

WHAT IS A “VOTE?”

LESSON OBJECTIVE(S)

The student will be able to:

- evaluate the advantages of voting on issues or people
- identify major political parties

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Activity 2 - Handout F-1 “Voter Registration Office Sign”
Handout F-2 “Voter Registration Form”
Handout F-3 “Voter Registration Cards”

ACTIVITIES

Activity 1 - “Why Americans Vote”

Read the following scenario to students:

Imagine that on the playground each day, (insert student’s name) was allowed to make the decision about what game everyone would play. Day after day, he/she would get to pick the game and everyone would have to play it.

Ask students to share their thoughts on what would be good and bad about this scenario. Record responses on the chalkboard and discuss. Then, ask what would be another way that the decision about the game could be made. Guide students to discuss the advantages of having to vote to determine the game. Another alternative would be that students could each choose their own game, which is also a form of voting! Discuss ways their alternate plans have good and bad points.

Explain that people in the United States decided long ago to vote for leaders. Once, people here were ruled by a king (English kings were, in fact, bound by the Magna Carta. However, for the purpose of this lesson, use the simple explanation that a king could not be changed by a vote.) The Americans decided that they would prefer to vote on issues instead of one person deciding their laws and rules.

Have students write a response to this lesson. They might choose to imagine what life would be like if we had a king of our country. Another topic could be an opinion on the good things and bad things of voting on issues.

Display students’ writing on the election bulletin board.

Activity 2 - “Registering to Vote”

Explain to students that each citizen must register, or sign-up, in order to vote. Discuss why this might be so (to insure one vote per person, fairness, to make sure that only people really living in the area actually vote, etc.)

Set up a “Voter Registration Office” using Handout F-1 “Voter Registration Office Sign.” Distribute “Voter Registration Form.” Assume the role of registrar and assist students in completing the card. After students complete the card and turn it in to you, give them a Voter Registration Card.