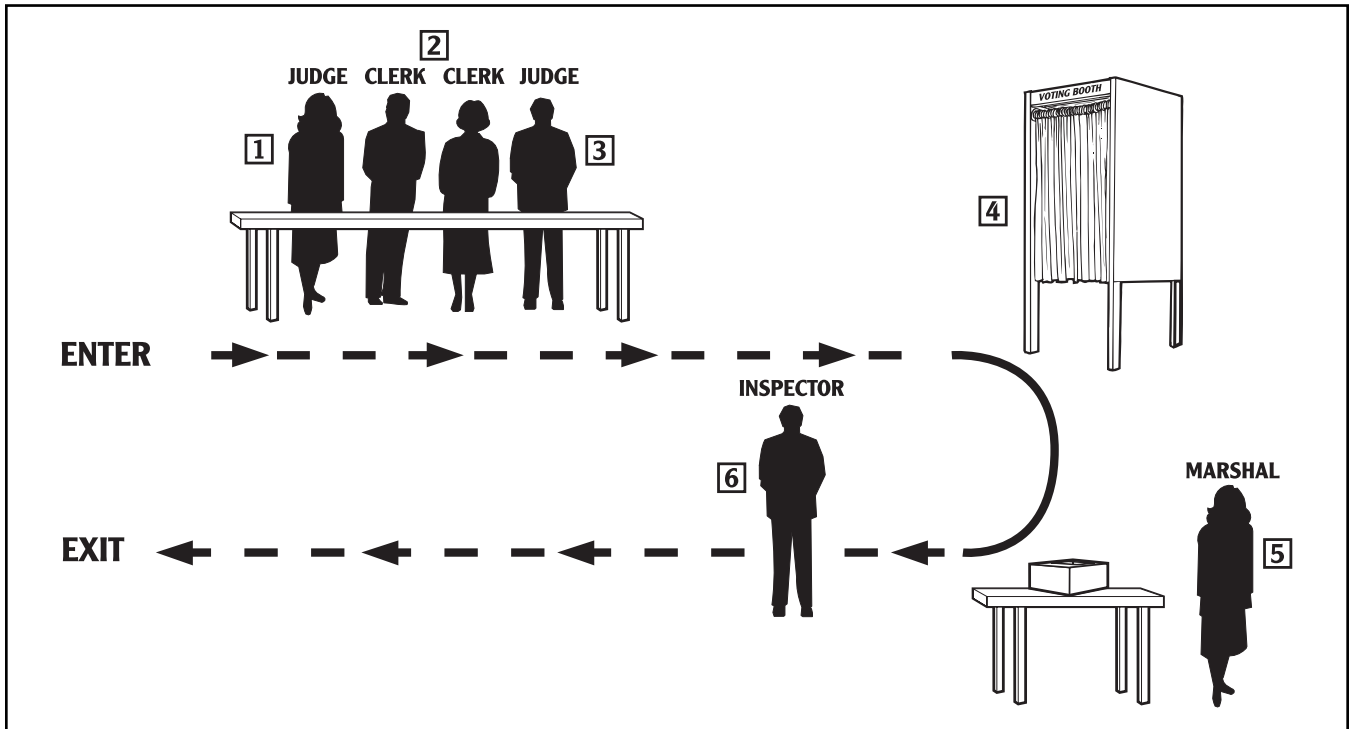
- ✓ Seat the marshal by the ballot box.
- ✓ Ask a student to demonstrate by casting the first vote.
- ✓ Let each student go through the process of voting.
- ✓ Instruct the marshal to tally and announce the vote.
- ✓ Implement the vote.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Who can go into a polling place?*
- ★ *Have you ever gone with your parents? If so, what was it like?*
- ★ *How do adults know where to go to vote?*
- ★ *If they don't know, how can they find out?*
- ★ *Can everybody vote?*
- ★ *Have you voted at the Kids Voting booth before? What was it like?*
- ★ *Where will you go to cast your Kids Voting vote this election?*
- ★ *Are there any rules in a polling place?*
- ★ *What do you think are good manners for a polling place?*



POLLING PLACE DIAGRAM



At the polls there are usually: one inspector; two judges — one Republican, one Democrat; two clerks — one Republican, one Democrat; and one marshal.

As you enter you will generally meet:

- 1** A judge with the register, a list containing the names of registered voters in the precinct, who will ask your name, find it in the register, and ask you to sign beside it
- 2** Two clerks, one for each party, who will add your name to a list to witness that you have voted
- 3** Another judge, who will hand you your ballot, and help you understand how to cast your ballot
- 4** A voting booth
- 5** The marshal, who will take your ballot and place it in the ballot box
- 6** The inspector, who oversees the polling place and assigns all the workers their duties

Poll workers have other duties. For instance the marshal makes sure that the law is kept. She watches that no one campaigns within 150 feet of the polls and she checks to see that everyone in line when the poll closes gets a chance to vote.

You, the voter, will:

- 1. Sign in by writing your name in the register
- 2. Take a ballot from a judge
- 3. Go to the booth and vote
- 4. Return your ballot to the marshal



WATCHING THE RETURNS

(Time varies)

OBJECTIVE

Students monitor the election returns to stay politically active.

MATERIALS

U.S. Map handout

GET READY

- ✓ Copy one map for each student.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Ask the students to take the maps home and watch the election returns on television or find them in the newspaper.
- ✓ Instruct them to choose a color for each presidential candidate (preferably blue for a Democratic candidate and red for a Republican candidate) and to color the states according to the results they get.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What happened when you went to the polls?*
- ★ *Did you have any problems? Any surprises?*
- ★ *Did the election turn out as you thought it would?*
- ★ *How do you feel about it today?*
- ★ *Were the election returns exciting to watch?*

MORE!

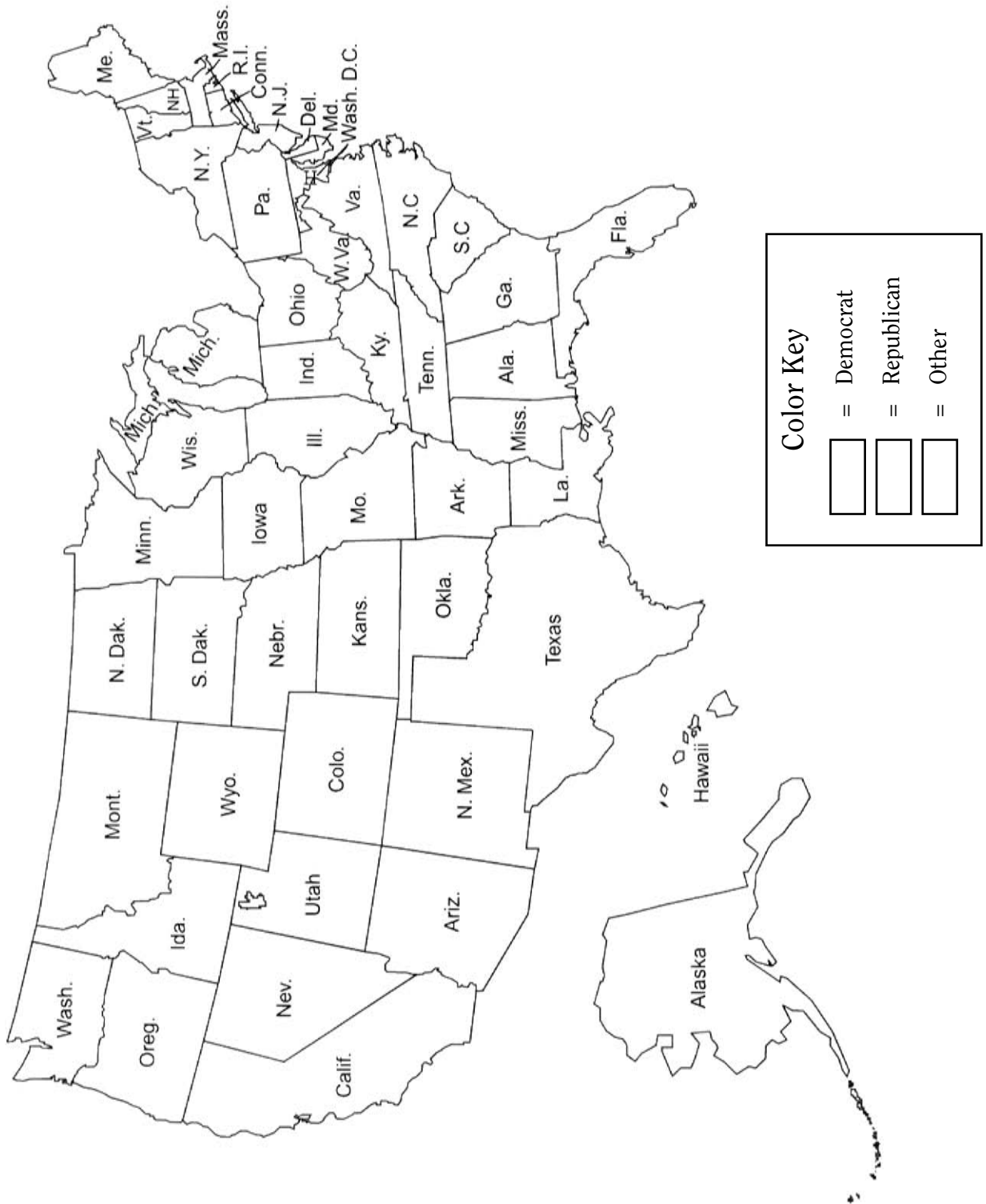
Help the students write the correct number of electoral votes in each state. For gubernatorial or other state elections, copy a state map showing counties. Follow instructions above.

VOTE QUOTE

“Politics is just another word for your future.”
–Unknown



U.S. MAP





ELECTION ACCOUNTABILITY

(Time varies)

OBJECTIVE

Students gather and track information that pertains to campaign promises.

MATERIALS

No materials are necessary for this activity.

GETTING READY

- ✓ Make sure that all your students have access to newspapers and news magazines.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Remind your students that being an active citizen does not begin and end with voting. Mention that it is also very important to hold our elected officials accountable for the promises they make well after they have been elected.
- ✓ Tell your class that they will be documenting the outcomes of elections so that they can reexamine campaign promises at a later date.
- ✓ Assign your students to collect newspaper articles and magazine clippings that detail the promises made by newly elected/re-elected officials.
- ✓ Using the articles and clippings they gathered, have your students make a chart that lists the elected officials and the promises that got them elected. Over the course of the school year, have your students occasionally revisit this chart. If the official has met the promise he or she made, then instruct your student to cross that promise off.

- ✓ By the end of the school year, students should examine their “promise” chart one more time. Students should evaluate how well the officials have kept their promises.
- ✓ Have a class discussion over the accomplishments and failures of the various officials.
- ✓ Assign your students to either write to an official that has kept his/her promises or one that has not. Students can express their gratitude to the official for contributing to the community or they can challenge him/her to keep his/her promises.
- ✓ Have students volunteer to share their letters and any responses they get.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Do you think campaign promises are about getting elected or are they genuine?*
- ★ *What candidate(s) from the past election do you think made sincere campaign promises? What gave you this impression? How has this official been in keeping his/her promises?*
- ★ *Why might it be difficult to keep campaign promises?*
- ★ *What courses of action do we have if a candidate has not kept his/her promises?*



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

MY VOTE GIVES ME POWER

- ★ What is a vote? What do you think a voting experience involves?
- ★ What does voting accomplish?
- ★ Does voting make a difference? How?
- ★ What is involved in an election?
- ★ What is the purpose of an election?
- ★ Are there different kinds of elections? Like what? What makes them different?
- ★ What power does voting give?
- ★ What is apathy?
- ★ What happens when people do not vote?

I STUDY THE CANDIDATES AND ISSUES

- ★ What is a candidate? What does a candidate hope to accomplish?
- ★ What do candidates do to try to win an election?
- ★ Do you know any candidates in this election?
- ★ What is an issue?
- ★ Can you give an example of an issue?
- ★ What issues are important to you?
- ★ Why is it important to study the candidates?
- ★ Why is it important to study the issues?
- ★ What can you do to know the candidates and issues?

I REGISTER AND VOTE

- ★ What does it mean to register?
- ★ What does registering involve?
- ★ Why is it important to register?
- ★ Why do you need to register before you vote?
- ★ Why is it important to vote?
- ★ What do you accomplish when you register and vote?
- ★ Have you ever been to a polling place? What was that like?

I CONTINUE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- ★ What does it mean to make a difference?
- ★ Does voting make a difference?
- ★ What in addition to voting can you do to make a difference?
- ★ Do candidates make promises? Can you give me an example?
- ★ Do all candidates keep their promises once they are elected?
- ★ What can you do to make sure that candidates keep their promises when they are elected?
- ★ What do you think is important to do once an election is over? Why?



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

Landslide! A Kid's Guide to the U.S. Elections by Dan Gutman

OBJECTIVE

Students investigate elections and the voting experience.

MATERIALS

Landslide! A Kid's Guide to the U.S. Elections
– Dan Gutman

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

- ✓ Have your students become familiar with *Landslide! A Kid's Guide to the U.S. Elections* before reading it.
- ✓ To familiarize your students with the book, have them break up into groups and play a trivia game. Organize your students by teams of four or five and prepare six questions, one from each chapter of the book.
- ✓ One at a time, pose these questions to the groups. Students may know some answers offhand, so make sure to prepare a few more detail-oriented questions. Students should have the book at their disposal so that they can search for answers to your questions.
- ✓ Reward the team with the greatest number of correct answers.
- ✓ Read *Landslide! A Kid's Guide to the U.S. Elections* with your class.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What is the significance of voting? Why should everyone vote?*
- ★ *What does it take to run a successful campaign?*
- ★ *What are the qualities of a good candidate for office?*

- ★ *How do people determine who they are going to vote for?*
- ★ *What is the registration process? Why is it necessary?*
- ★ *After an election, what can you do to continue to make a difference?*

ACTIVITY

- ✓ Have your students master the material covered in the book. To do this, divide your students into six teams. Assign each group one chapter of the book to become experts on.
- ✓ Within each chapter, there are headings. Each heading is posed as a question, such as: "What does the president do when his term is over?" The individual teams should decide who is going to master which questions within their chapter.
- ✓ Have the groups stand in front of the class one by one. The other groups should scan their chapter and ask any questions they have.
- ✓ Make sure to ask at least four or five questions from each chapter.
- ✓ Consider rewarding teams that answer all their questions correctly.



CULMINATING ACTIVITY: I GO TO THE POLLS

(Time varies)

OBJECTIVE

Students engage in an authentic voting experience.

- ✓ Have your students reflect, either verbally or in written form, both on their voting experience and how they plan to continue to make a difference in their community.

MATERIALS

Election materials supplied by your Kids Voting USA affiliate

GET READY

- ✓ Have your students' voter registration cards handy. (They should have filled them out during the *Registration Simulation* activity. If your students did not participate in this activity, consider doing it with them prior to them casting their votes.)

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Tell your students, *Now that we know what voting is and why it is important, let's use our right to vote and make a difference.*
- ✓ Give your students their registration cards prior to their voting experience so they can take them to the polls.
- ✓ Have your students participate in your local Kids Voting USA affiliate election. If you are not sure who your contact person is (whether a grade-level chair, school principal, etc.) visit our Web site: www.kidsvotingusa.org and click on "Affiliate Network." It will give you the contact information for your local Kids Voting USA affiliate. They should be able to give you the information you need.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *How did your voting experience cause you to feel? Why do you think that was the case?*
- ★ *Does voting give you power? How?*
- ★ *How do you think you would feel if you were not allowed to vote?*
- ★ *Do all people vote who are able to? Why do some people not vote? How do you feel about that?*
- ★ *Why is it important to study the candidates and issues?*
- ★ *What are good ways to learn about the candidates and issues?*
- ★ *What does it mean to register? Why is registering important?*
- ★ *Is voting the only way you can make a difference? What else can you do to make a difference?*

KIDS VOTING USA

6-8

**DEMOCRACY AND
THE PEOPLE**

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



INTRODUCTION TO THEME

The intent of this theme is to provide an understanding of and a context for American democracy and citizenship, from the rights and responsibilities of students in their local, state, and national communities to the world beyond. The theme’s activities fall under four main learning objectives:

- Students will understand the principles that make a government democratic.
- Students will understand how America fits the model of a democracy.
- Students will learn the rights and responsibilities of an American citizen.
- Students will learn the context of American democracy within the world.



GENERAL ACTIVITIES

CONCEPT 1: WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

Types Of Government 2
 A Body Of Information 4

CONCEPT 2: DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA

Political History Interview 6
 Citizen’s Jeopardy 8
 If Elected... 10

CONCEPT 3: A CITIZEN’S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The “Right” Way 11
 A Declaration 13

CONCEPT 4: DEMOCRACY IN THE WORLD

Democracy: Who, What, Where? 15
 Pen Pals 17
 A Message From Nelson Mandela 18



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

Questions for Concept 1: What is Democracy? 21
 Questions for Concept 2: Democracy in America 21
 Questions for Concept 3: A Citizen’s Rights and Responsibilities 22
 Questions for Concept 4: Democracy in the World 22



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

Government: How Local, State, and Federal Government Works by Mark Friedman 23



CULMINATING ACTIVITY

Democracy, Taking A Stand 24



TYPES OF GOVERNMENT

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students understand what democracy is within the context of other forms of government.

MATERIALS

Types Of Government handout

GET READY

- ✓ Make a copy of the *Types Of Government* handout for each of your students.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Inform your class that they will be evaluating several forms of government to gain a better understanding of democracy.
- ✓ Review with your students the following forms of government: monarchy, theocracy, communism, dictatorship, and democracy.
- ✓ In explaining the various forms of government, use the classroom as an analogy. For example: *If our classroom was its own country and we were a dictatorship, I might be the dictator. I would have complete control without input from any of you, the citizens.*
- ✓ Distribute the *Types Of Government* handout to your students. Tell your students that they are going to use this handout to reflect on advantages and disadvantages of the forms of government they just learned about.
- ✓ Divide your students into groups of three or four. Have them review with each other the definitions of the different forms of government. Next, have them complete the handouts.

- ✓ Have the group members share with one another their responses to the handout questions.
- ✓ As a class, review the handout and allow students to share their responses.
- ✓ To conclude the activity, have your students write a paragraph/essay on one of the types of government you reviewed: monarchy, theocracy, communism, dictatorship, or democracy. Students should identify a country that has this form of government and explain how that government affects the lives of its people.
- ✓ Have your students share their assignments in class the next day.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Define the different types of government we discussed. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?*
- ★ *What do you think is the purpose of government? Do you think democracy accomplishes this? Explain why or why not you think so?*
- ★ *Has this activity helped you realize anything about your own country and how it operates? Please specify.*



TYPES OF GOVERNMENT

Name: _____

1. What are some universal needs that people have of government? What form of government fulfills these needs best? Explain why you think so.

2. Within your family unit, how are decisions made? Which political system is it most similar to? Explain in detail how they are similar.

3. How might your life be different if you lived under _____ ?
(Choose one of the following: monarchy, theocracy, communism, or dictatorship.)

4. What advantages and disadvantages are there to democracy in comparison to other forms of government?



A BODY OF INFORMATION

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students consider all the ways that democracy impacts our lives.

MATERIALS

Butcher paper, markers, multicolored markers, scissors; government agencies information

GET READY

- ✓ Have a set of multicolored markers ready for each group of students as well as a generous length of butcher paper (should be as long as your students are tall).
- ✓ Duplicate the page of city, state, and/or national agencies from your telephone directory for each group.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Explain to your students that a useful way to think of democracy is to look at the life of one person. A democracy, whether local or national, impacts every member of the community in many ways.
- ✓ Divide your students into groups of four. Inform them that they are going to discover all the ways that democracy impacts them by creating a person on butcher paper. They will create the outline of a person on the butcher paper and within this outline list all the ways this person is impacted by democracy.

- ✓ Students must first brainstorm the qualities of the person they draw. Give each group several minutes to determine things such as age, gender, health status, etc. Prompt the groups with different qualities they might want to consider: retired, differently-abled, etc. They may even name this person if they wish, both for fun and to make referencing easier.
- ✓ Model a completed project for the students. This should be the outline of a person and within the outline various things you wrote about how this person is impacted by democracy. Examples: *This adult needs freeways to get to work; this older person needs health benefits; this man needs a building permit for his house, this baby needs her diaper taken out in the garbage, etc.*
- ✓ Have your students draw the outline of their person and begin to fill it in. They can use the list of city, state, and federal agencies to jog their thinking. Remind the students to think of their own lives and the lives of those they know.
- ✓ When completed, the various figures can be hung on the classroom walls. Invite the class to walk around the room and look at the paper citizens.

**A BODY OF INFORMATION** (continued)**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- ★ *Are there any services used by all the paper citizens?* (Police, garbage, libraries etc.)
- ★ *Which services would you miss the most if the community did not provide them?* (Garbage collection?)
- ★ *If our government provides us these services, what is it that we give back?* (Taxes, votes, civic engagement)
- ★ *Politicians often talk about the services they think are most important. Which ones are most important to you?* (Education and transportation were the ones on the top of most community agendas.)
- ★ *Why is it special that a democracy provides these services?* (Because they represent the people's interests, etc.)

MORE!

Students can invite a speaker from a city agency (police, refuse, animal control, recreation, libraries, etc.) to talk to the class about the agency's work and how students can make a difference in that work.



POLITICAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

(30 minutes out of class; ten minutes in class)

OBJECTIVE

Students interview an adult to learn firsthand about the American democratic experience.

MATERIALS

Political History Interview Questions handout

GET READY

- ✓ Make a copy of the *Political History Interview Questions* for each student participating.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Ask students, *How can we best learn about American democracy and our country's history?* Students may respond with ideas like books, films, etc. If they don't mention it, say: *People are the greatest resource in our country. Could you imagine what a 100-year-old American could tell you? What do you think are some of the experiences he/she could talk about?* Listen to responses.
- ✓ Inform your students that they will be conducting primary research by going right to the source to learn about American democracy. Explain to them that they will be conducting interviews.
- ✓ Have your students interview an adult at least 50 years old, but older if possible. Preferably this person is from their own family.
- ✓ Have your students choose a predetermined amount of questions from the handout, and then write down or tape-record the answers from the interviews.

- ✓ Students should consider the responses given to them by their interviewee and present them in written form. They can transcribe their interview if they have it on audiotape. They can write a story representing one of the best responses they heard (they can ask their interviewee for help in capturing the details of the story). Additionally, they may document the contents of the interview in a written summary.
- ✓ Students can share their documents with the class.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What did you learn about your interviewee's experience in America?*
- ★ *What did you learn about America?*
- ★ *What were you surprised to learn from your interviewee?*
- ★ *Did you hear anything that made you feel proud?*
- ★ *How do you think your political history will be similar to the person you interviewed? Different?*



POLITICAL HISTORY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

From *To Our Children's Children*, Bob Greene and D.G. Fulford

- ★ Which president did you admire most in your lifetime? Which president who lived before your time?
- ★ Do you have a strong party alliance? Have you ever worked on a campaign? Have you ever worked at a polling place?
- ★ Which domestic problems are utmost in your town today? How have you noticed them firsthand? Do homeless people populate the library or doughnut shop? Are there a lot fewer help-wanted ads in the newspaper than there used to be?
- ★ Where do you go to vote? Do you see the same people every year?
- ★ What have been your causes over the years? How have you worked for them?
- ★ What do you do about issues that bother you?
- ★ Did you ever wear campaign buttons or use bumper stickers? Which campaign slogans stick in your mind? Which ones do you remember from your growing-up years?
- ★ Have you ever gone against popular opinion or beliefs politically? Has this caused you any problems?
- ★ Have you ever seen racial injustice firsthand? Have you ever been the target of prejudice?
- ★ What do you see as our country's most pressing problem today?
- ★ Is there a government policy that you strongly disagree with? Do you think the welfare system is run correctly? Are your Social Security benefits what you think they should be?
- ★ Do you follow the local goings-on in city government?
- ★ Are you on first-name terms with any of the local politicians? Are they bright and knowledgeable? Are they as capable as the people who used to run local government?
- ★ Has there been a case of corruption or scandal that has rocked your town? Were you surprised when it came to light?
- ★ Did you ever run for office? Did you win? How did you campaign?
- ★ Do you own a flag? Do you display it?
- ★ Do you mostly vote for losers or winners?
- ★ Did you like Ike?
- ★ Did you ever march for or against anything? Was this acceptable to your family? What finally made you decide to take your stance?
- ★ Where were you when Franklin Roosevelt died? When John F. Kennedy was shot? Robert Kennedy? Martin Luther King, Jr.?
- ★ Do you feel the same way about politics and politicians as you did when you first became old enough to vote?
- ★ What do you think was America's grandest national moment in your lifetime? America's lowest national moment?
- ★ Have you ever seen a president in person? Where? What was it like?
- ★ What direction do you think the country is going in today? Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the nation's future?
- ★ How does being an American feel different from the way it felt 40 years ago?



CITIZEN'S JEOPARDY

(40-50 minutes over two days)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn about American democracy by studying 25 facts and then playing Jeopardy in two teams.

MATERIALS

Citizen's Jeopardy handout; small prizes

GET READY

- ✓ Duplicate one copy of the Jeopardy answers for each student.
- ✓ Obtain some small prize for the winning team and an even smaller one for the losing team, for example: red and blue pencils and flag stickers.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Distribute the Jeopardy answers and spend 10 minutes reviewing the list. Consider using a cooperative review technique, such as:
 - ✓ *"Pairs Compare:" Each pair turns the handout over and writes down as many of the facts from the sheet as they can remember. Then, two pairs consult: one pair should quiz the other pair on how many facts they can remember correctly, and then the other pair takes their turn.*
- ✓ Assign the page for homework review.
- ✓ Draw a Jeopardy board with categories and amounts on the board. (Erase each amount as it is chosen.) Categories run horizontally on the top of the board. Amounts run vertically on the left side of the board, with smaller amounts up top and larger amounts below.

- ✓ Divide the class in half and play in two teams with two captains. You can choose the two people with birthdays closest to yours to be captains.
- ✓ Make sure the students do not have the *Citizen's Jeopardy* handout within view while you play.
- ✓ Call on teams alternately. The captain chooses a category and an amount, and the team confers to answer. If correct, they win the points; if incorrect, they lose the points. If they do not answer, the question goes to the other team.
- ✓ Appoint a scorekeeper to keep track of points on the board.
- ✓ Make a random question a Daily Double (allowing teams to wager any amount of points accrued up until then) and ask it to try and help the lagging team. For the Final Jeopardy answer, when teams may wager all or any part of their scores, compose an answer specific to your community.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What did you learn about democracy, specifically American democracy, by participating in this exercise?*
- ★ *What information, if any, surprised you?*
- ★ *What insights did this activity give you about your community?*

MORE!

Add a second Double Jeopardy board that is related to local election issues.



CITIZEN'S JEOPARDY

HISTORY

- 10 **10,000 B.C.** – the date when villages began to develop into cities
- 20 **3,500 B.C.** – the date people began to live in permanent settlements
- 30 **Order, Peace, and Security** – the first needs of ancient cities
- 40 **Caretaker of Crops and Chief Planner of Defense** – the first areas of authority in ancient cities
- 50 **Old English Laws** – the model colonists used for their local governments

TYPES OF ELECTIONS

- 10 **Local Election** – an election to elect members of the city council and mayor
- 20 **Initiative Election** – a method of enacting ordinances that begins with petitions by citizens
- 30 **Recall** – a petition process by which voters can remove an elected official from office in midterm
- 40 **Bond Election** – an election to determine whether a city may borrow money by selling bonds
- 50 **Charter Election** – an election to determine whether a city will adopt its own constitution and to elect people to draft it

CITY BOARDS AND SERVICES

- 10 **Library** – the board that runs the libraries
- 20 **Parks and Recreation** – a board to plan, build, and oversee parks and other recreation for city residents, such as races, sports classes, etc.
- 30 **Sanitation** – the service of collecting garbage and keeping the city clean
- 40 **Planning and Zoning** – a board that plans the use of buildings or activities that can occur in each area of the city

- 50 **Public Works** – anything constructed by government with public funds for the use or pleasure of the general public, such as libraries, etc.

MISCELLANEOUS

- 10 **Annex** – to bring property into boundaries
- 20 **County Board of Supervisors** – elected officials that run local and state elections among other things
- 30 **Grant-In-Aid** – federal money given to states or cities to help pay for programs
- 40 **Public Utility** – an organization that provides essential products or services, such as light, water, gas
- 50 **Corporation** – people joined together and given the authority to act as a single entity, as a city

FORMS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- 10 **Strong Mayor-Council/Assembly** – council/assembly governs; mayor appoints department heads and controls them
- 20 **Weak Mayor-Council/Assembly** – council/assembly governs; mayor appoints few, if any department heads and has limited control over them
- 30 **Council/Assembly-Manager** – council/assembly appoints manager to carry out policies and she/he appoints department heads
- 40 **Commission** – elected commissioners each head a department and together govern the city
- 50 **Home-Rule** – the authority for locally elected officials to make local decisions



IF ELECTED...

(20-25 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students consider the power of American democracy in action, making decisions as an elected leader would.

MATERIALS

Lined paper

GET READY

- ✓ Have paper available for students to write on.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Ask, *In America can our leaders do whatever they want to?* Listen and respond to student responses.
- ✓ Then ask, *What are the types of leaders we have in America?* (president, governor, senator, mayor, school board member, etc.)
- ✓ Tell the students to imagine they were just elected to office — they should choose an office to hold (governor, mayor, president, school board member, etc.)
- ✓ Tell your students to brainstorm things they would do if they were elected to office. It would be helpful to the students later on in the activity if they wrote their ideas down on paper.
- ✓ Have your students consult with each other about their ideas. They can share in pairs or in small groups of three or four.
- ✓ Inform the students that they need to use these brainstorming ideas to compose an essay about what they would do if they were elected to office.

- ✓ Allow students to share what they have written with the class, and encourage them to send their letters to the elected official whose positions they wrote about.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What were some of the best ideas that someone shared?*
- ★ *Remember, you were elected to office by the people you represent. Were you thinking about them when you wrote your ideas?*
- ★ *American leaders are not allowed to abuse the power they have. Did we hear any ideas that sounded like someone was using their power in a way they shouldn't?*
- ★ *Think about the office you wrote about. Can you name a power this leader has? A power the leader does not have?*
- ★ *Could you actually become this leader? How would you prepare to become this leader?*
- ★ *Is our democracy all about our leaders? What would you say democracy is about?*



THE “RIGHT” WAY

(40 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students identify the rights guaranteed to them by the Bill of Rights.

MATERIALS

The “Right” Way handout

GET READY

- ✓ Duplicate the *The “Right” Way* handout so that you have enough copies for each student in your class.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Review the 10 guarantees of the Bill of Rights. Give examples of what each right protects and ask for additional examples from your students.
- ✓ Distribute the *The “Right” Way* handout. Ask the students to match each scenario with the corresponding guarantee from the Bill of Rights.
- ✓ Let students complete the handout individually or in groups of two.
- ✓ Go over the correct answers with the class, having students explain why they matched the scenarios as they did.
- ✓ Ask students, again individually or in groups of two, to choose the right most important to them.
- ✓ Slowly ask one group to join another group, and then that group to join another, etc. Eventually this will bring the groups back to a class discussion of the most significant rights guaranteed to Americans.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Which right(s) seems to be the most important to this class?*
- ★ *Which right(s) seemed not as important to this class? Why? How might your life change if we lost those rights?*
- ★ *Did you realize that a right was more important to you than you had previously thought?*
- ★ *Was it easy for a group to agree on what right was most important? Why or why not?*

MORE!

Have students write an argument defending what they think is the most important right. Ask students to bring in examples of these rights in newspapers, television, magazines, etc.

VOTE QUOTE

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”
–Edmund Burke



THE “RIGHT” WAY

Match the guarantees of the Bill of Rights with the scenarios that best describe them.

THE 10 GUARANTEES OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS

- A. Freedom of speech
- B. Freedom of the press
- C. Freedom of religion
- D. Freedom to assemble
- E. Protection from unreasonable searches and seizures
- F. Right to bear arms
- G. Protection from self-incrimination
- H. Right to a jury trial
- I. Protection from cruel and unusual punishment
- J. Access to legal counsel

SCENARIOS

- _____ You publish an article critical of a policy issued by your mayor.
- _____ You own a rifle and hunt often.
- _____ A police officer asks to search your home, but you tell him he cannot come in because he does not have a search warrant.
- _____ You attend religious services on the weekends.
- _____ You are arrested for a crime and want to see your lawyer.
- _____ You are charged for a crime and want to be tried by a group of your peers.
- _____ You are being held for a serious crime, but feel safe from being dealt an inhumane punishment.
- _____ You are arrested for a crime, but do not have to say anything that might implicate you in that crime.
- _____ You join a group of friends and protest a construction site in your neighborhood by picketing outside the site on public property.
- _____ You make comments critical of the president’s policies but know it is your right to say what you want.



A DECLARATION

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students read an excerpt from the *Declaration of Independence* and interpret it in their own words.

MATERIALS

A Declaration handout

GET READY

- ✓ Make a copy of the *A Declaration* handout for each student in your class.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Explain to your class that the *Declaration of Independence* was the document that laid the groundwork for the shaping of our country. Further explain that many of the rights Americans cherish are referenced in the *Declaration of Independence*.
- ✓ Give each student a copy of *A Declaration* handout.
- ✓ Have your students read the excerpt from the *Declaration of Independence* found on the handout.
- ✓ Tell your class that they need to summarize, in their own words, what the excerpt means and then write their interpretations in the space provided.
- ✓ Inform your students that next they need to identify and interpret the various rights that are included in the passage. (There is a space provided on the handout for this as well.)

- ✓ Once your students have completed the handout, divide them into groups of three or four. Give these small groups time to review their summaries and interpretations.
- ✓ Have the small groups come back together for a class discussion. Dissect the *Declaration of Independence* excerpt and allow your students to share their insights and ideas.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What does this passage from the Declaration of Independence tell us about our rights and responsibilities as United States citizens?*
- ★ *Why do you think you were given this particular section of the Declaration of Independence to summarize and interpret?*
- ★ *Was it difficult to analyze and summarize the excerpt? Why or why not?*
- ★ *Were your thoughts similar to those of the other people in your group? Were they different? Explain how?*



A DECLARATION

Name: _____

Read the following excerpt from the *Declaration of Independence*. First, summarize the content of the passage and then list in your own words the rights it specifies.

Excerpt from the *Declaration of Independence*:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.”

Summary: _____

Rights Specified in the Above Excerpt: _____



DEMOCRACY: WHO? WHAT? WHERE?

(35 minutes: 5 minutes one day, 30 another)

OBJECTIVE

Students investigate questions about their government and other governments around the world.

MATERIALS

Democracy: Who? What? Where? handout

GET READY

- ✓ Duplicate the page of questions and cut them into fortune cookie-sized strips.
- ✓ Duplicate a copy of your class roster to record which question went to which student.
- ✓ Pair students.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Place the slips face down. Let each pair select a question and read it aloud to the class.
- ✓ Once every pair has a question, tell the students to study their questions very carefully.
- ✓ Say, *As partners, examine the question. Brainstorm: What would you expect the answer to be? What are some possibilities for finding the answer? Write down these first guesses.*

- ✓ Give students several days to determine the answers. Provide students with some clues about how to find answers. For example, some answers may be found in the school library. You may want to provide additional paper resources (books, magazines, etc.) and/or access to the Internet.
- ✓ Have students present their answers as oral reports of no more than one minute.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What answers were not at all what you expected? Explain.*
- ★ *Did anyone already know the right answer to their question? How did you know that?*
- ★ *Did anyone find out any other interesting information they wish to share?*

MORE!

Students can write thank you letters to the contacts that helped them find their answers: people at City Hall, the school librarian, etc.



DEMOCRACY: WHO? WHAT? WHERE?

1. What ancient nation first practiced democracy? What are some things we know about the way their government worked?

2. Name five democracies besides our own. How are these countries' governments different than our own?

3. Name the leader of another democracy. What is his or her title? What are his or her responsibilities?

4. How many countries in the world are democracies? About how many countries were democracies 100 years ago?

5. What is the largest democracy on earth? How many people live there?

6. What are the names of our senators? What political parties do they belong to?

7. What are the names of our representatives? What political parties do they belong to?

8. What are the three branches of the American government? What do the different branches do?

9. What cities have been our nation's capital? When did Washington, D.C. become the nation's capital.

10. Name the guarantees protected by the Bill of Rights? Why was the Bill of Rights created?

11. Who first settled the community we live in? What was the date of incorporation of our town/city?

12. How many employees work directly for our local government? What are some of the jobs they have (name five)?

13. What did our mayor do before becoming mayor? Is it a full-time job? What are some of the mayor's responsibilities?

14. Where are our city offices located? How many people work there?

15. Where and how do you register to vote in our town?



PEN PALS

(Time varies)

OBJECTIVE

Students contact other students around the globe to learn about different democracies.

MATERIALS

Appropriate letter writing materials: paper, pens/pencils, envelopes, etc.

GET READY

- ✓ Arrange pen pals from other countries to exchange information about their countries with your students.
- ✓ Write to:
World Wise Schools
1990 K Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20526.
- ✓ Look for pen pal opportunities on the Internet at www.stonesoup.com/main2/penpal.html.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Assign each student a pen pal.
- ✓ Give your students sample questions they could ask their pen pals, such as: *How is your country different than America? Do you know people who vote? What is the name and title of your country's leader?*

- ✓ Over a specified period of time, have your students put together a profile on the countries where their pen pals are living. Have them include information they got directly from their pen pals.
- ✓ Designate a time for students to share what they learned from their friends overseas.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *How is democracy the same in other countries? How is it different?*
- ★ *What did you especially like about the other countries you researched?*
- ★ *Are there any things you did not like?*
- ★ *Are there things you would change about the United States?*
- ★ *How could we make changes if we wanted to?*



A MESSAGE FROM NELSON MANDELA

(30-40 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students compare and contrast aspects of American and South African democracy.

MATERIALS

A Message from Nelson Mandela to the Youth of America handout

GET READY

- ✓ Make a copy of the *A Message from Nelson Mandela to the Youth of America* handout and the *A Message to Nelson Mandela from the Youth of America* handout for each student in your class.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Talk to your class about Nelson Mandela. Ask, *Does anyone know who Nelson Mandela is? Do you know why he is famous?* Listen to student responses and provide information on Nelson Mandela to create a context for the handout. (To find information, visit www.anc.org.za/people/mandela.html.)
- ✓ Have your class read the *A Message from Nelson Mandela To the Youth of America* handout.
- ✓ Have your students compose messages to Nelson Mandela on the *A Message to Nelson Mandela from the Youth of America* handout in response to his message to them.
- ✓ Have your students share their messages with their classmates and, if possible, send the letters to Nelson Mandela's home in Qunu, Transkei, South Africa.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Why do you think Nelson Mandela wrote a message to the youth of America?*
- ★ *What did he mean when he wrote, "Whilst the particulars of our histories may have been different, the heart of our struggle, from Selma to Soweto, has been the same...."?*
- ★ *What are some realizations that he made regarding America?*
- ★ *What are some similarities that Nelson Mandela noticed between his country of South Africa and the United States?*
- ★ *Both America and South Africa are democracies; what makes them so?*
- ★ *What did you write in response to Nelson Mandela's message?*

MORE!

Have students think of other international figures that they want to contact. Have them write and mail letters to these individuals.



A MESSAGE FROM NELSON MANDELA TO THE YOUTH OF AMERICA

Young people of America, I greet you in the name of friendship, reconciliation and peace. Today, we stand at the dawn of a new century—a century in which it is possible for the first time to create a truly global society. The choices you, the next generation, make now will critically affect the quality of life and the aspirations of that global society.

Looking back on this past hundred years, it has been a century mixed with hope and despair. Hope because we have witnessed a growing worldwide outrage against racial discrimination; despair because we have also witnessed some of the most horrendous examples of man's inhumanity to man. In a world that has produced the wonders of satellite communication and laser surgery one third of humanity still suffers daily from poverty. Entire peoples have become victims of genocide and "ethnic cleansing."

But a time of crisis is not just a time for tears. It gives us an opportunity, indeed it throws down the challenge—to choose wisely or to choose rashly. You who are our youth, our pride and our future, face that challenge now. Do you choose the road to further violence and injustice or do you choose the path to a just and peaceful society?...

Since my release from prison, I have come to realize, as I hope you will too, that to face this challenge, a new vocabulary of life is required. You will need to empower, not to exploit each other; to respect, not to degrade each other; to deal with issues that touch both our continents, and not to avoid them. You will need, in short, to create a bridge and bond between the youth of Africa and the youth of America. Whilst the particulars of our histories may have been different, the heart of our struggle, from Selma to Soweto, has been the same...

During my visit to the United States, I found that many of you, both black and white, remain unfamiliar with the diverse peoples of our continent. Few realize the day-to-day realities young people face growing up in Africa. The destruction that apartheid once wrought on our youth is incalculable. The very essence of apartheid—divide and rule—has broken down the fabric of family life and has turned brother against brother and sister against sister.

In the United States, too, hatred, distrust and faction fighting are proving to be a deadly cancer in the growth of the nation, particularly the youth. Students arm themselves to go to school; gangs battle for supremacy in the streets, whilst drug dealers fan the flames. The gun has become the symbol of survival. But the gun only brings further violence and destruction. This may sound strange and ironic, coming from me, when I was part of the leadership which called for the armed struggle. It is precisely because I took part in that decision that I can appeal to you now, to say the time has come for the gun to be silenced, the hatred to be put behind us. Together we must work out a new solution, towards peace, towards reconciliation, and towards justice for all. It will not be easy.

During my lifetime, I have met thousands of young white men and women from both our continents who have risked their lives to end discrimination. I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together with equal opportunities in harmony and dignity. This is the challenge to us in ending apartheid in South Africa and this is the challenge to you in ending racism in the United States—to set an example to the whole world. But we cannot do this if we ourselves are divided, if we ourselves have hatred in our hearts, if we ourselves cannot talk to each other.

As the youth of America, you hold a very special place in the future of your country and the rest of the world, particularly the continent of Africa. ... Talk to each other, learn from each other, share with each other. Work together to give the scourge of racial hatred its final blow.

I wish you strength, peace, and success in everything you do. From Selma to Soweto, together we shall overcome!

Mayibuye i-Africa!
Amandla!

Nelson Mandela

This message is excerpted from Nelson Mandela's Special Introduction to *African-American Consciousness —Reclaiming Your History*, part of the Soul to Soul Adventure Series by John Ballard. This message cannot be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher, World Citizens for a Global Education. Kids Voting USA thanks Mr. Ballard and World Citizens for a Global Education for permission to reprint the excerpt.



A MESSAGE TO NELSON MANDELA FROM THE YOUTH OF AMERICA

A “Soul to Soul” Message to Nelson Mandela from:

Your Name	Your School	Your Address

- Checklist of possibilities:**
 You may want to...
- Affirm your commitment to help end racism
 - Tell him why you are eager to become a voter
 - Express how you feel about Mr. Mandela’s career and life story
 - Send an idea for linking world youth
 - **Write a completely individual “soul to soul” message (the best of all!)**



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

- ★ What does the word “Democracy” mean? Where have you heard it before?
- ★ Who has the power in a democracy? The leader or the people he/she leads?
- ★ How are decisions made in a democracy?
- ★ How can a person make his/her voice heard in a democracy?
- ★ Sometimes people don’t agree with a majority’s decisions. Should they still have to stand by them?
- ★ What other types of governments are there?
- ★ What is the best type of government?
- ★ If you did not live in a democracy, what do you think you would be missing?
- ★ How can you, as students, participate in a democracy?
- ★ Does everyone you know understand what a democracy is? What can you do to help others understand democracy?

DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA

- ★ What qualifies America as a democracy?
- ★ Who makes the decisions in America?
- ★ What do adults do to contribute to our government?
- ★ What benefits does our government provide us with?
- ★ How do you support your country?
- ★ Does the United States have a perfect government? What can you do to improve it?
- ★ What type of people makes good leaders? Good presidents?
- ★ Do you know people who don’t care about our government? Why do you think they don’t care?
- ★ Do you think everyone benefits from our government? If not, who do you think is not benefiting?
- ★ If the majority of Americans think something is good, are they always going to be right?
- ★ Why is democracy the fairest form of government?

**OVERARCHING QUESTIONS** (continued)**A CITIZEN'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- ★ The U.S. Constitution guarantees us many rights. Why do you think our forefathers felt the need to protect our rights?
- ★ What is the Bill of Rights? Why do you think it was created?
- ★ What are some of our protected rights?
- ★ Are some of our rights more important than others? Why or why not?
- ★ What does freedom of speech mean to you?
- ★ Does freedom of speech mean that you can say whatever you want whenever you want?
- ★ What does the word “freedom” mean to you?
- ★ Do you think kids have enough rights? Do you think there are certain rights denied to you that you should have?
- ★ What do you think are a citizen’s responsibilities?
- ★ How are you a responsible citizen?

DEMOCRACY IN THE WORLD

- ★ Are all governments in the world the same? How are some governments different than others?
- ★ Can you think of differences between the way you live in America and the ways other people live in other countries? What are they? What are some examples?
- ★ Do you think America is unique? What makes it a unique place to live?
- ★ Can you think of a country that has had some of the same struggles and triumphs as America? Explain what makes the countries similar? What are some differences?
- ★ Why do you think that America has attracted millions of people over the last 200 years, drawing them away from their native countries?



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

Government: How Local, State, and Federal Government Works by Mark Friedman

OBJECTIVE

Students learn how the government operates and how it affects them.

MATERIALS

Government: How Local, State, and Federal Government Works – Mark Friedman; writing materials

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

- ✓ Ask your students how many places they live. This may confuse them at first as they will think that they live in only one place, so ask them to name where they live.
- ✓ You will undoubtedly hear at least a few different responses, some of which might be a state or a city name. Inform your students that they all live in multiple places: a county, a state, a country, and probably a town or city as well.
- ✓ Tell your students that just as you live in multiple places, you have multiple governments that serve your needs.
- ✓ Tell your students that you are going to read a book that discusses the different types of government: local, state, and federal.
- ✓ Read selections from *Government: How Local, State, and Federal Government Works*.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Which government is the most important: local, state, or federal? Is there a good answer to this question?*
- ★ *What is something your local government might do? Your state government? The federal government?*

- ★ *Consider the branches of government: legislative, judicial, and executive. What do the different branches do?*
- ★ *Is one branch more powerful than another?*
- ★ *What does the term “checks and balances” mean in terms of government?*

ACTIVITY

- ✓ Tell students that they are going to write a short story based on the following prompt: You wake up to find out that the government was shut down for the day. As you write your story, consider how your life would be different without any government.
- ✓ Inform the class that the story must address what would be missing in terms of services provided by the local, state, and federal governments. Say, *Think of everything you normally do during an average day. What could you do now that you couldn't do before? What can't you do now that the government used to enable you to do?*
- ✓ Ask some questions to get your students thinking inventively: *Would you have school if there was no government? Would the traffic signals work?* Encourage your students to be creative in their responses. (You can provide a list of government services to your students if you wish.)
- ✓ Students could alternatively write essays on what the different levels of government provide each citizen.
- ✓ Ask students to share their written responses with the class.



CULMINATING ACTIVITY: DEMOCRACY, TAKING A STAND

(45-60 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn the characteristics of a democratic society and explore their roles as citizens.

MATERIALS

Teens Pressure Lawmakers for Tobacco-Free Schools handout

GET READY

- ✓ Copy the *Teens Pressure Lawmakers for Tobacco-Free Schools* handout for each of your students.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Ask your students, *What words come to mind when you think of the word 'democracy'?* List the students' ideas on the board.
- ✓ Read each of the following statements one at a time and ask students to stand if they agree with the statement: *Democracy is a type of government. Democracy is a way of living with each other in our communities, states, and nation. People's participation in public life is the essential ingredient in democratic government. Only adults can effect changes in our democracy.*
- ✓ Discuss your students' responses to the above exercise: *Democracy is both a way of living in society and our form of government. While citizens must be 18 or older to vote, there are many ways that youth can effect changes in our society.*
- ✓ Ask your students to read the true story on the handout, *Teens Pressure Lawmakers for Tobacco-Free Schools*. Discuss the vocabulary

words in italics (or ask the students to look up words that are unfamiliar to them).

- ✓ After reading the story, ask your students to form pairs to discuss and write answers to the following questions: 1) What strategies did the students use to bring about the successful passage of the bill? 2) What personal qualities or characteristics were necessary for the students' success? 3) These students took a stand for a cause they believed in. Can you think of other causes for which you might take a stand? Write down at least three.
- ✓ Finally, invite students to stand and tell about a time when they, or other students they know or have heard about, took a stand for a cause they believed in and worked to create change.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What are the characteristics of a democratic society?*
- ★ *What qualifies America as a democratic society?*
- ★ *What keeps some countries from being considered a democracy?*
- ★ *What rights and responsibilities do you have as an American citizen?*
- ★ *What strategies did the students in the handout use to bring about change?*
- ★ *What personal qualities or characteristics were necessary for the students to achieve their goal?*
- ★ *What are causes for which you might take a stand? Why are you passionate about these causes?*



TEENS PRESSURE LAWMAKERS FOR TOBACCO-FREE SCHOOLS

In the town of Sandwich, Massachusetts, nearly thirty students started what turned into a successful two year campaign to lobby Massachusetts lawmakers to pass a law banning tobacco on school grounds. Since this law was passed in 1987, many other states have passed similar laws. Here is how this group of committed teens made a difference.

Working with the health teacher, William Sangster, the teens met after school and brainstormed strategies to use in their quest to deter youth from taking up the smoking habit. To begin, they wrote letters to all the *legislators* in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Working with a key *ally*, State Representative Peter Morin, a bill was created. Students attended *committee hearings* for the proposed bill, and testified before the House. April Swartz, a quiet member of Students Against Smoking challenged committee members with this argument: “If someone came to you asking to stop teen suicide, everyone would be in favor of that idea. Our bill is the first step to slowing down a form of teen suicide. We need your help. Vote in favor of our bill for the children of tomorrow.”

April had a sound argument, but the opposition didn't buy it. The *legislation* was opposed by the Mass. Department of Education who argued that local school boards should

decide such policies, rather than the state. But the major stumbling block was that the Committee chairman insisted that school faculty smoking be banned as well, a position that the Mass. Federation of Teachers vowed to fight. The bill was defeated.

The students might have given up, but in the summer reporters from a local newspaper and TV station wanted to feature their cause. The teens went back to Mr. Sangster and asked if they could re-file the bill and keep working on it. They did, though the new bill reflected a compromise with the Committee chairman and now included banning smoking for teachers as well.

By the time the bill cleared the full House and landed in the Senate, senators were being pressured to remove teachers from the legislation. Now the students geared up for *lobbying* the senators. Mr. Sangster paired the students and set them free to talk with every legislator they could find. The impact was evident, most notably in the Speaker of the House deciding to be a co-sponsor of the bill. As a result, the bill received strong *bipartisan* support. In the end, the bill passed, but did not include banning smoking for teachers. The vote was 112-27. This bill was the first piece of legislation ever passed in the history of the Massachusetts legislature sponsored directly by kids.

Adapted from Lesko, W. (1992). *No Kidding Around!: America's Young Activists are Changing Our World and You Can Too*. Kensington, MD: Information USA, Inc.

KIDS VOTING USA

6-8

THE RIGHT TO VOTE

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



INTRODUCTION TO THEME

The intent of this theme is for students to understand what suffrage is and how and when it was granted to different populations over the course of American history. The theme’s activities fall under three main learning objectives:

- Students will understand what suffrage is within the context of American history.
- Students will learn the history of America’s minority populations and the right to vote.
- Students will understand what advantages and obstacles there are to suffrage in America today.



GENERAL ACTIVITIES

CONCEPT 1: WHAT IS SUFFRAGE?

Suffrage Sequence Cards 2
 Vote Quotes 5

CONCEPT 2: EXPANDING THE RIGHT TO VOTE

Historical Debate – Women’s Suffrage 7
 The Long Journey 8
 1965 Alabama Literacy Test 10
 Part Of The Franchise 15

CONCEPT 3: SUFFRAGE TODAY

Who Has The Power? 16
 Voting Barriers 20



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

Questions for Concept 1: What is Suffrage? 21
 Questions for Concept 2: Expanding the Right to Vote 21
 Questions for Concept 3: Suffrage Today 21



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

A Time for Courage: The Suffragette Diary of Kathleen Bowen by Kathryn Lasky 22



CULMINATING ACTIVITY

Use It Or Lose It! 23



SUFFRAGE SEQUENCE CARDS

(20-25 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students order and examine the history of voting rights to gain a better understanding of the right to vote.

MATERIALS

U.S. Suffrage Timeline Cards handout; *U.S. Suffrage Timeline Cards with Dates* handout

GET READY

- ✓ Copy and cut a set of *U.S. Suffrage Timeline Cards* for each group of three to five students.
- ✓ Copy a *U.S. Suffrage Timeline Cards with Dates* handout sheet for each group.
- ✓ See “The Right to Vote” in the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Have your students divide into groups of three to five.
- ✓ Give each group a set of suffrage sequence cards.
- ✓ Explain to the groups that they need to put the cards in chronological order. Allow an adequate amount of time for the groups to order the cards.
- ✓ When it seems like all, or most, of the groups have finished, call the game and provide each group with an answer key handout.
- ✓ Go over the correct sequencing as a class.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Do you think we will ever need to add new cards to this game? If yes, what makes you think so?*
- ★ *Who still cannot vote? Should they be able to vote? Why or why not?*
- ★ *Why do people want the right to vote?*
- ★ *Why did it take so long for some groups to gain the right to vote?*
- ★ *Do you know what each group did to gain the right to vote? How could you find out?*

MORE!

Assign students to discover and report what various populations did to gain the right to vote.

VOTE QUOTE

“Vote as an individual; lemmings end up falling off cliffs.” –Pierre S. du Pont



U.S. SUFFRAGE TIMELINE CARDS

<p>The Declaration of Independence is signed. The right to vote is based on property ownership. Suffrage is primarily for white male Protestants over the age of 21.</p>	<p>The 24th Amendment passes, outlawing the poll tax.</p>	<p>With the Civil War over, lawmakers enact the 14th Amendment, granting citizenship to African-Americans and permitting them to vote. But state officials still attempt to deny them the right to vote.</p>
<p>The Constitution is drafted. States are given the power to regulate their own suffrage laws and favor white male landowners.</p>	<p>Further amendments to the Voting Rights Act require that many voting materials be printed in the languages of various minority groups.</p>	<p>The 15th Amendment is ratified, providing the legal rights of African-Americans to vote and prohibiting state and local governments from denying that right.</p>
<p>George Washington is elected president by the Electoral College. Only 6 percent of the entire population is involved in the election.</p>	<p>The Voting Rights Act passes after Martin Luther King, Jr. leads 25,000 people on a march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, to dramatize the need for more voting rights.</p>	<p>Wyoming becomes a state and is the first state to provide suffrage for women in its Constitution.</p>
<p>Vermont declares that all adult white males, regardless of property ownership or religion, can vote.</p>	<p>The 26th Amendment lowers the voting age from 21 to 18.</p>	<p>The Civil Rights Act passes, allowing punishment for interference with, or disruption of, protection for African-American voters.</p>
<p>Rhode Island does not follow the lead of Vermont and other states with reformed voting rights. A rebellion begins and forces Rhode Island to adopt a new Constitution. This allows broader voting rights.</p>	<p>Before the signing of the Constitution, many communities vote in ways similar to their European home countries.</p>	<p>The 19th Amendment is ratified, giving women the right to vote.</p>
<p>Because African-Americans and women suffer discrimination at the polls, Elizabeth Cady Stanton sets forth resolutions for women’s suffrage at the first convention of women’s rights advocates. They pass.</p>	<p>A Civil Rights Act defines citizenship and prohibits discrimination based on race. The Republican Congress overrides the veto of President Andrew Jackson, hoping to lure the vote of former slaves.</p>	<p>Poll taxes, grandfather clauses and literacy tests are introduced in many Southern states. They are designed to restrict the ability of African-Americans to register and vote.</p>
<p>Georgia lowers its voting age from 21 to 18 in state and local elections.</p>	<p>The National American Woman Suffrage Association is founded, with Susan B. Anthony as president.</p>	<p>Miguel Trujillo, a Native American and former Marine, wins a suit against New Mexico for not allowing him to vote. New Mexico and Arizona are required to give the vote to all Native Americans.</p>
<p>The Voting Rights Act is amended to lower the voting age to 18 and ban the use of literacy tests.</p>		



U.S. SUFFRAGE TIMELINE CARDS WITH DATES

1776 – The Declaration of Independence is signed. The right to vote is based on property ownership. Suffrage is primarily for white male Protestants over the age of 21.	1964 – The 24th Amendment passes, outlawing the poll tax.	1868 – With the Civil War over, lawmakers enact the 14th Amendment, granting citizenship to African-Americans and permitting them to vote. But state officials still attempt to deny them the right to vote.
1787 – The Constitution is drafted. States are given the power to regulate their own suffrage laws and favor white male landowners.	1975 – Further amendments to the Voting Rights Act require that many voting materials be printed in the languages of various minority groups.	1870 – The 15th Amendment is ratified, providing the legal rights of African-Americans to vote and prohibiting state and local governments from denying that right.
1789 – George Washington is elected president by the Electoral College. Only 6 percent of the entire population is involved in the election.	1965 – The Voting Rights Act passes after Martin Luther King, Jr. leads 25,000 people on a march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, to dramatize the need for more voting rights.	1890 – Wyoming becomes a state and is the first state to provide suffrage for women in its Constitution.
1791 – Vermont declares that all adult white males, regardless of property ownership or religion, can vote.	1971 – The 26th Amendment lowers the voting age from 21 to 18.	1957 – The Civil Rights Act passes, allowing punishment for interference with, or disruption of, protection for African-American voters.
1842 – Rhode Island does not follow the lead of Vermont and other states with reformed voting rights. A rebellion begins and forces Rhode Island to adopt a new Constitution. This allows broader voting rights.	Before 1776 – Before the signing of the Constitution, many communities vote in ways similar to their European home countries.	1920 – The 19th Amendment is ratified, giving women the right to vote.
1848 – Because African-Americans and women suffer discrimination at the polls, Elizabeth Cady Stanton sets forth resolutions for women’s suffrage at the first convention of women’s rights advocates. They pass.	1865 – A Civil Rights Act defines citizenship and prohibits discrimination based on race. The Republican Congress overrides the veto of President Andrew Jackson, hoping to lure the vote of former slaves.	1876 – Poll taxes, grandfather clauses and literacy tests are introduced in many Southern states. They are designed to restrict the ability of African-Americans to register and vote.
1943 – Georgia lowers its voting age from 21 to 18 in state and local elections.	1869 – The National American Woman Suffrage Association is founded, with Susan B. Anthony as president.	1947 – Miguel Trujillo, a Native American and former Marine, wins a suit against New Mexico for not allowing him to vote. New Mexico and Arizona are required to give the vote to all Native Americans.
1970 – The Voting Rights Act is amended to lower the voting age to 18 and ban the use of literacy tests.		

**VOTE QUOTES**

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students study famous quotes to learn the significance of the right to vote.

MATERIALS

Vote Quotes handout

GET READY

- ✓ Make a copy of the *Vote Quotes* handout for each student.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Give each student in the class a copy of the *Vote Quotes* handout.
- ✓ Tell your students that they will be analyzing the six quotes on the handout. Have them interpret, in their own words, the purpose and meaning of each quote.
- ✓ Once your students have individually analyzed the six quotes, have them get into groups of two or three to discuss and compare their thoughts.
- ✓ Have your class come together as a whole to discuss all responses.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ★ *What quote did you agree with the most? Why?*
- ★ *Did you struggle with interpreting any of the quotes? Which one(s) and why?*
- ★ *Did you disagree with any of the quotes? If yes, why?*
- ★ *Did you find that the people in your small group had similar interpretations of the quotes?*
- ★ *What insights did these quotes shed on suffrage?*



VOTE QUOTES

1. “The future of this republic is in the hands of the American voter.”
–Dwight D. Eisenhower
2. “The ballot is stronger than the bullet.”
–Abraham Lincoln
3. “Those who stay away from the election think that one vote will do no good: ‘Tis but one step more to think one vote will do no harm.”
–Ralph Waldo Emerson
4. “Bad officials are elected by good citizens who do not vote.”
–George Jean Nathan
5. “The ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all.”
–John Fitzgerald Kennedy
6. “People often say that, in a democracy, decisions are made by a majority of the people. Of course, that is not true. Decisions are made by a majority of those who make themselves heard and who vote — a very different thing.”
–Walter H. Judd



HISTORICAL DEBATE—WOMEN’S SUFFRAGE

(45 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students debate women’s suffrage.

MATERIALS

A large piece of newsprint or butcher paper

GET READY

- ✓ See “The Right to Vote” in the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Hold a debate: “Resolved, that women should be allowed to vote” as though the students lived in the early 1900s when women still did not have the right to vote.
- ✓ Use formal debate rules or the following:
 - ✓ The teacher is the arbitrator and determines the length of the debate.
 - ✓ Each student who is debating is arbitrarily assigned to the affirmative or negative side. (Have about four or five students in each group.)
 - ✓ Each group must prepare an opening and closing statement and designate a spokesperson to deliver them.
 - ✓ Each student who is debating must research and present at least one factual statement.
 - ✓ Have the groups take turns giving statements and making rebuttals until closing statements are given.
- ✓ After the last closing statement, engage the class in a discussion of women’s suffrage.
 - ✓ Hang up a large piece of newsprint and label it as illustrated:

KNOW	WANT TO KNOW

- ✓ Ask each student to write statements on small pieces of paper and stick them on the KNOW and WANT TO KNOW sections. Discuss these.
- ✓ Instruct your students to divide the research into specific topics and assign smaller groups to research them.
- ✓ Continue discussion for a few days to move papers from WANT TO KNOW to KNOW on the bulletin board.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What were some of the more successful arguments made during the debate? Why?*
- ★ *What did you learn through this activity that surprised you?*
- ★ *What other groups had to fight for the right to vote?*
- ★ *Why do people fight for the right to vote?*
- ★ *Why has it taken so long for some groups to secure the right to vote?*
- ★ *How would you feel if you were denied the right to vote?*

MORE!

An excited class in Tempe, Arizona, wore costumes representing the early 1900s to make their debate more real.

Allow your class to make many decisions by voting.



THE LONG JOURNEY

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students explore the history of Native Americans and the right to vote.

MATERIALS

The Long Journey handout

GET READY

- ✓ Make a copy of *The Long Journey* handout for each of your students.
- ✓ If possible, share information with your students about the history of Native Americans and the right to vote in preparation for this activity.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Inform your students that while the 15th Amendment (1870) endowed African-American men with the right to vote and the 19th Amendment (1920) granted voting rights for women, Native Americans can not claim one defining historical moment when their right to vote was secured.
- ✓ Tell your class that one important step in granting suffrage to Native Americans was the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. In theory it provided voting rights to Native Americans, though in reality the practice was much different.
- ✓ Have your students read the handout, which pertains to the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. Have them complete the questions about the passage and quotes found on the handout.
- ✓ Go over the handout as a class.

- ✓ Inform your students that election laws as well as literacy tests, poll taxes, and voter harassment prevented many Native Americans from voting well beyond the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. Tell them: *It was not until Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that all of these practices were declared illegal. In fact, it was not until the act was renewed in 1975 that Congress required states to provide bilingual ballots and voter assistance at the polls for linguistic-minority voters, including some Native American populations.*
- ✓ Engage your class in a discussion on Native Americans and suffrage using the questions below.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *How is the history of Native Americans and the right to vote similar to the history of African-Americans and the right to vote? To women and the right to vote?*
- ★ *Why do you think some Native Americans may have been reluctant to accept American citizenship and the right to vote?*
- ★ *Why might Native Americans be considered a special group in terms of citizenship and suffrage?*
- ★ *Why do you think it was such a long and complicated journey for Native Americans to be granted suffrage?*



THE LONG JOURNEY

Read the following passage from the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 and answer the questions below:

“Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That all non citizen Indians born within the territorial limits of the United States be, and they are hereby, declared to be citizens of the United States: Provided That the granting of such citizenship shall not in any manner impair or otherwise affect the right of any Indian to tribal or other property. (Approved June 2, 1924)”

Many Native Americans continued to face voting barriers up to the middle of the 20th century. What kind of voting barriers do you think they faced? What other group(s) faced similar barriers?

Doesn't citizenship guarantee voting rights? Provide an example of when it did not.

The citizenship and voting rights guaranteed by the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 were not received well by all Native Americans. Read the following quotes and answer the questions below:

“United States citizenship was just another way of absorbing us and destroying our customs and our government. How could these Europeans come over and tell us we were citizens in our country? We had our own citizenship. By its [the Citizenship Act of 1924] provisions all Indians were automatically made United States citizens whether they wanted to be so or not. This was a violation of our sovereignty. Our citizenship was in our nations.” – Anonymous

How does this quote demonstrate that not all Native Americans were happy with the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924?

“The Indians aren't allowed to have a voice in state affairs because they aren't voters. All they [the politicians] have to do out there is to look out for the interests of the Indians. Just why the Indians shouldn't vote is something I can't understand. One of the Indians went over to Old Town once to see some official in the city hall about voting. I don't know just what position that official had over there, but he said to the Indian, ‘We don't want you people over here. You have your own elections over on the island, and if you want to vote, go over there.’” –Henry Mitchell, canoe maker

How does this quote represent the desire some Native Americans had for the right to vote?



1965 ALABAMA LITERACY TEST

(45 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students experience the injustice of voter discrimination.

MATERIALS

1965 Alabama Literacy Test handout;
Answers to Alabama Literacy Test handout

GET READY

- ✓ Duplicate a *1965 Alabama Literacy Test* for each student. Note: this test should be administered after students have studied both the Constitution and the obstruction of African-American voting. (Students should be aware, for instance, that white voters did not have to take these tests because of “Grandfather Clauses.”)

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Say, *The U.S. Constitution is so important to citizenship that you should know it perfectly without needing previous study time. No textbooks may be consulted.*
- ✓ Pass out the *1965 Alabama Literacy Test* and provide 25 minutes of serious, uninterrupted and monitored test time.
- ✓ Students will trade papers and score the tests as you read each item with its full correct response.
- ✓ Say, *You just took the 1965 Alabama Literacy Test to determine whether you were qualified to vote. If you missed more than seven answers, the registrars would have refused you.*

- ✓ Ask for students to share their thoughts on the difficulty and fairness of the exam. (Most will comment on how difficult and unfair it was.)
- ✓ Give your students the task of finding primary sources that describe what it was like to experience voter injustice before the civil rights movement.
- ✓ Have your students share the accounts of voter discrimination they found.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Were you upset when you thought this test might harm your grade? How would you feel if it robbed you of your right to vote?*
- ★ *Why did Southerners want to keep African-Americans away from the polls? What were they afraid of? (political power, economics, etc.)*
- ★ *Nationally, what are the requirements today for registration and voting in any region of the United States?*

MORE!

Assign students to write a short story about a character that took a literacy test in the South and failed it (or passed it). What happened next?

VOTE QUOTE

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” – Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Thanks to Dr. Robert Marlon, University of Redlands, now deceased, who obtained the 1965 Alabama Literacy Test during his involvement with the civil rights movement.



1965 ALABAMA LITERACY TEST

Name _____

1. Which of the following is a right guaranteed by the Bill of Rights?

Public Education Employment
 Voting Trial by Jury

2. The federal census of population is taken each five years. True False

3. If a person is indicted for a crime, name two rights which he has.

4. A U.S. senator elected at the general election in November takes office the following year on what date? _____

5. A President elected at the general election in November takes office the following year on what date? _____

6. Which definition applies to the word "amendment?"

Proposed change, as in a Constitution
 Making of peace between nations at war
 A part of the government

7. A person appointed to the U.S. Supreme court is appointed for a term of _____.

8. When the Constitution was approved by the original colonies, how many states had to ratify it in order for it to be in effect? _____

9. Does enumeration affect the income tax levied on citizens in various states? _____

10. Persons opposed to swearing in an oath may say, instead: (solemnly _____)

11. To serve as President of the United States, a person must have attained:

25 35 40 45 years

12. What words are required by law to be on all coins and paper currency of the U.S.?

13. The Supreme Court is the chief lawmaking body of the state. True False

14. If a law passed by a state is contrary to provisions of the U.S. Constitution, which law prevails?

15. If a vacancy occurs in the U.S. Senate, the state must hold an election, but meanwhile the place may be filled by a temporary appointment made by _____

16. A U.S. senator is elected for a term of _____ years.

17. Appropriation of money for the armed services can be only for a period limited to _____ years.

18. The chief executive and the administrative offices make up the _____ branch of government.

19. Who passes laws dealing with piracy?

20. The number of representatives which a state is entitled to have in the House of Representatives is based on _____

21. The Constitution protects an individual against punishments which are _____ and _____.



1965 ALABAMA LITERACY TEST PAGE 2

22. When a jury has heard and rendered a verdict in a case, and the judgment on the verdict has become final, the defendant cannot again be brought to trial for the same cause. True False

23. Name two levels of government which can levy taxes: _____

24. Communism was the type of government in: U.S. Russia England

25. Cases tried before a court of law are two types, civil and _____

26. By a majority vote of the members of Congress, the Congress can change provisions of the Constitution of the U.S. True False

27. For security, each state has a right to form a _____

28. The electoral vote for President is counted in the presence of two bodies. Name them: _____

29. If no candidate for President receives a majority of the electoral vote, who decides who will become President? _____

30. Of the original 13 states, the one with the largest representation in the first Congress was _____

31. Of which branch of government is the Speaker of the House a part? Executive Legislative Judicial

32. Capital punishment is the giving of a death sentence. True False

33. In case the President is unable to perform the duties of his office, who assumes them? _____

34. "Involuntary servitude" is permitted in the U.S. upon conviction of a crime. True False

35. If a state is a party to a case, the Constitution provides that original jurisdiction shall be in _____

36. Congress passes laws regulating cases which are included in those over which the U.S. Supreme Court has _____ jurisdiction.

37. Which of the following is a right guaranteed by the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution? Public Housing Education Voting Trial by Jury

38. The Legislatures of the states decide how presidential electors may be chosen. True False

39. If it were proposed to join Alabama and Mississippi to form one state, what groups would have to vote approval in order for this to be done? _____

40. The Vice President presides over _____

41. The Constitution limits the size of the District of Columbia to _____

42. The only laws which can be passed to apply to an area in a federal arsenal are those passed by _____ provided consent for the purchase of the land is given by the _____

43. In which document or writing is the "Bill of Rights" found? _____

44. Of which branch of government is a Supreme Court justice a part? Executive Legislative Judicial

45. If no person receives a majority of the electoral votes, the Vice President is chosen by the Senate. True False



1965 ALABAMA LITERACY TEST PAGE 3

46. Name two things which the states are forbidden to do by the U.S. Constitution.

47. If election of the President becomes the duty of the U.S. House of Representatives and it fails to act, who becomes President and when?

48. How many votes must a person receive in order to become President if the election is decided by the U.S. House of Representatives? _____

49. How many states were required to approve the original Constitution in order for it to be in effect?

50. Check the offenses which, if you are convicted of them, disqualify you for voting:

____Murder ____Issuing worthless checks
____Petty larceny ____Manufacturing whiskey

51. The Congress decides in what manner states elect presidential electors. ____True ____False

52. Name two of the purposes of the U.S. Constitution. _____

53. Congress is composed of _____

54. All legislative powers granted in the U.S. Constitution may legally be used only by _____

55. The population census is required to be made every ____ years.

56. Impeachments of U.S. officials are tried by _____

57. If an effort to impeach the President of the U.S. is made, who presides at the trial?

58. On the impeachment of the chief justice of the Supreme court of the U.S., who tries the case?

59. Money is coined by order of:
____U.S. Congress ____The President's Cabinet
____State Legislatures

60. Persons elected to cast a state's vote for U.S. President and Vice President are called presidential _____

61. Name one power which is exclusively legislative and is mentioned in one of the parts of the U.S. Constitution above. _____

62. If a person flees from justice into another state, who has authority to ask for his return? _____

63. Whose duty is it to keep Congress informed of the state of the union? _____

64. If the two houses of Congress cannot agree on adjournment, who sets the time?

65. When presidential electors meet to cast ballots for President, must all electors in a state vote for the same person for President or can they vote for different persons if they so choose? _____

66. After the presidential electors have voted, to whom do they send the count of their votes?

67. The power to declare war is vested in _____

68. Any power and rights not given to the U.S. or prohibited to the states by the U.S. Constitution are specified as belonging to whom? _____



ANSWERS TO ALABAMA LITERACY TEST

1. Trial by Jury only
2. False (every 10 years)
3. Habeas Corpus (immediate presentation of charges); lawyer; speedy trial
4. January 3
5. January 20
6. Proposed change, as in a Constitution
7. Life (with good behavior)
8. Nine
9. Yes
10. Affirm
11. 35
12. In God We Trust
13. False
14. U.S. Constitution
15. The governor
16. Six
17. Two
18. Executive
19. Congress
20. Population (as determined by census)
less untaxed Indians
21. Cruel and unusual
22. True
23. State and local
24. Russia
25. Criminal
26. False
27. Militia
28. House of Representatives, Senate
29. House of Representatives
30. Virginia
31. Legislative
32. True
33. The Vice President
34. True
35. The Supreme Court
36. Co-appellate
37. Trial by jury
38. True
39. Congress and the legislatures of both states
40. the Senate
41. 10 miles square
42. Congress; state legislatures
43. Constitution
44. Judicial
45. True
46. Coin money; make treaties
47. The Vice President, until the House acts
48. 26
49. 9
50. Murder
51. False
52. (Preamble statements) “to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.”
53. House of Representatives and Senate
54. Congress
55. 10
56. The Senate
57. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court
58. The Senate
59. The U. S. Congress
60. Electors
61. Pass laws, coin money, declare war
62. The Governor
63. The President
64. The President
65. They can vote for different people.
66. Vice President (President of the Senate)
67. Congress
68. The states; the people



PART OF THE FRANCHISE

(45 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students personalize the history of the right to vote.

MATERIALS

Lined paper

GET READY

- ✓ Prepare your students for this activity by reviewing the events that comprise the voting rights timeline.
- ✓ Tell your students that for this activity they should be especially respectful of each other's sensitivities.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Inform your students that the right to vote, also known as "suffrage," is not quite the same as the right to free speech, to a fair trial, or to any of the other civil rights. Explain that the right to vote is not a right belonging to all persons; rather, it is a political right, one belonging to all those who can meet certain requirements set by law.
- ✓ Explain to your students that these requirements for suffrage have changed a great deal over time. Say, *To demonstrate my point, I am going to ask all students to stand on one side of the room.*
- ✓ Say, *In 1788, only white men who paid taxes and owned land could vote. If you were an adult man then, could you have voted? If yes, then step over to the other side of the room.*
- ✓ Continue through the voting rights timeline, saying:
 - ✓ *In 1913, women living in California, Arizona, Wyoming, Kansas, Washington, Oregon, and Illinois could vote. As an adult woman, could you have voted*

then? If yes, then move over to the other side of the room.

- ✓ *In 1920, the 19th Amendment made it possible for all women to vote. As an adult woman, could you have voted? If yes, then move over to the other side of the room.*
- ✓ *In 1965, the Voting Rights Act made it possible for African-Americans to vote without fear of being penalized, hurt or killed. As an adult, could you have voted safely then? If yes, then move over to the other side of the room.*
- ✓ *In 1975, the Voting Rights Act also included protections for Hispanic, Asian, and Native American citizens. As an adult, could you have voted safely now? If yes, then move over to the other side of the room.*
- ✓ Assign each of your students to write a paragraph about how this activity impacted their classroom. They should consider not only what crossed through their minds, but also what may have crossed through the minds of their peers. Have students share their responses, if they wish.
- ✓ Discuss equal voting rights with your students using the questions below.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What did it feel like to be one of the first people to walk to the other side of the room?*
- ★ *What did it feel like to be one of the last people to walk over to the other side of the room?*
- ★ *What did this activity teach you about the history of voting rights in America?*
- ★ *What else, if anything, did you take away from this activity?*



WHO HAS THE POWER?

(30-40 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students evaluate the history of the right to vote in America.

MATERIALS

Petition: I Want to Vote! handout; *Petitioner Descriptions* handout; *Outcome Cards* handout

GET READY

- ✓ Make copies of *Petition: I Want to Vote* handout for your class. (You will be dividing your students into groups of three or four, so make sure each group has only one copy of the *Petition: I Want to Vote* handout.)
- ✓ Fill in the top two lines of each *Petition: I Want to Vote!* handout with a different petitioner description from the *Petitioner Descriptions* handout.
- ✓ Make one copy of the *Outcome Cards* handout, which aligns with the petitioner descriptions. Cut the cards apart.
- ✓ See “Chronology of Suffrage” and “Qualifications for Voting” in the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Organize your students into groups of three or four, depending on the size of your class. Give each group one of the eight *Petition: I Want To Vote* handouts, each with its own petitioner description. Provide 10 minutes for each team to brainstorm at least three arguments in favor of giving the petitioner, who they represent, the right to vote.
- ✓ Take turns addressing each group as a petitioner. Have the class come up with three arguments against the petitioner, that the

group must record on their handout. Note: Students should consider the time period the petitioner is living in when divising arguments.

- ✓ Have the class reach a consensus on giving or denying the vote to the petitioner.
- ✓ Once the class has decided one way or the other, give the appropriate *Outcome Card* to the group to read aloud to the class.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What groups have gained the right to vote since our country’s inception?*
- ★ *How might our country be different if the power to vote was still limited to those who had it at the time of the Constitution?*
- ★ *Why have different groups fought so hard for suffrage?*
- ★ *What is the state of suffrage today? Do you foresee additional groups gaining the right to vote? If so, who?*

MORE!

Research the voter qualifications in your state. Make a visual representation (chart, poster, etc.) of the qualifications. Write a letter supporting the extension or restriction of these qualifications. Mail it to a legislator.

VOTE QUOTE

“There is no future for a people who deny their past.” - Adam Clayton Powell



Petition: I Want to Vote!

I am _____

Reasons why I should be able to vote:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Arguments against giving this person the vote:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Group consensus:

This person _____ should have the right to vote.

_____ should not have the right to vote.



Petitioner Descriptions

1. A 16-year-old citizen of the United States who is a full-time high school student
2. An adult migrant farm worker who is a tax-paying U.S. citizen but who has no permanent address
3. An 18-year-old U.S. soldier fighting in Vietnam in 1966
4. A 30-year-old pioneer woman living in the Wyoming Territory in 1850
5. A 21-year-old Virginia slave in the 1850s
6. A 21-year-old North Carolina factory worker who did not own a private home or property in 1845
7. A Japanese citizen who lives and works in California and pays U.S. taxes
8. An adult who can neither read nor write English



OUTCOME CARDS

1.	The 26th Amendment set the voting age at 18, where it remains today, for all federal, state, and local elections. <i>The petitioner cannot vote.</i>
2.	There is a uniform 30-day residency requirement for voting in presidential elections, established by the Voting Rights Act of 1970 and upheld in the Supreme Court by an 8-1 majority. <i>Petitioner cannot vote unless he/she establishes residency 30 days before the presidential election.</i>
3.	The Voting Rights Act of 1970, followed by the 26th Amendment in 1971, set the voting age at 18. Public feeling to lower the voting age was strongly influenced by the number of American soldiers in Vietnam below the age of 21, who could fight for their country but who could not vote in its elections. <i>In 1966, the petitioner could not vote.</i>
4.	In 1920, the efforts of women's suffragists over almost a century were rewarded with the passage of the 19th Amendment, which guaranteed women the right to vote in all states. Several states had already given women the vote; the first of these was indeed Wyoming, which had done so in 1869, when it was still a territory. <i>However, in 1850, the petitioner could not vote.</i>
5.	No citizenship rights were given to slaves by the original Constitution. Even former slaves had no citizenship rights in the United States until the passage of the 14th Amendment in 1868; voting rights were guaranteed to them by the 15th Amendment in 1870. Virtual exclusion from the polls in Southern states, through threats, poll taxes, literacy tests, and other tactics, was common until the Voting Rights Act of the 1965, which outlawed such activities. <i>In Virginia in the 1850s, the petitioner could not vote.</i>
6.	By 1845, property restrictions on voters had been abolished in all but two states, Virginia and North Carolina. However, some states had property and even religious restrictions on their electorates before that. <i>In 1845 in North Carolina, the petitioner could not vote.</i>
7.	No matter how long a resident alien has lived, worked, and paid taxes in the United States, only citizens by birth or naturalization possess voting rights. <i>The petitioner cannot vote.</i>
8.	According to the Voting Rights Act of 1970, there is no literacy qualification whatsoever for voters. If the voter cannot read the ballot because of language or literacy barriers, he/she may bring a translator or reader to the polls. <i>The petitioner can vote.</i>



VOTING BARRIERS

(45 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students consider the barriers to voting today, including their causes and the impact they have.

MATERIALS

No materials are necessary for this activity.

GET READY

- ✓ Remind your students that a democracy is a form of government in which policy is decided by the majority of the citizens' votes.
- ✓ Break your students up into five evenly sized groups. (There will be one group for each of five voting barriers the students list.)

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Tell your students that they are going to explore the reasons why some people do not vote.
- ✓ Have your students brainstorm five barriers (one for each group) that prevent adults from registering and voting, such as:
 - ✓ Polling hours and the fact that elections are held on a work day.
 - ✓ The fact that you need to vote in the precinct where you lived at the time of registration.
 - ✓ The inconvenience of registering and the need to be registered a certain length of time before an election.
 - ✓ Being a convicted felon, a non-citizen, or merely uninformed.

- ✓ Assign each group a barrier.
- ✓ Have each group identify the causes and effects of their barrier and state their opinion on whether or not the barrier is justified.
- ✓ In class, the same or following day, have each of the five groups present their ideas and opinions to the class. When each group presents, make sure the rest of the class is brainstorming a list of questions to ask the presenters.
- ✓ Allow the class to ask questions of each group after they present.
- ✓ End the activity with a class discussion of voting barriers using the discussion questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What were some of the causes of the voting barriers we identified?*
- ★ *What were some of the effects of the voting barriers we identified?*
- ★ *In your opinion, do some of these voting barriers need to exist? Why or why not?*
- ★ *In your opinion, are some of the voting barriers not justified? Why or why not?*



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

WHAT IS SUFFRAGE?

- ★ Do you know that the right to vote is called suffrage? What does having the right to vote mean?
- ★ Do those with the right to vote have more power than those without?
- ★ Does everyone have the right to vote? Who does? Who doesn't?
- ★ What groups of people have earned the right to vote over the years?
- ★ What did they do to earn the right to vote?
- ★ When or if you did not get to vote, how did/would it feel to be powerless?
- ★ Why would you want the right to vote?

EXPANDING THE RIGHT TO VOTE

- ★ Have all minority groups in America always had the right to vote? Who did not?
- ★ What did these groups of people do to earn the right to vote?
- ★ Why do people fight for the right to vote?
- ★ Why has it taken so long for some groups to acquire the right to vote?
- ★ Is the history of voting rights over or are there more rights to be won?
- ★ Is America the only country in the world to have denied voting rights to certain populations?
Can you give an example?
- ★ What do you think it would feel like to be denied the right to vote?
- ★ What do you think it felt like to earn the right to vote?

SUFFRAGE TODAY

- ★ Who has the right to vote today?
- ★ What are today's requirements for registration and voting in any region of the United States?
- ★ How might our country be different if the right to vote were still limited to those who had it at the time of the Constitution?
- ★ What are some barriers that keep people from voting today?
- ★ Do you think everyone who deserves the right to vote has the right to vote? Do you foresee additional groups gaining the right to vote? If so, who?
- ★ Why do you think 18-24-year-olds do not vote as much as other age groups in our country?
- ★ Why do you think so many people do not vote in our country? Is there anything we can do to change this?
- ★ What is the state of suffrage today?
- ★ What do you think it will feel like the first time you vote?



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

A Time for Courage: The Suffragette Diary of Kathleen Bowen by Kathryn Lasky

OBJECTIVE

Students examine the right to vote by reading a fictional account of a girl living in the U.S. in the early 20th century.

MATERIALS

A Time for Courage: The Suffragette Diary of Kathleen Bowen - Kathryn Lasky

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

- ✓ Consider doing the *Historical Debate – Women’s Suffrage* activity as your pre-reading activity. It can be found in the The Right to Vote theme under the concept, *Expanding the Right to Vote*.
- ✓ The *Historical Debate – Women’s Suffrage* activity will thoroughly engage the students in the issue of women’s suffrage before reading the book.
- ✓ Spend some time discussing what historical fiction is and how this book is an example of it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What do you think it was like to be a young woman in a period when women were denied the right to vote?*
- ★ *What were Kat’s mom and other family members hoping to achieve in picketing? What do you think it was like to picket day after day?*
- ★ *What do you think the right to vote meant to the female characters in this book?*
- ★ *Why do you think people were reluctant to give women the right to vote?*
- ★ *Why do you think Kathryn Lasky wrote this book?*

ACTIVITY

- ✓ Have your students write a journal entry as if they were living in a time when a minority group of Americans was denied the right to vote. They should address the issue of suffrage in their entries, whether it concerns women and the right to vote, African-Americans and the right to vote, Native Americans and the right to vote, and so on.
- ✓ Tell your students that just as *A Time for Courage: The Suffragette Diary of Kathleen Bowen* is an example of historical fiction, their entries must be as well. They need to make their entries as realistic as possible, referencing dates and the real people of that period.
- ✓ Give your students the tools to be as accurate as possible: they may need history books, Internet access, etc.
- ✓ Have your students read their journal entries to the class. Encourage them to be creative in their dress and speech.



CULMINATING ACTIVITY: USE IT OR LOSE IT!

(45-60 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students recognize the fragile nature of the right to vote and acknowledge the need to protect that right.

MATERIALS

Voting Hassles handout; *Use It Or Lose It!* handout

GET READY

- ✓ Make a copy of the *Voting Hassles* handout for each of your students.
- ✓ Make a copy of the *Use It Or Lose It!* handout for each of your students.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Working individually or in small groups, have students complete the *Voting Hassles* worksheet.
- ✓ Ask the students what countries they guessed the different events occurred in. Do they think that the event is current or historical?
- ✓ Next, read the following to the class: *Do you still think your right to vote is secure? In your opinion, how effective are U.S. laws related to voting? Here are the corresponding dates and places where the voting conditions described on the worksheet have existed—each of them, right here in our own nation, some as recent as five years ago! Maybe we still need to think hard about protecting our right to vote.*
 1. Louisiana, 1890s
 2. Alabama, 1965
 3. Mississippi, 1960s
 4. New York, 1872
 5. Texas, 1996
 6. Texas, 1990s
 7. South Carolina, 2000
 8. Florida, 2000

- ✓ Have students read the *Use It Or Lose It!* handout.
- ✓ Have students circle the actions they would be willing to participate in at the bottom of the handout. Tell them they should be ready to defend their choices and describe the possible consequences of their actions or reluctance to act.
- ✓ Engage your class in a discussion of the choices they made on the *Use It Or Lose It!* handout.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What U.S. populations have earned the right to vote over the last two centuries?*
- ★ *How did these groups earn the right to vote?*
- ★ *Do you still think your right to vote is secure? How effective are the different voting laws in the United States?*
- ★ *What are you willing to do to protect your right to vote?*
- ★ *What problems remain with voting that need to be solved? How would you go about solving them?*

REFERENCES

Hampton, Henry and Steve Fayer. *Voices of Freedom*. Bantam Books: New York, 1991.
 Rapoport, Miles S. "The American Prospect."
<http://www.org/print/V12/5/rapoport-m.html>



VOTING HASSLES

Directions: Consider for a moment what it would mean to be denied the ability to elect our government officials. Imagine that the following incidents happened to you. Write down where and when you think each incident might have happened. Be prepared to discuss your ideas with the class.

1. While you are waiting to register to vote, some men ride by in a pickup truck with shotguns. It is very hot and you are waiting in line very long. The water has been turned off at a nearby faucet and there is nothing to drink. Suddenly the doors ahead close and you are told for the third day in a row to go home and come back tomorrow.
2. A poll tax is charged for you to vote. You have very little money to pay, and they tell you that since you did not pay last year, you now owe twice as much if you want to vote.
3. Before they will allow you to register to vote, you are required to interpret several sections of the country's constitution that explains the rules of government. Your explanation must meet the approval of the registrar.
4. When you attempt to vote, you are arrested and put in jail.
5. Voting districts are gerrymandered (boundaries are drawn in uneven, illogical shapes) so that certain groups of people are submerged in a larger group. This larger group of people will effectively cancel your voting interests.
6. Radio ads are run to purposely confuse you about the method of absentee voting.
7. Polling places are closed early in certain areas of the city. Your precinct is closed when you get off work and you do not get to vote.
8. Ballots are difficult or confusing to interpret. They are also difficult to mark so that your vote cannot be easily read.



USE IT OR LOSE IT!

USE IT OR LOSE IT!

The founders of this country strongly believed that democracy requires its citizens to participate. If we fail to take part, we are no longer truly a democratic nation, no matter how content or unhappy we are with it. Taking the right to vote for granted is dangerous and deadly to the process of democracy.

It has not been easy for many members of this nation to gain the right to vote. After many years of fighting and seemingly gaining the right of suffrage (vote), some groups of people have had to keep fighting to continue protecting that right. Many of those groups were finally protected with the passage of The Civil Rights Act of 1964 that was written to enforce the constitutional right to vote. Their right to vote was then strengthened with the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 that prohibits the use of voting laws, practices, or procedures that discriminate in either purpose or effect on the basis of race, color, or membership in a minority language group.

Today, around the world people continue to fight and die for the right to vote. How far would you go to keep this basic human right to choose your own government leaders? Indicate below which of the following you would be willing to take part in.

Protest

Run for office

Non-violent actions

Attend meetings

Fight in a war

Make campaign donations

Letter writing campaign

Go to jail

Petition

Nothing

What other actions might you take to defend your right to vote?

KIDS VOTING USA

6–8

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



INTRODUCTION TO THEME

The intent of this theme is for students to learn how to evaluate information and to intelligently form, communicate, and act on the decisions they make. The theme’s activities fall under four main learning objectives:

- Students will learn how to gather and weigh information and form an opinion.
- Students will learn how to clearly and effectively communicate their position with others.
- Students will learn how to work together effectively.
- Students will consider how they can have an impact in their community.



GENERAL ACTIVITIES

CONCEPT 1: GATHERING AND WEIGHING INFORMATION

Evaluate A Web Site 2
 The Decision-making Chart 5
 Judging Propaganda 7
 Newspaper Scavenger Hunt 9

CONCEPT 2: COMMUNICATING YOUR POSITION

Debate The Issue 10
 Complaints And Solutions 12
 Student Interviews 15

CONCEPT 3: WORKING TOGETHER

You Can Vote 16
 Design A Sign 18

CONCEPT 4: HAVING AN IMPACT

It’s Official 21
 Targeting Problems In My Community 22
 “How’re We Doin’?” 25



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

Questions for Concept 1: Gathering and Weighing Information 27
 Questions for Concept 2: Communicating Your Position 27
 Questions for Concept 3: Working Together 27
 Questions for Concept 4: Having an Impact 27



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

Fight On! Mary Church Terrell’s Battle for Integration
 by Dennis Brindell and Judith Bloom Fradin 28



CULMINATING ACTIVITY

Toward A More Perfect Community 29



EVALUATE A WEB SITE

(40-50 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn how to become critical consumers of information on the World Wide Web and evaluate a Web site.

MATERIALS

Evaluate A Web Site handout; access to the Internet

GET READY

- ✓ Prepare copies of the *Evaluate A Web Site* handout for your students.
- ✓ Arrange for your class to have access to the Internet. If possible, seat two students to each computer.
- ✓ Before the activity, talk to your students about various forms of media and information. (See “The Media and Politics” in the Appendix.)

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Ask your students to think of characteristics of good decision-making (examples: decisions well thought out, decisions based on information from many sources, etc.).
- ✓ Say: *Good decisions are based on accurate information. One source of information is the World Wide Web. It is a great place for finding information regarding limitless subjects, including history, the presidency, voting, and so on.*
- ✓ Engage your class in a dialogue on credibility, discussing what makes some information valid and other information not (What is the source of the information? How current is it? etc.). Tell your students that they should have this

critical approach to information they find on the Web as well.

- ✓ Ask the class to brainstorm elements of a good Web page. Capture these ideas on the board.
- ✓ Next, tell your class that there are some significant things to consider when evaluating a Web site and its information:
 - ✓ Intent: Is the purpose of the site to provide information or to persuade?
 - ✓ Source: Is the author of the site someone with the appropriate education, training, or experience to write with authority on the topic?
 - ✓ Content: Does the content of the site seem biased? Is there a balanced point of view?
 - ✓ Context: Are there other, better Web sites out there on the same subject?
 - ✓ Timeliness: Is the information listed on the site current? Find out when it was added.
 - ✓ Recognition: Has the Web site been recognized for excellence in some way?
- ✓ Instruct your students to evaluate a Web site in pairs based on the criteria above.
- ✓ Distribute the handout and ask your students to use it as their evaluation tool.
- ✓ Have your students visit the Kids Voting USA Web site. They should type www.kidsvotingusa.org into the address bar.
- ✓ Next, have your students click on the “Resources” icon on the left-hand side of the screen. A page will pop up with lots of interesting Web sites for kids and young adults. Have the pairs “surf” around, visiting some of the listed Web sites.

**EVALUATE A WEB SITE** (continued)

- ✓ Give the pairs a couple of minutes to determine which Web site they want to evaluate.
- ✓ Give the pairs 20 to 30 minutes to evaluate their Web site using the *Evaluate A Web Site* handout.
- ✓ Have the pairs report on their Web evaluations. They should be prepared to reference how their site did or did not meet the criteria discussed.

MORE!

Three-hole punch the evaluations and keep them in a binder by the computer. Create a wall display with the “Top Ten Web Sites.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Was it difficult to evaluate your Web site? If so, what made it challenging?*
- ★ *Would you recommend your Web site to a friend? Why or why not?*
- ★ *Why is it important to gather information from many different sources?*
- ★ *Do you think the World Wide Web is a good source of information? Why or why not?*



EVALUATE A WEB SITE

Evaluated by: _____

Address (URL): _____

Evaluate your Web site based on the following criteria:

Intent: _____

Source: _____

Content: _____

Context: _____

Timeliness: _____

Recognition: _____

Would you recommend this Web site to someone else? Why or why not?



THE DECISION-MAKING CHART

(40-50 minutes over a few days)

OBJECTIVE

Students gather and evaluate information to help them make an informed decision.

MATERIALS

Decision-making Chart handout

GETTING READY

- ✓ Make copies or a transparency of the *Decision-making Chart* handout.
- ✓ Before the activity, you may want to talk to your students about various forms of media and information.
- ✓ Check the Appendix for information on “The Media and Politics.”

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Inform your students that they will be evaluating information and forming opinions by using a “Decision-making Chart.”
- ✓ Tell your class that first they need to define some words for the purpose of the activity.
- ✓ First, ask your students to define “credible” in terms of how it relates to information-gathering. Students may mention things like “recent information” or “from a variety of sources.”
- ✓ Students should next define “reliable” in terms of sources of information. They may mention things like “expert in their field” or “unbiased organization.”
- ✓ Instruct students to gather information, individually or in small groups, on a candidate or an issue. They should gather from at least five separate sources of information.
- ✓ Using the information gathered, students should pass each item of information through the questions on the *Decision-making Chart*.

- ✓ Students should continue this process until they have evaluated all the information and are able to make a decision and/or form an opinion.
- ✓ Remind students that in their final decision-making/forming of an opinion, they should consider what was consistent across the various sources.
- ✓ Ask your students to share and defend their decisions/opinions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

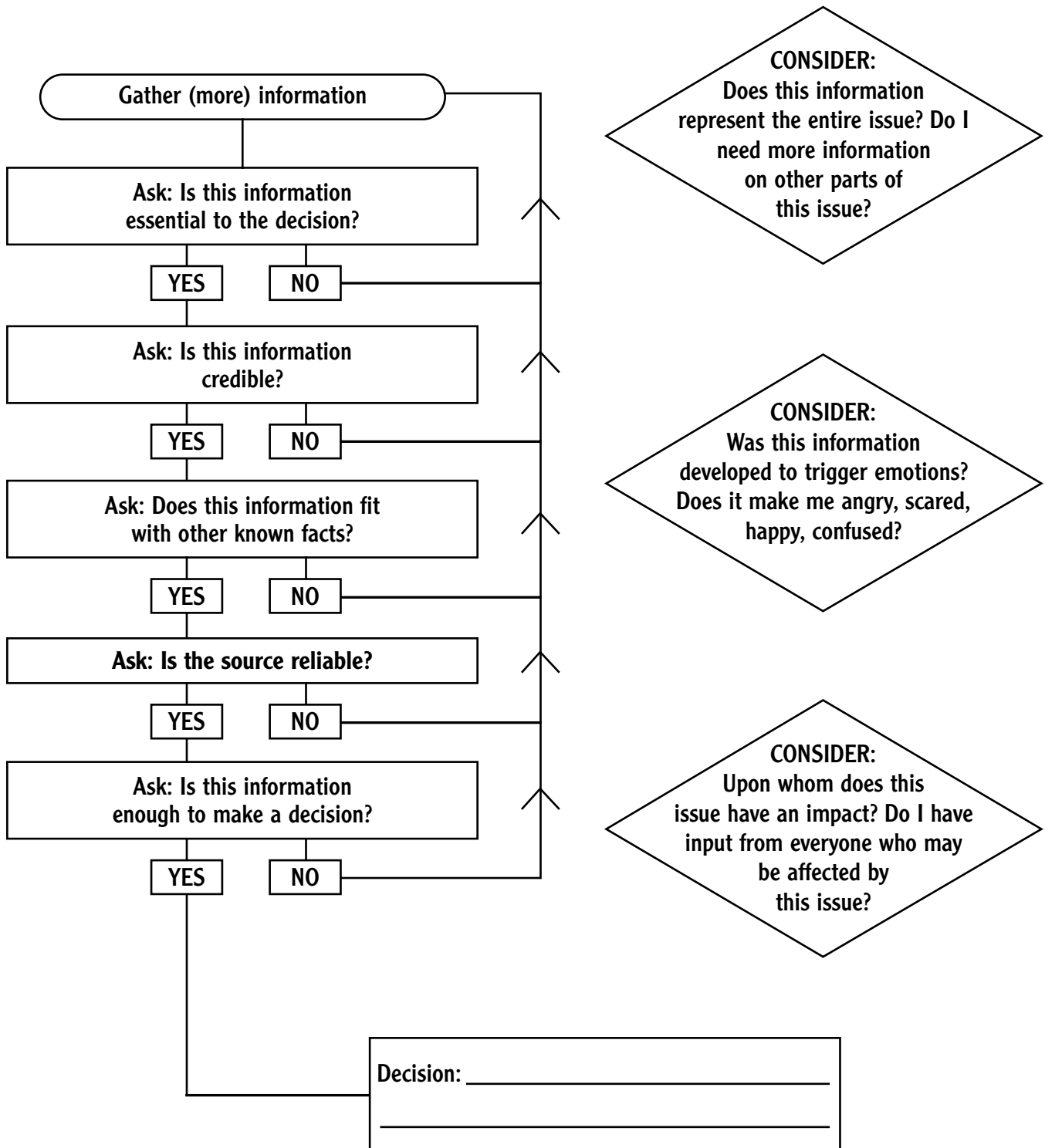
- ★ *What does “credible” mean? What does “reliable” mean?*
- ★ *Give an example of somebody making an uninformed decision.*
- ★ *Do you think people often make decisions based on inadequate information?*
- ★ *Why is it important to understand that not all information is credible?*
- ★ *Which sources of information did you find most credible?*
- ★ *Is the information you receive from major network newscasts, news magazine shows, talk shows, morning shows, cable TV news and public broadcasting news equally credible? If not, how would you rank them in terms of their credibility?*

VOTE QUOTE

“Voting is the least arduous of a citizen’s duties. He has the prior and harder duty of making up his mind.” – Ralph Barton Perry



DECISION-MAKING CHART





JUDGING PROPAGANDA

(45 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn to identify various forms of propaganda.

MATERIALS

Judging Propaganda handout; writing and drawing materials

GET READY

- ✓ Make a copy of the *Judging Propaganda* handout for each student in your class.
- ✓ Tell your students that advertisers, candidates, and the media at large often use propaganda techniques to influence opinions — these approaches are often on television and radio, and in magazines and newspapers. You may provide examples.
- ✓ See the “Political Propaganda” section of the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ After sharing with your students some background information on what propaganda is, give an example of each type of propaganda technique listed on the activity handout.
- ✓ Once you think students have a handle on the various techniques, have them complete the handout either individually or in small groups.
- ✓ Go over the handout as a class:
 - ✓ Answers: 1-b, 2-e, 3-a, 4-d, 5-j, 6-h, 7-c, 8-f, 9-g, 10-i.
- ✓ Now share some more examples you have made up. Have the students guess which techniques you are using. Make sure they are comfortable with the different terms.

- ✓ Have the students come up with their own examples now. They may choose a technique and apply it to a product, a candidate, or an issue.
- ✓ Have the students write out their propaganda message in the form of an advertisement. Have them support their advertisement with a picture.
- ✓ Have your students present their advertisements and ask the class to guess which technique they are using.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Can you think of examples of propaganda you have heard? What makes these examples of propaganda? What techniques are being used?*
- ★ *What is the purpose of propaganda?*
- ★ *Can you be truthful and write propaganda? How or how not?*
- ★ *Is all propaganda bad? What would make some propaganda bad?*
- ★ *Do you think propaganda is effective? How do you think propaganda affects people as they live their lives?*

MORE!

Have students bring in various pieces of propaganda from the media. They should share this information with the class, identifying the techniques being used.



JUDGING PROPAGANDA

Listed below are names of propaganda techniques, followed by specific examples. Match the name of the technique to the example by placing the letter in the box.

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| a. EMOTIONAL APPEAL | f. SCIENTIFIC APPROACH |
| b. GLITTERING GENERALITIES | g. SNOB APPEAL |
| c. TESTIMONIALS | h. CARD STACKING |
| d. BANDWAGON | i. TRANSFER |
| e. PLAIN FOLKS | j. NAME-CALLING |

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. These are vague, nice-sounding descriptions of things: “Have a lawn that makes you proud.” “Get the biggest and best for your money.” “...stronger, brighter.” | <input type="text"/> |
| 2. This appeals to your sense of home and family: “Lemonade, just like grandma used to make.” “The hearth-baked goodness of whole grain bread.” “It’s as American as apple pie.” | <input type="text"/> |
| 3. This is a direct line to your fear, anger, pity, or sense of humor: “Don’t be bullied into paying more taxes than you need to.” “If you know the feeling of a dead battery on a lonely road, then buy...” | <input type="text"/> |
| 4. Since many people want to do what everyone else is doing, you are urged to hop aboard and join the crowd: “Be like all the others in your neighborhood and roller skate under the stars...” “Join the younger generation, vote for...” | <input type="text"/> |
| 5. One blames problems on a particular group, person, or idea: “I don’t want those big-mouthed kids in the library.” “Our downfall began under the other party.” “Your money problems are caused by that party.” | <input type="text"/> |
| 6. One only presents one side and hides the other. One only presents what is favorable or what is unfavorable, whatever serves the cause. | <input type="text"/> |
| 7. These refer to people who are either unnamed, unknown, or famous who have something to positive to say about the product, issue or candidate. Everyone is made to sound like an expert: “Most experienced mothers depend upon...” “These movie stars are voting for...” | <input type="text"/> |
| 8. Tests, statistics, survey, and pseudo-scientific jargon are used to be convincing: “Four out of five dentists use...” “Research shows that...” “The polls show our candidate ahead.” | <input type="text"/> |
| 9. These give the impression that people of elegance, wealth, good taste, and intelligence will buy the product or vote for the issue or candidate: “When only the very best will do, buy...” “People of status will vote for...” | <input type="text"/> |
| 10. One groups things for a stronger effect. The following combinations of traits do not necessarily go together: “young and joyous,” “thick and juicy,” “old and wise.” | <input type="text"/> |



NEWSPAPER SCAVENGER HUNT

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students identify newspaper sections and evaluate articles to answer specific questions.

MATERIALS

Multiple copies of a local or national newspaper; small prizes such as candy or pencils (for the winning group of students)

GET READY

- ✓ Make up questions about the articles/sections of a newspaper and copy them on a piece of paper. (Sample questions are provided in the “Instructions” section.)
- ✓ Make a copy of these questions for each student.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Have a discussion with your class about the different components of a newspaper: news articles, advertisements, editorials, sports articles, etc.
- ✓ Break your students up in small groups of three or four.
- ✓ Pass out your questions, but have the groups keep the paper face down so they can’t see the questions and begin early.
- ✓ Tell your students that when you say “Go,” they can start looking for the answers. Have your students answer the questions in written form and/or by submitting newspaper clippings.
- ✓ Consider using some or all of these questions:
 - ✓ How many sections are there in this newspaper? What are they?
 - ✓ Find two local news articles.

- ✓ Find two national news articles.
- ✓ Find two international news articles.
- ✓ Find two examples of sports articles.
- ✓ Find three examples of advertising; what are they advertising?
- ✓ Find two editorials.
- ✓ Find two letters to the editor.
- ✓ What is the main story in the newspaper?
 - ✓ When did the story take place?
 - ✓ Where did the story take place?
 - ✓ Who was the article written by?
- ✓ Instruct the teams that when they have completed answering the questions they should raise their hands. Check over their responses. If they are not all correct, the team needs to keep searching for the correct answers. (If no team finds all the correct answers, call the game at a specified time and declare the team with the most correct answers the winners.)
- ✓ Make sure to reward the winning team.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Why is it important to understand the makeup of a newspaper?*
- ★ *What did you learn from this activity?*
- ★ *Do you feel more confident searching through a newspaper now? Why or why not?*



DEBATE THE ISSUE

(Two class sessions of 45 minutes each, plus prep time by eight debating students)

OBJECTIVE

Students debate a topic and communicate effectively with one another.

MATERIALS

Debate The Issue handout; stopwatch; debate films

GET READY

- ✓ Think ahead of time of eight students that would be good candidates to debate formally in front of the class.
- ✓ Make eight copies of the *Debate The Issue* handout, so that each of your debaters has one.
- ✓ Have a stopwatch nearby.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ On Day 1, generate debate topics with your class and have them vote for the topic they most want debated (could be directly related to the area/subject matter you are currently studying).
- ✓ Thoughtfully select two teams of four: a team for the issue (the affirmative team) and a team against the issue (the negative team). Explain to the students that just because they are selected to represent one side of the issue doesn't mean this reflects their true feelings. Tell them they are role playing and in order to effectively role play, they might be part of a side they would not usually support.
- ✓ Have the class watch excerpts of former debates, preferably presidential or vice-presidential debates. (Refer to the "Recommended Films" section of the Bibliography.)
- ✓ Give each of your debaters a *Debate The Issue* handout.
- ✓ Ask team members to choose parts. The least challenging is Opening Argument which may be

written ahead of time and simply read aloud; the hardest and longest is Question Session.

- ✓ Ask debate teams to prepare their ideas in two columns on a separate piece of paper: "Our Arguments" and "If They Say, We Say." (This way, students are ready to stand their ground when they hear opposing arguments.)
- ✓ Students may finish preparations as homework that night and reconvene with their groups before the debate the following day.
- ✓ On Day 2, hold the debate, keeping to time limits with use of a stopwatch.
- ✓ If time allows, end the debate with questions from the non-debating members of the class.
- ✓ After the debate, have the class list the most convincing arguments from each team. Keep track of these on the board.
- ✓ Have your class vote to determine who the winners of the debate are.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What is the purpose of holding a debate?*
- ★ *Which arguments were the most impressive? Why?*
- ★ *Was it difficult to separate the seriousness of the arguments being made by your classmates from their everyday personality and behavior?*
- ★ *How were people effective in presenting their point of view during the debate?*
- ★ *What were some important things you learned from this debate?*
- ★ *Are debates an effective way to get information about candidates and issues? Why or why not?*
- ★ *What can we learn from a debate that we can't learn in other ways?*



DEBATE THE ISSUE

Topic: _____

Affirmative Team Members

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Negative Team Members

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Sequence of the Debate (follow the numbers for proper order of speakers):

Affirmative Team	Time	Negative Team	Time
1. Opening Statement	3 min.	2. Opening Statement	3 min.
3. Rebuttal Argument	3 min.	4. Rebuttal Argument	3 min.
5. Question Session	5 min.*	6. Question Session	5 min.*
7. Summary	3 min.	8. Summary	3 min.

*Debater answers four questions, one from each member of the opposite team; if time, also answers questions from the floor.



COMPLAINTS AND SOLUTIONS

(40 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students simulate the important task of answering complaint mail as mayors. They troubleshoot areas of conflict in communities, with an emphasis on human rights issues.

MATERIALS

Office of the Mayor Letter Form handout;
Complaint Scenarios handout

GET READY

- ✓ Duplicate the letter form for each student.
- ✓ Make several copies of the *Complaint Scenarios* handout and cut apart scenarios so that each student will have a scenario.
- ✓ To customize this activity, create a *Complaint Scenarios* handout with real-life situations from your town.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Say, *There are many areas of conflict among members of a community. One of the mayor's most important jobs is to respond to complaints of citizens against one another and against the city. We are going to let you try to perform this delicate task as "mayors."*
- ✓ Review some civil rights laws that affect city administrations around the U.S.: Equal Opportunity Employment, Affirmative Action for Federal Contracts, Fair Housing Laws, Americans with Disabilities Act requiring access in public facilities, Nuisance Codes, etc.

- ✓ Assign a scenario to each student. Students should respond to the scenario as though they were mayor.
- ✓ After letters are written, pair students to discuss their problems and solutions.
- ✓ Ask students to call or e-mail city agencies to check their solutions with official policies.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Which qualities of an effective city leader did you need to address the problems?*
- ★ *Was there a specific way that you provided your response? What was that?*
- ★ *What can a young citizen do to share his or her opinion with his/her community and with his/her government?*

MORE!

Assign research projects on the civil rights laws cited in this activity. Pose these situations to candidates invited to visit your classroom.

Thanks to Harold Crowley, former executive director, Kids Voting Massachusetts, and to Janet Ellis, former equal opportunity administrator, City of Quincy, Massachusetts, for their assistance with this activity.



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR





COMPLAINT SCENARIOS

1. A man thinks he was denied rental of an apartment because he has young children.

2. A woman complains that her neighbor plays loud music.

3. A family wants additional refuse pickup in their neighborhood.

4. A man thinks he was not given a job in the town library because of his age.

5. A minority construction firm requests bids for city work.

6. A family needs daycare at their school, but none is provided at that campus.

7. A citizen complains that there is no wheelchair access to the city park's restrooms.

8. A citizen demands more police protection in a high crime neighborhood.



STUDENT INTERVIEWS

(30-40 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students interview their classmates about their ideas on politics and voting.

MATERIALS

Lined paper; class list

GET READY

- ✓ Find guidelines about how to properly conduct an interview. (One such source for guidelines is <http://www.kosmicki.com/102/htinterview.htm>.)

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Inform your class that they will be conducting interviews with each other about politics and voting.
- ✓ Share with your students the guidelines you found regarding conducting interviews.
- ✓ As a class, develop a common set of questions for the interview. Following are some possibilities:
 - ✓ What is your name, grade, and age?
 - ✓ What do you think “politics” is about?
 - ✓ What does voting mean to you? Besides Kids Voting USA activities, can you remember a time you had to vote at school or at home?
 - ✓ Why do you think it is important (or not important) for people to vote?
 - ✓ Have you ever spoken with anyone that has voted? If so, what did you learn while speaking with them?
 - ✓ Do you think you will vote in elections when you turn 18? Why or why not?
 - ✓ Besides voting, how do people make a difference in their community?
- ✓ Can you give an example of a time you made a difference in your community?
- ✓ Do you have ideas for additional ways students our age can get involved?
- ✓ Using your class list, pair students off for the interviews. (Decide whether or not you want interviews to be conducted in class or for homework.)
- ✓ Make sure students record the results of their interviews on a sheet of paper.
- ✓ In class, ask each student to cut their interviews in strips with one question and response on each strip.
- ✓ Have the students put all their question and response strips into a box.
- ✓ Have students draw strips from the box at random and read them aloud. (This keeps the results process random.) Have students draw question and response strips until you have gotten at least one response for each question.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What do the results of your interviews tell you about middle school students’ knowledge of politics and voting?*
- ★ *What do the results tell us about middle school students’ interest in voting?*
- ★ *Did you learn a lot about your own personal views on voting and democracy through this exercise? If so, what did you learn?*



YOU CAN VOTE

(20-30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students work together to perform various actions.

MATERIALS

Index cards; various props that can be used to act out the different sentences

GET READY

- ✓ Prepare a stack of 10 or so index cards.
- ✓ Collect some items that relate to voting in addition to other props. (See the “Instructions” section.)

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Create the *You Can Vote* cards as a class before playing. Each card should contain the second half of a sentence that begins with, “You can vote...” Below are a few examples, but you and your class can think of others.
 - ✓ “. . . to elect the president of the United States.”
 - ✓ “...to make your voice heard”
 - ✓ “...on Election Day.”
 - ✓ “...when you are 18.”
 - ✓ “...to make a difference in your community.”
 - ✓ “...because it is your right.”
 - ✓ “...because it is your responsibility.”
 - ✓ “...since you are part of a democracy.”
 - ✓ “...at a local polling precinct.”
- ✓ Make sure to review the *You Can Vote* cards with your students before playing the game. This will give the students some context for their guessing.
- ✓ Divide the class into groups of three or more.
- ✓ Create a section of the room to turn into the “performance space” (an open area where the students can act out scenarios).
- ✓ Have the groups perform one at a time after drawing a *You Can Vote* card. A representative from each group should draw the card from the pile and share it with everyone in their group, but there can be no discussion among group members.
- ✓ When you tell the group to go, they must create an instant scene that can last no more than 10-15 seconds (using pantomime, sounds, props, etc., but no words) that conveys the sentence they have chosen. This can be done in many different ways: one person may become the person who is voting, while the others become the environment, or ‘supporting’ characters. The challenging part is that the group cannot discuss or plan ahead of time.
- ✓ After the group has performed their sentence, have the rest of the class try and guess which *You Can Vote* card the group drew. These guesses are important because they are a form of descriptive feedback on the effectiveness of the performance. By knowing what the audience saw, the group can judge how effectively they have communicated.
- ✓ After receiving guesses, the group should reveal what card they had drawn.
- ✓ Repeat this process until all groups have performed.

**YOU CAN VOTE** (continued)**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- ★ *How did you feel about this activity? Was it difficult or easy for your group to act out the sentence?*
- ★ *What was challenging about working with your classmates in this activity?*
- ★ *What was helpful about working with your classmates in this activity? Would it have been easy to act out a sentence on your own?*
- ★ *What did you learn about collaborative work?*
- ★ *If you could do this activity again, what would you do differently?*



DESIGN A SIGN

(30-35 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students work together to invent a slogan and sign for an issue or candidate, and use their math skills to keep sign sizes within the limits set by sign ordinances.

MATERIALS

Design A Sign handout; scissors; red, blue, and green marker pens; white paper

GET READY

- ✓ Gather materials for every pair of students: scissors, red, blue, and green marker pens, and three sheets of white paper.
- ✓ Duplicate one *Design A Sign* handout for each pair.
- ✓ Write the regulations for election signs in Bentonville, Arkansas on the board: *Signs in neighborhoods with houses can be no bigger than 12 square feet in area. Signs on streets with stores can be no bigger than 16 square feet in area. Billboards can be no bigger than 72 square feet in area.* (If you can, obtain this election signage information for your own community from the Planning or Zoning department, and write that instead.)
- ✓ Pair off students. Seat them together.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Ask your class whether they have seen signs near their houses and local stores. Call on your students to repeat what's on some signs.

- ✓ Tell your class that the design of signs and the slogans on them are very important parts of advertising and campaigning.
- ✓ Say, *You are going to come up with a slogan and sign designs. The slogan can be about an issue or a candidate.* (Students can create a candidate if there is no election by combining their first name with their partner's last name.)
- ✓ Say, *Good slogans identify an issue or candidate with something striking and/or positive.* (Give an example: *Breathe Free: Gonzales is a Breath of Fresh Air* or *Don't Care About Pollution? Your Children Will!*) Give the pairs several minutes to invent a slogan.
- ✓ Tell your students that they will be designing three signs for their slogan: a neighborhood sign, a commercial area sign, and a billboard.
- ✓ Ask the students to choose one color for their signs, keeping their slogan in mind. Say, *The cost of using more than one color on sign materials is very high. Choose blue, the color of authority, or red, the color of excitement, or green, the color of the environmentalists, depending on your slogan.*
- ✓ The pairs can use the handout to practice their design ideas and then use paper and markers to create the two signs and billboard. Ask your students to label the height, width, and area of each sign on the back of each piece of paper, making sure they follow the sign ordinances posted on the board.

Thanks to Troy Galloway, Director of Community Development, City of Bentonville, Arkansas, and Karen Brown, former executive director, Kids Voting Arkansas, for their help with this activity.

**DESIGN A SIGN** (continued)

- ✓ Review the rule for area of a rectangle: $\text{area} = \text{length} \times \text{width}$. Labeling the dimensions of each sign will make it clear which piece of paper represents the neighborhood sign, the commercial area sign, or the billboard sign.
- ✓ Remind students that when working together they need to cooperate and at times make compromises to their individual ideas.
- ✓ Students can share their sign and slogan ideas with each other, the school community, and adults important to them.

MORE!

Duplicate extra handouts. Students can copy down slogans they see in their community on the handouts. They can then share these sign ideas and slogans with the class.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What are the purposes of signs and slogans?*
- ★ *Was it hard working together to come up with a slogan and sign designs? Why or why not?*
- ★ *If you had difficulty working with a partner, what did you do to overcome the difficulty?*
- ★ *What impact do you think signs have on the people who see them? Is there any way to find out?*



DESIGN A SIGN

BILLBOARD	
NEIGHBORHOOD SIGN	
COMMERCIAL AREA SIGN	

**IT'S OFFICIAL**

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students send letters to elected officials.

MATERIALS

Paper, envelopes; writing implements:
pens, pencils

GET READY

- ✓ Gather paper, envelopes, pens and/or pencils.
- ✓ If your school has e-mail capability in your classroom, a technology classroom or media center, schedule your class there when composing the letters. E-mail is a great alternative to paper mail.
- ✓ If your PTA has a special budget for the Kids Voting program, you might buy stamps for each student. If not, the students can mail their letters personally.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Say, *There are lots of people who work for us in our country: our mayor, our senators, our representatives, our president, etc. It's important that they understand how we feel about the job they are doing as well as what is important to us.*
- ✓ Ask students to think of something they would like to share with an elected official. Have the mailing addresses/e-mail addresses of elected officials available for your students.

- ✓ Tell your students to compose a letter to the official and sign it. They should use proper letter format. Tell them to write the address of the person they are contacting on the envelope as well as their return address. Alternatively, make a visit to the technology classroom or the media center if your classroom is not equipped with the Internet. Students can always send messages electronically in addition to paper mail.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Why is it important that we share our opinions with our elected officials?*
- ★ *What are other ways we can contact our elected officials?*
- ★ *How can we encourage other students to write their elected officials.*
- ★ *What can we say to people who tell us we are not making a difference?*

MORE!

Write letters to other prominent persons, such as judges and the state and national secretaries of education.



TARGETING PROBLEMS IN MY COMMUNITY

(One week, 20 minutes or so each day)

OBJECTIVE

The students learn about different problems in the local community, choose one, and brainstorm ways they can make a difference.

MATERIALS

Local newspapers; *Let's Make a Difference* handout

GET READY

- ✓ Collect local newspapers for the class to peruse.
- ✓ Arrange for a speaker to come to the class. (Refer to Day 3 in the "Instructions" section.)
- ✓ Copy the *Let's Make a Difference* handout for each student.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Day 1 – Bring in copies of local newspapers for the class to share. Ask students to look through the newspaper to identify local community problems. With students' input, make a list of these problems on the board. Have students continue to monitor local papers for articles about these problems. If possible, clip and post the articles on a bulletin board.
- ✓ Day 2 – For homework, ask students to talk to their parents about what they think are the biggest problems in their community. In class, have students share and add any ideas to the list on the board.

- ✓ Day 3 – Invite someone from the community to come to your class to speak about local community needs and problems. This could be a public official such as the mayor, a city council member, or someone who works for an umbrella social service organization such as United Way. Ask the speaker to talk with the class about current community problems. Encourage students to ask questions about the problems to learn what solutions might be effective. Be sure to have the speaker address how voting impacts this problem as well as any upcoming legislation or elections that might have an effect.
- ✓ Day 4 – Have students vote on the problem they would like to address. Before voting, give students the opportunity to advocate for any of the ideas listed on the board. Encourage students to consider the following criteria before voting: a) Which problem is of most concern to you? b) Which problem has the biggest impact on our community? c) On which problem could we potentially make the greatest impact? Rather than have each student vote for just one problem, consider using an alternate voting strategy such as voting for all the ideas in which you are interested, or voting for your top three choices.

**TARGETING PROBLEMS IN MY COMMUNITY** (continued)

- ✓ Day 5 – In pairs or small groups, have students fill in the *Let's Make a Difference* handout on the following page. They should complete the facts section first and then brainstorm ways to have an impact. Give students the opportunity to share their favorite ideas with the class. Have the students vote on their favorite service ideas. If at all possible, carry out one of the service activities as a class. If you do not complete a class service project, encourage your students to take their ideas home and complete one or more on their own (or for extra credit).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Was it difficult to come up with community problems? If yes, why?*
- ★ *Was it difficult to come up with solutions to community problems? If yes, why?*
- ★ *Was it difficult to carry out the community service project(s)? If yes, how was that the case?*
- ★ *How can you keep having an impact in your community?*



LET'S MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The community problem our class chose is: _____.

What we know... (List here the FACTS you have learned about the problem.)	Ways we can make a difference... (List here your group's ideas for how kids can help.)

When you have listed as many ideas as you can think of, talk together as a group and decide which three service ideas are your favorites. Put a star by the three ideas you chose. Be prepared to share these with the class.



“HOW'RE WE DOIN'?”

(30-40 minutes over a couple days)

OBJECTIVE

Students survey neighbors and friends to assess the community's perception of its own problems.

MATERIALS

Community Assessment Survey handout;
graphing materials

GET READY

- ✓ Copy two *Community Assessment Survey* handouts for each student.
- ✓ Have materials ready for data graphing.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Say, *In the 1980s, New York City's colorful Mayor Edward Koch used to greet New Yorkers on the street by calling out, "How'm I doin'?" We are going to find out how well our local government is handling major community problems, according to our fellow citizens.*
- ✓ Ask the students to use the assessment survey by assigning a score of 1 (low) through 5 (high) to their community in its handling of the five major problems of U.S. cities:
 - ✓ Growth/decline
 - ✓ Crime
 - ✓ Refuse
 - ✓ Clean water
 - ✓ Traffic and transportation
- ✓ Tell students to exchange, explain, and compare their responses and comments.
- ✓ Ask each group to predict the scores and comments these categories might receive in the community at large.

- ✓ Instruct students to bring home the surveys and administer them to parents or neighbors (with adult permission/supervision). Offer additional handouts to students who intend to interview more than two people.
- ✓ When surveys are returned, have students enter the data on a computer and print out a bar graph for each of the five categories. If a computer is not available, use graphing paper and markers to draw the bar graphs.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What community problem had the best score? Did any comments made by the adults surveyed help to explain the community's success on this issue?*
- ★ *What problem had the lowest score? Which comments by the adults surveyed help to explain why?*
- ★ *Are any of these issues being addressed by referendum? (Ask only if an election is pending.)*
- ★ *What are good questions to ask local officials about these issues? Have the officials already made statements addressing them? Where could we find these?*

MORE!

Invite local government officials (and/or candidates) to respond to the concerns revealed in the surveys, in person or by letter/e-mail.



“HOW'RE WE DOIN'?”

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT SURVEY

How would you rank our community in these areas, on a scale of 1 to 5?
Circle one in each category (1=low; 5=high). Add comments if you wish.

1) Growth/decline

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

2) Crime

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

3) Waste Disposal

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

4) Clean Water

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

5) Traffic and Transportation

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

GATHERING AND WEIGHING INFORMATION

- ★ Name some sources of information?
- ★ How do you decide if something you read or hear is true?
- ★ How do you make decisions?
- ★ What constitutes a good decision?
- ★ Tell me about a decision you have made? Do you think it was a good decision, why or why not?

COMMUNICATING YOUR POSITION

- ★ What does it mean to communicate effectively?
- ★ What makes a good communicator?
- ★ When are times that you are required to share an opinion or decision with others?
- ★ How do you communicate this information?
- ★ Do people always agree with you?
- ★ What do you do when someone disagrees with you?

WORKING TOGETHER

- ★ What does it mean to work well with others?
- ★ Is it always easy to work with others? What sometimes makes it hard to work with others?
- ★ What does it mean to be a good listener?
- ★ Can it be fun to work with other people? How?
- ★ Is there a time when you had to work with other people? How did it go?
- ★ What advice would you give someone who needs to work with other people?

HAVING AN IMPACT

- ★ What is a community? What is needed in order to have a community?
- ★ Are there any problems in your community?
- ★ Do you think adults are the only people who make a difference in your community? Why or why not?
- ★ Are there things that you can do to help your community? What are some ideas?
- ★ Do you think it would be hard to create change in your community?
What do you think would be hard about it?
- ★ Was there a time that you did something positive for your community? Describe that time.



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

Fight On! Mary Church Terrell's Battle for Integration by Dennis Brindell and Judith Bloom Fradin

OBJECTIVE

Students examine what it means to create positive change in a community.

MATERIALS

Fight On! Mary Church Terrell's Battle for Integration – Dennis Brindell and Judith Bloom Fradin

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

- ✓ Read aloud to your students, or have them read, Chapter One: *A Bowl of Soup*.
- ✓ This chapter captures a very important series of events in the life of Mary Church Terrell.
- ✓ Ask your students, *What do you think spurred Mary Church Terrell to go to Thompson's Cafeteria with her friends?*
- ✓ Ask, *Why did Mrs. Terrell ask the manager, "Doesn't the Constitution of the United States apply here?"*
- ✓ Ask your class if they think the Thompson Restaurant Case will be won by Mrs. Terrell. Ask them why they responded as they did, and then inform them that they will find out over the course of reading the book.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *How would you describe Mary Church Terrell's life and contributions?*
- ★ *When Mrs. Terrell was segregated in the workplace she quit her job and told her employers she would not work under those conditions? What did that accomplish?*
- ★ *How was Mary Church Terrell effective in the work she did? Was she able to accomplish what she did on her own, or did she work with others?*

- ★ *Are there still injustices in our country? What are they?*
- ★ *What could you do to fight these injustices?*
- ★ *How do you think Mrs. Terrell would feel about the state of race relations in America if she were alive today?*
- ★ *What can you do to improve where you live?*

ACTIVITY

- ✓ Have your students investigate the lives of individuals who have positively impacted America.
- ✓ Plan for your students to research and write a report on a person who has contributed greatly to our society. Give your students the freedom to choose who they would like to research, but encourage them to write about someone who they do not know much about.
- ✓ Say, *There are many people who have worked to end injustices and bring a greater sense of equality to America. Many of these people we know: Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Susan B. Anthony. Many of these people we may not be as familiar with, such as Mary Church Terrell, before reading this book. You are going to investigate the life of one of these people and share with the class how this person impacted our country.*
- ✓ Have your students share their work with their peers through oral presentations of five minutes or less.



CULMINATING ACTIVITY: TOWARD A MORE PERFECT COMMUNITY

(60 minutes — possibly an ongoing service-learning project)

OBJECTIVE

Groups of students compose an overview of their community, choose a campaign for a specific area of improvement, and plan a service project.

MATERIALS

Toward a More Perfect Community handout

GET READY

- ✓ Divide your class into groups of four students.
- ✓ Duplicate a copy of the *Toward a More Perfect Community* handout for each student.
- ✓ Obtain telephone access for local calls during class time (optional).

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Say, *A city in the western United States discovered recently that only 12% of its eligible voters had cast a ballot in the last mayoral election. If the youngest voters (18-25 years old) had turned out as a block, they could have elected their own candidates for mayor and city council.*
- ✓ Tell the class to assume that the youngest voters have done just that. Each group of four now represents a youth-oriented mayor and city council.
- ✓ Say to the groups, *Your job is to look at your community, evaluate its strengths and weaknesses, and choose one aspect of life in your community that needs improvement. Each group will develop a service project plan for the community aspect that needs improvement.*

- ✓ Tell your students to use the *Toward a More Perfect Community* handout to evaluate the community and to develop their service project plans.
- ✓ Inform students that their plans will require them to create a budget and to figure out how to include other students, faculty and administration, local businesses, local government agencies and/or the media in their plans.
- ✓ Have the groups present their plans, both in writing to the teacher and orally to the class.
- ✓ Have the class select a project that seems feasible and that will have an impact: ask, *How can we pursue one of these projects? What would be the fairest way for the class to select the one we want to pursue?* (Students can vote by secret ballot or by a show of hands.)
- ✓ Once a project has been selected, have your students further develop the plan of action as a class. They should brainstorm everything that needs to happen for the project to become a reality.
- ✓ Have your students implement their plan of action.

**CULMINATING ACTIVITY:
TOWARD A MORE PERFECT COMMUNITY** (continued)**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- ★ *Which attributes of our town were most commonly cited as strengths?*
- ★ *Which attributes of our town were most commonly cited for needing improvement?*
- ★ *Is there any common thread to be found in the areas students chose for improvement?*
- ★ *Is that the area for improvement we chose?*
- ★ *What group's plan of action did we choose? Why do you think this project plan was selected?*
- ★ *What impact did our service project have on the community issue? Did our project turn out as planned?*
- ★ *If in an election cycle: Which candidates in this election seem to agree with our programs of reform? What are they saying in their campaigns about "our" issues? Which of them might help us with our projects?*

MORE!

Send the plans to the mayor and/or the city council, either by mail or e-mail. (Many city Web sites offer direct posting of e-mail to city officials. Go to <http://www.statelocalgov.net/>, if you have Web access, to see whether your community has a Web site.) Invite parents to a presentation of the "More Perfect Community" project after its completion. Students could prepare refreshments, decorations, and banners. Invite local officials and school district leaders to the presentation.



TOWARD A MORE PERFECT COMMUNITY

Group Members: _____

Community Strengths: _____

Community Weaknesses: _____

Area of Focus For Project: _____

Project Description: _____

BUDGET

Costs: _____

Revenue sources: _____

How we will involve students, faculty, media, businesses and local government:

APPENDIX



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ELECTIONS	2
THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE	7
FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE POLITICAL BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS	8
THE LINKS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND VOTING	9
THE MEDIA AND POLITICS	9
THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT	12
POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS	15
POLITICAL PARTIES	16
POLITICAL PROPAGANDA	19
THE RIGHT TO VOTE	20
SERVICE-LEARNING	23
USE OF POLLS	24
VOTER APATHY	25

ELECTIONS

QUALIFICATIONS FOR VOTING

The United States Constitution gives each state the right to decide who is qualified to vote and for much of our history there were significant differences among the states. However, since 1964 the U.S. Department of Justice has been charged with enforcing the Voting Rights Act, which has resulted in uniform voting qualifications in all states.

To be qualified to vote one must be:

- ✓ A United States citizen
- ✓ 18 years of age or older
- ✓ A resident of a state or the District of Columbia
- ✓ Able to write or make his/her mark

One must not be:

- ✓ A convicted felon (unless civil rights have been restored)
- ✓ Legally insane

REGISTERING TO VOTE

Before the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, voter registration was, in some states, an intimidating and difficult process. Several instances brought attention to this topic, resulting in the Voting Rights Act of 1964.

Today, the trend in most states is to make registering to vote easier and more convenient. In many states it is now possible to register by mail or when getting a driver's license.

When registering to vote, one typically fills out a card which asks a series of questions designed to determine eligibility. It is also necessary to declare party allegiance or independence of party allegiance at the time of registration in most states. Each person is assigned to a voter precinct at the time of registration and can vote only at that precinct or by absentee ballot.

Limiting voters to a particular precinct is a way to control voter fraud and to facilitate the management of elections, but in today's increasingly mobile society it also prevents some people from voting. The application of computer technology is beginning to make some variations in the precinct system possible. For example, in some states it is now possible to register at the polls. If a person changes names, moves, or wants to have a different political party affiliation it is necessary to reregister.

POLLING PLACE PROCEDURE

Polling place procedures may vary slightly in some locations, but in general there is a great similarity. Elections and voting are under the jurisdiction of county governments. An election board is appointed for each precinct and it is its job to conduct the election according to the instructions of the county elections department. Also present at each polling place are representatives of the major political parties whose role is to be sure the election is conducted properly.

ELECTION PRECINCTS

The governing board for each county is responsible for establishing a “convenient” number of voting precincts. New precincts may be established by the governing body as necessary. In states where precinct irregularities are judged to have occurred, the process must be approved by the U.S. Department of Justice. The county recorder is responsible for advising voters of any change in their precincts. Special districts (school districts, utilities, etc.) may be established and polling places designated for each precinct.

ELECTION BOARD AND TALLY BOARDS

Election officials (whose titles may vary from state to state) representing the two major parties are appointed for each precinct. To be appointed, a person must be a qualified voter of the jurisdiction certifying the election. State employees associated with the election procedure are prohibited from being appointed as representatives of political parties. Lists of alternates are available if vacancies occur on the morning of an election.

ELECTION LAWS

Federal law governs all national elections and has been widely adopted by the states. Accordingly, one will find the following to be true at most elections:

- ✓ In primary elections only, ballots are printed on materials of a different color for each represented party.
- ✓ When there are two or more candidates for a nomination, the names are rotated in top, bottom, and middle positions. In primary elections where voting machines are used, electors' names shall appear in alphabetical order.
- ✓ The fifty-foot limit requires a sign marking the boundary be posted and that only those voting and those working in the polls be allowed within the fifty-foot limit.
- ✓ The United States flag will be displayed at polling places.

VOTING EQUIPMENT

Generally, it is state law which governs the type and number of voting devices which must be provided for the registered voters of each precinct, but it is the counties who are responsible for financing the purchase and maintenance of voting equipment and supplies.

ABSENTEE VOTING

All states make provisions for absentee ballots to be cast. See your Kids Voting Teacher Handbook for the specifics in your state.

RECOUNTS

An automatic recount of votes is required when the margin is less than one-tenth of one percent. The expense of the count will be borne by the state or county, depending on the office or measure involved.

GENERAL ELECTIONS

According to federal law, elections for federal offices will be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November on even-numbered years. This is also the date adopted by most states for the election of state officials. These elections are called general elections.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR HOLDING OFFICE:

- ✓ The president and vice president are required by the U.S. Constitution to be at least 35 years of age, reside in the country for the last 14 years, and be natural-born citizens.
- ✓ Senators are required to be at least 30 years of age, reside in the state they represent, and be citizens for at least nine years.
- ✓ Representatives are required to be at least 25 years of age, reside in the state they represent, and be citizens for at least seven years.

LENGTH OF TERMS

Depending on the office, candidates are elected for two-, four-, or six-year terms:

- ✓ The **president and vice president** are elected every four years.
- ✓ **Senators** are elected to six-year terms, but the terms are staggered so that one-third are elected every two years. Every state has two U.S. senators.
- ✓ **Representatives** are elected to two-year terms. The entire house is elected every two years. Since the total number of representatives is set by law at 435, changes in population require a reapportionment. This occurs every 10 years after the national census is taken. The Census Bureau determines the number of representatives to which each state is entitled, but it is up to the states to redraw their own congressional districts. To eliminate the practice of gerrymandering, the federal government oversees the drawing of congressional districts according to the Voting Rights Act of 1964.

Some states conduct elections for state executive offices in conjunction with federal general elections, and other states conduct state elections in off years. Also on the general election ballot may be several issues concerning the state that will be decided by the voters.

INITIATIVES

This measure allows citizens to make laws directly without action by the legislature or governor. There are two types of initiatives. One can be used to change a state constitution and the other to make a law. Both kinds of initiatives require that petitions be signed by registered voters. The number of signatures needed follows a formula determined by state law. The signatures must be collected within a certain time and validated by state or county officials. Before the election, the state publishes a pamphlet containing all proposals.

REFERENDUMS

This measure provides a way for the citizens to vote on a new law or constitutional amendment after the legislature has approved it. Referendums get on the ballot in one of two ways. *First*, the legislature may want to have the voters make the ultimate decision about whether a law is desirable or not. In that case, the legislature can by law place it on the general election ballot. *Second*, the public may pass petitions and get a sufficient number of signatures to force a law passed by the legislature to be put to a vote.

JUDICIAL ELECTIONS

Judicial elections generally occur during a general election. Some states have a system for selecting judges that allows voters to affirm more than one judge. For instance, there may be 20 judges up for affirmation, and voters may be allowed to select three judges to affirm. Other states have a system through which voters cast negative votes against a judge. For instance, there may be 20 judges up for affirmation, and a voter only votes against those he/she does not want affirmed.

PRIMARY ELECTIONS

The primary is a tool of the political parties to let them determine who their candidate will be in the general elections in case there are several persons who would like to run for the same office.

Primaries did not become a dominant factor in presidential nominations until the 1960s. Until then candidates were typically selected by party activists who attended the national conventions. The party then presented the candidates to the electorate. The rise of primaries involved voters more directly in the selection process, and in so doing it diminished the power of the major parties. Around the turn of the century, the reformers interested in making the nominating process more democratic began to press the state governments to provide more direct voter participation. The primary was the technique most of them favored. In 1901 Florida enacted the first presidential primary law. This gave party officials the option of holding a primary to choose delegates to the national presidential convention. Within a few years, a number of states took the next important step by establishing the “preferential” presidential primary. Oregon pioneered this new system, by which voters would cast a ballot for their preferred candidate and the delegates would be legally bound to that candidate at the national convention.

In 1912 preferential primaries were held in one-quarter of the states. The former President Theodore Roosevelt won the Republican vote in most of them. However, the Republican National Convention nominated the incumbent William Howard Taft. Indeed, until 1968, party leaders remained firmly in control of the nominating process.

In 1960 John Kennedy concentrated on two primaries—Wisconsin and West Virginia—and by winning them, convinced party leaders to support him at the convention. In 1964 and 1968 there were dramatic primary competitions among the major candidates. Barry Goldwater’s victory over Nelson Rockefeller in the California Republican primary in 1964 assured him the nomination, and the emotional Democratic primaries of 1968 pitted Eugene McCarthy, Robert Kennedy, and

Hubert Humphrey against each other. Robert Kennedy's death at the hand of an assassin, following his dramatic victory in the California primary, clouded the primary vote that year. Humphrey went on to win the nomination at the strife-torn national convention in Chicago.

Before the 1972 convention, some Democrats (led by South Dakota Senator George McGovern) began to exert pressure aimed at changing the complex nominating rules to allow broader voter participation. The first beneficiary of the changed rules was McGovern himself, who used the primary process to win the nomination. In 1976 the little-known Jimmy Carter won the nomination by pursuing a skillful primary campaign, and in 1980 Carter and Ronald Reagan earned their parties' nominations by winning majority votes in more than 35 primaries. This was the high water mark for primaries.

After the defeat in the 1980 election, the Democrats began to wonder at the wisdom of the system that absorbed so much time (candidates beginning to run the year before the election and campaigning in primaries from March through June) and seemed to discourage members of the party from running. By 1984 the number of primaries was reduced to 27. In 1988 the number was 25 for the Democrats and 28 for the Republicans, and nearly half of these were scheduled on the same date, March 8, "Super Tuesday."

Even so, the primary has remained the most important method of determining the major candidates for president. One of the consequences has been to diminish the role and influence of the political party in such matters. As a rule, party leaders interested in winning general elections seek moderate candidates who will appeal to coalitions of diverse voters. The primary process often demands that a candidate commit to groups with very specific political goals—the advocates, women's rights organizations, gay activists, ethnic minority groups—before these groups will grant their vote in a primary. By the time of the general election, these candidates may be seen as tools of special interests. Finally, the primary system is so cumbersome and so long that some major candidates simply cannot find the time, energy, or money to run. Some scholars now argue that reforms that would strengthen the primary system—shorten the campaign, diminish the influence of special interest groups, and control the spiraling expenditures necessary to run for the presidency—would benefit the country. But we should keep in mind that the expansion of the primary method was also intended to benefit the country.

LOCAL ELECTIONS

Local elections are set by the individual city councils or school boards. They tend to be in spring rather than fall when the primaries and general elections are held. Some examples of local elections are:

- ✓ **City Council and Mayoral Elections, Bond Elections.** Bond elections are held to get voter approval to spend money, generally for construction projects. It may be that a particular school district would like to build more schools or a city needs to build a new sewer plant.
- ✓ **Override Elections.** Override elections allow the voters to exceed the legal limit placed on taxing and spending.
- ✓ **Recall Elections.** In most states all elected officials, including judges, are subject to recall by the voters. To recall, petitions must be circulated and a specified number of signatures obtained.

APPOINTED OFFICIALS

Governmental entities have appointed officials, such as the city managers and school superintendents, who generally serve at the pleasure of their top elected officials. In most cases, these appointees actually run the day-to-day business while the elected officials set the governing policies. The elected officials often rely on the professional opinions of the appointed officials.

In many cases, governing entities have created volunteer citizen panels to help oversee the governmental process. Cities and counties, for instance, have planning and zoning boards to approve location of shopping centers and to ensure that liquor stores are not right next to churches. The people on these boards are interested individuals who, in most cases, serve without pay.

THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

To be elected president, a candidate must successfully win three different kinds of contests. First, the candidate must win delegate support at the state level. Second, the candidate must be nominated at the party's national convention. Finally, the candidate must win a majority of the nation's electoral votes in the nationwide election held every fourth year on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November.

Following the selection of candidates at the party conventions in the summer, the country witnesses a nationwide campaign for the presidency, generally with two major candidates. The campaign usually heats up in early September and continues until Election Day in early November. Voters who participate in the national election, however, are not actually voting directly for a presidential candidate. Rather, they are voting for electors—members of the *Electoral College*. The Electoral College actually chooses the president and vice president. Each state is assigned a number of electors equal to its total United States representatives (435) and senators (100). In addition, the District of Columbia has three electoral votes, making the total number of electors for the entire country 538. A presidential hopeful who wins the majority of electoral votes wins the election.

Currently, the candidate who wins the greatest number of popular votes (not necessarily a majority) in a state receives all of that state's electoral votes. There are two exceptions to the rule. Maine and Nebraska both use an alternative method of distributing their electoral votes, called the Congressional District Method. With the Congressional District Method, a state divides itself into a number of districts, allocating one of its state-wide electoral votes to each district. The winner of each district is awarded that district's electoral vote, and the winner of the statewide vote is then awarded the state's remaining two electoral votes.

The candidate who wins a majority of the electoral vote is then elected president. On a few occasions in our history, the candidate with the plurality of popular votes has actually lost the election in the electoral college. Despite suggestions for changing the system, the U.S. Congress does not seem interested in doing so.

In the event that no candidate receives a majority of the electoral vote, the selection for president is made by the U.S. House of Representatives. Each state has one vote. In the 1824 election, with four major candidates running, Andrew Jackson, the candidate with the most electoral votes (99) and the greatest number of popular votes (153,544), lost the presidency to John Quincy Adams who had only 84 electoral votes and 108,740 popular votes. With three opponents, Jackson failed to win a majority of the total electoral votes. When the House voted to choose the president (as provided in the U.S. Constitution), Jackson's opponents united against him, and a majority of the states' representatives voted for Adams.

Before election day in November, each party with a candidate running for the presidency selects a slate of potential electors. Each state is given a number of electors equal to its total number of United States representatives and senators. (The District of Columbia was given three electoral votes by the 23rd amendment, which was ratified in 1961.) Thus, on election day in November, voters actually are choosing which slate of electors will be sent to the state capital to vote in December. The current practice in all states is that the candidate who wins the largest number of state's popular votes (not necessarily a majority) in the November general election receives *all* that state's electoral votes. Therefore, if a candidate wins by one percent in your state, that candidate will receive every one of your state's electoral votes.

FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE POLITICAL BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS

There are four major influences on voter decisions:

1. The background of the voter
2. The degree of voter loyalty to political parties
3. The issues of the campaign
4. The voter's image of the candidates

BACKGROUND:

- ✓ Age
- ✓ Education level
- ✓ Religious beliefs
- ✓ Ethnicity
- ✓ Social/economic status

LOYALTY TO POLITICAL PARTIES:

- ✓ Strong versus weak party voters vote in different numbers; weak party voters cast votes less frequently.
- ✓ Independent voters' votes are cast for persons or issues without regard for party affiliation.

ISSUES IN THE CAMPAIGN:

- ✓ The media (television, radio, newspapers, and Internet) presents issues to a wide audience.
- ✓ The degree to which the personal lives of voters are impacted by issues (e.g., pollution, energy, inflation, school busing, gun control, crime, unemployment and women's rights) in campaigns affects voters' attitudes.

CANDIDATE'S IMAGE:

How a candidate is perceived by the voters is extremely important in an election. Generally, the most important considerations are:

- ✓ Leadership qualities
- ✓ Problem-solving abilities
- ✓ Trustworthiness

THE LINKS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND VOTING

Voters directly impact government in the following ways:

- ✓ At the national level
- ✓ At the state, county, and local levels

AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL:

- ✓ The voter affects the **party platform**, which delineates the party's stand on specific issues.
- ✓ The party in power determines the **amount of spending** on various programs.
- ✓ The party in power determines the **direction of domestic and foreign policies**.

AT THE STATE, COUNTY, AND LOCAL LEVELS:

- ✓ **Taxes** (bond elections) to support various kinds of construction (e.g., new schools, highways, improvement districts)
- ✓ **Educational systems** (school boards)
- ✓ **Environmental issues** (clean air regulations, waste disposal)
- ✓ **Transportation** (public transit, highway systems)

THE MEDIA AND POLITICS

Any study of politics must take into account the importance of media in American politics. Not only are journalists and their programs the most important information sources in society, but also the media depend on the political system for much of the news they report. Almost all of the functions of the media have political implications and some are essential to the democratic process.

FUNCTIONS OF MEDIA

The media's functions include:

- ✓ Entertainment – providing material that is simply interesting, diverting or fun
- ✓ Reporting the news – mass media's primary goal
- ✓ Identifying public problems – investigative function, presentation of policy alternatives
- ✓ Socializing a new generation – transmission of historical information
- ✓ Providing a political forum – officeholders attempt to gain support for policies, image of leadership; viewers and readers share their own insights with the community
- ✓ Making money – private ownership; commercial media are profit-making enterprises

TELEVISION

Television is particularly influential in the realm of politics. TV may also portray issues more superficially than newspapers and news magazines because it operates within significant time constraints, and because it gives special emphasis to the visual impact of stories. Television journalism connects with viewers especially strongly on an emotional level. Print media have some advantages in reaching their audience on an intellectual level.

POWER OF MEDIA

The media comprise a powerful tool in political communication. They serve as vehicles for paid political advertisements, while also covering news that candidates may see as positive or negative. The media can manage news coverage based on particular interests. The media also can play a roll in creating special political events, such as presidential debates.

MEDIA AND GOVERNMENT

The media conduct investigative reporting related to elected officials on a regular basis. This can affect the way an office holder or an administration sets and pursues its agenda. Given limited time and space, journalists must make decisions about which issues and personalities to emphasize. Those decisions are influenced by personal and institutional values. As a result most journalists believe it is critically important to make special efforts to insure that their work is accurate, thorough, fair and balanced.

REGULATIONS

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution protects the right of media to do their work without unwarranted interference, and to share that work with an audience. The electronic media are restricted in some ways by government control, exercised through the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The FCC requires electronic media to provide equal time to political candidates. This equal time restriction does not apply to print media.

MEDIA AND THE PRESIDENT

The White House has a press corps and a press secretary. The press secretary works to communicate the position of the president. The press corps is comprised of media representatives who have the White House as a “beat” to cover. The White House can also create media events, such as “fireside chats.”

MEDIA AND THE SELECTION OF CANDIDATES

The role of the media in the selection of candidates cannot be overlooked. For good or bad it is there. In 1928, Al Smith’s chances for election as president were greatly reduced by his nasal-sounding voice, which was a disaster on radio. In the 1960 presidential debates of Nixon and Kennedy, television viewers gave the edge to Kennedy while radio listeners gave it to Nixon. The Reason: Nixon appeared to be sweaty and nervous, and seemed to have a five o’clock shadow while Kennedy appeared cool, collected and confident. While broadcast journalism may be more constrained in some ways by government licensing, the print media are able in some respects to be less inhibited. Newspapers frequently support candidates and take stands on issues of local, state and national importance. In recent years, however, television has come under great scrutiny as a source of political influence. Newspapers now cover politicians’ TV advertising campaigns as carefully as they cover actual campaign appearances. The needs of television have come to *shape* presidential campaigns.

Here are a few examples:

- ✓ Primaries are now much more national in character. Before television, candidates in the primaries concentrated on local issues: farm problems in agricultural states, industry problems in industrial states. The primaries today, however, are covered by national television and offer candidates an early arena for national exposure. As a result, primaries today are fought largely on the grounds of national issues as opposed to local issues and candidates are often hesitant to take strong stands on controversial issues as opposed to local issues.
- ✓ Speech writing has changed substantially. In 1858 the Lincoln-Douglas debates went on for hours and were reported in-depth by the newspapers. In electronic journalism, though, time is expensive. The candidate may get one or two minutes on the evening news, but usually no more. Speech writers now construct speeches to contain “sound bites,” as the networks call them—20- and 30-second highlights that can be dropped directly into television and radio newscasts.
- ✓ Television schedules dictate that most major campaign speeches are given early in the day, to give the networks time to locate the “sound bites” and edit them for use on the evening news. Television is an enormously persuasive medium, but the telegenic candidate may not always be the best qualified. Nor is the campaign that is best designed for television necessarily the one with the most substance. In recent years, newspapers have expanded their coverage of issues, by meeting with readers to get questions that are then submitted to candidates. Newspapers also make extensive efforts to compare candidates’ positions on important issues in some detail. It is the voters’ duty to study the personalities, analyze the issues, and learn all they can about the candidates, in order to make informed and responsible decisions.

THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT

THE POWERS OF THE PRESIDENT

The office of the president of the United States is one of the most powerful positions in the world. There are only a few hundred words in the U.S. Constitution about the president's duties and powers but those few words give him/her powers of many kinds.

Time and tradition have also developed expectations and powers that are not carefully spelled out in the U.S. Constitution. Still, the origin of all presidential power is in the U.S. Constitution and to understand the presidential role as it is currently exercised, one must understand the constitution. Presidential powers are found in Article II, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution.

CLAUSE 1

Text:

“The President shall be commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the militia of the several states when called into the actual service of the United States; he may require the opinion, in writing, of the principal officer in each of the executive departments, upon any subject relating to the duties of their respective offices, and he shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offenses against the United States, except in cases of impeachment.”

Interpretation:

When the framers of the U.S. Constitution made the president commander-in-chief of the armed forces, they were thinking of several important points:

1. They ordered that the head of the armed forces should be elected by the people
2. They prevented any military officer of the armed forces from seizing the government and making himself/herself president
3. They also prevented any president from becoming a dictator since he/she can be head of the armed forces only as long as he/she is president—and a president can be impeached or voted out of office
4. They placed in the hands of one person the great governmental and military power that must be used together in time of war. The words “principal officer in each of the executive departments” suggests that there will be various departments to help the president carry out his/her duties. The heads of these departments have come to be known as the president's Cabinet.

CLAUSE 2

Text:

“He shall have power, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, to make treaties, provided two-thirds of the Senators present concur; and he/she shall nominate and, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls, judges of the Supreme Court, and all other officers of the United States, whose appointments are not

herein provided for and which shall be established by law; but the Congress may by law vest the appointment of such inferior officers, as they think proper, in the President alone, in the courts of law, or in the heads of departments.”

Interpretation:

The rule that the U.S. Senate must approve any treaty keeps the president from making important agreements with other nations against the wishes of the elected representatives of the American people. But there are other kinds of foreign agreements, less important than treaties, which the president can make without Senate approval. In Clause 2, the U.S. Constitution makes separate rules for selecting two different kinds of officers:

1. Very important officers who are appointed by the president only after a majority of the U.S. Senate has approved them
2. Inferior officers, who can be chosen by the president, by his/her Cabinet officers, or by judges without Senate approval of them. These so-called “inferior officers” are not necessarily unimportant. Among the very important officials whom the president can appoint only with the approval of the U.S. Senate are high officers of the armed forces, leading postmasters, head customs officials, and members of key agencies such as the Atomic Energy Commission, the Federal Reserve Board and the Interstate Commerce Commission.

CLAUSE 3

Text:

“The President shall have power to fill up all vacancies that may happen during the recess of the Senate, by granting commissions which shall expire at the end of their next session.”

Interpretation:

In Clause 3, the U.S. Constitution says that if one of these important jobs becomes vacant while Congress is not meeting, the president may choose a person for the job without waiting to get Senate approval. Such an appointment is known as an *ad interim*, or “for the interval,” appointment. When Congress meets again, the U.S. Senate votes either for or against the person chosen by the president.

THE DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT

ARTICLE 2, SECTION 3

Text:

“He shall from time to time give to the Congress information of the state of the Union, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient; he may, on extraordinary occasions, convene both houses, or either of them, and in case of disagreement between them, with respect to the time of adjournment, he may adjourn them to such time as he shall think proper; he shall receive ambassadors and other public ministers; he shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed, and shall commission all officers of the United States.”

Interpretation:

One of the president's duties is to give information and advice to the U.S. Congress in messages on the "state of the Union." Hundreds of thousands of government employees throughout the country and around the world report back to their head officers. These officers in turn report to the president. Such messages are strong political tools for the president. Another tool is his/ her power to call special sessions of Congress. Among the most important duties of the president is "to take care that the laws be faithfully executed." He/she is too busy to do all this himself/herself but there are many officers in the executive branch of the government to help him/her enforce the laws. The presidential job, as described in the U.S. Constitution, is a medley of compromises. Today a president is asked to play countless roles that are not carefully spelled out in the U.S. Constitution. Modern-day presidents are much more powerful than those of the last century despite the fact that their constitutional powers have not changed. Attempting to describe presidential power is difficult, as the exact dimension of executive power at any given moment is largely the consequence of the incumbent's character and energy, combined with the needs and challenges of the time.

SUMMARY OF CONSTITUTIONAL ROLES AND POWERS OF THE PRESIDENT:

- ✓ Commander-in-chief
- ✓ Conduct foreign policy
- ✓ Negotiate treaties
- ✓ Nominate top officials
- ✓ Veto bills
- ✓ Faithfully administer federal law
- ✓ Pardon for federal offenses
- ✓ Maintain order
- ✓ Address Congress and nation

ADDITIONAL ROLES AND INFORMAL POWERS:

- ✓ Morale builder
- ✓ Party leader
- ✓ Legislative leader
- ✓ Coalition-builder
- ✓ Crisis manager
- ✓ Personnel recruiter
- ✓ World leader
- ✓ Budget setter
- ✓ Priority setter
- ✓ Bargainer and persuader
- ✓ Conflict resolver

STEPS IN ELECTING A PRESIDENT:

1. Candidate announces that he/she is entering the race; this usually happens one to two years before the November election.
2. Members of the same party run against each other, trying to become the party's candidate.
 - ✓ A. Primaries: Party members vote for candidates, win delegates to the convention.
 - ✓ B. Caucuses: Party members select delegates to the convention at meetings.
3. Voters vote for president; this is called the "popular vote."
 - ✓ A. Voters are really voting for electors who are pledged to a candidate.
 - ✓ B. If a candidate wins the popular vote, he/she wins all of the electoral votes; this is called "winner take all."
4. The Electoral College is made up of all of the electors. The electors vote in December. A candidate must get at least 270 out of 538 votes to win the election.
5. On January 6, Congress officially counts the ballots. If no candidate has at least 270 votes, the U.S. House of Representatives selects the president and the U.S. Senate selects the vice president.
6. Inauguration Day: The president and vice president are sworn into office on January 20.

POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

Every political candidate knows that issues are not all there is to a campaign. It is also necessary to "sell" the voters on the candidate's personality, values, character, and individual worthiness to hold office. Today's candidate usually wishes to be seen as warm, decent, and likable. Certainly it remains important to be intelligent, calm, well-informed, strong, and decisive—the traditional values of leadership—but voters also respond positively to an attractive personality and negatively to a cold or distant one.

An industry has sprung up over the need to make candidates "human," to stress personal qualities to which voters can respond emotionally as well as intellectually. Given two candidates of approximately equal ability, people will vote for the one they like. "I Like Ike" worked for several reasons. It was simple, it was memorable, it stressed affection rather than admiration or respect—attitudes Eisenhower already inspired—and it appealed to voters who were unfamiliar with or did not care about his war record. His Democratic opponent in both 1952 and 1956, Illinois Governor Adlai E. Stevenson, was an accomplished politician and, in private, a witty man, but he never achieved Eisenhower's broad popular appeal. And Stevenson's slogan could not compare with "Ike's;" how memorable is "Madly for Adlai"?

Names can be an important part of a politician's image. In the 1988 primary campaigns, Democratic Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis, whose friends called him "Michael," campaigned as "Mike," and Republican Delaware Governor Pierre Du Pont became "Pete." U.S. Vice President Lyndon Baines Johnson elevated to the presidency when John F. Kennedy was assassinated, campaigned under his initials using the slogan "All the Way With LBJ." Governor

James Earl Carter of Georgia, who won the presidency in 1976, stressed his Southern roots and lack of pretension by calling himself “Jimmy” throughout his political career.

Candidates traditionally emphasize their families. The candidate’s spouse and children usually play an active role in the candidate’s campaign—appearing at most of the important public functions and are invariably on hand at national conventions. The spirited part played by a candidate’s family is a public affirmation of family values, and family values are generally important to the American electorate. (America has had only one bachelor president, James Buchanan.)

In support of most campaigns, the political parties and the candidates’ advisors create an array of buttons, posters, slogans, cheers and, more recently, television and radio advertisements. All these tools seek to encapsulate a candidate’s appeal—to make it attractive to the largest number of voters. “Tippecanoe and Tyler Too” (William Henry Harrison), “Honest Abe” (Abraham Lincoln), “Speak Softly and Carry a Big Stick” (Theodore Roosevelt), “The New Deal” (Franklin Delano Roosevelt), “The New Frontier” (John F. Kennedy), “The Great Society” (Lyndon Baines Johnson)—were all marketing devices that summarized a candidate’s appeal and attempted, on the simplest level, to clarify the issues involved. As issues have become more complex and the media (especially television) have made candidates more visible, marketing is an even more important factor in political campaigns. One of the voter’s challenges is to differentiate between a candidate’s image and the substance of the campaign.

POLITICAL PARTIES

There are many political parties in the United States, but the two largest ones, the Republicans and Democrats, are so powerful that the U.S. is generally considered to have a two-party system. Many of those who wrote the Constitution hoped that political parties would never develop in America, but almost from the beginning there were Federalists and Anti-Federalists and by the middle of the 19th century the Republican and Democratic parties were well established. Despite the fears of our founding fathers, political parties serve an important role in the election process.

THE IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Political parties are crucially important throughout the election process. They offer choices and clarify issues. They play the key role in the selection of candidates for the presidency. They help to administer the state conventions, caucuses, and primaries. Parties run the national conventions from which the presidential and vice presidential candidates eventually emerge. At the conventions, the nominees and influential party members create a platform that reconciles the elements of the party that competed in the primaries. Parties are also very active in the November general elections. They raise money for their candidates, mobilize volunteers, encourage voter registration and participation, provide poll watchers, and create campaign materials. Once a party wins an election, it is expected to develop policies and to govern, while the party out of power is expected to provide constructive criticism of the party in power.

SUMMARY OF THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES:

1. Recruit and nominate candidates
2. Simplify choice of candidates through primaries
3. Raise funds for political campaigns
4. Serve as the “loyal opposition” and oppose the policies of the other party
5. Register voters and help run elections
6. Describe and clarify issues and disseminate information
7. Mobilize voters
8. Find commonality for diverse interests

THE ORGANIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Each party has a national committee headed by a chairperson and a vice chairperson. In addition, there are state party organizations and local organizations. In addition, each candidate also selects a campaign chairperson, treasurer, media expert, etc. There are party leaders and campaign organizations for each candidate in the different states as well.

THE FUNDING OF POLITICAL PARTIES

It costs hundreds of millions of dollars to conduct a nationwide campaign. Money is needed for travel, advertisements, office rental, accommodations, etc. Candidates who receive a certain percentage of primary votes and caucus support are eligible to receive financial assistance from the government, which matches money the candidates receive from private sources. This government support is made possible when citizens agree to contribute \$3 when filing yearly federal income tax returns. This method was initiated following the Watergate campaign incident. In addition, nominees of the two major parties receive financial support from their parties following the conventions. Candidates receive contributions from citizens provided the amounts do not exceed the legal limits and are reported properly.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

In recent years, special interest groups have founded PACs (Political Action Committees) to help elect candidates that favor their interests. The amount of money that the PACs give to federal candidates is limited, but some claim that regulation and enforcement is weak and that PACs exert too much influence. Some PACs give funds to candidates of both parties so that whoever is elected will be more willing to listen to their problems.

CONVENTIONS

Delegates chosen at the primaries, caucuses, and state conventions attend the national convention of their party during the summer of the election year. The number of delegates from each state is approximately proportional to the population of the state. Thus, in both the Democratic and Republican conventions, California (which has the largest population of any state in the union) has the most delegate votes, and New York has the second most.

PARTY NOMINEE

At the convention, the candidate who receives a majority of the delegate votes becomes the nominee of the party. In recent years, as a result of the primaries and caucuses, the nominees of the two major parties have a majority of the delegates committed to their candidates before the opening gavel. In 1988, however, some political analysts thought the sheer number of Democratic candidates would prevent any of them from collecting a majority of delegate votes by convention time. Thus the nomination of a “dark horse” (someone who had not been a candidate until the convention) was considered a possibility. According to convention rules, if no candidate receives a majority of votes on the first ballot, subsequent ballots are held until someone wins. When this happens, candidates with little support are expected to release their votes to another candidate. No convention, however, has gone over the first ballot since 1952.

PARTY PLATFORMS

Drafting a party platform is one of the major functions of a national convention. A platform is not only a written declaration of party principles and policy positions, it is also a campaign statement aimed at winning broad voter support. Usually, the drafters of a platform try to avoid taking positions that might anger a major voting bloc. A party’s platform will take a specific stance on a controversial issue only when certain issues are of particular importance to a large group that the party is trying to win over. In the past, controversial platform planks have included prohibition, social security, the Taft-Hartley law, and opposition to the Vietnam War. A major party might incorporate certain planks of minor parties in the hope of attracting new voters into its coalition. Because they are created to have broad appeal, platforms have been criticized as evasive, ambiguous, and in the words of 1964 presidential nominee Barry Goldwater, “Like Jello...there is usually little substance and nothing you can get your teeth into.”

PREPARATION OF THE PLATFORM

Each major party has a Committee on Resolutions, composed of two people from each state and territorial delegation. This group assigns a platform committee to prepare the platform weeks before the convention begins. This is to ensure that as many views as possible are expressed at pre-convention hearings by interested groups, state and local organizations, and the presidential candidates. These hearings are crucial in identifying areas of agreement and disagreement among the party’s factions. Compromises and accommodations are made, and major provisions are agreed upon before the resolutions in the platform go to the floor of the convention. The presidential nominee exerts considerable influence on the content of the platform. At the convention, the platform is usually adopted overwhelmingly.

ROLE OF THE PLATFORM

In addition to praising the principles and candidates of the party, platforms criticize those of the opposing party. The record of an incumbent administration is especially open to attack by the writers of the opposition platform. The platform can be taken as an outline of what a party hopes

to accomplish in office. Despite the criticism that platforms do not bind candidates and are basically designed to attract votes, many party pledges have been carried out as policy or have been turned into legislation.

CHOOSING A VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

The considerations of building harmony and voter appeal that go into shaping the platform also go into shaping the selection of the vice president. This is called “balancing the ticket.” A vice presidential candidate is chosen by the presidential nominee on the basis of how likely he or she is to help the party achieve the presidency. One of the factors considered is regional appeal: where does the presidential candidate need the most voter support? In recent elections, most successful Democratic tickets have established a north-south balance, while winning Republican slates have largely comprised candidates from the east and west. In 1952, on the winning Republican ticket, Dwight D. Eisenhower was president of Columbia University in New York and chose California Senator Richard M. Nixon as his running mate. Nixon, in turn, chose Maryland Governor Spiro T. Agnew. Two winning Democratic tickets in the last 40 years were John F. Kennedy from Massachusetts with Lyndon B Johnson from Texas, and Jimmy Carter from Georgia with Walter F. Mondale of Minnesota. Political philosophy, ethnicity, congressional relationships and, more recently, gender have also been factors in choosing the vice presidential candidate. In 1968 the liberal Hubert Humphrey balanced his ticket by choosing Senator Edmund Muskie, a Polish American moderate, to gain votes on the Eastern Seaboard and to balance his own Midwestern liberal background. In 1984 Walter Mondale chose a woman, Geraldine Ferraro, for his running mate. And in 1992, Bill Clinton chose fellow Southerner Albert Gore on the basis of political philosophy. In conclusion, if a major party wishes to make a successful bid for the presidency, it must develop both a platform and a ticket that appeal to a broad popular coalition.

THIRD PARTIES IN AMERICAN HISTORY

Third parties have never captured the presidency nor had more than a minimal influence in the U.S. Congress. However, they have had an impact at the state and local level. Most importantly, they serve as a forum for new ideas which have in some cases been adopted by the two main parties.

POLITICAL PROPAGANDA

Propaganda is one of the most misused words in the English language. It is almost always given a negative connotation. A common statement is “well, that’s just propaganda.” Actually, any communication intended to influence the opinions or actions of others is propaganda. A plea for donations to a charity is propaganda. Television commercials urging you to try a product are propaganda. Political advertisements seeking support for a candidate are certainly propaganda.

Propaganda is not inherently false; it is neither good nor bad. It is, simply put, slanted to a particular view and basic to politics. Political propaganda appeals to logic or reason, but sometimes also to fear, emotion or prejudice.

The most commonly used propaganda techniques are:

- ✓ **Plain Folk** – An attempt to win support by presenting the candidate as someone with things in common with his/her audience. This may be as simple as adopting the dress of the audience (bib overalls, for example, while speaking to farmers) or telling anecdotes that emphasize the “common touch” such as, “my grandpa came to this country a penniless shoemaker.”
- ✓ **Bandwagon** – This technique relies upon people’s need to conform, to go with the winner. The candidate is presented not as an outsider but as having broad support. “Vote for the winner.”
- ✓ **Transfer** – Associating a policy or candidate with objects that are honored and respected. For instance, showing the candidate at the Grand Canyon if he/she wishes to enhance an image as an environmentalist.
- ✓ **Card Stacking** – Presenting only one side of the arguments by omitting, manipulating, or distorting facts.
- ✓ **Name Calling** – Instead of dealing with issues, the candidate attacks his/her opponent through appeals to fear and prejudices. “My opponent is another spendthrift.”
- ✓ **Testimonials** – Well-known and respected people are used to endorse the candidate.
- ✓ **Glittering Generalities** – Using vague statements that seem exciting but have little substance. Frequently, the appeal is to patriotism, peace, prosperity—things everyone agrees with but which don’t really deal with the candidate or the issues.

THE RIGHT TO VOTE

The right to vote, also known as “suffrage,” is not quite the same as the right to free speech, to a fair trial, or to any of the other civil rights. The right to vote is *not* a civil right, one belonging to all persons. Rather, it is a political right, one belonging to all those who can meet certain requirements set by law.

A CHRONOLOGY OF THE GROWTH OF SUFFRAGE IN THE UNITED STATES

1776: At the time of the signing of The Declaration of Independence, the right to vote is based on property ownership. Suffrage primarily is reserved for white, male Protestants over the age of 21. There are a few instances of African-Americans owning property.

1787: With the drafting of the Constitution, states are given the power to regulate their own suffrage laws and they favor white, male property owners.

1789: George Washington is elected president by the Electoral College. Only six percent of the entire population is involved in the election.

1791: Vermont, the 14th state, declares that all adult, white males, irrespective of property ownership or religious preference, can vote.

1816: Indiana, Illinois, and Alabama join the Union and establish voting rules similar to Vermont’s.

1821: Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York follow suit. Between 1820 and 1830 the voting electorate doubled. Voter population increase was an impetus to the development of political parties.

1842: Rhode Island does not join other states with reformed voting rights and continues to require property ownership to qualify to vote. This issue causes much controversy, and rival state governments are elected in Providence and Newport. Thomas W. Door begins a movement known as the Door Rebellion which is victorious.

1843: Rhode Island adopts a new constitution. This provides broader suffrage provisions.

1848: African-Americans and women are still subject to discrimination at the polls. No significant advancement for their cause has occurred, even though reformers have long voiced opposition to the white-male-only vote. Women could not vote, could not own property after marriage, and were paid much less than men for doing the same work. The plight of women is denounced by Elizabeth Cady Stanton at a gathering of 100 women's rights advocates in Seneca Falls, New York. She reads a proclamation that "all men and women are created equal" and the convention passes several resolutions which call for women being given the vote. The Women's Suffrage Movement has begun.

1865: A Civil Rights Act defines citizenship and prohibits discrimination based on race. However, President Andrew Johnson vetoes the bill, stating that it favored the rights of African-Americans over whites. The Republican Congress overrides the veto, hoping to lure the vote of former slaves.

1868: African-Americans have endured slavery in the United States for more than 70 years. Slave states allow no African-American person to vote. Lawmakers enact the *14th Amendment* to the Constitution granting citizenship to African-Americans and permitting them to vote. However, state officials still attempt to deny them this right.

1869: The National American Women Suffrage Association is founded, with Susan B. Anthony as president.

1870: The *15th Amendment* to the Constitution is ratified, providing African-Americans the right to vote and prohibiting state and local governments from denying that right.

1872: Victoria Woodhull contends that under the provisions of the 14th and 15th Amendments, women are citizens of the United States and should be allowed to vote. Susan B. Anthony votes and is arrested for violating a federal law that forbids the votes of confederates or traitors.

1875: The Supreme Courts rules, in *Minor v. Happerset*, that suffrage is not coexistent with the right to citizenship granted in the 14th Amendment, and that the extent of women's rights is up to state legislatures.

1876: Poll taxes, grandfather clauses, and literacy tests are introduced in many Southern states. These measures restrict the ability of African-Americans to register and vote.

1876: The Supreme Court in *Elk v. Wilkins*, rules that Native Americans are not protected by the 14th Amendment, and therefore do not enjoy the rights of citizenship.

1890: Wyoming becomes a state and is the first to provide suffrage for women in its constitution.

1913: The *17th Amendment* to the Constitution is ratified. It allowed popular election of U.S. senators. No new group received the right to vote, but the voting power was expanded.

1920: The *19th Amendment* to the Constitution guarantees suffrage for women and indirectly establishes the right of women to hold public office.

1940: Native Americans are made citizens by an act of Congress. However, in New Mexico and Arizona, Native Americans cannot vote because they do not pay property taxes.

1943: Georgia lowers its voting age from 21 to 18 in state and local elections.

1947: Miguel Trijillo, a Native American and former Marine, wins a suit against New Mexico for not allowing him to vote. Since Native Americans pay most forms of taxes, they are subject to taxation without representation. New Mexico and Arizona are required to give the vote to all their Native American citizens.

1957: By provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1957, the Justice Department may punish interference or disruption of protection for African-American voters.

1960: The Civil Rights Act of 1960 allows courts to appoint federal referees to protect voting rights. Obstruction of these court orders is a federal offense.

1961: The *23rd Amendment* to the Constitution allows residents of the District of Columbia to vote for president and vice president. Until this amendment, residents were unable to vote since the District is not a state.

1964: The Civil Rights Act of 1964 expands on the guarantee of the right to register to vote without fear of reprisal. The *24th Amendment* to the Constitution guaranteed that no person could be denied the right to vote due to an inability to pay a tax prior to voting. The “poll” tax is now considered unconstitutional.

1965: Martin Luther King, Jr. leads 25,000 people on a march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, to dramatize the need for more voting rights.

1970: The Voting Rights act is amended to lower the voting age to 18 and to ban the use of literacy tests.

1971: The *26th Amendment* lowers the voting age to 18. National Voter Registration Act requires that voters be allowed to register when applying for or renewing a driver’s license by mail; when applying for certain types of public assistance; and at military recruiting offices. It also eliminates the purging of voter names from registration solely for the failure to vote. Further amendments to the Voting Rights Act require that many voting materials be printed in the language of various minority groups.

SERVICE-LEARNING

WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?

Service-learning can be found in the majority of U.S. public and private schools, though these activities incorporate a wide array of topics and projects. Service-learning is a method by which young people learn and develop through thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs, that are coordinated in collaboration with the school and community, that are integrated into each young person's academic curriculum, that provide structured time for a young person to think, talk, and write about what he/she did and saw during the actual service activity, that provide young people with opportunities to use newly acquired academic skills and knowledge in real life situations in their own communities, that enhance what is taught in the school by extending student learning beyond the classroom, and that help to foster the development of a sense of caring for others. (ASLER, 1993, p.1)

Whether teachers choose to incorporate service-learning in the curriculum as an individual homework assignment or a class activity, it is important that the experience include the essential elements of quality service-learning (Alliance for Service-Learning in Education Reform, 1993; Giles, Honnet, and Migliore, 1991; Wade, 1997). These elements include:

1. Careful planning and preparation
2. Collaboration with all who will be involved in the project (e.g. teachers, students, community members, parents)
3. Opportunities for student input, decision making and leadership
4. Integration of the service experience with academic skills and/or content
5. Service that meets an important need or addresses a problem
6. Reflection opportunities for students to think about, discuss, and write about their service experience
7. Evaluation of student learning and project outcomes
8. Celebration of students' efforts

WHY SERVICE-LEARNING?

Teachers too often send the message to their students that school is preparing them for the future. Truly, the message should be that the future is now. Students are already citizens and they can make a difference! What will students gain from service-learning? Linking service to citizenship develops knowledge, cooperation, critical thinking and enhances democratic values and beliefs.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS FOR KIDS VOTING USA SERVICE-LEARNING ACTIVITIES?

- ✓ Develop more informed voters and increase voter turnout
- ✓ Discover the value and power of voting
- ✓ Develop skills and traits conducive to wise democratic living

USE OF POLLS

“41% of Americans prefer a Democrat for president.”

“Survey finds Americans favor genetic engineering.”

Almost daily the mass media reports the results of a public opinion poll or survey. But just what is a poll? Why do we have them? How are they used?

Polls and surveys can be used to:

1. Measure public opinion at the time the poll is conducted
2. Assess and analyze data
3. Focus attention on public questions
4. Stimulate discussion on these questions

In the political arena, polls and surveys are very important because they can influence a candidate's decision concerning a specific issue. Polls can be used by candidates to shape their campaigns, tailoring both image and issues to voters' concerns. Recently, though, some critics have suggested that polls and pollsters can actually *shape* the opinions they are supposed to measure.

CONSTRUCTING A POLL

Three things must be considered when developing a poll:

1. Who is to be interviewed?
2. What kind of interview is to be conducted?
3. What is to be asked of the respondents?

SAMPLING

Since in most cases it is nearly impossible to poll every single person on a given topic, pollsters use what is called a random sample. A random sample is a portion of a selected population surveyed in a systematic way; for example, choosing every second or fourth person from a list such as the telephone book. This can be done because the law of mathematical probability states that if the sample is large enough and chosen at random, the result will be quite accurate—with a very small margin of error. National polls typically select 1,500 households at random as their sample. One reason polls are sometimes flawed is that the sample is *skewed*—that is, not sufficiently random. A poll on farm issues that included in its sample a much higher percentage of farmers than is found in the American population, would be inaccurate because its sampling was skewed. Of course, sometimes a sampling should not be random; a candidate who wants to know what farmers think will commission a poll of farmers only.

INTERVIEW

The basic polling tool is the questionnaire. Interviewees may respond to questionnaires in three ways: in person, by telephone, or by mail. For an accurate and objective poll, it is important that the pollsters get demographic information about each respondent, and that the respondents know that all the information obtained will be kept confidential.

QUESTIONING

A poll is only as good as the questions it asks. Therefore, questions should be simple, clear and, above all, neutral. For example, instead of “Don’t you think that funding social programs is more important than spending on defense?”—a more neutral question would be “Which do you feel is more crucial, spending on social program or on defense?” There are two basic types of polling questions, open and closed:

- ✓ **Open questions** – questions that pose a problem and ask respondents for their opinions, as in: “What do you feel is the most serious problem facing the United States?”
- ✓ **Closed questions** – questions in which the responses must be from among choices offered, as in: “Which of the following candidates do you favor at this time? a) Jones, b) Martinez, c) Jackson, or d) none of the above.”

VOTER APATHY

There are a number of reasons why people don’t vote, from ignorance about elections to a belief that one vote doesn’t count to facing barriers in voter registration and voting.

IGNORANCE ABOUT THE BASICS OF OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM

- ✓ Less than 50% of the adult population knows the term for a U.S. representative or senator.
- ✓ Less than 50% can tell the number of Supreme Court Justices or what the Bill of Rights includes.
- ✓ Only 55% of adults know the number of senators from each state or know who their own senators are.

LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT

- ✓ Those who feel left out of the system often fail to vote, as do those who do not believe that voting can affect real change in government.
- ✓ Many people feel the efforts of a single individual are futile considering the millions who *could* vote.

BARRIERS TO VOTING

- ✓ Many people find the hours polls are open and the fact that elections are always held during the work week are barriers to voting.
- ✓ The need to vote in the precinct where one lived at the time of registration is also a barrier to some.
- ✓ The inconvenience of registering and the need to be registered a certain length of time before an election also prevents many from voting.

Today, some states have made voting more convenient by allowing people to vote early by mail or at designated polling sites. Also, in compliance with the 1993 National Voter Registration Act, nearly all states allow people to register to vote by mail or at Motor Vehicle Offices.

BIBLIOGRAPHY



TABLE OF CONTENTS

K-2 2

3-5 7

6-8 13

9-12 17

RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION ON CHILDREN’S LITERATURE BOOKS 23

K-2

Adler, David. A Picture Book of Thomas Jefferson. (Holiday House, 1990).

Summary: This picture biography of Thomas Jefferson discusses his life and ideas. Adler has created picture biographies of a number of other Americans including Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Eleanor Roosevelt.

Archer, Jules. Winners and Losers: How Elections Work in America. (Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich, 1984).

Summary: This is an excellent resource book for the election process.

Barnes, Peter and Cheryl and Betty Shepard. A “Mice” Way to Learn about Government Curriculum Guide. (VSP Books, 1999)

Summary: Helps teachers explain the concepts introduced in Woodrow, the White House Mouse, House Mouse, Senate Mouse and Marshall the Courthouse Mouse. Guide includes classroom activities, research topics, role-playing exercises, as well as helpful Web sites, glossaries and bibliographies.

Barnes, Peter and Cheryl. House Mouse, Senate Mouse. (VSP Books, 1996)

Summary: Teaches children about the nation’s Capitol and how laws are made, from the research of a bill, through the signing at the president’s desk.

Barnes, Peter and Cheryl. Woodrow, the White House Mouse. (VSP Books, 1998, 2nd Ed.)

Summary: Tells the story of the presidency and the art, architecture and history of the White House, through the adventures of Woodrow G. Washingtall, President of the United Mice of America, and his family.

Barnes, Peter and Cheryl. Woodrow for President. (VSP Books, 1999)

Summary: Teaches about the process of electing a president from the primaries to Election Day. Book includes a “Contract to Vote” between America’s kids and adults.

Begaye, Lisa Shook. Building a Bridge. Illustrations by Libba Tracy. (Northland Publishing, 1993.)

Summary: This book teaches us that instead of mistrusting differences, we can celebrate them. Juanita, a Navajo girl, and Anna, an Anglo girl, start school and become friends.

Berenstain, Stan. The Berenstain Bears and the Big Election. (Random House, 1984).

Summary: Bear Country is falling apart, so Papa decides to run for president of the town council. Brother and Sister become his campaign managers. Papa wins the election and soon discovers that his campaign promises, like “honey in every pot,” are going to be difficult to keep.

Bernstein, Richard. The Presidency (Into the Third Century). (Walker and Company, Inc., 1989).
Summary: This excellent resource book is one of a three-part series. It discusses the office, powers, roles, and qualifications of the presidency. It also contains a chapter about presidents who changed the office.

Block, Judy R. The First Woman in Congress: Jeannette Rankin. (C.P.I., 1978).
Summary: Traces the career of the first woman to be elected to hold a congressional office.

Bratman, Fred. Becoming a Citizen: Adopting a New Home. (Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 1993).
Summary: Examines the origins of citizenship and the role of the citizen as well as immigration, illegal aliens, political asylum, the slave trade, becoming a citizen, and other related topics. This is part of a good series called the "Good Citizenship Library."

Brenner, Martha. Abe Lincoln's Hat. (Scholastic, 1994).
Summary: Humorous true stories about Lincoln and his habit of keeping important papers in his hat.

Brown, Marc. Arthur and the Scare-Your-Pants-Off Club. (Little, Brown, 1998).
Summary: In this chapter book, Arthur and his friends mobilize to prevent the banning of their favorite book series.

Brown, Marc. Arthur Meets the President. (Little, Brown, 1991).
Summary: Arthur enters an essay contest and wins a visit to the Capitol. He is given the opportunity to read his "How I Can Make America Great" essay to the president. This is perfect for kindergarten through third grade and may spawn a contest of your own.

Burby, Liza. A Day in the Life of a Mayor. (PowerKids Press, 1999).
Summary: A very good exploration of a typical day in the work of the former mayor of New York City, Rudolph Giuliani, describing many of the activities that make up his busy schedule.

Burningham, John. Would You Rather? (Seastar Books, 2003).
Summary: Would you rather be covered in jam, soaked with water or pulled through the mud by a dog? That's one set of choices offered in this book of possibilities, ranging from the pleasant to the ridiculous. Sure to provoke discussion and reactions from Yeah! to Yuck!

Cooney, Barbara. Miss Rumphius. (NY: Viking, 1982).
Summary: A story about Great-aunt Alice Rumphius who was once a little girl who loved the sea, longed to visit faraway places, and wished to do something to make the world more beautiful.
(Literature Connection Activity for Active Citizenship)

Cronin, Doreen. Duck for President. (Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing, 2004).
Summary: Duck is tired of doing his chores and decides to hold an election to replace Farmer Brown. Hilarious for kids and adults and includes a little math and quite a bit about the electoral process.
(Literature Connection Activity for Elections and Voting)

DiSalvo-Ryan, DyAnne. City Green. (Morrow, 1994).

Summary: A young girl named Marcy decides to turn a useless lot into a growing space for everyone to enjoy. She is able to get the whole neighborhood involved.

DiSalvo-Ryan, DyAnne. Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen. (Harper Trophy, 1997).

Summary: This book provides a look into soup kitchens and community service.

Ditchfield, Christian. Freedom of Speech. (Children's Press, 2004).

Summary: Describes what freedom of speech is, how and why it is guaranteed in the United States, how it is expressed, what its limits are, what censorship is, and what some of the surrounding debates are.

Ernst, Lisa Campbell. Squirrel Park. (Bradbury, 1993).

Summary: When a favorite tree is scheduled to be chopped down, a young boy and a squirrel come to its rescue.

Flournoy, Valerie. The Patchwork Quilt. Pictures by Jerry Pickney. (Dutton, 1985).

Summary: A young African-American girl and her grandmother begin a patchwork quilt.

Fradin, Dennis B. Voting and Elections. (Children's Press, 1995).

Summary: Beginning readers learn about the election process and voting.

Friedman, Ina R. How My Parents Learned to Eat. Illus by Allen Say. (Houghton Mifflin, 1984).

Summary: John, an American boy, and Aiko, a Japanese girl, learn each other's eating habits.

Fritz, Jean. Just a Few Words, Mr. Lincoln. (Grosset & Dunlap, 1993).

Summary: Jean Fritz tells the story of the Gettysburg Address and the Civil War. This book has good illustrations and photographs.

Greene, Carol. Congress. (Children's Press, 1985).

Summary: Describes the structure, function, and interrelationship of the two houses of Congress.

Grodin, Eliza. D is For Democracy: A Citizen's Alphabet. (Sleeping Bear Press, 2004).

Summary: Each letter from the alphabet introduces a person, place, thing or concept about the U.S. and its government. (*Literature Connection Activity for Democracy and the People*)

Hamanaka, Sheila. All the Colors of the Earth. (Harper Collins, 1994).

Summary: Written in verse this book shows that despite outward differences children everywhere are essentially the same and all are lovable.

Hurwitz, Johanna. Aldo Ice Cream. (Morrow, 1981).

Summary: A nine-year-old boy discovers the pleasures of doing volunteer work to help the older citizens of the community.

Hurwitz, Johanna. Class President. (Morrow Junior, 1990).

Summary: The fifth-grade class election becomes the setting for this story about elections, leadership and friendship.

Johnson, Mary Oates. The President: America's Leader. (Raintree, 1993).

Summary: A well-written book about the presidency; it is part of A Good Citizenship Series.

Lord, John V. The Giant Jam Sandwich. (Houghton Mifflin, 1973).

Summary: When four million wasps fly into their village, the citizens of Itching Down devise a way of getting rid of them.

Maestro, Betsy. The Voice of the People. (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1996).

Summary: A basic guide to voting and the election process in the United States.

Martin, A.M. Rachel Parker, Kindergarten Show-Off. (Holiday House, 1992).

Summary: A story of two girls finding out that they have a lot in common and their friendship.

McCloskey, Robert. Make Way for Ducklings. (Viking, 1969).

Summary: Mother duck takes her babies through town to meet father duck and causes a lot of commotion on the way.

Milios, Rita. I Am. Illus by Clovis Martin. (Children's Press, 1987)

Summary: Contrasts such differences as "I am big, you are small. I am short, you are tall." A book that emerging readers can read by themselves.

Nez, Redwing T. Forbidden Talent. (Northland Publishing, 1995).

Summary: A Navajo boy finds his talent for painting in conflict with what his grandfather calls, "The Navajo Way."

Nobleman, Marc Tyler. Election Day. (Compass Point Books, 2005).

Summary: Election Day contains full-color images and an easy-to-read text that describes Election Day and how people vote.

Pascoe, Elaine. The Right to Vote. (The Millbrook Press, 1997).

Summary: This book is part of the Land of the Free series which helps readers better understand the principles by which Americans live. This book covers one of Americas most important rights and freedoms, the right to vote. It also covers a basic understanding of the Bill of Rights.

Patrick, Denise L. The Car Washing Street. Pictures by John Ward. (Tambourine, 1993).

Summary: Even though his parents don't own a car, a little boy looks forward to the day when all the people in his neighborhood wash their cars.

Pinkwater, Daniel. The Big Orange Splot. (Scholastic, 1977).

Summary: The story of what happens on one street when Mr. Plumbean decides to paint his house differently.

Provensen, Alice. The Buck Stops Here: The Presidents. (Harper & Row, 1990).

Summary: This wonderfully illustrated book is interesting for all ages. The pictures help the reader make connections between the presidents and the events of their time in office. The rhyme is intended to assist the learner in memorizing the president's names.

Scher, Linda. The Vote: Making Your Voice Heard. (Raintree, 1993).

Summary: This book discusses voting requirements, how and where to vote, and how to vote wisely. It is part of a very good citizenship series called the "Good Citizenship Library."

Scriabine, Christine. Know Your Government: The Presidency. (Chelsea House, 1988).

Summary: Great resource book on the office of the president. A visual of the Oval Office allows students to compare the renovations of the Oval Office completed by the Clinton administration.

Shuker-Haines, Frances. Rights and Responsibilities: Using Your Freedom. (Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 1993).

Summary: Examines the rights and responsibilities of being a citizen, discussing such topics as free speech, interest groups, voting, taxes, jury duty, and running for office. This is part of a good series called the "Good Citizenship Library."

Sisulu, Elinor Batezat. The Day Gogo Went to Vote. (Little, Brown 1996).

Summary: Young Thembi and her beloved great-grandmother, who has not left the house for many years, go together to vote on the momentous day in 1994 when black South Africans are allowed to vote for the first time.

Stern, Gary M. The Congress: America's Lawmakers. (Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 1993).

Summary: Discusses the origins of Congress, the members of Congress, how Congress works, and notable debates and acts of Congress.

Strazzabosco, Jeanne. Learning about Forgiveness from the Life of Nelson Mandela. (PowerKids Press, 1996).

Summary: A brief but very good biography of the South African civil rights worker and president who serves as an example of forgiveness.

Weber, Michael. Our Congress. (Millbrook Press, 1994).

Summary: The Congress volume is part of a very good series called "I Know America."

Weizman, Daniel. Take a Stand: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Government. (Price, Stern, Sloan, 1996)

Summary: Describes how the United States government works, and how to get involved in politics including school elections, letter-writing campaigns, and mock political debates.

Williams, Vera B. Music, Music for Everyone. (Greenwillow, 1984).

Summary: A story of cooperation. Rosa and her friends play music to make money and entertain Rosa's sick grandmother.

3-5

Adler, David. A Picture Book of Thomas Jefferson. (Holiday House, 1990).

Summary: This picture biography of Thomas Jefferson discusses his life and ideas. Adler has done picture biographies of a number of other Americans including Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Eleanor Roosevelt.

Ander, Lloyd. The Beggar Queen. (Dutton, 1984).

Summary: Chaos reigns in Marienstat as Duke Conrad of Regia, the king's uncle, plots to overthrow the new government of Westmark and bring an end to the reforms instituted by Mickle, now Queen Augusta, Theo, and their companions.

Barnes, Peter and Cheryl and Betty Shepard. A "Mice" Way to Learn about Government Curriculum Guide. (VSP Books, 1999).

Summary: Helps teachers explain the concepts introduced in Woodrow, the White House Mouse, House Mouse, Senate Mouse and Marshall the Courthouse Mouse. Guide includes classroom activities, research topics, role playing exercises, as well as helpful web sites, glossaries and bibliographies.

Barnes, Peter and Cheryl. House Mouse, Senate Mouse. (VSP Books, 1996).

Summary: Teaches children about the nation's Capitol and how laws are made, from the research of a bill, through the signing at the president's desk.

Barnes, Peter and Cheryl. Marshall, the Courthouse Mouse. (VSP Books, 1998).

Summary: Teaches children about the judiciary branch of government through Chief Justice Marshall Mouse and his fellow justices on the Supreme Court of the United Mice of America.

Barnes, Peter and Cheryl. Woodrow for President. (VSP Books, 1999).

Summary: Teaches about the process of electing a president from the primaries to Election Day. Book includes a "Contract to Vote" between America's kids and adults.

Barnes, Peter and Cheryl. Woodrow, the White House Mouse. (VSP Books, 1998, 2nd Ed.).

Summary: Tells the story of the presidency and the art, architecture and history of the White House, through the adventures of Woodrow G. Washingtall, President of the United Mice of America, and his family.

Bernstein, Richard. The Presidency (Into the Third Century). (Walker and Company, Inc., 1989).

Summary: This excellent resource book is one of a three-part series. It discusses the office, powers, roles, and qualifications of the presidency. It also contains a chapter about presidents who changed the office.

Block, Judy R. The First Woman in Congress: Jeannette Rankin. (C.P.I., 1978).

Summary: Traces the career of the first woman to be elected to hold a Congressional office.

Bratman, Fred. Becoming a Citizen: Adopting a New Home. (Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 1993).

Summary: Examines the origins of citizenship and the role of the citizen and discusses immigration, illegal aliens, political asylum, the slave trade, becoming a citizen, and other related topics. This is part of a good series called the “Good Citizenship Library.”

Brown, Marc. Arthur and the Scare-Your-Pants-Off Club. (Little, Brown, 1998).

Summary: In this chapter book, Arthur and his friends mobilize to prevent the banning of their favorite book series.

Catrow, David. We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States. (Puffin Books, 2005).

Summary: This book inspires discussion of America’s most celebrated principles as they are outlined in the Preamble to the Constitution.

Christelow, Eileen. Vote! (Clarion Books, 2003).

Summary: This book was written as a resource to discuss voting with children through a narrative.

Collier, James. The Winter Hero. (Four Winds Press, 1978).

Summary: Anxious to be a hero, a young boy relates how he becomes involved in Shays’ Rebellion (started by farmers in western Massachusetts against unfair taxation levied on them by the Boston government). Collier’s other books are also good, including *My Brother Sam is Dead* (ABC-Clio, 1988) which tells the story of a family split by the Revolution.

Colman, Penny. Fannie Lou Hamer and the Fight for the Vote. (Millbrook Press, 1993).

Summary: A biography of the civil rights activist who devoted her life to helping blacks register to vote and gain a national political voice.

DiSalvo-Ryan, DyAnne. City Green. (Morrow, 1994).

Summary: A young girl named Marcy decides to turn a useless lot into a growing space for everyone to enjoy. She gets the neighborhood involved.

DiSalvo-Ryan, DyAnne. Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen. (Harper Trophy, 1997).

Summary: This book provides a look into soup kitchens and community service.

Ernst, Lisa Campbell. Squirrel Park. (Bradbury, 1993).

Summary: When a favorite tree is scheduled to be chopped down, a young boy and a squirrel come to its rescue.

Fleischman, Paul. The Borning Room. (Harper Collins 1991).

Summary: As an old woman is dying, she recounts the generations from slavery to WWI.

Fradin, Dennis. Voting and Elections. (Children’s Press, 1985).
Summary: A brief history of elections and voting in the United States.

Fritz, Jean. Just a Few Words, Mr. Lincoln. (Grosset & Dunlap, 1993).
Summary: Jean Fritz tells the story of the Gettysburg Address and the Civil War. This book has good illustrations and photographs.

Granfield, Linda and Steve Bjorkman. America Votes: How Our President is Elected. (Kids Can Press, 2003).
Summary: A perfect voting primer for the young focusing on the election of the president.

Gutman, Dan. The Kid Who Ran for President. (Scholastic, 1996).
Summary: A 12-year-old runs for president in 2000. This is an entertaining introduction to the election process.

Gutman, Dan. Landslide! A Kid’s Guide to the U.S. Elections. (Aladdin, 2000).
Summary: This is the 2000 edition but still very applicable. In a fun and snappy question-and-answer format, this book explains our democratic process in action.

Harris, Nathaniel. Ideas of the Modern World: Democracy. (Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 2001).
Summary: An exploration of democracy from its roots in the ancient world to the issues of today. (*Literature Connection Activity for Democracy and the People*)

Herold, M.R. A Very Important Day. Illus by C. Stock. (Morrow, 1995).
Summary: All over New York City, people from different nations are preparing for a very important day—the day they become citizens of the United States.

Hesse, Karen. A Light in the Storm: The Civil War Diary of Amelia Martin (Scholastic, 1999).
Summary: In 1860 and 1861, while working in her father’s lighthouse on an island off the coast of Delaware, 15-year-old Amelia records in her diary how the Civil War is beginning to devastate her divided state. The whole “Dear America” series is excellent for girls.

Hopkinson, D. Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt. Illus by J. Ransome. (Knopf, 1993).
Summary: A slave girl maps out her escape to Canada on a quilt.

Hurwitz, Johanna. Aldo Ice Cream. (Morrow, 1981)
Summary: A nine-year-old boy discovers the pleasures of doing volunteer work to help the older citizens of the community.

Hurwitz, Johanna. Class President. (Morrow Junior, 1990).
Summary: A fifth-grade class election becomes the setting for this story about elections, leadership and friendship.

Leinwand, Gerald. Patriotism in America. (F. Watts, 1997).

Summary: Examines some of the elements of the unifying phenomenon of patriotism in the United States. Includes discussions of symbols of patriotism such as national monuments.

Lewis, Barbara, Espeland, Pamela, and Pernu, Caryn. The Kid's Guide to Social Action. (Free Spirit Publishing, 1998).

Summary: A simple-to-follow guide where young people, teachers, and parents can plan their course of social action and expect to see results. Projects range from instigating cleanup of toxic waste to youth-rights campaigns as well as Internet searching, an expanded section on lobbying, and in-depth judicial information. (*Literature Connection Activity for Active Citizenship*)

Lord, John V. The Giant Jam Sandwich. (Houghton Mifflin, 1973).

Summary: When four million wasps fly into their village, the citizens of Itching Down devise a way of getting rid of them.

Maestro, Betsy. The Voice of the People. (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1996).

Summary: A basic guide to voting and the election process in the United States.

McCully, Emily Arnold. The Ballot Box Battle. (Knopf, 1996).

Summary: A young girl accompanies Elizabeth Cady Stanton as the suffragist attempts to vote in 1880 (against New Jersey law) and learns about courage in the process. Excellent for stimulating discussions about who can vote and the history of suffrage in the United States.

Medler, Keith. Hail to the Candidate: Presidential Campaigns from Banners to Broadcasts. (Smithsonian, 1992).

Summary: This book takes a look at 200 years of presidential campaigns.

Mitchell, Margaree King. Granddaddy's Gift. Illus by Larry Johnson. (Bridge Water Books, 1997).

Summary: When her grandfather registers to vote while living in segregated Mississippi, an African-American girl begins to understand why her grandfather insists that she attend school.

Mochizuki, Ken. Passage to Freedom: The Sugihara Story. (Lee & Low Books, 1997).

Summary: A Japanese diplomat in Lithuania defies his government and saves thousands of Jewish refugees.

Myers, Walter D. The Journal of Scott Pendleton Collins: A World War II Soldier. (Scholastic, 1999).

Summary: A 17-year-old soldier from central Virginia records his experiences in a journal as his regiment takes part in the D-Day invasion of Normandy and subsequent battles to liberate France. This is part of the "My Name is America" series, an excellent boys counterpart to the "Dear America" series.

Paterson, Katherine. Rebels of the Heavenly Kingdom. (Dutton, 1983).

Summary: Abducted from his home by bandits, 15-year-old Wang Lee is rescued from slavery by a mysterious girl who introduces him to the Taiping Tienkuo, a secret society partly based on Christian principles and dedicated to the overthrow of the Manchu government.

Rand, Gloria. Prince William. (Henry Holt, 1992).

Summary: A young girl saves a seal pup and helps in the massive clean up and rescue efforts after the 1989 Alaska oil spill.

Rinaldi, Ann. My Heart is on the Ground: The Diary of Nannie Little Rose, a Sioux Girl. (Scholastic, 1999).

Summary: In this diary account of her life at a government-run Pennsylvania boarding school in 1880, a 12-year-old Sioux Indian girl reveals a great need to find a way to help her people. The whole “Dear America” series is excellent for girls.

Ring, Susan. Election Connection: The Official Nick Guide to Electing the President. (Chronicle Books, 2004).

Summary: This book is all about helping students make their voice heard. While it focuses on the election of the president, it contends that good citizenship starts well before turning 18.

Roope, P. & C. Buttons for General Washington. (Carolrhoda, 1986).

Summary: Based on true accounts of the Darragh family who provided coded messages to the General around 1777.

Sachs, M. Call Me Ruth. (Doubleday, 1982).

Summary: Set in 1909, immigrants struggle to fit into a new society.

Samuels, Cynthia. It's a Free Country! A Young Person's Guide to Politics and Elections. (Atheneum, 1988).

Summary: This is an excellent resource book for learning about the election process. It uses case histories of actual candidates to describe what it takes to be elected to office.

Scher, Linda. The Vote: Making Your Voice Heard. (Raintree, 1993).

Summary: This book discusses voting requirements, how and where to vote, and how to vote wisely. It is part of a very good citizenship series called the “Good Citizenship Library.”
(Literature Connection Activity for Elections and Voting)

Scriabine, Christine. Know Your Government: The Presidency. (Chelsea House, 1988).

Summary: Great resource book on the office of the president. A visual of the Oval Office allows students to compare the renovations of the Oval Office completed by the Clinton administration.

Seuss, Dr. The Lorax. (Random House, 1971).

Summary: Explore citizenship and responsibility while learning about the Lorax and his fate. This book is also good for discussions about environmental issues.

Shuker-Haines, Frances. Rights and Responsibilities: Using Your Freedom. (Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 1993).

Summary: Examines the rights and responsibilities of being a citizen, discussing such topics as free speech, interest groups, voting, taxes, jury duty, and running for office. This is part of a good series called the “Good Citizenship Library.”

Sisulu, Elinor Batezat. The Day Gogo Went to Vote. (Little, Brown 1996).

Summary: Young Thembi and her beloved great-grandmother, who has not left the house for many years, go together to vote on the momentous day in 1994 when black South Africans are allowed to vote for the first time. (*Literature Connection Activity for The Right To Vote*)

Sobel, Syl. How the U.S. Government Works. (Barron’s Educational Series, 1999).

Summary: A complex process is explained in terms that young readers will find both interesting and understandable. Kids will come away with an appreciation of the priceless legacy left to all Americans by the Founding Fathers.

Stern, Gary M. The Congress: America’s Lawmakers. (Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 1993).

Summary: Discusses the origins of Congress, the members of Congress, how Congress works, and notable debates and acts of Congress.

Tate, E. Thank You, Dr. Martin Luther King! (Bantam Skylark, 1990).

Summary: In the 1980s, a girl discovers her heritage by participating in a commemorative play.

Weber, Michael. Our Congress. (Millbrook Press, 1994).

Summary: The Congress volume is part of a very good series called “I Know America.”

Weizman, Daniel. Take a Stand: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Government. (Price, Stern, Sloan, 1996)

Summary: Describes how the United States government works, and how to get involved in politics including school elections, letter-writing campaigns, and mock political debates.

Wesley, Valerie. Freedom’s Gifts A Juneteenth Story. Illus by Sharon Wilson. (Simon & Schuster, 2004).

Summary: When a girl from New York visits her cousin in Texas, she learns the origin of Juneteenth, a holiday marking the day Texan slaves realized they were free.

6-8

Adams, Colleen. Women's Suffrage: A Primary Source History of the Women's Rights Movement in America. (The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc. 2003).

Summary: A primary source history of the women's suffrage movement in America from 1776-1920.

Ander, Lloyd. The Beggar Queen. (Dutton, 1984).

Summary: Chaos reigns in Marienstat as Duke Conrad of Regia, the king's uncle, plots to overthrow the new government of Westmark and bring an end to the reforms instituted by Mickle (now Queen Augusta), Theo, and their companions.

Barnes, Peter and Cheryl. Marshall, the Courthouse Mouse. (VSP Books, 1998).

Summary: Teaches children about the judiciary branch of government through Chief Justice Marshall Mouse and his fellow justices on the Supreme Court of the United Mice of America.

Brindell, Dennis and Judith Bloom. Fight On! Mary Church Terrell's Battle for Integration. (Clarion Books, 2003).

Summary: A carefully researched biography about the life of the courageous and determined Mary Church Terrell who spent nearly 60 years fighting for racial equality. (*Literature Connection Activity for Active Citizenship*)

Catrow, David. We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States. (Puffin Books, 2005).

Summary: This book inspires discussion of America's most celebrated principles as they are outlined in the Preamble to the Constitution.

Colman, Penny. Fannie Lou Hamer and the Fight for the Vote. (Millbrook Press, 1993).

Summary: A biography of the civil rights activist who devoted her life to helping blacks register to vote and gain a national political voice.

Fradin, Dennis. Voting and Elections. (Children's Press, 1985).

Summary: A brief history of elections and voting in the United States.

Friedman, Mark. Government: How Local, State, and Federal Government Works. (The Child's World, 2005).

Summary: An examination of how government functions, from the separation of powers to checks and balances. (*Literature Connection Activity for Democracy and the People*)

Gutman, Dan. The Kid Who Ran for President. (Scholastic, 1996).

Summary: A 12-year-old runs for president in 2000. This is an entertaining introduction to the election process.

Gutman, Dan. Landslide! A Kid's Guide to the U.S. Elections. (Aladdin, 2000).

Summary: This is the 2000 edition but still very applicable. In a fun and snappy question-and-answer format, this book explains our democratic process in action. (*Literature Connection Activity for Elections and Voting*)

Hesse, Karen. A Light in the Storm: The Civil War Diary of Amelia Martin (Scholastic, 1999).

Summary: In 1860 and 1861, while working in her father's lighthouse on an island off the coast of Delaware, 15-year-old Amelia records in her diary how the Civil War is beginning to devastate her divided state. The whole "Dear America" series is excellent for girls.

Horn, Geoffrey M. The Bill of Rights and Other Amendments. (World Almanac Library, 2004).

Summary: It provides key facts and concepts students need to understand about principles of their government.

Howe, James. The Misfits. (Aladdin, 2003).

Summary: A story about four misfit middle school students who ban together to create their own political party for the student council elections.

Lasky, Kathryn. A Time for Courage: The Suffragette Diary of Kathleen Bowen. (Scholastic, 2002).

Summary: A diary of an eighth-grade girl, who looks on as her older sisters, mother and aunt take part in the movement to gain votes for women. (*Literature Connection Activity for The Right To Vote*)

McCully, Emily Arnold. The Ballot Box Battle. (Knopf, 1996).

Summary: A young girl accompanies Elizabeth Cady Stanton as the suffragist attempts to vote in 1880 (against New Jersey law) and learns about courage in the process. Excellent for stimulating discussions about who can vote and the history of suffrage in the United States.

Myers, Walter D. The Journal of Scott Pendleton Collins: A World War II Soldier. (Scholastic, 1999).

Summary: A 17-year-old soldier from central Virginia records his experiences in a journal as his regiment takes part in the D-Day invasion of Normandy and subsequent battles to liberate France. This is part of the "My Name is America" series, an excellent boys counterpart to the "Dear America" series.

Nardo, Don. Democracy. (Lucent Books Inc., 1994).

Summary: This book introduces a workable definition of democracy as well as the history of democracy in the United States of America up until the late 20th century.

Paterson, Katherine. Rebels of the Heavenly Kingdom. (Dutton, 1983).

Summary: Abducted from his home by bandits, 15-year-old Wang Lee is rescued from slavery by a mysterious girl who introduces him to the Taiping Tienkuo, a secret society partly based on Christian principles and dedicated to the overthrow of the Manchu government.

Rinaldi, Ann. My Heart is on the Ground: The Diary of Nannie Little Rose, a Sioux Girl. (Scholastic, 1999).

Summary: In this diary account of her life at a government-run Pennsylvania boarding school in 1880, a 12-year-old Sioux Indian girl reveals a great need to find a way to help her people. The whole “Dear America” series is excellent for girls.

Ring, Susan. Election Connection: The Official Nick Guide to Electing the President. (Chronicle Books, 2004).

Summary: This book is all about helping students make their voice heard. While it focuses on the election of the president, it contends that good citizenship starts well before turning 18.

Sagan, Miriam. World History Series: Women’s Suffrage. (Lucent Books, Inc., 1995).

Summary: This book was created to acquaint readers with the basics of women’s suffrage in America. In addition to helpful timelines, this book is highlighted by excerpts from primary and secondary sources along with user-friendly indexes and suggestions for further reading.

Scher, Linda. The Vote: Making Your Voice Heard. (Raintree, 1993).

Summary: This book discusses voting requirements, how and where to vote, and how to vote wisely. It is part of a very good citizenship series called the “Good Citizenship Library.”

Smith, Jane Wilcox. United States Government. (AGS Publishing 2005).

Summary: Each chapter and lesson in this book explains the people and events that shaped the U.S. government. The book also details how the U.S. government interacts with other governments of the world.

Sullivan, George. Campaigns and Elections: Ballots and Bandwagons. (Silver Burdett, 1991).

Summary: Studies the history of American presidential campaign management, showing strategy and tactics the candidates have used over the decades to give themselves positive exposure and their opponents negative exposure.

Teitelbaum, Michael. Our Government and Citizenship: The Bill of Rights. (The Child’s World, 2005).

Summary: An exploration of the Bill of Rights from their origin through history to today.

Wandberg, Robert. Volunteering: Giving Back. (Capstone Press, 2002).

Summary: Volunteering is something everyone can do and this book elaborates on how anyone can get involved in their community as a volunteer.

RECOMMENDED FILMS

Electing a President: The Process – This video traces the evolution of presidential elections from Washington to Clinton. Rainbow, 1983.

If I'm Elected: Modern Campaign Techniques – This documentary video critically analyzes today's media-dominated political campaigns. It helps students to address the issue of what is the best way to choose our leaders. Cambridge Educationals, 1993.

Inauguration '93 – A special report from ABC News hosted by Peter Jennings and David Brinkley. It features the oaths-of-office, Clinton's Inaugural Address, the parade, and the balls.

More Perfect Union, A – Produced by CNN, this stimulating series investigates the origins and development of the Constitution and its application to modern life. Video #7 discusses voting rights.

President Clinton: Answering Children's Questions – Hosted by Peter Jennings, this news special features President Clinton answering questions posed by sixth-eighth-graders and from different states with a variety of problems and concerns.

U.S. Government in Action – The Senate, The House of Representatives, The Regulatory Agencies, The Presidency, The Cabinet, & The Supreme Court. *New York Times/Teaching Resources Films*, 1988. Explains our federal system of government and introduces basic civics and government concepts.

Your Vote – A history of voting rights in the United States with a focus on the struggles of women, minorities, and 18-year-olds to win the right of suffrage.

9-12

Boyers, Sara J. Teen Power Politics: Make Yourself Heard. (The Millbrook Press, Inc., 2000).
Summary: This book explains how voting in the United States works, how to get ready for political action, and how to get involved in community service. (*Literature Connection Activity for Active Citizenship*)

Mishler, William. A Measure of Endurance: The Unlikely Triumph of Steven Sharp. (Random House Inc., 2003).
Summary: A heartwarming story of a courageous teenage boy, who, after being gravely injured while using a farm machine, takes on its powerful manufacturer and wins.

Morin, Isobel V. Politics, American Style: Political Parties in American History. (21st Century, 1999).
Summary: Morin traces the history of political parties in the United States, explaining how they both influenced and were affected by the issues and events of American history. She describes the evolution of our two-party system from its birth in the factionalism that surrounded the ratification of the Constitution to the present day.

Neuman, Nancy M., Editor. A Voice of Our Own: Leading American Women Celebrate the Right to Vote. (Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, 1996).
Summary: This book was written by prominent American women and is a collection of 29 original essays that celebrate the indomitable spirit of the American woman.

Paine, Thomas. Common Sense, Rights of Man, and Other Essential Writings of Thomas Paine. (Plume, 1984).
Summary: This book gives insight into Thomas Paine's "radical" ideas about freedom and democracy. (*Literature Connection Activity for American Democracy and Citizenship*)

Ramen, Fred. Individual Rights and Civic Responsibility: Rights of the Accused. (The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc., 2001).
Summary: Why do we have a Constitution or a Bill of Rights? Why did the remarkable people behind the American Revolution feel the need to create a document that precisely laid out the functions of the national government? Why did they choose the form that the Constitution eventually took? How has our interpretation of their vision changed over the two centuries since the Constitution was ratified? What do the Constitution and the Bill of Rights mean? The answers to the first three questions can be found in the first few chapters of this book while the rest of the book deals with the answers—if they exist—to the last two questions.

Rogers, Donald W. Voting and the Spirit of American Democracy. (University of Illinois Press, 1992).
Summary: An overview of the historical development of the right to vote. Leading historians and political scientists trace the history of American voting from the Colonial period to the present, incorporating the latest scholarship on suffrage reform, women's suffrage, black voting rights and electoral participation. (*Literature Connection Activity for Suffrage and the Right to Vote*)

Severn, Bill. The Right to Vote. (Washburn, 1972).

Summary: This is the story of voting rights achieved by those who found an answer to changing the system through democratic process, and who paved the way for the fight to increase the power of the people in government.

Smith, Jane Wilcox. United States Government. (AGS Publishing, 2005).

Summary: Each chapter and lesson in this book helps you learn about the people and events that shaped the U.S. government. The book also details how the U.S. government interacts with the other governments of the world.

Sullivan, George. Campaigns and Elections: Ballots and Bandwagons. (Silver Burdett, 1991).

Summary: This book studies the history of American presidential campaign management, showing strategy and tactics the candidates have used over the decades to give themselves positive exposure and their opponents negative exposure.

Sullivan, Joan. An American Voter: My Love Affair with Presidential Politics. (Bloomsbury, New York, 2002).

Summary: This is the story of young woman named Joan Sullivan who rediscovered a sense of courage and hope in her life while working for Bill Bradley's presidential campaign. Joan throws herself into this strange new world of politics, with the intent of getting a political education. In a whirlwind tour of the country, Joan campaigns for Bradley, taking to heart his message that idealism and dreams are not dead in America.

Taranto, James and Leonard, Leo, Editors. Presidential Leadership. (Free Press, 2004).

Summary: Two editors, one from the *Wall Street Journal* and the other from the Federalist Society, have put together Presidential Leadership: Rating the Best and Worst in the White House. It includes essays on each president, plus several broader thematic essays on presidential leadership from various authors. (*Literature Connection Activity for Elections and the Voting Experience*)

Tashjian, Linda. Vote for Larry. (Holt, 2004).

Summary: Second in a series about a high school activist. A 17-year-old runs for president to focus attention on youth issues.

The League of Women Voters. Choosing the President 2004. (The Lyons Press, 2003).

Summary: This is a thorough yet accessible and completely nonpartisan look at the players and events in a presidential election, explaining every important landmark on the road to the White House.

Waldman, Tom. The Best Guide to American Politics. (Renaissance Books, 2000).

Summary: A very readable, accessible, and practical volume for the average citizen to learn about the American political system. Waldman covers state and local governments, political parties, interest groups, and the media, among other things. Also included is valuable information about how to contact government officials, agencies, and members of Congress.

Wilson, Reginald. *Our Rights: Civil Liberties in the United States*. (Walker and Company Inc., 1992).
Summary: Wilson uncovers the events and personalities that have shaped the history of civil liberties in the United States. He discusses current issues, such as the ERA and surrogate motherhood, and looks at what may be the important questions in the future. His discussion provides readers with a lively and provocative introduction to civil liberties in the United States.

RECOMMENDED FILMS

1992 Live Debate Analysis – Kathleen Jamieson, Dean of the Annenberg School of Communication, joins Bill Moyers and other guests in discussing both the presidential and vice presidential debates. (60 minutes)

Abe Lincoln in Illinois – The Raymond Massey classic includes memorable scenes of the Lincoln-Douglas debates and the election of 1860. (110 minutes)

Act of Congress, An – This made-for-TV documentary traces the progress of a bill (the Clean Air Act of 1977) through the House of Representatives. It poses difficult questions: which is more important, automotive jobs or cleaner air? (58 minutes)

All the King's Men – Broderick Crawford plays Willy Stark, a corrupt politician based upon Louisiana's Huey Long, during his Depression-era rise from farm boy to governor. (109 minutes)

All the President's Men – Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman portray Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, the *Washington Post* reporters who uncovered the Watergate scandal. (135 minutes)

Animal Farm – George Orwell's political satire about barnyard animals who slip into totalitarian dictatorship, in animated cartoon version. (73 minutes)

Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman, The – Cicely Tyson begins life as a slave, and ends up 110 years later as a voter. (110 minutes)

Best Man, The – Two presidential contenders lose integrity in pursuit of the nomination. Henry Fonda and Cliff Robertson star. (104 minutes)

Bill of Rights in Action, The – The Town Hall and City Council of fictional Middleburg, USA, debate such issues as juvenile curfews, banning library books, and permitting a student with AIDS in public school. These are three separate American Bar Association films: *The Right to Privacy* (57 minutes); *Equal Protection* (33 minutes); and *First Amendment* (34 minutes).

Candidate, The – Along the campaign trail, candidate Redford (set up to lose the race) loses his idealism as well. (111 minutes)

Classics of Political TV Advertising, The – Two videocassettes show historic political commercials from 1952 to 1984, and from the 1986 congressional campaigns. (120 minutes)

Come See the Paradise – Randy Quaid plays a union organizer whose Japanese-American wife is separated from him during the World War II Japanese-American internment. (135 minutes)

Conspiracy: The Trial of the Chicago Eight – A reconstruction in newsreel and interview style of the trial of the radicals charged with incitement to riot at the 1968 Democratic National Convention. (118 minutes)

“Dangerous” Songs: Censors, Rock, and the 1st Amendment – Interviews with teenagers, parents, legislators and songwriters explore 1st amendment issues. (18 minutes)

Dave – In this update of *The Prisoner of Zenda*, an evil chief of staff replaces a corrupt U.S. president (felled by a stroke) with good-hearted Kevin Kline, a presidential look-alike. The film is filled with cameos by real politicians and newspeople. (110 minutes)

Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam – Among the actors reading these actual letters are Robert DeNiro and Robin Williams. (84 minutes)

Eyes on the Prize Series – The PBS documentary in six one-hour films recreates the “Second American Revolution,” the civil rights struggle between 1954 and 1965. A one-hour version of excerpts from it is available, too.

First Monday in October – In this comedy, the fictionalized first female Supreme Court Justice is conservative Jill Clayburgh, who locks opinions with liberal Justice Walter Matthau. The film actually predated Sandra Day O’Connor’s appointment to the Supreme Court. (99 minutes)

Gideon’s Trumpet – Henry Fonda plays Clarence Gideon, who petitioned the Supreme Court in 1962 because he had been unable to afford legal counsel. (104 minutes)

Give ‘Em Hell, Harry! – This one-man stage production stars James Whitmore as Harry Truman, reminiscing about his political career. (102 minutes)

Great Debates, The – ABC News culled selections from the watershed 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debates. (60 minutes)

In the Land of Jim Crow – A short but effective version of the civil rights struggle. (22 minutes)

Inherit the Wind – The film about the Tennessee “Monkey Trial” of John Scopes is a favorite of many teachers. The Clarence Darrow character is played by Spencer Tracy, and the William Jennings Bryan character is Frederick March. (128 minutes)

Inventing a Nation – This episode from Alistair Cooke’s “America” series covers the long process of writing and implementing the Constitution. (60 minutes)

Indomitable Teddy Roosevelt, The – Narrated by George C. Scott, the film contains rare footage as well as re-enactment. (94 minutes)

Killing Fields, The – Sam Waterston plays a *New York Times* reporter during the darkest nightmare to emerge in the politics of the later 20th century, the Khmer Rouge massacres in Cambodia. (142 minutes)

Lincoln-Douglas Debates, The: The House Divides – A short and clear version of the Lincoln-Douglas debates. (24 minutes)

Long Walk Home, The – Sissy Spacek and Whoopi Goldberg are part of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. (95 minutes)

Malcolm X – Spike Lee's biography of the black activist stars Denzel Washington. Based on *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* by Malcolm X and Alex Haley. (201 minutes)

Marbury vs. Madison – The 1803 case established the responsibility of the Supreme Court to review the constitutionality of congressional acts. (36 minutes)

Missiles of October, The – This made-for-TV version of the Cuban Missile Crisis features William Devane as an uncannily accurate JFK. (155 minutes)

Modern Presidency Series (5 Presidents) – David Frost interviews five recent presidents for PBS. (60 minutes each)

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington – Senator Jimmy Stewart triumphs over Washington corruption. This film shows the daily workings of Congress effectively. (125 minutes)

Native Land – Narrated by Paul Robeson, this is a warning about human rights. It was based on the Senate's La Follette Committee findings about the Klan and union-busting by big business.

Norma Rae – Sally Field won an Oscar for her portrayal of an uneducated textile worker who works with a labor organizer to unionize her plant. This is based on a true story. (114 minutes)

Point of Order – Paul Newman introduces this documentary culled from the Army-McCarthy hearings, but this is otherwise unnarrated footage. A teacher's guide is included. (107 minutes)

Power Game, The – There are four parts to this Hedrick Smith PBS series: "The Congress;" "The Pentagon;" "The Presidency;" and "The Unelected" (Media, PAC's and lobbyists). (60 minutes each)

Profiles in Courage – Stories of political heroism inspired by John F. Kennedy’s book. Outstanding portrayals: Robert Hooks as Frederick Douglass; Gary Merrill as John Marshall; and Martin Gabel as Daniel Webster. (50 minutes each)

Salt of the Earth – A film made in 1953 by blacklisted McCarthy-era film makers—a lesson in itself. Discusses the multiple issues of dignity and politics in a New Mexico 1951 mining strike by Mexican-Americans. (94 minutes)

Separate But Equal – Sidney Poitier portrays NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall in the story of the landmark civil rights case *Brown v. Board of Education*. (194 minutes)

Seven Days in May – Will a “loose cannon” general depose a pacifist president? Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas star. (117 minutes)

She’s Nobody’s Baby: A History of American Women in the 20th Century – This history of the women’s movement in the 20th century is narrated by Marlo Thomas and Alan Alda. (60 minutes)

Skokie – An all-star cast reenacts the struggle over whether or not a neo-Nazi group may demonstrate in Skokie, Illinois, a town containing many survivors of the Holocaust. (95 minutes)

State of the Union – In 1948, a Ross Perot prototype (played by Spencer Tracy) is drafted as a presidential candidate. (124 minutes)

To Kill a Mockingbird – Many government teachers list this movie classic as their favorite. Gregory Peck plays Atticus Finch, defense lawyer for a black man accused of rape in 1930s’ Alabama. (129 minutes)

Twelve Angry Men – Henry Fonda is the jury room protagonist. All 12 of the outstanding actors shine. (95 minutes)

War Room, The – The viewer is taken behind the scenes in the Clinton campaign. “Ragin’ Cajun” James Carville (whose language is a caveat here) and George Stephanopoulos are featured. (96 minutes)

Watergate Hearings, The – Hundreds of hours of congressional testimony and news coverage have been distilled by PBS into two hours. (120 minutes)

Who Owns Our Government? – The health care industry is featured in this PBS study of the effect of political contributions on public policy. (60 minutes)

RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION ON CHILDREN'S LITERATURE BOOKS

The American Library Association publishes lists of award-winning children's books. Contact ALA at 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611. E-mail: library@ala.org. Web site: <http://www.ala.org/>

C Is For Citizenship: Children's Literature and Civic Understanding, by Laurel R. Singleton (1997). Contact SSEC, Box 21270, Boulder, CO 80308-4270. Phone: (303)492-8154

The International Reading Association publishes annual lists of books chosen by teachers and students as the best newly published books. Contact IRA at Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714. Customer Service Department: customerservice@reading.org
Public Information Office: pubinfo@reading.org. Web site: <http://www.reading.org/>

Social Education, the primary journal of the National Council for the Social Studies lists "Notable Children's Trade Books" each year in the April/May issue. Contact NCSS at 8555 Sixteenth Street, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910. Web site: <http://www.socialstudies.org/publications/se/>

Social Studies and the Young Learner, a journal for elementary teachers published by the National Council for the Social Studies, carries a regular column on children's literature. Contact NCSS at 8555 Sixteenth Street, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910. Web site: <http://www.socialstudies.org/publications/se/>

The Children's Literature Web Guide features commentary on children's books, discussion boards, quick references, and more. Contact at <http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/>

GLOSSARY



AFFIDAVIT OF REGISTRATION – Sworn, written evidence of voter eligibility

ANNEX – To bring property into city boundaries

APATHY – Lack of interest or concern

APPORTION – To divide seats in a legislative body among different geographic districts

BALLOT – Printed form or other item used in voting

BALLOT BOX – Container for cast votes

BOND – A written promise to pay someone a particular amount of money plus interest after a certain amount of time

BOND ELECTION – An election asking voters to give the government the right to borrow money by selling bonds

CAMPAIGN – Course of action designed to influence voters in an election

CANDIDATE – Person who seeks or is put forward by others for a political office

CAUCUS – Closed meeting of party members to determine nominations

CENSUS – Official count of the people of the United States required by the Congress every 10 years

CHARTER – The city's constitution wherein the form of government is contained

CITIZEN – Person who was born in or chooses to live in and become a member of a country

CITY COUNCIL – A city's governing body

CITY MANAGER – A person hired by the city council to administer the city's affairs

COMMISSIONER – A head of a department who shares with other commissioners power to make laws (ordinances)

CONGRESS – Legislative group consisting of the House of Representatives and the Senate

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT – A political subdivision for the purpose of electing U.S. representatives

CONSENSUS – A general agreement

CONSTITUENCY – All the voters of a particular district

CONVENTION – A formal meeting of members of a party to nominate candidates to run for president or other political offices

COUNTY – A major unit of local government

CROSSOVER VOTE – A vote by a member of one party for a candidate of another party

DELEGATE – A person given power or authority to vote for others; a representative

DEMOCRACY – Government that is run by the people who live under it

DEMOCRAT – A member of the Democratic party, one of the two major political parties

DICTATOR – Person who has complete authority

DICTATORSHIP – Form of government headed by a dictator

ECONOMY – The way a country produces, divides up and uses its money and goods

ELECT – To choose by voting

ELECTION CAMPAIGN – Series of operations designed to win votes for a certain candidate, party or proposal

ELECTORAL COLLEGE – A group of representatives chosen by voters to elect the president and the vice president of the United States

ELECTORATE – Those eligible to vote

ELECTORS – The individuals chosen by the voters to elect the president and vice president of the United States (each state's electors number the same as its senators and representatives)

FEDERAL – Of or describing a union of states having a central government

FELON – A person guilty of a crime more serious than a misdemeanor

FRANCHISE – The constitutional right to vote

GENERAL ELECTION – Statewide elections held so that registered voters can decide the state and national officials who will head the government

GERRYMANDERING – The drawing up of voting districts in unusual shapes in order to benefit a certain group

GOVERNMENT – The group of people in charge of ruling or managing a country, state, city or other place

GOVERNOR – The person elected to be head of the government of a state of the United States

GRANT-IN-AID – Federal money given to states or cities to pay for programs

GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION – The selection of a governor by a state’s voters

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES – The lower house of the Congress consisting of 435 members who each serve two-year terms (and can be re-elected)

INCUMBENT – A person currently holding office

INDEPENDENT VOTER – A voter who does not belong to a political party

INITIATIVE – A method of enacting laws or ordinances that begins with petitions by citizens

ISSUES – Problems and ideas to be talked about, questioned, decided upon and voted on

JUDICIAL ELECTION – An election for judges

MAJOR PARTY – The Democratic or Republican Party (see Third Party)

MAYOR – Elected official in a city who has executive power

MUNICIPALITY – A city, town or district

NEUTRAL POLLING – Method of polling through which neutral questions are asked rather than questions expressing and/or advocating a particular viewpoint

NOMINATE – To propose or offer the name of someone for political office

NOMINEE – The person that a political party names, or nominates, to represent it in a general election

NONPARTISAN – Not associated with a particular political party

NONPARTISAN ELECTIONS – Elections usually held at the state or local level: the candidate’s party membership is not given on the ballot

OFFICE – A political position

ORDINANCES – The laws of a city

PARTISAN – Associated with a particular political party

PARTY – An organization working to gain political power or control

PARTY BOSS – A leader with great power within a political party; a party leader capable of affecting voting and elections

PARTY PLATFORM – Statement of the principles or beliefs of a political group

PLANK – A stand on an issue by a political party; planks comprise a party platform

POLITICAL AFFILIATION – The party in which a voter is registered

POLITICAL CARTOON – A cartoon developed to represent a particular view through humor

POLITICAL PARTY – A group of people who join together because they share many ideas about what government should do

POLLSTER – Person or company that researches public opinion

POLL – To collect opinions about important issues or happenings

POLL TAX – Tax levied on potential voters wanting to vote

POLLING PLACE – Place where votes are cast

POLLS – A place where votes are cast

PRECINCT – Divisions within a city, town or county for voting purposes

PRECINCT CLERK – Precinct election board worker responsible for recording those who have voted in a booklet called a poll list and performing other duties as assigned by the precinct inspector

PRECINCT INSPECTOR – Precinct election board worker responsible for the complete operation of each polling place

PRECINCT JUDGE – Precinct election board worker responsible for the set up of voting devices, demonstrating the voting devices, issuing ballots and aiding disabled voters

PRECINCT WORKER – A person who works at a polling place

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION – An election to choose a president and vice president

PRIMARY ELECTION – Preliminary elections in which voters choose party candidates to run for office on their party ticket in general elections

PROPAGANDA – Ideas or information that a group of people deliberately spread to try to influence the thinking of other people

PUBLIC WORKS – Anything constructed by the government with public funds for the use or pleasure of the general public such as libraries, roads, public housing

PUBLIC UTILITY – A public or privately-owned organization that provides essential products or services such as light, water, and gas

RANDOM SAMPLE – A sample of research subjects which provides every person the same chance of being selected, such as selecting every fourth person from the telephone book

RATIFY – To formally approve the vote

RECALL – Petition process by which voters can remove an elected official from office in midterm

REDISTRICTING – The redrawing of boundaries of political districts often based on shifts in population

REGISTER – The process by which a persons' name is added to the list of eligible voters

REPUBLICAN – Member of the Republican political party, one of the two major political parties

RESIDENT – A person who lives in a specific jurisdiction

RESOLUTION – A statement or opinion by city government, such as declaring a public policy or recognizing an achievement

RETURNS – The results of a vote

SENATE – The upper house of the Congress, with two members from each state (100 members total) who each serve six-year terms

STATE ELECTION BOARD – Body charged with organizing and conducting state elections

SUFFRAGE – The right to vote

TALLY – To count votes

THIRD PARTY – A party organized as an alternative to the two major parties; also called a minor party (see Major Party)

VOTE – A method by which people choose their leaders and decide public issues

VOTING BOOTH – An enclosure designed to ensure privacy for voting

VOTING MACHINE – Mechanical device for recording and counting votes at an election

VOTING ROSTER – An alphabetical list of people eligible to vote

ZONING – A form of planning where government or councils decide the use of buildings or the activities than can occur in each area of the city