

The background of the entire page is a close-up, slightly blurred image of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes. The stars are white on a dark blue field, and the stripes are red and white.

Election 2008

DCPS

Social Studies

Resource Guide

Dear Teacher,

Just a few years ago, I was an eighth grade student in my home state of Kentucky. It was a brand new school year, and also the year for a gubernatorial election. My teachers organized a mock election, with us eighth graders playing all the roles- candidates, platform writers, reporters, poll workers, etc. I don't even remember my role (platform writer, I think), but I do remember the result. After our entire middle school cast their ballots, one candidate prevailed by a single vote! Since then I have also forgotten who won our school-wide poll, but I have never forgotten a few simple lessons: politics are important, campaigns are exciting, and [every vote counts!](#)

In this spirit is offered our [DCPS Social Studies Resource Guide](#)- think of it as a book of matches to help you kindle the fire of learning this election year. You will find the [Election Vocabulary Lists for Teachers](#) divided into Basic, Intermediate and Advanced categories to help you meet your students' growing needs. Next you will find many [Web-Based Election Resources for Teachers](#), ranging from the simple word games in [Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids](#), to [270towin.com](#) which allows students to explore countless Electoral College scenarios (hanging chads not allowed!).

The [Sample Elections Activities for Teachers](#) are divided into K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. These have been culled from the web resources and other referenced sites, and are examples of the quality materials you will find as you explore. Finally the [Civics and Government Standards](#), divided by grade level, are provided for your reference and use. All of the resources in this guide have been collected from excellent and non-partisan sources, credited as appropriate.

We have all seen that famous photograph of young Bill Clinton shaking hands with John F. Kennedy, a moment of destiny captured. Who knows but that one of our students might find a similar moment this election year, and find themselves in the face of Biden, McCain, Obama, or Palin? Let's do our very best to prepare them for life of leadership or service, but above all - citizenship.

[Be Social! Be studious!](#)

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Election Vocabulary Lists for Teachers

- Basic Election Vocabulary
- Intermediate Election Vocabulary
- Advanced Election Vocabulary

Basic Election Vocabulary

Ballot

The list of candidates for all the offices in an election

Campaign

Events planned by someone running for office

Candidate

Someone who wants to be elected and is running for office

Democracy

A government run by the people, through free and frequent elections

Democratic Party

One of the two major political parties in the United States

Election

A decision-making process in which people choose who will hold political offices

Election Day

The first Tuesday after the first Monday in November

Issues

Things that people think are important and need action

Platform

A political party's goals

Political party

A group of voters who agree on many issues

Poll

A place where people vote; also, a collection of opinions on a subject

Republican Party

One of the two major political parties in the United States

Vote

A formal expression of opinion of the people on a proposal or candidate for office

Adapted from

Ann Fontanella, City College of San Francisco

<http://www.kqed.org/assets/pdf/education/digitalmedia/backtobasics.pdf>

Newspapers in Education

<http://www.nieonline.com/memphis/downloads/2008AllAboutElection.pdf>

Intermediate Election Vocabulary

Ballot Box

A receptacle for voters' ballots

Bias

A leaning in favor of or against something or someone; partiality or prejudice

Citizen

A native or naturalized member of a state or nation who owes allegiance to its government and is entitled to its protection

Campaign Chest

Money collected and set aside for use in a political campaign

Debate

Face-to-face discussion of candidates' views on issues

Federal

A union of states under a central government distinct from the individual governments of the separate states

G.O.P.

The Republican party, formerly known as the Grand Old Party

Grassroots

The involvement of common citizens in an issue or campaign

Hype

Slang for political ads (e.g. slick short TV commercials)

Incumbent

A person currently in office

Independent

A voter or candidate who does not belong to a political party

Landslide

An election in which a particular victorious candidate or party receives an overwhelming mass or majority of votes.

Media

The means of communication, such as radio, television, newspapers, and magazines, that reaches or influences people widely.

Mudslinging

Negative, often personal, frequently inaccurate, or exaggerated attacks of the opposition

Nominee

The person chosen by a political party to serve as its representative in a general election

National Conventions

A meeting held every four years by each of the major political parties to nominate a presidential candidate.

Non-partisan

An idea or person that does not support a specific party, cause, or candidate

Pollster

A person whose occupation is the taking of public-opinion polls

Primary

A meeting of the voters of a political party in an election district for nominating candidates for office and choosing delegates for a convention

Running Mate

A presidential candidate will choose another individual to run for vice-president. This person is the candidate's running mate.

Spin

The presentation of information that is biased to favor the candidates.

Adapted from

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/elections/vocabulary/2678.html?detoured=1>

Advanced Vocabulary**Absentee Voting**

A way people can vote when they can't get to their polling place. They vote on a special form and mail it in.

Balanced Budget

A balanced budget occurs when total revenues equal total outlays for a fiscal year.

Caucus

Meetings of party members within a legislative body to select leaders and determine strategy

Closed Primary

A primary in which voters can only vote for candidates in the party they are registered in. Prevents members of other parties from "crossing over" to influence the nomination of an opposing party's candidate

Congressional Districts (CD)

A political subdivision in which the nation is divided for the purposes of elected U.S. Representatives. Each district contains about 570,000 people.

Constituency

All of the voters in a particular district

Constituent

A person having the right to vote or elect; any of the voters represented by a particular official

Delegate

An individual who is appointed to represent others

Early Money

Money given to a campaign before or during the early presidential primaries. This money helps propel a campaign.

Electoral College

A body of electors chosen by the voters in each state to elect the President and Vice President of the U.S. The number of electors in each state is equal to its number of representatives in both houses of the U.S. Congress.

Exit Poll

A poll taken of a small percentage of voters as they leave the polls, used to forecast the outcome of an election or determine the reasons for voting decisions.

Franchise

The constitutional right to vote

General Elections

A regularly scheduled local, state, or national election in which voters elect officeholders

Gerrymander

The dividing of a state, county, etc., into election districts so as to give one political party a majority in many districts while concentrating the voting strength of the other party into as few districts as possible.

Gubernatorial Election

The selection of a governor by a state's voters

Initiative

A procedure by which a specified number of voters may propose a statute, constitutional amendment, or ordinance, and compel a popular vote on its adoption

Machine

An organized group of persons that conducts or controls the activities of a political party or organization

Matching Funds

Primary presidential candidates are eligible to receive dollar-for-dollar funds from the federal government that match the amount they have raised through their own efforts. They can receive matching funds only if they agree to limit their spending to \$37 million during the primaries.

Open Primary

A primary in which voters can vote for either party, regardless of which party they belong

Partisan

A supporter of a person, group, party, or cause, especially a person who shows a biased, emotional allegiance

Political Action Committee (PAC)

An organization of 50 or more people that is created to raise money for favored political candidates and is registered with the Federal Election Commission (FEC). A PAC may be formed by any group, including businesses, labor unions, and special interest bodies, and can donate up to \$5,000 per candidate per election.

Precinct

Also called election district. One of a fixed number of districts, each containing one polling place, into which a city, town, etc. is divided for voting purposes.

Runoff Primary

If no candidate gets a majority of the votes, a runoff is held to decide who should win.

Rhetoric

The ability to use language well to influence others

Soft Money

Funds raised by political parties directed toward party building and not directed toward supporting federal candidates.

Split-Ticket Voting

Voting for candidates of different parties for various offices in the same election. For example, voting for a republican for senator and a democrat for president.

Straight-Ticket Voting

Voting for candidates who are all of the same party. For example, voting for republican candidates for senator, representative, and president

Straw Poll

A nonofficial, nonscientific study of voter preferences in a presidential election

Stump Speech

A political campaign speech, especially one made on a campaign tour

War Chest

Money set aside or scheduled for a particular purpose or activity, like a campaign.

Whistle Stop

Campaigning for political office by traveling around the country, originally by train, stopping at small communities to address voters

Adapted from

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/elections/vocabulary/2678.html?detoured=1>

Web-Based Election Resources for Teachers

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- The Electoral College Web Page
- 270towin.com
- PBS "By the People, Election"
- PBS Kids Democracy Project
- New York Times
- The Constitutional Rights Foundation "Election Central"
- CNN Student News
- Scholastic: Online Activities
- The Lesson Plans Page
- A to Z Teacher Stuff

Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids

<http://bensguide.gpo.gov/index.html>

Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids is brought to the World Wide Web as a service of the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO). This site provides learning tools for K-12 students, parents, and teachers. These resources will teach how our government works, the use of the primary source materials of *GPO Access*, and how one can use *GPO Access* to carry out their civic responsibilities. And, just as *GPO Access* provides locator services to U.S. Government sites, Ben's Guide provides a similar service to U.S. Government Web sites developed for kids.

The Federal Election Commission

<http://www.fec.gov>

The duties of the Federal Election Commission (FEC) which is an independent regulatory agency, are to disclose campaign finance information, to enforce the provisions of the law such as the limits and prohibitions on contributions, and to oversee the public funding of presidential elections. The website provides information on the following:

- Supporting candidates
- Campaign finance laws
- Voter registration
- The Electoral College

The Electoral College Web Page

http://www.archives.gov/federal_register/electoral_college

The Office of the Federal Register coordinates the functions of the Electoral College on behalf of the Archivist of the United States, the states, the Congress, and the American people. The office has Sample

270towin.com

<http://www.270towin.com>

270towin.com is an interactive Electoral College map for 2008 and a history of Presidential elections in the United States. Since electoral votes are generally allocated on an "all or none" basis by state, the election of a U.S President is about winning the popular vote in enough states to achieve 270 electoral votes, a majority of the 538 that are available. It is not about getting the most overall popular votes, as we saw in the 2000 election, when the electoral vote winner (Bush) and the popular vote winner (Gore) were different.

PBS "By the People, Election"

<http://www.pbs.org/elections/kids/educators.html>

PBS has developed a website dedicated to teaching about elections. Resources include a glossary of commonly used election terms, a calendar of election-related events and sample lesson plans that are available for integration into the classroom.

PBS Kids Democracy Project

<http://www.pbs.org/democracy/kids/>

The PBS Kids Democracy Project site was designed to be a useful, fun addition to the classroom during the election year and beyond. The activities and lesson plans on the site have been designed with the following goals in mind:

- To introduce the structure and duties of local, state and federal government
- To facilitate the understanding of how government affects our everyday lives, through laws, institutions and services provided in the community
- To identify the duties of the U.S. president and encourage critical thinking about the skills necessary to be a good president
- To facilitate understanding of the history of voting rights in America, and articulate how voting and other forms of civic involvement are essential to a healthy democracy

New York Times

<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/elections.html>

The Learning Network has developed lesson plan units that use recent New York Times articles as springboards for examining important curricular topics in interesting and exciting ways. Use these lessons in your classroom or share them with teachers in other content areas to collaborate on interdisciplinary units. The lessons are listed in reverse chronological order, from the most recent to the least recent, based on the date on which they were published on the Learning Network.

The Constitutional Rights Foundation “Election Central”

http://www.crf-usa.org/election_central/election_links.htm

Constitutional Rights Foundation is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, community-based organization dedicated to educating America's young people about the importance of civic participation in a democratic society. For the election they have developed *Election Central*, an online resource that helps teachers and students explore the electoral process in the past and present in the United States and around the world.

Resources include:

- Broadcast News
- Newspapers
- Polls
- Encyclopedias & Almanacs
- Fact Checking

CNN Student News

<http://www.cnnstudentnews.cnn.com/fyi/>

CNN has developed a website geared toward students and teachers that allows them to gain knowledge about events occurring in the world with integrated lesson plans to enhance understanding and comprehension of the topics. Additionally, there are links to specific election web pages as well as a lesson on understanding the Electoral College process, which can be found at

<http://www.cnn.com/fyi/interactive/news/10/election.special/teachers/bg.6.html>

Scholastic: Online Activities

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/indepth/election2008.htm>

Scholastic, committed to understanding the needs and feelings of children, celebrating their hopes and dreams, and supporting parents and teachers by being the most trusted name in learning, has developed a website to attract the attention and gain the interest of young students as the 2004 presidential election approaches.

The Lesson Plans Page

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/>

The Lesson Plans Page is a collection of over 2,000 lesson plans, designed primarily for the elementary level, that were developed by Kyle Yamnitz, students, and faculty at The University of Missouri. More recent lesson plans were submitted by the users of the website. Launched in October of 1996, *The Lesson Plans Page* was developed to assist educators of all types from elementary school to college. Specific lessons from this website that correlate with the election year are:

- Candidates on the Road: <http://www.lessonplanspage.com/Campaignlesson2.htm>
- Classroom Campaigns:
<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/ssClassroomCampaigns.htm>
- Covering the Campaign:
<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/ssCoveringCampaign.htm>

A to Z Teacher Stuff

<http://www.atozteacherstuff.com>

A to Z Teacher Stuff is created by teachers, and designed to help teachers find online resources more quickly and easily. The website offers lesson plans, thematic units, teacher tips, teacher discussion forums, downloadable teaching materials, printable pages, themes, and more. Additionally there are lessons geared directly toward the upcoming election. Go to <http://www.atozteacherstuff.com/go/jump2.cgi?ID=1026> to find lessons on topics such as:

- The Electoral College
- Election Scavenger Hunt
- Election Results Map
- Picture This: Election Results Graphs

Sample Elections Activities for Teachers

K-5

The Great Seal

Students will learn the history and symbolic meaning of the Presidential Seal

The White House

Students learn the history and structure of the White House

The Presidential Election Process

Students will understand that presidential elections are decided by the Electoral College and not popular votes.

6-8

Back to Basics

Students are introduced to basic terminology and background information about elections and voting in the United States.

Making Choices

Students consider how we form opinions about political issues, parties, and candidates and compare some of the positions of the two presidential contenders

9-12

Evaluating Political Candidates

Students identify which one of ten anonymous but authentic candidates is the best qualified and which one is the least qualified to be the president of your country

Access, Analyze, Act

Students discover the power of social media while promoting civic engagement.



The Great Seal

On July 4, 1776, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson were given the task of creating a seal for the United States of America. The delegates of the Constitutional Convention believed an emblem and national coat of arms would declare to the world that the U.S. was an independent nation and had a free people with high hopes for the future. The Great Seal was finalized and approved six years later on June 20, 1782. The seal reflects the beliefs and values that the Founding Fathers wanted to pass on to their descendants.

In the center of the seal is a bald eagle, the national bird. It holds in its beak a scroll inscribed *E pluribus unum*, which is Latin meaning "out of many, one" and stands for one nation that was created from 13 colonies. In one claw is an olive branch, while the other holds a bundle of thirteen arrows. The olive branch and arrows "denote the power of peace and war."

A shield with thirteen red and white stripes covers the eagle's breast. The shield is supported solely by the American eagle to denote that Americans should rely on their own virtue. The red and white stripes of the shield represent the states united under and supporting the blue, representing the president and Congress. The color white signifies purity; red, bravery; and blue, justice. Above the eagle's head is a cloud surrounding a blue field containing thirteen stars, which forms a constellation. The constellation denotes that a new state is taking its place among other nations.

The Great Seal

Do you see a pattern of thirteen in the Great Seal? There are 6 in all. Can you find them all?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Why thirteen? Thirteen represents the first thirteen states. Can you name the original thirteen states?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____



The Great Seal Key

Do you see a pattern of thirteen in the Great Seal? There are 6 in all. Can you find them all?

1. 13 stars in the crest above the eagle
2. 13 arrows in the eagle's left claw
3. 13 olives in the eagles' right claw
4. 13 stripes in the shield upon the eagle's breast
5. 13 leaves in the eagles' right claw
6. 13 letters in the motto carried by the eagle, E Pluribus Unum

Why thirteen? Thirteen represents the first thirteen states. Can you name the original thirteen states?

1. Massachusetts
2. Connecticut
3. Rhode Island
4. New Hampshire
5. New York
6. New Jersey
7. Pennsylvania
8. Delaware
9. Virginia
10. Maryland
11. North Carolina
12. South Carolina
13. Georgia

White House



Located at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C., the White House is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the country. Completed in 1800, the White House has been the official residence of all the Presidents of the United States with the exception of George Washington. The house was rebuilt and restored after it was burned by the British during the War of 1812.

The White House has six floors--two basements, two public floors, and two floors for the First Family. Visitors who tour the White House are able to see the most beautiful and historic rooms in the house including the East Room, Green Room, Blue Room, Red Room, and the State Dining Room. These rooms are used by the President and First Lady to entertain guests and to receive leaders of other countries. The Oval Office is where the President conducts the business of the country, such as signing bills and Executive Orders and meeting with staff, visitors, and guests.

White House Scramble

Directions: Based on what you read about the White House, unscramble the words below. Some boxes are marked by a number. Use these numbers to reveal the mystery word.

TESERDPIN
2

CEVTUXEIE
8

FRSIT DALY

VALO
FIEFOC 3

LUEB MOOR
7 4

FAOCILIF
NERIDSECE
5

TANGWSINOH
6 10 1

NIPVYALANSEN
VAENUE 9

Mystery Word:
1 2 3 4 1 5 6 7 8 9 10

The Presidential Election Process

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/elections/lesson-plan/3246.html?detoured=1>

INTRODUCTION

Students will understand that presidential elections are decided by the Electoral College and not popular votes.

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOWANCE

50 minutes

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Understand that elections are decided by the Electoral College.
- See that each state has a number of electors, and understand how this number is determined.
- Examine election trends.

MATERIALS

- Crayons or colored pencils
- Copies of U.S. map
- Website: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/index.html>

PROCEDURES

- Ask if the students have heard of the Electoral College. If so, can anyone explain it? (The Electoral College is technically responsible for electing the president.) Explain that each state has a particular number of electors, their numbers determined by how many senators and representatives a state has. On Election Day, as presidential candidates "win" a particular state by accumulating the most votes, they are awarded the number of delegates from that state. The candidate with the highest number of electoral votes wins the election. In December, the electors hold their own election to vote formally for President. The winning candidate will have at least half the electoral votes – or 270 delegates. (For a more thorough explanation of the Electoral College, see <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/about.html>.)

- Have pairs of students look at the *List of States and Votes* on the National Archives and Records Administration site on the Electoral College's website: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/2004/allocation.html>. Ask a student to name a state that is physically large, and then note the number of electoral votes. Try another state. By looking at California and Montana, for example, students will see that the physical size of a state does not correlate with its number of electoral votes. Why do they think this is? (Answer: Votes correspond to population, not size.)
- Distribute a U.S. map to each pair and have students use the numbers from the National Archives website to fill in the number of delegates in each state on their map, using pencil or black ink.
- Assign recent election years, starting with 2004 and moving back in time, to the pairs and direct them to the *Electoral Votes by State* section of the site (<http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/historical.html>). As a class, choose colors to represent republicans, democrats, and third-party candidates. Then have the students color in the states in pencil or crayon to show whether the electoral votes went republican or democrat for their year.
- Hang the maps on the wall in chronological order. Identify and discuss voting trends and shifts in those trends over time, including regional differences. Has the South, for example, traditionally voted with a certain party? What do the students think the current presidential candidates might anticipate by way of votes? If they were running for president, would they spend more time in states that had traditionally voted for them or against them? Why?

ASSESSMENT

- Have student-pairs trade maps to check each other's work.

BACK TO BASICS: The 2008 Presidential Election

<http://www.kqed.org/assets/pdf/education/digitalmedia/backtobasics.pdf>

Overview

In this lesson, students are introduced to basic terminology and background information about elections and voting in the United States. They will learn about the electoral process, the 2008 presidential election and the different issues in the campaign, comparing the policies of different parties and candidates on the issues they have chosen as being of key importance to them.

Objectives

Students will:

- Identify the elements of the election process.
- Explore print and electronic media for information.
- Read graphs/charts and analyze statistics.
- Examine different parties, candidates and issues.
- Conduct surveys inside and outside the classroom.
- Present findings in pairs and small groups to the class.

Length

Two 90-minute lessons

Materials

- Rock the Vote at www.rockthevote.com
- Research program at www.rockthevote.com/research/
- CIRCLE (the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) promotes research on the civic and political engagement of Americans between the ages of 15 and 25 at www.civicyouth.org

Day One

1 Warm-up

As a class, students will define the term democracy. Write the two roots of the word (demo-crazy) on the board and ask the class for the meaning of each part.

The instructor will check for understanding and provide the meaning/origin if necessary. With a partner, the students will then discuss the following questions:

- What does democracy mean to you?
- What makes democracy work?
- What is the democratic process in the United States?

Elicit responses from students and list answers on the board.

2 Vocabulary

Assign a brief vocabulary exercise to the class. Ask students to write a brief definition of each word. They can then scan the vocabulary list to check their definitions. (See Election Vocabulary Lists for Teachers in this guide.)

Term	Meaning
Ballot	
Candidate	
Election	
Party	
Polls	
Polling place	
Voter turnout	

3 Background Knowledge

To ascertain students' general level of knowledge, ask them to take a brief quiz about voting in the United States. Then direct them to work in small groups to compare their answers.

- Who is eligible to vote?
- What are the two different ways to vote?
- When are election days?
- What are some different political parties?
- Which are the main political parties?
- How long is the presidential term?
- Who is eligible to run for president?

4 Free-Writing

For 10 minutes, students should write about the reasons people vote in a presidential election. Encourage them to share their writing with a partner. Invite students to report back to the whole class. Write the reasons they came up with on the board.

5 Sentence Structure

In small groups or pairs, the students will present key election issues using these different patterns:

An important issue for me is _____.

The most pressing issue for me is _____.

What especially concerns me is _____.

I am very concerned about _____.

Example: What especially concerns me is feeling safe on the streets.

Day Two

1 Statistical Analysis

Ask the class to guess the percentage of voter turnout in the last presidential election, broken down as follows: the percentage for the nation as a whole, for the state and for the city. Provide the actual statistics for students to examine and then to discuss in terms of their reaction to the percentages and possible explanation for these numbers. Statistics can be obtained from www.rockthevote.com/research/.

REASONS FOR LOW VOTER TURNOUT

Reason 1	
Reason 2	
Reason 3	
Reason 4	

3 Discussion

With a partner or in small groups, ask the students to discuss the following questions:

- Why do people vote in elections?
- How do people choose a party?
- How do people choose a candidate?
- What are some important issues today?
- What would motivate you to vote?

4 Survey

Ask students to look at the list of issues and put a check in front of the five issues that most concern them. Students will move around the classroom to compare their answers. Tally the students' responses and write the top five issues on the board.

ELECTION ISSUES

1. ___ The national economy
2. ___ Health care
3. ___ Quality education
4. ___ A cleaner environment
5. ___ Consumer safety
6. ___ The crime rate
7. ___ Government spending
8. ___ Increasing the minimum wage
9. ___ Immigration policy
10. ___ Other _____

5 Free-Writing

For 10 to 15 minutes, students should write about one issue that especially speaks to them. Encourage them to share their writing with a partner. Invite students to report back to the whole class and write responses on the board.

6 Analysis

Have students use the Easy Voter Guide to learn about the different political parties and their candidates, and then invite them to examine the information provided in the charts. Ask them to determine which party best represents their individual priorities and to find a candidate who best reflects their views. They should then compare their choices with a partner and discuss their discoveries, thoughts, reactions and questions.

Homework Assignment

Encourage students to visit the websites of the political parties and candidates they would like to explore and present their findings in class at the next meeting.

Making Choices: An Exploration of Political Preferences

<http://static.ncss.org/files/publications/MakingChoicesMLL.pdf>

OBJECTIVES

- To consider how we form opinions about political issues, parties, and candidates
- To have students compare some of the positions of the two presidential contenders
- To practice discussing the issues and the candidates in a civil and thoughtful manner

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOWANCE

Two 50 minute periods

MATERIALS

- Food items listed in Table 1
- Sentence strips from Table 2

PROCEDURES

1. Anticipatory Set

In this "Making Choices" anticipatory set, the teacher places a sign labeled "A" on one table, and one labeled "B" on another. He explains, *"After I place a food item on each table, you must silently determine which of the two items you prefer and then walk to the appropriate side of the room, closer to table A or table B, to show your preference."* He places the first set of items (canned corn on table A and canned green beans on table B) and invites students to stand up and "vote with their feet." Students congregate on the two sides of the room. Now it gets tougher for the students.

Table 1: Choices on the Table

This is a suggested list of foods for the anticipatory set.
The teacher places items on the tables in the order shown.

Table A	Table B
1. Canned corn	Canned green beans
2. BBQ chips	Nacho chips
3. Apple pie	Brownie
4. Cola	Diet cola
5. Oatmeal	Sweetened cereal
6. Coffee	Hot chocolate
7. Spam	Peanut butter



The teacher explains, "As I place new items on tables A and B, you must silently decide which food set you prefer as a whole. Your deliberations should include not only the most recently placed item, but the whole collection on each table. Once you have made your decision, walk to the appropriate side of the room. I may call upon you to explain your decision."

The teacher continues adding items to each table, pausing as students re-evaluate their position and choose a preferred side on the basis of all the items now on the tables. Students pause to think, then cross the room or stand still to indicate their "new position." When students stop moving, the teacher may call on an individual student and ask, "Why did you 'stand your ground' and not move at this time?" (Or, to a different student) "Why did you change our mind and move to the other side?"

This activity works best if the first items placed on the tables are foods that students will likely be willing to give up, and the last ones are foods that students likely either love or hate (Table 1). The idea is to set out the items so that most students will feel compelled to change sides at some point. The goal should be to encourage deliberation over items, but in the end, most students should have a strong sense of conviction toward one particular table.

The teacher asks open-ended and probing questions to encourage students to think carefully as they indicate their shifting but deliberate preference:

- "Why are you continuing to stay on this side?"
- "Why are you switching to a different side?"
- "Why haven't you moved even though I have placed two new items on each table?"
- "Why did you switch to this side when I put oatmeal on table A?"
- "Do you like Spam? If not, why did you stay on this side even though you don't like it?"

The teacher continues at a thoughtful pace until all items are "on the table," and all students have chosen a final side. The teacher now leads the students in reflecting on the activity, posing questions to initiate discussion and help students make connections between their decision-making process in the activity and more complex choices that a person might make about political issues.

2. Reflecting on the Activity

While the class is still standing near their preferred table, the teacher asks questions about what just happened, and why.

- "Raise your hand if you stayed at one table throughout the entire activity."
- "(To these students, he asks) Is there one particular item that kept you at your preferred table?"
- "Among those of you who moved back and forth a lot, what item helped you make your final decision?"
- "If the item you like most was placed on the other table, would you move to that side? Explain."
- "What item do you dislike the most on the other table? If this item were placed on your side, would you switch to the other table? Why or why not?"

The teacher tells everyone to return to his or her desk and then asks questions that invite students to make a mental leap toward thinking creatively about a citizen's political decision making.

- "Think about how deciding on a preferred table of food items might be related to a citizen's choices in the voting booth. For example, there seemed to be only a few students who loved all of the items on one table, or completely disliked all items on the other table. How can we relate this situation to voters and political parties?"

Possible connections that students might make during the ensuing discussion include how each item could relate to a specific political issue, including issues that are controversial. Explain to students that political parties have official stated positions on various issues that are described in an official document called a "party platform." The individual positions are "planks" in the "platform," which the two major parties vote on every four years at their presidential conventions.

A discussion of students' individual choices during the focus activity can be connected to how people often choose their political parties according to how the parties stand on various public policy issues. For example, sometimes voters feel so strongly about one issue that they will change their party affiliation based on it.

This discussion can be rather freewheeling and creative. Analogies that students might make between themselves and adult voters, and between food items and policy positions, do not have to be carefully reasoned or particularly realistic. The point is to get students thinking about various factors and forces that can be involved when citizens make political decisions - and excited about the prospect of learning more.

3. Examining Candidates' Positions

The focusing event described above can set the stage for a lesson that introduces new concepts and terms related to political parties in the past or present; assesses students' initial ideas and opinions; grapples with current political issues; and/or analyzes candidates' positions (or party platforms) on various issues. In our second lesson, the teacher segues into a discussion about how people seek to match their own opinions with a candidate's positions before voting. The teacher leads a discussion to assess students' prior knowledge. He asks students to brainstorm a list of contemporary issues that are important to everyone in the United States, as well as issues that are especially interesting to young people. (Sidebar 1). The teacher encourages students to give reasons for listing specific issues as important. He asks students to rank the issues from the most to the least important, in their own view. The teacher then asks some questions:

- "What are the main political parties in the United States?"
- "What do you know about the major positions of each party?"
- "Where does each party stand on issues that you listed as important?"
- "And how can you find that out?"

Sidebar 1. Seventh Graders' Sampling of Current Issues

Civil rights	Health Care
Crime	Homeland Security
Defense	Immigration
The economy	Intelligent design
Education	Kyoto protocols
Energy policies	Oil drilling in protected areas
Faith-based initiatives	Patriot Act
Farm policies	School accountability
Finance reform	Social programs
Foreign policy	Social Security
Free Trade	Taxes
Global Warming	War in Iraq
Gun control	Women's Rights

The teacher introduces the next part of the lesson, which is comparing some of the policy positions of the major candidates for president (Table 2). In preparation for this lesson, the teacher has made stacks of "sentence strips" that contain individual position statements, but do not reveal the author.

The teacher now instructs the students to

- "Create a T-chart by folding a blank sheet of paper in half and labeling one half "Democrat" and the other "Republican."
- "Take one "sentence strip" as the stack is passed around and read it."
- "From what you know about the candidates and the political parties, guess which candidate holds this position."

The teacher then calls on individual students to read aloud and place (the teacher's copy of) the sentence strip in the appropriate column on a large T-chart displayed on the front board. He gives clues to any student who seems unsure of what the correct placement might be. The teacher then asks the class to give a "thumbs up or down" to indicate whether students think the statement has been placed with the correct candidate and political party. The teacher clarifies the correct answer. The students construct the T-chart on their desks, statement by statement, until the chart is complete. Students with little prior knowledge may need more prompts from the teacher throughout the activity. The chart-making activity can be a spark that inspires interesting discussions.

Take time for students to speak their opinions and observations. Ask them to state their source of information: Have they learned about the candidates by listening to their parents' conversations? Watching television? Reading Internet sites? Talking with friends? Once the T-chart is correctly completed, the teacher can introduce students to the website procon.org, a nonprofit organization that presents the major candidates' various positions (in a "pro" and "con" format) on its well organized website. Students can check it out as an extension activity. The website is the source of the information for the sentence strips.

*Note: As this went to press, it was unclear whether Senator Hillary Clinton or Senator Barack Obama would be the Democratic Party's final presidential candidate. Thus, we have provided samples from all **three** presidential hopefuls.*

4. Making a Choice

At this point, the teacher recalls for the class the process of choosing table A or B during the focusing event. He asks students to remember how they ranked various public policy issues earlier in the lesson. Then the teacher addresses the class:

- "Place a check mark beside the statements you agree with on your T-chart."
- "Which issues did you consider to be the most important?"
- "To what extent do the candidates' positions line up with your opinions?"
- "Do you feel ready to choose one candidate over the other?"
- "Is it difficult to choose a particular candidate? Why or why not?"
- "How is the process of choosing a candidate similar to the process you went through in the focusing event? How is it different?"

A writing assignment can serve as an assessment of learning. For example, students can describe various policy issues and give their opinions about the importance of each. As a possible extension activity, students can research the candidates' positions on various issues with the use of the ProCon website, candidates' websites, and other sources.

Table 2. Candidates' Positions on Some Major Issues

As compiled by ProCon.org on March 19, 2008.

<p>cut</p> <p>Hillary Clinton, Democrat</p> <p>cut</p>	<p>cut</p> <p>PRO</p>	<p>Should all Americans have a right to government or employer subsidized basic health care?</p> <p>Under my plan, we won't require small businesses to cover employees. Instead we will provide tax credits to ensure that many of them do. These tax credits will be based on size and average wages, so that small businesses can provide health care without destroying their bottom line... Government also needs to do its part to promote shared responsibility. Under my plan, the government will provide tax-credits to insure that every single American can afford health insurance."</p> <p>cut</p>
<p>cut</p> <p>John McCain Republican</p> <p>cut</p>	<p>CON</p>	<p>Should all Americans have a right to government or employer subsidized basic health care?</p> <p>America has the highest quality health care in the world. Our job is to preserve it. Our job is to keep the costs down. Last year, the Medicaid inflation was 10 percent. ... No program in the world can survive under that. So of course we want to remove the employer ... tax, and tax incentives, and move it to the individual. Give the individual a \$2,500 refundable tax credit, a family a \$5,000 tax credit.</p> <p>cut</p>
<p>cut</p> <p>Barack Obama Democrat</p> <p>cut</p>	<p>cut</p> <p>PRO</p>	<p>Should all Americans have a right to government or employer subsidized basic health care?</p> <p>I believe that the millions of Americans who can't take their children to a doctor when they get sick have that right. ... If you already have health insurance, the only thing that will change for you under this plan is the amount of money you will spend on premiums. That will be less... [W]e will ask all but the smallest businesses who don't make a meaningful contribution today to the health coverage of their employees to do so by supporting this new plan.</p> <p>cut</p>
<p>cut</p> <p>Hillary Clinton Democrat</p> <p>cut</p>	<p>PRO*</p>	<p>Are humans substantially responsible for global climate change today?</p> <p>[T]he President [George W. Bush] and Vice President [Dick Cheney] refuse to admit that there were any human contributions to global climate change. There are climatic changes that are so-called natural, but we have so changed the atmosphere that it has a ripple effect... Yes, there are natural reasons why the climate may get warmer but we put so much CO₂ into the atmosphere that that changes the natural forces...</p> <p>cut</p>
<p>cut</p> <p>John McCain Republican</p> <p>cut</p>	<p>cut</p> <p>Not clearly PRO or CON</p>	<p>Are humans substantially responsible for global climate change today?</p> <p>I also believe that strengthening our energy security goes hand-in-hand with addressing global climate change, which I believe is real with human activity contributing to the buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.</p> <p>cut</p>
<p>Barack Obama Democrat</p>	<p>PRO</p>	<p>Are humans substantially responsible for global climate change today?</p> <p>Global warming is real, is happening now and is the result of human activities. The number of Category 4 and 5 hurricanes has almost doubled in the last 30 years. Glaciers are melting faster; the polar ice caps are shrinking; trees are blooming earlier; oceans are becoming more acidic, threatening marine life; people are dying in heat waves; species are migrating, and eventually many will become extinct.</p>

*Note: The ProCon.org website lists Sen. Clinton's position as "Not Clearly Pro or Con" on this issue on 3/19/08.

Table 2 Continued. **Candidates' Positions on Some Major Issues**

<p>Hillary Clinton Democrat</p>	<p><i>cut</i></p> <p>Has changed from CON to PRO</p>	<p>Should the U.S. set a timetable for troop withdrawal in Iraq? (Con) It is time for the President to stop serving up platitudes and present us with a plan for finishing this war with success and honor—not a rigid timetable that terrorists can exploit, but a public plan for winning and concluding the war.—Nov. 29, 2005</p> <p>(Pro) The Secretary of Defense should commence the redeployment of the Armed Forces from Iraq not later than October 1, 2007, with a goal of completing such redeployment within 180 days.—Apr. 26, 2007</p>
<p>John McCain Republican</p>	<p><i>cut</i></p> <p>CON</p>	<p>Should the U.S. set a timetable for troop withdrawal in Iraq? Young men and women are risking their lives as we speak in Iraq. And I know that they will be in greater harm's way if we withdraw from Iraq, as we keep debating over and over and over again. ... I understand that if the American people don't continue to support this effort that we will be forced to withdraw. But it's also my obligation to tell the American people and my constituents in Arizona that I represent, what the consequences of failure will be; and I believe they will be catastrophic.</p>
<p>Barack Obama Democrat</p>	<p><i>cut</i></p> <p>PRO</p>	<p>Should the U.S. set a timetable for troop withdrawal in Iraq? The first part of this strategy [in Iraq] begins by exerting the greatest leverage we have on the Iraqi government—a phased redeployment of U.S. troops from Iraq on a timetable that would begin in four to six months. ... For only through this phased redeployment can we send a clear message to the Iraqi factions that the U.S. is not going to hold together this country indefinitely—that it will be up to them to form a viable government that can effectively run and secure Iraq.</p>
<p>Hillary Clinton Democrat</p>	<p><i>cut</i></p> <p>PRO</p>	<p>Are more federal regulations on guns and ammunition needed? I remember very well when I accompanied Bill to Columbine after that massacre and met with the family members of those who had been killed and talked with the students, and feeling that we had to do more to try to keep guns out of the hands of the criminal and of the mentally unstable.</p>
<p>John McCain Republican</p>	<p><i>cut</i></p> <p>CON</p>	<p>Are more federal regulations on guns and ammunition needed? John McCain believes that banning ammunition is just another way to undermine Second Amendment rights. He voted against an amendment that would have banned many of the most commonly used hunting cartridges on the spurious grounds that they were "armor-piercing."</p>
<p>Barack Obama Democrat</p>	<p><i>cut</i></p> <p>Not clearly PRO or CON</p>	<p>Are more federal regulations on guns and ammunition needed? I'm a strong believer in the rights of hunters and sportsmen to have firearms. I'm a believer in homeowners having a firearm to protect their home and their family. It's hard for me to find a rationale for a 19-clip semi-automatic. I said at a forum earlier this week, "If you need 19 rounds to shoot a deer, you probably shouldn't be hunting," and so that I think is something that we should be able to have a reasonable conversation about.</p>

Evaluating Political Candidates

Courtesy Florida Law Related Education Association

Overview

In this activity you are asked to identify which one of the ten candidates is the best qualified and which one is the least qualified to be the president of your country. The biographical data on the candidates are presented in the **Candidate's Biographical Data Handout**. All of the candidates are (or were) real people. To ensure that the candidates are judged on their qualifications – and not your prior knowledge of them – their names and genders have been omitted.

Procedure

Phase One and Phase Two should be done with the entire class. Phase Three is an individual and small group activity.

Phase One

Ask students to list the constitutional qualifications to be President of the United States. What are the constitutional duties of the President? Provide pocket constitutions to document provisions. Discuss. Ask students what else they consider important factors in selecting the best person to be President. List and review.

Phase Two

Ask specifically about each of the following characteristics and discuss whether or not they should be considered in selecting a presidential candidate.

Age	Previous Occupation	Religion
Physical Health	Gender	Marital Status
Education	Ethnicity	Character
Personality	Number of Children	Personal Appearance

Phase Three

Provide **Candidate's Biographical Data Handout**. Ask students to review individually and not to discuss. Use the data provided to have each person select the two individuals, one of whom you feel would be best qualified and the other least qualified to be president. [Note: "Age as of this date" in the data refers to the point in each candidate's career at which he or she had accomplished all the activities listed in the data. For the candidates that actually served as president, the date used was just prior to their election to office.]

Phase Four

Assign students to groups of five. As a group, come to a consensus on the best qualified presidential candidate and the least qualified. Have each group write their number for each candidate on the board. Discuss reasoning of each group and what factors went into their decision making process.

Extending Activities

Examine the candidates' identities. Would you change your selection? Why or why not? Does the new information influence your conclusions about the necessary qualifications?

Do your qualifications reflect the beliefs of most individuals in your community? In your class? Identify a plan for determining how you could find out.

Candidate's Biographical Data Handout Key

Candidate 1 = Mitt Romney

Candidate 2 = Martin Luther King, Jr.

Candidate 3 = Eleanor Roosevelt

Candidate 4 = Barack Obama

Candidate 5 = John McCain

Candidate 6 = Franklin D. Roosevelt

Candidate 7 = Arnold Schwarzenegger

Candidate 8 = Condeleezza Rice

Candidate 9 = George W. Bush

Candidate 10 = Hillary Clinton

Candidate's Biographical Data Handout

Candidate 1

Colleges Attended: Brigham Young University (valedictorian) B.A., Harvard University J.D./M.B.A.

Religion: Mormon

Career (Major Occupations): Bishop, Lawyer, Investor, CEO, Governor

Married: 39 years **Children:** 5 **Age as of this date:** 60

Candidate 2

Colleges Attended: Morehouse College, B.A. and L.H.D.; Crozer Theological Seminary, B.D.; University of Pennsylvania; Boston University, Ph.D., D.D.; Harvard University, L.L.D.; Central State College; Morgan State College

Religion: Protestant

Career (Major Occupations): Protestant Minister, Teacher of Philosophy at Harvard, President of a civil rights organization, 1 of 10 outstanding men of the year according to *Time* magazine, Nobel Prize winner, Noted public speaker

Married: 15 years **Children:** 4 **Age as of this date:** 37

Special Note: Arrested on numerous occasions

Candidate 3

Colleges Attended: None (private secondary school in England)

Religion: Protestant

Career (Major Occupations): Teacher, Journalist, Member of a labor union, Delegate to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Endorsed by a president for the Nobel Peace Prize, Noted public speaker

Married: 27 years **Children:** 6 **Age as of this date:** 65

Candidate 4

Colleges Attended: Columbia University B.A., Harvard University J.D.

Religion: Christian

Career (Major Occupations): Community Organizer, University lecturer, Civil rights lawyer, Author, State Senator

Married: 12 years **Children:** 2 **Age as of this date:** 43

Candidate 5

Colleges Attended: U.S. Naval Academy, National War College

Religion: Episcopalian

Career (Major Occupations): U.S. House of Representatives, Naval Aviator, U.S. Senate, Served in Vietnam War

Married: 28 years, 2nd marriage **Children:** 4 **Age as of this date:** 71
Special Note: Prisoner of War, Silver Star, Bronze Star, Legion of Merit, Purple Heart, Distinguished Flying Cross

Candidate 6

Colleges Attended: Harvard University B.A., Columbia University J.D.
Religion: Protestant
Career (Major Occupations): Farmer, Lawyer, State Senator, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Governor, Vice-Presidential candidate
Married: 27 years **Children:** 6 **Age as of this date:** 50

Candidate 7

Colleges Attended: University of Wisconsin, B.A.
Religion: Roman Catholic
Career (Major Occupations): Army officer, World-Class Athlete, Actor, Governor
Married: 21 years **Children:** 4 **Age as of this date:** 60
Special Note: Naturalized Citizen of the USA

Candidate 8

Colleges Attended: University of Denver B.S., University of Notre Dame M.S., Ph.D.
Religion: Presbyterian
Career (Major Occupations): University Professor, University Provost, Diplomat, Ranked among most influential people in the World by *Time* Magazine
Married: No **Children:** n/a **Age as of this date:** 48

Candidate 9

Colleges Attended: Yale University B.A., Harvard University M.B.A.
Religion: United Methodist
Career (Major Occupations): Member of the Air National Guard, Energy Investor, Sports Team Owner, Governor
Married: 21 years **Children:** 2 **Age as of this date:** 52
Special Note: Arrested for D.U.I.

Candidate 10

Colleges Attended: Wellesley College B.S., Yale University J.D.
Religion: United Methodist
Career (Major Occupations): Attorney, University professor, Co-founded children's advocacy group, Author, U.S. Senator
Married: 30 years **Children:** 1 **Age as of this date:** 57

Access, Analyze, Act

<http://www.pbs.org/teachers/vote2008/blueprint/index.html>

This suite of lesson plans and activities is designed by PBS to let teachers and students explore the power of social networking while participating in the civic process. Click on the link above to see interactive explanations of these plans activities.

Access

These lessons are designed to engage and motivate students' interest in the political process and social media tools.

 [1.1 Lesson Plan](#) (255 KB pdf)

Students create their own blogs, which they can use throughout the lessons in this guide – and beyond – to share their views on political issues, candidates and campaigns; post original content; link to and embed election-related media; develop a network of interested commentators and activists; and reflect upon their learning.

 [1.2 Lesson Plan](#) (360 KB pdf)

Students read about civic engagement and take an interactive quiz that measures their political personalities. They then discuss their quiz results and the different ways that people participate in the process of citizenship. Finally, students reflect on their learning on their blogs.

 [1.3 Lesson Plan](#) (536 KB pdf)

Students compare people's knowledge of celebrities to their knowledge of politicians, learn about their local, state and national representatives, and recognize important links between political issues and their everyday lives. They then gather information about the views of their Congressional representative(s) as they relate to political issues that affect them.

Analyze

These lessons are designed to engage students in critique and evaluation of various types of media messages using key concepts of media literacy.

 [2.1 Lesson Plan](#) (555 KB pdf)

Students explore how media technologies have played a role in presidential campaigns throughout history. They research how media has been used in the 2000, 2004 and 2008 elections. After identifying key events and compiling information, photos, and videos illustrating media use during these campaign years, students create timelines using an online timeline tool.

 [2.2 Lesson Plan](#) (209 KB pdf)

Students learn about six genres of political discourse in the media and three persuasive appeals based on Aristotle's classical rhetoric. They then find and analyze examples of the genres and persuasive techniques on the Web sites of the 2008 presidential candidates.

 [2.3 Lesson Plan](#) (372 KB pdf)

Students learn about the political process by exploring various formats of radio programming. They explore election-related issues and evaluate the authority and authenticity of various types of programming.

 [2.4 Lesson Plan](#) (698 KB pdf)

Students use an online devil's advocate tool to expand their thinking about key issues in the 2008 election. Students learn how people interpret issues differently, identify persuasive techniques, and determine what information is missing. In the process, they build critical thinking skills and background knowledge about the issues.

Act

These lessons are designed to help students explore the ways in which they can take action on political and social issues using social media tools.

 [3.1 Read & Discuss](#) (199 KB pdf)

Students read about the participation gap among young people in the political process and learn about the role that social media can play in promoting civic engagement.

 [3.2 Lesson Plan](#) (383 KB pdf)

Students learn to think like journalists whose purpose is to ask good questions. They examine different types of questions, identify examples of these types and rewrite ineffective questions. Finally, they submit original questions to an election-related social media site.

 [3.3 Lesson Plan](#) (386 KB pdf)

Students choose campaign issues and develop persuasive extemporaneous speeches that they record as audio or video files and post to their blogs and/or a social media site.

 [3.4 Lesson Plan](#) (230 KB pdf)

Students team up to choose a political issue and design a short persuasive video that demonstrates their knowledge and position regarding the issue and encourages viewers to take action. They post their videos to their blogs and/or youth-oriented social media sites.

Civics and Government Standards

K-2

Standard 1: The student understands the structure, functions, and purposes of government and how the principles and values of American democracy are reflected in American constitutional government. (SS.C.1.1)

1. knows how various symbols are used to depict Americans' shared values, principles, and beliefs.
2. knows traditionally patriotic activities and various holidays that reflect the shared values, principles, and beliefs of Americans.
3. understands how and why rules are made and knows that a good rule or law solves a specific problem, is fair, and "does not go too far."
4. recognizes major elected officials.
5. knows examples of authority and power without authority, and knows that people in positions of authority have limits on their authority.
6. understands that the Constitution is a written document that states that the fundamental purposes of American government are to protect individual rights and promote the common good.

Standard 2: The student understands the role of the citizen in American democracy. (SS.C.2.1)

1. knows the qualities of a good citizen (e.g., honesty, courage, and patriotism).
2. knows that a responsibility is a duty to do something or not to do something.
3. knows the sources of responsibility, examples of situations involving responsibility, and some of the benefits of fulfilling responsibilities.
4. knows that the right to privacy is a personal right guaranteed by the United States Constitution and knows when privacy is expected.

3-5

Standard 1: The student understands the structure, functions, and purposes of government and how the principles and values of American democracy are reflected in American constitutional government. (SS.C.1.2)

1. identifies the structure and function of local, state, and federal governments under the framework of the Constitutions of Florida and the United States.
2. understands the structure, functions, and primary responsibilities of executive, legislative, and judicial branches of governments and understands how all three branches of government promote the common good and protect individual rights.
3. knows the names of his or her representatives at the local, state, and national levels (e.g., city council members, state representatives, and members of Congress) and the names of his or her representatives in the executive branches of government at the local, state, and national levels (e.g., mayor, governor, and president).
4. knows possible consequences of the absence of government, rules, and laws.
5. knows the basic purposes of government in the United States and knows the basic things governments do in one's school, community, state, and nation.

Standard 2: The student understands the role of the citizen in American democracy. (SS.C.2.2)

1. understands the importance of participation through community service, civic improvement, and political activities.
2. understands why personal responsibility (e.g., taking advantage of the opportunity to be educated) and civic responsibility (e.g., obeying the law and respecting the rights of others) are important.
3. knows that a citizen is a legally recognized member of the United States who has certain rights and privileges and certain responsibilities (e.g., privileges such as the right to vote and hold public office and responsibilities such as respecting the law, voting, paying taxes, and serving on juries).
4. knows examples of the extension of the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship.
5. knows what constitutes personal, political, and economic rights and why they are important and knows examples of contemporary issues regarding rights.

6-8

Standard 1: The student understands the structure, functions, and purposes of government and how the principles and values of American democracy are reflected in American constitutional government. (SS.C.1.3)

1. knows the essential ideas of American constitutional government that are expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Federalist Papers, and other writings.
2. understands major ideas about why government is necessary and the purposes government should serve.
3. understands how the legislative, executive, and judicial branches share power and responsibilities (e.g., each branch has varying degrees of legislative, executive, and judicial powers and responsibilities).
4. knows the major parts of the federal system including the national government, state governments, and other governmental units (e.g., District of Columbia, American tribal governments, and the Virgin Islands).
5. knows the major responsibilities of his or her state and local governments and understands the organization of his or her state and local governments.
6. understands the importance of the rule of law in establishing limits on both those who govern and the governed, protecting individual rights, and promoting the common good.

Standard 2: The student understands the role of the citizen in American democracy. (SS.C.2.3)

1. understands the history of the rights, liberties, and obligations of citizenship in the United States.
2. understands that citizenship is legally recognized full membership in a self-governing community that confers equal rights under the law; is not dependent on inherited, involuntary groupings; and confers certain rights and privileges (e.g., the right to vote, to hold public office, and to serve on juries).
3. understands the argument that all rights have limits and knows the criteria commonly used in determining when and why limits should be placed on rights (e.g., whether a clear and present danger exists and whether national security is at risk).
4. understands what constitutes personal, political, and economic rights and the major documentary sources of these rights.
5. understands how he or she can contact his or her representatives and why it is important to do so and knows which level of government he or she should contact to express his or her opinions or to get help on a specific problem.
6. understands the importance of participation in community service, civic improvement, and political activities.
7. understands current issues involving rights that affect local, national, or international political, social, and economic systems.

9-12

Standard 1: The student understands the structure, functions, and purposes of government and how the principles and values of American democracy are reflected in American constitutional government. (SS.C.1.4)

1. understands the nature of political authority and the nature of the relationship between government and civil society in limited governments (e.g. constitutional democracies) and unlimited governments (e.g. totalitarian regimes).
2. understands the ideas that led to the creation of limited government in the United States (e.g., ideas of natural rights philosophy, and the concept of popular sovereignty).
3. understands how the overall design and specific features of the Constitution prevent the abuse of power by aggregating power at the national, state, and local levels; dispersing power among different levels of government; and using a system of checks and balances (e.g., federalism).
4. understands the role of special interest groups, political parties, the media, public opinion, and majority/ minority conflicts on the development of public policy and the political process.

Standard 2: The student understands the role of the citizen in American democracy. (SS.C.2.4)

1. develops and defines his or her own political beliefs and tendencies.
2. assesses the role that his or her own political behavior plays in determining the flow of power through our political system and for resolving conflicts in a pluralistic society.
3. understands issues of personal concern: the rights and responsibilities of the individual under the U.S. Constitution, the importance of civil liberties, the role of conflict resolution and compromise, and issues involving ethical behavior in politics.
4. understands the distinction between citizens and noncitizens (aliens) and the process by which aliens may become citizens.
5. understands how personal, political, and economic rights are secured by constitutional government and by such means as the rule of law, checks and balances, an independent judiciary, and a vigilant citizenry.
6. understands the argument that personal, political, and economic rights reinforce each other.
7. knows the points at which citizens can monitor or influence the process of public policy formation.