

KIDS VOTING USA

3–5 CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



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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

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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 style="text-align: center;">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 style="text-align: center;">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 style="text-align: center;">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 style="text-align: center;">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 style="text-align: center;">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 style="text-align: center;">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%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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 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

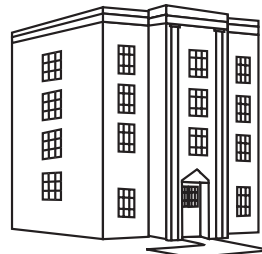
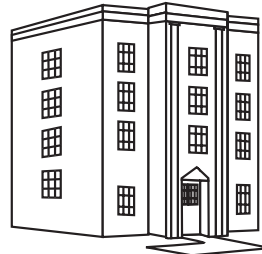
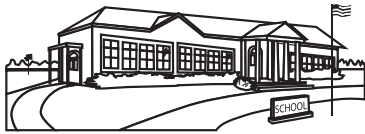
- ★ *What sort of buildings act as polling places? (churches, schools, etc.)*
- ★ *Why are polling places located in such buildings?*
- ★ *Is our school a polling place?*
- ★ *What time do the polling places open and close?*
- ★ *Have you ever been to a polling place with an adult? If so, what was it 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.

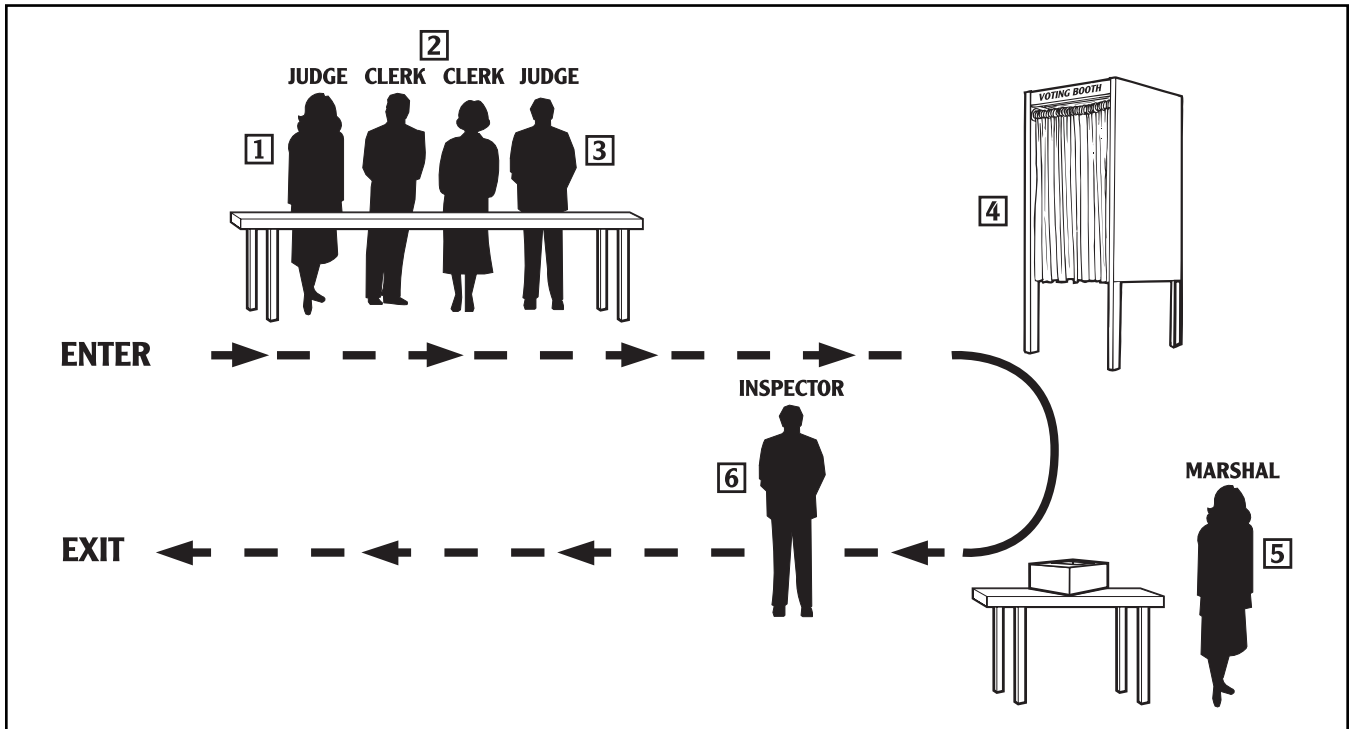
- ✓ Let each student go through the process of voting.
- ✓ Instruct the marshal to tally and announce the vote.
- ✓ Implement the vote.

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!

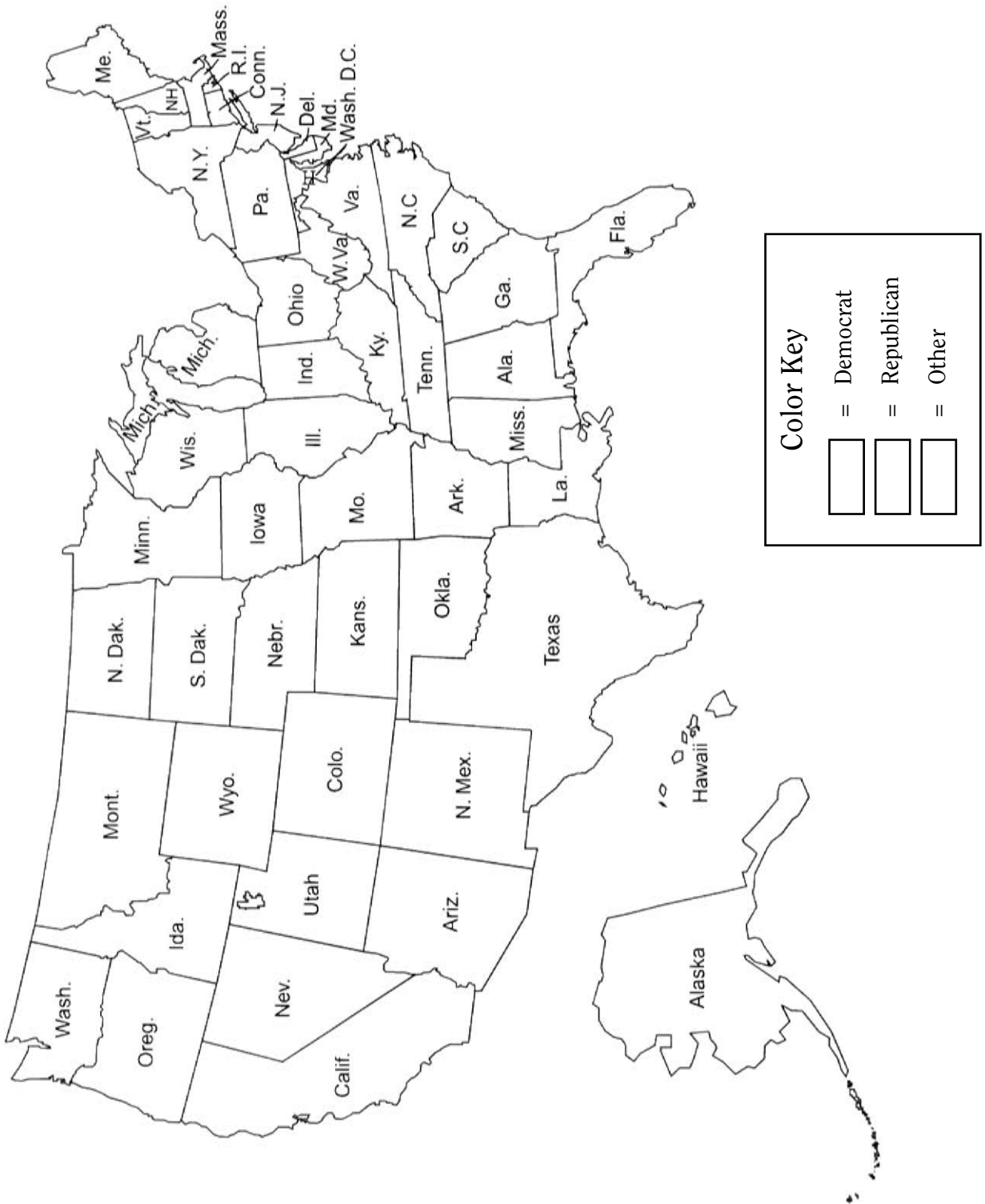
For gubernatorial or other state elections, copy a state map showing counties. Follow instructions above.

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


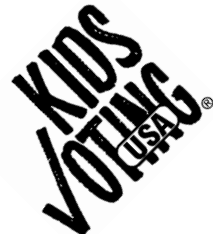


- ★ *How can our wishes for our country come true?*
- ★ *Is there anything a young person can do to make these wishes come true?*
- ★ *How have we helped our country by participating in this activity?*
- ★ *If we practice self-discipline and patience in our classroom, how might that help?*
- ★ *Can you 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**



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

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 My Life 14
 Our Town: A Role Play 18

CONCEPT 3: A CITIZEN’S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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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

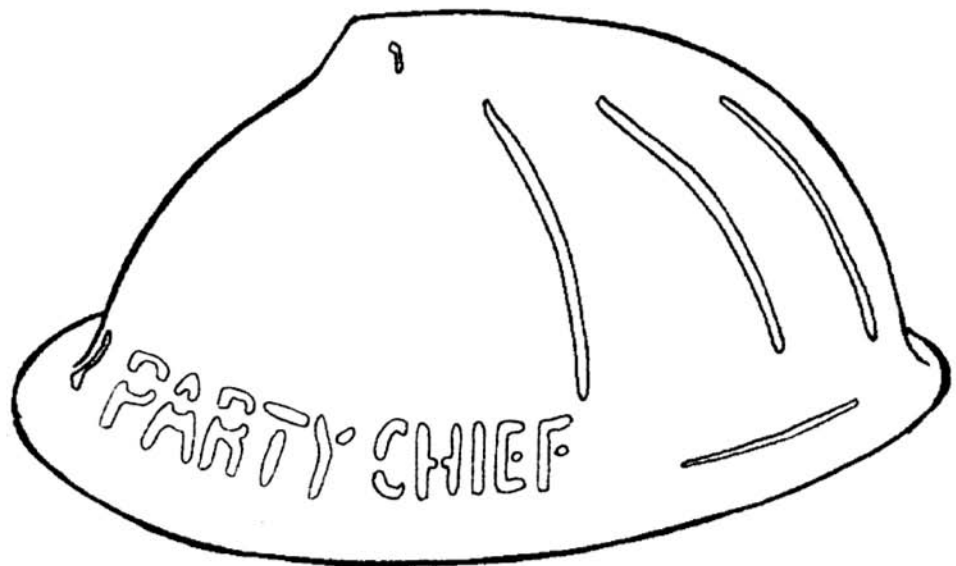
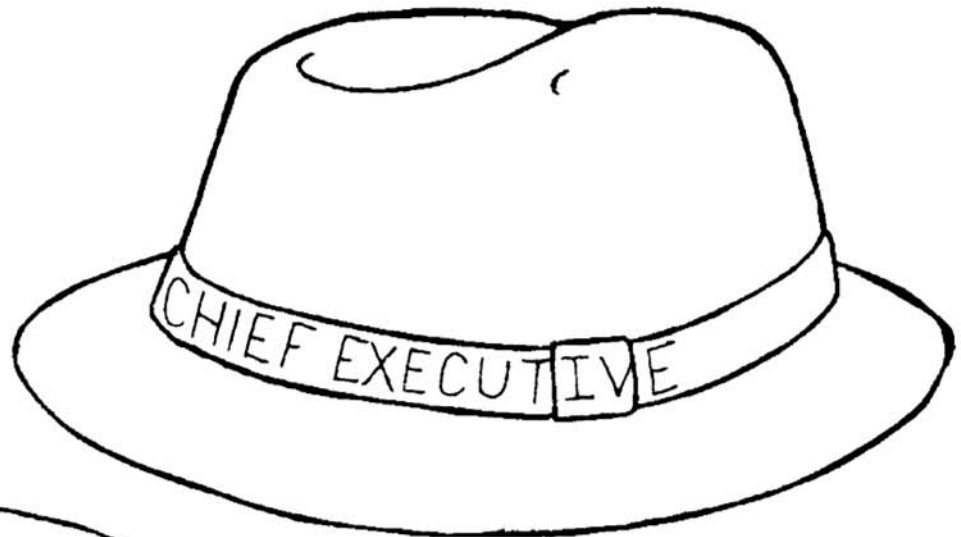
- ★ *Which hat got the most number of votes?
Does this make it the most important job of
the president?*
- ★ *Which hat got the least number of votes?
Does this make it the least important job
of the president?*
- ★ *What do you think the president would say is
the most important thing he does?*

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



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

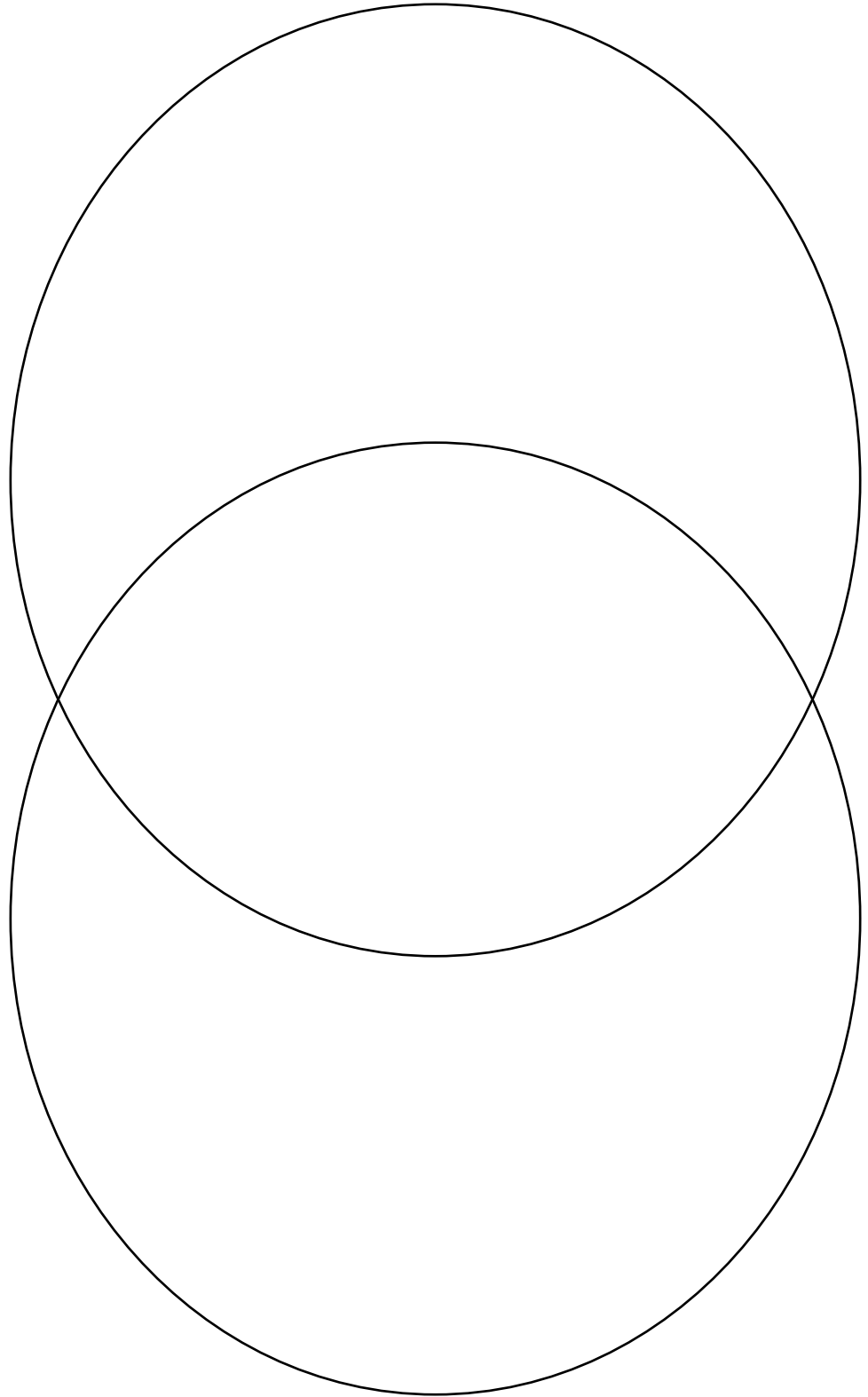
- ✓ After reading the story, divide your students into groups of two and ask them to compare and contrast suffrage in America versus suffrage in South Africa.
- ✓ After brainstorming the similarities and differences between the two countries, tell your students that they will be given a handout where 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



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

- ★ *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?*

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.

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

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

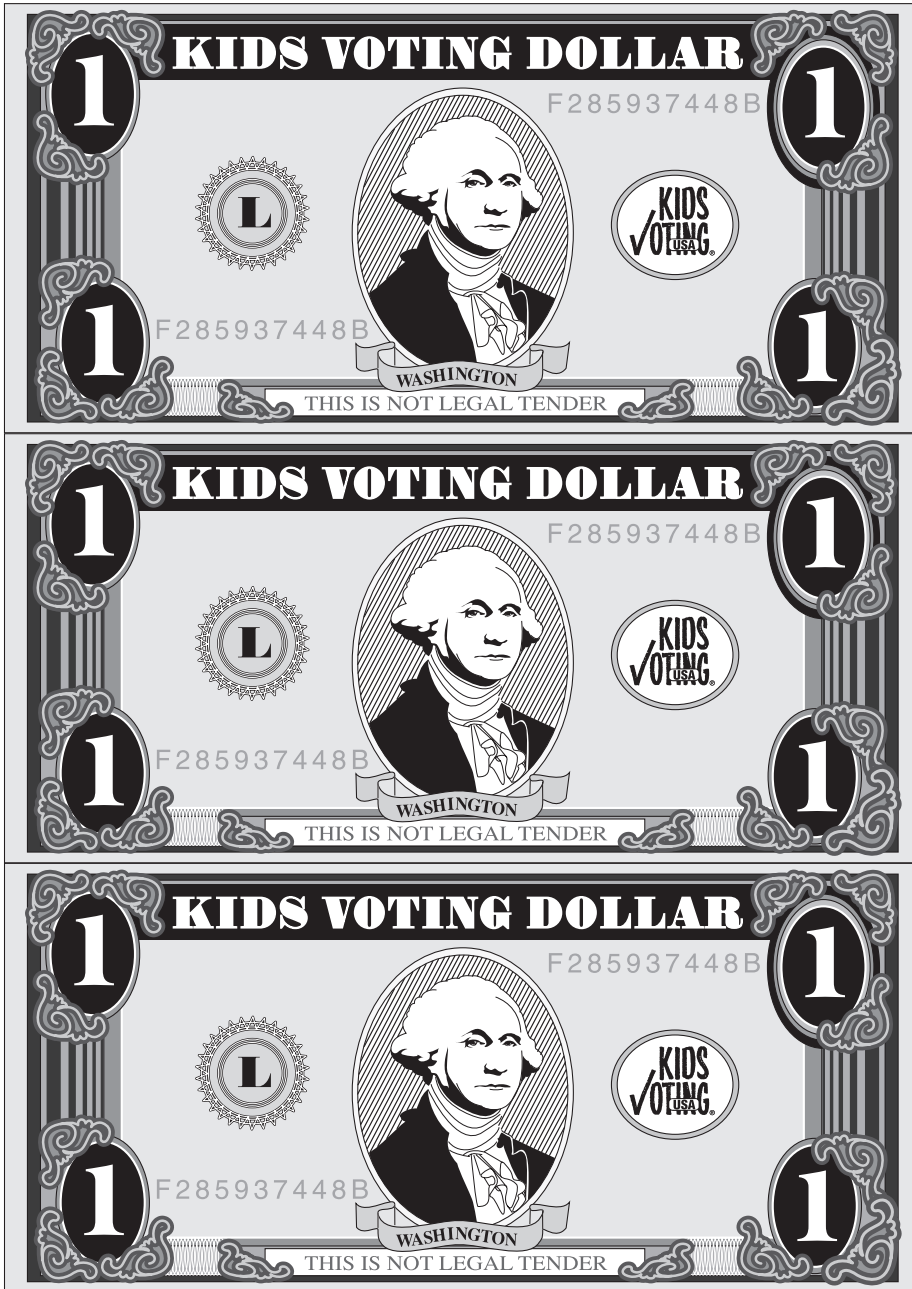
- ★ *Why did you give out the money the way you did? Which programs seemed most important to you?*
- ★ *What have you heard in the news about those five areas? Is anything good happening? Anything bad?*
- ★ *Is it important that we know what is going on in these different areas? Why or why not?*
- ★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