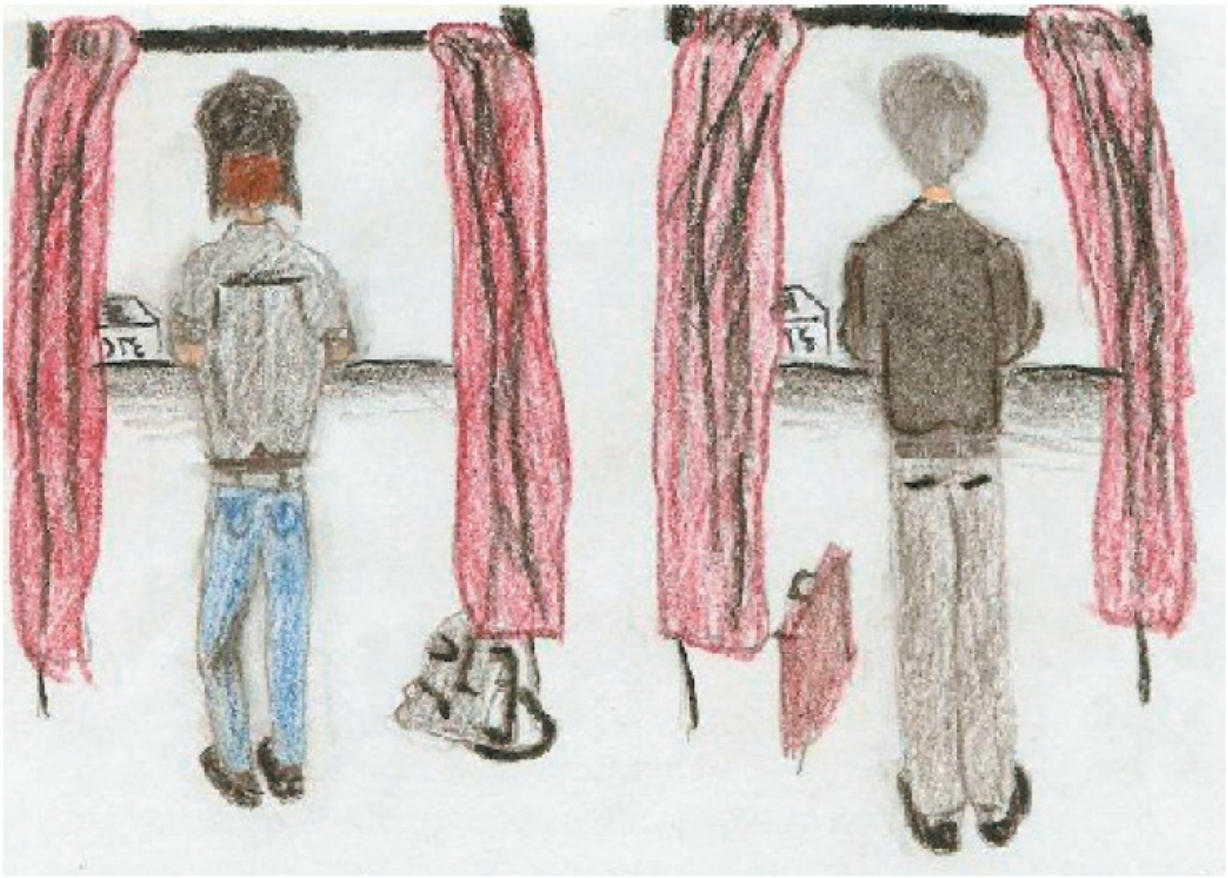
Democracy Central

A Teachers Guide To California's Statewide Elections



"26th Amendment: The right to vote at the age of 18. When a person turns 18 he/she is an adult, so they should have a voice in choosing the President." - Melody Kahkedjian

Debra Bowen
Secretary of State

MYVOTE
STUDENT MOCK ELECTION

Jack O'Connell
Superintendent of Public Instruction

www.sos.ca.gov/elections/studentmockelection.htm

Democracy Central:
A Teachers Guide to California's Statewide Elections

This is a publication of the California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, a collaboration of Constitutional Rights Foundation, Center for Civic Education, and the Alliance for Representative Democracy.

Educating for Democracy

California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools

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Introduction

This collection of lesson plans and classroom activities was assembled for the 2008 MyVote California Student Mock Election, a youth civic engagement project sponsored by California Secretary of State Debra Bowen and then-Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell to help students discover the importance of elections and the power of their vote in our democracy. For the 2010 Student Mock Election, the editors updated some of these lessons, as needed, and created a Volume II — 2010 volume, with more ways to help teachers stir their students' interest in voting. We invite you to explore both volumes, as well as "New In 2012!" which features lessons and activities especially geared to this year's presidential election.

The Constitutional Rights Foundation, on behalf of the California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools, selected and created material that is in line with California's 8th, 11th and 12th-grade History-Social Science standards. Students in 9th and 10th grade would also benefit from the many opportunities here to develop their critical thinking and civic participation skills.

The lessons are also aligned with the Civic Mission of Schools Proven Practices. Please note that in the lessons, the term "promising approaches" is used, but in 2011, a new CMS report was issued confirming the practices as proven by research.

These lesson plans are filled with ideas for stirring lively classroom discussion about what it means to take part in a democracy, and for promoting student interest in learning about the candidates and ballot measures at a time when the campaign season is in full swing. They encourage teachers to use interactive approaches, including guided discussion, role-play and simulation, and service learning. While they were chosen to help teachers prepare their students to vote in the MyVote California Student Mock Election, we hope you find them useful during non-election years as well.

For young people, taking part in a mock election at school can be the first step toward becoming a lifelong voter. We encourage you to participate in the MyVote California Student Mock Election, and help your students find out how to gain further firsthand experience with elections while serving their community as a High School Poll Worker.

Using the Curriculum Materials

We know how busy your classrooms are and that you have a lot of content to cover with your students this year. The lessons in this collection were selected with your California History-Social Science standards in mind and are organized by topic. We invite you to **pick and choose** from the menu to best meet your students' needs.

I. Democracy

What is a Democracy?

What the students do: Read about the role of citizens and the function of elections in a democratic society and conduct an interview about voting.
CA History-Social Science Standards**:** 12.2.4, 12.3.4, 12.6.4
CMS Proven Practices**:** 1, 2
Thanks to: National Student/Parent Mock Election

Road to Democracy

What the students do: Small groups determine the most important elements of democracy and create a graphic representation of those they think are thriving and those they think are challenges in our country.
CA History-Social Science Standards**:** 11.1.1; 12.1.2, 12.1.5, 12.2.4
CMS Proven Practices**:** 1, 2
Thanks to: Street Law, Inc.

Proposals for a More Democratic Country

What the students do: Small groups analyze hypothetical proposals for making America more democratic and role-play a presidential commission evaluating the Electoral College system.
CA History-Social Science Standards**:** 12.4, 12.6
CMS Proven Practices**:** 1, 2, 6
Thanks to: Constitutional Rights Foundation

II. The Voters

Voting Rights in America: Past and Present

What the students do: Read about the history of voting rights and role-play a committee deciding to support or oppose modern voting restrictions.
CA History-Social Science Standards**:** 11.10.6, 11.10.7; 12.6.4, 12.6.6
CMS Proven Practices**:** 1, 2, 6
Thanks to: Constitutional Rights Foundation

Get the Youth Vote!

What the students do: Take the roles of hypothetical candidates and their staff members and create a strategy to attract young voters. Students will use recent research findings to guide their work.
CA History-Social Science Standards: 12.2.4, 12.6.6
CMS Proven Practices: 1, 2, 6 and potentially 3
Thanks to: Constitutional Rights Foundation

Voter Participation: Who's Voting

What the students do: Examine census data from the 2008 election and evaluate strategies for increasing voter turnout. Create a public service announcement to encourage civic participation.
CA History-Social Science Standards**:** 12.6.6
CMS Proven Practices**:** 1, 2, 3
Thanks to: University of Virginia Center for Politics: Youth Leadership Initiative

III. Candidates, Parties, and Ballot Measures

How to Judge a Candidate

What the students do: Use a framework to learn about and evaluate candidates.
CA History-Social Science Standards**:** 12.2.4
CMS Proven Practices**:** 2

Thanks to: The League of Women Voters of the Cincinnati Area and the The League of Women Voters Education Fund

Parties, Planks, and Platforms

What the students do: Read about the role of political parties and role-play a committee drafting a party's platform.
CA History-Social Science Standards**:** 12.6.1
CMS Proven Practices**:** 1, 2, 6
Thanks to: Constitutional Rights Foundation

Deliberating in a Democracy

What the students do: Explore at least one current ballot measure and participate in a structured discussion to analyze the proposed measure and reach their own conclusions.
CA History-Social Science Standards**:** 11.11; 12.2.4, 12.6.4, 12.6.5
CMS Proven Practices**:** 1, 2, 3
Thanks to: Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago's international program Deliberating in a Democracy

IV. Ways to Participate

And I Quote…

What students do: Select quotes about civic participation they find meaningful and create a "public service announcement" on the importance of civic participation.
CA History-Social Science Standards**:** 12.3.1, 12.3.2, 12.10
CMS Proven Practices**:** 1, 2, 3
Thanks to: California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools

Civic Participation and Responsibility

What the students do: Read about and discuss responsible citizenship and prioritize civic participation activities.
CA History-Social Science Standards**:** 12.2.3, 12.2.4, 12.2.5 12.3.2
CMS Proven Practices**:** 1, 2, and potentially 3
Thanks to: Constitutional Rights Foundation

Get Involved!

What students do: Create a plan of action for participating in an election.
CA History-Social Science Standards**:** 12.2.4, 12.6.4
CMS Proven Practices**:** 2, 3
Thanks to: Constitutional Rights Foundation

V. The Media

Campaign Advertising

What the students do: Learn about and find examples of different advertising strategies used in political ads and then create their own political ad for the candidate or ballot measure of their choosing.
CA History-Social Science Standards**:** 12.6.3
CMS Proven Practices**:** 2 and possibly 3, 4 if students share ads with candidates/organizations
Thanks to: University of Virginia Center for Politics: Youth Leadership Initiative

How to Watch a Debate

What the students do: Prepare for and watch a political debate. Use a variety of criteria to "rate the debate" and participate in follow-up discussion and activities.
CA History-Social Science Standards: 12.6
CMS Proven Practices**:** 1, 2, and potentially 3, 4, 5
Thanks to: The League of Women Voters of New Jersey Education Fund and The League of Women Voters Cincinnati Area
Additional Resource: Commission on Presidential Debates

Press Conference

What the students do: Take the roles of candidates and their staff members or reporters for different media outlets and conduct a simulated press conference. Members of the media will endorse a candidate, candidates and staff members will create their last ad before the hypothetical election.
CA History-Social Science Standards: 12.6.3
CMS Promising Approaches: 2, 6
Thanks to: Constitutional Rights Foundation

VI. Getting Informed

Searching and Surfing for Facts

What the students do: Research, participate in "scavenger hunts," and create products using information they have found to educate others about topics related to voting and elections.
CA History-Social Science Standards: 12.6.4
CMS Promising Approaches: 1, 2 and potential parent involvement
Thanks to: Constitutional Rights Foundation

VII. Links to Additional Resources

Many organizations, both local and national, have excellent lessons and special activities related to elections that support high quality civic education. We have included all of the organizations that contributed lessons for this curriculum resource, and more:

Lessons and Curricula

California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools: http://www.cms-ca.org
Center for Civic Education: http://www.civiced.org/

Constitutional Rights Foundation: http://www.crf-usa.org
League of Women Voters Cincinnati Area: http://www.lwvcincinnati.org/
National Conference of State Legislators: http://www.ncsl.org/legislatures-elections/backtoschool/back-to-school-your-ideas-count-lesson-plans.aspx
National Student/Parent Mock Elections: http://www.nationalmockelection.org/
New Jersey League of Women Voters: http://www.lwvnj.org/
Street Law, Inc.: http://www.streetlaw.org/
University of Virginia's Youth Leadership Initiative: http://208.81.226.245/learning-programs/lesson-plans/
Vermont Secretary of State:
High School: http://www.sec.state.vt.us/kids/vtvotes/912menu.shtml
Middle School: http://www.sec.state.vt.us/kids/vtvotes/57menu.shtml
Elementary: http://www.sec.state.vt.us/kids/vtvotes/k4menu.shtml

Special Programs to Engage Youth in Elections

California Secretary of State's Programs for Students
Mock Elections: http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/studentmockelection.htm
Student Poll Workers: http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/pollworker.htm
Commission on Presidential Debates: hosting your own DebateWatch: http://www.debates.org/pages/dwoverview.html
National Student/Parent Mock Elections: http://www.nationalmockelection.org/
Youth Leadership Initiative, University of Virginia Center for Politics: http://208.81.226.245/

Becoming an Informed Voter: Send Your Students Surfing

California Secretary of State: http://www.sos.ca.gov/
Smart Voter by the League of Women Voters: http://www.smartvoter.org/
Project Vote Smart: http://www.vote-smart.org/index.htm
Easy Voter Guide: http://www.easyvoterguide.org
Rock the Vote: http://www.rockthevote.com/home.php
Mobilize.com: http://mobilize.org/index.php?
Library of Congress**:** http://learning.loc.gov/learn/features/election/home.html

VIII. Standards

The lessons address the following California History-Social Science content standards for the 11th and 12th grades:

11.5 Students analyze the major political, social, economic, technological, and cultural developments of the 1920s. 4. Analyze the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment and the changing role of women in society.

11.10 Students analyze the development of federal civil rights and voting rights. 1. Analyze the passage and effects of civil rights and voting rights legislation (e.g., 1964 Civil Rights Act, Voting Rights Act of 1965) and the Twenty-Fourth Amendment, with an emphasis on equality of access to education and to the political process. 2. Analyze the

women's rights movement from the era of Elizabeth Stanton and Susan Anthony and the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the movement launched in the 1960s, including differing perspectives on the roles of women.

12.2 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured. 4. Understand the obligations of civic-mindedness, including voting, being informed on civic issues, volunteering and performing public service, and serving in the military or alternative service.

12.3 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on what the fundamental values and principles of civil society are (i.e., the autonomous sphere of voluntary personal, social, and economic relations that are not part of government), their interdependence, and the meaning and importance of those values and principles for a free society. 1. Explain how civil society provides opportunities for individuals to associate for social, cultural, religious, economic, and political purposes. 2. Explain how civil society makes it possible for people, individually or in association with others, to bring their influence to bear on government in ways other than voting and elections. 3.Discuss the historical role of religion and religious diversity. 4. Compare the relationship of government and civil society in constitutional democracies to the relationship of government and civil society in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.

12.6 Students evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national, state, and local elective offices. 1. Analyze the origin, development, and role of political parties, noting those occasional periods in which there was only one major party or were more than two major parties. 2. Discuss the history of the nomination process for presidential candidates and the increasing importance of primaries in general elections. 3. Evaluate the roles of polls, campaign advertising, and the controversies over campaign funding. 4. Describe the means that citizens use to participate in the political process (e.g., voting, campaigning, lobbying, filing a legal challenge, demonstrating, petitioning, picketing, running for political office). 5. Discuss the features of direct democracy in numerous states (e.g., the process of referendums, recall elections). 6. Analyze trends in voter turnout; the causes and effects of reapportionment and redistricting, with special attention to spatial districting and the rights of minorities; and the function of the Electoral College.

12.10 Students formulate questions about and defend their analyses of tensions within our constitutional democracy and the importance of maintaining a balance between the following concepts: majority rule and individual rights; liberty and equality; state and national authority in a federal system; civil disobedience and the rule of law; freedom of the press and the right to a fair trial; the relationship of religion and government.

I. Democracy

Topic: I. Democracy

What the students do: Read about the role of citizens and the function of elections in a democratic society and conduct an interview about voting.
CA History-Social Science Standards: 12.2.4, 12.3.4, 12.6.4
CMS Promising Approaches**:** 1, 2
Thanks to: National Student/Parent Mock Election

What Is a Democracy?

"As citizens of this democracy you are the rulers and the ruled, the lawgivers and the law-abiding, the beginning and the end." —Adlai E. Stevenson (c. 1958)

Overview

This lesson sequence introduces students to the role of citizens and the functions of elections in a democratic society. The readings in the lesson develop understanding of basic concepts such as democracy, constitutional government, consent of the governed. The small group and whole class exercises introduce issues related to why citizens might not participate in elections.

Objectives

As a result of this unit, students should be able to:
- Explain the concepts of "democracy" and "constitutional democracy";
- Explain the role of citizens in a constitutional democracy;
- Explain the nature and functions of elections in a constitutional democracy; and
- Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the issue of elections in a democratic society.

Materials/Preparation

Handout 1: "What Do We Mean by "Democracy?" —1 per student
Handout 2: "Conducting an Interview" —1 per student

Procedures

I. Distribute to each student a copy of **Handout 1: What Do We Mean by "Democracy"?**

II. You may want to post the following vocabulary items on the board: democracy, constitutional democracy, habeas corpus, title of nobility, direct democracy, representative government, initiative, referendum, recall, public agenda. Students should define these terms while they are completing the reading exercise.

III. After completing their reading, have students work with a study partner to respond to the *What do you think?* questions at the conclusion. Have students share their responses with the class.

IV. As an out of class assignment, ask students to interview adults or some of their peers. Distribute a copy of **Handout 2: Conducting an Interview** to each student. Encourage students to interview individuals in different age groups and in a variety of occupations. Review with the class tips for conducting an interview. You may want to have students include additional questions in their interviews. When students have completed their

interviews, have them compile their data. You may want the class to work with a math teacher to work out the mathematical calculations. Then have students interpret the meaning of the data. What conclusions can they draw from the information gathered?

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What Do We Mean by "Democracy"?

Literally, "democracy" means "rule of the people." In the democracies of ancient Greece, where the idea of democracy was born more than 2,400 years ago, citizens gathered together in the outdoors to make decisions about public policy. Although today citizens sometimes gather together to decide certain things, they usually do not make most decisions themselves. Instead, they vote for representatives who make decisions in their name. That is what happens in most elections. Sometimes people mistake "democracy" for the elections that are just part—although an essential part —of every democratic political system. What we call "democracy" is more complicated than people simply coming together to make decisions or to vote in elections.

What Do We Mean by "Constitutional Democracy"?

"Democracy" today really refers to "constitutional democracy." "Constitutional" democracy means **limited government,** which means that the government only has limited authority to do what it wants. By law, the government has to abide by the Constitution. This is why our government is called a "constitutional democracy."

What Happens When There Is No Constitutional Government?

To see why this is so important, all you have to do is to look at international events on the evening news or read about foreign countries in newspapers. In many parts of the world there are violent uprisings, even mass killings. In the Middle East and many parts of Africa, Asia, and Central and South America, people are dying every day in political violence. Countless others are locked up for their beliefs by authoritarian governments. Their rights as human beings are ignored.

We should not forget that terrible political violence has also occurred in the United States. Hundreds of thousands of people died in the Civil War; and others died and were jailed during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 1960's. The achievement of Constitutional government is therefore important to everyone.

What Do Constitutions Do?

They **distribute the powers of government** to various branches, including legislative, executive, and judicial branches. That is, a constitution **empowers the government** by setting down rules that allow the branches of government to do certain things. In modern democracies, a constitution also limits the powers of government by forbidding it to do certain things.

What Does the U.S. Constitution Forbid the Government to Do?

The U.S. Constitution is the most important document in the United States. It is what sets America apart from oppressive regimes around the world. Many other countries, such as Ireland, based their own constitutions on the example set by the United States. As our country matured, American citizens voted to "amend" the Constitution in certain areas. For instance, when the Constitution was first drafted, slavery was still legal. Many of the constitutional writers, for example, owned slaves themselves! The first ten amendments to the Constitution are known together as the **Bill of Rights.** The Bill of Rights is a vital safeguard to the individual rights of citizens.

For instance, the 1st Amendment grants Americans "freedom of speech." This means that we have the right to say whatever we want, even if that includes criticizing the government, without being punished. In some countries people are put to death for daring to speak out against a government regime. The 1st Amendment guarantees that this will never happen in America. Other Amendments protect individuals against unreasonable search and seizure, forced police confessions, civil rights violations by states, and many other actions that infringe upon our rights.

State Constitutions

All states have constitutions that distribute the powers of state and local government and limit the powers of government. State constitutions also have bills of rights that may offer even greater protection than the United States Bill of Rights.

Elections and Accountability of the Government to Citizens

Finally, elections make government accountable to the people who elect its top officials. Accountability makes government responsible. Accountability means that there are consequences for bad policies and improper actions by officials. Someone must monitor what the government is doing and be able to implement changes when government is not behaving satisfactorily. Thus, elections protect our rights. People who do not care about elections are not taking care of their rights. Informed, responsible voting protects people from government abuse of power. This is one reason why everyone should be concerned with elections. The interests of all individuals are at stake.

What Kinds of Democracies Are There?

As we saw above, democracy first began in ancient Greece. The ancient Greeks had a **direct democracy.** What this means is that citizens participated directly in the government, rather than through representatives. This led to problems, however, because emotion could be aroused by orators who appealed to human passions. Thucydides, an ancient Greek historian, describes in his writings how decisions of direct democracy led to the downfall of Athens, the center of Greek political life.

The American Founders read about the problems of ancient democracies and believed that representative government could be more stable. James Madison said that Congress could "refine and enlarge" the people's voice and moderate emotions through the deliberations of representative bodies.

What Are Some Forms of Direct Democracy in American Life?

Despite the fact that our form of government is representative democracy, direct democracy does exist in certain forms. The oldest and most famous form of direct democracy in American life is the **New England Town Meeting,** which originated long before the American Revolution. There are still town meetings in New England today. There are many other forms of direct democracy in American life. Classrooms sometimes take votes. Members of associations and organizations vote in person on many matters, relying on well-known parliamentary rules (usually "Roberts Rules of Order") to maintain fair procedures. What would be the consequences if your city, town or

community were governed by a Town Meeting rather than its present form? Would the direct democracy of the Town Meeting work in your community? Why or why not?

Initiative, Referendum, and Recall Elections

Initiative, referendum, and recall elections are also elements of direct democracy, requiring responsible citizens to be informed about the issues which may directly affect them and their communities. "Initiatives" are proposals that become law if passed by voters at certain elections. Referendums are laws passed by state legislatures that are submitted to the electorate to pass or strike down. And "recall" elections ask the voters if a public official should be removed from office. These are all weighty decisions that in many states are made directly by voters. Initiatives in a number of states, such as in California, act to change a state's constitution. Initiatives can therefore potentially have a powerful effect on state and local government policy. For example, Proposition 13 a California initiative passed in the 1970s, which limited real estate taxes on homes to 1% of its value, had an enormous effect not only on California but in other states, as demands to lower property taxes spread to many parts of the nation.

What Is the Public Agenda?

The public agenda is the set of problems or questions that have come to public attention. It affects everyone, whether or not they choose to participate in elections. The public agenda consists of the issues for local, state or national legislatures to decide. Examples of items on the public agenda might include campaign finance reform, the threat of war, tax policy, welfare policy, environmental issues, and so forth. The public at large does not itself set the public agenda but reacts to items on the agenda set in this way; the public as such is not organized to act collectively. In the form of public opinion polls the public does have a role in setting the public agenda. Even here, however, the public's role is often to react to issues that leaders bring before it.

Individuals can help set the public agenda by joining interest groups or other private associations of civil society as well as political parties, making presentations at public meetings, writing letters to the media and public officials, and helping to write, produce, or distribute literature on one or more proposed public issues.

The Electoral Process and Issues of the Public Agenda

One of the most important reasons to have elections is to decide the issues that are on the public agenda. The outcome of elections are expressions of the popular will. A purpose of the electoral process is therefore to air arguments on all sides of issues of the public agenda. Ideally, by exposure to the best arguments on the principal issues of the public agenda, the public can make a better judgment about public policy issues and learn the positions of candidates on them.

What Do You Think?

1. How can elections help protect the rights of citizens to, e.g., freely express their political ideas?

2. In what ways, other than participating in elections, do citizens help prevent the abuse of power by government officials?

3. In what ways, other than participating in elections, do citizens in a democracy express their consent of the governed?

4. Some people argue that “democracy is not a spectator sport.” Do you agree or disagree with this view? Why?

5. What interests might motivate private citizens to care about influencing the public agenda or public policy?

6. What are some examples of direct democracy in your community?

7. Work with a partner to create a class bulletin board that illustrates why citizens should participate in local, state, and national elections.

Conducting an Interview

Do people think having the right to vote is important?

In the United States we select our leaders by allowing citizens to vote. When you turn 18 years of age you have the right to vote in local, state, and national elections. Your right to vote is protected by the United States Constitution and the laws of the national government. Your state constitution and the laws of your state also protect your right to vote. Under our system of government, the states have the responsibility to conduct elections.

Have you ever thought about why voting is such an important right of citizens? One way to find out why voting is an important right is to ask people what they think. You and your classmates will be talking to other students in your school and to adults in your family and community to find out what they think.

You will be asked to interview several people and to write down their answers. When your class finishes gathering this information, you will compile the answers to see what people in your community think. Remember, when you conduct an interview with someone, you should first introduce yourself. Tell the person what your class is studying. Ask the person if he or she would be willing to answer your questions.

Here are some questions you might ask people. You and your classmates may want to add other questions to this lists.

Name of person _____
Occupation _____

1. Do you usually vote in local, state, or national elections? Yes __ No__

2. If the answer to #1 is Yes: What are some reasons why you decided to vote?

3. If the answer to #1 is No: What are some reasons why you decided not to vote?

4. What do you think is the purpose of having elections in our country?

5. Would you favor having a law that requires all citizens to go to the polls on Election Day? (Explain why, or why not.)

(Teachers may wish to adapt the interview format to the needs of the class. For students interviewing non-English-speaking parents, for example, the wording might read: "Why do you want to live in America? In America we have a democracy based on a Constitution that limits what government can do. What do you think might happen if we did not have a Constitution?")

Topic: I. Democracy

What the students do: Small groups determine the most important elements of democracy and create a graphic representation of those they think are thriving and those they think are challenges in our country.

CA History-Social Science Standards: 11.1.1; 12.1.2, 12.1.5, 12.2.4

CMS Promising Approaches**:** 1, 2

Thanks to: Street Law, Inc.

Road to Democracy

Overview

Democracy is a concept that is hard to define. Political philosophers and practitioners debate the parameters of democracy and its requirements. Those who study governments might not agree about all the components of an effective democracy, but there are some principles or signposts that have been determined to serve as a general guide. Some international organizations such as Freedom Forum use these indicators to assess the health of democracy in the world.

In this lesson, students will explore and determine the elements or principles that must be present in a country in order for democracy to thrive.

Objectives

- Identify and describe elements of democracy.
- Identify challenges to democracy.
- List some elements that are in place and some elements that require more vigilance in their own country.
- Explain the role of a citizen in supporting the health of a democracy.

Materials/Preparation

Poster board or chart paper and markers for groups of 3-4.

Handout: Signposts of Democracy —1 one per student

Procedure

I. Focuser (5-7 minutes)

- Explain to students that they may recall that the first democracy started in Greece and that it required that all the eligible men meet in the main square to vote on support for war initiatives and Athenian leaders. Not everyone who lived in Greece had a say in how they were governed, so the expression that democracy is "rule by the people" is sometimes not so easily defined. Today, some democracies have parliamentary systems, whereas others have presidential systems. Some democracies are more centralized and others delegate more power to states. Also, some countries are just on their way to democracy and others need to renew their commitment to democracy.

- Ask students to think about what they think a democracy needs to be healthy and strong. They should think of what elements they would have in place in an ideal democracy. What

are the essential components that are necessary? Ask students to take a moment to jot down their ideas on a piece of paper. Then, ask students to consider what are the obstacles to achieving democracy? What kinds of things would be present in a country that was showing signs of losing its commitment to democracy or that might prevent a country from being a model of democracy. Students should jot down those things that they think are obstacles to democracy.

- Ask students to give a few examples of what they answered to see if they are on track.

II. Working on Posters (20 minutes)

- Next, explain to students that they will work in groups to draw a Roadmap to Democracy for a fictitious country. Together, their team will brainstorm the elements of democracy and the barriers to democracy. Using this information, they will draw a road that leads to a perfect democracy and they can invent the name of that country. They should draw a road and along it they draw pictures of all the obstacles that come to mind, as well as all the things that allow their democracy to flourish.

- Clarify any questions that students might have. Tell them that they must choose someone from their group who will describe their roadmap to the rest of the class. (2 minutes each)

- Divide the class into groups of 4 – 5 (smaller if they have less experience working in groups). Distribute posters and markers to students.

Each group presents on the results of their group work. (15 minutes)

III. Analyzing the posters (10 minutes)

- Which elements are common to all the posters?
- Which elements seem to be the most crucial to democracy?
- Are there elements that are not defining of democracies, but can be found in other systems?
- Which elements seem to be working in our country today?
- Which elements are jeopardizing democracy in our country today?
- In what way can citizens have a role to play in supporting democracy? Are there ways that people undermine democracy?
- Describe something that you would hope citizens would do to support democracy in your country?

IV. Discussion and Reflection

Distribute **Handout: Signposts of Democracy**. Have students compare their Roads to Democracy with the Signposts of Democracy.

- Which principles that you included on your poster match those on the Signposts of Democracy? Which ones are missing?
- In what ways can "we the people" in a democracy strengthen the "Road to Democracy?" Why is it important for people to participate in a democracy?

Handout

Signposts of Democracy

Citizen Participation
One of the most basic signposts of a democracy is citizen participation in government. Participation is the key role of citizens in democracy. It is not only their right, but it is their duty. Citizen participation may take many forms including standing for election, voting in elections, becoming informed, debating issues, attending community or civic meetings, being members of private voluntary organizations, paying taxes, and even protesting. Participation builds a better democracy.

Equality
Democratic societies emphasize the principle that all people are equal. Equality means that all individuals are valued equally, have equal opportunities, and may not be discriminated against because of their race, religion, ethnic group, gender or sexual orientation. In a democracy, individuals and groups still maintain their right to have different cultures, personalities, languages and beliefs.

Political Tolerance
Democratic societies are politically tolerant. This means that while the majority of the people rule in a democracy, the rights of the minority must be protected. People who are not in power must be allowed to organize and speak out. Minorities are sometimes referred to as "the opposition" because they may have ideas that are different from the majority. Individual citizens must also learn to be tolerant of each other.

A democratic society is often composed of people from different cultures, racial, religious and ethnic groups who have viewpoints different from a majority of the population. A democratic society is enriched by diversity. If the majority deny rights to and destroy their opposition, then they also destroy democracy.

One goal of democracy is to make the best possible decision for the society. To achieve this, respect for all people and their points of view is needed. Decisions are more likely to be accepted, even by those who oppose them, if all citizens have been allowed to discuss, debate and question them.

Accountability
In a democracy, elected and appointed officials have to be accountable to the people. They are responsible for their actions. Officials must make decisions and perform their duties according to the will and wishes of the people, not for themselves.

Transparency
For government to be accountable the people must be aware of what is happening in the country. This is referred to as transparency in government. A transparent government holds public meetings and allows citizens to attend. In a democracy, the press and the people are able to get information about what decisions are being made, by whom and why.

Regular Free & Fair Elections
One way citizens of the country express their will is by electing officials to represent them in government. Democracy insists that these elected officials are chosen and peacefully removed from office in a free and fair manner. Intimidation, corruption and threats to citizens during or before an election are against the principles of democracy.

In a democracy, elections are held regularly every so many years. Participation in elections should not be based on a citizen's wealth. For free and fair elections to occur, most adult citizens should have the right to stand for government office. Additionally, obstacles should not exist which make it difficult for people to vote.

Economic Freedom
People in a democracy must have some form of economic freedom. This means that the government allows some private ownership of property and businesses, and that the people are allowed to choose their own work and join labor unions. The role the government should play in the economy is open to debate, but it is generally accepted that free markets should exist in a democracy and the state should not totally control the economy. Some argue that the state should play a stronger role in countries where great inequality of wealth exists due to past discrimination or other unfair practices.

Control of the Abuse of Power
Democratic societies try to prevent any elected official or group of people from misusing or abusing their power. One of the most common abuses of power is corruption. Corruption occurs when government officials use public funds for their own benefit or exercise power in an illegal manner.

Various methods have been used in different countries to protect against these abuses. Frequently the government is structured to limit the powers of the branches of government; to have independent courts and agencies with power to act against any illegal action by an elected official or branch of government; to allow for citizen participation and elections; and to check police abuse of power.

Accepting the Results of Elections
In democratic elections, there are winners and losers. Often the losers in an election believe so strongly that their party or candidate is the best one, that they refuse to accept the results of the election. The consequences of not accepting the results of an election may be a government that is ineffective and cannot make decisions. It may even result in violence. This is against democratic principles.

Human Rights
All democracies strive to respect and protect the human rights of citizens. Human rights mean those values that reflect respect for human life and human dignity. Democracy emphasizes the value of every human being. Examples of human rights include freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, the right to equality and the right to basic education.

Multi-Party Systems
In order to have a multi-party system, more than one political party must participate in elections and play a role in government. A multi-party system allows for opposition to the party that wins the election. This helps provide the government with different viewpoints on issues. Additionally, a multi-party system provides voters with a choice of candidates, parties and policies to vote for. Historically, when a country only has one party, the result has been a dictatorship.

The Rule of Law
In a democracy no one is above the law, not even a king or an elected President. This is called the rule of law. It means that everyone must obey the law and be held accountable if they violate it. Democracy also insists that the law be equally, fairly and consistently enforced. This is sometimes referred to as “due process of law.”

Bill of Rights
Many democratic countries also choose to have a bill of rights to protect the people against abuse of power. A bill of rights is a list of rights and freedoms guaranteed to all people in the country. When a bill of rights becomes part of a country's constitution, the courts have the power to enforce these rights. A bill of rights limits the power of government and may also impose duties on individuals and organizations.

Topic: I. Democracy
What the students do: Small groups analyze hypothetical proposals for making America more democratic and role-play a presidential commission evaluating the Electoral College system.
CA History-Social Science Standards: 12.4, 12.6
CMS Promising Approaches: 1, 2, 6
Thanks to: Constitutional Rights Foundation

Proposals for a More Democratic Country

Overview

In this lesson, students analyze and discuss several proposals for making America more democratic. Then in small groups, they role-play presidential commissions making recommendations on whether to replace the Electoral College.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify voter initiative, campaign finance reform, and the Electoral College.
- Express an informed opinion on whether campaign finance reform is necessary and whether voter initiatives should be adopted at the federal level.
- Evaluate and justify a position on the Electoral College.

Materials/Preparation

Handout 1: "Proposals for Making America More Democratic"— one per student.
Handout 2: "Should We Replace the Electoral College?"— one per student.

Procedure

I. Focus Discussion

A. Hold a brief discussion by asking students: Do you think our form of government is democratic enough?
B. Tell students that they are going to read a few proposals for making the United States more democratic.

II. Reading and Discussion—Proposals for Making America More Democratic

A. Distribute **Handout 1: "Proposals for Making America More Democratic"** to each student. Ask students to read it, examine the three proposals, and think about whether or not they favor them.

B. When students finish reading, hold a discussion using the questions on the handout:

1. What is a voter initiative? Do you think it should be adopted at the federal level? Why or why not?
2. Do you think campaign finance reform is necessary? Why or why not?
3. Many times in our history it has been suggested that the Electoral College be changed. Why do you think it never has been?

III. Small-Group Activity—Should We Replace the Electoral College?

A. Divide the class into groups of 3–5 students.

B. Distribute **Handout 2: "Activity: Should We Replace the Electoral College?"** to each student. Review it with students and answer any questions they may have.

C. When students are ready, ask which groups favored option #1. Ask them for their reasons. Ask others who rejected this option why they did. Hold a class discussion. Repeat this for each option.

D. Debrief the activity by holding a class vote on each option.

Proposals for Making America More Democratic

Since our nation's founding, many changes have been made to make our country a more democratic nation. For example, the Constitution has been amended three times to extend the right to vote. The 15th Amendment extended it to all racial groups; the 19th, to women, and the 26th to everyone age 18 or older. The Constitution was also amended to allow voters to elect U.S. senators. Prior to the 17th Amendment, ratified in 1913, each state's legislature chose its U.S. senators. Many other proposals have been made to make America more democratic.

Get Rid of the Electoral College

In an American election, voters do not directly choose a presidential candidate. The founders of the Constitution debated how the president should be selected. Some favored a popular vote (although the practicality of this was questionable at the time). They ultimately reached a compromise that reflected our federal system. They placed the final decision of who will be president and vice president in the hands of a separate voting body called the Electoral College.

Usually, the Electoral College vote accurately reflects the will of the larger voting public. But this does not always happen. Each state is given a number of electors based on the number of members in the House of Representatives plus its two U.S. senators. It is up to the state legislature to determine how the electors are selected. Today, every state chooses its electors through a popular vote. When people vote, the ballot says the name of the candidates for president and vice president. But people are actually voting for a slate of electors committed to a particular candidate. Following the election, the slate of electors for the winning candidate from every state meet in the Electoral College and vote for president.

In only three clear-cut instances has the Electoral College vote gone against the popular vote. In 1876, Rutherford B. Hayes lost the popular vote by about 300,000 votes. In 1888, Benjamin Harrison lost by about 100,000 votes, but won the presidency. In 2000, George W. Bush lost by about 500,000 votes, but won the Electoral College.

Opponents of the Electoral College believe it is archaic and undemocratic. The president, they say, is the president of all the people and should be the candidate with the most votes. They urge a constitutional amendment to change the Electoral College.

Supporters say the Electoral College reflects our federal system. To win the Electoral College, a candidate cannot simply campaign in the most populous states, but must also focus on smaller states. They argue that under the Electoral College the president therefore represents the whole nation.

Voter Initiatives

In many states, voter initiatives put proposed legislation on an election ballot. This allows citizens to vote directly for or against a proposed law instead of relying on their elected representatives in the legislature. For an initiative to be placed on a ballot, advocates must first collect signatures from registered voters. Then the initiative is placed on the ballot. In this way, a simple majority of votes can transform a bill into law without its being considered by the legislature. Currently, only state governments have voter initiative procedures. There is no federal initiative process.

The Constitution would have to be amended to allow for federal voter initiatives. Proponents believe that an initiative amendment would give more power to the voter. They argue that the initiative process would put responsibility for public policy directly in the hands of America's voters and that putting potential laws on the ballot would attract more voters to the polls.

Others express doubts about the initiative process. They indicate that the legislative process is a complex process full of critical checks and balances. Writing a bill and passing it into a law that is effective and won't be challenged in the courts requires legislative experience and lawmaking skills. They fear that initiatives reduce the legislative process to a contest among powerful groups to determine who can most effectively manipulate the voting public.

Campaign-Finance Reform

In 2004, the campaign expenditures for President George W. Bush and Democratic contender John Kerry reached more than $1 *billion* by Election Day. Many Americans believe that too much money is required to finance a modern election campaign—including vast amounts paying for expensive media ads. To get elected, they say, politicians must approach big business and special-interest groups for campaign financing. In turn, once they are elected, the biggest contributors have the strongest influence on the politicians they supported.

Advocates for campaign-finance reform argue that the search for campaign dollars defines how politicians behave in office. They argue that even if most legislative decisions are influenced by party, ideology, and the needs of their constituency, politicians still pay back contributors in the countless decisions about where they focus their lawmaking energy.

But, they argue, political favoritism is only one effect of the high cost of political campaigns. They point out that costly campaigns hinder direct democracy by making it nearly impossible for the average citizen to run for office.

Supporters of the current campaign finance system question how the system could be changed. Will donations be limited? They argue that campaign contributions are part of every citizen's rights to free speech and participation in the political process. They say that those who contribute are merely exercising these rights. Will the public finance campaigns? They say that there is little public support for this.

Others point to democratic nations that have restructured their campaign finance laws. Political fund-raising scandals have continued in these nations after they have reformed their finance laws. They argue that a broad range of factors—an equitable tax policy, an independent judiciary, adequate pay for legislators and other civil servants, budget disclosures, and party systems that nurture competition—combat legislative corruption more than the rules of campaign finance.

For Discussion

1. What is a voter initiative? Do you think it should be adopted at the federal level? Why or why not?
2. Do you think campaign finance reform is necessary? Why or why not?
3. Many times in our history it has been suggested that the Electoral College be changed. Why do you think it never has been?

A C T I V I T Y

Should We Replace the Electoral College?

1. Form small groups. Each group will role-play a presidential commission.

2. In your group, do the following:

   a. Imagine that you have been appointed to a presidential commission. The commission is to make recommendations on whether the Electoral College should be replaced and, if so, what should replace it.

   b. Read and discuss the arguments for and against the Electoral College and then discuss and decide on one of the options listed below. (Most of these options will require a constitutional amendment.) Be prepared to report on the reasons for your decision.

3. The groups should report back. Hold a class discussion on whether the Electoral College should be replaced, and if so, with which option. Conclude by taking a class vote.

Arguments Against the Electoral College. First, it allows a president to be elected who does not win the popular vote. This has occurred at least three times (in 1876, 1888, and 2000). Second, deadlocks can happen. A third party candidate or a close election can prevent any candidate from getting a majority. When no one captures a majority of the electoral votes, the House of Representatives decides who is president. This has occurred twice in our history (in 1800 and 1824). One study has shown it has almost happened 22 times. Third, because every state gets at least three electoral votes regardless of the state's population, voters in small states have more power than those in large states. Fourth, each state's electoral vote does not depend on the number of voters casting ballots. States with the same number of electoral votes may have far different turnouts on election day. Fifth, the Electoral College may hold down voter turnout. If opinion polls show one candidate far ahead in a state, voters in that state who prefer another candidate may not vote. In fact, candidates often ignore states where one holds a substantial lead.

Arguments in Favor of the Electoral College. First, the Electoral College represents our federal system, with its emphasis on the states and their representatives. Second, the Electoral College is not archaic and undemocratic. We have two senators from every state regardless of the state's population. We don't consider that archaic or undemocratic. Third, it allows every state to participate and have a voice, including the small states. These states might be overlooked if the election depended solely on candidates seeking the most votes. Fourth, it prevents sectionalism by requiring a winning candidate to have support distributed throughout the country. Fifth, it has contributed to political stability by promoting the two-party system, which encourages the major parties to represent a wide range of interests. Sixth, it strengthens the power of minority groups, which can play a powerful role in deciding the outcome of close elections in states.

Option #1: Popular vote. Decide the presidency based on the candidate who receives the highest total popular vote.

(Continued)

Option #2: Majority Popular Vote. Decide the presidency based on the candidate who receives a majority of the popular vote. If no candidate receives a majority, then a run-off election between the two highest vote-getters would take place.

Option #3: District Electoral Vote. Each state gets electoral votes based on its number of congressional representatives plus its two U.S. senators. The district electoral vote gives one electoral vote to each congressional district and the overall winner in the state gets two electoral votes. This system is already used in two states (Maine and Nebraska). If every state were required to use it, a constitutional amendment would be necessary. But your commission could also simply recommend that each state adopt this system.

Option #4: Retain the Electoral College.

II. The Voters

Topic: II. The Voters
What the students do: Read about the history of voting rights and role-play a committee deciding to support or oppose modern voting restrictions.
CA History-Social Science Standards: 11.10.6, 11.10.7; 12.6.4, 12.6.6
CMS Promising Approaches**:** 1, 2, 6
Thanks to: Constitutional Rights Foundation

Voting Rights in America: Past and Present

Overview
In this lesson, students look at the history of voting rights in America. The lesson provides two different readings for teachers to select from: *Who Voted in Early America* or *Race and Voting in the Segregated South*. Teachers might elect to assign one or both readings, depending on the standards he/she wishes to address and class time. The activity, in which students work in small groups to examine modern restrictions on voting and decide whether to support or oppose these restrictions, is designed to support either or both readings.

Objectives
Students will be able to:
- Explain typical requirements for voting in early America and/or post Reconstruction.
- Describe how voting rights have changed over time.
- Evaluate and decide whether modern restrictions on voting should remain in place.

Materials/Preparation
Decide if you will have your students focus on voting rights in Early America and/or the Segregated South. Provide students with copies of the reading(s) you selected (**Handout 1: "Who Voted in Early America," OR Handout 2: "Race and Voting in the Segregated South").**

Handout 3: "Who Should Not Be Allowed to Vote?"—1 per student.

Procedure
I. Focus Discussion

A. Hold a brief discussion by asking students: What constitutional amendments have been passed regarding voting? (15th Amendment gave the vote to black males; 19th Amendment gave women the vote; the 24th banned the poll tax; and the 26th gave young people 18 and older the right to vote).

B. Tell students that, historically, voting rights in our nation were much more restrictive than they are today.

II. Reading and Discussion—Voting Rights

A. Distribute the handout **"Who Voted in Early America?" OR "Race and Voting in the Segregated South"** to each student. Ask students to read it and look for the restrictions on voting.

B. When students finish reading, hold a discussion using the questions on the handout.

III. Small-Group Activity—Who Should Not Be Allowed to Vote?

A. Distribute **Handout 3: "Who Should Not Be Allowed to Vote?"** Divide the class into groups of 3–5 students.

B. Review the instructions and answer any questions students may have.

C. When students are ready, discuss each restriction. Ask for reasons for and against the restriction. Conclude by voting on whether to retain each of the five restrictions.

Handout 1

Who Voted in Early America?

Coming from England, American colonists usually adopted the voter qualifications that they had known in England. Typically, a voter had to be a free, adult, male resident of his county, a member of the predominant religious group, and a "freeholder." A freeholder owned land worth a certain amount of money. Colonists believed only freeholders should vote because only they had a permanent stake in the stability of society. Freeholders also paid the bulk of the taxes.

Becoming a freeholder was not difficult for a man since land was plentiful and cheap. Thus up to 75 percent of the adult males in most colonies qualified as voters. But this voting group fell far short of a majority of the people then living in the English colonies. After eliminating everyone under the age of 21, all slaves and women, most Jews and Catholics, plus those men too poor to be freeholders, the colonial electorate consisted of perhaps only 10 percent to 20 percent of the total population.

After declaring independence on July 4, 1776, each former English colony wrote a state constitution. About half the states attempted to reform their voting procedures. The trend was to do away with the freehold requirement and grant all taxpaying, free adult males the right to vote. Since few men escaped paying taxes, suffrage (the right to vote) expanded in these states.

Vermont's constitution went even further. It granted universal manhood suffrage (i.e., all adult males could vote). Some states also abolished religious tests for voting. New Jersey's new state constitution apparently accidentally permitted women to vote.

It granted the right to vote to "all inhabitants" of legal age (21) who owned property worth 50 English pounds and resided in a county for at least one year. Little comment on the possibility of women voting took place in the state for 20 years. Even so, one state election law passed in 1790 included the words "he or she."

In 1797, a bitter contest for a seat in the New Jersey state legislature erupted between John Condict, a Democratic Republican, and William Crane, a Federalist. Condict narrowly won the election after Federalists turned out a large number of women to vote for Crane. This was probably the first election in U.S. history in which a substantial group of women went to the polls.

Newspaper coverage of women voting was widespread in the state. Newspapers debated whether the state constitution really intended for women to vote. Some argued that the words "all inhabitants" surely did not include children, slaves, and foreigners. If this were the case, they continued, women should not be allowed to vote either because they never had before. Others maintained that perhaps widows and single women who owned property worth 50 pounds should be able to vote. Married women were automatically excluded from voting since all property in a marriage legally belonged to the husband.

In 1806, voters in a New Jersey county voted on where to build a new county courthouse. During three days of voting, partisans from the two contending towns (Newark and Elizabeth) used legal and illegal devices to win the election. Men and boys, whites and blacks, citizens and aliens, residents and non-residents voted (often many times). Women and girls, married and single, with and without property, joined the election frenzy. Finally, males dressed up as females and voted one more time.

Newark, with 1,600 qualified voters, counted over 5,000 votes; Elizabeth, with 1,000 legal voters, counted more than 2,200 votes. Although Newark claimed victory, the voting was so blatantly fraudulent that the state legislature canceled the election.

The following year, the state legislature passed a new election law to make clear who was qualified to vote in New Jersey. The law declared that no persons were to be allowed to vote except free white men who either owned property worth 50 pounds or were taxpayers. Such voters would also have to be citizens and residents of the county where they voted. Thus, in 1807, the all-male state legislature ended the experiment with women suffrage in New Jersey.

Expanding the Right to Vote

Despite New Jersey's limiting suffrage, the trend throughout U.S. history has been to expand the right to vote. At first, the main debate was over property tests. But by the Civil War, most states had replaced property requirements with universal white male suffrage.

With the end of slavery, reformers turned to securing the right to vote for black males. The 15th Amendment accomplished this in 1870, but another century passed before discrimination against black voters was finally ended. Women did not win the right to vote until the adoption of the 19th Amendment in 1920, over 100 years after women lost the vote in New Jersey.

In 1964, the 24th Amendment prohibited denying anyone the right to vote in federal elections for failing to pay a voting or any other tax. Finally, in 1971, the 26th Amendment reduced the legal voting age to 18 in all elections.

For Discussion

1. Which groups of people were excluded from voting during the early years of American history? Why do you think they were excluded?

2. Why did women seemingly have the right to vote in New Jersey between 1776 and 1807? Why do you think women lost this right in 1807?

Race and Voting in the Segregated South

After returning home from World War II, veteran Medgar Evers decided to vote in a Mississippi election. But when he and some other black ex-servicemen attempted to vote, a white mob stopped them. "All we wanted to be was ordinary citizens," Evers later related. "We fought during the war for America, Mississippi included. Now, after the Germans and Japanese hadn't killed us, it looked as though the white Mississippians would. . . ."

The most basic right of a citizen in a democracy is the right to vote. Without this right, people can be easily ignored and even abused by their government. This, in fact, is what happened to African American citizens living in the South following Civil War Reconstruction. Despite the 14th and 15th amendments guaranteeing the civil rights of black Americans, their right to vote was systematically taken away by white supremacist state governments.

Voting During Reconstruction

After the Civil War, Congress acted to prevent Southerners from re-establishing white supremacy. In 1867, the Radical Republicans in Congress imposed federal military rule over most of the South. Under U.S. Army occupation, the former Confederate states wrote new constitutions and were readmitted to the Union, but only after ratifying the 14th Amendment. This Reconstruction amendment prohibited states from denying "the equal protection of the laws" to U.S. citizens, which included the former slaves.

In 1870, the 15th Amendment was ratified. It stated that, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

More than a half-million black men became voters in the South during the 1870s (women did not secure the right to vote in the United States until 1920). For the most part, these new black voters cast their ballots solidly for the Republican Party, the party of the Great Emancipator, Abraham Lincoln.

When Mississippi rejoined the Union in 1870, former slaves made up more than half of that state's population. During the next decade, Mississippi sent two black U.S. senators to Washington and elected a number of black state officials, including a lieutenant governor. But even though the new black citizens voted freely and in large numbers, whites were still elected to a large majority of state and local offices. This was the pattern in most of the Southern states during Reconstruction.

The Republican-controlled state governments in the South were hardly perfect. Many citizens complained about overtaxation and outright corruption. But these governments brought about significant improvements in the lives of the former slaves. For the first time, black men and women enjoyed freedom of speech and movement, the right of a fair trial, education for their children, and all the other privileges and protections of American citizenship. But all this changed when Reconstruction ended in 1877 and federal troops withdrew from the old Confederacy.

Voting in Mississippi

With federal troops no longer present to protect the rights of black citizens, white supremacy quickly returned to the old Confederate states. Black voting fell off sharply in most areas because of threats by white employers and violence from the Ku Klux Klan, a ruthless secret organization bent on preserving white supremacy at all costs.

White majorities began to vote out the Republicans and replace them with Democratic governors, legislators, and local officials. Laws were soon passed banning interracial marriages and racially segregating railroad cars along with the public schools.

Laws and practices were also put in place to make sure blacks would never again freely participate in elections. But one problem stood in the way of denying African Americans the right to vote: the 15th Amendment, which guaranteed them this right. To a great extent, Mississippi led the way in overcoming the barrier presented by the 15th Amendment.

In 1890, Mississippi held a convention to write a new state constitution to replace the one in force since Reconstruction. The white leaders of the convention were clear about their intentions. "We came here to exclude the Negro," declared the convention president. Because of the 15th Amendment, they could not ban blacks from voting. Instead, they wrote into the state constitution a number of voter restrictions making it difficult for most blacks to register to vote.

First, the new constitution required an annual poll tax, which voters had to pay for two years before the election. This was a difficult economic burden to place on black Mississippians, who made up the poorest part of the state's population. Many simply couldn't pay it.

But the most formidable voting barrier put into the state constitution was the literacy test. It required a person seeking to register to vote to read a section of the state constitution and explain it to the county clerk who processed voter registrations. This clerk, who was always white, decided whether a citizen was literate or not.

The literacy test did not just exclude the 60 percent of voting-age black men (most of them ex-slaves) who could not read. It excluded almost all black men, because the clerk would select complicated technical passages for them to interpret. By contrast, the clerk would pass whites by picking simple sentences in the state constitution for them to explain.

Mississippi also enacted a "grandfather clause" that permitted registering anyone whose grandfather was qualified to vote before the Civil War. Obviously, this benefited only white citizens. The "grandfather clause" as well as the other legal barriers to black voter registration worked. Mississippi cut the percentage of black voting-age men registered to vote from over 90 percent during Reconstruction to less than 6 percent in 1892. These measures were copied by most of the other states in the South.

Other Forms of Voter Discrimination

By the turn of the century, the white Southern Democratic Party held nearly all elected offices in the former Confederate states. The Southern Republican Party, mostly made up of blacks, barely existed and rarely even ran candidates against the Democrats. As a result, the real political contests took place within the Democratic Party primary elections. Whoever won the Democratic primary was just about guaranteed victory in the general election.

In 1902, Mississippi passed a law that declared political parties to be private organizations outside the authority of the 15th Amendment. This permitted the Mississippi Democratic Party to exclude black citizens from membership and participation in its primaries. The "white primary," which was soon imitated in most other Southern states, effectively prevented the small number of blacks registered to vote from having any say in who got elected to partisan offices—from the local sheriff to the governor and members of Congress.

When poll taxes, literacy tests, "grandfather clauses," and "white primaries" did not stop blacks from registering and voting, intimidation often did the job. An African-American citizen attempting to exercise his right to vote would often be threatened with losing his job. Denial of credit, threats of eviction, and verbal abuse by white voting clerks also prevented black Southerners from voting. When all else failed, mob violence and even lynching kept black people away from the ballot box.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965

As a result of intimidation, violence, and racial discrimination in state voting laws, a mere 3 percent of voting-age black men and women in the South were registered to vote in 1940. In Mississippi, under 1 percent were registered. Most blacks who did vote lived in the larger cities of the South.

By not having the power of the ballot, African Americans in the South had little influence in their communities. They did not hold elected offices. They had no say in how much their taxes would be or what laws would be passed. They had little, if any, control over local police, courts, or public schools. They, in effect, were denied their rights as citizens.

Attempts to change this situation were met with animosity and outright violence. But in the 1950s, the civil rights movement developed. Facing enormous hostility, black people in the South organized to demand their rights guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution. They launched voter registration drives in many Southern communities.

In the early 1960s, black and white protesters, called Freedom Riders, came from the North to join in demonstrations throughout the South. In some places, crowds attacked them while white police officers looked on.

Medgar Evers, the black veteran stopped by a white mob from voting, became a civil rights leader in his native Mississippi. Because of his civil rights activities, he was shot and killed in front of his home by a white segregationist in 1963.

But through the efforts of local civil rights leaders like Medgar Evers and other Americans, about 43 percent of adult black men and women were registered to vote in the South by 1964. That same year, the 24th Amendment was ratified. It outlawed poll taxes in federal elections. (The U.S. Supreme Court later ruled that all poll taxes are unconstitutional.)

White supremacists, however, still fiercely resisted voting by African Americans. Black voter registration in Alabama was only 23 percent, while in neighboring Mississippi less than 7 percent of voting-age blacks were registered.

A major event in the civil rights movement soon brought an end to voting discrimination. Early in 1965, a county sheriff clamped down on a black voter registration campaign in Selma, Alabama.

Deputies arrested and jailed protesting black teachers and 800 schoolchildren. The leaders of the voter registration drive decided to organize a protest march from Selma to Montgomery, the capital of Alabama.

On March 7, 1965, about 600 black and white civil rights protesters passed through Selma and began to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge spanning the Alabama River. They were met on the other side by a large force of Alabama state troopers, who ordered the marchers to return to Selma. When the marchers refused to turn back, the troopers attacked, some on horseback, knocking down people and beating them with clubs. This was all filmed by TV news cameras and shown that evening to a shocked American public.

The Selma march pushed the federal government to pass legislation to enforce the right of black citizens to vote. A few days after the violence at Selma, President Lyndon Johnson introduced the Voting Rights Act of 1965 before a joint session of Congress. Johnson declared, "it is not just Negroes, but it's really all of us who must overcome the crippling legacy of bigotry and injustice."

The Voting Rights Act, signed into law by President Johnson on August 6, 1965, suspended literacy and other tests in counties and states showing evidence of voter discrimination. These counties and states also were prohibited from creating new voter requirements that denied citizens their right to vote. Moreover, in the areas covered by the act, federal examiners replaced local clerks in registering voters.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 ended the practices that had denied African Americans the right to vote in Southern states. Registration of black voters in the South jumped from 43 percent in 1964 to 66 percent by the end of the decade. This represented an increase of more than a million new African American voters who could finally claim their right to vote.

For Discussion and Writing

1. What legal devices did Southern states use to exclude most of their black citizens from voting? What other methods were used to stop blacks from voting?
2. What was unfair about the way literacy tests were used for voter registration in the South from 1890 to 1965?
3. What were the consequences to African Americans of being excluded from voting in the segregated South?

Handout 3

Who Should Not Be Allowed to Vote?

All states still have some voting restrictions. Are they necessary? You have been asked by Suffrage USA, a national non-profit, non-partisan (hypothetical) organization to sit on a special committee.

Your committee will review five traditional restrictions on the right to vote and decide whether you think Suffrage USA should support or oppose each of these restrictions. Before making a decision on each restriction, discuss and write answers to these two questions:

1. What are some reasons favoring the restriction?
2. What are some reasons against the restriction?

Restrictions on the Right to Vote

In order to vote, you must:

A. Reside in a voting district for at least one month.
B. Be at least 18 years of age.
C. Not be in prison or on parole for a felony conviction.
D. Be a U.S. citizen.
E. Be registered to vote.

Topic: *The Voters*
What the students do: Take the roles of hypothetical candidates and their staff members and create a strategy to attract young voters. Students will use recent research findings to guide their work.
CA History-Social Science Standards: 12.2.4, 12.6.6
CMS Promising Approaches: 1, 2, 6 and potentially 3
Thanks to: Constitutional Rights Foundation

Get the Youth Vote!

Overview

In this two-day session, students explore reasons why the voting rate for young people (18-29) is lower than for other age groups, and they take the roles of a special "youth vote team" to help a hypothetical candidate capture the youth vote.

First, students brainstorm answers to the question, "Why don't young people vote?" Next, students work in small groups to take a look at recent research on youth voting and create a strategy directed at young voters.

During Day Two, students present their strategies and participate in a debriefing discussion.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Generate possible reasons for a low voting rate among 18-29 year olds.
- Explore research and data about voting rates.
- Develop strategies for a hypothetical candidate to motivate young voters.

Materials/Preparation

Handout 1: "Go Vote for Gomez!" —1 per student
Handouts 2–5: One of the handouts per ¼ of the class. (e.g., for 24 students, run off 6 copies of each handout)

Possible Resource People: It would be great to have an elected official or someone who is running for office come to hear and comment on the students' ideas.

Day One Procedure

I. Focus Activity: Why Don't Young People Vote?

Tell students that today they will become staff members working on the campaign of Alex Gomez, a candidate running for state senator.

Distribute **Handout 1: Go Vote for Gomez** and ask students to take a look at the first section titled "The Voters." Read the section together, and then explain that there are over 46 million young adults between the ages of 18-29 who are eligible to vote in our country. In the 2006 national elections, less than 25 percent of these people voted. Since then, the youth vote has started to increase, but is still lower than other age groups. New efforts are being made to reach this important group.

The (hypothetical) campaign manager has learned that if Gomez can capture the youth vote, it could be a landslide. Today, students will become a special team of the candidate's staff focusing on getting the youth vote. Explain that to get started, they need to think about the problem so that they can come up with solutions. Ask the class to brainstorm:

Why do you think so many young people do not vote?

Make a list of the students' responses on the board. Tell students that this list should be helpful to them, as the candidate's special youth vote team, as they come up with new ways to reach young voters.

II. Small-Group Activity: Get the Youth Vote!

Explain that a lot is being done nationally to get young people engaged in voting. Over $40 million is invested during elections to try to understand what motivates young voters and what turns them off to the political process.

Refer students to the section in Handout 1 titled "Facts About Youth Voters" and go over the key points with the class.

Tell students that their next task as the youth vote team is to create special campaign strategies directed at your community's young voters. Divide the class into groups of 2-4 students.

Distribute the "Special Assignment" sheets (Handouts 2 through 5) to each group. Tell them that each group will create a strategy and message directed at young voters. Each group will present its ideas during the next session.

Let the students know how much time they will have to prepare today and at the beginning of the next session.

Day Two Procedure

I. Final Preparations

Remind students how much time they have to prepare for their presentations and that each person from their group should have some role in presenting their group's ideas.

II. Presentations of Youth Vote Special Assignments

Each group should present its strategy. After the groups have presented, ask the whole class:

- What strategies do you think would work well with younger voters? Why?
- How would you convince a candidate that the youth vote is important?
- What would you tell real candidates to do if they want to get the youth vote?

- Do you think you would ever be interested in working on a real campaign to help reach young voters? Why or why not?

III. Optional Activities: Putting Our Ideas to the Test

Have your students put their ideas in action by:

- Contacting the candidate of their choice and sharing ideas about reaching young voters. Students could bring "evidence" to class to show how he/she went about contacting the candidate's staff, the response, etc.
- Implementing their ideas during a school-based student government election.
- Implementing their ideas to increase student participation in the Secretary of State's Student Mock Elections program. (http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter_ed.htm)

Go Vote for Gomez!

The Campaign Team

Imagine that you are a member of a campaign team. Your candidate, Alex Gomez, is running for state senate. Today your team will focus on an important group of the voting population.

Before your team gets started today, read the background information below about voters.

Voters

As you know, the U.S. Constitution ensures that citizens who are at least 18 years old have the right to vote. In the 1780s, just after the American Revolution, only about 6 percent of the population was allowed to vote, mostly white males who owned a certain amount of property. Over the years, through legislation and constitutional amendments, more groups won the right to vote:

- African American males in 1870 (15th Amendment)
- Women in 1920 (19th Amendment)
- People who are 18 years of age or older in 1971 (26th Amendment)

Voting is central to our democracy. Through voting, "we the people" have a voice about who our leaders are, what are laws are, and the policies that impact our daily lives. If we don't vote, then we are leaving the power in the hands of leaders who were elected by "we *a few* of the people"!

But many Americans do not take advantage of this important right. The highest voting rates occur during the years of a Presidential election. In the 2008 presidential election, 64 percent of voting-age citizens voted. That means that over one-third of the people who could vote did not.

Local elections tend to draw far fewer voters to the polls. For example, in the 2005 mayoral election in Los Angeles, only 36 percent of the registered voters cast ballots, and in the 2003 city election, only about 10 percent of registered voters voted.

Because voting is so essential to our system of governance, voting rates are tracked by national and local governments, as well as researchers. Millions of dollars are spent each year to study how many people voted in elections. Researchers look at who voted and who did not vote by age groups, ethnicity, and many other factors. In this way, we learn more about why people vote — and why people do not vote.

Get the Youth Vote!

You are a member of a campaign team trying to get Alex Gomez elected for state senator. Gomez is 37 years old, and if elected, would be the youngest senator ever to serve in your state. Alex grew up in your community, attending public schools and helping to run a small family-owned restaurant. Alex worked hard to attend college, graduated with honors, and went on to law school. After getting a law degree, Alex worked as a prosecutor for the District Attorney. Active in the city's Chamber of Commerce, Alex started a program to help middle class citizens open their own small businesses. This program has become a model throughout the state. In addition to an interest in improving the economy through supporting small business, Gomez is committed to protecting the state's natural resources and in supporting the state's public schools.

If your candidate can win the "youth vote," it is predicted that the election will be a landslide in your favor! Your state has a large population of people between the ages of 18 and 24. No one else running for office has bothered to try to reach this important group of voters, so your candidate has decided to put some time, money, and energy into reaching young voters. You are a member of the candidate's special Youth Vote Team, and your job is to help Alex capture the youth vote.

Facts about Youth Voters

The candidate's analysts have put together some facts from recent research to help you. (The candidate is imaginary, but this research is real.)

- Candidates have struggled trying to reach young voters for many years. The voting age in this country used to be 21. But in 1971 the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, lowering the voting age to 18. People between 18 and 24 years old vote at the lowest rate, compared to people over 25.

- Phonebanks are a common campaign strategy. Many candidates have volunteers and staff call registered voters. The campaign staff creates a script for the volunteers to use so that the voters all get the same message about the candidate and his/her stand on issues. Usually, the script is very short and to the point, because people over the age of 30 tend to like it that way. The call often ends with something like, "We hope to get your vote on Tuesday!"

- "Robocalling" is another phone call strategy that uses automated calling and a recorded message. Research shows that this is not effective with 18-29 year olds.

- The direct mail strategy is also very common. Candidates send out flyers and brochures to registered voters through the mail. Data shows that this strategy does not work with young voters.

- Young voters (ages 18 to 29) are more racially and ethnically diverse than older voters, according to the exit polls. (Kirby & Marcelo1, 2006)

- Young voters were relatively late to make up their minds. They were the most likely age group to make their voting decision on Election Day. (Kirby & Marcelo, 2006)

- Quality counts. Research shows that the most effective method of generating a new voter is an in-person door knock by a peer. The next greatest impact was seen by phonebanks with longer, chattier phone scripts or volunteers making the calls. (Darrow, 2003)

- Begin with the basics. Young people need nuts-and-bolts information about how to vote. And efforts that make voting more convenient are quite effective. (Darrow, 2003)

- The use of e-mail, text messaging, online social networking sites, and other new technologies gives us easy ways to reach young voters where they are—online or on their cell phones. (Darrow, 2003)

- Use technologies that young people use like text and the Internet, but only in ways that allow them to choose to participate in the dialogue. (Kirby & Marcelo1, 2006)

Sources:

Young Voters in the 2006 Elections. Emily Hoban Kirby and Karlo Barrios Marcelo. CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement; www.civicyouth.org), 2006.

Young Voter Mobilization Tactics: A Compilation of the Most Recent Research on Traditional and Innovative Voter Turnout Techniques. Carolyn Darrow. Tides Center; YouthVote Coalition, a project of Tides Center, 2003

CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement; www.civicyouth.org)

Voting and Registration in the 2008 Elections: Population Characteristics. U.S. Census Bureau, July, 2012. http://www.census.gov/prod/2010pubs/p20-562.pdf

Handout 2

Youth Vote — Special Assignment: Phonebank

Your task is to create a new strategy directed at young voters. Use the information provided by the analysts (Handout 1) and your own knowledge about young people to come up with a strategy that will work.

Your group will focus on creating a strategy for **phone calls**. Assume calls will be made to registered voters between the ages of 18-24.

1. Who should make the calls?

2. When should the calls be made?

   A. Time of day?

   B. When during the election?

3. Create the script for the caller to use to encourage the person to vote for your candidate.

4. Prepare to present your strategy to the rest of the campaign staff. Each person should have some role in the presentation. Be sure to:

   A. Tell what your special assignment was.

   B. Present your answers to all of the questions.

   C. Explain your decisions and why you think your strategy will work.

Handout 3

Youth Vote — Special Assignment: Face-To-Face Contact

Your task is to create a new strategy directed at young voters. Use the information provided by the analysts (Handout 1) and your own knowledge about young people to come up with a strategy that will work.

Your group will focus on creating a strategy for **face-to-face contact** with people between the ages of 18-24.

1. What type of face-to-face contact should we go for? (door-knocking, stopping people passing by, etc.)

2. What type of volunteers should we recruit for this?

3. Where should the volunteers work?

4. Create the script for the volunteers to use to encourage the person to vote for your candidate.

5. Prepare to present your strategy to the rest of the campaign staff. Each person should have some role in the presentation. Be sure to:

   A. Tell what your special assignment was.

   B. Present your answers to all of the questions.

   C. Explain your decisions and why you think your strategy will work.

Youth Vote — Special Assignment: Cell Phone Technology

Your task is to create a new strategy directed at young voters. Use the information provided by the analysts (Handout 1) and your own knowledge about young people to come up with a strategy that will work.

Your group will focus on creating a strategy for using **cell phone technology** with people between the ages of 18-24.

1. What type of cell phone technology should we use? (calls, text messaging, etc.)

2. When should the messages/calls be sent?

   A. Time of day?

   B. When during the election?

3. Create the script for the volunteers to use to encourage the person to vote for your candidate.

4. Prepare to present your strategy to the rest of the campaign staff. Each person should have some role in the presentation. Be sure to:

   A. Tell what your special assignment was.

   B. Present your answers to all of the questions.

   C. Explain your decisions and why you think your strategy will work.

Youth Vote — Special Assignment: Computer Technology

Your task is to create a new strategy directed at young voters. Use the information provided by the analysts (Handout 1) and your own knowledge about young people to come up with a strategy that will work.

Your group will focus on creating a strategy for using **computer technology** with people between the ages of 18-24.

1. What type of computer technology should we use? (e-mail, chat, web site, etc.)

2. How will we hold the person's interest?

3. Create a sample of what you would use. Show what it would say and describe how it would work.

4. Prepare to present your strategy to the rest of the campaign staff. Each person should have some role in the presentation. Be sure to:

   A. Tell what your special assignment was.

   B. Present your answers to all of the questions.

   C. Explain your decisions and why you think your strategy will work.

Topic: The Voters
What the Students Do: Examine census data from the 2008 election and evaluate strategies for increasing voter turnout. Create a public service announcement to encourage civic participation.
California History-Social Science Standards**:** 12.6.6
CMS Promising Approaches**:** 1, 2, 3
Thanks to: University of Virginia Center for Politics: Youth Leadership Initiative

Voter Participation: Who's Voting?

Purpose

Voting in state, local, and federal elections is an integral component of citizenship and yet only sixty-four percent of American citizens participated in the elections of 2008. Students will examine census information from the 2008 election in order to compare the demographic differences between voting populations. Using this information, students will evaluate strategies for increasing voter turnout in future elections.

Objectives

1. Students will understand the role of voting in a democracy in order to describe the importance of voting to the nation's future.
2. Students will examine current census data regarding the 2008 election in order to determine Americans who are under-represented in the election process.
3. Students will identify reasons why many Americans do not vote in order to evaluate strategies for increasing voter turnout.

Keywords

census *demographic* *native/naturalized citizen* *socio-economic status*

Materials

1. Census 2008: *Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2008 (http://www.census.gov/prod/2010pubs/p20-562.pdf)*
2. Student handout: *2008 Elections: Census Data Analysis*
3. Teacher key: *2008 Elections: Census Data Analysis*
4. Teacher resource: *Conclusions from the 2008 Elections*
5. Student handout: *Time Out Ticket*
6. Student handout: *Proposals for Increasing Voter Turnout*
7. Student handout: *Public Service Announcement Checklist*
8. Access to the internet:
   - http://www.census.gov/prod/2010pubs/p20-562.pdf
   - Resources on alternatives to the current election system

Procedure

1. Warm-up: Instruct students to brainstorm the word *democracy*. After they have generated a list of words ask them to go back and highlight the one or two words that are most important to the survival of a democracy. Most students should identify voting as a key component of a democracy.
   - Is voting important to our democracy?
   - Why is voting so important to American democracy?
   - If you asked one hundred Americans the same questions, how many do you think would agree that voting is important?
   - What percentage of eligible Americans do you think voted in the 2008 elections? (Answer: 64%)
   - Does this surprise you? If yes, why? If not, why?
   - Should more people be voting? What might it mean if less than three-fourths of registered voters participated in the 2008 elections?

2. Have students analyze 2008 census data in order to determine who voted in the 2008 l presidential election. Have students visit:
   http://www.census.gov/prod/2010pubs/p20-562.pdf
   - In what region of the country do you find the highest rates of voter participation? Lowest?
   - What factors affect the likelihood that a person will vote? Answers should include: Race/ethnicity, education, amount of time a person has lived in one location, whether or not a person is a native or naturalized citizen, **socio-economic status** (the economic, social and physical environments in which individuals live and work).
   - Describe a typical voter/non-voter in the United States:
     - Gender
     - Location
     - Education
     - Income
     - Age
     - Occupation
   - What do the *demographics* imply about representative government in the United States?

     Demographics- statistics or information regarding life in a society or community
     Native Citizen- a citizen born in the United States
     Naturalized Citizen- a citizen born outside of the United States

3. Using the handout *Conclusions from the 2008 Elections* break students into small groups and give each group a conclusion from the list. Have them discuss the statement and hypothesize as to whether or not the statement is true. Each group should prepare to summarize their group's findings with the class and answer questions from other students.

4. Distribute the handout *Time Out Ticket* and have the students reflect on the effects of low voter turnout on the democratic process.

   - Many Americans complain that their representatives in Congress and the president have little in common with them. Based on the **demographic** information in the lesson, why might this be true?
     - What groups tend to be under-represented in the electoral process?
     - How is the legislative process affected by the lack of voter participation?

5. Revisit the chart entitled *Reasons Given for Not Voting: 2008*. In small groups have the students discuss the reasons that they feel are most valid and propose strategies for improving voter turnout. Ask them to record their group's ideas on chart paper and share them with the class.

6. Working in the same small groups, have the students research the various strategies proposed for increasing voter turnout. Students should record their research on the chart *Proposals for Increasing Voter Turnout*. Engage in a jigsaw activity by having one student from each group meet to debate the various suggestions. Students should complete page 2 of the handout in order to evaluate the options presented in the lesson. The following sites have information on the strategies. If you have no access to the internet, articles have been included to support this activity.

   Compulsory Voting-
   http://www.geography.about.com/library/weekly/aa060100a.htm
   www.mind-trek.com/writ-dtf/votehoax/p-mcguin.htm

   Voting by Mail-
   www.fairvote.org/turnout/mail.htm
   http://www.sos.state.or.us/elections/HAVA/votingguide/votebymail.html
   http://www.idea.int/vt/postal_voting_internet_voting.cfm

   Voting by Internet-
   http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/30/AR2006103001062.html
   http://igs.berkeley.edu/library/research/quickhelp/policy/government/e-voting.html

7. To assess student achievement have the students work in pairs to create a public service announcement (PSA) that would encourage voter participation in 2012. Use the PSA Checklist to guide development and evaluation of the PSA. Students could use PowerPoint to create their PSAs or if technology is limited they could create the storyboards (see included template.)

Extension Activities:

1. Start an advocacy project for one of the proposals to increase voter turnout. Have the students use the *Speakout!* Section of the YLI website to contact legislators and invite them to speak to students on the issues. Contact groups that work with under-represented voters to see how you can promote voting in your area.

2. Create and perform skits that illustrate what happens to a democracy when its citizens don't vote. Contact elementary/middle schools in your area to see if the students could perform the skits. Skits could also be taped and sent to area schools.

3. Have each student poll ten adults who are eligible to vote (citizen, over the age of 18, not a felon). Students should ask the adults if they participated in the 2008 elections. They should also record the reasons why the person did or did not vote. Compare the class results to the chart from the census report, *Reasons Given for Not Voting: 2008*.

2008 Elections: Census Data Analysis

<u>Directions:</u> Using the information provided in the Census Data report answer the following questions. Remember to examine the charts and graphs carefully before responding.

1. *Figure 1 on Page 3. Voters among the Total, Citizen and Registered Voting Age Populations: 2008*
   a) What percentage of the total U.S. population voted in 2008?
   b) What percentage of citizens voted in 2008?
   c) What percentage of registered citizens voted in 2008?
   d) How would you compare the number of citizens and the number of registered citizens?
   e) What does this chart tell us about the electoral process in 2008?
   f) If many people in a region are not citizens, what will the effect be on representation in Congress?

2. *Table 2 on Pages 4-5. Reported Rates of Voting and Registration by Selected Characteristics: 2008*
   a) Who has a higher rate of voting participation, men or women?
   b) Which racial or ethnic groups have the highest rates of voter participation?
   c) Which age group has the highest levels of voter participation?
   d) Describe the relationship between educational attainment and voter participation?
   e) Who tends to vote more, households with lower incomes or those with higher incomes?
   f) Why might employed citizens vote in higher numbers than unemployed citizens?
   g) In what regions of the United States do you find the highest voter turnout?
   h) In what regions do you find the lowest voter turnout?

3. *Figure 5 on Page 11. Voting by State: 2008*
   a) According to the data in the graph, what state had the highest voting-age citizen population to vote?
   b) What state has the lowest percentage of voting-age citizen population who voted?
   c) What percentage of voters in your state participated in the 2008 election?

4. *Figure 6 on Page 15. Method of Registration to Vote: 2008*
   a) Looking at the graph, which method appears to be most successful in registering students to vote?
   b) Why do you think that is true?

5. *Table 2 on Page 4. Reported Rates of Voting and Registration by Selected Characteristics: 2008.* Using data from the chart, describe a person **most likely** to vote in the 2008 election.

   a) Gender:
   b) Region:
   c) Level of Education:
   d) Income level:
   e) Age:
   f) Race:

6. *Table 2 on Page 4. Reported Rates of Voting and Registration by Selected Characteristics: 2008.* Using data from the chart, describe a person **least likely** to vote in the 2008 election.

   a) Gender:
   b) Region:
   c) Level of Education:
   d) Income level:
   e) Age:
   f) Race:

Summary Questions

1. What factors affect the likelihood that a person will vote? Which do you feel are the most decisive?

2. How might the study of **demographics** (statistics or information regarding life in a community) affect political campaigns?

3. Is our representational democracy really representative of the entire nation? Why or why not?

Teacher Key

2008 Elections: Census Data Analysis

Directions: Using the information provided in the Census Data report answer the following questions. Remember to examine the charts and graphs carefully before responding.

1. *Figure 1 on Page 3. Voters among the Total, Citizen and Registered Voting Age Populations: 2008*
   a) What percentage of the total U.S. population voted in 2008? **58.2%**
   b) What percentage of citizens voted in 2008? **63.6%**
   c) What percentage of registered citizens voted in 2008? **89.6%**
   d) How would you compare the number of citizens and the number of registered citizens? **There are 225.5 million citizens, but only 146 million register to vote.**
   e) What does this chart tell us about the electoral process in 2008?
      - **The citizenship requirement prevents many people from voting.**
      - **Citizens who are registered to vote are far more likely to vote than unregistered voters.**
      - **Voter registration is a major barrier to voting.**
   f) If many people in a region are not citizens, what will the effect be on representation in Congress? **Non-citizens will most likely not be represented in Congress because they cannot vote**

2. *Table 2 on Pages 4-5. Reported Rates of Voting and Registration by Selected Characteristics: 2008*
   a) Who has a higher rate of voting participation, men or women? **women by +4.2%**
   b) Which racial or ethnic groups have the highest rates of voter participation? **Whites have the highest; then blacks**
   c) Which age group has the highest levels of voter participation? **65-74 year-olds**
   d) Describe the relationship between educational attainment and voter participation? **The**
   e) **more educated a person is, the more likely he/she will vote**
   f) Who tends to vote more, households with lower incomes or those with higher incomes? **higher incomes**
   g) Why might employed citizens vote in higher numbers than unemployed citizens?
      - **Unemployed citizens are less likely to have a permanent place of residence and be registered to vote.**
      - **Unemployed citizens are under great stress looking for work and less likely to make voting a priority.**
   h) In what regions of the United States do you find the highest voter turnout? **Midwest followed by West**
   i) In what regions do you find the lowest voter turnout? **South is lowest followed by the Northeast**

3. *Figure 5 on Page 11. Voting by State: 2008*
   a) According to the data in the graph, what state had the highest voting-age citizen population to vote? **Minnesota**
   b) What state has the lowest percentage of voting-age citizen population who voted? **Georgia**

c) What percentage of voters in your state participated in the 2008 election?

4. *Figure 6 on Page 15. Method of Registration to Vote: 2008*
   a) Looking at the graph, which method appears to be most successful in registering students to vote? **at school or on college campuses**
   b) Why do you think that is true?
      - **Students spend most of their daylight hours at school, and cannot easily get to their government office buildings or DMV during business hours.**
      - **Students are less likely to have transportation to get to government office buildings or DMV during business hours.**
      - **Convenience of registering at school.**
      - **Postive peer pressure as well as teacher/staff influence may motivate students to register to vote.**

5. *Table 2 on Page 4. Reported Rates of Voting and Registration by Selected Characteristics: 2008.* Using data from the chart, describe a person **most likely** to vote in the 2008 election.

   a) Gender: **female**
   b) Region: **Midwest**
   c) Level of Education: **bachelor's degree or higher**
   d) Income level: **$75,000+**
   e) Age: **65 or older**
   f) Race: **Black**

6. *Table 2 on Page 4. Reported Rates of Voting and Registration by Selected Characteristics: 2008.* Using data from the chart, describe a person **least likely** to vote in the 2008 election.

   a) Gender: **male**
   b) Region: **South**
   c) Level of Education: **Less than high school diploma**
   d) Income level: **less than $25,000**
   e) Age: **18-24 year olds**
   f) Race: **Asian**

Summary Questions

1. What factors affect the likelihood that a person will vote? Which do you feel are the most decisive?
   - **Your age**
   - **Your race**
   - **Your gender**
   - **Where you live**
   - **What gender you are**
   - **Where you live**
   - **How much money you make**
   - **How much education you've received**

2. How might the study of **demographics** (statistics or information regarding life in a community) affect political campaigns?
   Possible responses:
   - **Candidates, particularly Democrats, will organize voter registration drives to sign up new voters.**
   - **Political campaigns will gear their advertising, particularly TV spots, to attract certain demographic groups.**
   - **Campaign strategies will include rallies, money spent toward certain regions and demographic groups.**
   - **Candidates may adapt their party platforms to attract demographic groups.**

3. Is our representational democracy really representative of the entire nation? Why or why not?
   Possible arguments supporting representative democracy:
   - **All demographic groups, if they are citizens, have the same opportunity to vote.**
   - **Not voting is a free choice.**

   Possible arguments against representative democracy:
   - **Significant numbers of demographic groups do not participate, or who feel disassociated from their government.**
   - **A significant problem is that many the demographic make up of most candidates does not represent many in the population i.e. though there is more diversity now than in decades past, most candidates are still white, male, and upper to upper middle class.**

Conclusions from the 2008 Elections

Who Votes: According to the U.S. Census Report, the following statements describe the citizens who make it to the polls.

Non-Hispanic whites constitute most of the voting-age citizen population.	Native citizens are more likely to register and vote than naturalized citizens.
Women are more likely to vote.	The peak age group for voting was between 65-74 years of age.
Married people are more likely to vote.	People with more education, higher incomes and jobs are more likely to vote.
Homeowners and longtime residents are more likely to vote.	People in the Midwest are most likely to register and vote.
Most people vote in person instead of using absentee ballots.	Voting rates are higher in states with same-day registration.

Time Out Ticket

Many Americans complain that their representatives in Congress have little in common with them. Based on the demographic information in the lesson, why might this be true?

- What groups tend to be under-represented in the electoral process?
- How is the legislative process affected by the lack of voter participation?

Time Out Ticket

Many Americans complain that their representatives in Congress have little in common with them. Based on the demographic information in the lesson, why might this be true?

- What groups tend to be under-represented in the electoral process?
- How is the legislative process affected by the lack of voter participation?

THE TOP TEN REASONS PEOPLE DON'T VOTE

1. Too busy, conflicting schedule	17.5%
2. Illness or disability	14.9%
3. Not interested	13.4%
4. Did not like candidates or campaign issues	12.9%
5. Other reason	11.3%
6. Out of town	8.8%
7. Don't know or refused	7.0%
8. Registration problems	6.0%
9. Inconvenient polling place	2.7%
10. Forgot to vote	2.6%
10. Transportation problems	2.6%

Proposals for Increasing Voter Turnout

Solution for increasing voter turnout:

Information that supports this solution:

Information that opposes this solution:

Do you think this strategy would be successful in increasing voter turnout? Why or why not?

Part **2**: **Jigsaw** - Working with your group, use the decision-making grid to evaluate the proposals for increasing voter turnout. Be prepared to present your group's decision.

Decision-Making Model

Problems	Goal (s)

Alternatives	Pros (+)	Cons (-)

Decision (s)	Reasons (s)

Public Service Announcement Checklist

Directions: In your group, prepare a 30 second PSA that will encourage citizens to vote in the 2010 election.

Criteria	Possible Points	Points Earned
Explains the importance of voting	10	
Describes voter participation in the 2006 election	15	
Identifies reasons why citizens don't vote	10	
Explains the effects of low voter turnout for our democracy	10	
Supports a strategy for increasing voter turnout	10	
Incorporates a slogan that encourages citizens to vote	10	
PSA is engaging and interesting	10	
Total	75	

III. Candidates, Parties, and Ballot Measures

Topic: III. Candidates, Parties, Ballot Measures

What the students do: Use a framework to learn about and evaluate candidates.
CA History-Social Science Standards: 12.2.4
CMS Promising Approaches**:** 2
Thanks to: League of Women Voters of the Cincinnati Area and League of Women Voters Education Fund

How to Judge a Candidate

Overview

This activity provides students with a framework for learning about and evaluating candidates. Teacher could allow students to choose or assign different candidates running for local, state, or national offices. Students could share what they learn about the candidates with others through a hallway/classroom display of student work, with parents, or could use this activity to prepare for a mock election.

Objectives

The students will be able to:

- Name candidates and the offices they are running for.
- Identify and describe at least two issues the candidate discusses.
- Analyze and evaluate the candidate's stand on the issues.
- State and support their opinions on which candidate(s) should be elected.
- Evaluate the method they used to judge candidates.

Materials/Preparation

Handout: "How to Judge a Candidate"—1 per student

Determine if the students' work will be shared and the criteria you'll use to assess.
Ideas for Using the "How to Judge A Candidate" framework with Students

A. Use the framework to prepare your students to participate in a mock election. Assign students to work in teams to prepare a "report card" for each of the candidates on the mock election ballot. Assessment criteria might include: thoroughness of research, issue-based arguments supporting or opposing a candidate's position, the student's ability to state and support an opinion on which of the steps in judging a candidate was most valuable and why.

B. Divide the steps in the framework among different groups of students, having each group complete one of the steps for one candidate. Have each of the groups contribute its work product to creating a "portrait of the candidates" booklet to distribute, bulletin board, hallway, or presentation. Share the portraits with parents, other students, or community groups.

You may want to have the students take a non-partisan, "just the facts" approach to this to create an informational, not opinionated, portrait. You could discuss with students the differences and the purposes of non-partisan vs. endorsement approaches to educating others about candidates and issues.

How to Judge a Candidate

Elections present voters with important choices. Whether it is a local race that will affect your community or a national race that could change the direction of the country it is a time to consider the issues which you care about and decide which candidate you support.

The seven steps outlined in the framework below are designed to help you judge a candidate.

1. Decide what you are looking for in a candidate.
2. Find out about the candidates.
3. Gather materials about the candidates.
4. Evaluate candidates' stands on issues.
5. Learn about the candidates' leadership abilities.
6. Learn how other people view the candidate.
7. Sorting it all out.

Step 1: Decide what you are looking for in a candidate.

Candidates can be judged in two ways: the positions they take on issues and the leadership qualities and experience he or she would bring to office. Both are important. Your first step in judging a candidate is to decide the issues you care about and the qualities you want in a leader.

When you consider issues, think about community or national problems that you want people in government to address. For example, you may be interested in the environment, terrorism, government funding for student loans, or teenage unemployment. Those are issues.

When you consider leadership qualities, think about the characteristics you want in an effective leader. Do you look for intelligence, honesty, an ability to communicate?

Step 2: Find out about the candidates.

First find out which candidates are running in the race by going to Smart Voter (http://www.smartvoter.org/index.html). If Smart Voter is not available for your county, then look in your Sample Ballot mailed to you from your county elections office. Newspapers are another source of information.

Step 3: Gather materials about the candidates.

Put together a "library" of information about the candidates. Collect any information you can find on the candidates. Call campaign headquarters and watch the press. Sources of information from which you may choose include:

Campaign literature, including campaign Web sites

Nonpartisan online voter information Web sites like Smart Voter

Direct mail letters

Press reports (newspapers, television, and radio)

Radio and television ads

Candidate speeches

Candidate debates.

(Continued)

In a local race, interviews with the candidates can be helpful. For incumbents, a look at their voting records on issues that you have listed as important can tell you the candidates' positions on those issues.

Step 4: Evaluate candidates' stands on issues.

As you read the materials you collect, keep a record. Do the materials give you an overall impression of the candidates? What specific conclusions can you draw about the candidates' stand on issues? Fill in the Candidate Report Card as you gather new information (see end).

Step 5: Learn about the candidates' leadership abilities.

Deciding if a candidate will be a good leader is difficult. How can you know if someone will be honest, open or able to act under pressure if elected to office? Here are some ways to read between the lines as you evaluate the candidates' leadership qualities.

1. Look at the candidates' background and experience. How well prepared are they for the job?
2. Observe the candidates' campaigns. Do they accept speaking engagements before different groups - even those groups that might not be sympathetic? Do they accept invitations to debate? Do the campaigns emphasize media events where the candidates can be seen but not heard?
3. Review the campaign materials. As you read the materials and watch the campaign develop, add to the Candidate Report Card. the information that provides insights into candidates' personalities and leadership qualities. For example, do campaign materials emphasize issues or just images? Are they accurate?

Step 6: Learn how other people view the candidate.

Now that you have accumulated information from campaigns and other sources, you will want to learn what other people think about the candidates. Their opinions can help to clarify your own views, but do not discount you own informed judgments. You may be the most careful observer of all!

1. Seek the opinions of others in your community who keep track of political campaigns. Interview three people (not family members) such as shopkeeper, neighbor, or politically active volunteer, to find out which candidate they support and why. Learn what has shaped their political opinions. Was it an event? An idea or program proposed by a candidate? A particular issue about which they feel strongly? A long-standing party loyalty?

2. Learn about endorsements. This is a way for interest groups and organizations to give a "stamp of approval" to a candidate. Endorsements provide clues to the issues a candidate supports. Get a list of endorsements from each candidates' headquarters. Find out what these groups stand for and find out why they are endorsing this candidate.

3. Look into campaign contributions. Where do the candidates get the funds to finance their campaigns? Do they use their own money or raise funds from a few wealthy donors, from may small contributors, or from Political Action Committees? Many types of information about campaign contributions must be reported to the government and are watched by the press. Check the newspaper for stories on campaign finance. How might these campaign contributions affect the candidates' conduct in office?

(Continued)

4. Throughout the campaign, opinion polls will be taken by a variety of groups to evaluate public support for the different candidates. Polls reveal who is leading at a certain point in the race. As you read the polls, ask these questions: Who sponsored the poll? Were all the figures released? What kinds of questions were asked? Were they slanted or unbiased? How were respondents selected – randomly or in a way that included all segments of the population? How many people were included in the poll sample?

Step 7: Sorting it all out.

Review the information in your Candidate Report Card and compare all the candidates. Ask yourself these final questions:

- Which candidate's view on the issues do you agree with the most?
- Who ran the fairest campaign?
- Which candidate demonstrated the most knowledge on the issues?
- Which candidate has the leadership qualities you are looking for?

Is the choice clear? If so, pick a candidate.

Evaluate candidates' use of television

More and more, people tune in to televisions for their main source of information. Television is a visual medium dependent on good pictures and timely events to tug at your emotions and keep your interest. Candidates are aware of the potential power of television and try to use it to their advantage. For instance, in a newscast, the picture you see of a crowd with banners and balloons cheering a candidate may have been staged by a media advisor whose job is to make the candidate look good on television. As you watch news coverage of campaigns, be aware of staged events and try to find out what the candidate is saying about the issues. When you watch political ads you need to be aware of how the media influences your reactions. Ask yourself some questions as you watch. Did you find out anything about issues or qualifications? Or was the ad designed only to affect your attitude or feelings about a candidate? How important were the script, setting and music?

Seeing through distortion techniques.

All candidates are trying to sell themselves to voters. Sometimes their language is so skillfully crafted that they distort the truth in way that are difficult for even the most careful observer to detect. Here are some examples of distortion techniques that you should watch for as you review candidates' campaign materials.

Common distortion techniques:

Name calling/Appeals to prejudice: These are attacks on an opponent based on characteristics that will not affect performance in office. References to race, ethnicity or martial status can be subtly used to instill prejudice.

Rumor mongering: These include statements such as, "Everyone says my opponent is a crook, but I have no personal knowledge of any wrongdoing," which imply (but do not state) that the opponent is guilty.

Guilt by association: These are statements such as, "We all know Candidate B is backed by big money interest," that attack candidates because of their support rather than because of their stands on the issues.

Catchwords: These are phrases such as "Law and Order" or "un-American" that are designed to trigger a knee-jerk emotional reaction rather than to inform.

Passing the blame: These are instances in which a candidate denies responsibility for an action or blames an opponent for things over which he or she had no control.

Promising the sky: These are unrealistic promises that no one elected official could fulfill.

Evading real issues: These include instances in which candidates may avoid answering direct questions, offer only vague solutions or talk about the benefits of proposed programs but never get specific about possible problems or costs.

Prepare a Candidate Report Card

List Issues: Your Priority Issues

List your positions and rank the candidates on how they stand on the issues and your positions

List the Leadership Qualities you want and rank the candidates on those qualities.

This information is part of the League of Women Voters Education Fund project.

Online publishing of this page was originally done by
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Topic: III. Candidates, Parties, and Ballot Measures

What the students do: Read about the role of political parties and role-play a committee drafting a party's platform.

CA History-Social Science Standards: 12.6.1

CMS Promising Approaches**:** 1, 2, 6

Thanks to: Constitutional Rights Foundation

Parties, Planks, and Platforms

Overview

In this lesson, students examine political parties and their role in the U.S. political system. After reading about and discussing political parties, students in small groups role-play members of a committee responsible for making the first draft of a political party's platform.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify party platforms and planks.
- Explain the nature and development of American political parties.
- Describe the role of third parties.
- Explain how American political parties differ from ideological parties in other countries.
- Create a plank of a party's platform on a given issue.

Materials/Preparation

Handout: "Political Parties, Platforms, and Planks"—1 per student.

Procedure

I. Focus Discussion

A. Hold a brief discussion by asking students:

• What political parties are there in the United States? (The two largest are the Democratic and Republican parties. Other third parties include the American Independent, Green, Peace and Freedom, and Libertarian parties.)

• What do these parties stand for? (Accept various answers.)

B. Explain that students are going to learn more about political parties.

II. Reading and Discussion—Political Parties, Platforms, and Planks

A. Distribute **Handout: "Political Parties, Platforms, and Planks"** to each student. Ask students to read it and look for:

- How the two-party system developed.
- The role of third parties.

B. When student finish reading, hold a class discussion using the questions on the handout:

1) How did the two-party system develop in the United States? What important role do third parties play in this system?

2) How are American political parties different from those in many countries? How are they organized? What do they do?

3) What is a party platform? Why are party platforms important? What is a platform plank?

III. Activity—Building a Party Platform

A. Divide students into 10 groups. Assign each group one of the 10 issue areas below:

1. Preventing terrorism
2. Jobs and the economy
3. Diversity and equality
4. U.S. budget deficit
5. Healthcare
6. Education
7. Environment
8. Energy
9. Immigration
10. Social Security

To make sure they don't forget, ask students to circle their assigned area on their handout.

B. Review **"Activity: Building a Party Platform"** on the handout. Answer any questions students may have.

C. When students finish, ask each group to present its findings to the whole class. After each presentation, discuss the plank and vote as a class whether to (1) adopt, (2) modify, or (3) reject each position or plank. Write all the adopted or modified planks on the board.

Handout

Political Parties, Platforms, and Planks

Political parties are important in American politics. Yet the Constitution does not mention political parties. In fact, many of the founders, including George Washington, distrusted permanent political parties, fearing that they would become too powerful. The first two political factions to appear were the Federalists, who supported ratification of the Constitution, and the Anti-Federalists, who opposed ratification. These factions disappeared once the Constitution was ratified. Early in Washington's first administration as president, two new factions formed: the Federalists, who supported Alexander Hamilton and a group that gathered around Thomas Jefferson, called the Democratic Republicans. They were the first real parties.

Throughout most of American history, the United States has had two major parties. Today's Democratic Party can trace its origins to Jefferson's old party. Today's Republican Party can trace its origins to the election of 1854. Along the way, dozens of third parties have come and gone. Some of these parties were formed to promote a particular cause, such as the Prohibition Party or the Equal Rights Party, which demanded the vote for women. Other third parties, such as the Populists and the Greenbackers, arose for short periods around economic issues. Some third parties, such as the Progressives and the Dixiecrats, splintered off from the Republican and Democratic parties. Some parties have developed around a certain leader, such as George Wallace's American Independent Party or Ross Perot's Reform Party.

Third parties have never received high percentages of votes in elections, but they still serve important functions in the American political system. They give citizens who vote for them a forum for dissent. They also give those promoting reform a chance to air their ideas. For example, many of the ideas of the Progressives eventually were adopted by the major parties.

American political parties differ from those in many countries, where parties are often organized to promote a particular political or economic ideology such as socialism, communism, fascism, or capitalism. Others may represent a given economic interest such as labor or farmers. Some have been organized to promote a religious group or interest.

In contrast, American political parties are generally not ideological. Instead, they are made up of a loose collaboration of interests that want to win the next election. While the parties might differ on the issues, they seek to appeal to the widest possible spectrum of the electorate.

Platforms and Planks

American political parties are organized on a national, state, and local basis. Every four years, the parties hold a national convention to nominate a presidential and vice presidential candidate. They also meet to develop and approve a party platform of issues and positions upon which the candidates will run. A party platform is a set of principles, goals, and strategies designed to address pressing political issues. Each party's platform is broken down into "planks," or declarations that speak to each specific issue.

Party platforms and their planks are important to the electoral process: They give the candidates a clear political position with which they can campaign. They give voters a sense of what the candidates believe in, the issues they think are important, and how—if elected—they will address them.

For Discussion

1. How did the two-party system develop in the United States? What important role do third parties play in this system?

2. How are American political parties different from those in many countries? How are they organized? What do they do?

3. What is a party platform? Why are party platforms important? What is a platform plank?

A C T I V I T Y

Building a Party Platform

Imagine that you are members of a committee responsible for creating a first draft of a political party's platform. You have been assigned one of the issue areas from the list below.

1. Preventing terrorism
2. Jobs and the economy
3. Diversity and equality
4. U.S. budget deficit
5. Healthcare
6. Education
7. Environment
8. Energy
9. Immigration
10. Social Security

In your group, do the following:

a.) Discuss the assigned issue area.

b.) Discuss why it is an important issue area for a political campaign.

c.) Develop a position, or "plank," on how the issue area should be addressed.

d.) Be prepared to present the plank and explain why it should be adopted as part of the platform.

Topic: III. Candidates, Parties, and Ballot Measures
What the students do: Explore at least one current ballot measure and participate in a structured discussion to analyze the proposed measure and reach their own conclusions.
CA History-Social Science Standards: 11.11; 12.2.4, 12.6.4, 12.6.5
CMS Promising Approaches**:** 1, 2, 3
Thanks to: Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago's international program Deliberating in a Democracy

Deliberating in a Democracy: Engaging Students in Civic (and Civil) Discourse

Overview

This lesson engages students in learning about and discussing ballot measures using a structured academic controversy model we call "Deliberation." Through their participation in the Deliberation process, students will analyze the proposed initiative/proposition, examine different points of view on the issue, and form and express their own opinions.

The Deliberation model is the centerpiece of an international program, *Deliberating in a Democracy* (DID), funded by the U.S. Department of Education. For more information and lessons using the Deliberation model, please visit: http://www.deliberating.org/.

Materials/Preparation

To prepare for this lesson, teachers (or students) will need to select at least one ballot proposition or initiative and collect background information on the issue, including supporting and opposing arguments, rationales, impact statements, etc. It is important that the different points of view are presented in a balanced, non-partisan way for the students so that they can reach their own conclusions based on the background information.

Several websites will be helpful in collecting this information:

The California Secretary of State provides information on initiatives:
http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/elections_j.htm

The League of Women Voters also provides information on ballot measures on its Easy Voter site: http://lwvc.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=easyvoter_guide_propositions

The home pages for each of the sites listed above:
Secretary of State: http://www.sos.ca.gov/
Easy Voter: http://www.easyvoter.org/site/evguide/

Make copies of the following handouts:

Handout 1: "Deliberation Guide"—1 per student
Handout 2: "Deliberation Summary"—1 per student
Handout 3: "Student Reflection on Deliberation" —1 per student

Teacher Instructions for the Deliberation

Step One: Introduction

Explain that voting on ballot measures is an important part of California's democratic process because they provide an opportunity for citizens to directly impact public policies and laws. Many ballot measures impact our personal pocketbooks, the environment, transportation, and schools. Explain that though they may not be of voting age yet, they still have the right (and responsibility) to know about the issues being discussed and what is at stake.

Tell them that today they are going to have an opportunity to really examine and decide for themselves if they would support or oppose at least one current ballot measure.

Introduce the ballot measure(s) and ask if the students have seen political ads related to them. Discuss the difference between getting information about ballot measures through campaign ads vs. seeking information about ballot measures through non-partisan sources.

Tell the students that to become informed about ballot measures, they need to understand the positions of those who support **as well as** those who oppose the measure.

If you are going to have students locate their own background information, assign this now.

Next, inform the students that they are going to participate in a sophisticated discussion about at least one ballot measure using a format called "Deliberation".

Distribute and go over **Handout 1: "Deliberation Guide."** Review the Rules of Deliberation with the students and post the rules in a prominent position in the classroom. Emphasize that the class will deliberate and then debrief their experiences.

Step Two: Reading the Background Information

Distribute copies of the Background Information you or your students prepared. Have students read the information carefully and underline facts and ideas that they think are important and/or interesting. **(Ideally for homework.)**

Step Three: Grouping

Divide the class into groups of four or five students. Group members should share their important facts and interesting ideas with each other to develop a common understanding of the information.

Step Four: Introducing a Deliberation Question

The students will address a Deliberation Question:

Should the voters vote YES on the following ballot measure (insert language of ballot measure).

Give the Deliberation Question to the class and display it in the classroom. Distribute **Handout 2: "Deliberation Summary,"** to each student. Have everyone write the Deliberation Question in the space provided (The Deliberation Question) and remind them of the Rules of Deliberation on Handout 1.

Step Five: Learning the Reasons

Divide each group into two teams, Team A and Team B. Both teams should reread the background information. Team A should find the most compelling reasons to **support** the Deliberation Question. Team B should find the most compelling reasons to **oppose** the Deliberation Question. Each team is responsible for selecting the most compelling reasons for its position. Make sure that everyone on the team is prepared to present at least one reason.

Step Six: Presenting the Most Compelling Reasons

Each team will present the most compelling reasons in support of or in opposition to the Deliberation Question. The teams may not believe in or agree with their reasons, but they should be convincing in presenting them to others.

Team A will explain the reasons they selected to **support** the Deliberation Question. If Team B does not understand something, they should ask questions but NOT argue.

Team B will explain the reasons they selected to **oppose** the Deliberation Question. If Team A does not understand something, they should ask questions, but NOT argue.

In preparation for the next step, Reversing Positions, have each team listen for the most compelling reasons.

Step Seven: Reversing Positions

Explain that the next step is for each team to take the opposite view and have Team B explain to Team A what they believe to be the best reasons in support of the Deliberation Question. Have Team A do the same to Team B.

Step Eight: Deliberating the Question

Students now drop their roles and begin deliberating the question as a group. Remind the class of the question. Each student can (1) use what he/she has learned about the issue and (2) offer his/her personal experiences and formulate opinions regarding the issue.

After deliberating, students should find and record areas of agreement in their group in the space provided on Handout 2 ("Areas of Agreement in My Group").

Invite students as individuals to express to the group their personal position on the issue and write it in the space provided ("My Personal Position") on Handout 2. ***Important:*** Individual students do NOT have to agree with the group.

Step Nine: Debriefing the Deliberation

Reconvene the entire class. Distribute **Handout 3: "Student Reflection on Deliberation,"** as a guide. Ask students to discuss the following questions: **(5 to 10 minutes)**

- What were the most compelling reasons for each side?
- What were the areas of agreement?
- What questions do you still have? Where can you get more information?
- What are some reasons why deliberating this issue is important in a democracy?
- What might you or your class do to share what you have learned about this or other ballot measures? Options include teaching others about what they have learned, taking a poll about the measure at school, writing an editorial for the school or community paper, or conducting additional research.

Consider having students prepare personal reflections on the Deliberation Question through written, visual, or audio essays.

Step Ten: Student Poll/Student Reflection

Ask your students: "Do you agree, disagree, or are you still undecided about the Deliberation Question?" Students fill out **Handout 3.**

Handout 1

Deliberation Guide

What Is Deliberation?

Deliberation (meaningful discussion) is the focused exchange of ideas and the analysis of arguments with the aim of making a decision.

Why Are We Deliberating?

Citizens must be able and willing to express and exchange ideas among themselves, with community leaders, and with their representatives in government. Citizens and public officials in a democracy need strategies and opportunities to engage in the public discussion of controversial issues in order to make informed decisions. It is important to keep an open mind in order to reconsider a decision based on new information.

What Are the Rules for Deliberation?

- Read the material carefully.
- Focus on the deliberation question.
- Listen carefully to what others are saying.
- Check for understanding.
- Analyze what others say.
- Speak and encourage others to speak.
- Refer to the reading to support your ideas.
- Use relevant background knowledge, including life-experiences, in a logical way.
- Use your heart and mind to express ideas and opinions.
- Remain engaged and respectful when controversy arises.
- Focus on ideas, not personalities.

Handout 2

Deliberation Summary

Deliberation Question:

Areas of Agreement in My Group:

My Personal Position (Include reasons to support your opinion. You may suggest another course of action or add additional ideas to address this problem)

Handout 3

Student Reflection on Deliberation

Large Group Discussion: What We Learned

What were the most compelling reasons for each side?

Side A: Side B:

What were the areas of agreement?

What questions do you still have? Where can you get more information?

What are some reasons why deliberating this issue is important in a democracy?

What might you and/or your class do to address this problem?

Individual Reflection: What I Learned

Which number best describes your understanding of the focus issue? [circle one]

1 2 3 4 5

NO DEEPER **MUCH DEEPER**

What new insights did you gain?

What did you do well in the deliberation?

What do you need to work on to improve your personal deliberation skills?

What did someone else in your group do or say that was particularly helpful?

Is there anything the group should work on to improve the group deliberation?

IV. Ways to Participate

Topic: IV. Ways to Participate
What students do: Select quotes about civic participation they find meaningful and create a "public service announcement" on the importance of civic participation.
CA History-Social Science Standards**:** 12.3.1, 12.3.2, 12.10
CMS Promising Approaches**:** 1, 2, 3
Thanks to: California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools

And I Quote…
Ideas for Using Quotes

Overview
This lesson provides an opportunity for students to examine quotes related to the importance of civic participation, select those that resonate with them, and create "public service announcements" to generate awareness with other students or groups.

Objectives
Students will be able to:

- Describe reasons why civic participation is important in a democracy.
- Select at least one quote that they think sends an important message about an engaged citizenry or civic participation.
- Tell why the quote resonates with them.
- Incorporating their selected quote, create a public service announcement to convince others about the importance of an engaged citizenry.

Materials/Preparation
Handout 1: "Ten Civic Participation Quotes"—1 for each student.
Art supplies
Decide in advance what medium you want students to make their PSAs in. Consider:

- Posters that can be displayed in the school
- Television spots that can be presented to other classes, parent groups, community groups.
- Radio spots that could be presented on the intercom.
- Web-based PSAs that could be viewed by other students, parents, community members.

Optional: **Handout 2: "Additional Civic Participation Quotes"**—These might be useful if students want more than the first 10 or if you decide to do additional activities with quotes.

Procedure

I. Selecting Quotes

A. Discuss with students the importance of participation in a democracy (see lessons in section One: "What is a Democracy?" and the other lessons in Section Three: "Why Participate" for ideas).

B. Tell students that they are going to have an opportunity to think more carefully about why people should participate in our democracy and that they will have a chance

to convince others that it is important. Explain that many people have given this a lot of thought and have said some interesting things about civic participation.

C. Distribute **Handout 1: "Ten Civic Participation Quotes"** to each student. Have students work in partners or triads to select quotes that are meaningful to them. They should discuss and decide which quotes resonate with each person.

II. Creating Public Service Announcements

A. After students have identified their quotes, have members from each group share one they thought was especially good and explain why they chose it.

B. Tell students that they are going to create public service announcements (PSAs) to convince others of the importance of civic participation. Discuss the difference between a PSA and a commercial and ensure that students understand that they will be trying to "sell" an idea that should benefit the public good.

C. Inform students of their choices of media (poster, television spot, radio spot, web-based PSA), according to what you wish them to use. Explain that the PSA should:
- Incorporate at least one of the quotes.
- In their own words, graphics, or artistic way, convince others that active, effective citizenship is important.
- Be appropriate and geared for an identified audience.

III. Ideas for Assessment

A. Have students write three paragraphs describing:
1. Why participation of citizens is especially important in a democracy.
2. What quote(s) they selected and why.
3. What they learned from this activity.'

B. Assess students' PSA product using the following criteria:
1. Does the PSA effectively incorporate quote(s).
2. Does the PSA provide a rationale for civic participation?
3. Is the PSA appropriate for the identified audience?
4. Did students work effectively to create the product? (Did they spend adequate time on task, work cooperatively with other students, offer ideas/suggestions, participate in discussion and product design/completion?

IV. Additional Ideas for Using Quotes

A. Quote of the Day: Have students find out if they could incorporate a quote into daily announcements, the school newspaper, school display case, bulletin board or marquee.

B. Writing or Speaking Prompt: Use a quote as a writing prompt:

U.S. or World History
Select one of the quotes that represent a specific time and place. Have students describe the context for the quote at that time and place, then discuss and write about the relevance of the quote today.

Government
Select a quote related to one of the founding documents (Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Federalist Papers, Bill of Rights). Have students discuss and write about the relevance of the document today.

Select a quote that, for its time, influenced the "public agenda." Have students write about the quote in terms of how it was used to influence the public agenda at that time. Have students locate a recent quote from a national, state, or local figure and describe how they think the quote could influence the public agenda today.

English/Language Arts
Have students incorporate one of the quotes *effectively* into a piece of writing. Discuss how writers and speakers use quotes to persuade, provide point of view, etc.

Divide students into groups of three and assign each triad a different quote. Give students five minutes to work together to outline a "1-Minute Speech" that one student will give to the class. The theme of the speech could be:

- Why this quote is important to remember today.
- What this quote means to youth today.
- Incorporate the quote into a topic of your choosing.

General
Select several quotes that relate to the role and responsibility of citizenship. Have each student choose the quote that most resonates with him/her and discuss and write about his/her reasoning.

Handout 1

Educating for Democracy
California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools

Ten Civic Participation Quotes

1. No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts itself off from its youth severs its lifeline.
   —Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General

2. Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country.
   —Franklin D. Roosevelt, U.S. president

3. When I was young I used to volunteer in a soup kitchen and they thought I was wonderful. When I asked why there were soup kitchens, they thought I was a radical."
   —Senator Paul Wellstone

4. You must be the change you wish to see in the world.
   —Mahatma Gandhi, Indian leader

5. If you think you're too small to have an impact, try going to sleep in a room with a mosquito.
   —Anita Roddick, businesswoman

6. Bad politicians are sent to Washington by good people who don't vote.
   —William E. Simon, secretary of the treasury

7. The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any.
   —Alice Walker, writer

8. It is not the function of our Government to keep the citizen from falling into error; it is the function of the citizen to keep the Government from falling into error.
   —Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson

9. If you don't like the way the world is, you change it. You have an obligation to change it. You just do it one step at a time.
   —Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund

10. Our problems are man-made, therefore they may be solved by man. . . . No problem of human destiny is beyond human beings.
    John F. Kennedy, U.S. president

Additional Civic Participation Quotes

Instead of being satisfied to alleviate suffering, we shall labor hard and continually to prevent it.
—Helen Keller, blind and deaf educator

I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand.
—Chinese proverb

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.
—William Butler Yeats, Irish poet

The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different from other men."
—Lyndon B. Johnson, U.S. president

If you really believe in something, go for it! Life is too short to stand around and watch.
—Ryan Tedschei, activist

Whatever you can do, or dream you can…begin it.
—Goethe, German writer

When you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there.
—Lewis Carroll, English writer and mathematician

Think globally, act locally.
—Popular saying

This country will not be a permanently good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a reasonably good place for all of us to live in.
—Theodore Roosevelt, U.S. president

¡Sí se puede! Yes, it can be done!"
—Cesar Chavez, social activist

The time is always ripe to do what is right.
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Imagination governs the world.
—Napoleon

The frog does not drink up the pond in which he lives.
—Sioux proverb

It is not enough to be busy; so are the ants. The question is: What are we busy about?
—Henry David Thoreau, writer

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To make a difference is not a matter of accident, a matter of casual occurrence of the tides. People choose to make a difference.
—Maya Angelou, writer

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.
—Eleanor Roosevelt, writer and humanitarian

Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.
—Ralph Waldo Emerson, clergyman and philosopher

If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else.
—Booker T. Washington, educator and activist

If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, it expects what never was and never will be.
—Thomas Jefferson

We cannot escape history.
—Abraham Lincoln

Democracy is not something you believe in or a place to hang your hat, but it's something you do. You participate. If you stop doing it, democracy crumbles.
—Abbie Hoffman, social activist

Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.
—Abraham Lincoln

There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.
—Elie Wiesel, author, Holocaust survivor

If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary.
—From the *Federalist Papers*

The job of a citizen is to keep his mouth open.
—Gunter Grass, German writer

Whenever you have truth it must be given with love, or the message and the messenger will be rejected.
—Mahatma Gandhi, Indian leader

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.
—Margaret Mead, anthropologist

The ballot is stronger than bullets.
—Joseph A. Schumpeter, economist

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I believe in Democracy because it releases the energies of every human being.
—Woodrow Wilson

A nation as a society forms a moral person, and every member of it is personally responsible for his society.
—Thomas Jefferson

Nobody makes a greater mistake than he who does nothing because he could do only a little.
—Edmund Burke, British writer and leader

A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it is but a prologue to Farce or Tragedy or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own Governors must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives.
—James Madison, U.S. president

Topic: IV. Ways to Participate
What the students do: Read about and discuss responsible citizenship and prioritize civic participation activities.
CA History-Social Science Standards**:** 12.2.3, 12.2.4, 12.2.5, 12.3.2
CMS Promising Approaches**:** 1, 2, and potentially 3
Thanks to: Constitutional Rights Foundation

Civic Participation and Responsibility

Overview
In this lesson, students explore how citizens can participate in civic life. First, they read about and discuss the responsibilities of being a citizen. Then in small groups, they decide on and rank five activities that they believe citizens should do beyond voting, obeying the law, serving on juries, and paying taxes.

Objectives
Students will be able to:
- Identify elements of good citizenship and methods of civic participation.
- Identify character traits that contribute to civic responsibility.
- Understand how civic participation can fulfill individual and community goals.
- Decide and rank the importance of activities that all citizens should do.

Materials/Preparation
Handout: "Civic Participation and Responsibility"—1 per student.

Procedure
I. Focus Discussion

A. Hold a brief discussion by asking students:
- In a democracy, who holds the ultimate power? (The people.)
- For a democracy to work, what do citizens have to do? (Accept various answers.)

B. Tell students that they are going to pursue this last question in depth.

II. Reading and Discussion

A. Distribute **Handout 1: "Civic Participation and Responsibility"** to each student. Ask students to read it and look for activities that citizens should do.
B. When students finish reading, hold a discussion using the questions on the handout:

1. Why do you think it is important for citizens in a democracy to be involved in the democracy?
2. What are some current and historical examples of citizen movements in America?

III. Activity—Participating Citizens

A. Divide students into groups of four or five students each.

B. Review "Activity: Participating Citizens" on the handout. Answer any questions students may have.

C. When students finish with their group discussion, call on groups to report what they consider the most important activity a citizen can do and why. Hold a class discussion. Write each activity on the board.

D. Conduct a vote to see which activities the class as a whole considers most important.

IV. Enrichment Activity—Take Action!

Challenge your students to take action on an issue, community problem, or policy they care about. Consider having your students follow these steps to address their issue:

1. Identify and describe the issue.
2. Research the issue (pros/cons, causes/effects).
3. Research current policies and viewpoints about the issue.
4. Brainstorm and evaluate options for addressing the issue (consider how much time you have, what your resources are, etc.)
5. Create an action plan to implement your best option (objective, tasks, team, timeline, how will you gauge your success).
6. Implement your plan!
7. Reflect on your successes/challenges and what you learned through the process.
8. Share your work with others.

Options for addressing issues your students might consider:

- Write letters:
  Legislators
  Letter to newspaper editor
  Community agencies/advocacy groups
  Community leaders/activists working on issue
- Organize and sponsor:
  Debates
  Panel discussions
  Community forum/fair about the issue
- Volunteer:
  On a campaign for candidate whose platform includes addressing the issue
- Create and implement your own project:
  Issue: Voter participation
  Project: Voter registration drive for young voters, new immigrants, or others

  Issue: Healthcare for children
  Project: Research organizations offering free mobile services and work to organize an event in your community. Put the word out!

Civic Participation and Responsibility

In a democracy, the ultimate power belongs to the people. If a democracy is to work, the people must be involved. Civic participation is essential to the workings of a constitutional democracy.

As voters, citizens should carefully consider their choices of governmental representatives, leaders, and judges. To do so, they must stay informed about the issues and the positions of candidates. Also citizens must be prepared to serve on juries so that the right to a fair and impartial trial can be preserved. Further, citizens must be willing to pay taxes to assure a common defense, public safety, and other essential governmental services.

Beyond these basics, a citizen should do much more. A citizen needs to understand constitutional principles, debate their meaning, and be prepared to defend them. Citizens need to know how to participate in the political processes of government so that they can influence public policy. Our federal system offers many opportunities to do so. Citizens can attend political and governmental meetings such as those of the state legislature or city council. Citizens can contact and express their views to elected officials. Citizens can write letters to representatives or to newspapers on issues of public policy.

Citizens can also work with others in political campaigns or circulate petitions, demonstrate, picket, or boycott to make their voices heard. These kinds of actions have brought great changes to America over the years. Such actions won women the right to vote during the suffrage campaigns and helped achieve greater equality for African-Americans and other minority groups during the civil rights movement.

Citizens can also decide to take a leadership role in public affairs. One way is to run for office. Another is to serve on one the many commissions, boards, and grand juries at every level of government. Citizens can also devote their lives to public service as governmental workers, police officers, teachers, fire fighters, judges, prosecutors, and public defenders.

Participation in Civil Society

Participation in government and the political process, though crucial to the health of a democratic republic, is not the only way to demonstrate effective citizenship. Many argue that citizens owe a commitment to the betterment of their communities by direct action. There are many ways to participate.

Joining and participating in community organizations such as service clubs, church groups, or charity leagues bring community members together to form bonds, discuss common interests, and address community problems.

Each year, millions of Americans volunteer their time to help solve community problems and address community needs. People volunteer for community clean-ups, to visit nursing homes, to build shelters for the homeless, to help feed the hungry, and to mentor and teach reading to children. Millions of Americans also participate in fund-raising activities and give money to charities. While these actions do not necessarily involve political participation, they do help create a much better society and a healthier country.

Civic Character

Certain character traits improve a citizen's ability to meet civic responsibilities and contribute to a healthy society. Some are personal traits. Self-reliance, supporting one's family, making sure one's children are educated, and earning a living are all personal traits that benefit society.

To be a truly responsible citizen, however, requires more. It is important that citizens respect the law and be law-abiding. Yet, there are times when citizens, on deeply held moral grounds may refuse to obey what they consider to be an unjust law or refuse a civic responsibility such as the draft.

It is important that citizens respect individual worth and human dignity and show compassion for fellow citizens. This includes respecting the rights, choices, and contrary opinions of others.
It is important that citizens develop a loyalty to the principles of American constitutional democracy and be willing to defend them. For American constitutional democracy to thrive, it is important that citizens invest of themselves in assuring its continuance.

For Discussion

1. Why do you think it is important for citizens in a democracy to be involved in the democracy?

2. What are some current and historical examples of citizen movements in America? Explain what each was trying to achieve.

A C T I V I T Y

Participating Citizens

There are basic things that every citizen should do: Obey the law, vote, serve on juries, and pay taxes. But what else should citizens do to ensure a strong democracy?

In your group, do the following:

1. Discuss and decide on five activities, aside from basic things listed above, American citizens should participate in to keep our democracy strong.

2. Decide which one of the five activities is the most important and why.

3. Be prepared to explain to the rest of the class why your top-rated activity is the most important one.

Topic: IV. Ways to Participate
What students do: Create a plan of action for participating in an election.
CA History-Social Science Standards**:** 12.2.4, 12.6.4
CMS Promising Approaches**:** 2, 3
Thanks to: Constitutional Rights Foundation

Get Involved in Elections!

Overview

In this lesson, students learn about active participation in elections. First, students read about and discuss options for active participation in elections. Then in small groups, students select an issue they care about and make a plan for taking action on this issue during an election campaign.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe several options for active participation in elections.
- Select an issue that they care about.
- Create an action plan for actively participating in an election.

Materials/Preparation

Handout 1: "Get Involved in Elections!"—1 per student.
Handout 2: "Creating an Action Plan" —1 per student.

Procedure

I. Focus Discussion

A. Hold a brief discussion by asking students: What do you think is the most important duty of citizens in a democracy? Why?

B. Tell students that they are going to look at options for getting actively involved in elections.

II. Reading and Discussion—Get Involved in Elections!

A. Distribute **Handout 1: "Get Involved in Elections!"** to each student. Ask students to read it, examine the options, and think about their benefits and costs.

B. When students finish reading, hold a discussion using the questions on the handout:

1. Why do you think voting is important? What does "Democracy is not a spectator sport" mean? Do you agree? Explain.

2. Look at the options discussed above. For each discuss the following questions.

   - What is the purpose of this approach?
   - What are some of its potential benefits? What are some of its potential costs?
   - Under what circumstances, would this approach be appropriate and get the best results?

III. Small-Group Activity—Creating an Action Plan

A. Ask students to brainstorm issues that they think are important. If necessary, use the list of issue areas on the handout to spark student ideas. Write their ideas on the board.

B. Divide the class into groups of three to five students. Distribute **Handout 2: "Creating an Action Plan"** and go over the steps with the class. Answer any questions students may have.

C. When students finish, call on groups to explain which issue and option they chose. Then call on groups that chose the same option to compare the steps of their plans.

IV. Putting Plans into Action

Having students implement their Action Plans provides an outstanding opportunity to engage students in meaningful civic participation.

Some ideas to consider:

- Groups of students who created the plans work together to implement.
- The class selects one plan to implement as a class project.
- Students complete their own assessment of how the Action Plan was implemented using criteria such as:

What they learned about the issue they were addressing.
What they learned about public policy, voting, elections, etc.
What they personally contributed in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes.
What they learned about their own knowledge, skills, attitudes.
What successes/challenges they experienced.

Get Involved in Elections!

Voting is one of the most important acts a citizen can do. Our elected officials make decisions that can affect the lives of everyone: They might, for example, deal with issues of war and peace, healthcare, taxes, the environment, immigration, and public safety. Every citizen has a right, even a duty, to stay informed and vote for the best candidates for office.

Also, many cities and states (such as California) have ballot propositions. These are proposed laws that the voters decide on. The proposals may be bond issues for schools, rapid transit, or water. They may relate to the environment, public safety, immigration. Again, these are important matters that citizens should study and vote on.

Citizens can be involved in elections in many ways aside from voting. They may volunteer as poll workers to help at election time. Or they may become involved in a candidate's campaign by donating money or volunteering time (staffing phone banks or going door-to-door to talk to voters).

Individuals and groups have many options for making their opinions heard on issues that they want candidates to address and on helping individual candidates. Below are a few options.

Letter-Writing Campaigns. Most people in power keep close track of letters written by the public. It's one of the ways they gauge public opinion. Although the official or candidate may not personally read every letter, he or she has assistants who read letters and tally opinions. If politicians pay attention to one letter, think of what many letters can do. A letter-writing campaign can force politicians to pay attention to an issue. To conduct a letter-writing campaign, organizers typically meet in a place where many people congregate or walk by. Those conducting the campaign must get the attention of passers-by and persuade them to take a few minutes to write a personal letter. To do this, the issue must strike people as important. The best campaigns don't send form letters. A handwritten letter shows that a person really cares. Some groups organizing letter-writing campaigns often supply a variety of pens, paper, and envelopes so that all the letters look different. The organizers of the campaign typically collect the letters and send them out at intervals from different ZIP Codes.

Petitioning. A petition is like a letter with a thousand signatures. It's easier to get people to sign a petition than write a letter. Politicians know this—that's why they pay more attention to a letter-writing campaign. But a petition can help spread the word about a cause or issue. Typically, a petition is like a short letter that simply states a demand. Each page of the petition should include this statement. Thus more than one person can gather signatures, and it makes it clear that people knew what they were signing. Groups typically set a deadline for their petition, because energy for the drive will last a short time. But they can make the claim, "In only a week, we collected 500 signatures."

E-Mail and Telephone Campaigns. Politicians keep track of e-mails and telephone calls as carefully as they do letters. A flood of phone calls or e-mails can get a politician's attention as quickly as a stack of mail. And it's easier for most people to call or e-mail than to write a letter.

Voter Forums. An informed citizenry is necessary for democracy. Before casting their ballots, voters should know the issues and how candidates stand on issues. Yet many voters make decisions based on

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30-second television advertisements and even on attack ads. Voter forums, where issues are discussed and debated, can help create better-informed voters. At these forums, experts may be invited to discuss and debate issues, or candidates or spokespeople for candidates may be invited to debate and answer questions from the audience. Typically, these forums are held in the evening at meeting halls or school auditoriums.

Research and share candidates' views on a particular issue. Many voters may not understand where the candidates stand on a particular issue. It can be helpful to research a particular issue and see the views of all the candidates. Consider using candidates' web sites to pose questions about issues you care about. You could share the information you learn through political blogs and youth web sites.

Voter Registration Drives. To vote, a person must be registered to vote. Voter registration drives try to get as many people registered to vote as possible. They can be conducted in schools, at malls, or in other public places. In California, according the Secretary of State's Office, "You do not need to be a registered voter, or a particular age, or even a resident of the area, in order to register voters." Thus a group a students, who themselves are not eligible to vote, may register others to vote. Complete instructions on how to register others to vote can be found online at: http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/guidetovr_1006.pdf

Get-Out-the-Vote Campaigns. To vote, a person must be registered. But that is only the first step. The person must also cast a ballot, typically by going to the polls on Election Day. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in the 2002 national elections, 70 percent of the registered voters actually voted. A get-out-the-vote campaign tries to get people to the polls on Election Day. Political parties and non-profit groups (such as the League of Women Voters and Rock the Vote) have elaborate get-out-the-vote campaigns. Individuals can join these campaigns or create their own. There are a number of possibilities for individuals and small groups. They can call friends and relatives on Election Day and urge them to vote. Or they can hold a block party on Election Day and invite people who have voted. Or they can create posters urging people to vote. Or before the election, they can urge neighbors to vote and check at the poll on Election Day and call those who still have not voted.

Everyone—even those too young to vote—can get involved in an election. Examine the issues. Look at the candidates. Take action. Democracy is not a spectator sport.

For Discussion

1. Why do you think voting is important? What does "Democracy in not a spectator sport" mean? Do you agree? Explain.

2. Look at the options discussed above. For each discuss the following questions.

    - What is the purpose of this approach?
    - What are some of its potential benefits? What are some of its potential costs?
    - Under what circumstances, would this approach be appropriate and get the best results?

Handout 2

Creating an Action Plan

Imagine that in an upcoming election, you want voters and candidates to focus on a particular issue. Your group is going to create a plan for getting involved in this election. Do the following:

1. Discuss and decide on an issue that you care about. Consider the following issue areas (but you can decide on an issue outside these areas):

   Education, crime, the economy, unemployment, recreation, the environment, housing, healthcare, Social Security, drug and alcohol abuse, automobile accidents, natural disasters, race relations, foreign policy, national defense.

2. Think of what you can do about this issue in the upcoming election. Consider the actions discussed in the article: letter-writing campaigns, petitioning, e-mail and telephone campaigns, voter forums, voter registration drives, get-out-the-vote campaigns. Decide which is the most appropriate for your group and your issue.

3. On a separate sheet of paper, write down a plan of action. It should include the following elements:

   A. State the issue. Tell what issue your group is concerned about.

   B. Decide on an option. Tell which option you have chosen to address your issue.

   C. Set your goal. In one sentence, state what you want to accomplish.

   D. Write the steps you have to take. What do you have to do? When? Who will do it? This is the bulk of your plan of action. Be detailed.

   E. Make an evaluation plan. When you are done, how will you know whether you have succeeded?

4. Be prepared to share your action plan with the rest of the class.

V. The Media

Topic: V. The Media
What the students do: Learn about and find examples of different advertising strategies used in political ads then create their own political ad for the candidate or ballot measure of their choosing.
CA History-Social Science Standards**:** 12.6.3
CMS Promising Approaches: 2 and possibly 3, 4 if students share ads with candidates/organizations
Thanks to: University of Virginia Center for Politics: Youth Leadership Initiative

Campaign Advertising

Purpose
The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to political advertisements and help them understand how those advertisements influence the issues and candidates in campaigns.

Objectives
- Students will identify the different types of political advertisements.
  - Card stacking
  - Contrast
  - Glittering generalities
  - Mudslinging
  - Plain folks
  - Testimonial
  - Transfer
- Students identify possible consequences, both intended and unintended, of political advertisements.
- Students will be able to explain how candidates use political advertisements to influence voter opinion on campaign issues.
- Students will be able to predict how candidates might use different types of advertisements to reach different groups of people.
- Students will list the many ways that commercials are used to influence the electorate.
- Students will be able to construct a political advertisement of their own.

Materials/Preparation
Handout 1: Types of Political Advertising Guide"—1 per student
Handout 2: "Media Chart"—1 per student

Procedures
I. **Warm Up:** Students are asked to describe a popular ad from television. They can do this orally, draw a picture, write a description, etc. The teacher may then ask students, "What features of this ad made it so memorable?" The teacher may choose to record responses on the board under the heading, "techniques used by advertisers."

II. Discuss student responses**.** Which techniques are the most effective? The least?

III. Distribute **Handout 1: "Types of Political Advertising Guide"** to each student. Discuss the different types of advertising listed on the handout using questions like:
- Do the advertisements appeal to specific audiences?
- How can advertisements influence public opinion about campaign issues?

IV. Tell students that over the next few days (or assign your own timeline), they will have a chance to get acquainted with candidates and propositions through looking at campaign ads on television, radio, and in print media. Distribute **Handout 2: Media Chart** and be sure the students understand how to fill in the blanks. Discuss the fact that some ads may use more than one advertising strategy, and that it is okay to list and describe more than one strategy per ad.

Provide students time to complete the assignment, then on the due date:

V. Ask students to share several of the ads they critiqued, ensuring that they understand the different strategies. Then ask:

What ads stood out to you? Why were these memorable? Which of the ads did you think was particularly effective? Why?

VI. Have students create a political advertisement for a candidate or ballot measure of their choice. Suggested guidelines include:

A. Students should research the politician's background and know where he/she stands on at least three central issues, or research the ballot measure in terms of who supports/opposes and the rationale/implications each side describes.

B. Students would then choose one of the types of ads from Handout 1 and create their own ad in that style. Components of this ad could include
- Dialogue for the advertisement
- Music or other background sounds
- Setting
- Special effects

C. Depending on time, students could create their ads using a variety of media. They could present their work as a PowerPoint presentation, a skit, or a storyboard.

D. The teacher may also wish to add a written component to the assignment. Suggested questions include:
- Who is your intended audience? What issues are important to your audience?
- What are you trying to convince them to do or think?
- What issues are important to your candidate? How does your ad address these issues?

Extension Activities

1) The students find examples of each type of commercial and bring descriptions or the actual tapes to class.
2) Students write a letter describing why they think their ad would be effective and send their ad ideas and drafts to the candidate's staff or to the appropriate organization supporting/opposing a ballot measure.
3) A student contacts an elected official and interviews them about political advertisements.
4) A student could contact a candidate and watch the production of an advertisement.

Rubric to Assist Teachers in Assessing Student Work

Acceptable	Strong	Exceptional
• Concentrates on 3 issues. • Identifies audience they are trying to reach. • It is clear that the ad is trying to convince the voter. • The writing has few grammar or spelling errors. • Describes the look of the ad. • Suggests music or sound for the ad.	• Concentrates on 3 issues in some detail. • Clearly identifies the target audience they are trying to reach • The ad is convincing on the majority of the issues raised. • The writing has no grammar or spelling errors. • Describes the look of the ad in detail • Chooses music or sound for the ad.	• Concentrates on three issues in detail. • Clearly identifies the target audience they are trying to reach • The ad is convincing on every issue. • The writing has no grammar or spelling errors. • Ad includes symbolism, metaphors, alliteration or artistic elements for special effects. • Chooses music that develops the theme for the ad.

Handout 1

How Do Candidates Get Your Attention?
A Guide to Campaign Advertisements

A. *Testimonial*–endorsements from celebrities and other well-known people.

Example: Michael Jordan's endorsement of Bill Bradley for President; Senator Warner's endorsement of George Allen for Senate; any local celebrity or well known community leader's public endorsement of a candidate for office.

B. *Mudslinging*–often referred to as "attack ads," the TV, radio and print advertisements make assertions about the opponent in a variety of unflattering ways. Name-calling and/or groundless assertions about one candidate by his/her opponent. This advertising strategy is used by a candidate primarily to create a negative impression of one's opponent. This strategy may backfire and create a negative impression of the candidate who is responsible for the creation of the negative ad if used excessively, or in a manner that is perceived as false, deceptive, "tasteless" or "going too far."

Example: The Bush "Rats" Ad; 1996 Democratic Presidential and Congressional commercials that "morphed" the candidate into images of Pat Robertson or Newt Gingrich.

C. *Transfer*–Use of popular symbols to create a positive connotation for the candidate or the use of negative or controversial symbols to create a negative connotation of one's opponent.

Example – Positive: Ads that feature pleasant music, beautiful outdoor country or rural scenery, happy families, playful children, successful teams or businesses etc.
Negative: Talking about an opponent's record with ominous music in the background, using black and white photos, visually shocking images such as oil spills, home foreclosure, car accidents, prison bars etc. Images of one's opponent in slow motion causing the eye's to blink slowly, thereby giving the impression of disinterest, laziness and/or intoxication.

D. *Card stacking* – Use of statistics, often in a one-sided manner; the omission of information that is crucial to drawing an informed and balanced conclusion.

Example: 95% of citizens surveyed support Mrs. Jones for City Council;
"Time after time, my opponent voted against legislation that would have supported new jobs in our community."

E. *Plain Folks* – An attempt by a candidate to appeal to the average voter as just "one of the people."

Examples: Lamar Alexander in 1996 wearing his trademark red and black-checkered shirt. Any candidate ad where he or she appears with no jacket or suit, shirtsleeves rolled up and/or wearing a sweater. Usually doing everyday task such as shopping at the supermarket or walking down a street or "visiting" with neighbors. Another technique that fits this category is one where the candidate does not appear in the ad, but "average" people on the street stop to talk about the candidate. The negative version of this would be "man on the street" interviews where the interviewees are critical of the opponent.

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E. *Glittering Generalities* – Usually the first type of ad used in a campaign, these spots are designed to introduce a candidate to the voters. Needless to say, like any introduction, these types of ads are almost always very positive. Designed to leave the viewer with a very good first impression. This ad type uses very vague words and phrases that have a positive effect on the viewer and appeal to a variety of interests.

Examples: Ads use images and phrases that are virtually impossible not to like such as: "Working for your family," "Building a Bridge To The Future," "Saving Our Schools" "Improving America" "Saving Social Security" "Building One America" etc. The images are usually of a perfect world with happy families and children in pleasant surroundings on sunny days with blue skies or images of the candidate hard at work, sleeves rolled up, actively engaged in conversation with people in a "responsible" business environment.

F. *Bandwagon* – Similar to card stacking, this is an attempt to convey a sense of momentum and to generate a positive "everybody's doing it so you should too" mentality.

Examples: Voice-overs in commercials stating "Polls show Robert Stone leading in the race for the United States Senate." Large groups of people greeting a candidate or carrying signs in support. Group testimonials and/or corporate endorsements such as: "Endorsed by the National Association of Retired Persons," or "Endorsed by the National Education Association."

G. *Contrast Ad* – Juxtaposing positive images of one's candidacy with negative images of the opponent in the same ad.

Examples: Split screens with Hillary Clinton in color moving at regular speed and her opponent Rick Lazio in black and white moving in slow motion. Images of two candidates on screen as a voice over denounces the opponent followed by a red X appearing over the opponent's face.

Handout 2

How Do Candidates Get Your Attention?
Media Chart

As you view, read, or listen to different campaign ads on television, radio, and print media, complete the chart below. For each type of ad, fill in the definition section, describe one of the ads you critiqued and evaluate its persuasiveness.

TYPE OF AD AND DEFINITION	WHAT TECHNIQUES ARE USED IN THIS AD?	WHAT MADE THIS AD EFFECTIVE OR INEFFECTIVE?
Testimonial:		
Mudslinging:		
Transfer:		
Card Stacking:		
Plain Folks:		
Glittering Generalities:		
Bandwagon:		
Contrast:		

Topic: V. The Media
What the Students Do: Prepare for and watch a political debate. Use a variety of criteria to "rate the debate" and participate in follow-up discussion and activities.
CA History-Social Science Standards: 12.6
CMS Promising Approaches**:** 1, 2, and potentially 3, 4, 5
Thanks to: The League of Women Voters of New Jersey Education Fund and The League of Women Voters Cincinnati Area
Additional Resource: Commission on Presidential Debates

How to Watch a Debate

To Teachers and Students:

The purpose of this guide is to help you learn how to watch political candidate debates. The ***"Rate the Debate"*** *questions can be used for class discussion and as guidelines as you watch a debate. The suggested activities at the end are provided for class assignments by the teacher. Teachers should consider using How to Judge a Candidate* (in Section III: Candidates, Parties, and Ballot Measures) *as an additional resource.*

In 1984, an estimated 85 million Americans watched the televised debates between presidential candidates Ronald Reagan and Walter Mondale. Nine out of every ten American voters say they have watched a candidate debate some time in the past. These include debates among candidates for all levels of public office, from city council to the US Senate to the presidency. No other political events – in fact, few other television programs – produce such large audiences. Why do people watch debates?

Clearly, there is a horse-race quality to a candidate debate; people want to know who will "win" when the stakes are so high and the political atmosphere so intense. But there is more. Before voters go to the polls, they want to know where candidates stand on the issues, what leadership qualities the candidates possess, how they react under pressure, even what they look like. Voters want to comparison shop and to see the candidates meet head-on and face-to-face.

Think of other ways we learn about candidates. The 60-second spot on TV is produced by a media advisor, the letter seeking contributions is written by a professional fundraiser, and news reports are filtered through the eyes of reporters. Compared to these, the candidate debate provides a direct opportunity to hear candidates speak for themselves, unrehearsed, without a prepared speech.
Still, viewers need to watch debates with a careful eye. Television can emphasize image over substance. Good debaters are not necessarily better leaders. This guide provides background information and poses questions to help you as you watch candidate debates--information you need to make an intelligent choice at the polls.

Candidate Debates: *A behind the scenes look*

At first glance, the purpose of a debate seems obvious - to provide voters with the information they need to make an intelligent choice at the polls. Debates also help to get the public interested in an election and to educate voters about the issues.

But those directly involved in debates may have other goals. For candidates, it is to get elected. Candidates weigh every debate decision whether to debate, what format is best, even what curtain colors and camera angles they want – with one question: "Will it help me win?" Television broadcasters who air the debate want to attract an audience with a lively show and a hot race. The debate that gets on the air is the result of delicate juggling of all these goals.

The juggling takes place in negotiating sessions between the debate sponsor, the candidates, and, in some cases, the broadcaster. Negotiations focus on such issues as the number, date, site and format for the debate. These negotiations often are long and difficult, and they may involve what seem to be small details. The negotiations for the presidential and vice-presidential debates in 1984, for example, went on for an intense three-week period before the debate schedule finally was set. Weeks later, conflict arose over such issues as the color of the backdrop curtain and the placement of furniture on stage. Though minor, each dispute could have led one candidate or the other to back out of the debate at the last minute,

Format

The negotiations about format - the actual structure of the debate - are usually the most intense. A candidate debate can use any format that puts candidates face-to-face stating their views and responding to their opponents. Using this definition, what methods can you think of to structure debates?

Candidates tend to prefer safe formats that protect them from direct confrontation. The "modified press conference", used in the 1984 Reagan-Mondale debates, is an example of this format in which a journalist poses a question, a candidate has several minutes to respond, the journalist poses a follow-up questions, and the same candidate responds. The next candidate goes through the same questioning process and then each has a chance to rebut, or refute, the opponent. This format guarantees each candidate equal time and takes advantage of the knowledge of a number of journalists. However, it provides little opportunity to challenge a candidate who is dodging a question and often allows the press to set the agenda for the debate; sometimes issues of most concern to the public and to the candidates are missed in the process.

Contrast the above format with the much less structured "single moderator format" used in the 1984 Democratic primary debates. A single moderator posed questions to the candidates and was free to follow up immediately if a candidate ducked the question or responded with an answer that was too general. Candidates were given time to ask questions of each other. This format usually results in a much livelier interaction between candidates and tends to highlight differences in the candidates' stands on the issues. However, it requires a skilled, well-informed moderator who is able to make sure all candidates get equal opportunity to present their views.

In some debates, audience questions are used, either live or prescreened. Formal opening and/or closing statements by the candidates often are included. Sometimes, several formats are combined in one debate. As you watch debates, consider the strengths and weaknesses of the format, and keep in mind that the format selected probably reflects a compromise reached by the candidates, the debate sponsor and possibly the broadcaster.

Candidate participation

As you watch a debate, note who is and who is not included. Are minor party and/or independent candidates involved? Deciding whom to include in a debate is not always easy or obvious for debate sponsors. Some choose to include only major candidates in order to use the brief time available to give voters an opportunity to compare candidates with a realistic chance of winning. Other sponsors prefer to open the platform to all legally qualified candidates, providing voters with an opportunity to hear all candidates' points of view. Which position do you think is most informative to voters?

Either way poses potential problems. In 1980, for example, the League of Women Voters Education Fund announced it would include in its presidential debates all candidates receiving more than 15 percent support in national nonpartisan public opinion polls. Independent candidate John Anderson met that criterion, and the League invited him to participate in the first presidential debate. The Democratic contender, President Jimmy Carter, promptly pulled out. Later, when Anderson's support dipped below the League-established 15 percent criterion, he was not invited for the second debate. Carter then agreed to take the stage opposite Republican candidate Ronald Reagan.

Impact of debates

Most scholars agree that debates rarely cause a dramatic change in the course of an election. They seldom make a winner out of a long-shot nor can they destroy a candidate who is far ahead in the polls. In fact, studies of the impact of presidential debates show that debates tend to confirm the choices people have already made. According to these studies, even if a candidate makes a major mistake or says something supporters do not like during a debate, most supporters adjust their views in order to remain loyal to the original candidate.

This is not to say that debates do not shape voters' opinions. In fact, they have the greatest impact on undecided voters. Watching a debate helps an uncommitted voter decide how to cast a ballot on election day.

In addition, studies show that debates influence voters in other important ways. Debates stimulate interest in the election and inform the public about the issues involved in the campaign as well as the candidates' positions on those issues. They put candidates on the record, so they can be held accountable once in office. They help rally a candidate's supporters to get involved in the campaign and to vote. And finally, they provide a great deal of information about the personalities of the candidates.

In sum, candidate debates can play a vital role in our democracy. In a country in which only about half of all eligible voters cast their ballots in the 1984 presidential elections, the role that televised debates play in stimulating and educating voters is especially important.

Debates, though, will remain only as good as the public wants them to be. Because many candidates want safe debates – or, all too often, no debates at all – it is up to the public to persuade candidates to debate and to accept better, more challenging formats. And then, it is up to the debate audiences to evaluate the candidates – differentiate between style and substance – and make informed choices at the polls.

Rate the Debate

You will get more out of watching a debate if you are well prepared. Get ready by following press reports on the candidates. Knowing their campaign positions ahead of time and knowing something about the issues that are likely to come up in the debate will help you to understand the questions and answers and to evaluate the candidates' performance. It also is helpful to get some background on the debate sponsor and follow any campaign conflicts over the debate itself.

Rate the debate format

A good format should be interesting and fair, should provide information about the candidates' views on the issues and should help you judge the candidates' leadership qualities. In evaluating the debate format, consider:

1. Does it give all candidates equal opportunity to speak and to respond to opponents?
2. Does it hold your interest? Does it allow the differences between the candidates to surface?
3. Does it make it easy for the candidates to talk about the issues? Does it allow the candidates to state their views clearly? Does, it allow the candidates to be pinned down?
4. Does it give you insight into the candidates' personalities and leadership qualities?

Rate the moderator/panelists

1. Is the moderator in control of the debate?
2. Are the questions fair? Are they equally tough on all candidates?
3. Are the questions clear? Is there enough information so that viewers understand the meaning of the answers? Are follow-up questions used to help pin down the candidates?
4. Do the questions cover the important issues? Are there any major issues that are not mentioned?
5. Does the moderator or do any of the panelists talk too much?
6. Does the moderator allow each candidate the same amount of time to talk?

Rate the candidates

Most of your attention during a debate centers on the candidates' performance, and rightly so. But as you watch, be aware of your reactions both to the substance of the candidates' remarks and to the visual images they convey. Those images can be powerful. For example, two revealing polls were taken after the 1960 debates between John Kennedy, who came across as youthful and energetic, and Richard Nixon, who looked tired and older. A majority of television viewers judged Kennedy the debate winner, but a poll of radio listeners gave the victory to Nixon. Clearly, the power of image can cause voters to overlook the substance of a debate. Therefore, as you evaluate candidates consider:

Image

1. Are you influenced by the age, sex, clothes, posture or other physical characteristics of the candidates? How?
2. What impressions do the candidates convey as the debate progresses? Who appears more relaxed? more sincere? more confident?

3. Who knows how to use television better? Do the candidates look directly at you (into the camera) or elsewhere (at the panelists, live audience, etc.)? Does this affect your overall impression of the candidates?

Substance

1. Do the candidates answer or evade the questions?
2. Do the candidates tell you their stands on issues or do they respond with emotional appeals and campaign slogans?
3. Do the candidates give their own views, or do they mostly attack the opponent? Are the attacks personal or directed at the opponent's policies?
4. Are the answers consistent with the candidates' previous positions?
5. Is the candidate well informed? Do the candidates use facts and figures to help you understand or to confuse you?
6. Are the answers realistic or are they just campaign promises? You may want to read a transcript or view a videotape of the debate to help answer these questions.

Rate the impact of the debate

Political debates are but one event in a long campaign season. How has the debate influenced the campaign? In evaluating the impact of a debate, consider the following:

1. At what stage in the campaign is the debate taking place?
2. What press coverage, if any, is there of the debate? Does it cover important issues or focus on attention-getting details (mistakes, slogans, etc.)?
3. Did the debate change press coverage of the campaign? Are different issues emphasized?
4. Did the candidates' ratings in the polls change after the debate?
5. Has interest in the campaign changed? How?
6. Have the behavior, policy positions or campaign strategy of either candidate changed? How?

Suggested activities

1. The candidates and the Issues

Before the debate*:* On a piece of paper, along the left margin, write down the issues about which you care most. Make a column next to each issue for each candidate. Then, make a column for your own position on each issue listed. If you do not know or you want to hear the various views before forming an opinion, leave it blank.

During the debate: As candidates talk about the issues you have listed, fill in their positions in the appropriate column. If you do not understand the candidate's answer, write, “Don't understand." If the candidate avoids the question, write "avoids question If the issue is not discussed, leave it blank.

After the debate: Make a final column listing your positions on the issues after watching the debate. Evaluate what you learned about the issues from the debate. Have you changed any opinions or made up your mind on any issues? Circle the candidate's positions that are the closest to yours. How helpful was the debate in helping you learn the candidates' stands on the issues?

2. The candidates and their leadership qualities

Before the debate: On a piece of paper, along the left margin, list the qualities of a good leader. (Examples: strong, good communicator, good listener, honest, smart, etc.). Next, for each quality, make a column with the name of each candidate in the debate.
During the debate: As you watch the debate, note ways in which each candidate does or does not show the leadership qualities you have listed. Your examples should come both from the candidates' statements and from the images they convey.
After the debate: Evaluate your list. What impressed you the most: content or image? How was the debate helpful in teaching you about the candidates' leadership qualities? How might it be deceptive? How do your impressions compare with those of others - classmates, parents, media commentators?

3. Impact of debates - take your own poll

Before the debate*:* Design a poll to determine your classmates' views (or, as a class project, a sampling of your neighbors' and relatives' views) of the candidates. Include questions about the leadership qualities of the candidates, the candidates' stands on key issues and whom they would vote for if the election were held that day.
After the debate: *Go* back to the same group of people and ask the same questions. How did their answers change, if at all? What impact did the debate have on your sample?

4. Impact of debates - Interviews

Before the debate: Design a set of interview questions to solicit various views of the candidates (their leadership qualities, their stands on issues, whom they would vote for, and so on). Select different kinds of people to interview.
After the debate: Interview the same people. Ask who they thought "won" the debate and why. Also ask if they changed their opinion as a result of the debate and what they learned from the debate. Evaluate the responses. What impact did the debate have?

5. Participate in a debate

Attend a debate: Find out if there will be a live audience at a candidate debate. If so, ask if you can attend. If there will be audience questions, prepare the questions you would like the candidates to address.
Stage your own mock debate**:** Assign all roles to various classmates, including candidates, moderator, etc. You may even want to stage mock negotiating sessions over debate details (format, etc.). Afterwards, be sure to evaluate how your debate went and discuss the different viewpoints of all participants.

Topic: V. The Media
What the students do: Take the roles of candidates and their staff members or reporters for different media outlets and conduct a simulated press conference. Members of the media will endorse a candidate, candidates and staff members will create their last ad before the hypothetical election.
CA History-Social Science Standards: 12.6.3
CMS Promising Approaches: 2, 6
Thanks to: Constitutional Rights Foundation

Press Conference

Overview

Day 1
Students first discuss the role of candidates running for various offices (sheriff, school board member, and county supervisor) as well as the role of local media reporters covering a campaign. Students should also discuss and agree on a local problem that should be addressed by each candidate. Next, each student will take on the role of a candidate, a campaign staff person, or a reporter. Once everyone has a role, students should begin working in small groups. The candidates and their staffs develop a one-minute statement setting forth their positions to deal with local problems. The media groups prepare a set of questions they will ask at the candidates' news conference.

Day 2
The candidates hold press conferences. Next, the reporters endorse candidates in television, radio, and newspaper editorials. The candidates put on campaign ads describing their position on the local problem discussed yesterday.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Identify various candidates in local elections.
2. Describe a local issue.
3. Describe the role media plays in the election process.
4. Develop effective questions.
5. Develop and defend positions on local issues.

Materials/Preparation

Handout 1: "Candidates' Instructions" — 18 copies
Handout 2: "Media Instructions" — class size minus 18
Possible Resource Persons: A reporter from your local paper, radio or television station could work with media groups. An elected officeholder or campaign worker could help candidate groups.

Procedure

Day 1

A. Set Up the Simulation

Ask the students to name some of the most important issues they think their community faces. Write the students ideas on the board and ask the students:

A. Set up the Simulation (continued)

Which of these issues do you wish elected officials (or candidates) would emphasize more?

Hold a class vote to select the issue.

Tell students that today some of them are going to become candidates running for local offices, and some of them are going to become reporters working for different media groups.

Explain that for this activity, the candidates are running for the following local offices:
Sheriff
School Board
County Supervisor

Discuss the roles/responsibilities of these positions to ensure student understanding. Briefly brainstorm how each public official might address the issue your class selected to ensure that students will have ideas to get started on the assignment below.

B. Preparing for the Press Conference

Step 1. Tell students to imagine that it is the final days of a campaign. Candidates are scrambling to reach out to as many voters as possible before Election Day. A final press conference has been arranged by a local non-partisan group for the candidates running for sheriff, school board, and county supervisor. The morning newspaper, a local radio station, and a local television news station have yet to endorse candidates, and all three will be at the press conference. Those endorsements are very important, and this press conference provides a great opportunity to make a lasting impression on the voters.

Explain to students that they are going to get a chance to take part in the press conference as candidates and staff or as members of the media.

Step 2. Assign the following roles for students:

- Two candidates each for sheriff, school board, and county supervisor. Each candidate must have two staff members.
- Divide the remaining class members equally into reporting teams for three media organizations: (1) Newspaper, (2) Radio, or (3) Television.

Step 3. Distribute **Handout 1: "Candidates' Instructions"** to candidates and staff and **Handout 2: "Media Instructions"** to media members. Review the instructions with the class and remind students that the issue they selected as a class is the issue the candidates and the media will focus on.

Step 4. Use the rest of the class session for groups to prepare.

Day 2
The Press Conference

Step 1. Assign each pair of candidates and their staffs to a different area of the room. Have media organizations send reporters to cover each candidate pair.

Step 2. After about 10 minutes, conclude the press forum. Monitor groups as the candidates prepare 15-second radio ads and the media groups prepare endorsements for candidates. (If desirable, the radio station can read its endorsement, the TV channel can do a newscast, and the newspaper team can write its endorsement.)

Step 3. As time permits, have the various groups present their endorsements and radio ads.

Step 4. Debrief the activity using the following questions:

- Was the press forum a good way to get information about the candidates' views? Why or why not?
- As a candidate, how did it feel to have to answer media questions?
- As a reporter, how did it feel to try to get the candidate to respond to your questions?

Handout 1

Candidates' Instructions
Preparing for the Press Conference

You are a member of a candidate's election team. You are in the final days of the campaign. Candidates are scrambling to reach out to as many voters as possible before Election Day.

A final press conference has been arranged by a local non-partisan group for the candidates running for sheriff, school board, and county supervisor.

The morning newspaper, a local radio station, and a local television news station have yet to endorse candidates, and all three will be at the press conference. Those endorsements are very important, and this press conference provides a great opportunity to make a lasting impression on the voters.

The voters want to hear about the burning issues, and to get the media endorsements you need, your candidate needs to share his/her vision for addressing the number one issue your community faces. (Use the issue your class decided should be a top priority for elected officials.)

To prepare for the press conference:

1. Choose one member of your group to serve as the candidate.

2. Review and discuss the information presented in class regarding the local issue facing the community.

3. Brainstorm ideas for addressing the issue that your candidate (sheriff, school board, or county supervisor) might be able to move forward if elected. Select one plan or program to share at the press conference. Prepare a brief statement that describes your plan for your candidate to share at the press conference. Help your candidate prepare to answer questions that the reporters might likely ask.

4. When the press conference begins, the candidate makes the presentation and then takes questions from the press. The staff should stand by the candidate during the press conference and call on reporters, help field questions, and help with anything the candidate needs.

5. After the press conference, return to your groups and prepare your candidate's last political ad. This is your candidate's chance to say anything that wasn't said during the press conference and to clarify anything that was said! Your teacher will let you know what format your ad should take.

6. Present your ad to the class.

Handout 2

Media Instructions
Press Conference

Imagine that you are on a political coverage team for one of the media outlets: news radio, television, or newspaper. It is your job to cover the upcoming press conference where candidates running for sheriff, school board, and county supervisor will be. Your paper or station has not yet endorsed a candidate for these offices, and your editor is counting on you to help make the final decision about who will be endorsed.

The public wants to know about the candidate's views on the burning issue your community faces. (Use the issue your class selected.)

Your team needs to be prepared to ask the candidates "the tough questions" about this issue and how he/she would address the issue if elected.

To accomplish the task, complete the following steps:

1. Assign at least one reporter to cover each of the candidates.

2. Review and discuss the information presented in class regarding the local issue facing the community.

3. Brainstorm and develop questions to ask the candidates at the press forum. Think about questions appropriate for the office the candidate is running for. Each candidate should be asked at least two questions.

4. At the press conference, wait for both candidates to complete their statements. Then raise your hand and direct your questions to each. Take notes about their responses.

5. After the press conference, return to your teams. Select one of the candidates from each of the races for endorsement. Write an endorsement for each, specifying at least two reasons for your organization's endorsement.

6. Present your endorsement to the class.

VI: Getting Informed

Topic: VI. Getting Informed
What the students do: Research, participate in "scavenger hunts," and create products using information they have found to educate others about topics related to voting and elections.
CA History-Social Science Standards: 12.6.4
CMS Promising Approaches: 1, 2 and potential parent involvement
Thanks to: Constitutional Rights Foundation

Searching and Surfing for Facts

Overview

Young people, of voting age or not, need opportunities to participate in democratic processes. Research from the *California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Sc*hools shows that discussing political issues in the classroom, with friends, and at home increases civic knowledge, skills, and positive dispositions. Research from the League of Women Voters shows "that when people have dialogue about the issues they care about, they develop a sense of their own role in making change and are much more interested in learning about voting."

Effective civic education mirrors participatory citizenship. Students take content knowledge to the next level: grappling with issues, practicing decision-making, problem solving, and working with others. It is important to help students gather accurate and balanced information about candidates, ballot measures, and other election-related topics. In addition to the many opportunities presented in *Democracy Central: A Teacher's Guide to the 2008 Elections* for students to research and gather information, here are some additional ideas to get them searching and surfing:

1. "Scavenger Hunts"

Choose items from the **Question Bank** to help students gather information about selected topics. It is important that the students have some purpose for gathering the information. Some ideas to consider:

- Divide students into teams and have a "Surfing Competition" to see which teams can complete the hunt accurately and on deadline. After the competition, each team generates a set of questions and answers it thinks are important for all (citizens, high school students, community members, parents) to know and creates a brochure to distribute or poster to display.

- Have students interview at least one adult at home to find out what he/she thinks are the most important things voters should know before they go to the polls. Students and the adults they interviewed then work together to gather the information. Students bring the information back to class, work in small groups to compile their findings, and create brochures to distribute back to their families or others. (Contact your local League of Women Voters to find out if they would volunteer to help with this project, provide guidance on creating non-partisan and accurate brochures, etc.)

2. Operation Outreach

Engaging students in activities that educate others not only provides an opportunity to increase their own knowledge, but can also impact civic skills and dispositions as a service-learning project.

Here are some ideas to get your students educating others:

- Students organize a DebateWatch using suggestions from the Commission on Presidential Debates.

- Students could organize a project similar to this: Twelfth-grade government students at Belmont Senior High in Los Angeles thought it was important for new citizens to be more involved in the democratic process. As the students studied the process of democratic elections in their classwork, they realized the importance for new citizens to understand the variety of political parties and the importance of registering to vote. On the day that 6,000 (six thousand!) new citizens were to be sworn-in at the Los Angeles Convention Center, the Belmont students brought educational displays they had created, written in six languages, to the plaza in front of the Convention Center. As the newly sworn-in citizens exited the building, surrounded by their families, the Belmont students approached them and asked if they could help explain anything about the voting process.

  These 30 students registered 1,500 new voters and held engaging discussions about the impact of voting, about political parties, and about the structures of our state and federal governments. Students reinforced their social studies content and met a need for engaging more community members as active participants in a democracy.

- Students organize a mock election for a local middle or elementary school. They create age-appropriate and balanced materials to help the younger students learn about candidates before they "vote."

Question Bank

Here are some questions to get students searching and surfing. Teachers are encouraged to modify the questions to meet their instructional needs!

VOTING

3. How do you register to vote?
4. Where do you register to vote?
5. What is the name and address of your county registrar of voters?
6. What are the qualifications for registering to vote?
7. When do you have to re-register?
8. Why register at all? Why not just show up on Election Day?
9. How many polling places are there in your county?
10. What is absentee voting and how does it work?
11. What times do the polls open and close?
12. Where is your household's polling place for the next election?

CANDIDATES & OFFICES

1. What offices are on the ballot?
2. Who are the major candidates running for _____?
3. Is this a non-partisan office? or To what parties do the major candidates belong?
4. Who is endorsing the major candidates?
5. What issues are the candidates discussing?
6. What issue are you most interested in?
7. Where do the major candidates stand on the issue you are most interested in?
8. Which candidates seem most interested in issues affecting youth?
9. What is the most interesting thing you found out about the candidates?
10. What is the best resource you found for learning about the candidates? Why?

BALLOT MEASURES

1. What is a ballot measure?
2. What measures are on the ballot?
3. Which ballot measures are you most interested in? Why?
4. Choose one ballot measure and find out how it came to be.
5. Who supports it? Who opposes it?
6. What does it mean to vote "YES" on this ballot measure?
7. Describe any economic impact this measure might have.
8. How might this measure impact your community, someone you know, or your life
9. What is the most interesting thing you learned about this ballot measure?
10. What was the best resource you found for learning about this ballot measure? Why?

GENERAL

1. What type of election is coming up? (National, Local, Primary, General, Special)
2. Find three resources you think people should use to learn about what is on the ballot.

(Continued)

3. Find three resources you think people should use to learn about the candidates.
4. Find three resources you think people should use to learn about issues being discussed.
5. What age group has the highest voter turnout in your state?
6. What age group has the lowest voter turnout in your state?
7. What is the most interesting or useful poll or survey you have found? Why?
8. What are the top three issues in the news concerning the election/campaigns?
9. What types of media are candidates using to reach out to young voters?
10. Where do you get your information about the election? Why?