

Growing Voters and Election 2004

Grades: 4-8

Activity Title: Students Vote

Overview

In this lesson, students will respond to the Electoral controversy, learn about the Electoral College, and create a slideshow and presentation to teach younger students about the election process. At the end of the lesson, all the students will have a chance to vote for their favorite candidates online in a nationwide, secure on-line mock election.

Essential Questions

Why is it important to vote? What are you doing by voting? Historically, what issues have been important? What are the important issues in this year's elections? Why did our forefathers set up the Electoral College process? How does it work? Does it work as planned? Should we continue to use the Electoral College or should the citizens elect their president by direct vote?

National Standards

Standard 20: Understands the roles of political parties, campaigns, elections, and associations and groups in American politics

- Understands the roles of political parties
- Knows the various kinds of elections (e.g., primary and general, local and state, congressional, presidential, recall)
- Understands the ways in which individuals can participate in political parties, campaigns, and elections
- Understands the historical and contemporary roles of prominent associations and groups in local, state, and national politics (e.g., historical associations such as abolitionists, suffragists, labor unions, civil rights groups; religious organizations and contemporary associations such as AFL-CIO, National Education Association, Common Cause, League of Women Voters, Greenpeace, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People)
- Knows how and why Americans become members of associations and groups, and understands how membership in these associations provides individuals with opportunities to participate in the political process.

Standard 28: Understands how participation in civic and political life can help citizens attain individual and public goals

- Understands why it is important for citizens to monitor their local, state, and national governments; and knows ways people can monitor the decisions and actions of their government such as reading about public issues, watching television news programs, discussing public issues, and communicating with public officials
- Knows ways people can influence the decisions and actions of their government such as voting; taking an active role in interest groups, political parties, and other organizations that attempt to

Growing Voters and Election 2004

influence public policy and elections; attending meetings of governing agencies (e.g., city council, school board); working in campaigns, circulating and signing petitions; taking part in peaceful demonstrations; and contributing money to political parties, candidates, or causes

- Knows individuals or groups who monitor and influence the decisions and actions of their local, state, tribal, and national governments (e.g., the media, labor unions, P.T.A., Chamber of Commerce, taxpayer associations, civilian review boards)
- Understands how participation in civic and political life can help bring about the attainment of individual and public goals (e.g., personal goals such as living in a safe and orderly neighborhood, obtaining a good education, living in a healthy environment; public goals such as increasing the safety of the community, improving local transportation facilities, providing opportunities for education and recreation)
- Understands the importance of both political and social participation and what distinguishes one from the other (e.g., participating in a campaign to change laws regulating the care of children as opposed to volunteering to care for children), and knows opportunities for both political and social participation in the local community
- Understands how Americans can use the following means to monitor and influence politics and government at local, state, and national levels: joining political parties, interest groups, and other organizations that attempt to influence public policy and elections; voting; taking part in peaceful demonstrations; circulating and signing petitions
- Knows historical and contemporary examples of citizen movements seeking to promote individual rights and the common good (e.g., abolition, suffrage, labor and civil rights movements)
- Understands what civil disobedience is, how it differs from other forms of protest, what its consequences might be, and circumstances under which it might be justified.
- Understands why becoming knowledgeable about public affairs and the values and principles of American constitutional democracy and communicating that knowledge to others is a form a political participation

Objectives

Students will understand the importance of voting.

Students will understand the process of holding an election.

Students will use technology to gather information about the candidates.

Students will learn the history of the Presidential elections.

Materials

Local newspapers

National magazines (Time/Newsweek/etc.)

Computers with Internet access

Inspiration software

Microsoft Word

MS Power Point

Growing Voters and Election 2004

Activities

1. The students will work in pairs to research and list issues that are being debated by the candidates in the presidential election. The students will include the candidates' stands on each of the issues.

Elections Central <http://www.multied.com/elections/>

Compare candidates <http://presidentmatch.com/Compare.jsp?idlist=5|10&invoker=qanda>

2. Students will use primary resources to research and write a short paragraph about one of the past Presidential elections.

3. Students will use Inspiration software to create a concept map detailing what they know about the Electoral College. Students will consult the listed websites to learn more about the election process and the Electoral College. Students will update their concept maps to reflect their learning.

4. Students will write a paragraph on "How would you solve the Electoral College controversy?"

5. Students will work in groups of four to create a PowerPoint presentation about the basic election process. Before the elections are held, they will visit other classrooms and use their slideshow presentations to explain the election process to younger students.

6. Students will try their hand at predicting who will win the next presidential election. You can create your own results by clicking on a different button in one of three columns, Democrat (D), Republican (R), and Third Party (O) using the Electoral College Calculator (http://www.archives.gov/federal_register/electoral_college/calculator.html) listed at the ikeepbookmarks Election 2004 site.

7. Students will vote in the election using the Internet Mock Election Site (<http://www.youthleadership.net/whysignup/mockelections.jsp>) hosted by the Youth Leadership Initiative.

Links

http://www.ikeepbookmarks.com/election_2004

Assessment

Rubrics for election history paragraph, Electoral College concept map, and the PowerPoint presentation are available at the end of the lesson.

Electoral Controversy Paragraph Rubric					
Student's Name _____					
Category	4	3	2	1	Pts
Main/Topic Idea Sentence	Main/Topic idea sentence is clear, correctly placed, and is restated in the closing sentence.	Main/Topic idea sentence is either unclear or incorrectly placed, and is restated in the closing sentence.	Main/Topic idea sentence is unclear and incorrectly placed, and is restated in the closing sentence.	Main/Topic idea sentence is unclear and incorrectly placed, and is not restated in the closing sentence.	_____
Content	Relevant, telling, quality details give the reader important information that goes beyond the obvious or predictable.	Supporting details and information are relevant, but one key issue or portion of the storyline is unsupported.	Supporting details and information are relevant, but several key issues or portions of the storyline are unsupported.	Supporting details and information are typically unclear or not related to the topic.	_____
Sources	All sources used for quotes and facts are credible and cited correctly.	All sources used for quotes and facts are credible and most are cited correctly.	Most sources used for quotes and facts are credible and cited correctly.	Many sources used for quotes and facts are less than credible (suspect) and/or are not cited correctly.	_____
Supporting Detail Sentence(s)	Paragraph has three or more supporting detail sentences that relate back to the main idea.	Paragraph has two supporting detail sentences that relate back to the main idea.	Paragraph has one supporting detail sentence that relate back to the main idea.	Paragraph has no supporting detail sentences that relate back to the main idea.	_____
Elaborating Detail Sentence(s)	Each supporting detail sentence has three or more elaborating detail sentences.	Each supporting detail sentence has at least two elaborating detail sentences.	Each supporting detail sentence has one elaborating detail sentence.	Each supporting detail sentence has no elaborating detail sentence.	_____
Mechanics and Grammar	Paragraph has no errors in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.	Paragraph has one or two punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors.	Paragraph has three to five punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors.	Paragraph has six or more punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors.	_____

Electoral College Concept Map Rubric					
Student's Name _____					
Category	4	3	2	1	Pts
Purpose	The concept map establishes and maintains the purpose or main idea throughout.	The concept map establishes the purposes but sometimes losses focus.	The concept map attempts to establish and maintain the focus.	The concept map does not focus on the purpose or main idea.	
Organization	Organization through layers is logical and consistent showing connection of ideas.	Organization shows relationship of terms with a few overlaps in flow or arrangement.	Poor organization affects the flow or accuracy of the concept map.	Serious errors in organization makes the concept map difficult to follow or inaccurate.	
Layout	<p>The concept map is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Visually appealing. -Balanced and appropriate use of shapes and graphics. Consistent layout. Ideas well spaced and balanced. 	<p>The concept map requires some adjustments to enhance the layout</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent use of shapes and graphics Inconsistent use of color Spacing well balanced 	<p>The concept map requires more effort to make it easy to follow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of customized color and shape. Too many colors, shapes or graphics used. Ideas too close and cluttered 	<p>The concept map is hard to read and follow due to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Overlapping lines. -Too many graphics or shapes. -too many colors or unorganized color scheme. -No attempt to customize. 	
Editing	Careful proof reading has eliminated all spelling errors and typos.	A few spelling errors or typos have occurred on the concept map.	Many careless spelling errors or typos could have been corrected with proof reading.	No evidence of proof reading. Too many spelling errors or typos.	

PowerPoint Presentation Rubric: Students Vote					
Student Name: _____					
Category	4	3	2	1	Pts
Content & Accuracy	All content throughout the presentation is accurate. There are no factual errors.	Most of the content is accurate but there is one piece of information that might be inaccurate.	The content is generally accurate, but one piece of information is clearly flawed or inaccurate.	Content is confusing or contains more than one factual error.	
Originality	Presentation shows considerable originality and inventiveness. The content and ideas are presented in a unique and interesting way.	Presentation shows some originality and inventiveness. The content and ideas are presented in an interesting way.	Presentation shows an attempt at originality and inventiveness on 1-2 cards.	Presentation is a rehash of other people's ideas and/or graphics and shows very little attempt at original thought.	
Spelling and Grammar	Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.	Presentation has 1-2 misspellings, but no grammatical errors.	Presentation has 1-2 grammatical errors but no misspellings.	Presentation has more than 2 grammatical and/or spelling errors.	
Use of Graphics	All graphics are attractive (size and colors) and support the theme/content of the presentation.	A few graphics are not attractive but all support the theme/content of the presentation.	All graphics are attractive but a few do not seem to support the theme/content of the presentation.	Several graphics are unattractive AND detract from the content of the presentation.	
Cooperation	Group delegates tasks and shares responsibility effectively all of the time.	Group delegates tasks and shares responsibility effectively most of the time.	Group delegates tasks and shares responsibility effectively some of the time.	Group often is not effective in delegating tasks and/or sharing responsibility.	
Sequencing of Information	Information is organized in a clear, logical way.	Most information is organized in a clear, logical way.	Some information is logically sequenced	There is no clear plan for the organization of information.	
Effectiveness Of Content	Information presented makes an excellent case for voting and should encourage new voters.	Information presented makes a good case for voting and should encourage new voters.	Information presented makes a case for voting but may fail to encourage new voters.	Information deals with voting but fails to create interest for new voters.	