Teaching about Elections

Elections and voting provide many interesting opportunities to teach students about civics, how government works, the electoral process, current events, historical context and campaign politics. Young people want to be part of the conversation--and should be. They are eager for information, reflection and dialogue. Below are education resources, lesson plans, family resources and other election-related content to assist you in teaching and talking about elections.

Because elections often bring about differences of opinion and strong feelings, it is important to review classroom guidelines for safe, respectful and inclusive dialogue.
Teaching Tools: Before, During & After Elections

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

9 Ways To Teach about the Election: A Social Justice Approach

Campaigns and elections are ripe with opportunity to discuss government, the electoral process, civics, history and other important issues. Teach students about the election with a focus on social justice issues using these strategies and activities.

LESSON PLAN

Debate Watch Teaching Guide

MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL

Political debates can provide important learning opportunities. Use this teaching guide to help students analyze and understand any political election or debate, both national and local.
It’s important to remember our civic duty does not end at the ballot box. This classroom resource assists teachers with engaging students in discussions after an election.

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**The Election is Over... Now What?**

It’s important to remember our civic duty does not end at the ballot box. This classroom resource assists teachers with engaging students in discussions after an election.

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**Let's Talk Politics: Bias, Dialogue and Critical Thinking**

Tools and resources teachers may want to use to engage young people in conversations about the election and presidential campaign.
Is a 6th grader chanting “Build a Wall” in his classroom a political statement or a deliberate act to intimidate other students in the class? Rosalind Wiseman talks about effective neutrality in facilitating student discussions.

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

When Do Teachers Stay Neutral?

Is a 6th grader chanting “Build a Wall” in his classroom a political statement or a deliberate act to intimidate other students in the class? Rosalind Wiseman talks about effective neutrality in facilitating student discussions.

LESSON PLAN

7 Ideas for Teaching about the Presidential Inauguration

MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL
Lesson Plans on Election-Related Issues

LESSON PLAN

The 2020 Presidential Election: What Can We Learn from Victory Speeches?

MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL

Middle and high school students analyze President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris' victory speeches. Students identify and research issues they think should be a priority in the Biden-Harris Administration.
LESSON PLAN

Elections and the Youth Vote
HIGH SCHOOL

With a steady increase among young adults who vote, help high school students explore the role and importance of the youth vote, consider barriers to the youth vote, and propose ideas for taking action.

LESSON PLAN

Should We Keep the Electoral College?
HIGH SCHOOL
Help high school students understand the Electoral College and its origins and explore their opinion about it as they consider the pros and cons.

LESSON PLAN

Sexism and the Presidential Election

HIGH SCHOOL

This high school lesson gives students the opportunity to analyze gender bias in presidential elections and explore how sexism surfaces during campaigns, past and present.
This lesson plan helps 8-12 grade students explore and understand the current landscape of elected officials and Presidential hopefuls and how the 2018 midterm election broke records and barriers regarding diversity.
Teach high school students the importance and impact of election polls as they analyze why identity and demographics are critical factors in polling results.

LESSON PLAN

Election Caucuses: Who's In and Who's Out?

MIDDLE SCHOOL, HIGH SCHOOL

To what extent are caucuses equitable and reflect “the will of the people”? Teach students the difference between caucuses and regular primary elections, and how caucuses work.
Students use primary and secondary sources to learn about ballot initiatives and how they were used to expand voting rights in the 2018 midterm elections.
The Justice Department’s request to add citizenship question to the 2020 Census causes a great deal of controversy. In this lesson, students gain insight about the U.S. Census and the controversy by developing a potential School Census.

Help high school students explore the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the difference between the right to vote and the ability to vote and reflect on some of the current day threats to voting rights and what can be done about it.
High school students define, discuss and learn more about cyberhate and explore the role of counterspeech in being an online ally.

Exploring Solutions to Address Racial Disparity Concerns
This high school lesson will help students reflect on some of the underlying problems and issues that have emerged from cases like those involving Eric Garner and Michael Brown, undertake research and present viable solutions.

**Lesson Plan**

**The Alt Right and White Supremacy**

**High School**

High school lesson plan to help students learn about the alt right and explore historical and current day examples of white supremacy.
LESSON PLAN

The 'Muslim Ban' and the Power of Protest

HIGH SCHOOL

Teach students about the "Muslim ban" executive order. Gain insight into people's thoughts through posted hashtags, reactions of protestors and reflect on their own point of view on the topic by writing an op-ed.
Middle and high school students explore the connection between anti-Muslim acts of bigotry and the misunderstandings and stereotypes about Muslim people, and identify ways they can be allies in the face of bias and discrimination.

Help high school students understand political asylum as they explore the concept of a caravan and the stories of migrants fleeing persecution, poverty and violence.
Family separations and detentions are happening at the U.S. border. This lesson plan helps students understand the issue, learn about asylum and consider their own opinions.

**Why Are Families Being Separated and Detained at the Border?**

Family separations and detentions are happening at the U.S. border. This lesson plan helps students understand the issue, learn about asylum and consider their own opinions.

**What is the Dream Act and Who Are the Dreamers?**
In this lesson, high school students learn about the DREAM Act—its background, history, current status—and reflect on different perspectives about it as well as develop their own.

Election-Related Resources for Parents and Families

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**What is Voter Suppression?**
Talk with your family about what voter suppression is and how it impacts our ability to vote. *(Ages 10 and up)*
Learn more about the history and purpose of voting and the ways in which the right to vote has been prevented and suppressed throughout our history. *(Ages 10 and up)*

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**Let’s Talk about Voting!**

Learn more about the history and purpose of voting and the ways in which the right to vote has been prevented and suppressed throughout our history. *(Ages 10 and up)*

**BLOG**

**7 Engaging Picture Books about Voting and Elections**
A round-up of picture books for elementary students about voting, elections and the power of democracy.

Engage in a family conversation about what the U.S. Census is, why it's important, how it impacts the Electoral College and what some of the issues and controversies have been over the years. *(Ages 10 and up)*

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**What’s the Census and Why Does it Matter?**

Engage in a family conversation about what the U.S. Census is, why it's important, how it impacts the Electoral College and what some of the issues and controversies have been over the years. *(Ages 10 and up)*
Learn about the Electoral College, find out why it's controversial and discuss whether you think it's fair and equitable. *(Ages 10 and up)*

**Tools and Strategies**

What is the Electoral College and Why Is it Controversial?

Learn about the Electoral College, find out why it's controversial and discuss whether you think it's fair and equitable. *(Ages 10 and up)*

**Election Polls**

Talk with your family members about how polls inform, influence and impact elections. *(Ages 10 and up)*
**Tools and Strategies**

**Bias in the Presidential Election**

Tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about bias and bullying in the presidential election. *(Ages 10 and up)*

![Image of voting scene](iStock)

**George Floyd, Racism and Law Enforcement (in English and en Español)**

Engage your family in a discussion about the killing of George Floyd, how bias and hate escalate and the larger context of systemic racism. *(Ages 11 and up)*

![Image of protests](iStock)
Talk with your family about the disproportionate impact of coronavirus on communities of color and how systemic racism is a contributing factor. *(Ages 12 and up)*

**TOOLS AND STRATEGIES**

**How Systemic Racism Impacts Coronavirus Racial Disparities**

Talk with your family about the disproportionate impact of coronavirus on communities of color and how systemic racism is a contributing factor. *(Ages 12 and up)*

**Tools and Strategies**

**Family Separations and Detentions at the Border**

There have been horrific stories of children being ripped from their parents at the border. Discuss with your youth what they have heard, how they feel about the
TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

Gun Violence and Mass Shootings

Tips and strategies for parent and family roundtable discussion with youth about mass shootings, violence, guns and gun laws. (Ages 12 and up)