

Growing Voters and Election 2004: Grades: 1-3

Activity Title: Reporters in Action

Overview

This lesson is intended for younger students, Grades 1-3, although it could be adapted for upper level students. The focus of this lesson is on learning about the Presidential Election. In this lesson the students become TV interviewers and go out to the community (parents, grandparents, teachers, principal, soccer coach, etc.) to ask whom these adults are planning to vote for and why. Elementary students will learn the basic steps of choosing a president, how people decide whom to vote for, and graph and tally election information during the Presidential Election.

Essential Questions:

How is it possible that the majority of people interviewed voted for X, yet Y won the election?

Can the answers of ____ number of voters predict who will win the election?

Why should people vote?

Does one person's vote make a difference?

Is our nation's method of electing a President fair? Do the results of the election reflect the desires of the citizens in our community? Do the results of the election reflect the preferences of the citizens in our e-mail class's community?"

National Standards:

What are the Roles of the Citizen in American Democracy?

Rights of individuals. Students should be able to explain why certain rights are important to the individual and to a democratic society.

Responsibilities of individuals. Students should be able to explain why certain responsibilities are important to themselves and their family, community, state, and nation.

Forms of participation. Students should be able to describe the means by which citizens can influence the decisions and actions of their government.

Political leadership and public service. Students should be able to explain the importance of political leadership and public service in their school, community, state, and nation.

Selecting leaders. Students should be able to explain and apply criteria useful in selecting leaders in their school, community, state, and nation

The meaning of citizenship. Students should be able to explain the meaning of citizenship in the United States.

What is Government and What Should It Do?

Defining power and authority. Students should be able to explain the difference between authority and power without authority, and that authority comes from custom, law, and the consent of the governed.

Functions of government. Students should be able to explain some of the major things governments do in their school, community, state, and nation.

Fundamental values and principles. Students should be able to explain the importance of the fundamental values and principles of American democracy.

Objectives:

Students will:

Know various positions in our government. I.e. President, Vice President, senators, representatives

Be aware that there is a federal and a state government.

Understand that an election is held to elect people to represent us in the government.

Realize that there are many different opinions about who should run our nation.

Be aware of basic concerns and issues in our nation.

Materials:

Paper

Pencils

Computer

Refrigerator box for the voting booth

Ballots

Activities

1. Before the first interview, the class will discuss elections:

Why do we hold elections?

Who runs in an election?

Why do people vote?

What are the issues that adults vote on in elections?

Who are the people they vote for?

Students should be aware of President, Vice President and perhaps Governor, Senators, Representatives depending on the grade level.

How many people vote in our country?

(Discuss our huge population and introduce information about large numbers.)

2. Building Background Knowledge

Students may view the following sites in order to build background knowledge about citizenship and help students understand the voting process

[Brain Pop](http://www.brainpop.com/specials/election)- at this site students may view a cool movie about elections, ask questions, or do an experiment.

<http://www.brainpop.com/specials/election>

[Voting Chain Lesson](http://www.kidsvoting.org/the%20voting%20chain.doc) Students vote, tally, and implement the vote.
<http://www.kidsvoting.org/the%20voting%20chain.doc>

[Yes or No Game](http://www.kidsvoting.org/yes%20or%20no%20game.doc) A lesson in which students practice and discuss voting.
<http://www.kidsvoting.org/yes%20or%20no%20game.doc>

3. Interviews

The class will brainstorm ideas for questions that will appear on a class interview sheet.

Create a simple interview sheet to help students be successful. The person being interviewed should be asked to read (or help read) the question and guide the student in marking the correct answer. For young students, interview sheets should be easy to fill out. Circle the answer may be best.

Interview sheet may include questions such as

- What do you think is the most important issue in the upcoming election?
Choices: Education, Crime, War with Iraq, Health Care
- Who do you think should be our next President?

Role Play- One of the students will interview the Principal (or other adult well known to the students) while the teacher demonstrates how to fill in the interviewing form.

Students will practice reading and using the form by interviewing a partner in the classroom.

Students will use the interview form to interview adults at home. Encourage younger students to ask the adult to help them fill in the interview sheet the class created.

4. Keeping Track: Results of Interviews

Teachers will create a classroom spreadsheet titled Results of Interviews on a computer. (Note: Teachers should set this list up as a spreadsheet to make graphing the answers easier.)

Students will bring their completed forms to school and add their adults' interview answers to the class list on the computer. These answers will be e-mailed to a buddy class somewhere else in the nation.

[Find classroom penpal buddies](http://www.teaching.com) at teaching.com's IECC site. This is a free teaching.com service to help teachers link with partners in other cultures and countries for email classroom pen-pal and other project exchanges. <http://www.iecc.org/>

5. Graphing and Predicting

The students will keep a running tally of the votes and graph it day by day. The classes will compare their classroom results with the results from their buddy class and attempt to predict who the winners will be.

6. Daily Student Discussion

Which of today's answers is a good reason to vote for someone?
Why are there so many different reasons for voting for the same person?
How should Americans select their leaders?
From our list and tally, predict who will win the election.
After examining our e-mail buddies' list of reasons, tally, and graph, predict who will win the election.
Discuss why the classes' answers are different.

7. Voting in the Classroom Election

Students will learn about how to register to vote and how to mark a ballot. Then they will practice voting before the day of the election.

[Kids Voting Registration Lesson](http://www.kidsvoting.org/Kids%20Voting%20Registration.doc)-Students register to vote.
<http://www.kidsvoting.org/Kids%20Voting%20Registration.doc>

[Marking a Ballot Lesson](http://www.kidsvoting.org/Marking%20a%20Ballot.doc)-Students study and mark sample ballots to prepare to vote. <http://www.kidsvoting.org/Marking%20a%20Ballot.doc>

[Voting Simulation Lesson](http://www.kidsvoting.org/Voting%20Simulation.doc)-Students will vote in a simulated polling place to become familiar with the voting process.
<http://www.kidsvoting.org/Voting%20Simulation.doc>

On Election Day 2004, students will vote on secret ballots for President and Vice President in a voting booth they have created (refrigerator box is suggested).

8. Evaluation and Analysis

After the election, the class results and the e-mail buddy class results will be compared to the nation's results. Discuss the outcome of the election. Consider how our nation would be different if the nation's results had been the same as the class's results.

Explain that the elected officials will not take office until January. Ask the students. Why do we wait so long for our new President to take office?

Assessment:

A rubric will be used to evaluate students' Collaborative Work Skills. (see below)

Links

http://www.educationworld.com/standards/national/soc_sci/civics/5_8.shtml#nss-c.5-8.2
Education World: National Standards

<http://www.pbs.org/democracy/kids/vote/index.html> To provide background knowledge, students can vote in an online “voting booth” prior to beginning their interviews.

<http://www.pbs.org/democracy/kids/educators/whyvote.html> Why vote? - a teacher link with student links attached

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/inauguration/lesson_steps.html Steps in selecting a President. Teachers can use this site to provide background knowledge for students.

<http://www.takeyourkidstovote.org/youth/elementary.htm> Take Your Kids to Vote

<http://www.brainpop.com/specials/election> Brain Pop- at this site students may view a cool movie about elections, ask questions, or do an experiment.

Election 2004 Interviews

Student's Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1	Score
Working with Others	Almost always listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others.	Usually listens to, shares, with, and supports the efforts of others. Does not cause "waves" in class.	Often listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others, but sometimes is not on task.	Rarely listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Often not on task.	
Contributions	Routinely provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A definite leader who contributes a lot of effort.	Usually provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A strong group member who tries hard!	Sometimes provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A satisfactory group member who does what is required.	Rarely provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. May refuse to participate.	
Attitude	Never is publicly critical of the project or the work of others. Always has a positive attitude about the task(s).	Rarely is publicly critical of the project or the work of others. Often has a positive attitude about the task(s).	Occasionally is publicly critical of the project or the work of other members of the group. Usually has a positive attitude about the task(s).	Often is publicly critical of the project or the work of other members of the group. Often has a negative attitude about the task(s).	
Pride	Work reflects this student's best efforts.	Work reflects a strong effort from this student.	Work reflects some effort from this student.	Work reflects very little effort on the part of this student.	
Problem-solving	Actively looks for and suggests solutions to problems.	Refines solutions suggested by others.	Does not suggest or refine solutions, but is willing to try out solutions suggested by others.	Does not try to solve problems or help others solve problems. Lets others do the work.	
Preparedness	Brings needed materials to class and is always ready to work.	Almost always brings needed materials to class and is ready to work.	Almost always brings needed materials but sometimes needs to settle down and get to work	Often forgets needed materials or is rarely ready to get to work.	
Quality of Work	Provides work of the highest quality.	Provides high quality work.	Provides work that occasionally needs to be checked/redone to ensure quality.	Provides work that usually needs to be checked and redone to ensure quality.	

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					Total _____
					Grade _____