



KIDS VOTING USA

K-5 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 (3-5 ONLY)

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

LOCAL INFORMATION



KIDS VOTING USA K-8 EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



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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

K-2 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

The Odd Vote 2
 Voting Chain 3
 Yes Or No Game 5

CONCEPT 2: I STUDY THE CANDIDATES AND ISSUES

Which Hand? 7
 Three Changes 8
 Election Bulletin Board 9

CONCEPT 3: I REGISTER AND VOTE

Kids Voting Registration 11
 Voting Simulation 14
 Marking A Ballot 17
 Pencil Flags 18

CONCEPT 4: I CONTINUE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Marking The Winners 20
 The Wish Tree 21



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

Questions for Concept 1: My Vote Gives Me Power 23
 Questions for Concept 2: I Study the Candidates and Issues 23
 Questions for Concept 3: I Register and Vote 23
 Questions for Concept 4: I Continue to Make a Difference 23



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

Duck For President by Doreen Cronin 24



CULMINATING ACTIVITY

I Go To The Polls 25



THE ODD VOTE

(15 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn how to vote and implement the results.

MATERIALS

No materials are necessary for this activity.

GET READY

- ✓ Be prepared to create a tally chart on either the whiteboard/chalkboard or a flip chart.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Ask your students, *Is there only one way to vote? How do people vote for the President of the United States? How do you think people voted before there were machines? How do we sometimes vote in class?*
- ✓ Say, *Let's vote in an odd way today.*
- ✓ Demonstrate these three ways to vote:
 - ✓ Agree: wave both your hands in the air
 - ✓ No opinion: Fold your arms across your chest
 - ✓ Disagree: put both thumbs down and stamp your feet
- ✓ Make statements to vote on based on the interests of your students, such as: *Candy should be outlawed. School should be half a day.*
- ✓ Invite students to make statements to be voted on, like: *I like spinach. Red is my favorite color.*
- ✓ Conclude by voting on a statement that can be tallied and implemented immediately, such as: *We are going to vote on whether to have math early in the day or later.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Do you like voting this way? Why or why not?*
- ★ *Did your friends vote the same way you did? Does this matter?*
- ★ *Are there times when a vote should be private. Why?*
- ★ *On the final vote, did your vote give you any power? How?*

MORE!

Vote, tally, and implement as many decisions as possible during the week. Help your students understand the power of their votes through action and discussion.

VOTE QUOTE

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



VOTING CHAIN

(20-30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students vote, tally, and implement the vote.

MATERIALS

Construction paper; *Yes/No Sign* handout; tape

GET READY

- ✓ Cut a small strip of construction paper to make a link for each child. Each strip of construction paper will be a link in a chain.
- ✓ Cut apart the *Yes/No Sign* handout.
- ✓ Pin the *Yes* sign and the *No* sign to a bulletin board so you can attach the students' links as they vote.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Say to the children, *Have you and your friends ever had to make a decision about something that was hard to agree on? Maybe you were deciding what to watch on TV or where to eat. How did you finally make the decision? Voting is a fair way to make decisions.*
- ✓ Help the class choose an issue to vote on (such as snacks, activities, or recess time) that can be implemented immediately. State the issue as a question to be answered "Yes" or "No."
- ✓ Give your students the strips of paper. (You may ask them to write their names on them or you can explain the concept of a secret ballot where voting is confidential.)
- ✓ Explain that one link on a voting chain represents one vote.
- ✓ Let each student link his/her "vote" under the *Yes* sign or *No* sign.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Is the longest chain under the Yes sign or under the No sign? Let's count.*
- ★ *Can you see your own voting link?*
- ★ *Would the chain look different if you had not voted?*
- ★ *What might happen if you could vote as many times as you wished rather than once?*
- ★ *What do the results of our vote mean to us?*
- ★ *Was this a fair decision?*

MORE!

The class could vote on other issues during the week in this way or in others.



YES/NO SIGN

YES

NO



YES OR NO GAME

(15-20 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students vote and tally the results.

MATERIALS

Yes & No Cards handout; popsicle sticks

GET READY

- ✓ Copy and cut out the *Yes* card and the *No* card from the *Yes & No Cards* handout.
- ✓ Attach the two cards to popsicle sticks, if desired.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ As a class, brainstorm 10 to 15 statements that can be judged with a vote of yes or no. Have fun with this list. Some suggestions are:
I like broccoli. I like the color blue. I wish I could fly. School should be all year round. It was okay for Goldilocks to go inside the bears' house. All whale killing should be stopped. There is too much violence on TV.
- ✓ Either designate a student leader or lead the activity yourself.
- ✓ Announce the first issue to be voted on.
- ✓ Hold up the *Yes* sign and point to one side of the room. Have students wishing to vote *Yes* go to that side of the room.
- ✓ Hold up the *No* sign and point to the other side of the room. Have students wishing to vote *No* go to that side of the room.
- ✓ Continue to do the same thing for the rest of the statements.
- ✓ Hold a final vote that can be implemented directly such as, "We will do math next."
- ✓ Tally each vote, write the results on the blackboard, and implement the vote.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Did the same people vote "Yes" on every issue? Did the same people vote "No?"*
- ★ *Did any of your friends vote "Yes" when you voted "No," or "No" when you voted "Yes?" How did that make you feel?*
- ★ *Did you think about changing your vote to be on the same side as a friend?*
- ★ *Would you have voted differently if this had been a secret ballot?*
- ★ *Might a secret vote be important sometimes? When?*
- ★ *Which vote gave you power? What power did it give you?*
- ★ *How does voting give adults power?*

MORE!

During the next week, vote as often as possible on issues that can be implemented in the classroom so students can see the direct relationship between their votes and their lives.



YES & NO CARDS

YES

NO



WHICH HAND?

(15 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students gather information before making a decision.

MATERIALS

Small prizes, such as stickers or pieces of candy (preferably something you can hide in one hand)

GET READY

- ✓ Make sure you have the small prizes ready and that there is enough for your entire class.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Say to your students, *Each of you can guess which one of my hands is holding a prize. You will have a better chance at guessing correctly if you ask for information first. Information will help you make a better decision.*
- ✓ Call your students one at a time to guess which hand holds the prize.
- ✓ Ask each member of your class if they would like some information. If they do, give a clue such as: *Choose the hand closest to the window* or *The hand moving up and down is empty.*
- ✓ Allow children who choose the wrong hand to try again later.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Did information help you make a good choice?*
- ★ *Can information help you make a good choice when choosing a leader?*
- ★ *Where can you find information about people who want to be our leaders?*

MORE!

Encourage students to bring in information they find on the election such as newspaper articles, pictures, cartoons, bumper stickers, etc., and display them on a Kids Voting bulletin board.

VOTE QUOTE

“If a nation expects to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization, it expects what was never meant to be.” – Thomas Jefferson



THREE CHANGES

(15-20 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students study each other carefully to improve information-gathering skills.

MATERIALS

No materials are necessary for this activity.

GET READY

- ✓ Divide your students into teams of two.
- ✓ Have students in the pairs face each other.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Say to your students, *Perhaps you have lost some money or a toy in a room that you often play in. When you did, you probably looked around the room much more carefully than ever before. When we need to, we can observe or study a person or thing very carefully. In this game you will practice observing carefully.* (All teams will play simultaneously.)
- ✓ Tell the students to look at each other carefully.
- ✓ When you say, *Three changes*, direct them to turn back-to-back and make three changes in their appearance: change their hair, untie their shoelaces, tuck in their shirt, etc.
- ✓ When they have made the changes, say, *Face each other.*
- ✓ Ask the students to identify the changes their partners have made.
- ✓ Students can play several times, changing partners occasionally.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Did you get better at observing another person?*
- ★ *Do you think we should carefully observe a person who wants to be our leader? Why?*
- ★ *How can we get information about a person who wants to be our leader?*
- ★ *What information do we need to know about a person who wants to be our leader?*
- ★ *Who is currently looking to be our leader?*
- ★ *What information do you have about them? How can you find out more?*

MORE!

Encourage your students to bring to class any election paraphernalia they find. Ask them to look in magazines, newspapers, and mailed brochures. Pin this information to a bulletin board.



ELECTION BULLETIN BOARD

(5 minutes a day for two weeks)

OBJECTIVE

Students share election-oriented information they gather from the media by constructing a bulletin board of articles and pictures.

MATERIALS

Colored pencils and crayons; *Election Bulletin Board* handout

GET READY

- ✓ Gather colored pencils and crayons.
- ✓ Prepare a bulletin board in the classroom that can be used for election information.
- ✓ Prepare a note on the back of the *Election Bulletin Board* handout to go home with the children that explains the assignment: With parents or guardians, each student will look for one article or picture about the election, and attach it to the paper. (Students may alternatively draw a picture about the election.)
- ✓ Sample note to families: *Our class is making a special Kids Voting bulletin board and each student will help by attaching an article about the election to this paper. Please help your child to find an article or picture by the end of the week. If you cannot find one together, the student can draw a picture about the election instead.*
- ✓ Duplicate one handout for each student, with the picture of people talking on one side and the note to families on the other.

INSTRUCTIONS

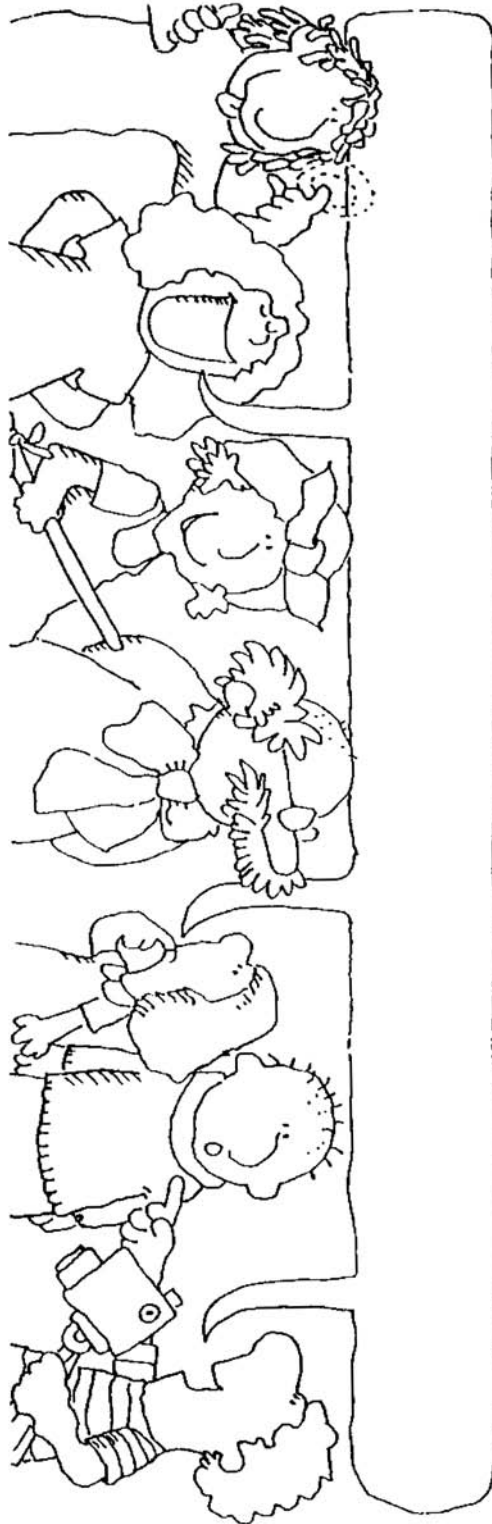
- ✓ After you pass out the handout, ask the students to write their names above the caption bubble.
- ✓ Look at the picture together. Say, *People are talking to each other in this picture. Who are the people talking?* (“a lady who is cleaning her house,” “an old man,” etc.) Give your students some time to color in the people.
- ✓ Say, *Have you been hearing people talk about the election at home or on television? One of the most important things people can say about the election is to remind each other: “Vote!” Let’s write that word in our bubble so it looks like everyone is saying it.*
- ✓ Write V-O-T-E on the board for your students to copy.
- ✓ Explain that the students can post their papers on the Kids Voting bulletin board when there is a picture/article about the election attached to it.
- ✓ Tell the students that the letter on the back of the handout is asking their families to help them find or draw a picture.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Where will you look for a picture about the election? Who will help you to find one?*
- ★ *If you can’t find a picture, what kind of picture could you draw? (A ballot, a voter = person holding a ballot, a candidate = person running for office, etc.)*



ELECTION BULLETIN BOARD





KIDS VOTING REGISTRATION

(20-30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students understand the importance of registering to vote.

MATERIALS

Voter Registration Cards handout; *Registration Badges* handout; lined paper

GET READY

- ✓ Copy enough *Voter Registration Cards* for your students.
- ✓ Prepare three *Registration Badges* – cut them out from the handout. If possible, print them out on colored paper.
- ✓ Put two or three tables or desks together at the front of the room.
- ✓ For more information, see “Elections” in the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Say to your students, *Have you ever signed up for swimming lessons or school? If so, you probably had to go in before the first day of class and sign up. Another word for signing up is “registering.” Before you can vote you must register to put your name on the list of voters.*
- ✓ Assign three students to be the registrars for the class. Give each registrar a *Registration Badge*.
- ✓ Give each registrar a stack of *Registration Cards* and a registration sheet. (The registration sheet could be a piece of lined paper folded down the middle.) Have the registrars sit at the desks/chairs you put together.

- ✓ Instruct the students to come to the tables/desks three at a time to fill out their *Registration Cards* and sign the registration sheets. (Have the students sign their names on the left side of the registration sheet.)
- ✓ Each student goes to one registrar who helps them through the registration process, so it is important that the registrars know how the process works.
- ✓ Have the registrars switch roles with students who have already registered so that they have a chance to register.
- ✓ Tell your students that you will send the *Registration Cards* home with them the day before the Kids Voting election so they can take them to the polls.
- ✓ Save the registration sheet for the *Voting Simulation* activity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Why do we register?*
- ★ *What could happen if people voted without registering?*

MORE!

As an alternative to classroom registration, help coordinate a school registration day for both students and parents. Invite a deputy registrar for parents and let students register for the Kids Voting election at the same time.

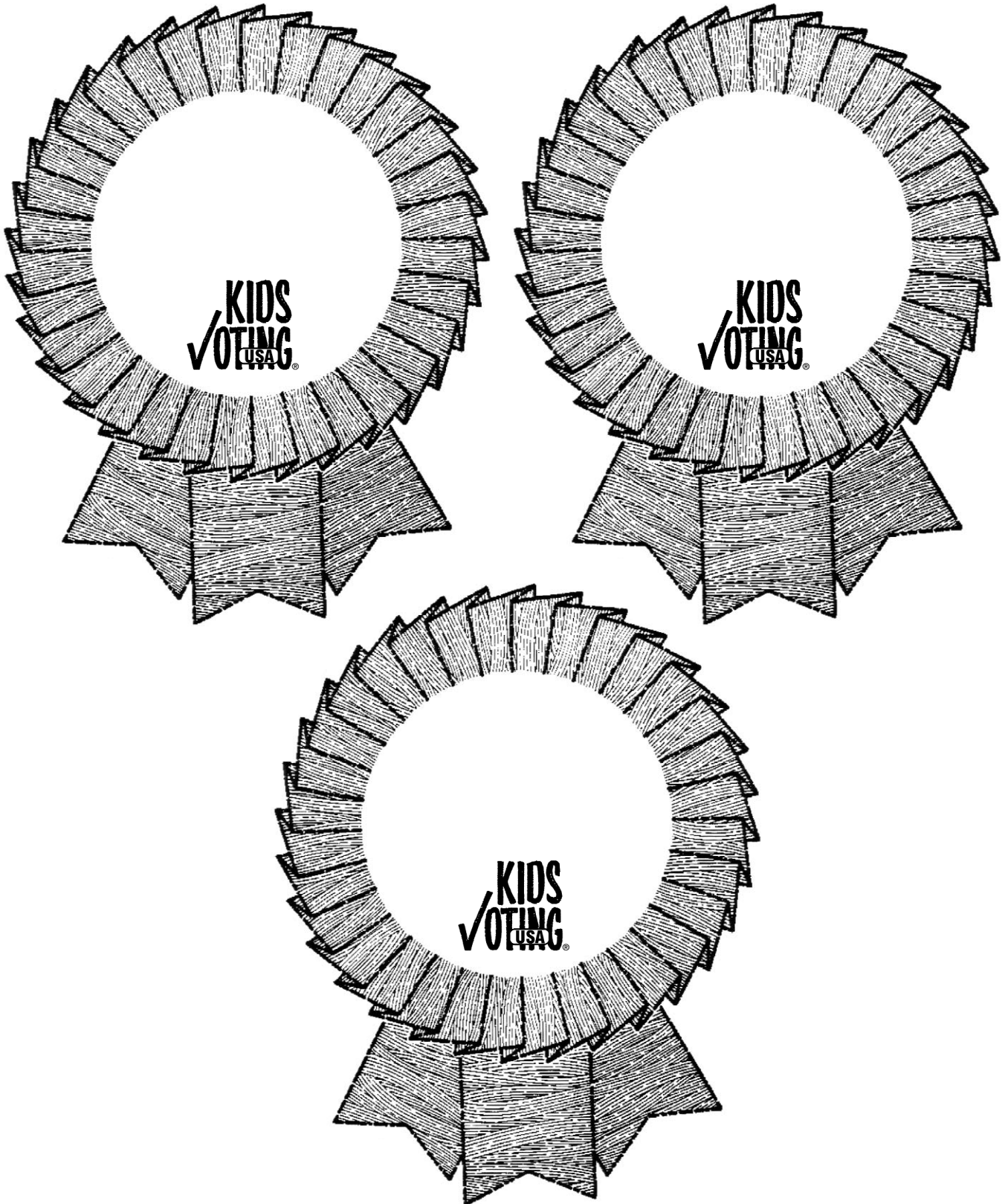


VOTER REGISTRATION CARDS

 <p>Voter Registration</p> <p>Student _____</p> <p>Teacher _____</p> <p>School _____</p>	 <p>Voter Registration</p> <p>Student _____</p> <p>Teacher _____</p> <p>School _____</p>
 <p>Voter Registration</p> <p>Student _____</p> <p>Teacher _____</p> <p>School _____</p>	 <p>Voter Registration</p> <p>Student _____</p> <p>Teacher _____</p> <p>School _____</p>



REGISTRATION BADGES



**VOTING SIMULATION**

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

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

MATERIALS

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

GET READY

- ✓ Choose an issue that will impact the students rather quickly. For instance, vote on what to play at recess or how to determine seating or something fun like, *What tastes best: a chocolate chip or peanut butter cookie?*
- ✓ Prepare ballots from the *Ballots* handout or determine 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 (see handout) and assign students to role play the part of the workers. Seat them as shown in the diagram.
- ✓ Give one of the judges the registration sheet derived from the *Kids Voting Registration* activity.
- ✓ 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.

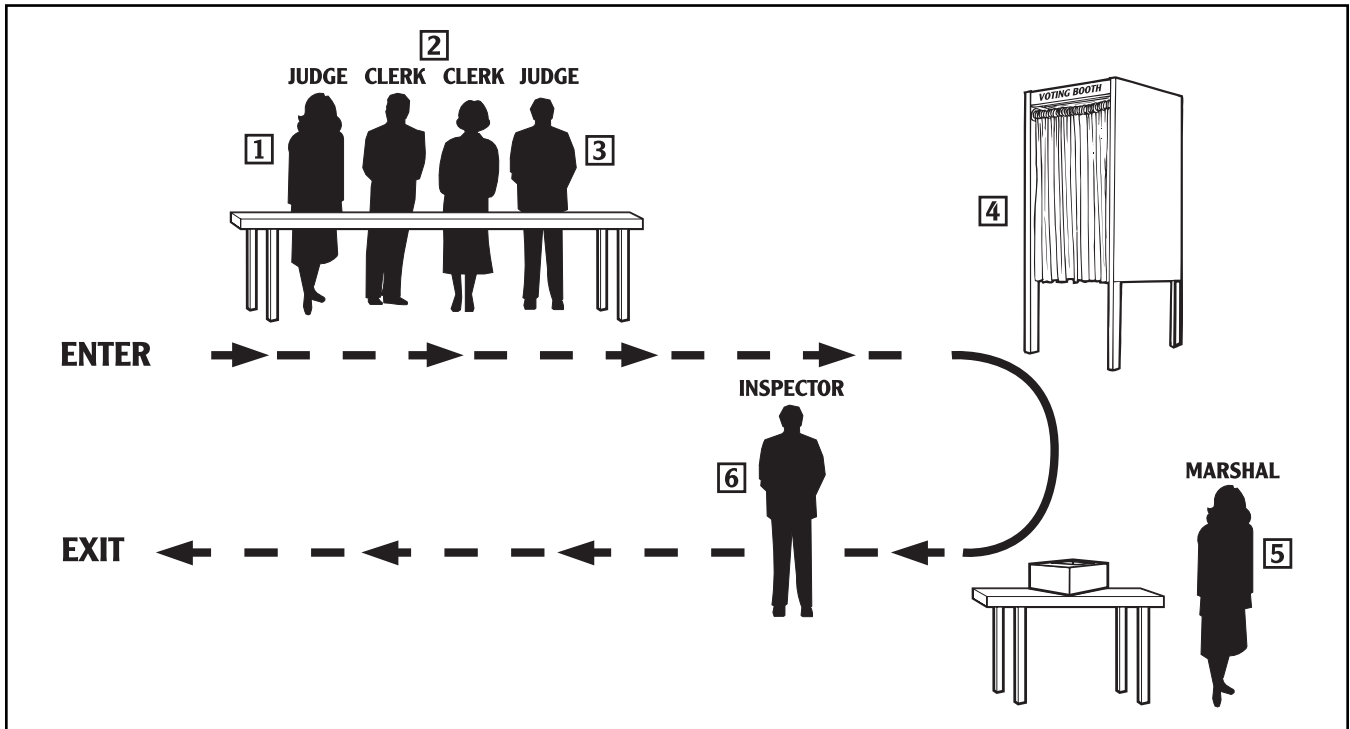
- ✓ Let each student go through the voting process.
- ✓ Instruct the marshal to tally and announce the vote.
- ✓ Implement the vote.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Who can go into a polling place?*
- ★ *Have you ever gone with your parents? If yes, 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



BALLOTS

<p>BALLOT VOTE FOR ONE</p> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>BALLOT VOTE FOR ONE</p> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>BALLOT VOTE FOR ONE</p> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>BALLOT VOTE FOR ONE</p> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>BALLOT VOTE FOR ONE</p> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>BALLOT VOTE FOR ONE</p> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>



MARKING A BALLOT

(15-20 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students study and mark sample ballots.

MATERIALS

Sample *Kids Voting Ballot*

GET READY

- ✓ Copy a sample *Kids Voting Ballot* for each student. (If you have not received them, check with your Kids Voting contact person.)

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Study the ballot with your students. Identify the pictures and issues you feel they can understand.
- ✓ Ask your students to pretend they are at the polls and have them mark their ballots.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *How did you decide who to vote for?*
- ★ *How do grown-ups decide who to vote for?*
- ★ *Where do they get their information?*
- ★ *What can you do if you don't know who to vote for?* (Ask for help from a parent or guardian; listen to the commercials on TV or the radio; etc.)
- ★ *Where will you go to mark a Kids Voting ballot?*

MORE!

Encourage your students to take their ballots home and discuss the candidates and issues with their families.

VOTE QUOTE

“If a nation expects to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization, it expects what was never meant to be.” – Thomas Jefferson



PENCIL FLAGS

(20-30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students advocate voting.

MATERIALS

Pencil Flag Format handout; old newspapers and magazines (optional); scissors, tape, and glue

GET READY

- ✓ Copy and cut a *Pencil Flag Format* for each student.
- ✓ Gather old newspapers and magazines (optional).
- ✓ Gather scissors, tape, and glue.
- ✓ Write the word *VOTE* on the board.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Tell your students that they can help our country by reminding others to vote. Explain that this project will help them remind others.
- ✓ Instruct your students to find and cut the letters *V*, *O*, *T*, and *E* from magazines and newspapers (or use the letters on the format).
- ✓ Help them paste the letters on the flag format. They can then add designs and color.
- ✓ Help them tape/fasten the flags to their pencils.
- ✓ Have your students use the flags at school for a few days, then tell them to take them home to remind adults to vote. They could stick the pencil flags in a plant or flower arrangement (with permission) or just use them as pencils.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *When is election day?*
- ★ *What word is on your flag?*
- ★ *Why should we vote?*
- ★ *Who can you remind to vote with your pencil flag?*
- ★ *Who can you remind to take you to vote?*

MORE!

As a grade level or whole school project, have classes make flags large enough to be read from the street and hang them in front of the school to remind the community to vote.



PENCIL FLAG FORMAT

		☆ _____ ☆	V	O
			T	E
		☆ _____ ☆	V	O
			T	E
		☆ _____ ☆	V	O
			T	E



MARKING THE WINNERS

(5-10 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students monitor the returns to stay politically active.

MATERIALS

Kids Voting Ballot

GET READY

- ✓ Prepare monitoring ballots by writing the following on a sample *Kids Voting Ballot*:
Place a check by the candidate or issue that is ahead at your bedtime. Circle the candidate or issue that has won or is ahead just before you leave for school.
- ✓ Make a copy of the monitoring ballot for each student.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Read the instructions you wrote on the ballot to the students.
- ✓ Instruct the students to take their monitoring ballots home and watch the returns on TV.
- ✓ Ask them to bring their ballots back the next day.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

For election day:

- ★ *Which candidates/issues do you think will win?*
- ★ *How might you feel if a person you voted for does not win?*
- ★ *What can you do if a person you voted for does not win?*

For the day after elections:

- ★ *Who won? Who is the leader of our (country, state, city, school board, etc.)?*
- ★ *Why do you think they won?*
- ★ *How can we support our leaders?*
- ★ *Do you have any sad or happy feelings?*
- ★ *Did the people at your house talk about the elections? Would you like to share what they said?*
- ★ *Now that we have voted, how else can we help our country?*

MORE!

As a class, write a letter of congratulations to a winning candidate or a letter of consolation to a losing candidate. Let all the students sign their names. Send it by e-mail if possible.



THE WISH TREE

(30-45 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students make wishes for their country regarding changes they would like to see.

MATERIALS

Star Cards handout; art supplies (crayons, markers, etc.); yarn; a hole puncher; scissors

GET READY

- ✓ Find a large, bare branch and place it in a pot filled with pebbles, or design a large tree out of paper on the bulletin board. (Alternatively find a bare tree outside for this activity.)
- ✓ Copy and cut apart a star card for each student.
- ✓ Gather: one 8-inch-long piece of string or yarn for each student; crayons, markers, or colored pencils; scissors; and a hole puncher.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Instruct your students to cut out the star card, fold it in half, and color or decorate the cover.
- ✓ As they are working, ask them to think of a wish they would like to come true for our country. For example: I wish we could lower crime rates.
- ✓ Help them draw or write their wish on the inside of the card and sign their names.
- ✓ Help them punch a hole in the corner and tie string through the hole.
- ✓ Hold a ceremony so the students can tie their cards to the tree. They may read or describe their wishes as they place them on the tree or students may discover the wishes on their own at a later time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS


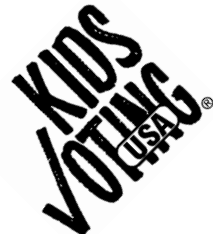


- ★ *Can wishes come true?*
- ★ *How can our wishes for our country come true?*
- ★ *Is there anything a young person can do to help these wishes come true?*
- ★ *Does this Kids Voting activity count as helping? If so, why?*
- ★ *If we practice self-discipline and patience in our classroom, might that help?*
- ★ *Can you think of anyone who had a wish or a dream for our country and made it come true? Tell us about it.*

MORE!

Brainstorm and vote on a wish for our country that your class can make come true, such as a cleaner school or park. Work together to make it happen!



STAR CARDS

	<p><i>“How lovely to think that no one need wait a moment. We can start slowly changing the world. How lovely that everyone great and small can make a contribution.”</i> – Anne Frank</p> 
	<p><i>“How lovely to think that no one need wait a moment. We can start slowly changing the world. How lovely that everyone great and small can make a contribution.”</i> – Anne Frank</p> 



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

MY VOTE GIVES ME POWER

- ★ What is a vote?
- ★ What does voting do?
- ★ Does voting make a difference? How?
- ★ What is an election?
- ★ What is the purpose of an election?
- ★ What power does voting have?

I STUDY THE CANDIDATES AND ISSUES

- ★ What does it mean to study something?
- ★ What is a candidate?
- ★ What does a candidate hope to do?
- ★ 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?

I REGISTER AND VOTE

- ★ What does it mean to register?
- ★ What do you think you do when you register?
- ★ Why is it important to register?
- ★ Do you need to register before you vote?
- ★ Why is it important to vote?
- ★ What do you accomplish when you register and vote?

I CONTINUE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- ★ What does it mean to make a difference?
- ★ Does voting make a difference?
- ★ What else can you do to make a difference?
- ★ Do candidates make promises? Can you give me an example?
- ★ Do all candidates keep the promises they make 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?



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

Duck For President by Doreen Cronin

OBJECTIVE

Students investigate elections and the voting experience.

MATERIALS

Duck For President - Doreen Cronin

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

- ✓ Have your students start thinking about the story *Duck For President* before you start reading it. Tell your class that they will be constructing a story similar to the one they are about to read by each contributing a sentence.
- ✓ Say, *Today we will be reading a story about a duck that runs for president. Let's make some guesses about what might happen by making up a similar story of our own. I will start with the first sentence and then everyone else will contribute a sentence.*
- ✓ Say, *There once was a duck that lived on a farm that ran for president...*
- ✓ Have each student contribute a sentence to the story.
- ✓ After your class creates their own story, read the book and point out any connections the story has to the one your class made up.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Why did Duck first run to be in charge of the farm? To be governor? To then be president?*
- ★ *How did Duck win those elections?*

- ★ *What does it mean to campaign? What is an election? What does it mean to register and vote?*
- ★ *Why did Duck head back to the farm in the end?*
- ★ *Why is voting important? What does it accomplish?*

ACTIVITY

- ✓ Invite your students to be creative about the story by asking them to imagine one of the speeches Duck gave.
- ✓ Say, *Twice in the story Duck gave speeches that only other ducks could understand. What do you think Duck was saying in these speeches?*
- ✓ Ask your students to deliver speeches of their own to the class. Tell them they need to include the words "Vote" and "Election" in their speech and they should list the promises Duck would have made to the other ducks. Encourage your students to be creative.
- ✓ Break up your students into groups of two so they can practice their speeches and help each other perfect them.
- ✓ Invite students to share their speeches with the class. Your class should respectfully quack when each person is done delivering his/her speech.



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 on how they plan to continue to make a difference in their community.

MATERIALS

Election materials supplied by your Kids Voting USA affiliate

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *How did it make you feel when you voted?*
- ★ *Does voting give you power? How?*
- ★ *How do you think it 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?*

GET READY

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

KIDS VOTING USA

K-2

**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?

Pinwheels 2
 Who’s The Leader? 4

CONCEPT 2: DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA

The President’s Hats 5
 If I Were... 9
 What’s For Kids? 11

CONCEPT 3: A CITIZEN’S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Car-Car 12
 “I Can Vote” Song 13

CONCEPT 4: DEMOCRACY IN THE WORLD

Friends Afar 15
 Democracy In The Print 16



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

Questions for Concept 1: What is Democracy? 17
 Questions for Concept 2: Democracy in America 17
 Questions for Concept 3: A Citizen’s Rights and Responsibilities 17
 Questions for Concept 4: Democracy in the World 17



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

D is for Democracy: A Citizen’s Alphabet by Elisa Grodin 18



CULMINATING ACTIVITY

Democracy And Me 19

**PINWHEELS**

(20-30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students discuss how a democracy is powered by the people that participate in it.

MATERIALS

Pinwheels Pattern handout; fasteners, hole punchers, scissors, crayons/markers; plastic straws

GET READY

- ✓ Copy a pinwheel pattern for each student.
- ✓ Set out fasteners for each student.
- ✓ Gather a hole puncher, scissors, and crayons or markers.
- ✓ Buy plastic straws, flatten them at one end, and punch a hole to use them for stems.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Instruct your students to decorate their pinwheels as they wish. Then tell them to cut on the heavy lines of the pattern and fold on the lines as indicated.
- ✓ Help them stick the fasteners through the pinwheels and the stems. Be sure they keep the fasteners loose enough so the pinwheels will turn.
- ✓ Ask your students to hold the pinwheels still (without blowing on them) to see if they turn.
- ✓ Then ask them to power the pinwheels by blowing on them.
- ✓ Suggest to your class that the pinwheels and our government are alike in that they both need a source of power.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

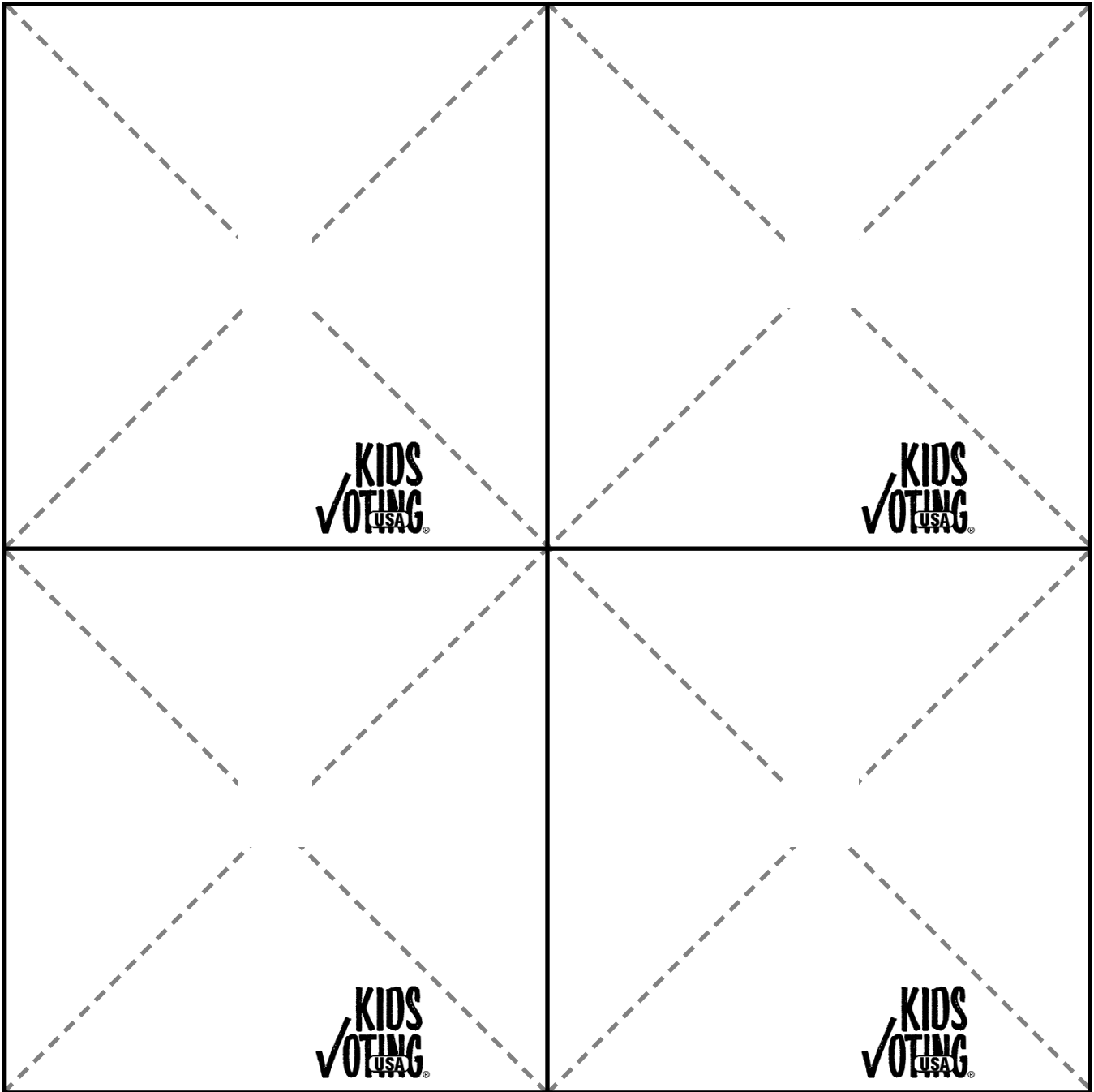
- ★ *Did the pinwheels turn without your power?*
- ★ *Does the government work without our power?*
- ★ *We power the pinwheels with our breath. How do we power our government? (With our vote, by running or helping someone else run for office, writing letters, serving on committees, paying our taxes, etc.)*

MORE!

Use fluorescent crayons and a black light on the pinwheels. Also, have your students vote on an issue that can be implemented quickly so they can feel the power their vote gives them. Possible issues might be room arrangement, recess game, a class assignment, etc.



PINWHEELS PATTERN





WHO'S THE LEADER?

(15-20 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students identify leaders that direct or guide us.

MATERIALS

No materials are necessary for this activity.

GET READY

- ✓ Say to your students, *Before I became a teacher, I studied so I could better help you learn. In a democracy, our leaders study the problems of our country so they can help us solve them.*
- ✓ Say, *In democracies we have leaders who make decisions. They are allowed to make these decisions, however, only because we gave them the permission.*
- ✓ Say, *We are going to play a game about leadership.*

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Have your students stand in a circle.
- ✓ Have one student volunteer to briefly stand outside the room (so they don't know what the class is doing).
- ✓ Select another student to be the leader.
- ✓ Tell the leader to make motions such as moving hands, tapping feet, nodding head, etc.
- ✓ Instruct the other students to do whatever the leader does. Call the volunteer student back in the room.
- ✓ Ask the volunteer student to stand in the center of the circle, attentively watch his/her classmates, and try to identify the leader. When the student discovers the leader, start the game over with two new students.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What was the leader's role in this game?*
- ★ *What do the leaders of our community, our state, and our country do?*
- ★ *Can you name some leaders in your home, school, or community?*
- ★ *Were you ever a leader before you played this game?*
- ★ *Have you ever followed a leader?*
- ★ *Are there certain ways leaders should act? What makes a good leader?*

VOTE QUOTE

"The whole of government consists in the art of being honest." – Thomas Jefferson



THE PRESIDENT'S HATS

(20 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students examine the jobs of the president to discuss components of American democracy.

MATERIALS

The Hat Patterns handout; *The President's Work* handout; small boxes

GET READY

- ✓ Copy and cut apart *The Hat Patterns* handout. Place each hat on the front of an open box.
- ✓ Divide your class into groups of three.
- ✓ Copy and cut apart a set of *The President's Work* cards for each group of three.
- ✓ Read "The Office of President" in the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Prepare your class for the activity with a discussion about the powers and duties of the president and define any words that might be new to them. Specifically, go over what the job titles mean: head of state, chief diplomat, etc.
- ✓ Give each group a set of cards.
- ✓ Instruct each group to discuss each card, decide which responsibility goes to which hat/job, and place the cards in the correct hat box.
- ✓ When all the cards are in the hat boxes, tell your students that they are going to see what everyone else thought.
- ✓ Invite students to draw the cards out of the boxes.
- ✓ You can keep track by posting them on the board or by taping them to the front of the boxes.

- ✓ Go over which duties belonged to each job:

Answers:

- ✓ Head of State: Officially visits other countries
- ✓ Chief Diplomat: Helps settle problems among other countries
- ✓ Chief Executive: Carries out laws
- ✓ Commander-in-Chief: Defends country during war
- ✓ Party Chief: Heads political party

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

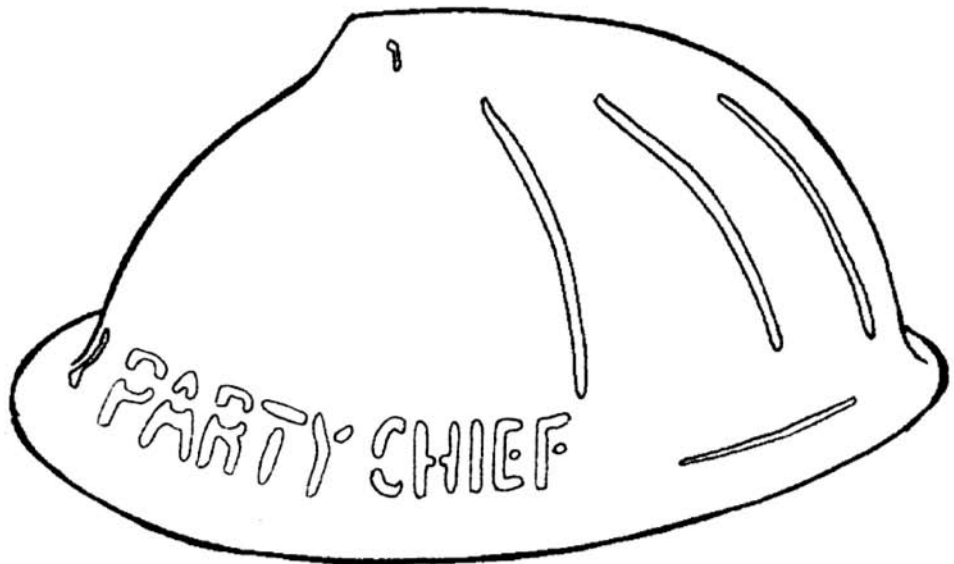
- ★ *What do you think is the most important job of the president? Why?*
- ★ *Which hat would you like to wear? Why?*
- ★ *Which hat would you not like to wear? Why?*
- ★ *What characteristics do you think a president should have?*

MORE!

Develop a similar activity for the governor or mayor.



THE HAT PATTERNS





THE HAT PATTERNS





THE PRESIDENT'S WORK

HEADS POLITICAL PARTY

HELPS SETTLE PROBLEMS
AMONG OTHER NATIONS

CARRIES OUT LAWS

DEFENDS THE COUNTRY
DURING WAR

OFFICIALLY VISITS
OTHER COUNTRIES

**IF I WERE...**

(20 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

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

MATERIALS

If I Were... handout; additional lined paper; scissors, glue

GET READY

- ✓ Copy an *If I Were...* handout for each student. If possible, use colored paper.
- ✓ Have additional paper available for students to write on.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Ask, *In America can our leaders do whatever they want?* Listen to student responses.
- ✓ Next, ask, *What types of leaders do we have in America?* (president, vice president, governor, senator, etc.) *What are the jobs of these leaders?*
- ✓ Tell your students to imagine they were just elected to office. Ask, *What office would you want to hold?* *Governor? Senator? Mayor? President?*
- ✓ Provide each student with an *If I Were...* handout. Tell them to use this handout to brainstorm ideas of what they would do if elected to office.
- ✓ Allow your students to write their ideas on the handout. You can have the students work with each other to come up with ideas.

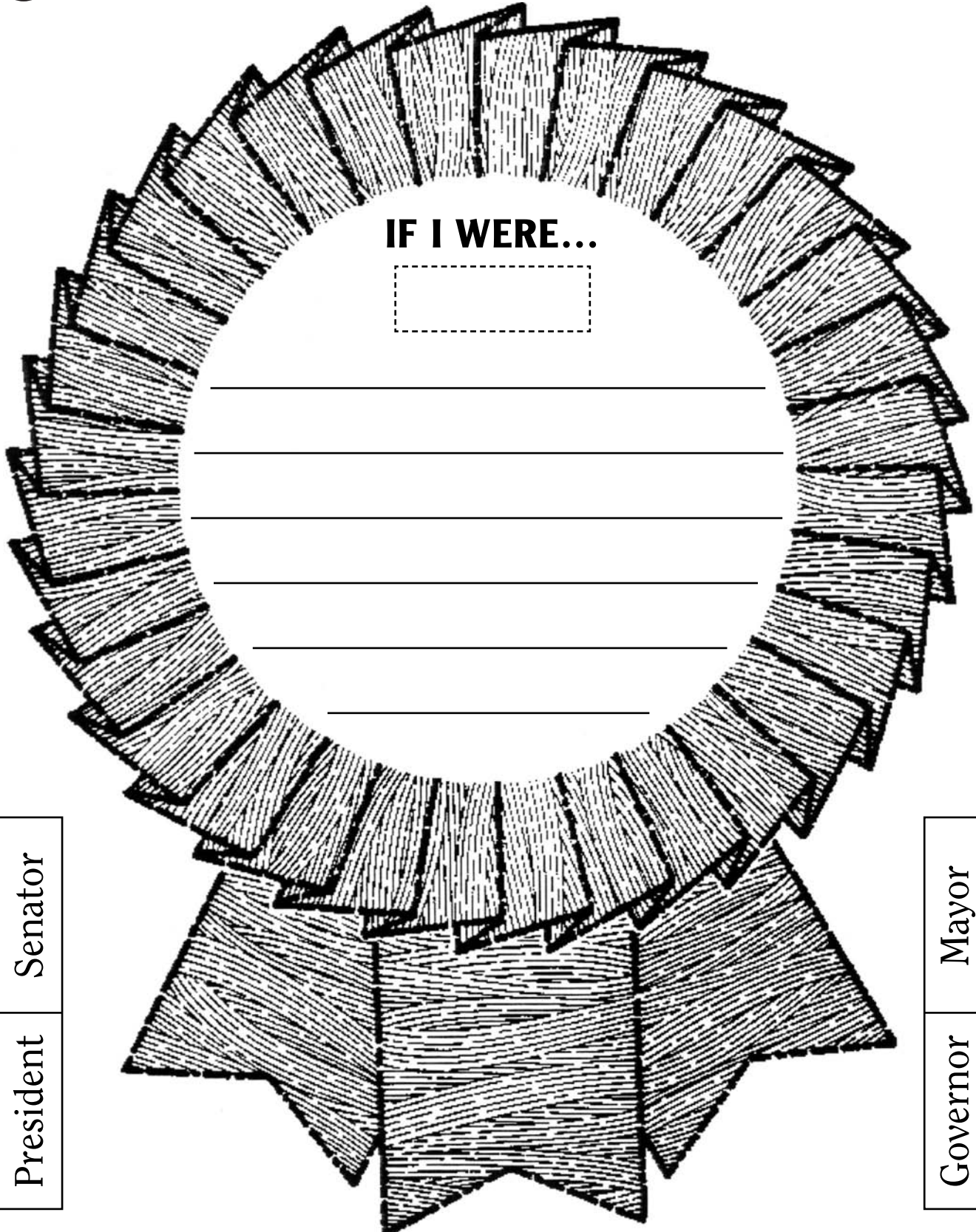
- ✓ Students can additionally cut out the position they want from the handout and either glue or tape it to what they write (see handout).
- ✓ Allow students to share their work.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What were some of the best ideas that we heard?*
- ★ *Did the ideas sound like they would be good for everyone? (Remember, leaders need to do their best for everyone.)*
- ★ *Think about the office you wrote about. Can you name a power this leader has?*
- ★ *Could you actually become this leader? What could you do to become a good leader?*



IF I WERE...



President
Senator

Governor
Mayor

**WHAT'S FOR KIDS?**

(20 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students investigate the services provided directly to children by their government.

MATERIALS

Telephone book; drawing paper, markers, crayons

GET READY

- ✓ Consult the telephone book's government pages to write down the names of programs in your town which provide services directly for children: Parks and Recreation, Pools, Museums, Libraries, Bicycle Registration, etc. Post these on your board.
- ✓ Gather sheets of paper, crayons, and markers.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Say, *In America, our government plans and organizes activities and services for the children in our communities.*
- ✓ Point out to your students that they take advantage of city services in many ways. Ask, *Who has a library card? Who plays in the park? Who is part of a soccer league?, etc.*
- ✓ Ask each student to choose a city service he/she likes to use and to draw a picture of him/her using the service. (Examples: swimming in the city pool, reading books at the library, visiting the children's museum, etc.)
- ✓ Instruct your students to share their drawings with each other.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Did any two or three people choose the same city service?*
- ★ *How does the town pay for the swimming pool, library, soccer field, etc.?*
- ★ *How does voting affect city services for kids?*

MORE!

Invite the director of parks and recreation or the museum or library director to speak to your class about programs for children.

Thanks to former Tempe, Arizona Mayor Neil Giuliano for assistance with this lesson.

**CAR-CAR**

(15 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students practice being responsible and articulate their responsibility to vote.

MATERIALS

No materials are necessary for this activity.

GET READY

- ✓ Arrange to work in a room with a large open space.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Explain to your students that they are going to play a game in which they need to be responsible.
- ✓ Help your students pair off and decide who will be the drivers and who will be the cars.
- ✓ Ask the drivers to stand behind the cars with their hands on the cars' shoulders.
- ✓ Have the cars shut their eyes.
- ✓ Tell the drivers to steer their cars by pulling gently, with their hands, on the cars' shoulders.
- ✓ Instruct the drivers to begin when you say "green light" and to stop when you say "red light."
- ✓ Play for a few minutes, and then have the pairs change positions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What does it mean to be responsible?*
- ★ *What were the drivers responsible for?*
- ★ *What were the cars responsible for?*
- ★ *What happened if one person was not responsible?*
- ★ *Why should people be responsible to vote?*
- ★ *Why should people be responsible in everything they do?*
- ★ *What can happen if people are not responsible?*

MORE!

Suggest to your students that they play this game and talk about responsibility with those at home.

VOTE QUOTE

"Politics is just another word for your future."
– Unknown

**“I CAN VOTE” SONG**

(15 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students recognize that voting is a right and privilege that makes a difference.

MATERIALS

“I Can Vote” Song handout

GET READY

- ✓ Either learn the song yourself or find someone to teach it to your class.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Teach your class the song.
- ✓ Use it in a program with hand movement and marching.
- ✓ Help your students make red, white, and blue decorations.
- ✓ Have your students wear red, white, and blue.
- ✓ Have your class perform for their parents/guardians or for the school.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What makes America a special place to live?*
- ★ *Does one vote make a difference? Why?*
- ★ *Can kids make our country better? How?*



"I CAN VOTE" SONG

I Can Vote

Brightly

Words & Music by
Cathy P. Shepherd

Optional descant I can vote. I'll make a diff - 'rence

1. I am young and I'm learn - ing a - bout the world I see, I am
2. I am one, just one per - son but one and one make two. You will

with my vote, you'll see the diff - 'rence. I am

us - ing my know - ledge to make a bet - ter me. I can help keep my coun - try free
see what a diff - 'rence that one or two can do. When you mul - ti - ply peo - ple the

young but I can vote.

keep its lib - er - ty. I will stand for the right and vote wise and care - ful - ly.
won - ders nev - er cease, As we build for the fu - ture, work - ing to keep our peace.

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1558 W. 1st St., Mesa, Arizona (602) 962-4759

**FRIENDS AFAR**

(Time varies)

OBJECTIVE

The class contacts students overseas to learn about a different country.

MATERIALS

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

GET READY

Arrange for a pen pal from another country to exchange information about their country.

- ✓ Write to: World Wise Schools
990 K Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20526.
- ✓ Look for pen pal opportunities on the Internet. A good Web site to visit is www.stonesoup.com/main2/penpal.html.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ As a class, correspond with a class from another county.
- ✓ Have your students brainstorm some questions/ideas that they want to include in their letters.
- ✓ Encourage your students to ask questions: *How is your country different from the United States? Do you know people who vote? How old do you have to be to vote? What is the name of your current leader?*
- ✓ Continue to correspond with this class throughout the school year.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *How is our government similar to other countries' governments?*
- ★ *How is it different?*
- ★ *What did you learn that you liked most about the other country?*
- ★ *Were there any things you did not like?*



DEMOCRACY IN THE PRINT

(30-40 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students explore aspects of another democracy.

MATERIALS

Newspapers, magazines, periodicals; scissors

GET READY

- ✓ Tell your students that there are other democracies in the world besides the United States. In fact, there are many countries where people have the right to vote.
- ✓ Inform your class that they are going to learn about another democratic country.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Tell your class they are going to collect information on another democratic country.
- ✓ Have your students vote to decide what country they want to learn about. Provide some ideas if necessary: France, Australia, etc.
- ✓ Once the class has chosen a country, start collecting magazines and newspapers that contain articles and pictures about the country. If at all possible, find articles that are written for children.
- ✓ Dedicate a bulletin board in the classroom to the articles and pictures.
- ✓ Bring these magazines and newspapers into school and show your students how you found the articles. Show them how you cut them out and attached them to the bulletin board.

- ✓ Read aloud what some of the articles say and explain what some of the pictures show. Make connections between the country the class selected and America — explain how the country is a democracy.
- ✓ Encourage your students to bring in any materials they can find on the country. They may want to ask their parents/guardians for help finding these items.
- ✓ Give your students time to make a contribution (it may take some time for them to find appropriate/related material). Announce intermittently any updates to the bulletin board.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What makes the country we learned about a democracy?*
- ★ *How is this country like the United States?*
- ★ *How is this country different than the United States?*



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

- ★ Have you heard the word “democracy” before? Where and when?
- ★ Do you know what a government is?
- ★ Who has the power in a democracy? The leader or the people he/she leads?
- ★ How are decisions made in a democracy?
- ★ Sometimes people don’t agree with the decisions that are made. Should everyone still have to stand by those decisions? Why or why not?
- ★ 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

- ★ Who makes the decisions in America?
- ★ What do adults do to contribute to our country?
- ★ What does our government do for us?
- ★ How do you support your country?
- ★ What can you do to make our country better?
- ★ What types of people make good leaders? Good presidents?
- ★ What do you think is the best thing about living in America?

A CITIZEN’S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- ★ Do you know what it means to be responsible?
- ★ How are you responsible? Give me an example.
- ★ What does having a right mean?
- ★ Can you think of an example of a right?
- ★ What do you think the freedom of speech is?
- ★ What does the word “freedom” mean to you?
- ★ Do you think kids have enough rights?

DEMOCRACY IN THE WORLD

- ★ Can you tell me the names of some other countries?
- ★ Do you think all countries are the same?
- ★ What do you think are some differences between countries?
- ★ Can you give a reason why many countries have become democracies?
- ★ Why do you think so many people from other countries want to live in America?

**LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY***D is for Democracy: A Citizen's Alphabet* by Elisa Grodin, Illustrated by Victor Juhasz**OBJECTIVE**

Students understand the concept of democracy and how it applies to America.

MATERIALS

D is for Democracy: A Citizen's Alphabet -
Elisa Grodin

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

- ✓ Tell your students that they will be learning about democracy. Explain that a democracy is a government where all citizens have a voice.
- ✓ Let your students know that each letter of the alphabet is represented in this book by a word that has something to do with democracy. For example, *W* is for *George Washington*.
- ✓ Have your students guess what the different letters stand for. Don't reveal what they actually stand for until someone guesses correctly. Remind your students that all their guesses need to be about democracy in America.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What do you think were some of the most important words discussed in the book? Why do you think those words are so important?*
- ★ *How would you describe a democracy?*
- ★ *How is America a democracy?*
- ★ *What can you do to make sure your voice is heard?*
- ★ *The last pages of the book say, "We Want You To Get Involved?" Involved in what? What do they mean?*

ACTIVITY

- ✓ Play a memory game with your students. After reading them the book (you may want to read it for a second time before you play), ask your students to recall each page's key word.
- ✓ Go alphabetically through the book saying, *A was for... B was for...* letting your students finish the statements.
- ✓ Cover the key words on each page (so the students don't see it) and make sure you hold up the pictures for your students to see. The pictures on each page should jog their memories, but you can always give clues such as, No "D" is not for dog, "D" is for our type of government.
- ✓ Keep the book available in your classroom and encourage your students to look at it when they get a chance.
- ✓ Consider playing the memory game again after some time has passed.



CULMINATING ACTIVITY: DEMOCRACY AND ME

(45 minutes in class, additional time out of class)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn the characteristics of a democratic society and how they can improve where they live.

MATERIALS

Ways I Can Participate in Our Democracy handout

GET READY

- ✓ Copy the *Ways I Can Participate in Our Democracy* handout so you have a copy for each student or make a transparency of it for an overhead projector.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Ask students, *How many have heard of the word “democracy”? Does anyone know what it means? What other words do you think of when you hear “democracy”?* List your students’ ideas on the board.
- ✓ Read to your students the following definition: *A democracy is a society where the people are involved in making many of the decisions about what happens.*
- ✓ Ask students, *How do people in the United States help make decisions about the government, schools, laws, and other important aspects of our lives?* (Possible answers include attending public meetings, writing letters to public officials, running for public office, and serving on a local board. If students do not mention voting, make sure to tell them that it’s one of the major ways citizens help make decisions).

- ✓ Ask students, *Is democracy just for grown-ups? Does it have anything to do with kids?* Accept all responses. Then ask, *How many of you ride a bike? Wear pajamas? Use a local park? Drink water? Breathe the air?* Explain to your students that the laws made by our local, state, and federal governments determine what is acceptable and what isn’t with these and many other situations. The government affects most of our everyday activities, including the fact that students are required, at this moment, to be in school!
- ✓ Use the *Ways I Can Participate in Our Democracy* handout on an overhead projector and ask students to identify the things that kids can do to participate in our democracy. Have a discussion with the class after completing the handout. Are your students surprised that they can contribute to our democracy in so many ways? While elementary school students are not old enough to vote, they can still influence how adults vote and otherwise contribute to improving society. (Instead of using an overhead projector, you can copy the handout for individuals or groups, depending on their reading abilities.)
- ✓ After completing the handout, ask your students to choose a class activity. (Have your students vote by ballot or by a show of hands.) The class should come up with a plan to carry out one of the ideas on the handout: recycling, donating food, etc.
- ✓ The class should carry out this plan and document it with photos and writings. The class can create a bulletin board showcasing the work they did.

**CULMINATING ACTIVITY: DEMOCRACY AND ME** (continued)**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- ★ *What is a democracy?*
- ★ *Can anyone share how they participate in our democracy?*
- ★ *Do you think we made a difference in our community? How?*
- ★ *Do you think it is our responsibility to help our community? Why?*
- ★ *What other ways will you be able to participate in our democracy when you are an adult?*



WAYS I CAN PARTICIPATE IN OUR DEMOCRACY

Directions: Circle the ideas listed below that are ways kids can help their community.

Picking up trash

Writing to an elected official

Following the laws

Voting in public elections

Listening to or reading the news

Donating money

Attending a public meeting

Talking to an adult about voting

Visiting someone who is lonely

Writing a letter to a newspaper

Talking to friends about a
community problem

Calling the mayor about a
community problem

Speaking at a public meeting

Distributing flyers

Raising money for a good cause
in the community

Making get well cards for
children in the hospital

Volunteering at a nursing home

Creating artwork that teaches

Donating food or clothing

Recycling

Can you think of any other ways kids can participate in democracy?

Write them here...

KIDS VOTING USA

K-2

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

I Heard, I Think, I Know... 2
 Making Inferences 3
 It’s News To Me 4

CONCEPT 2: COMMUNICATING YOUR POSITION

Robots 5
 Spokespeople For Kids Voting USA 6

CONCEPT 3: WORKING TOGETHER

Zoo Animal Cages 7
 Two On A Crayon 8
 Match Community Helpers 9

CONCEPT 4: HAVING AN IMPACT

If Elected... 12
 Postcards 14
 Targeting Problems In My Community 15



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

Questions for Concept 1: Gathering and Weighing Information 16
 Questions for Concept 2: Communicating Your Position 16
 Questions for Concept 3: Working Together 16
 Questions for Concept 4: Having an Impact 16



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

Miss Rumphius by Barbara Cooney 17



CULMINATING ACTIVITY

What’s The Problem? 18

**I HEARD, I THINK, I KNOW...**

(30-45 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn how to form opinions and make good decisions.

MATERIALS

Magazines, books, newspapers, and/or access to the Internet

GET READY

- ✓ If your classroom is not equipped with the Internet, find a classroom/resource room that is.
- ✓ Make sure you have access to varied forms of media: newspapers, books, etc.

INSTRUCTIONS**Setting Up the Research**

- ✓ Tell students that a good decision is well thought out and based on information from many sources. Say, *Good decisions are based on information. What are good sources of information?* (Newspapers, the Internet, books, magazines, etc.) *These are great places for finding information on anything we want.*
- ✓ Ask students to brainstorm an issue or topic that impacts their lives and that they would like to know more about, i.e. the environment, education, etc. Tell them they can be specific: rainforest destruction, seat belts on school buses, etc.
- ✓ Vote to determine a subject for the class to research.

Conducting the Research

- ✓ Conduct research on the subject the class selects. Research the topic using: books, Internet sites, magazines, videos, etc.
- ✓ Share the research in its many forms with your students.
- ✓ Say, *Now that we have learned about _____, does anyone want to share how they feel about it (share an opinion)?*
- ✓ Listen to responses and encourage students to explain why they feel the way they do (prompt them to mention the research sources).
- ✓ In the case of an election, ask students to share why they made the decisions they have made.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *How do we make good decisions?*
- ★ *Why do you think it is important to gather information from many different places?*
- ★ *Can you believe everything you hear and see? Why or why not?*

MORE!

Encourage students to bring in information on the subject as they see it in newspapers, etc. Create a bulletin board to document the information as it comes in.



MAKING INFERENCES

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn to make inferences from the information they are presented with.

MATERIALS

No materials are necessary for this activity.

GET READY

- ✓ Tell the class that you can learn a lot about a situation by the decisions people make and the actions they take.
- ✓ Tell the class that it is important to be aware of people's actions, especially those of our elected officials. Give the example of a politician who makes lots of promises to get elected but never delivers on them. In this case, actions speak louder than words.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Tell students that they are going to play a game similar to Charades. Explain the concept of Charades if they are not familiar with it. (*Charades is a game played with teams. An individual from one team "acts out" a phrase without speaking while their teammates try to guess what the phrase is. The objective is for your team to guess the phrase as quickly as possible.*)
- ✓ Tell students that some of them will act things out in front of the class without talking. The rest of the class will try to guess what the student is acting out.
- ✓ Choose student volunteers and give them specific actions to perform in front of the class. Choose actions that lead to rational conclusions, such as yawning = being tired.

- ✓ Give the students hints if they need help performing their assigned actions.
- ✓ Give each student about twenty seconds to act, and then have the class guess their action.
- ✓ Some other ideas for actions are:
smiling = being happy, shivering = being cold, wiping forehead = being hot, and so on.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *How were you able to make correct guesses when everyone was acting silently?*
- ★ *Why is it important to look not only at what people say but also what they do?*
- ★ *Should you base your opinions on actions alone? Is that a smart decision, or is it better to pay attention to both what a person says and what they do?*
- ★ Give an example of a decision you made recently. Say, *What can you tell by the decision I made?*

MORE!

Have students come up with their own ideas to act out silently and have the class continue to guess what they are.



IT'S NEWS TO ME

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn how to distinguish the different parts of a newspaper.

MATERIALS

Two copies of a local or national newspaper

GET READY

- ✓ Obtain two copies of a local or national newspaper.
- ✓ Leave one newspaper intact and prepare to cut the other.
- ✓ Identify a few articles or advertisements from the newspaper you have selected to cut; you are trying to find examples of the different components of a newspaper. For example, locate and cut out an article from the sports section, an article from the news section, and also an advertisement.
- ✓ Photocopy these articles so that you have multiple sets of them. (You will be breaking your class up into groups of three or four so make sure to have a set of articles for each group.)
- ✓ Make labels for the different newspaper clippings. (For example, have one label say *Sports Article*, another *Advertisement*, and one *News Article*.) Make sure you have a set of labels for each group of students as well.
- ✓ If possible, laminate the labels and articles and/or advertisements.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Have a discussion with your class about newspapers. Explain to your students why people read them. Also make sure you describe various newspaper components: advertisements, sports articles, news articles (local, national and international), travel articles, cooking articles, and so on.
- ✓ Using the newspaper you left intact, show your class an example for each section you discuss. For example, say, *This is an advertisement because it's about a product that's on sale. This is a sports article because it's about a baseball game.*
- ✓ Break your class up into small groups of three or four. Give each group the set of articles/advertisements you laminated as well as the labels.
- ✓ Have the groups figure out which article or advertisement fits which label.
- ✓ Go over the correct answers with your class and ask the groups to provide explanations for how they matched the clippings and labels.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What did you learn about a newspaper that you didn't know before?*
- ★ *Why is it important to understand what the different parts of a newspaper mean?*
- ★ *Why do we have newspapers?*

**ROBOTS**

(20 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn to communicate effectively with another person.

MATERIALS

No materials are necessary for this activity.

GET READY

- ✓ Tell the class that they are going to play a game that involves good communication.
- ✓ Inform the class that this activity will involve them moving around, but there will be no running.
- ✓ Arrange for as large a space as possible.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Help your students divide into pairs. Designate one student in each pair to be the robot and the other student to be the robot operator.
- ✓ Tell the robots that they will be moving around the room with their eyes closed. They will be directed by their operator and may only go in a straight line until their direction is changed by their partner.
- ✓ Tell the robot operators that they can give directions to the robots, but cannot touch them. For example, they can say, *Go slower, Turn left, Turn right, Turn around*, etc.
- ✓ Tell the robots that they should walk in place if they hit an obstacle or another robot. They should wait for directions from their operator before moving again.
- ✓ Give the pairs about 60 seconds to wander the room/space as described.
- ✓ Ring a bell or blow a whistle to stop all robot action. Have the robots tell the operators one thing they did well and one thing they could

do better next time. Then have the operators do the same thing, and tell the robots one thing they did well and one thing they could do better next time.

- ✓ Have your students try their roles again for an additional 60 seconds.
- ✓ Have the pairs discuss what worked better the second time.
- ✓ Next, have them swap roles: the operators take a turn at being the robot and the robots take a turn at being the operator.
- ✓ Repeat the sequence one more time as described above.
- ✓ Finally, ask the pairs to talk about what made a good robot and a good robot operator. After a few minutes, open up the discussion to the whole class.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *How did it feel to be the robot operator? Was it hard to communicate with the robots? What made a good operator in this game?*
- ★ *How did it feel to be a robot? Was it hard to take directions from the operator? What made a good robot in this game?*
- ★ *In real life, have you ever felt anything similar to this game? When was that? Why was it similar?*
- ★ *What are some characteristics of good communication?*
- ★ *Was this game hard or easy? Why do you feel that way?*

MORE!

Suggest that the students play the game during recess and at home. Have them ask any adults at home what it means to be a good communicator.

**SPOKESPEOPLE FOR KIDS VOTING USA**

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students advocate voting throughout their school and community.

MATERIALS

Materials vary depending on how your students advocate voting.

GET READY

- ✓ Tell your class that they have the opportunity to be spokespeople for Kids Voting USA. Inform them that they will be able to share their knowledge about voting and democracy with the school.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Ask, *What messages do you want to share with the rest of the school? How can you share your passion for voting and democracy with other students? How can you influence other people to vote?*
- ✓ Students may come up with their own messages as well as how to disseminate them, but you can mention these ideas as a start:
 - ✓ Make posters that celebrate democracy.
 - ✓ Make signs to encourage classes and students to participate in the election.
 - ✓ Bring in daily information for an election bulletin board.
 - ✓ Visit classrooms encouraging students to vote.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What was the message you communicated to the school? How did you communicate this message (signs, posters, etc.)?*
- ★ *Was it hard to convince people to vote? If yes, what made it so hard?*
- ★ *How were you best able to communicate your message to the other students? Do you think you were effective in sharing your message?*



ZOO ANIMAL CAGES

(20 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn to cooperate while creating edible zoo animal cages.

MATERIALS

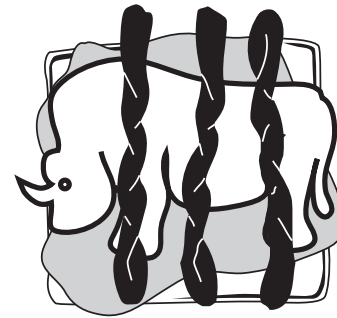
1 half of a graham cracker per child;
1 container (more depending on class size) of white frosting; 1 animal cracker per child; 3 licorice/Twizzler® pieces per child; plastic knives for spreading frosting

GET READY

- ✓ Split your students up into groups of four.
- ✓ Make sure there are enough graham crackers, white frosting, animal crackers, and licorice/Twizzler® pieces per child.
- ✓ Have each child wash their hands extremely well, as they will all be handling food.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Tell your students that they will be making treats they can eat, though they must work together in their groups to make it happen.
- ✓ Assign each student in each group to be in charge of one item for creating zoo animal cages. One child will receive all of the graham crackers, one will have the frosting, one will have the animal crackers, and the other will be in charge of the licorice/Twizzlers®.
- ✓ Model for your students how to create the zoo animal cages. First, lay a half of a graham cracker flat. Next, spread the frosting on a graham cracker. Then, place an animal cracker on top of the frosting. Finally, place three pieces of licorice or three Twizzlers® vertically along the graham cracker as the animal cage's bars.



- ✓ Give the groups a minute to discuss how they will build the zoo animal cages. They should determine that the student with the graham crackers needs to give everyone in their group a graham cracker. Then, they should determine that the person with frosting should next distribute a large clump of frosting on each graham cracker and that each group member should spread the frosting on their cracker with their plastic knife. They should determine that the person holding the animal crackers should then distribute them to his/her group members. Lastly, they should determine that the person with the licorice/Twizzlers® should give three pieces to each group member to complete the cages.
- ✓ Have your students build their zoo animal cage treats. Confirm that each group is working cooperatively.
- ✓ When the class has completed their zoo cages, have your students walk around the room to see the other groups' zoo animal cages.
- ✓ Finally, allow your students to eat their zoo animal cages.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What was the best part about making the zoo animal cages?*
- ★ *What was the most difficult part about making the zoo animal cages?*
- ★ *Was it hard working in a group to create your cages? Why or why not?*

**TWO ON A CRAYON**

(10-15 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn to cooperate and work together.

MATERIALS

Construction paper and drawing materials;
a music playing device

GET READY

- ✓ Help the students divide into pairs.
- ✓ Gather crayons and construction paper.
- ✓ Setup a music source for the activity.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Give each pair a crayon and a piece of white construction paper.
- ✓ Explain that both partners will hold the crayon simultaneously and draw a picture together while a three or four minute song is played in the background. Tell the students that pairs cannot decide what picture to draw before the activity nor can they talk while they draw. This exercise is about silent cooperation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Did you enjoy working together?*
- ★ *Was cooperating difficult? Why or why not?*
- ★ *Did the cooperation produce anything that surprised you?*
- ★ *How did you decide who would lead and who would follow?*
- ★ *Was it hard to lead? To follow? Do you think it is sometimes hard for adults in our country to be our leaders? How?*

MORE!

Now that the class is familiar with the activity, you can have them try the exercise again (same pairs or different).

From *Tribes, A New Way of Learning Together*, by Jeanne Gibbs, CenterSource, Santa Rosa, CA 95401



MATCH COMMUNITY HELPERS

(15-20 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students work together to match community helpers (policeman, bus driver, garbage man, etc.) to the tools they use to do their jobs (police badge, garbage can, school bus, etc.).

MATERIALS

Match Community Helpers handout (contains Helpers and Tools cards)

GET READY

- ✓ Duplicate the Helpers and Tools cards onto card stock.
- ✓ Cut the cards so that you have 10 Community Helper cards and 10 Tool cards.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Hold up each card and say aloud what the picture shows: “gavel,” “fire fighter,” etc. Have your students repeat after you.
- ✓ As you hold up and name the cards, ask the children what each worker does and how the tools are used: “What does a judge do?” “What do you do with the badge?”
- ✓ Hand one card to each student.
- ✓ Each child will seek the student with the card that matches his/hers.
- ✓ Encourage the children to talk out loud to each other about mismatches, as they look for their matches: “No, the bus driver doesn’t use the garbage can.”
- ✓ When all the matches are made, ask the pairs to show and explain their matches: “The fire fighter uses the fire hose to put out fires.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *You had to cooperate to match the cards. Was it difficult to work together?*
- ★ *How can you make the jobs of the community helpers easier? What can you do to help the bus driver? the garbage worker? the police officer? etc.*
- ★ *What do you do to be a community helper?*
- ★ *Is there anything else you can do to be a community helper?*

MORE!

Have your students look for pictures in the newspaper that show community helpers.



MATCH COMMUNITY HELPERS

MATCH COMMUNITY HELPERS

<p>CONSTRUCTION WORKER</p> 		<p>MAYOR</p> 	
<p>LIBRARIAN</p> 		<p>FIREMAN</p> 	
<p>BUS DRIVER</p> 		<p>DOCTOR</p> 	



MATCH COMMUNITY HELPERS

MATCH COMMUNITY HELPERS

<p>JUDGE</p> 		<p>SANITATION WORKER</p> 	
<p>POLICE OFFICER</p> 		<p>MAIL CARRIER</p> 	

**IF ELECTED...**

(20-30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students write a suggestion for their community on a “campaign button” which also acts as a reminder for parents and guardians to vote.

MATERIALS

If Elected... handout; tape; markers, colored pencils, crayons, etc.

GET READY

- ✓ Duplicate *If Elected...* Buttons.
- ✓ Gather colored pencils, marking pens, etc. for decorating the buttons.
- ✓ This activity works best close to an election, preferably a mayoral election, but it is not essential.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Say, *Let's pretend that each one of you is a candidate for mayor, and you need to do one important thing for our community. What would that be?* (Possible student responses: make the community cleaner, create more parks, support the police, and so on.)
- ✓ Tell students to write or draw their idea on the button handout. Remind your students to think of an improvement that would benefit the entire community. (Students can draw a picture of what they would do if they do not have a strong ability to write.)
- ✓ Give students time to color and cut out the buttons as well as to write their ideas. Make adhesive tape “hinges” to attach the buttons to their shirts.

- ✓ Have students share their suggestions with the class by forming an “Inside Outside Circle” to read each other’s ideas. (It also makes good reading practice.) Children form two concentric circles and turn to face each other. After reading the partners’ buttons, one circle moves clockwise to the next person and the new pairs read each others’ buttons. Proceed until perhaps five pairs have shared.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What were some of your suggestions? Who would benefit from these improvements?*
- ★ *Is there a way that you can help your suggestion come true? What can you do?*
- ★ *How might voting make your suggestions for our town a reality?*



IF ELECTED...

IF ELECTED...

CAMPAIGN BUTTON
<p>IF ELECTED...</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

**POSTCARDS**

(20 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students prepare postcards to send to their parents or guardians.

MATERIALS

Sheets of cardstock; crayons, markers, paper cutter, scissors

GET READY

- ✓ Prepare “postcards” by cutting sheets of cardstock in half on the paper cutter or with scissors.
- ✓ Gather crayons and markers.
- ✓ Bring in some stamps to show students how often political figures are used. (They may choose to draw a president on their own “stamps” too.)

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Say, *We receive reminders in the mail to visit the dentist or to meet at a restaurant for a birthday treat. Today, you are going to create a reminder about an upcoming election or an issue important to your family.*
- ✓ Have your students draw a picture and write a message about the election or issue on one side of their “postcard.” The message can be as simple as “Vote!” or “Recycle!” or they can write a longer message. Tell them to draw a stamp on the other side, to address it to the recipient of the postcard: “Mom” “Dad” “Tom” etc., and to sign or write their own name as well.
- ✓ Remind students to deliver their postcard when they get home.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What are other ways we can send reminders to adults? (Letter, e-mails)*
- ★ *How can we remind other students at our school to vote, recycle, etc.?*
- ★ *How are we helping our town if we deliver our cards and messages?*



TARGETING PROBLEMS IN MY COMMUNITY

(30-45 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

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

MATERIALS

No materials are necessary for this activity.

GET READY

- ✓ Arrange to have someone from the community come to your class and speak about local community needs and problems.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ For homework one night, ask students to talk to their parents/guardians about what they think are the most important community needs and/or problems. Have students share their findings with the class while you add them to a list on the board. Then have your students come up with any additional ideas to add to the board.
- ✓ The next day, have someone from the community come to your class to speak about local community needs and problems. This could be a public official such as the mayor or 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 your students to ask questions so they can learn how/why the problems originated and what they can do to help.

- ✓ Have each student select what they think is the most important problem. Have them consider:
 - a) What issue interested me the most?,
 - b) What issue matters the most to me, my neighborhood, and my community?
 - c) What could I do to help solve this problem?
- ✓ Have your students share their problems and solutions with the class. For example, if a student selects too much trash in the community as a problem, some solutions include recycling, encouraging others to not litter, and throwing away trash in parks and playgrounds.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What are some of our community's needs and problems?*
- ★ *When have you noticed some of these problems in our community?*
- ★ *What are some solutions to these problems? Why do you think these are good solutions?*
- ★ *What are some of the sources of these problems? How do you think they started?*
- ★ *What can we do as individuals to help prevent these problems?*
- ★ *What can we do as a class to help prevent these problems?*

MORE!

Have your students share things they do to address community problems. Encourage them to make class announcements when they do something to help the community.



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

GATHERING AND WEIGHING INFORMATION

- ★ Why is information important?
- ★ What are sources of information?
- ★ Is everything you hear true?
- ★ How do you decide if something is true?
- ★ What is a decision?
- ★ How do you make decisions?
- ★ What makes some decisions good and other ones bad?
- ★ Tell me about a decision you have made? Do you think it was a good decision, why or why not?

COMMUNICATING YOUR POSITION

- ★ Have you ever told anyone how you felt about something that was important to you?
- ★ Is it always easy to say how you feel?
- ★ What do you think is a good way to share an opinion with someone else?
- ★ Do people always agree with you?
- ★ What do you do when someone disagrees with you?
- ★ Do you know what it means to communicate?
- ★ What makes a good communicator?

WORKING TOGETHER

- ★ What does it mean to work well with others?
- ★ Is it always easy to work with others?
- ★ What can be difficult about working 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?
- ★ Are there any problems in your community?
- ★ Do you think adults are the only people that 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? If so, what do you think would be hard about it?
- ★ Was there a time you did something good for your community? Please tell me about it.

**LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY***Miss Rumphius* by Barbara Cooney**OBJECTIVE**

Students learn what it means to create positive change in their community.

MATERIALS

Miss Rumphius - Barbara Cooney

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

- ✓ Take your students on a “picture walk.” Turn from page to page through the book, asking your students what they see and what they think is happening in the story.
- ✓ After going through the book, have your students make predictions about the story’s plot. Ask, *What do you think this book is about? Who do you think the main character in the book is? Did you see anything that looked familiar? Did you see anything that looked confusing?*
- ✓ Read *Miss Rumphius* and make sure to reference the students’ predictions during and after reading it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Why do you think Alice’s grandfather told her that she needed to do something to make the world more beautiful?*
- ★ *Where did Miss Rumphius get the idea to spread flower seeds everywhere?*
- ★ *What difference did it make that Miss Rumphius had spread the seeds?*
- ★ *People called her crazy for spreading the seeds around town. How does that make you feel? Why?*
- ★ *Is it always easy to do good things? What can make it difficult?*

- ★ *Do you think the flowers will go away if Miss Rumphius does not continue to plant them? Who else could spread the seeds?*
- ★ *Think about Miss Rumphius. Can one person’s good intentions and actions make a difference?*
- ★ *What can you do to make your community a better place to live?*

ACTIVITY

- ✓ Have your students think of ways they could make their community a better place to live.
- ✓ Keep track of these ideas by writing them on the board.
- ✓ Tell your students to draw a picture that represents what they can do to improve their community. Remind them of how Miss Rumphius made her town more beautiful.
- ✓ Have students share their pictures with the class and explain the change they would bring to the community.
- ✓ As a class, decide on one thing you can do to improve your town, school, or even your classroom community.
- ✓ Carry out this project and invite parents and community members to come and celebrate it.



CULMINATING ACTIVITY: WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?

(45-60 minutes in class; time varies out of class)

OBJECTIVE

Students choose and complete a service activity designed to address a local community problem.

MATERIALS

Depends on the service project selected

GET READY

- ✓ Prepare newspaper articles that discuss community problems: trash, hunger, etc.
- ✓ Consider things that will determine the nature of the service-learning project: money, transportation, supervision, etc.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Have your class brainstorm problems in the community. You may want to bring in a local newspaper, or newspaper articles, and read sections of it to your class.
- ✓ Keep track of the problems mentioned by your class by writing them on the board.
- ✓ Tell your class that they are going to address one of the problems, but they first need to choose a problem. Have them select the problem by a show of hands or a similar democratic process.
- ✓ Now that you have a problem for your class to address, ask your students to come up with possible solutions to the problem. (These ideas represent possible service projects.) List these ideas on the board.
- ✓ In order to identify the correct project for your class, encourage your students to consider the following questions:
 - ✓ How much time do we have for the service activity?

- ✓ What kinds of support do we need (money, transportation, adult supervision) and where can we find this support?
- ✓ Which ideas are likely to have the greatest impact on the problem?
- ✓ Which ideas do we most want to do?
Note: It is important as the teacher that you “veto” any ideas that the students are advocating but that you find unacceptable or unreasonable. Be sure to explain to the students why that idea will not be included in the final list.
- ✓ Vote on a service project idea for the class to complete. (If you and your students are ambitious and have the time, you could choose more than one.)
- ✓ Make arrangements to carry out the project, including contacting the people and/or organizations needed for its success. Allow enough time for your class to complete the project.
- ✓ After completing the service project, have students reflect on their experience in writing or discussion.
- ✓ To conclude the experience, celebrate students’ efforts to make a difference. This could be as simple as a popcorn party, extra recess, or a pizza picnic to as involved as a public event in the community with guest speakers and student awards.

**CULMINATING ACTIVITY: WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?** (continued)**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- ★ *Was it hard to come up with a service project for the class? Why or why not?*
- ★ *What was hard, easy, fun or difficult about the service experience?*
- ★ *Did the class make a difference?*
- ★ *Were we able to influence public opinion regarding the problem?*
- ★ *What did we learn from this experience and how could we apply that learning to future efforts to improve our community?*

MORE!

If the service idea chosen didn't involve influencing public opinion about the issue, you might also want to include one of the following activities:

- ✓ Writing a letter to the editor or a public official in the community about the problem
- ✓ Organizing a public display with facts, artwork, and any other information you can think of

KIDS VOTING USA

3-5

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

Voter Apathy Experience 2
 Voting Graphs 5

CONCEPT 2: I STUDY THE CANDIDATES AND ISSUES

Meet The Candidates 6
 Where Did You Hear That? 8
 Two Ballots 10

CONCEPT 3: I REGISTER AND VOTE

The Name Game 12
 Polling Place Mural 14
 Voting Simulation 16

CONCEPT 4: I CONTINUE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Watching The Returns 18
 The Wish Tree 20
 Promises To Keep 22



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

Questions for Concept 1: My Vote Gives Me Power 24
 Questions for Concept 2: I Study the Candidates and Issues 24
 Questions for Concept 3: I Register and Vote 24
 Questions for Concept 4: I Continue to Make a Difference 24



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

The Vote: Making Your Voice Heard by Linda Scher 25



CULMINATING ACTIVITY

I Go To The Polls 26



VOTER APATHY EXPERIENCE

(A few minutes a day for a week)

OBJECTIVE

Students experience the effects of apathy.

MATERIALS

Ballots handout; *Please Vote Today* handout; material to construct a ballot box

GET READY

- ✓ Adapt the set of ballots on the following page for your classroom.
- ✓ Copy and cut a set of ballots for each student.
- ✓ Copy the *Please Vote Today* sign and assign a student to color it and set it up on a table or desk.
- ✓ Assign a few students to construct a ballot box. Set it near the *Please Vote Today* sign.
- ✓ See “Voter Apathy” in the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ On Monday, without discussion, say to the students: *We will vote on an issue a day for the next five days. Each morning I will place the ballots by the ballot box. Please come by the desk once a day to vote by marking a ballot and placing your ballot in the box. At the end of the week we will tally and implement the votes.*
- ✓ Do not encourage or remind students to vote during the week.
- ✓ At the end of the week, assign a few students to tally and record the results on the board.
- ✓ The following week, implement the results.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What was the point of this activity?*
- ★ *Who didn't vote and now wishes they had?*
- ★ *Might the outcome have been different if everyone had voted?*
- ★ *Did more students vote on some days than others? Why?*
- ★ *What does the word “apathy” mean? (Unconcern or indifference)*
- ★ *Were any of us apathetic to voting? Why or why not?*
- ★ *Do you think more students would vote if we voted like this again? Why?*
- ★ *Are voters in the U.S. apathetic? Why?*
- ★ *Why should citizens vote? What could happen if they don't vote?*
- ★ *Is there anything we can do to encourage adults to vote? If so, what?*

MORE!

Help your students learn to be responsible to vote by allowing them to make as many classroom decisions as possible by voting.



BALLOTS

<p>VOTE FOR ONE (Length of Recess)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Increase recess by 10 minutes, but add 10 minutes of homework</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Decrease recess by 10 minutes, but take away 10 minutes of homework</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Keep recess and homework the same as it has been</p>	<p>VOTE FOR ONE (Order of Day)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Math, Science, Reading, Spelling, Social Studies</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Science, Spelling, Reading, Social Studies, Math</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Remain as is</p>
<p>VOTE FOR ONE (Amount of Homework)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Once a week for 1 hour</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Every night for 15 minutes each night</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3 times a week for 20 minutes each night</p>	<p>VOTE FOR ONE (Lunch)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lunch in the classroom next Monday</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lunch outside next Monday</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lunch in the cafeteria next Monday</p>
<p>VOTE FOR ONE (Work Pattern)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Work alone all day</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Work with a friend all day</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Work in teams all day</p>	<p>VOTE FOR ONE (Issue: _____)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> _____</p>



PLEASE VOTE TODAY

KIDS VOTING USA
PLEASE VOTE TODAY

PLEASE VOTE TODAY
KIDS VOTING USA

**VOTING GRAPHS**

(20 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students appreciate the impact of their vote.

MATERIALS

Construction paper; scissors; butcher paper (not necessary if you use a chalkboard/whiteboard)

GET READY

- ✓ Cut construction paper into 1-inch squares and hang a large piece of butcher paper. (You may alternatively use your chalkboard to create the graph.)

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Have your students participate in a vote. Either come up with a question relevant to your classroom or let your students come up with one.
- ✓ Have your students graph the results of the vote. They can create a graph on the blackboard or on the piece of butcher paper.
- ✓ Have one student read the results while others place the paper squares or fill in the graph with chalk.
- ✓ Carry out the results of the vote as it affects the classroom (we will have no math homework tonight, etc).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Do you have power to make decisions and changes when you vote?*
- ★ *What happens if you decide not to vote?*
- ★ *Is this how our government tallies the vote?*
- ★ *How do they do it?*



MEET THE CANDIDATES

(30-40 minutes over two days)

OBJECTIVE

Students put together a page consisting of pictures and promises made by the candidates running for office.

MATERIALS

Meet the Candidates handout; scissors, glue

GET READY

- ✓ Divide your students into pairs.
- ✓ Duplicate one copy of the *Meet the Candidates* handout for each pair of students.
- ✓ Collect, or have your students collect, local campaign literature and several recent issues of the local newspapers.
- ✓ Prepare scissors and glue for each pair of classmates.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Tell the pairs to look for a photograph of each candidate in an election and to also look for articles about the candidates' campaigns.
- ✓ Ask your students to watch the news and listen for promises that the candidates make. Give an example: John Jones says that he will bring new businesses to our town.
- ✓ Give students time to work on the *Meet the Candidates* handout the next day and possibly at home. (Students could alternatively work on this project in small groups.)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What promises have been made by the candidates?* (Continue until you have reviewed all the candidates.)
- ★ *Which promises seem most important to you? How do campaign promises help you decide how to vote?*
- ★ *Is there one candidate whose picture appears more often than the others? Do you think he/she is winning right now? Do you think the pictures are giving him/her an advantage?*
- ★ *What can we do if politicians do not keep their campaign promises?*

MORE!

Continue to collect campaign pictures and put them up on a bulletin board with the *Meet the Candidates* papers.

Bring up the concept of promises in other contexts: books the students read, classroom rules, etc.



MEET THE CANDIDATES

Candidate Name

Candidate Name

Candidate Name

Picture of Candidate

Picture of Candidate

Picture of Candidate

Campaign Promises

Campaign Promises

Campaign Promises



WHERE DID YOU HEAR THAT?

(A few minutes a day for a week)

OBJECTIVE

Students gather information about candidates and issues for analysis.

MATERIALS

Where Did You Hear That? handout

GET READY

- ✓ Cut the media patterns from the handout and place them on a bulletin board entitled “Where Did You Hear That?”
- ✓ For more information see “Political Campaigns” in the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Discuss with your students the importance of staying informed and up-to-date on the issues and candidates. Ask them where they can get information to make wise voting decisions.
- ✓ Invite students to share things they have already heard people say about the candidates or issues. Have your students record this information on small slips of paper and place them under the lips graphic on the bulletin board.
- ✓ Ask if anyone remembers hearing anything on TV or the radio in respect to the candidates and issues. If so, again have your students write the information on slips of paper, though this time have them attach the slips under the TV or radio graphics.
- ✓ Ask your students to cut out information from newspapers, magazines, political brochures, or any other written media and bring it to class to help complete the bulletin board. This information should be attached under the newspaper graphic.

- ✓ Ask your class to continue to actively listen to other people, to watch/listen to the TV or radio, and to read the newspaper so they can continue to bring information for the bulletin board.
- ✓ Continue to fill the board for a few days.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Has the information gathered influenced how you will vote?*
- ★ *Where do you think people get most of their information?*
- ★ *Are your family and friends good sources of information?*
- ★ *Should you believe all the information you hear?*

MORE!

At the end of the week, play, “Do You Believe It?” As you read a piece of information, ask the children to give a thumbs up if they believe it is true, thumbs sideways for maybe, or a thumbs down for false. Ask the students to explain what makes certain information believable and other information not.



WHERE DID YOU HEAR THAT?

WHERE DID YOU HEAR THAT?





TWO BALLOTS

(10-15 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students experience voting with and without adequate information.

MATERIALS

Two Ballots handout

GET READY

- ✓ Make enough copies of the *Two Ballots* handout for the number of students in your class.
- ✓ Cut the ballots apart.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Without any instruction, give the students *Ballot A* and ask them to vote.
- ✓ Have your students either tally the results as a group on the board or individually on a piece of paper. (Students may also graph the results of the vote at your discretion.)
- ✓ Give the students *Ballot B* and ask them to vote again. Tally (and graph) the results again.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What difference was there between “Ballot A” and “Ballot B”?*
- ★ *Did you change your vote once you had the information on “Ballot B”?*

- ★ *Why is it important to gather information before we vote?*
- ★ *Where can we get information before voting?*
- ★ *Have you already decided who you will vote for? If not, how will you get the information you need to decide?*

MORE!

Make extra copies of the two ballots for your students so they can share with adults at home.

Have students take a simple class poll by asking adults where they get most of their information before voting.

Ask your students to bring in any election articles, pictures, or materials for a bulletin board.

VOTE QUOTE

“Liberty without learning is always in peril and learning without liberty is always in vain.”
– J.F. Kennedy

This lesson was developed by Edna Neprud, Kids Voting Georgia; Kelly Kline, Kids Voting California; and Bobbie May, Kids Voting Washington.



TWO BALLOTS

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Ballot A</h2> <table style="width: 100%; margin-top: 20px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 70%;"></th> <th style="width: 15%; text-align: center;">YES</th> <th style="width: 15%; text-align: center;">NO</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. School</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Recess</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Ice Cream</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Homework</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. Television</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		YES	NO	1. School	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Recess	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Ice Cream	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Television	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Ballot B</h2> <table style="width: 100%; margin-top: 20px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 70%;"></th> <th style="width: 15%; text-align: center;">YES</th> <th style="width: 15%; text-align: center;">NO</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. School will be year round.</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Recess will be replaced by 20 minutes of sit-ups & push-ups.</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Only garlic-flavored ice cream will be served in the cafeteria.</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. There will be no homework on weekends.</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. Television will be in the classroom — but only the commercials.</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		YES	NO	1. School will be year round.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Recess will be replaced by 20 minutes of sit-ups & push-ups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Only garlic-flavored ice cream will be served in the cafeteria.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. There will be no homework on weekends.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Television will be in the classroom — but only the commercials.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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THE NAME GAME

(20 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students discover the importance of voter registration.

MATERIALS

Kids Voting Registration Cards handout; slips of paper; a paper bag or equivalent

GET READY

- ✓ Copy enough *Kids Voting Registration Cards* for your class.
- ✓ Write the words “same” and “different” on two slips of paper and place them in a container or paper bag so students cannot see what they are picking.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Ask your students to privately give themselves a new name, write it on a slip of paper, and keep it hidden from the other students.
- ✓ In seat order, ask each student to stand and announce his or her new name. As the teacher, write down the new names of the students (beside their real names on a student roster) so you can keep track. Tell the class to listen carefully to their classmates’ new names because they will need to remember them without being able to write them down.
- ✓ Next, have each student draw a slip of paper from the container and say either the same name he/she said earlier or a different one as indicated by the slip of paper.
- ✓ Ask the class to remember whether it was the same or a different name. Have your students vote by a show of hands and tell the class whether or not they are correct. If they are wrong, remind them of the name they had forgotten.

- ✓ Once every student has drawn from the bag, talk with your class about the importance of voter registration. Point out that without registering, some people might try to vote multiple times.
- ✓ Copy and give each student a *Kids Voting Registration Card* to fill out. Collect the cards and return them the day before elections so each student can take their card to the polls.
- ✓ Fold a piece of lined paper in half and have each student sign on the left hand side. Save the paper to use as a registration list for the voting simulation activity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Was this game difficult or easy in your opinion? What made it so?*
- ★ *How was this game like voter registration?*
- ★ *What might happen if people did not have to register?*
- ★ *Can you think of other ways than registration that we could use to make sure people voted only once? Any futuristic ideas?*

MORE!

Help coordinate a school registration day for both students and parents. Invite a deputy registrar for parents and let students register for the Kids Voting USA election at the same time. See local Teachers Handbook for more information.



KIDS VOTING REGISTRATION CARDS

 <p>Voter Registration</p> <p>Student _____</p> <p>Teacher _____</p> <p>School _____</p>	 <p>Voter Registration</p> <p>Student _____</p> <p>Teacher _____</p> <p>School _____</p>
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POLLING PLACE MURAL

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students choose appropriate sites for polling places.

MATERIALS

Mural Symbols handout; glue; scissors; markers or crayons; several sheets of butcher paper or newsprint

GET READY

- ✓ Make several copies of the *Mural Symbols* handout.
- ✓ Have the glue, scissors, markers or crayons, and several large sheets of butcher paper or newsprint ready for use.
- ✓ See “Elections” in the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Divide your students into groups of three or four.
- ✓ Instruct each group to design a mural depicting a neighborhood similar to their own. (They may choose the neighborhood surrounding the school if they are from different areas.) Have your students draw their design and/or use symbols from the handout.
- ✓ After allowing your students time to finish their murals, review the activity with them using the discussion questions.
- ✓ Ask each group to indicate the best location for a polling place on their murals.
- ✓ Let each group show their mural to the class and explain how their polling place is on a reasonable site.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

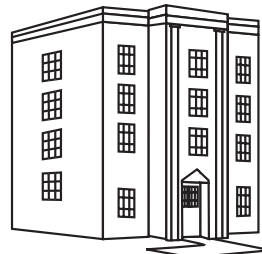
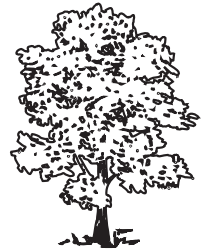
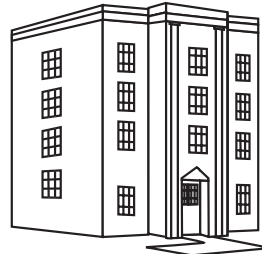
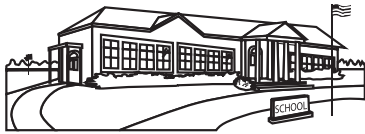
- ★ *What sort of buildings act as polling places? (churches, schools, etc.)*
- ★ *Why are polling places located in such buildings?*
- ★ *Is our school a polling place?*
- ★ *What time do the polling places open and close?*
- ★ *Have you ever been to a polling place with an adult? If so, what was it like?*
- ★ *Do you know where the adults at your house go to vote? Where? If not, how can you find out?*

MORE!

If there are several polling places within the boundaries of your school, assign your students to find the polling place where they will vote. Post a map of the area in your room and let the students place nametags at their polling places.



MURAL SYMBOLS





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's for homework that evening or something fun such as determining the class's favorite color.
- ✓ Prepare ballots or determine 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 roles of the various precinct workers and assign students to these roles. Seat them as shown in the diagram.
- ✓ Give one of the judges the registration sheet derived from "The Name Game" activity.
- ✓ 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.

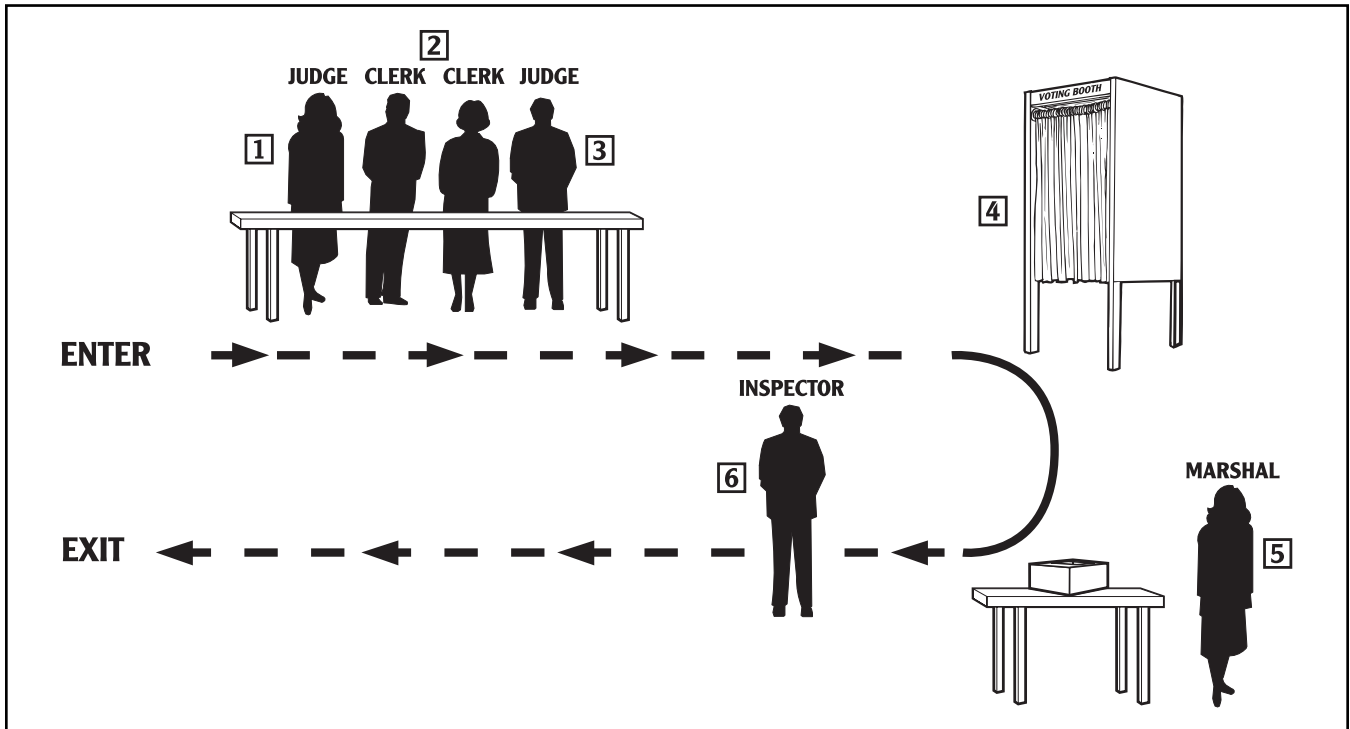
- ✓ Let each student go through the process of voting.
- ✓ Instruct the marshal to tally and announce the vote.
- ✓ Implement the vote.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Who can go to a polling place?*
- ★ *Have you ever gone with your parents? If so, where was it?*
- ★ *How do adults know where 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 *U.S. Map* handout for each student.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Ask your 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 accordingly as they learn the results from television, the radio, or newspaper.

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?*
- ★ *If you were planning an election returns show for kids how would you make it more exciting?*

MORE!

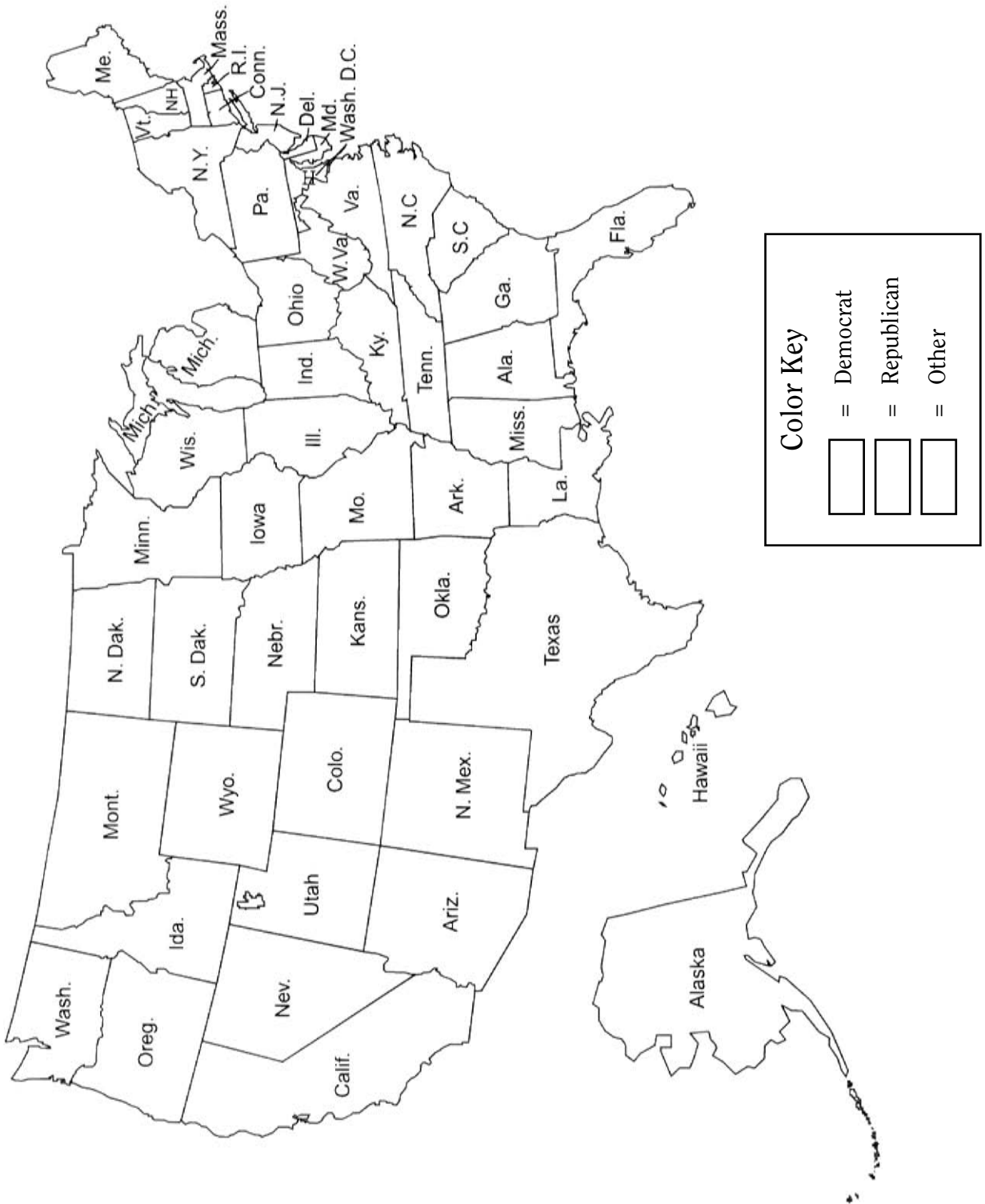
For gubernatorial or other state elections, copy a state map showing counties. Follow instructions above.

VOTE QUOTE

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



U.S. MAP





THE WISH TREE

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students make wishes for their country that express changes they want to see.

MATERIALS

Star Cards handout; art supplies (crayons, markers, etc.); yarn; hole puncher; scissors

GET READY

- ✓ Find a large bare tree branch and place it in a pot filled with pebbles or design a large tree out of paper and attach it to a wall or bulletin board.
- ✓ Copy and cut apart a star card for each student.
- ✓ Prepare: one 8-inch-long piece of string or yarn for each student, crayons, markers, or colored pencils, scissors, and a hole puncher.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Instruct your students to cut out the star card, fold it in half, and color/decorate the cover.
- ✓ As they are working, ask them to make a wish for our country.
- ✓ Have your students draw or write their wish on the inside of the card and sign their names.
- ✓ Help them punch a hole in the corner and tie string through the hole.
- ✓ Hold a ceremony so the students may tie their cards to the tree. They may read or describe their wishes as they place them on the tree or share them more privately later on.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS


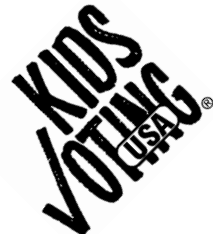


- ★ *How can our wishes for our country come true?*
- ★ *Is there anything a young person can do to make these wishes come true?*
- ★ *How have we helped our country by participating in this activity?*
- ★ *If we practice self-discipline and patience in our classroom, how might that help?*
- ★ *Can you think of anyone who had a wish or a dream for our country and made it come true? Tell us about it.*

MORE!

As a class, brainstorm a wish for the community that the class can make a reality (such as a cleaner school or playground). Work together to make this happen.



STAR CARDS

	<p><i>“How lovely to think that no one need wait a moment. We can start slowly changing the world. How lovely that everyone great and small can make a contribution.”</i> – Anne Frank</p> 
	<p><i>“How lovely to think that no one need wait a moment. We can start slowly changing the world. How lovely that everyone great and small can make a contribution.”</i> – Anne Frank</p> 



PROMISES TO KEEP

(Time varies)

OBJECTIVE

Students track the candidates' promises to involve themselves in the ongoing political process.

MATERIALS

Promises To Keep handout

GET READY

- ✓ Copy *Promises To Keep* handout for each student or group.
- ✓ See "Political Campaigns" in the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Instruct your students to find the winning candidates' promises by examining newspapers and news magazines and by watching TV.
- ✓ Have your students list one candidate's promises and make their predictions in the appropriate *Promises To Keep* column.
- ✓ Save the charts until spring (if the election was in the fall). In March, April, or May, place check marks in the last column if the promises were kept.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Have the winning candidates kept all their promises?*
- ★ *Do you think the candidates were sincere about their promises?*
- ★ *Why might it be difficult to keep campaign promises?*
- ★ *What course of action do we take if a candidate has not kept his or her promises?*

MORE!

Research campaign promises made by candidates within the last two or three years to see if the promises have been kept.



PROMISES TO KEEP

Fill in the Promises and Predictions columns in the time leading up to the election. After some time has passed, fill out the “He/She Did It!” column.

Candidate's Name		
PROMISES	PREDICTIONS	HE/SHE DID IT!
	I PREDICT HE/SHE _____ KEEP THIS PROMISE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I PREDICT HE/SHE _____ KEEP THIS PROMISE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I PREDICT HE/SHE _____ KEEP THIS PROMISE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I PREDICT HE/SHE _____ KEEP THIS PROMISE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I PREDICT HE/SHE _____ KEEP THIS PROMISE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I PREDICT HE/SHE _____ KEEP THIS PROMISE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I PREDICT HE/SHE _____ KEEP THIS PROMISE.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I PREDICT HE/SHE _____ KEEP THIS PROMISE.	<input type="checkbox"/>



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

MY VOTE GIVES ME POWER

- ★ What is a vote? What do you think it is like to vote?
- ★ What does voting accomplish?
- ★ Does voting make a difference? How?
- ★ What is an election?
- ★ What is the purpose of an election?
- ★ Are there different kinds of elections? Like what?
- ★ What power does voting have?
- ★ What happens when people do not vote?

I STUDY THE CANDIDATES AND ISSUES

- ★ What is a candidate?
- ★ What does a candidate hope to do?
- ★ How do candidates 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 study the candidates and issues?

I REGISTER AND VOTE

- ★ What does it mean to register?
- ★ What do you think you do when you register?
- ★ Why is it important to register?
- ★ 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 experience like?

I CONTINUE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- ★ What does it mean to make a difference?
- ★ Does voting make a difference?
- ★ What else 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?



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

The Vote: Making Your Voice Heard by Linda Scher

OBJECTIVE

Students investigate elections and the voting experience.

MATERIALS

The Vote: Making Your Voice Heard - Linda Scher

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

- ✓ Read to your class the paragraph on page 37 beginning, “The U.S. government is the only western democracy that doesn’t...”
- ✓ Ask, *Why do you think this is the case in America? Do you think the government should come up with ways to get more people to vote? Why or why not?*
- ✓ Ask, *What did the author mean when she commented that the government might need to find new ways to keep voting from becoming a “spectator sport.”*
- ✓ Next, ask your students to divide into groups of two or three and brainstorm ways that prevent Americans from becoming voter “spectators.”
- ✓ Have your students share their ideas with the class.
- ✓ Read *The Vote: Making Your Voice Heard* by Linda Scher

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What are the qualifications to vote today? Do you think those are good qualifications? Why or why not?*
- ★ *“Voting is the foundation of democracy.” What does that mean in your own words?*
- ★ *How has voting changed in America over the years? What do you think of these changes?*
- ★ *How and where do you vote? What does voting accomplish for yourself and others?*

- ★ *Why do some people not vote even if they have the right? How do you feel about that?*
- ★ *How do you think wise decisions are made in casting a vote?*
- ★ *Why do you think the author named her book, The Vote: Making Your Voice Heard?*

ACTIVITY

- ✓ Have your students create a collage that answers the following five questions (each question is a chapter heading from the book):
 - ✓ *Who Can Vote?*
 - ✓ *How Has Voting Changed?*
 - ✓ *How and Where Do You Vote?*
 - ✓ *Who Votes and Who Doesn’t?*
 - ✓ *How Do You Use Your Vote Wisely?*
- ✓ Divide your class up into groups of five so that each student can prepare one question for the collage.
- ✓ Give your students time to meet and determine who is responsible for which question.
- ✓ Provide enough time for students to collect articles, pictures, etc. (Encourage your students to draw an image if they cannot find what they are looking for in magazines, newspapers, etc.)
- ✓ On the day of creating the collages, break your students up into their groups and make sure you supply them with enough glue, scissors, etc. (The students should have their pictures, drawings, and other clippings ready, so they can easily work together to create a group collage.)
- ✓ Have your groups present their collages to the class identifying how they answered the questions through their artwork.



CULMINATING ACTIVITY: I GO TO THE POLLS

(Time varies)

OBJECTIVE

Students engage in an authentic voting experience.

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 Name Game* activity. If your students did not yet 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 back 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.
- ✓ Have your students reflect, either verbally or in written form, both on their voting experience and on how they plan to continue to make a difference in their community.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *How did it make you feel when you voted?*
- ★ *Does voting give you power? How?*
- ★ *How do you think it 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?*
- ★ *How can you get information 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

3-5

**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?

Democracy: What Is It And What Does It Have To Do With Me? 2
 Our Homes, Our Town, Our Country 5

CONCEPT 2: DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA

The President’s Hats 7
 In Their Words 13
 My Life 14
 Our Town: A Role Play 18

CONCEPT 3: A CITIZEN’S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Freedom Connection 21
 Pledge Anew 22

CONCEPT 4: DEMOCRACY IN THE WORLD

Democracy: Who? What? Where? 24
 Pen Pals 26



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

Questions for Concept 1: What is Democracy? 27
 Questions for Concept 2: Democracy in America 27
 Questions for Concept 3: A Citizen’s Rights and Responsibilities 27
 Questions for Concept 4: Democracy in the World 27



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

Ideas of the Modern World: Democracy by Nathaniel Harris 28



CULMINATING ACTIVITY

Go Ask City Hall! 29



DEMOCRACY: WHAT IS IT AND WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH ME?

(30-35 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn the characteristics of a democratic society and how they can improve where they live.

MATERIALS

Ways I Can Participate in Our Democracy handout

GET READY

- ✓ Copy the *Ways I Can Participate in Our Democracy* handout for each student.
- ✓ Have lined paper available for students (if they are not responsible for supplying their own).

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Ask students, *How many of you have heard of the word “democracy”? Does anyone know what it means? What other words do you think of when you hear the word democracy?* List the students’ ideas on the board.
- ✓ Read to students the following simple definition: *A democracy is a society where the people are involved in making many of the decisions about what happens in communities, states, and the country.*
- ✓ Ask students, *How do people in the United States help make decisions about the government, schools, laws and other important aspects of our lives?* (Possible answers include attending public meetings, writing letters to public officials, running for public office, and serving on a local board. If the students do not mention voting, make sure to tell them it is a major way people can help make decisions in our country.)

- ✓ Ask students, *Is democracy just for adults? Does it have anything to do with kids?* Accept all responses. Then ask, *How many of you ride a bike? Wear pajamas? Use a local park? Drink water? Breathe the air?* Point out to students that the laws made by our local, state, and federal governments determine what is and what isn’t acceptable when doing things such as riding a bike, using a local park, etc. They affect most of our everyday activities, including the fact that the students are required at this moment to be in school!
- ✓ Give students, individually or in small groups, the *Ways I Can Participate in Our Democracy* handout and ask them to circle all of the ideas that kids can do. Are the students surprised that they can contribute to our democracy in so many ways? While elementary students are not old enough to vote, they can influence how adults vote and contribute to improving society in many other ways.
- ✓ After completing the handout, ask the students to compose a paragraph about how they plan on improving their community. This can be based on one of the ideas they circled on the handout or it can be a new idea they come up with. They should not only write about what they plan on doing but also how they plan on carrying through on their idea.
- ✓ Ask students who wish to share their idea to present it to the class.



DEMOCRACY: WHAT IS IT AND WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH ME? (continued)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Who can share how they already participate in our democracy?*
- ★ *Who came up with ideas that were not on our “Ways I Can Participate in Our Democracy” handout? What are some of these ideas?*
- ★ *What other ways will you be able to participate in democracy when you are an adult?*



DEMOCRACY: WHAT IS IT AND WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH ME?

WAYS I CAN PARTICIPATE IN OUR DEMOCRACY

Directions: Circle the ideas listed below that are ways kids can help their community.

Picking up trash

Writing to an elected official

Following the laws

Voting in public elections

Listening to or reading the news

Donating money

Attending a public meeting

Talking to an adult about voting

Visiting someone who is lonely

Writing a letter to a newspaper

Talking to friends about a
community problem

Calling the mayor about a
community problem

Speaking at a public meeting

Distributing flyers

Raising money for a good cause
in the community

Making get well cards for
children in the hospital

Volunteering at a nursing home

Creating artwork that teaches

Donating food or clothing

Recycling

Can you think of any other ways kids can participate in democracy?

Write them here...



OUR HOMES, OUR TOWN, OUR COUNTRY

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students construct a concept map of households and discuss the ways that democracy impacts their lives.

MATERIALS

Multicolored markers; *Our Homes, Our Town, Our Country* handout; butcher paper; government agencies information

GET READY

- ✓ Divide your students into groups of three or four.
- ✓ Have ready a set of multicolored markers for each group of students.
- ✓ Make copies of the handout so that each student has one.
- ✓ Give each group one large piece of (butcher) paper.
- ✓ Duplicate the page of city, state, and/or national agencies from your telephone directory for each group.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Explain to your class that a useful way to think of democracy is to look at the household unit (the people who live together under the same roof). A democratic government, whether local, state, or national, provides services to the households of a community.
- ✓ Model for the students a handout that you have completed, pointing out the various services the government provides for the different members of a household: *Children need sports leagues and library services; adults need free-ways to get to work; older people need health classes; the house needs a building permit.*
- ✓ Say, *Add as many services as you can think of to the bubbles on the handout. You can use*

the list of city, state, and federal agencies to jog your thinking. Share your ideas with your group members. If you want to expand the activity you can say, If you feel a member of the household has been left out and want to add a bubble to your map, feel free to make that addition.

- ✓ The group should next draw a large concept map (based on the one in the handouts) on the piece of butcher paper. They need to work together to make sure nothing is written more than once. They can then present their map to the class and the teacher can keep track of all the services mentioned.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Are there any services used by all the people in the household? (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 provide 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 are 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 could 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 children can make a difference in that work.



OUR HOMES, OUR TOWN, OUR COUNTRY



health classes



freeways



building permit



library services



sports leagues



THE PRESIDENT'S HATS

(30-40 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students examine the jobs of the president to discuss facets of American democracy.

MATERIALS

The Hat Patterns handout; *The President's Work* handout; boxes

GET READY

- ✓ Divide your students into groups of three.
- ✓ Copy and cut apart *The Hat Patterns* handout. Place each hat on the front of an open box.
- ✓ Copy and cut apart a set of *The President's Work* cards for each group of three.
- ✓ Read "The Office of President" in the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Prepare your class for the activity with a discussion of the powers and duties of the president.
- ✓ Give each group a set of *The President's Work* cards.
- ✓ Instruct each group to discuss each card, decide which job goes to which hat, and place the cards in the correct hat box.
- ✓ When all the cards are in the hat boxes, invite a student to stand by each box, draw the cards out, and then read them to the class.
- ✓ You can keep track of the cards by posting them on the board or by taping them to the front of the boxes.
- ✓ Go over which duties belonged to each job. (You can pass out the answers; a handout is provided.)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What do you think is the president's most important job? Why?*
- ★ *Why were some of the same cards dropped in different boxes? (This will inevitably happen, and is a good time to address that the president's different responsibilities may intersect.)*
- ★ *Which hat would you like to wear? Why?*
- ★ *Which hat would you not like to wear? Why?*
- ★ *How does a president learn to do all these jobs?*
- ★ *How could you prepare yourself to be president?*
- ★ *Which jobs do you think the current president does either poorly or well?*
- ★ (If an election is forthcoming), *Which candidate do you think is most prepared?*
- ★ *If you don't know, how could you find out?*
- ★ *How do you think the president of the United States is different from other world leaders?*
- ★ *What characteristics do you think a president should have?*

DEVELOP A GRAPH

- ✓ Create a chart on the board identifying the hats of the president. Ask the students which hat they think is most important.
- ✓ Have a student volunteer to tally the votes as you call on one student at a time. Each student gets to vote once.
- ✓ Create a bar graph on the board. Using the chart information, have students fill in the correct number of votes each hat received.



THE PRESIDENT'S HATS (continued)

MORE QUESTIONS

- ★ *Which hat got the most number of votes?
Does this make it the most important job of
the president?*
- ★ *Which hat got the least number of votes?
Does this make it the least important job
of the president?*
- ★ *What do you think the president would say is
the most important thing he does?*

MORE!

Develop a similar activity for governor, senator,
or mayor, etc.



THE HAT PATTERNS





THE HAT PATTERNS





THE PRESIDENT'S WORK

HEADS POLITICAL PARTY	HOLDS PRESS CONFERENCES
CAMPAIGNS FOR OTHERS IN PARTY	OFFICIALLY VISITS OTHER COUNTRIES
HELPS SETTLE PROBLEMS AMONG OTHER NATIONS	LIGHTS THE WHITE HOUSE CHRISTMAS TREE
PREPARES THE BUDGET	MAKES TREATIES
PREVENTS NATIONAL EMERGENCIES	APPOINTS GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS
GRANTS PARDONS FOR CRIMES	HOLDS CEREMONIES AND DINNERS FOR FOREIGN OFFICIALS
CARRIES OUT LAWS	GIVES MEDALS
DEFENDS THE COUNTRY DURING WAR	GOES TO INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS
KEEPS THE COUNTRY STRONG DURING PEACE	APPOINTS AMBASSADORS



ANSWERS TO THE PRESIDENT'S HATS

HEAD OF STATE

HOLDS CEREMONIES AND DINNERS FOR FOREIGN VISITORS
LIGHTS THE WHITE HOUSE CHRISTMAS TREE
HOLDS PRESS CONFERENCES
GIVES MEDALS
OFFICIALLY VISITS OTHER COUNTRIES

CHIEF DIPLOMAT

GOES TO INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS
MAKES TREATIES
HELPS SETTLE PROBLEMS AMONG OTHER COUNTRIES
APPOINTS AMBASSADORS

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CARRIES OUT LAWS
PREPARES THE BUDGET
APPOINTS GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS
PREVENTS NATIONAL EMERGENCIES
GRANTS PARDONS FOR CRIMES

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

DEFENDS THE COUNTRY DURING WAR
KEEPS THE COUNTRY STRONG DURING PEACE

PARTY CHIEF

CAMPAIGNS FOR OTHERS IN PARTY
HEADS POLITICAL PARTY



IN THEIR WORDS

(30-40 minutes over two days)

OBJECTIVE

Students interview adults to directly learn about American democracy.

MATERIALS

No materials are necessary for this activity.

GET READY

- ✓ Divide your students into groups of three or four.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Inform your students that they will be interviewing adults to learn more about American democracy.
- ✓ Tell your class that each group will first brainstorm questions and then the class will compile a final list of questions to ask the interviewees.
- ✓ Have each group of students come up with at least two questions to ask the interviewees in respect to their opinions and experiences with the United States, past and/or present. Some examples of questions are:
 - ✓ Which president did you admire most in your lifetime and why?
 - ✓ Have you ever seen a president in person? Which one?
 - ✓ How does being an American feel different from the way it felt 20 years ago?

- ✓ Have the groups come back together, share their questions, and list them on the board.
- ✓ As a class, choose 10 questions that everyone will ask their interviewees.
- ✓ Have your students copy the questions onto a separate piece of paper.
- ✓ Instruct your students to find an adult to interview, follow through with the interview, and then write up the responses.
- ✓ In class, have students volunteer to share the responses they got to the various questions. Follow this sharing session with a discussion based on the questions below.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Did any response given by an interviewee surprise you? If yes, how so?*
- ★ *Did you share any of the same opinions as the person you interviewed? If yes, which ones and why?*
- ★ *What were you able to determine about the United States in terms of its past and its current direction?*
- ★ *Are there any common threads running through the various responses the interviewees gave?*

**MY LIFE**

(30 minutes in class; time varies out of class)

OBJECTIVE

Students keep journals of their daily activities to understand how government impacts them every day.

MATERIALS

My Life handouts; chart paper (optional)

GET READY

- ✓ Duplicate *My Life* handouts for each student.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Initiate a conversation with your students by asking, *Is the government just for adults? How does it affect your lives?* Listen to the responses and add, *I bet the government affects us in even more ways.*
- ✓ Tell your students you are giving them a piece of paper that will be their journal for just one day. All they need to do is keep track of what they are doing every hour: ex. 7:00 a.m. Alarm rings—I wake up, brush my teeth, shower. (Students should not feel obligated to record activities of a personal matter that they don't wish to share with the class.)
- ✓ Give the students the handout on a Friday and ask them to bring it back in on a Monday (giving them Saturday or Sunday to complete it). Tell them that when they bring it back on Monday the class is going to look and see how government impacts much of what we do.
- ✓ When students bring back their journal entries, ask them to reflect quietly about the

details of their recorded activities. Ask, *When you woke up, did an alarm clock go off? Did it play radio music? Did you run the tap when you brushed your teeth?*

- ✓ Give students enough time to add details to their entries.
- ✓ Pair students to compare journals and observe the influence of government over a single day. Students should look at each other's journals and make notes on the entries showing where government may have an influence.
- ✓ Give an example yourself. Say, *Was it 6 a.m. when your alarm went off? Why was it 6 and not 7? Because the government determines time zones, doesn't it? This is the kind of notation to make for the activities in the journals. Think carefully: there may be more than one governmental involvement.* (Example: turning on the water = plumbing codes, clean water regulations, sewage treatment standards, regulations to heat the water, etc.)
- ✓ After your students are finished, create a class journal by calling on each pair to provide an activity for each hour of the day. Move chronologically through the day, recording the information on chart paper if possible. When the diary entry is complete, look for government influences as a class.

**MY LIFE** (continued)**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- ★ *Did you find any activities without ties to government? Ask the class to check out the lack of government influence. Be persistent: humming or singing looks government-free... but what about public nuisance laws?*
- ★ *What would America be like without our government?*
- ★ *What does this exercise tell you about the importance of voting and participating in our government?*

MORE!

Students could ask adults to share what they do over the course of a day. Students can share these activities and how the government impacts them.



MY LIFE – JOURNAL PAGE 1

Journal of Activities for _____

MORNING

AFTERNOON

6:00–7:00 am _____

Noon–1:00 pm _____

7:00–8:00 _____

1:00–2:00 _____

8:00–9:00 _____

2:00–3:00 _____

9:00–10:00 _____

3:00–4:00 _____

10:00–11:00 _____

4:00–5:00 _____

11:00–12:00 _____

5:00–6:00 _____



MY LIFE – JOURNAL PAGE 2

Journal of Activities for _____

EVENING

OVERNIGHT

6:00–7:00 pm _____

While you sleep, on a mattress tagged to guarantee that it meets federal regulations (a tag you remove at your peril!), what else is happening in your home?

7:00–8:00 _____

8:00–9:00 _____

9:00–10:00 _____

10:00–11:00 _____

11:00–12:00 _____



OUR TOWN: A ROLE PLAY

(45 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students play the parts of city officials, members of boards and commissions, and ordinary citizens. In their roles, they examine both imaginary scenarios and actual issues being addressed in the community.

MATERIALS

The *Roles and Scenarios* handout; *Role Biography* handout; conference badges

GET READY

- ✓ Duplicate the *Role Biography* handout for each student in the class.
- ✓ Assign each student a different role from the list provided. Obtain conference badges and use markers or a word processor to label the badges with the roles from the list. (The list can be found on the *Roles and Scenarios* handout.)
- ✓ Complete the scenarios list on the *Roles and Scenarios* handout with at least two possible scenarios (preferably ones that are currently being addressed in the community).
- ✓ Move desks so that groups of four can consult during the role play.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Distribute badges and the *Role Biography* handout and give students five minutes to fill out Parts I and II of the handout.
- ✓ Choose a scenario from the list.
- ✓ Ask students, in their roles, to record their reactions to the scenario in Part III of the *Role Biography*. Give them five minutes to do so.

- ✓ Say, *At your tables, please express your community concerns and opinions with the other three “townspeople.” After a few minutes, we will hold the Town Meeting to discuss the issue and we will hear from all of you.*
- ✓ After the table consultations, ask the City Clerk (a student you have given the role to because of leadership abilities) to run the Town Meeting, which can last as long as you choose.
- ✓ Once the Town Meeting is over, choose another scenario, preferably a “real life” one from the community, and have the students respond to it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *As a student, did you personally disagree with what you had to present as, for instance, the town police chief?*
- ★ *As you can see, officials and citizens have to arrive at compromises. Is there an issue you can think of that seems to call for compromise? Can you suggest compromise solutions for that issue?*
- ★ *Would you like to have any of these roles in your community for real?*

MORE!

You may continue the role play for several days, adding a research component: consulting the media and/or the real people in town who hold the simulated positions to see what they think about the issues.



ROLES AND SCENARIOS

Roles:

- Mayor
- Building Inspector
- Business License/Sales Tax Manager
- City Attorney
- City Clerk
- City Council Member
- City Manager
- Community Center Director
- Director of Libraries
- Facilities Maintenance Director
- Finance Officer
- Fire Commissioner
- Garbage Department Director
- Insurance Officer
- Parks and Recreation Director
- Personnel Director
- Police Chief
- Public Information Officer
- Purchasing Officer
- Superintendent of Schools
- Transportation Director
- Member, Design Board
- Member, Arts Commission
- Member, Human Relations Commission
- Member, Planning and Zoning Board
- Downtown Department Store Owner
- Elderly Retiree
- Wheelchair-bound Citizen
- Parent of Four Children

Scenarios:

- A large shopping center will be built in town.

- The community wants a minor league baseball team.

- Parking problems in the town center are keeping business away.

- Some citizens complain that the design rules of the historic district are too restrictive.

- A crafts fair is proposed.

- The number of homeless people on Main Street is rising quickly.

- There are gangs at the high school.

- Drug crimes are up.

- An automobile parts plant is coming to town.

- Add here two actual situations in your town that are currently being addressed:



ROLE BIOGRAPHY

Name of student: _____

Role: _____

PART I: GET A LIFE!

Invent for yourself some background, family, personality traits, etc.

(Example: "I am a 30-year-old man with a young family and I've been the Parks and Recreation Director for only two months. I'm likely to back down in a clash with older, more established community leaders.")

PART II: MY JOB IS TO...

List the most important concerns you have in your role in the city's welfare:

(Example: "As the Fire Commissioner, I am most worried about fire safety for all the citizens, through enforcement of the fire code.")

PART III: HERE'S MY REACTION

For each scenario in the role play, give your response to possible benefits and problems in your area of concern.

(Example: If the city holds a crafts fair, the Garbage Department Director wants exhibitors to clean up after themselves; wants no disruptions of the refuse removal schedule; wants a budget for additional trash cans on the streets, etc.)

SCENARIO 1: _____

SCENARIO 2: _____

My reaction: _____

My reaction: _____



FREEDOM CONNECTION

(40-50 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students gain an understanding of the Bill of Rights and the major freedoms it guarantees.

MATERIALS

Index cards (10 for each student); a hole punch; yarn or string

GET READY

- ✓ Punch holes in the upper left-hand corner of the index cards, or secure multiple hole punchers for your students to do it themselves.
- ✓ Have a discussion with your students about the U.S. Constitution to lay the groundwork for this activity on the Bill of Rights.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Inform your students that they are going to explore the Bill of Rights and make connections between it and their own lives.
- ✓ Tell your students that after the Constitution was ratified, people were concerned that it did not guarantee certain rights. Say, *With the king previously denying certain freedoms before the war, colonists were worried about their rights being abused by a new government.* Give each student a copy of the Bill of Rights found at the following site: <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/funddocs/billeng.htm>.
- ✓ Read and discuss the Bill of Rights as a group. Make sure your class has a good understanding of each right.
- ✓ Divide students into groups of three or four and ask them to discuss the freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. Each group should confirm that all its members know the meaning of each right.

- ✓ Next, have your students continue to work in groups and have them think of real-life scenarios that are protected by the 10 rights. Give each student 10 large index cards with holes punched in the upper left-hand corners of the cards.
- ✓ Have students label each index card with a number, 1 through 10, indicating each freedom of the Bill of Rights. Your students should then write a brief scenario that would be protected by each right. (Group members can consult each other as they work.)
- ✓ Have your students bind their cards with a piece of string or yarn.
- ✓ Allow students to volunteer to share some of their Bill of Rights scenario cards.
- ✓ Ask your students to write a paragraph or essay about how their lives would be different if the Bill of Rights was never created.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What did this activity teach you about the importance of the Bill of Rights?*
- ★ *Was it challenging to come up with a scenario for each right? Why or why not?*
- ★ *Could you fathom how your life would be different without the Bill of Rights? How might it be changed?*
- ★ *Which right is the most important to you? Explain why.*

**PLEDGE ANEW**

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students evaluate the responsibility they commit to each morning when pledging allegiance to their country.

MATERIALS

Pledge Anew handout; lined paper, pens/pencils

GET READY

- ✓ Copy the *Pledge Anew* handout so that you have a copy for each student.
- ✓ Make sure you have paper and pens/pencils for each student.
- ✓ Have paper and crayons available.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Say, *Sometimes when people repeat something over and over again they forget what they are saying. They may even confuse the words they are repeating. This is often the case with students saying the Pledge of Allegiance.*
- ✓ After having students say the Pledge of Allegiance, ask them what they think it means. Ask them what the phrase “liberty and justice for all” means to them. Inform your students that Francis Bellamy first wrote the Pledge in 1892. Ask them why they think he wrote it.
- ✓ Tell your students that they are going to write the pledge in their own words. Give each student a copy of the *Pledge Anew* handout and advise them to use words they would normally use themselves.

- ✓ Students who finish early can create a picture that accompanies their interpretation of the Pledge.
- ✓ Ask students to share their work with the rest of the class.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Why do you think the Pledge was first written?*
- ★ *What do the real words mean?*
- ★ *What is your favorite phrase? Why?*
- ★ *What does it mean to show allegiance to America?*
- ★ *Can our actions show allegiance as well as our words? How?*
- ★ *What are you promising when you recite the Pledge?*
- ★ *Did somebody else’s “translation” seem very different from your own? Is any one person’s interpretation wrong?*



PLEDGE ANEW

The words to the Pledge of Allegiance are written below. Read them over a few times and then write the Pledge in your own words in the space provided. When writing your version of the Pledge, think of reasons why Francis Bellamy wrote it. Lastly, state what you think you are promising when you say the Pledge.

The Pledge of Allegiance:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag
of the United States of America,
and to the Republic for which it stands,
one Nation under God, indivisible,
With Liberty and Justice for all.

In your own words...

What are you promising when you recite the pledge?



DEMOCRACY: WHO? WHAT? WHERE?

(35 minutes: 5 minutes on one day, 30 minutes on a later day)

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.
- ✓ Pair students.
- ✓ Duplicate a copy of your class roster to record which questions go to which pairs.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Place the slips face down. Let each pair select a question.
- ✓ Once every pair has a question, tell the students to read over their question several times.
- ✓ Say, *As partners, examine your question. Brainstorm: What do you expect the answers to be? What are some ways to figure out the answer? Record any first guesses as well as ways to find the answer.*
- ✓ Give students several days to determine their answers. To aid them in this process, provide students with some clues (for example, some answers may be found in the school library). You may want to provide additional printed resources (books, magazines, etc.) and/or access to the Internet to further aid your students.
- ✓ Have the pairs present their answers as oral reports of no more than one minute each.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Which answers to the questions were not what you expected originally? 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 could 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?

2. Name five democracies besides our own.

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

4. How many countries in the world are democracies?

5. What is the largest democracy on earth?

6. What are the names of our senators?

7. What are the names of our representatives?

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

9. What cities have been our nation's capital?

10. Name the guarantees protected by the Bill of Rights?

11. Who first settled the community we live in?

12. How many employees work directly for our local government?

13. What did our mayor do before becoming mayor?

14. Where are our city offices located?

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 for pen pals to exchange information about democracies in other parts of the world.
- ✓ Write to:
World Wise Schools
1990 K Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20526
- ✓ Look for pen pal opportunities on the Internet. A good Web site to visit is:
<http://www.stonesoup.com/main2/penpal.html>

INSTRUCTIONS

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

- ✓ Over a specified period of time, have your students put together profiles 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 are democracies the same in other countries? How are they 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?*



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

- ★ Where have you heard the word “democracy” before?
- ★ Who has the power in a democracy? The leader or the people he/she leads?
- ★ How are decisions made in a democracy?
- ★ Sometimes people don’t agree with the majority’s decisions. Should they still have to stand by them?
- ★ If you did not live in a democracy, what do you think you would be missing?
- ★ What is the best type of government?
- ★ 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

- ★ 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?
- ★ What types of people make effective leaders? What about effective presidents?
- ★ Do you know people who don’t care about our government? Why do you think they don’t care?
- ★ If the majority of Americans think something is good, are they always going to be right?
- ★ Why is democracy the fairest form of government?

A CITIZEN’S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- ★ The Constitution guarantees us many of our rights. Why do you think our forefathers felt that they needed to protect our rights?
- ★ What are some of our protected rights?
- ★ What does the 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 might some governments be different than others?
- ★ Can you think of differences in the way people live in different countries? What are some examples?
- ★ 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

Ideas of the Modern World: Democracy by Nathaniel Harris

OBJECTIVE

Students understand the idea of democracy and play out the concept.

MATERIALS

Ideas of the Modern World: Democracy - Nathaniel Harris

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

- ✓ Tell students that you are going to share with them a definition of democracy expressed by Abraham Lincoln, our 16th president.
- ✓ Say, *According to Lincoln, democracy is a, "government of the people, by the people, (and) for the people."* (excerpted from the Gettysburg address)
- ✓ Ask what this means to the students. Have them put this definition in their own words.
- ✓ Tell your students that they are now going to discover the many aspects of a democracy.
- ✓ Read selections from *Ideas of the Modern World: Democracy*.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Is the idea of democracy new? With whom did it originate? Is it the same idea or has it changed?*
- ★ *In a true democracy, all people participate in all the decision making. Are most of the world's democracies run this way? What do you think about that?*
- ★ *For most of human history, nations have not been run by democracies. Why do you think this has been the case?*
- ★ *In a democracy, can the majority do whatever they want? Can they take away the rights of everyone else? Why not?*

ACTIVITY

- ✓ Tell the students that you are going to play a game. Give them multiple game options to choose from.
- ✓ Ask, *What's the best way to choose a game? To have one person decide? To have a random group of people decide for everyone? Have everyone decide together?* Ask the students to explain why they think one option is better than another.
- ✓ Ask, *Is it easier to let one person decide, or maybe just a few? Wouldn't (student's name) like it best if he/she got to choose?* Listen to student responses. Say, *Oh, that is not good for everyone. Then what is a good way to decide?* Students will say that they should vote.
- ✓ Hold a vote over which game the class should play, having students write their game choice on pieces of paper (or create ballots). Play the game that gets the most votes.
- ✓ Ask the class if everyone got to play the game they wanted to play. Listen to responses.
- ✓ Point out that even though they all didn't get to play the game they wanted, through democracy they all had a voice and they all got to participate in a game.



CULMINATING ACTIVITY: GO ASK CITY HALL!

(1 hour)

OBJECTIVE

Students propose a park improvement or a similar youth-centered plan of action and walk through the processes of democracy and governance.

MATERIALS

Maps of the community; markers, pens and paper; letter writing materials

GET READY

- ✓ Obtain a map of the community from a source such as the Chamber of Commerce.
- ✓ Obtain a map (or create one) of the neighborhood immediately surrounding the school.
- ✓ Gather markers, pens, and paper.
- ✓ Divide your students into groups of four.
- ✓ Distribute the copy of the community map to each group.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Ask each group of students to imagine they are walking around the different areas featured on the map. Say, *What features of the town could be improved for the children living there?* (Ex. creating a new library, a new park, a new playground, etc.) Each group should discuss some possibilities and then design and illustrate a project idea for a part of the community.
- ✓ After the students present their responses, give each group a copy of the map of the school's immediate neighborhood.
- ✓ Say, *Let's look at our school's neighborhood. What is one small improvement in this part of town that could help children?* (Emphasize the importance of choosing a smaller project, like a new piece of playground equipment in a park or a street sign close to school.)

- ✓ Have each group suggest improvements for the area around the school.
- ✓ Vote: Which is the best idea presented to improve the school's neighborhood?
- ✓ Find out how much your improvement will cost the city by pricing the materials that are going to be installed. (Call the manufacturers of the equipment for a quote or call the city for an estimate.)
- ✓ Call City Hall and ask which office or board makes decisions in the area of your improvement. It might be the Library Department, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, etc.
- ✓ Have students write a letter (using proper letter format) to present the idea with a budget to the proper authorities.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *How would your community pay for the improvement you suggested?*
- ★ *Do you think the fact that you are students will help or hinder the implementation of your idea? Would you have a better chance of having your thoughts heard if you were of voting age? Why or why not?*
- ★ *What are other ways students can impact their communities?*

MORE!

Find out when your City Council or a public board meets. Encourage students and parents to attend such a meeting together. Ask those who attend to report about one proposal they observed at the meeting.

KIDS VOTING USA

3-5

THE RIGHT TO VOTE

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



INTRODUCTION TO THEME

The intent of this theme is for students to understand what suffrage is and why it is an important concept today. The theme’s activities fall under two main learning objectives:

- Students will understand what suffrage is within the context of American history.
- Students will understand what advantages and obstacles there are to suffrage today.



GENERAL ACTIVITIES

CONCEPT 1: WHAT IS SUFFRAGE?

Nonvoter Simulation 2
 Suffrage Timeline 3
 Vote Quotes 6

CONCEPT 2: SUFFRAGE TODAY

Know The Vote 8
 Around The World 11



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

Questions for Concept 1: What is Suffrage? 13
 Questions for Concept 2: Suffrage Today 13



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

The Day Gogo Went to Vote by Elinor Batezat Sisulu 14



CULMINATING ACTIVITY

Get Out The Vote! 16



NONVOTER SIMULATION

(45-60 minutes over the course of a week)

OBJECTIVE

Students understand the concept of suffrage – the right to vote.

MATERIALS

No materials are necessary for this activity.

GET READY

- ✓ Have three students volunteer to form a committee. Assign them to:
 - ✓ Choose three issues to vote on over the next three days that will directly affect the class, such as “We will study math all morning today” or “We will do extra homework tonight, but none tomorrow.”
 - ✓ Choose unfair criteria to determine the right to vote on each of the issues such as “those with birthdays from January to June.” Have different criteria for each of the three days. On the third day of voting you may want the voter criteria to be those who have not yet voted, so that everyone gets a chance to vote.
- ✓ Prepare a ballot box, ballots, a voting site, and voting issue signs.
- ✓ Supervise the ballot box and get ready to turn away students who do not have the right to vote.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Have the committee announce the voting issue each day and display it next to the ballot box. Do not display the voting criteria.
- ✓ Invite the students to vote one at a time by writing “Yes” or “No” on a ballot and placing it in the box.

- ✓ Instruct the members of the committee to quietly turn away those who do not meet the voting criteria.
- ✓ Announce the outcome and implement it. Repeat the process for the next two days.
- ✓ Inform the class that there will be a meeting held at the end of the week for complaints and discussion.
- ✓ Hold a class meeting to discuss the feelings of the students.

QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS MEETING

- ★ *Did those with the right to vote have more power than those without? Do you know that the right to vote is called suffrage?*
- ★ *When you did not get to vote, how did it feel to be powerless?*
- ★ *Do you think the process of granting suffrage has always been fair? Why or why not?*
- ★ *Do you have a say in the decisions our government makes? If yes, how?*
- ★ *Does everyone use their voting privilege? Why or why not?*
- ★ *What other powers do you have in this community, this state, this country?*
- ★ *How did U.S. citizens achieve suffrage? Do citizens of other countries have the right to vote?*



SUFFRAGE TIMELINE

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn that the population with voting rights has drastically changed over the years.

MATERIALS

U.S. Suffrage Timeline handout; *Suffrage Timeline Questions* handout

GET READY

- ✓ Break your students up into small groups of two or three (or if your students are younger, work together as a class on the activity).
- ✓ Make photocopies of the *U.S. Suffrage Timeline* handout and the *Suffrage Timeline Questions* handout for each group of students.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Provide a definition of suffrage and explain who has the right to vote today.
- ✓ Inform your students that they are going to investigate the history of the right to vote in America.
- ✓ Give each group copies of the *U.S. Suffrage Timeline* handout and the *Suffrage Timeline Questions* handout.
- ✓ Go over the *U.S. Suffrage Timeline* handout with the entire class.

- ✓ Have the groups use the *U.S. Suffrage Timeline* handout to answer the questions on the *Suffrage Timeline Questions* handout.
- ✓ Once each group has completed the *Suffrage Timeline Questions* handout, have a class discussion comparing and contrasting answers to the questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Which questions were the most difficult to answer? Why?*
- ★ *Were there questions that had no “right” answer? Which questions and why?*
- ★ *Were there any dates on the timeline that surprised you? How so?*
- ★ *Why is learning about suffrage so important for young citizens of the United States?*



U.S. SUFFRAGE TIMELINE

- 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.
- 1787** The Constitution is drafted. States are given the power to regulate their own suffrage laws and favor white male landowners.
- 1848** Because African-Americans and women will suffer discrimination at the polls, Elizabeth Cady Stanton sets forth resolutions for women's suffrage at the first convention of women's rights advocates.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 1890** Wyoming becomes a state and is the first state to provide suffrage for women in its Constitution.
- 1920** The 19th Amendment is ratified, giving women the right to vote.
- 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.
- 1957** The Civil Rights Act passes, allowing punishment for interference with, or disruption of, protection for African-American voters.
- 1964** The 24th Amendment passes, outlawing the poll tax.
- 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.
- 1970** The Voting Rights Act is amended to lower the voting age to 18 and ban the use of literacy tests.
- 1971** The 26th Amendment lowers the voting age from 21 to 18.



SUFFRAGE TIMELINE QUESTIONS

Name: _____

Use the *U.S. SUFFRAGE TIMELINE* handout to answer the following questions. If you can't give a definite answer to a question, state what additional information you would need to know.

1. You are a Native American living in Arizona in the 1920s. Can you vote?
2. You are a woman living in Wyoming in 1894. When were you first granted the right to vote?
3. What was the last U.S. population to earn the right to vote?
4. What U.S. Constitutional Amendment gave women the right to vote?
5. You are an African-American male living in Alabama in 1864. Can you vote?
6. You are an African-American male living in Alabama in the 1940s. Can you vote?
What might be keeping you from voting?
7. You are a white male in the 1790s and you do not own property. Can you vote?
8. What did the 24th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution accomplish?

**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



KNOW THE VOTE

(Time varies)

OBJECTIVE

Students experience voter apathy and ignorance.

MATERIALS

Materials for signs; materials for a ballot box; *Ballots* handout; clipboard; lined paper

GET READY

- ✓ Set up your classroom for a vote, but do not announce it to the class. Create a sign that says you are voting that day on (something that the students will care about). The sign should also say, “Place your ballot in the ballot box by the end of the day.” The sign should list several options to choose from to answer the ballot question. Place the sign somewhere visible in the room.
- ✓ Make copies of the *Ballots* handout and cut enough ballots for each student in your class to cast one vote.
- ✓ Place a ballot box and the ballots somewhere in the room that is visible but not too prominent.
- ✓ Next to the ballot box leave a clipboard with lined paper. Label the paper “Voter Registration.”
- ✓ For more information, see “Voter Apathy” in the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Come up with something for your class to vote on, but do not make any announcements to the class regarding the vote. Set up the classroom as described above and see if the students can figure out the voting process. Note: if students ask questions of you individually (such as where the ballot box is), answer them, but do not share any information with the class as a whole.

- ✓ At the end of the day, point out the sign that announced the vote you held that day. Then point out the ballot box and ballots as well as the registration clipboard. Ask the class, *Who noticed these things in the classroom? What did you do? Did you vote? Did you tell other people to vote?*
- ✓ Check the voter registration sheet and the ballot box. Count the ballots and announce the outcome of the vote. Make it clear that you had to register on the sheet before you could vote and therefore only those people who registered had their votes count.
- ✓ There will be a mix of reactions in the classroom from those that were not aware of the vote, those that knew of a vote but did not know how to cast their vote, those that voted but did not register, and those that registered and voted. In the possibility that no one correctly registered and voted, you should make sure you registered and voted. Point out that because you both registered and voted you got to make the decision for the class without their input.
- ✓ Carry out the decision of the vote.
- ✓ Tell the class that there will be a similar voting opportunity the next day. At the end of the day, change the sign to reflect a new question. See how many more people register and vote the next day and make a note of it to the class.

**KNOW THE VOTE** (continued)**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- ★ *How did you feel after the first day of voting?*
- ★ *How was this experience for you on the second day of voting?*
- ★ *If you did not vote the first day, why didn't you? (Didn't care...weren't sure what to do...)*
- ★ *If you voted the second day but not the first, what changed?*
- ★ *Why do you think 18-24-year-olds do not vote as much as other age groups in our country?*
- ★ *In general, why do you think so many people do not vote in our country? Is there anything we can do to change this?*
- ★ *How did you feel when you got to vote in this activity?*
- ★ *Did you know that there have been groups of people in our country who have not had the right to vote?*
- ★ *How do you think they felt? Why do you think they were left out of the process?*
- ★ *Can everyone in our country vote? Can everyone in the world vote?*



BALLOTS

<p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p>



AROUND THE WORLD

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students discover the role that suffrage plays in different forms of government.

MATERIALS

Slips of paper

GET READY

- ✓ Give each student a slip of paper: On a third of the slips should be written, “Democracy,” on another third, “Dictatorship” and on the last third, “Oligarchy.”
- ✓ Have your students divide into three different groups: one “Democracy” group, one “Dictatorship” group, and one “Oligarchy” group. Have each of the three groups meet in a different part of the room.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Remind your students that a democracy is a form of government in which policy is decided by the majority of adult citizen’s votes.
- ✓ Ask your class, *Are you aware that there are many people in the world who don’t live in a democracy? Some people live in countries with other forms of government, such as dictatorships and oligarchies.*
- ✓ Explain that in a dictatorship one person has absolute and complete control over the government; this person, the dictator, cannot be held responsible for what he or she does to the general population.
- ✓ Let your class know that in the case of oligarchies, just a few people make the decisions for everyone.

- ✓ Ask the groups to consider a question like, “What is your favorite movie?” or “What is your favorite color?” Tell them that in a few minutes their group will need to answer the question.
- ✓ Have those students in the “Democracy” group answer the question in a way that allows everyone to share their opinion, such as voting. Provide paper to this group to act as ballots.
- ✓ Randomly select one person in the “Dictatorship” group to be the dictator. Have that student answer the question for the group based on what he/she thinks is best. Make sure the other “Dictatorship” group members remain quiet and do not give their opinion.
- ✓ Similarly, at random select three people in the oligarchy group to answer the question for the entire group. The rest of the group members must remain quiet.
- ✓ Have the groups give their responses to the question.
- ✓ Next, have the groups switch to a different form of government (i.e. dictatorship to democracy, democracy to oligarchy, and oligarchy to dictatorship) and vote on another question. Have the groups switch governments one last time, so each student has experienced each type of government.
- ✓ Discuss with your class the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of governments. Use the discussion questions found on the next page.

**AROUND THE WORLD** (continued)

- ✓ To end the activity, hold a vote on what your class's favorite form of government is. If any students list oligarchy or dictatorship, explain that if the classroom was an oligarchy/dictatorship and you (the teacher) were the leader, then it is likely the vote they just had would have never occurred.
- ★ *Which form of government allows citizens to have the most input in decision-making?*
- ★ *Why do you think some countries are democracies and others oligarchies/dictatorships?*
- ★ *What has this activity taught you about suffrage?*
- ★ *What has this activity taught you about being an American citizen?*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What are the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of governments we examined?*
- ★ *Which form of government did you like the most? Which one did you like the least?*



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?
- ★ Who are some groups of people that 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?

SUFFRAGE TODAY

- ★ Who has the right to vote today?
- ★ How might our country be different if the power to vote was still limited to those who had it at the time of the writing 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?
- ★ 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 in general do not vote in our country? Is there anything we can do to change this?
- ★ What do you think it will feel like the first time you vote?



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

The Day Gogo Went to Vote by Elinor Batezat Sisulu, Illustrated by Sharon Wilson

OBJECTIVE

Students examine the right to vote by comparing suffrage in America to suffrage in South Africa.

MATERIALS

The Day Gogo Went to Vote - Elinor Batezat Sisulu; *Venn Diagram* handout

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

- ✓ Ask your students to share something they were excited to do for the first time: Ride a bike? Fly in a plane? Go to school? Have your students break up into small groups and share what they were excited to do and how it felt when they finally got to do it.
- ✓ Tell your students the woman in *The Day Gogo Went to Vote* waited decades to vote because of the color of her skin. Ask, *Can you imagine how she felt?* (Take responses) *Let's find out.*
- ✓ Read *The Day Gogo Went to Vote*.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Did you come to understand why the right to vote is so important by reading this story? What makes it so important?*
- ★ *In America, who were some people that used to be denied the right to vote and other rights?*
- ★ *What did they do to earn the right to vote?*
- ★ *What is suffrage? What does this word have to do with the story?*
- ★ *What are the similarities and differences between the United States and South Africa when it comes to the right to vote?*
- ★ *After having read the story, how do you think Gogo felt the first time she was allowed to vote?*

ACTIVITY

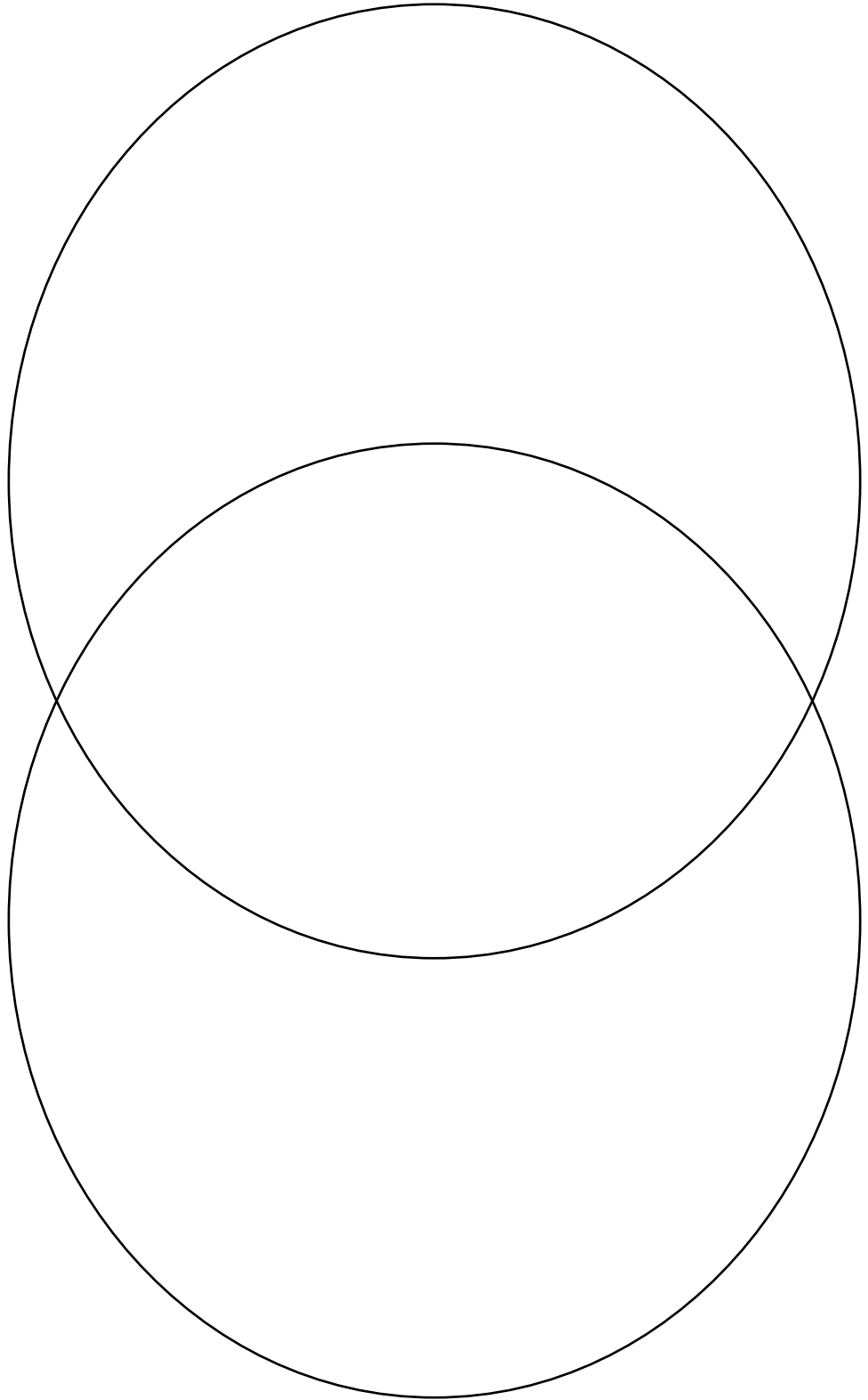
- ✓ After reading the story, divide your students into groups of two and ask them to compare and contrast suffrage in America versus suffrage in South Africa.
- ✓ After brainstorming the similarities and differences between the two countries, tell your students that they will be given a handout where they need to list any conclusions they have come to.
- ✓ Explain what a Venn Diagram is and how it is used.
- ✓ Pass out the activity handout for the students to complete.
- ✓ Create a large Venn Diagram on the board for the entire class. Call on volunteers to come up to the board and fill in the diagram using their completed handouts.
- ✓ Ask, *What conclusions can we draw from the completed diagram?*



The Day Gogo Went to Vote
by Elinor Batezat Sisulu, Illustrated by Sharon Wilson

VENN DIAGRAM

Compare and contrast the right to vote in the United States with the right to vote in South Africa. Use the Venn Diagram below. The place where the two circles overlap should show the characteristics that both the United States and South Africa have in common.





CULMINATING ACTIVITY: GET OUT THE VOTE!

(Time varies)

OBJECTIVE

Students participate in a variety of activities to increase the number of adult voters and/or kid voters who attend the polls on Election Day.

MATERIALS

The materials needed depend on what project the students decide to undertake.

GET READY

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

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Have students brainstorm responses to the following question: “How can we increase the number of registered voters/kid voters who will attend the polls on election day?”
- ✓ Here are some possibilities to add to students’ lists if they do not come up with them:
 - ✓ Posters
 - ✓ Flyers
 - ✓ Letter to the editor of a local and/or school newspaper
 - ✓ Public service announcement on the radio
 - ✓ Voter registration drive
 - ✓ Calling registered voters to remind them to vote
 - ✓ Setting up a public display in the library, mall, or outside a grocery store
 - ✓ Contacting neighbors, friends, relatives, etc.
- ✓ Decide which activity or activities students will undertake to increase the voter turnout. Students could work in small groups or the entire class could work on one project.

- ✓ Have students keep track of how many kids and/or adults they influence to vote. A large thermometer-type graph could be posted in the classroom and filled in periodically as students complete their activities. (Of course, they won’t be able to discern the effects of all activities, for example, posters and flyers.) As a school or a class, students could set a goal to influence a certain number (100? 1000?) of people to go to the polls. If they worked with the adult population, they could check the Auditor’s Web pages, contact the Auditor’s office, and/or contact the Election Commissioner for voter turnout records. Be sure to compare results to the voter turnout of the last comparable election.
- ✓ After the election, discuss in class whether students think they made a difference.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What did you learn about the challenges of influencing people to vote?*
- ★ *Did you make a difference? If so, how?*
- ★ *Was this activity easier or harder than you thought it would be? Why?*
- ★ *What was the best approach in trying to get people to vote?*
- ★ *Do you think most citizens appreciate their right to vote? Why do you feel that way?*
- ★ *What challenges do we face that prevent people from voting? What can you do about those challenges?*
- ★ *What did this activity teach you about the right to vote?*

KIDS VOTING USA

3-5

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

Using The World Wide Web 2
 Judging Propaganda 3
 Student Reporters 5

CONCEPT 2: COMMUNICATING YOUR POSITION

Bumper Stickers 6
 Spokespeople For Kids Voting USA 8
 Debates For Classroom Decisions 9

CONCEPT 3: WORKING TOGETHER

Ice Cream In A Bag 10
 Building A Story 11
 Eleusis 12

CONCEPT 4: HAVING AN IMPACT

Things To Do On My First Day In Office 13
 E-mail, Snail Mail 15
 Dollars And Sense 16



OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

Questions for Concept 1: Gathering and Weighing Information 18
 Questions for Concept 2: Communicating Your Position 18
 Questions for Concept 3: Working Together 18
 Questions for Concept 4: Having an Impact 18



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

The Kid’s Guide to Social Action by Barbara A. Lewis 19



CULMINATING ACTIVITY

Learn And Serve 21



USING THE WORLD WIDE WEB

(30-40 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn how to navigate the World Wide Web and locate Web sites of interest.

MATERIALS

Access to the Internet

GET READY

- ✓ 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. You may also want to engage them 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.).

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Ask your students to think of characteristics of a good decision (examples: well thought out or based on information from many sources).
- ✓ 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 any topic including history, voting, democracy, and so on.*
- ✓ Tell your students that they are going to work in pairs to navigate the Web and research a topic.
- ✓ First, 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 various Web sites.

- ✓ Tell the pairs that as they “surf” they should pay attention to the things they want to learn more about: the presidency, Congress, the U.S. Constitution, etc.
- ✓ Give the pairs a few minutes to determine what they would like to research.
- ✓ Next, have the pairs use search engines to research their topic of interest. They can use any of the popular search engines: Yahoo!, Google, etc.
- ✓ Inform your students that entering keywords like “voting,” “election,” “campaign,” and “president” might help them narrow their search for relevant Web sites.
- ✓ Give the pairs 10 to 15 minutes to visit several Web sites relating to their topic.
- ✓ Have the pairs report on what they learned. They should be prepared to reference what Web sites they got their information from.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Did you find it challenging to use the Internet? If yes, how so?*
- ★ *Was it easy to search for information on your topic? Why or why not?*
- ★ *How did you feel about the amount of information you found? The quality of the information?*
- ★ *How do you think the World Wide Web might be helpful to voters?*



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.
- ✓ Share with your students that advertisers, candidates, and the media at large often use propaganda techniques to influence opinions — these approaches can be found in television, the radio, and in magazines and newspapers. Provide examples to your class.
- ✓ Share with your students information from 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 your students come up with their own examples now. They may choose a technique and apply it to a product, a candidate, or an issue.
- ✓ Your students should now 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 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 identify and share the propaganda technique 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 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"/> |



STUDENT REPORTERS

(45 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students identify the parts of a newspaper article and write their own article.

MATERIALS

A local or national newspaper (if possible, get copies for your entire class)

GET READY

- ✓ Bring in a local or national newspaper and pick a news article to share with the class.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Describe to your students the various parts that make up a newspaper article: *The headline is meant to grab the reader's attention, the lead paragraph contains specific details and important information about the article, the body gives supporting information and details about the lead, and the conclusion sums up the content of the article.*
- ✓ Using the article you selected before, explain how the different parts of the news article fit the descriptions you provided: *See how this headline is catchy? See how most of the important information is in the lead paragraph?*
- ✓ Give copies of the newspaper to your students (if you were able to get copies) and have them examine an article and identify its various parts. If you do not have additional copies of the newspaper, break your students up into groups of three or four and give an article from your newspaper to each group.
- ✓ Have your students label the parts of their article (in pen or marker).

- ✓ Invite individuals or groups to read their article aloud, identify its various parts, and explain why they labeled the parts as they did.
- ✓ Tell your students that each of them is going to write their own article and in doing so the class will generate its own newspaper. Give the students some of the following options for their assignment:
 - ✓ Write an article based on an event in the classroom, school, or community.
 - ✓ Write an article based on an event or incident that occurred in a book the class read.
 - ✓ Create an article based on a picture selected from a magazine or newspaper.
- ✓ Give your students a few days to complete their articles. Then have your students share their articles with the rest of the class. Compile all the articles into a class newspaper to be brought home.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What does a newspaper article have to have in order for people to want to read it?*
- ★ *Why is the article headline so important?*
- ★ *What happens if you have a weak lead paragraph? What about a weak body or conclusion?*
- ★ *Was it difficult writing an interesting article?*
- ★ *What did you learn from writing your article?*



BUMPER STICKERS

(20 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students advocate for a cause or issue through the creation of bumper stickers.

MATERIALS

Bumper Stickers handout; paper (preferably label paper); drawing and writing materials

GET READY

- ✓ A few days in advance of doing this activity, ask your students to keep a watchful eye out for bumper stickers.
- ✓ Copy enough of the *Bumper Stickers* handout so that each student has one bumper sticker. Use label paper if possible.
- ✓ Cut the bumper stickers from the handout apart.
- ✓ Gather markers and crayons.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Discuss with students the purpose of bumper stickers. If possible, bring in examples and discuss what makes a bumper sticker effective.
- ✓ Draw bumper sticker examples on the board. First draw effective bumper stickers with catchy, large print. Next, draw ineffective ones with small, messy print. Then ask: *Which would you consider well done and eye-catching, and which would you consider poorly done and uninteresting? Why?*
- ✓ From the answers, keep track of what makes a good bumper sticker. List on the board the qualities of a good bumper sticker:
 - ✓ Short, catchy message
 - ✓ Large, neat letters
 - ✓ Clear, heavy lines
 - ✓ Bright colors

- ✓ Ask the class to describe bumper stickers they have seen and liked.
- ✓ Divide your students into groups of three.
- ✓ Instruct each student to design a bumper sticker promoting a favorite issue, candidate, etc. They may draw their design on scrap paper before using the label paper.
- ✓ Have students consult with their group members to make sure everyone used the graphic principles on the board.
- ✓ Let the students draw and color in their bumper stickers.
- ✓ Students can share their bumper stickers with the class for feedback.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Why do you think people put bumper stickers on their cars?*
- ★ *Do you think bumper stickers help sway people's opinions on issues, candidates, or other subjects? If so, how?*
- ★ *Do you think creating bumper stickers is a good way to express how you feel about something? Why or why not?*
- ★ *What are some other ways you can express or share an opinion?*









MORE!

If they get consent from the appropriate adult family member, students can place their bumper sticker on the family car.

Have your students help you collect bumper stickers for a bulletin board. Discuss whether they are effective or ineffective.



BUMPER STICKERS

   	   
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SPOKESPEOPLE FOR KIDS VOTING USA

(Time varies)

OBJECTIVE

Students advocate voting throughout their school and community.

MATERIALS

Materials vary depending on what the students do to advocate voting.

GET READY

- ✓ Ask for student volunteers who would like to act as spokespeople for Kids Voting USA. Inform them that they have to be passionate about voting and democracy and willing to share that passion with their fellow students.
- ✓ Meet with the students who you think are responsible enough for the position.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Gather the students who will act as spokespeople for Kids Voting USA. Inform them that they have been selected to advocate Kids Voting USA because of their interest in democracy as well as their level of maturity.
- ✓ Arrange for these students to meet once or twice to create and carry out projects to promote voting throughout the school. Ask, *What messages do you want to share with the rest of the school? How can you influence other people to vote? How can you share with other students your passion for voting and democracy?*
- ✓ Students may come up with their own ideas for messages and how to disseminate these messages, though you may mention these ideas as a start:
 - ✓ Make signs to encourage classes and students to participate in the election.
 - ✓ Bring in daily information for an election bulletin board.

- ✓ Sponsor a forum on an issue or election.
- ✓ Make tally sheets for the school vote. This can be compiled in graph form.
- ✓ Count votes for the whole school.
- ✓ Count votes by class and grade level for comparison. Speak about apathy and how it influences a vote.
- ✓ Announce events and results over the intercom.
- ✓ Continue to collect material involving candidates and issues to inform the school on an ongoing basis.
- ✓ Remind your students to be conscious of when they are sharing opinions and when they are sharing facts. (They want to influence people to vote, but they should be careful not to influence how people vote.)
- ✓ Reward your Kids Voting USA spokespeople!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Does anyone have the job you just had during an adult election? Who are they and what do they do?*
- ★ *What can you do to promote an election when you are an adult?*
- ★ *Was it hard to convince people to vote? If yes, what made it so hard?*
- ★ *How were you best able to communicate your message to the other students? Do you think you were effective in sharing your message?*

MORE!

Have your student advocates share their message with the adult community, either in school or at home.



DEBATES FOR CLASSROOM DECISIONS

(30-40 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students debate with each other over issues relevant to the classroom.

MATERIALS

Anything that could aid in holding a classroom debate (mock podiums, etc.)

GET READY

- ✓ Find a tape of a debate, preferably a former Presidential or Vice-presidential debate. (Refer to the “Recommended Films” section of the Bibliography.)

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Show parts of the videotaped debate to the class.
- ✓ Discuss debate form and etiquette with your class.
- ✓ Hold debates in class concerning classroom decisions:
 - ✓ Center the debate around an issue that the students care about and will have divided opinions over: What should we play at recess today? Should we have math in the morning or afternoon tomorrow? Etc.
 - ✓ Identify students who want to represent and defend their point of view.
- ✓ Each student debater should present and defend their argument and be prepared to critique other students’ arguments.
- ✓ Following the debate, have your students vote and decide the issue.
- ✓ Implement the results of the vote.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What is the purpose of holding a debate?*
- ★ *Are debates an effective way to get information about candidates and issues? Why or why not?*
- ★ *How were people effective in presenting their point of view during the debate? Why was this effective?*
- ★ *What can we learn from a debate that we can’t learn in other ways?*
- ★ *How else can we get information before making important decisions?*



ICE CREAM IN A BAG

(20-30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students work together to decide on an ice cream flavor and to create ice cream.

MATERIALS

Measuring cups, measuring spoons, milk, vanilla, sugar, rock salt, ice, one or more 1-gallon Ziploc® freezer bags, one or more 1-pint Ziploc freezer bags; eating utensils and bowls/cups; any ingredients needed to create the ice cream flavor the class has voted on

GET READY

- ✓ Gather your students together and tell them they will be eating as a class tomorrow, but first they need to decide on an ice cream flavor.
- ✓ Help your students hold a debate/forum and a vote to choose an ice cream flavor. Recommend the students pick a flavor that the majority of the class will enjoy — it is their goal to work together to find a flavor that everyone will like.
- ✓ Hold an “Ice Cream Election” and graph the results of the vote.
- ✓ Once the students have made a final decision, prepare the materials above for the day when you will be making the ice cream as a class. Make sure you have:
 - ✓ measuring cups, measuring spoons, milk, vanilla, sugar, rock salt, ice, one or more 1-gallon Ziploc freezer bags, one or more 1-pint Ziploc freezer bags
 - ✓ the ingredients needed for the flavor the class has voted on (ex. chocolate, strawberries, etc.)
 - ✓ spoons and either bowls or cups

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Help the students mix the following in 1-pint freezer bags:

- ✓ 1 cup milk
- ✓ 4 T sugar
- ✓ 1 t vanilla flavoring
- ✓ Put the following in the gallon freezer bags:
 - ✓ 2 cups ice
 - ✓ 3 T salt
 - ✓ the sealed pint bag
- ✓ Seal the gallon bags.
- ✓ Pass the bags around so all can cooperate to make the ice cream. Students should gently squeeze the bags but also make sure the bags don't pop open.
- ✓ Eat the ice cream while discussing the questions below.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Was the flavor of the ice cream the flavor you wanted? If the student says no, ask them if it was still a fair process. Remind them, if necessary, that they were able to express their opinion both verbally and in a vote.*
- ★ *Would it be fair if we only let the boys vote on the flavor? Why not?*
- ★ *Were you happy with the flavor the class selected? Were you happy with the process we took to determine the flavor?*
- ★ *Was it hard to work as a class to determine the flavor of the ice cream? Why or why not?*
- ★ *Did the ice cream taste good even if you voted for another flavor?*
- ★ *Was it easy or difficult to make the ice cream as a class? Why?*
- ★ *If we did this again, what could you do to get more people to vote for the flavor you wanted most?*
- ★ *Do adults ever do anything similar to what we just did? Can you give me an example? (elections, presidential debates, etc.)*

**BUILDING A STORY**

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students work collaboratively to write well-developed stories.

MATERIALS

Lined paper; writing utensils

GET READY

- ✓ Break your class up into groups of three or four.
- ✓ Write these five words on the board:
 - ✓ Election
 - ✓ Vote
 - ✓ President
 - ✓ Campaign
 - ✓ Ballot

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Inform your students that they will be working with their groups to collaboratively write a story.
- ✓ Tell the groups that their stories must be at least two paragraphs long and that all students in each group must take part in creating the story.
- ✓ Encourage your students to listen to and support their fellow group members as they work.
- ✓ Inform each group that they need to make sure that their story has all essential elements:
 - ✓ A setting
 - ✓ Characters
 - ✓ A problem
 - ✓ Events
 - ✓ A resolution

- ✓ Have the groups choose four of the five words on the board to incorporate into their story.
- ✓ Encourage your students to write creatively with strong action words and descriptive language.
- ✓ Give the groups a specified amount of time to work together on their stories.
- ✓ At the conclusion of the activity, have your class come back together and the groups share their stories out loud.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Was it difficult to work together on this assignment with your classmates? If yes, what made it challenging?*
- ★ *Was it easy to incorporate the words on the board into your story? Why or why not?*
- ★ *Do you think working in groups made your story better than it would have been if you were working alone? If yes, explain why.*
- ★ *What did you learn from this activity?*

**ELEUSIS**

(20 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students work together to create and decode patterns.

- ✓ The groups take turns creating and deciphering patterns until you decide the activity is over.

MATERIALS

Packs of cards (one pack for each group of four students)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**GET READY**

- ✓ Help the students divide into teams of four.
- ✓ Group each team of four against another team of four.
- ✓ Give each team a pack of cards.

- ★ *How did you figure out what the patterns were?* (The answers will possibly be something like, “I saw a little bit of a pattern, then I tried it on the rest of the cards and if it didn’t work, I tried another idea.”)
- ★ *Did it help you to figure out the pattern by having teammates?*
- ★ *How did it feel to figure out the patterns as a team?*
- ★ *Was it difficult to work together and create a pattern for the other team to guess? Why or why not?*
- ★ *When have there been other times that you had to work together with other people?*
- ★ *Why does it help to have groups of people cooperate and work together?*

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Explain the following rules to the students: Using a pack of regular playing cards, one team makes up a pattern at the beginning of the game, then lays out the cards in a row following the pattern. The other team tries to figure out what the pattern is as the row is being laid out. For instance, in an example too simple to use, the first team might lay the cards out in alternating colors—one red, then one black. Or the first team might lay them out alternating even and odd cards. Another example: 1,7,8,2,6,8,3,5,8,4,4,8. This pattern is $1+7=8$, $2+6=8$, $3+5=8$, $4+4=8$. (Aces count as 1 and jacks, queens, and kings as 11, 12, and 13.)
- ✓ Once one group has guessed correctly, they may lay the cards out in their pattern.

This activity was developed with funding by the Intel Corporation. The game was invented by Robert Abbott and found in *Mathematics, A Human Endeavor* by Harold R. Jacobs.



THINGS TO DO ON MY FIRST DAY IN OFFICE

(20-25 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students think up ways to improve their communities as if they were mayor and then envision their own role in making things better.

MATERIALS

Things To Do On My First Day In Office handout; writing and drawing materials

GET READY

- ✓ Duplicate the *Things To Do On My First Day In Office* handout for each student in your class.
- ✓ Prepare a Kids Voting bulletin board area to display the papers.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Say, *Have you ever wondered what the mayor of our community does? What do you think he does?* Listen to responses.
- ✓ While students brainstorm several of the mayor's jobs, write them on the board. They may include planning, listening to people's problems, getting things built for the community, etc.
- ✓ Distribute the handouts and say, *I want you to pretend that each of you has just been elected mayor of our city! Tomorrow will be your first day in office. What do you need to do, and want to do, starting tomorrow?*
- ✓ The students will list their priorities and, if they wish, color or decorate their papers.

- ✓ Have your students pair up to exchange papers. Each student should select their favorite idea from the other person's list.
- ✓ Make a master list of suggestions on the board.
- ✓ Ask your students if there are any suggestions on the board that they can do now; they can act on one of the suggestions, depending on its feasibility.
- ✓ Display the papers on your Kids Voting bulletin board, labeling them with the children's last names: "Mayor Smith," "Mayor Johnson," etc.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What are the qualifications you need to be the real mayor of our town?* (Review these for your community. Generally, you must be a resident for a specified time and a registered voter.)
- ★ *In what ways can you help to make the plans for our community come true?* (Choose some of the students' plans and brainstorm children's roles in bringing them about. Example: "Make our town cleaner" can translate into "We will never throw litter in the streets.")

MORE!

Students can send their papers to the mayor or they can summarize their plans in a classroom letter. Mail the letter to the mayor's office or send it via e-mail.

Thanks to Carol Sharkey of Providence Day School, Charlotte, North Carolina, for this activity.



THINGS TO DO ON MY FIRST DAY IN OFFICE

THINGS TO DO ON MY FIRST DAY IN OFFICE

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**E-MAIL, SNAIL MAIL**

(30-40 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students send letters, postcards, and/or e-mails to an elected official.

MATERIALS

Paper or cardstock; writing implements: pens, pencils

GET READY

- ✓ Students can write letters or prepare “postcards.” To create postcards, cut sheets of cardstock in half on a paper cutter.
- ✓ Gather pens and/or pencils.
- ✓ If your school has e-mail capability in your classroom, through a technology classroom or media center, schedule your class there during the week you would like to compose the letters. E-mail is a great alternative to paper mail.
- ✓ If your PTA has a special budget for the Kids Voting USA program, you might buy a postcard stamp for each student. If not, the students can deliver or mail the postcards 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 is important that they understand how we feel about the job they are doing as well as what is important to us.*
- ✓ Ask your students to think about something they would like to share with an elected official. Have the mailing addresses/e-mail addresses of various elected officials available for your students.

- ✓ Tell your students to compose a letter to the official and sign it. They should use the 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 your visit to the technology classroom or the media center, if your classroom is not equipped with the Internet. Ask the technology or media specialist, if there is one, to explain what e-mail is and how it works. Students can always send messages electronically as well as by “snail mail.”
- ✓ Explain the term “snail mail” — the post office is as slow as a snail, compared with the speed of e-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 “You are not making a difference?”*

MORE!

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



DOLLARS AND SENSE

(20 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students allocate their “dollars” toward the improvement of the community priorities they deem most important.

MATERIALS

Kids Voting Dollars handout

GET READY

- ✓ Duplicate a page of four “dollars” for each student. Cut the dollars apart.
- ✓ Label five boxes:
 - ✓ CRIME FIGHTING
 - ✓ TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION
 - ✓ REDUCING AIR & WATER POLLUTION
 - ✓ ARTS AND RECREATION
 - ✓ SCHOOLS

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Explain to your students that local communities obtain money to provide services in several ways: they use taxes (example: sales tax); they issue bonds (investments in the city that are paid back years later); they receive money from state and national governments.
- ✓ Say, *Today each of you will decide how to distribute extra money to fund programs in our community. You have four dollars to give and five kinds of services to choose from. You may distribute your dollars any way you want, depositing as many dollars as you wish in each box.*
- ✓ Ask your students to identify the greatest needs of their town, and then to walk up to the boxes and spend their dollars.

- ✓ After the first round, count the allocations. Write the results on the board.
- ✓ Instruct your students to create graphs representing the total number of dollars that went to each area.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

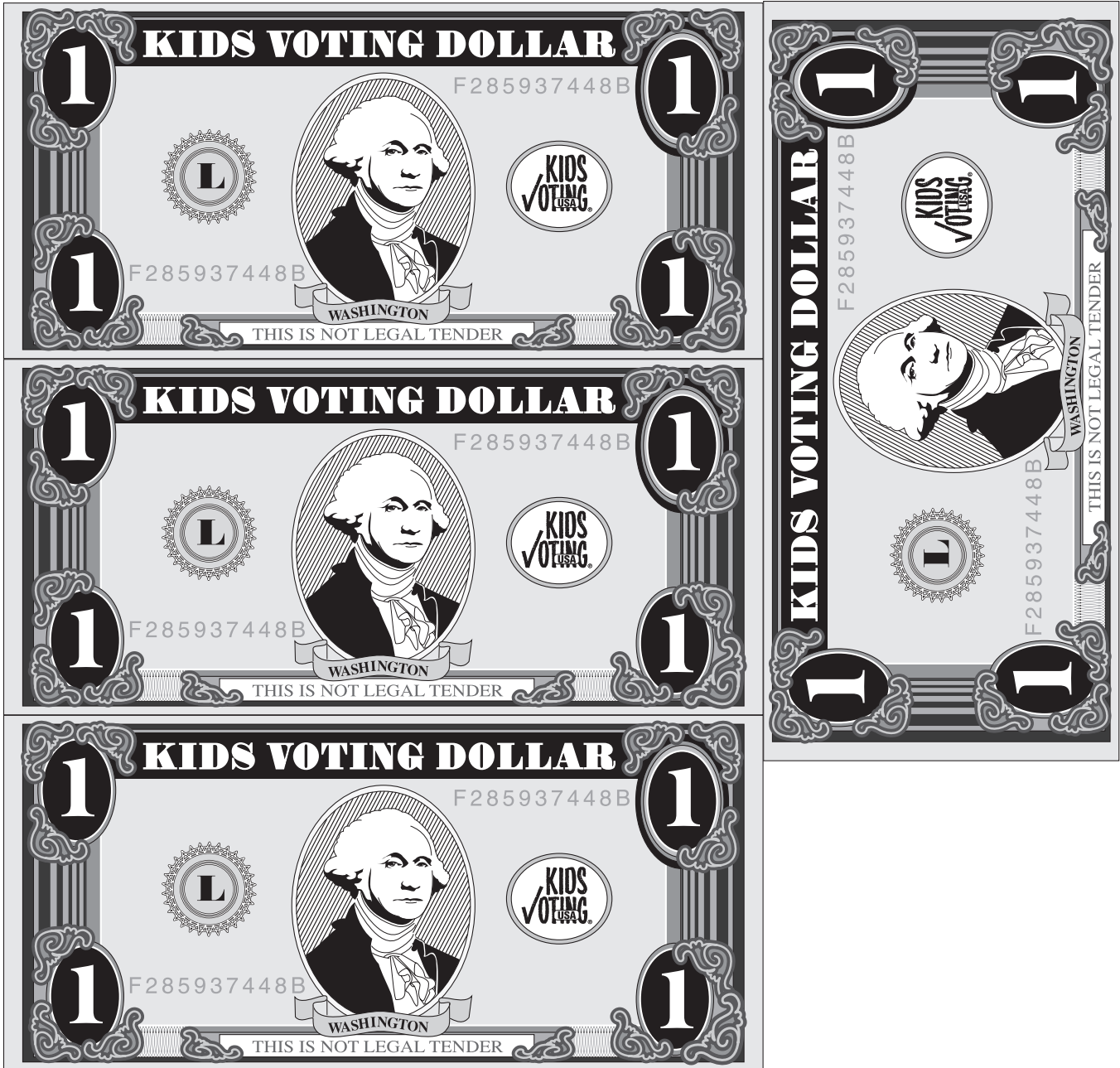
- ★ *Why did you give out the money the way you did? Which programs seemed most important to you?*
- ★ *What have you heard in the news about those five areas? Is anything good happening? Anything bad?*
- ★ *Is it important that we know what is going on in these different areas? Why or why not?*
- ★ *What can we do to have an impact in these different areas?*

MORE!

Invite a city planner to address your class. Send this lesson to his/her office beforehand. Ask him/her to plan his/her talk around how he/she would spend the four “dollars” in your simulation. Encourage your students to bring to class any election paraphernalia they find for a bulletin board. Ask them to look in magazines, newspapers, and mailed brochures.



KIDS VOTING DOLLARS





OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

GATHERING AND WEIGHING INFORMATION

- ★ What are sources of information? Are these all good sources of information?
- ★ What makes one source of information better than another?
- ★ Is everything you hear true? How do you decide if something is true?
- ★ What goes into making 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

- ★ When are times that you need to share an opinion?
- ★ Is it always easy to say how you feel?
- ★ What do you think is a good way to share an opinion with someone else?
- ★ Do people always agree with you?
- ★ What do you do when someone disagrees with you?
- ★ What does it mean to communicate?
- ★ What makes a good communicator?

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?
- ★ 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 out in 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 good for your community? Describe that time.



LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY

The Kid's Guide to Social Action by Barbara A. Lewis

OBJECTIVE

Students plan and implement service projects to create positive change in their communities.

MATERIALS

The Kid's Guide to Social Action - Barbara A. Lewis

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

- ✓ To engage your class in the book, read aloud pages 50 and 51. These two pages comprise a section called “Kids in Action.” The passage shares the story of a girl who created a program to help the homeless.
- ✓ Ask your students, *What do you think inspired Amber to create Happy Helpers for the Homeless? What did Amber accomplish in her service? What do you think Amber got out of her volunteer work?*
- ✓ Tell your students that they are going to learn about a group of students who, like Amber, set out to create positive change in their community.
- ✓ Have your students read the story of Jackson Elementary School students found on pages 7-11.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Was it easy for the Jackson Elementary School students to solve their problem? What made it challenging?*
- ★ *How did the students educate themselves about the problem they were confronted with?*
- ★ *Wouldn't it have been easy for the students to give up on their project? Were people eager to help them? Why do you think they kept at it? What did this story teach you about being persistent?*

- ★ *These Jackson Elementary School students inspired other students at their school to do great things. Have they inspired you? In what way?*
- ★ *What can you do to have an impact in your community?*

ACTIVITY

- ✓ Make copies of the *What's the Problem* handout found on page 16 of the book. Make enough copies so that each of your students has one.
- ✓ Copy the *Brainstorming I: Come Up With Ideas* and the *Brainstorming II: Choose Your Main Idea* handouts found on pages 177 and 178 so that you have a two-sided handout for each of your students.
- ✓ Inform your students that they are going to create positive change in their community, much as did the Jackson Elementary School students they read about — they will identify a problem and plan a service project that helps address the problem.
- ✓ Divide your students into small groups of four or five.
- ✓ Distribute the *What's the Problem* handout and have the small groups identify topics of interest to them.
- ✓ With topics from the handout in mind, have the groups decide what problem they would like to address. (Students can always choose a topic/problem that is not on the handout.)

**LITERATURE CONNECTION ACTIVITY** (continued)

- ✓ Once the groups have chosen a problem to address, have them come up with service ideas to address the problem. They can use the *Brainstorming I: Come Up With Ideas* handout to come up with service possibilities and they can narrow their search to one option using the top section of the *Brainstorming II: Choose Your Main Idea* handout.
- ✓ The groups should next complete the bottom of the *Brainstorming II: Choose Your Main Idea* handout in order to create a plan of action for their selected service project. Before students do this, however, encourage them to learn more about their selected problem by surfing the Web, by reading magazines articles, and so on.
- ✓ Give the groups time to present their plans of action.
- ✓ Have your students vote on the service project idea that interests them most. (Have each student vote twice so that they do not vote solely for their own idea.)
- ✓ Have your class implement the selected project. (Your students can use the book to help them identify the resources and tools available to them.)
- ✓ Have your students use journals for reflection as they implement the service project.
- ✓ Celebrate the success of the service project.



CULMINATING ACTIVITY: LEARN AND SERVE

(1 hour in class; time varies out of class)

OBJECTIVE

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

MATERIALS

Newspaper articles; additional materials determined by the nature of the service project

GET READY

- ✓ Prepare newspaper articles that discuss community problems: trash, hunger, etc.
- ✓ Arrange to have someone from the community come to your class to speak about local community needs and problems.
- ✓ Consider things that will determine the nature of a service project: money, transportation, supervision, etc.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ For homework one night, ask students to talk to their parents/guardians about what they think are the biggest problems in their community. The next day, have students share in class and add these ideas to a list of community problems on the board.
- ✓ Have your students come up with additional ideas to add to this list by having them read through the newspaper articles you collected. (You may want to distribute entire newspapers if your students are familiar with reading them.)
- ✓ Have your students add any additional community problems they can think of to the list.
- ✓ The next day, have someone from the community come to your class to speak about local community needs and problems. This

could be a public official such as the mayor or 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 more about how they originated and what solutions might be effective.

- ✓ Tell your class that they are going to address one of these problems, but first they need to decide which problem. Have your class vote to decide which problem to address.
 - ✓ Now that you have a problem for your class to consider, ask your students to come up with possible solutions to the problem. List these ideas on the board.
 - ✓ In order to identify the correct project for your class, encourage the students to think about which of these activities would be most feasible and desirable to execute. The following questions will be helpful to consider:
 - ✓ How much time do we have for the service activity?
 - ✓ What kinds of support do we need (money, transportation, adult supervision) and where can we find this support?
 - ✓ Which ideas are likely to have the greatest impact on the problem?
 - ✓ Which ideas do we most want to do?
- Note: It is important as the teacher that you “veto” any ideas at this point that the students are advocating for that you find unacceptable or unreasonable. Be sure to explain to the students why that idea will not be included in the final list.

**CULMINATING ACTIVITY: LEARN AND SERVE** (continued)

- ✓ Vote on one project idea for the class to complete.
- ✓ After completing the service activity, have students reflect on their experience in writing or discussion.
- ✓ To conclude the experience, celebrate students' efforts to make a difference. This could be as simple as a popcorn party, extra recess, a pizza picnic, or as involved as a public event in the community with student awards.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What are some of our community's needs and problems? Why do you consider these problems? How do you know these are needs and problems in our community?*
- ★ *Was it hard to come up with a service project for the class? Why or why not?*
- ★ *What was hard, easy, fun or difficult about the service experience?*
- ★ *Did the class make a difference?*
- ★ *What did we learn from this experience and how could we apply that learning to future efforts to improve our community?*

MORE!

If the service project the class undertook is not one that involved influencing public opinion, you might also consider one of the following activities for your class:

- ✓ Write a letter about the problem to a newspaper editor or a public official in the community
- ✓ Organize a public display with facts, artwork, and any other information you can think of

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

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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