



MOCK ELECTION PREP PACKET

GRADES 3-5

Mock elections are an excellent way to prepare students to be active citizens. Before students participate in a mock election, it is necessary to provide the information and tools necessary for informed voting.

This packet includes lesson plans and activities that will prepare your students for the mock election by addressing the following learning outcomes:

1. Learn about forms of government and the role of elections
2. Learn about the electoral process
3. Learn about issues and candidates
4. Learn the impact and importance of voting
5. Learn about the different functions of branches and levels of government
6. Further reading and research skills
7. Build voting habits

Each component of this packet will address one or more of the above learning outcomes. This is designed in a plug and play fashion where educators can choose as many or as few lessons/activities to incorporate in their classrooms.

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- Learning Outcomes: Learn the impact and importance of voting

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- Learning Outcomes: Learn about forms of Government and the role of Elections

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- Description: Students investigate questions about their government and other governments around the world.
- Learning Outcomes: Learn about forms of Government and the role of Elections

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- Learning Outcomes: (1) Learn about the functions of branches and levels of government, (2) Learn the impact and importance of voting, (3) Improve writing skills

6) Our Town: A Role Play

- Description: 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.
- Learning Outcomes: (1) Learn about the functions of branches and levels of government, (2) Learn the impact and importance of voting

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- Description: Students propose a park improvement or a similar youth-centered plan of action and walk through the processes of democracy and governance.
- Learning Outcomes: (1) Learn about the functions of branches and levels of government, (2) Further reading and research skills

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- **Description:** Students allocate their “dollars” toward the improvement of the community priorities they deem most important.
- **Learning Outcomes:** (1) Learn about issues and candidates, (2) Learn the impact and importance of voting

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- **Description:** In this activity, students discover the importance of voter registration.
- **Learning Outcomes:** Learn about the electoral process

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- **Description:** In this activity, students experience voter apathy and ignorance.
- **Learning Outcomes:** (1) Learn about the electoral process, (2) Learn the impact and importance of voting

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- **Description:** In this activity, students study famous quotes to learn the significance of the right to vote.
- **Learning Outcomes:** Learn the impact and importance of voting

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- **Description:** In this activity, students experience voting with and without adequate information.
- **Learning Outcomes:** (1) Learn the impact and importance of voting, (2) Learn about issues and candidates

13) Meet the Candidates

- **Description:** In this lesson, students put together a page consisting of pictures and promises made by the candidates running for office.
- **Learning Outcomes:** (1) Learn about issues and candidates, (2) Further reading and research skills

14) Voting Simulation

- **Description:** Host a Mock Election! Students vote in a simulated polling place to become familiar with the voting process.
- **Learning Outcomes:** (1) Learn about the electoral process, (2) Build voting habits



What Democracy Looks Like: Why We Vote

Objective

Students interview adults to learn about the importance of voting.

Materials

No Materials are needed for this activity.

Instructions

- ❖ Inform your students that they will be interviewing adults to learn more about voting.
 - ❖ Divide students into groups of 3-4 students and have them brainstorm questions for their interviewees.
 - ❖ Advise your students not to ask questions like "Who are you voting for?"
 - ❖ Provide some example questions to get the ball rolling
 1. What does voting mean to you?
 2. Are you planning on voting in the upcoming election? Why or why not?
 3. Why is voting important?
 - ❖ Have each group of students finalize two questions to ask the interviewees.
- ❖ Have the groups come back together, share their questions, and list them on the board.
 - ❖ As a class, choose 4 or 5 questions that everyone will ask their interviewees.
 - ❖ Have students write down the questions they will be asking.
 - ❖ Instruct students to interview two adults and record their responses.
 - ❖ After the interview have been conducted, either have student share their responses in small groups or have students volunteer to share with the whole class.

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?
- ❖ Based on your interviews, are you excited to vote? Why or why not?



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.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *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?*
- ★ *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?*



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...



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?

**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:



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:

My reaction:

SCENARIO 2:

My reaction:



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.



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





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 (such as a paper bag), so a student can draw one out without seeing it.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Ask your students to privately give themselves a new name, to write it on a slip of paper, and to 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 name 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 Kids Voting 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>
 <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>



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>
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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



TWO BALLOTS

(10-15 minutes)

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

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 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!

Invite your students to prepare trick ballots for each other.

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



TWO BALLOTS

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Ballot A</h2> <table style="width: 100%; margin-top: 20px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 60%;"></th> <th style="width: 20%; text-align: center;">YES</th> <th style="width: 20%; 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: 65%;"></th> <th style="width: 15%; text-align: center;">YES</th> <th style="width: 20%; 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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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

- ✓ Break your students up 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 to listen for promises made to the voters by the candidates. 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?*
- ★ *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



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 registration simulation.
- ✓ Give the clerks lined paper to record the voters as they come in.
- ✓ Hand the ballots to the other judge.
- ✓ Seat the marshal by the ballot box.
- ✓ Ask a student to demonstrate by casting the first vote.

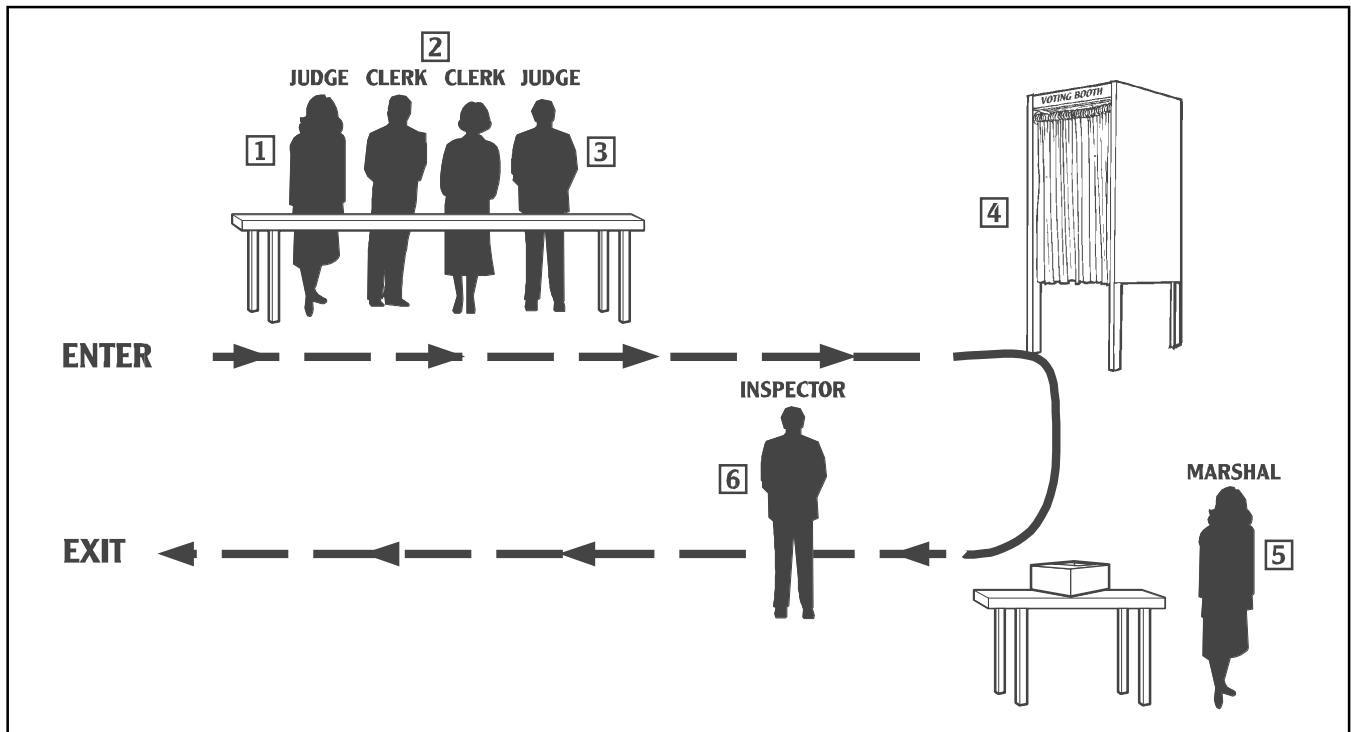
- ✓ Let each student go through the process of voting.
- ✓ Instruct the marshal to tally and announce the vote.
- ✓ Implement the vote.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Who can go into a polling place?*
- ★ *Have you ever gone with your parents?*
- ★ *Where was it?*
- ★ *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