Every Vote Counts!

Estimated Time: 50 minutes

I. Objectives
As a result of this lesson, students will:
- understand the concept of a democracy.
- review the election vocabulary words vote, Election Day, citizens, and ballot.
- participate in the voting process and discuss the importance of voting.
- create a poster that illustrates the importance of voting.

II. Materials and Resources
- Project Presidency Web site: Why Does Voting Matter?
- Construction paper, crayons, and other art material
- Decorated shoebox (ballot box)
- Copies of the **Snack Voting Ballots**
- Snacks (for the next day)
- Poster with voting requirements of the United States
- Computer(s) with Internet access

III. Introduction
1. Separate the class into two groups. Pass out a **Snack Voting Ballot** to each student in one group. Explain to the class that the group with the ballot (demonstrate ballot) will vote on a snack for the next day.
2. Present students with the following options: broccoli, apples, and popcorn
3. Have students vote for their favorite snack by marking their choice on the ballot. Ask students to fold the paper and place it in the ballot box. Tally the votes and announce the snack that has been chosen by the group of voters.
4. Now gather both groups for a class discussion. Ask the group that had a chance to vote how it felt to vote. Ask the other group how they felt about not having a chance to vote. Ask the class:
   - *Is it fair to have someone make a choice for you? Why or why not?*
   - *Does voting give people power?*
   - *Why is it important to vote?*
5. Now pass out a ballot to the group that did not vote and allow them to vote for their favorite snack. Tally the total number of votes and announce the snack of the day.
6. Write the word democracy on the board. Explain to students that the United States is a democracy. Let students know that in a democracy people get to vote for leaders and have a say in how leaders run the country.
7. Ask students if their vote for the snack would be considered a democracy.
IV. Procedure
1. On an overhead projector, an interactive whiteboard, or in small groups at the computer station, display the Project Presidency Web site: Why Does Voting Matter? (You can also print out the pages and have students follow along as you read.)
2. Explain that at one time in the United States, not all people were allowed to vote. Tell students that a long time ago only white men who were 21 or older and owned land were allowed to vote.
3. Display a poster with the voting requirements of the United States. Read them aloud or have volunteers read each requirement aloud.
4. Distribute construction paper or poster and art materials.
5. Tell students that they are going to make their own poster about why voting is important based on the activity they just completed. Ask them to consider how it might feel for someone who is not allowed to vote or make decisions.
6. Encourage students to use elections words, including vote, Election Day, citizens, and ballots in their posters.
7. Assign groups of four or five students. Have them share their posters with each other.
8. Display the posters in the classroom or hallway.

V. Extension
1. Explain to students that they will vote on a classroom mascot. Tell students that a mascot can be an animal, person, or thing that is adopted by a group as its symbol and can bring good luck.
2. Brainstorm choices for the class mascot. Students may list animals or familiar characters, for example Sesame Street characters (at the younger students) and super heroes (for older students). Remind students that they will vote for only one.
3. Write the names of the choices on the board. (Show pictures to match the names of the choices, if they are available.)
4. Pass out ballots that the class has made. Remind students that the word ballot is one of the election words on the word wall.
5. Have students vote for their choice. Once they have voted, ask students to place their ballots in the ballot box.
6. Tally the votes for the classroom mascot. Name the winner. Remind students that a vote is a choice that can be counted. Ask students how they would feel if they did not have a chance to vote for the class mascot.
7. Optional: If available, bring in a stuffed animal to represent the classroom mascot. Place the mascot in a prominent place.

VI. Assessment
- Students demonstrate an understanding of a democracy by actively participating in classroom discussions and voting activities.
- Students’ posters use words, images, or ideas presented in class to show the importance of voting.
VII. National Standards
   National Council for the Social Studies
   Thematic Strands
   • Individual Development and Identity
   • Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
   • Power, Authority, and Governance
   • Civic Ideals and Practices

   National Council of Teachers of English
   Language Arts Standards
   • Standard 1 Reading for Perspective
   • Standard 3 Evaluation Strategies
   • Standard 4 Communication Skills
   • Standard 5 Communication Strategies
   • Standard 6 Applying Knowledge
   • Standard 11 Participating in Society
   • Standard 12 Applying Language Skills
Snack Voting Ballots

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<tr>
<th>Snack of the Day</th>
<th>Broccoli</th>
<th>Apple</th>
<th>Popcorn</th>
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