

VOTE!

Learning Objectives: Students will:

1. understand the importance of individual participation in the democratic process by analyzing how political parties and voting takes place
2. compare communication if different forms
3. write persuasively
4. recognize propaganda techniques in campaigning

TEKS: SS 3.9B, 11C, 12A, 17A, 18A, 4.17C, 21 A&D, 5.18A, 12C;
LA 3.21A, 4.19A, 5.10A, 11B, 19A

Materials Needed: *Vote!* By Eileen Christelow (Clarion Books, 2003), or other book about the voting process, large construction paper, markers or crayons, Voter Registration blanks (attached)

Vocabulary: political parties, mayor, candidate, campaign, polls, vote

Teaching Strategy:

1. Read the book, *Vote!*, by Eileen Christelow, to the class, allowing them to ask questions about parts they do not understand.
2. Set up a class election. Younger children could vote on what their favorite books, color, or snacks are. A simple graph would reveal results.
3. Older students will vote on a menu for the school cafeteria. Set up the scenario by asking the students to pretend that they get to choose what the main course for lunches in the school cafeteria on Fridays will be.
4. Lead the class in brainstorming a list of the favorite choices. Consolidate the list to the top three suggestions. Those will represent the political parties of the class. Give them appropriate names, with reference to their preferences. (For example the Perfect Pizza Party or the Bountiful Burgers Party.)
5. Students in each party will campaign for their choice of food item. They may make signs, speeches, make up a jingle, and/or write a TV ad. The teacher might plan a debate. Students will use persuasive techniques to try to get other students to change their minds and join a different political party.

6. Each student will then register to vote, using the blank provided.
7. On the predetermined Election Day, students will vote by secret ballot. Students do not have to vote with the political party they originally favored.
8. Votes will be counted and the winner declared. If the vote is close, a recount may be needed.
9. Debrief the activity with the following discussion questions:
 - a. How does it feel to stand up for something you believe strongly in?
 - b. What could you have done differently to make your views more persuasive?
 - c. How effective is campaigning to get others to vote for your candidate?
 - d. How are political campaigns like/different from what we did in class?
 - e. What is money used for in political campaigns? Why is it so important?
 - f. Is it fair for the candidate with the most money to win the election?
 - g. Voters have to be 18 years old to vote? Is that fair? Too old? Too young?
 - h. Should there be some other criteria for voting?
10. Possible resource speakers for the classroom might be from the League of Women Voters, one of the political parties, or the county election officials.

Voter Registration

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Age: _____ School: _____

“What’s for Lunch?” Election Ballot

_____ Elementary School

Vote for only one choice by marking an X in the box beside your choice.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____