

Growing Voters and Election 2008

Activity Title: **Voter Information / Civic Lemonade Stand**

High School

Overview

Students in a class (Middle School or High School and organized as age-appropriate) have the assignment to produce a WHY VOTE pamphlet of their own. Websites with various resources are provided in our activity. See the Growing Voters list.

The students come to some decisions about what the content should be. That right there is pretty important: their own answers to why someone eligible to vote should do so. For the pamphlet, some students will care about the material, some about layout, others about art work, and still others about production: the students take ownership of the Why Vote pamphlet.

This activity deepens the impact. This part of the activity is for students in groups to take their Why Vote? pamphlet out into the public; to a school event, to a mall, out on the sidewalk in front of their school, to a sporting event, etc.

Objective

In lemonade stand fashion, students distribute not a pamphlet from an organization (like the League of Women Voters' materials), but their very own creation. With that they get engaged in the civic process. When ask a passing adult "excuse me, are you going to vote on November 4th?"; or "May I give you the voting pamphlet that my class made?" and they have a dialogue with the person who stops, right then, it happens: they are participating in the political process.

Activity

A "Civic Lemonade Stand" →Voter Information and Registration Table

Equipped with the "Why Vote" pamphlets they've developed in class, students will volunteer to staff a voters' information table at a store, on the street, during a school open house or athletic event, or in some other appropriate venue. The students will hand out their pamphlet and talk with potential voters; if necessary, a parent or teacher will chaperone and provide background support for the student volunteer(s). The pamphlets could also have voter-registration card available if desirable.

Students will provide information to people visiting their table, help them fill out the registration cards, and offer to take the cards to the appropriate location and turn them in. If PowerPoint presentations have been created by the class or other students in collaboration, a laptop on the table can be playing these materials for interested viewers.

Sample ballots would be another item to include at the table for people to study.

Buttons, stickers, pencils, and balloons (donated by the parties' headquarters) could also be passed out.

Class Discussion

Students can report on their experiences handing out their pamphlet; they can compare reactions and interactions they had with voters and non-voters. The class can analyze what they learned from being part of the political process.

Students' results and analysis could also easily be added to a blog and the pamphlet shared with other students who want to do this in their community.

Lesson Extension: Additional Activity to Integrate Math

Evaluating the effectiveness of the student volunteers' efforts at the Voter Information and Registration Table(s)

1. Students will keep track of the number of people who meet each of the requirements stated below.

- Number of non-registered voters who stop at the table.
- Number of registered voters who stop at the table.
- Number of people who said they were going to vote / not planning to vote.
- Number of people who take a pamphlet (created by the students) with them.
- Number of people who pick up other informative materials such as that provided by one of the political parties.
- Number of people who watch some or all of the slideshow presentation the students created.
- Number of people who fill out a voter's registration card.
- Number of registration cards that are filled out and left with the students to be turned in.

2. Using a spreadsheet program, students will graph the information gathered at the Voter Information and Registration Table(s).

3. Students will evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts to inform and register voters.