Role-Play the Vote

Uses Vote Worthy Part 1 Segment 1 *Listen here*

Background Reading

Many people feel that the Electoral College is an outmoded method for electing the United States president but dismantling it – or even modifying it – could have unexpected consequences. The original intent of the Electoral College as outlined in the Constitution was to protect the importance of states as geopolitical units. Each state elects a number of electors equal to the number of U.S. Congressional districts in the state plus two (the number of U.S. senators from each state), thus ensuring that every state has at least three electors. In 1961, the 23rd Amendment provided Electoral College representation for the District of Columbia.

The Constitution does not specify how the members of the Electoral College will be determined. In almost all states, the winner of all electoral votes is determined by the statewide winner of the popular vote in a winner-take-all contest. However, two states have a different system. In Maine and Nebraska, each congressional district is represented by an elector selected by the popular vote in that district, and two electors are awarded to the winner of the statewide popular vote.

Maine also uses an innovative approach to voting known as ranked choice voting. Instead of selecting only one candidate, voters rank all candidates in their order of preference. If no candidate receives at least 50% of the vote, the candidate with the fewest number of votes is dropped. Ballots that were cast for the dropped candidate as first choice are recounted with each voter's second choice counting as their vote. The process repeats until one candidate receives at least 50% of the votes. This method is also called an instant run-off since there is no need to hold a second election if a winner does not emerge from the first round of vote counting.

Another scenario that has been suggested and ratified by 15 states is the National Popular Vote plan. According to this plan, the electoral votes of each state would go to the national winner of

the popular vote instead of to the winner of the state popular vote. This plan has been enacted into law in 15 states, but it is connected to an interstate compact that it will only go into effect when, and if, enough states ratify the plan to carry the majority of the electoral votes. This plan would ensure that the candidate who wins the national popular vote also wins the electoral college vote.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think the approach taken to selecting members of the Electoral College by Maine and Nebraska is more fair or less fair than the winner-take-all approach of other states in terms of ensuring that every vote counts? Why or why not?

2. What would be the advantages of the National Popular Vote Plan? The disadvantages?

3. What would be the advantages of ranked choice voting? The disadvantages?

Key Vocabulary

Electoral College: Established in Article II, Section 1 of the U.S. Constitution, the Electoral College is the formal body which elects the President and Vice President of the United States.

National Popular Vote plan: A plan that has been enacted into law in 15 states that will, if and when it takes effect, award all the Electoral College votes belonging to those states to the winner of the national popular vote rather than to the winner of the state popular vote

interstate compact: An agreement between two or more states

ranked choice voting: A system of voting that allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference rather than simply voting for one candidate

Teaching Tips

- Some students are adept at auditory learning while others benefit from a written explanation. Adding a hands-on, role play experience to the mix provides a third way for students to internalize complex concepts like how the Electoral College functions — something that is difficult for most adults to grasp!

- There are few topics more controversial these days than the election process and voting rights. Review with your students how to distinguish between fact and opinion. After listening to Segment 1 of Vote Worthy, you might ask them to analyze the segment, identifying which portions are facts and which are opinions. Discuss how an informed opinion is one based on an understanding of the facts.

- If you have not already established norms for civic discourse in your classroom, this is an excellent opportunity. The ability to engage in civil discourse with respect for diverse opinions is reflected in both the Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies and the national standards. It is also a core competency in Social and Emotional Learning. An easy approach is the THINK test for determining if a comment is appropriate: T—is it true, H—is it helpful, I—is it inspiring, N—is it necessary, K—is it kind.

Suggested Activity

Part One

After students listen to the podcast and read the Background Reading, explain that you are going to create a hands-on exploration of three different voting methods. Instead of voting for presidential candidates, your "election" will be of a favorite flavor of ice cream (or favorite snack, song, or basketball team – whatever will engage your students). You can provide three to four "candidates" or take "nominations" from the floor. (No more than four).

Divide the class into unequal size groups or "states" varying in size from 4 to 12 students each. Assign one student in each group as the ballot counter. Provide each student with an index card to use as a ballot. (Virtual students can use whatever paper they have on hand.) Tell students that this first "election" will use the winner-take-all approach. The number of students in each group will equal the number of "electoral votes" for each group. Ask each student to write his nor her vote on the card or paper. You can have the ballot counter collect the ballots, or if you want to avoid sharing materials, each voter can hold up the ballot for the ballot counter to record. If one group has a tie, that group will need to have a run-off vote between the top two choices. The ballot counter then reports the winner in their "state" as you tally the results. Each "state" receives a number of votes equal to the size of the group plus two, and all votes from the "state" go to the same candidate (winner take all).

Combine the results from all the states and declare a winner.

Now ask the ballot counter to record the number of votes for each "candidate" and report these votes to you. Record these individual sums and for each group, add two votes for the winner from the previous tally. Remind students that this is the system used by Nebraska and Maine. As each ballot counter announces the results from their "state," keep a running tally. Combine the results from all the states and declare a winner. This is what would happen if all states used the Nebraska/Maine approach.

Finally, ask the ballot counter for each "state" to tell you the total number of votes for each candidate without adding the two extra votes. Add the results together and declare a winner. This is the result of a National Popular Vote.

Were the results exactly the same using each method? Lead the class in a discussion using Discussion Questions 1 and 2.

Part Two

Using the same four "candidates," have each student vote by ranking their choices. They are not required to have a second or third choice if they don't want to, but remind them that not having alternate choices might mean that their vote ends up not being counted. If there is a clear winner (50% or above), repeat the process with different "candidates" until you end up with a vote in which no one candidate has 50% of the vote or more. Tell students that the lowest ranking candidate is now eliminated. Anyone who voted for that candidate can now add their vote for their second choice to the tally.

 Lead a discussion based on question #3 from the Discussion Questions.

Extensions

• Ask students if role playing the different procedures helped them have a clearer idea of what each process entails. Did it change their opinion about the advantages and disadvantages of the different processes?

• Ask students if they think that all voters understand these different election options. They encountered the same information in two different formats – podcast and reading. Which was easier for them to understand? Note that different learners process information differently. Was there an advantage to processing the same information in two different ways? Did the role playing help give them a more concrete understanding?

• Role playing is one way to understand confusing concepts. How else could these ideas be presented in a way that would make them more accessible to the average voter? Point out that you are asking them to consider how to present the facts about the different processes, not their opinion about which process is better. Ask them to work in small groups to come up with an idea of how they could share what they have learned with a wider audience, physical or virtual. It could be through charts, music, video, a computer game, a performance, a graphic representation. Have each group share their idea with the class. If time permits, engage them in developing one or more of the ideas as a community service project.

Kentucky Academic Standards

Social Studies

HS.C.I.CC.1 Engage in civil discussion, reach consensus when appropriate and respect diverse opinions relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in civics.

HS.C.I.CC.2 Engage in disciplinary thinking and construct arguments, explanations or public communications relevant to meaningful and/or investigative questions in civics.

HS.C.I.CC.3 Engage in disciplinary thinking and apply appropriate evidence to propose a solution or design an action plan relevant to compelling and/or supportive questions in civics.

Reading and Writing Literacy Practices

- Recognize that text is anything that communicates a message.
- Employ, develop and refine schema to understand and create text.
- Utilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others and the world.
- Engage in specialized, discipline-specific literacy practices.
- Apply high level cognitive processes to think deeply and critically about text.

Reading Guiding Principles

- Students will integrate and evaluate content presented in print/non-print forms of text found in diverse media and formats.
- Students will compose informative and explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content.
- Students will use a variety of strategies to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases, consulting reference material when appropriate.
- Students will acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking and listening in order to be transition ready.

Resource created by Judy Sizemore

Background Reading for Role-Play the Vote

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Another scenario that has been suggested and ratified by 15 states is the National Popular Vote plan. According to this plan, the electoral votes of each state would go to the national winner of the popular vote instead of to the winner of the state popular vote. This plan has been enacted into law in 15 states, but it is connected to an interstate compact that it will only go into effect when, and if, enough states ratify the plan to carry the majority of the electoral votes. This plan would ensure that the candidate who wins the national popular vote also wins the Electoral College vote.

Federalism and the Electoral College: Are States Still Relevant?

Uses Vote Worthy Part 1 Segment 1   *Listen here*

Background Reading

The Electoral College is an important part of how we in the United States elect our president. In this system, each citizen has one vote, which is cast in their state of residency. These votes are tallied at the state level to determine the state's choice. Then, a group of people serving as the Electoral College gathers together at their state's capital to cast votes, based on a state's population, for the presidential candidate that their state has selected.

This might seem like a complicated system, but the Electoral College arose from the Founding Fathers 'fear of "factions," groups of voters who agreed on a common purpose and worked together to make their ideas a reality. According to James Madison in Federalist Number 10, if a faction becomes the majority, "a pure democracy...can admit of no cure for the mischiefs of faction." (https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed10.asp) In other words, they worried that factions would become a "tyranny of the majority," and use their power to crush those who disagreed by choosing a president who would serve only the faction's desires, instead of promoting the general welfare. Consequently, in creating the method through which Americans would choose the president, the method of the Electoral College was formed. They were proud of the balance they felt this system created. Alexander Hamilton, in Federalist Number 68, notes of the Electoral College, "if the manner of it be not perfect, it is at least excellent." (https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed68.asp)

Today, many Americans want to move to a system called the "popular vote," which means that the presidential candidate who receives the largest number of votes nationally would win, instead of the winner of the majority of Electoral College votes from the states. In fact, according to a 2020 Gallup poll, 61 percent of citizens surveyed said they would support

amending the Constitution to use the popular vote in presidential elections. (https://news.gallup.com/poll/320744/americans-support-abolishing-electoral-college.aspx)

This podcast discusses whether or not the Electoral College has outlived its usefulness, or if it still has a purpose and role to play in American political life.

The podcasters first focus on the idea of federalism, which is a type of government in which the nation is not simply one single unit, but a collection of state governments under the banner of one national government, each of which has important roles, responsibilities, and identities. Because the United States has a federal system, Dr. Scott Lesley, professor of political science at Western Kentucky University, discusses how the Electoral College reflects this reality of our system of government and upholds the importance of each state as a geopolitical unit.

They also discuss the idea of a National Popular Vote, which would replace the Electoral College with a less federal-focused system.

Discussion Questions

- Do you feel a sense of identity as a Kentuckian or know anyone who feels connected to their home state?

- Do you think state identity is an important part of our nation?

- In what ways would our national and state identities change if we moved to a national popular vote for president?

- What are the benefits of passing a state law that "binds" Electoral College electors to vote for the winner of the popular vote in their state? Can you think of any drawbacks?

- The podcast presenters say that the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact is the wrong way to go about changing to a popular vote system, because it undercuts the Constitution, without actually amending it. Why do you think they make this assertion?

- With the Electoral College system, states where the voters' preference for president are undecided or split, receive more focus, attention, and visits from presidential candidates. Is this system fair? Can you think of a way to ensure that non-competitive states are also considered important?

- The podcast presenters comment that moving to a national popular vote system would make urban areas, where many voters live, more important than rural areas. Does this issue make the idea of a national popular vote more or less appealing to you? Why?

Key Vocabulary

direct election: an election in which people vote directly for the person, persons or political party that they want to see elected to a political position

Electoral College: Established in Article II, Section 1 of the U.S. Constitution, the Electoral College is the formal body which elects the President and Vice President of the United States.

faithless electors: Electoral College electors who do not vote for the candidates for whom the elector had pledged to vote and instead vote for another person

federalism: a type of government in which the nation is not simply one single unit, but a collection of state governments under the banner of one national government, each of which has important roles, responsibilities, and identities

geopolitical unit: a political jurisdiction or area based on location

popular vote: in the U.S. presidential election, the vote made directly by qualified voters as opposed to the Electoral College

ratification: formal confirmation

"winner takes all": an Electoral College approach in which the winner of the most popular votes receives all of that state's electors; every state with the exception of Maine and Nebraska use this system

Suggested Activity

After listening to the podcast, show the YouTube video "The Sneaky Plan to Subvert the Electoral College for the Next Election" at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUX-frlNBJY and have students read the article "5 Reasons to Keep the Electoral College" at https://electoralvotemap.com/5-reawsons-to-keep-the-electoral-college/ or the article "Reasons to Keep the Electoral College" at https://www.thoughtco.com/why-keep-the-electoral-college-3322050

Then use the Socratic Seminar method (https://minds-in-bloom.com/5-steps-to-successful-socratic-seminar_29/) to engage students in a discussion about whether states and the federal system are still relevant, or if the Electoral College system is outdated and should be changed.

Evaluation Criteria for Student Work

Students may express a variety of opinions, however, some of main arguments they could discuss can be found at the Britannica ProCon.org article "The Electoral College: Top 3 Pros and Cons, at https://www.procon.org/headlines/the-electoral-college-top-3-pros-and-cons/ . Student responses should be grounded in evidence, with specific examples from the podcast, YouTube video, or articles being used to support their opinions.

Suggested Supplemental Source

The Annenberg Guide to the United States Constitution at
www.annenbergclassroom.org/constitution/ (Article 2, Section 1)

Kentucky Academic Standards

Social Studies

HS.C.CP.1
Explain how the U.S. Constitution embodies the principles of rule of law, popular sovereignty, republicanism, federalism, separation of powers and checks and balances to promote general welfare.

HS.C.PR.2
Analyze the role of elections, bureaucracy, political parties, interest groups and media in shaping public policy.

HS.C.RR.2
Explain how active citizens can affect the lawmaking process locally, nationally and internationally.

Resource created by Katie Booth, N.B.C.T.

Background Reading for Federalism and the Electoral College: Are States Still Relevant?

Background Reading

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They also discuss the idea of a National Popular Vote, which would replace the Electoral College with a less federal-focused system.

Women's Suffrage: Idealism and Reality

Uses Vote Worthy Part 1 Segment 2   *Listen here*

Background Reading

Women in the United States gained the right to vote in 1920 with the ratification of the Constitution's 19th Amendment. Prior to this, women from all backgrounds organized to advocate for women's suffrage rights. Starting in 1848 at a meeting of civic-minded women called the Seneca Falls Convention, women like Susan B. Anthony pushed for incremental approaches to gaining women's suffrage, in which women gained their rights step-by-step, as more and more people could be convinced that it was a just idea. More militant suffragists, like Alice Paul, thought this was too moderate and instead advocated for sweeping national changes brought about by whatever means were necessary. Some women, like Ida B. Wells, faced more than one level of discrimination, because she was a woman who wanted voting rights, but was also African American, living in a time when slavery was still legal. Even within suffragist organizations, she faced discrimination, because she saw the enfranchisement of women as linked to the end of racism and wanted to push both for abolition and women's suffrage together.

This podcast discusses the history of women's suffrage in Kentucky and the role, past and present, of the League for Women Voters in ensuring full suffrage.

This lesson uses the podcast discussion as a jumping off point to focus on the diversity of the women's suffrage movement and the tension between idealism and reality in assessing the success of the 19th Amendment. In a movement with a common goal, how did activists navigate the diversity of approaches and emphases to gain universal women's suffrage?

Discussion Questions

(Italicized questions are to be answered while listening to the podcast)

1. *What could "make a democracy perfect"?*

2. *What is the purpose of the League of Women Voters?*

3. *How was Kentucky impacted by the 19th Amendment?*

4. *How were black Kentucky women impacted by the 19th Amendment?*

5. What issues did suffragists care about? (Hint: it was not just voting!)

6. What issues, among those that suffragists cared about, did the 19th Amendment address?

7. Did one group of suffragists benefit from the 19th Amendment more than others?

8. Can we consider the 19th Amendment successful if it did not address all issues suffragists advocated?

Key Vocabulary

19th Amendment: ratified August 18, 1920, the amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women the right to vote

Alpha Suffrage Club: the first black women's suffrage club in Chicago, founded in 1913 by Ida. B Wells; its goals included giving voice to African-American women (who were excluded from national suffrage organizations such as the National American Woman Suffrage Association) and promoting the election of African Americans to public office.

Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906): an American social reformer and women's rights advocate who played a key role in the women's suffrage movement

National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA): an organization founded in 1869 by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton that worked for women's right to vote

National Woman's Party: an American political organization formed in 1911 to work for women's suffrage; its main leader was Alice Paul.

Alice Paul (1885-1977): an American suffragist and women's rights advocate who was a primary strategist in the work to pass the 19th amendment

political platform: a candidate or political party's statement of principles, goals and stands on issues

Ida. B. Wells (1862-1931): An African American journalist, educator and leader in the early civil rights and women's suffrage movements; she was a co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1909.

women's suffrage: the right of women by law to vote

Suggested Activity

Listen to the podcast and have students read the *Smithsonian Magazine* article "The Original Women's March on Washington and the Suffragists Who Paved the Way." Then have students work in groups to jigsaw the article to compare and contrast the rights the 19th Amendment gave women with the rights suffragists advocated for.

Have students construct an argument backed with evidence addressing the question: Can we consider the 19th Amendment successful if it did not address all issues suffragists were advocating for? Arguments can be expressed via an essay, poster presentation, pictorial depiction, or other appropriate format.

Suggested Supplemental Sources

- 1913 Women's March: Smithsonian Magazine article "The Original Women's March on Washington and the Suffragists Who Paved the Way." https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/original-womens-march-washington-and-suffragists-who-paved-way-180961869/

- 19th Amendment: "Women's Right to Vote" at the Interactive Constitution website. https://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendment/amendment-xix

- Jigsaw method: TeachHUB.com article "The Jigsaw Method Teaching Strategy" at https://www.teachhub.com/teaching-strategies/2016/10/the-jigsaw-method-teaching-strategy/

Kentucky Academic Standards

Social Studies

HS.C.CV.3 Analyze the impact of the efforts of individuals and reform movements on the expansion of civil rights and liberties locally, nationally and internationally.

HS.UH.CE.5 Evaluate the ways in which groups facing discrimination worked to achieve expansion of rights and liberties from 1877-present.

Resource created by Bonnie Lewis

Background Reading for Women's Suffrage: Idealism and Reality

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Gerrymandering: How Do We Make Sure Voting Is Representative?

Uses Vote Worthy Part 1 Segment 2 [Listen](#)

You may also want to play MaryLynn Collins' question about redistricting from Vote Worthy Episode 3 (starting at 18:30)

Background Reading

The United States has a Representative Democracy. Not all citizens serve in Congress, instead, we vote for people to represent our views through their public service as our Representatives and Senators. U.S. Senators are elected from the whole state — every person in the state casts a vote for the person they prefer. However, the U.S. House of Representatives are elected from geopolitical units called voting districts. When Americans go to the polls, they each cast a ballot as part of a voting district. At the national (federal) level, each state is broken up into these districts, with a goal of fairly providing representation to the population living there. Every ten years, after the U.S. national census occurs and the population is recounted, these districts must be redrawn, to ensure continued fairness.

In most states, the state legislature draws and votes on the district lines. Article 1 Section 4 of the Constitution states, "The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof…" In many states, a committee is formed by the state legislature to research and, as needed, redraw the boundaries. The new voting districts are usually approved just like a normal bill, by being voted on and passing through the state House and state Senate. In Kentucky, this process begins again in 2021.

But often, the placement of these voting district boundaries is a source of disagreement. If one political party has a large majority within the legislature, it can try to draw voting districts that favor their candidates and political party. Drawing voting districts in a way that favors one group or political party is called gerrymandering.

This problem is not new. In fact, the word "gerrymander" is named after Elbridge Gerry, a signer of the Declaration of Independence who used his political influence as the Governor of

Massachusetts to redraw Congressional voting districts to favor his political party. A newspaper cartoonist of the period said one of the districts was shaped so strangely that it looked like a salamander, or "Gerry-mander," in the words of the cartoonist. (https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_509530)

Segment 2 of Episode 1 of the Vote Worthy podcast focuses on voting rights, from celebrating women gaining their right to vote through the 19th Amendment to worries about voter suppression, especially through "diluting" the votes of citizens by intentionally separating voting blocs into different districts so that many common voices are split. Citizens need to take the issue of gerrymandering seriously so that, as the podcast states, "the public elects their politicians and not the politicians electing the voters."

Discussion Questions

1. Go to the Congressional Districts Map at the govtrack.us website (https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/map) and zoom in on Kentucky to locate Kentucky's 3rd Voting District. How big is it in size compared to the other voting districts in Kentucky? Knowing that voting districts are drawn to give fair representation to a districts' population, why do you think the geographic size of this district is so small.

2. The government is made up of the Legislative, Judicial, and Executive branches, which have checks and balances to ensure power is shared among them. In Kentucky, the state legislature creates voting districts which are voted on by the legislative branch. However, both the executive branch and the judicial branch have checks on this power. Knowing what you do of the function of these branches, what are some ways they might check the power of the legislative branch to create voting districts as they like?

3. Through gerrymandering, sometimes politicians create districts that lean very sharply toward one political party or the other. What kind of candidates are likely to be successful within this kind of voting district?

4. Based on what you heard and read about gerrymandering, how do you think this problem might contribute to the high level of political polarization we see in American politics recently?

Key Vocabulary

19th Amendment: ratified August 18, 1920, the amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women the right to vote

absentee ballot: a ballot completed and cast (or mailed in) before an election by a voter who is unable to be present at the polls

early voting: a process to allow voters to cast their ballots before a scheduled election day

gerrymandering: drawing the boundaries of an electoral district to favor one party or class

polarization: division into two sharply contrasting groups

political platform: a candidate or political party's statement of principles, goals and stands on issues

voting bloc: a group of voters whose common concern or concerns around certain issues are so strong that it tends to dominate their voting decisions, causing them to vote together in elections

suffrage: the legal right to vote in elections

Suggested Activity

After reading the background, listening to the podcast, and discussing the questions, ask students (individually or in small groups) to carefully examine the hypothetical graphic of 50 people shown on the left side of Encyclopedia Britannica's gerrymandering article: (https://www.britannica.com/topic/gerrymandering). Show them just the first part of the graphic that shows 50 people, 60% orange and 40% purple. Cover or block the right side of the image that shows examples of fair and gerrymandered districts.

Ask students to try and fairly divide up the population of 50 into five voting districts in as many ways as they can. Remind them that, in the case of voting districts, "fair" means that districts are not drawn in a way that undercuts the political voice of their populations. For example, if 40% of a population is Democrat and 60% is Republican, "fair" voting districts would usually result in 3 Republican representatives and 2 Democratic representatives. So three of the "districts" they draw should be dominated by orange voters and two by purple voters.

Now, ask them to gerrymander this bloc of voters, to create unfair voting districts that give too much representation to the orange or too much representation to the purple.

Allow individuals or small groups to show and explain the different ways they constructed their voting districts. Allow the class to discuss how cooperation and conflict within groups of people results in the creation of our current system of voting districts.

Evaluation Criteria for Student Work

Students may draw their districts in a variety of configurations as long as their work displays understanding of the idea and reality of gerrymandering during the discussion. Individually or in small groups, they are able to create both a "fair" and "unfair" example of a voting district.

Suggested Supplemental Sources

- Brittanica Encyclopedia article on gerrymandering:
  https://www.britannica.com/topic/gerrymandering

- Annenberg Guide to the U.S. Constitution: www.annenbergclassroom.org/constitution/

- "Gerry-mander" cartoon at the National Museum of American History:
  https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_509530

- Kentucky information at Ballotpedia website:
  https://ballotpedia.org/Redistricting_in_Kentucky

Kentucky Academic Standards

Social Studies

HS.G.HI.1
Analyze how the forces of cooperation and conflict within and among people, nations and empires influence the division and control of Earth's surface and resources.

HS.C.CP.1
Explain how the U.S. Constitution embodies the principles of rule of law, popular sovereignty, republicanism, federalism, separation of powers and checks and balances to promote general welfare.

Resource created by Katie Booth, N.B.T.C.

Background Reading for Gerrymandering

The United States has a Representative Democracy. Not all citizens serve in Congress, instead, we vote for people to represent our views through their public service as our Representatives and Senators. U.S. Senators are elected from the whole state — every person in the state casts a vote for the person they prefer. However, the U.S. House of Representatives are elected from geopolitical units called voting districts. When Americans go to the polls, they each cast a ballot as part of a voting district. At the national (federal) level, each state is broken up into these districts, with a goal of fairly providing representation to the population living there. Every ten years, after the U.S. national census occurs and the population is recounted, these districts must be redrawn, to ensure continued fairness.

In most states, the state legislature draws and votes on the district lines. Article 1 Section 4 of the Constitution states, "The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof…" In many states, a committee is formed by the state legislature to research and, as needed, redraw the boundaries. The new voting districts are usually approved just like a normal bill, by being voted on and passing through the state House and state Senate. In Kentucky, this process begins again in 2021.

But often, the placement of these voting district boundaries are a source of disagreement. If one political party has a large majority within the legislature, it can try to draw voting districts that favor their candidates and political party. Drawing voting districts in a way that favors one group or political party is called gerrymandering.

This problem is not new. In fact, the word "gerrymander" is named after Elbridge Gerry, a signer of the Declaration of Independence who used his political influence as the Governor of Massachusetts to redraw Congressional voting districts to favor his political party. A newspaper cartoonist of the period said one of the districts was shaped so strangely that it looked like a salamander, or "Gerry-mander," in the words of the cartoonist. (https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_509530)

Segment 2 of Episode 1 of the Vote Worthy podcast focuses on voting rights, from celebrating women gaining their right to vote through the 19th Amendment to worries about voter suppression, especially through "diluting" the votes of citizens by intentionally separating voting blocs into different districts so that many common voices are split. Citizens need to take the issue of gerrymandering seriously so that, as the podcast states, "the public elects their politicians and not the politicians electing the voters."

Salamanders and Politics

Uses Vote Worthy Part 1 Segment 2 *Listen here*

You may also want to play MaryLynn Collins 'question about redistricting from Vote Worthy Episode 3 (starting at 18:30)

Background Reading

Cartoon by By Elkanah Tisdale (1771-1835) (often falsely attributed to Gilbert Stuart)[1] - Originally published in the Boston Centinel, 1812., Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid =6030613

What do salamanders have to do with politics? It all started in 1812 when Elbridge Gerry, who was the Governor of Massachusetts, signed a bill to redistrict an area around Boston. Redistricting means to draw new lines to establish the district in which people will cast their votes.

The new district gave a partisan advantage to the political party to which Gerry belonged. Instead of following natural boundaries, the new boundaries established districts so that more districts would be won by candidates in that party. One district had such a strange shape that it was compared to a mythological salamander. A cartoonist created a drawing of the new district with wings and claws, and it was published in the *Boston Centinel*.

Making fun the shape of the district, Gerry's name was combined with the "-mander" from salamander to create a new word – gerrymander. Gerry may not have been the first politician to use redistricting as a political tool, but his name is the one that stuck, and today, gerrymandering is the practice of redrawing voting district lines to give an advantage to a particular political party.

The United States Constitution states that a census must be conducted every ten years to establish how many people live in each state. This is important for elections because the number of members of the U.S. Congress from each state is determined by the proportion of the country's population living in each state. The first Congress had only 65 members, but the number of congressmen increased as new states were added and the population grew. In 1929, Congress passed an act limiting the number of congressmen to 435. After the census is tabulated every ten years, those 435 seats are divided among the states according to the official population count.

Each state is in charge of deciding how to establish the congressional districts within the state. The only federal laws are that congressional districts must have roughly the same number of people and that district lines cannot be drawn in order to dilute the votes of racial groups. Most states require that districts be contiguous. That means that a person could travel from any point within a district to any other point within that same district without having to cross another district.

Redistricting in most states is done by the state legislature. Whichever party has the majority in the state legislature at the time that district lines are redrawn can take advantage of their position. There are no laws that say that district lines cannot be drawn to give an advantage to a political party – which is why partisan gerrymandering is so popular.

The most widely practiced methods of gerrymandering are called cracking and packing. Cracking means to break apart concentrations of voters likely to vote for a particular political party. Packing means to clump those voters together so that they win in fewer districts. Both can result in districts with shapes as bizarre as a salamander.

Discussion Questions

1. Is it important for all residents in a state to take part in the federal census? Why or why not?
2. Gerrymandering is sometimes described as the process that allows politicians to choose their voters instead of voters choosing their politicians. What does that mean?
3. In some states redistricting is done by an independent, bipartisan commission instead of by the state legislature. Do you think that is a good idea? Why or why not?

Key Vocabulary

census: a complete counting of a population and recording of specific information. In the United States, an official census is legally mandated by the Constitution to take place every ten years. The results determine, among other things, the apportionment of seats in the U.S. House or Representatives.

contiguous: connecting without a break

cracking the vote: drawing district lines so that like-minded voters are split into multiple districts to dilute their voting power

gerrymander: to divide an area into election districts in order to give an advantage to one political party.

partisan: prejudiced in favor of a specific cause or political party

packing the vote: drawing district lines so that like-minded voters are packed into as few districts as possible

Teaching Tips

- Although gerrymandering plays a decisive role in elections, the process and its impact are often ignored or misunderstood. You can help your students explore the concept of gerrymandering by having them draw "district lines" to separate an imaginary state into five districts using the accompanying tables (or ones you design yourself). You could print the tables and have students color in the districts, but it is much less frustrating to do the coloring on a computer, where it is easy to change colors. (Samples of possible gerrymandered configurations are provided.) Letting students work in small groups allows them to collaborate and to check one another's work. If students cannot use the computer to do this they can use markers or colored dots to indicate the districts.

- Absolute accuracy in creating gerrymandered districts is not the central focus of this lesson. Rather, the intent is to let students explore how gerrymandering can change the outcome of elections. You might use the discussion questions both before and after the activity to see if students have new insights after experimenting with gerrymandering.

Suggested Activities

Activity One

Toward the end of segment 2 of the first Vote Worthy podcast, Margie Charasika, President of the Louisville League of Women Voters, talks about her hope that the Kentucky legislature will get more citizen input on the process of redistricting in 2021 by establishing a nonpartisan advisory committee. To help students understand why she thinks this is so important to our democratic process, lead them in trying their hand at redistricting in ways that result in fair representation and in ways that result in unfair representation.In the second Vote Worthy podcast, law professor Joshua Douglas and KET producer Renee Shaw continue to discuss redistricting and ways to reduce gerrymandering.

After students listen to the podcast, divide the class into small groups and distribute three copies of the **Slice and Dice the Vote blank form** to each student or have them download the table to their computers. Ask them to complete questions on the form as a group. Let each group share their results with the class. If they are having trouble getting started, project one of the sample completed tables in the **Slice and Dice Samples form** and discuss it.

If time permits, follow the same procedure with the Pack the Vote and Crack the Vote tables, using the **Pack the Vote blank form** and **Pack the Vote Samples form** and the **Crack the Vote blank form** and the **Crack the Vote Samples form**. You might have half of the groups working

on packing while the others work on cracking. Have them share their results with the class, including their reflections on how the different configurations could completely change the number of congressmen from each party who represent the state in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Activity Two

The Kentucky League of Women Voters is advocating for fairer districting in Kentucky in 2021. You can find out more about this effort at the [League of Women Voters of Kentucky website](#). (Information will also be posted at the [Kentucky Fair Maps Coalition](#).)

Have students review the information and ask them if they think that most citizens understand the process of redistricting and how important the role of district maps is in elections. What actions could they take as a class to educate voters about this important issue? Break into small groups to discuss possible activities. Ask each group to make a presentation to the class about their idea. If possible, follow through on one or more of the ideas.

Kentucky Academic Standards

Social Studies

HS.C.CP.1 Explain how the U.S. Constitution embodies the principles of rule of law, popular sovereignty, republicanism, federalism, separation of powers and checks and balances to promote general welfare.

HS.C.PR.2 Analyze the role of elections, bureaucracy, political parties, interest groups and media in shaping public policy.

HS.C.I.CC.2 Engage in disciplinary thinking and construct arguments, explanations or public communications relevant to meaningful and/or investigative questions in civics.

HS.C.I.CC.3 Engage in disciplinary thinking and apply appropriate evidence to propose a solution or design an action plan relevant to compelling and/or supportive questions in civics.

Reading and Writing Literacy Practices

- Recognize that text is anything that communicates a message.
- Employ, develop and refine schema to understand and create text.
- Utilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others and the world.
- Engage in specialized, discipline-specific literacy practices.
- Apply high level cognitive processes to think deeply and critically about text.

Reading Guiding Principles

- Students will integrate and evaluate content presented in print/non-print forms of text found in diverse media and formats.

- Students will compose informative and explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content.

- Students will use a variety of strategies to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases, consulting reference material when appropriate.

- Students will acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking and listening in order to be transition ready.

Resource created by Judy Sizemore

Background Reading for Salamanders and Politics

What do salamanders have to do with politics? It all started in 1812 when Elbridge Gerry, who was the Governor of Massachusetts, signed a bill to redistrict an area around Boston. Redistricting means to draw new lines to establish the district in which people will cast their votes.

The new district gave a partisan advantage to the political party to which Gerry belonged. Instead of following natural boundaries, the new boundaries established districts so that more districts would be won by candidates in that party.

One district had such a strange shape that it was compared to a mythological salamander. A cartoonist created a drawing of the new district with wings and claws, and it was published in the *Boston Centinel*.

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The United States Constitution states that a census must be conducted every ten years to establish how many people live in each state. This is important for elections because the number of members of the U.S. Congress from each state is determined by the proportion of the country's population living in each state. The first Congress had only 65 members, but the number of congressmen increased as new states were added and the population grew. In 1929, Congress passed an act limiting the number of

congressmen to 435. After the census is tabulated every ten years, those 435 seats are divided among the states according to the official population count.

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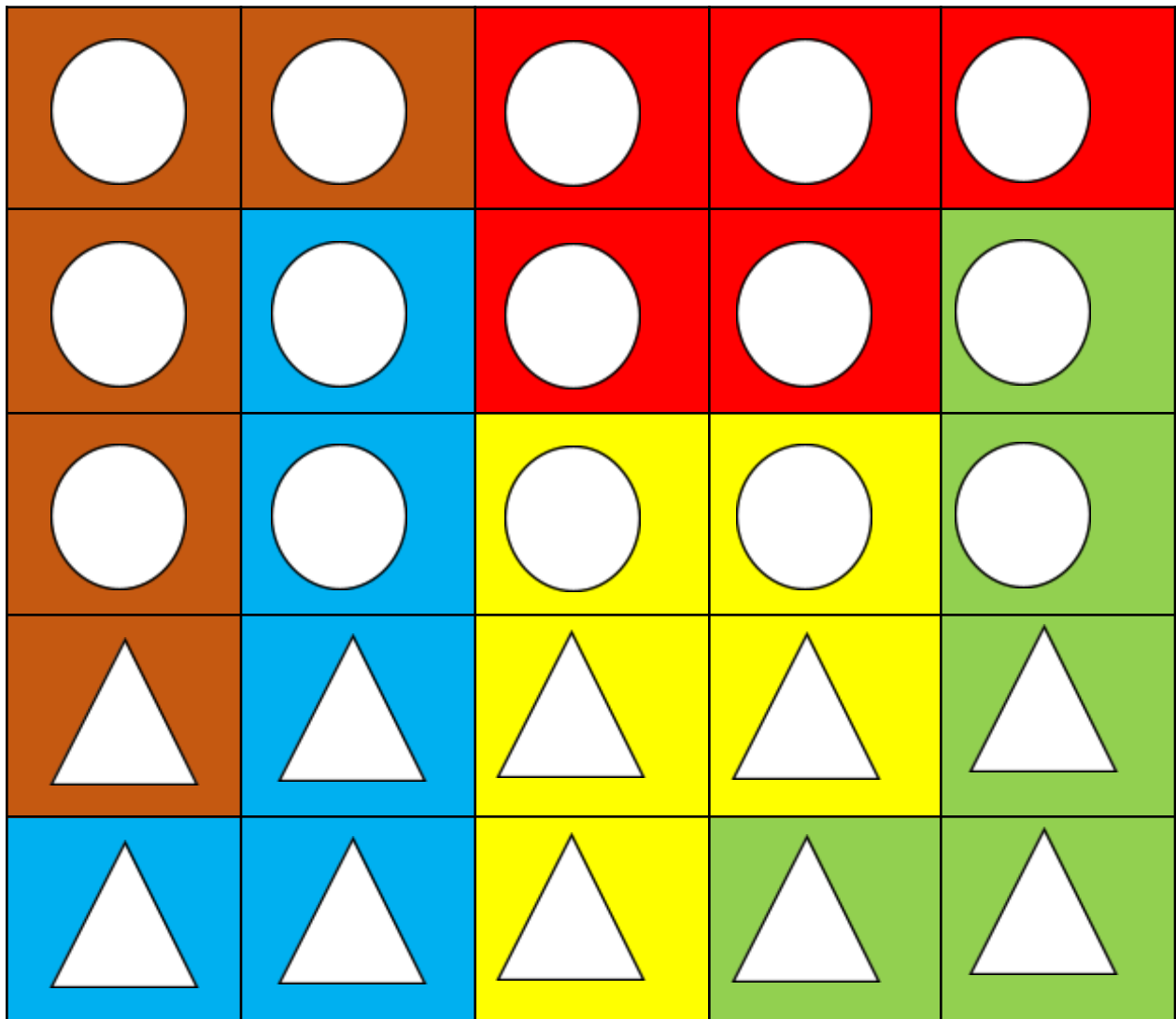*Cartoon by By Elkanah Tisdale (1771-1835) (often falsely attributed to Gilbert Stuart)[1] - Originally published in the Boston Centinel, 1812., Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6030613*

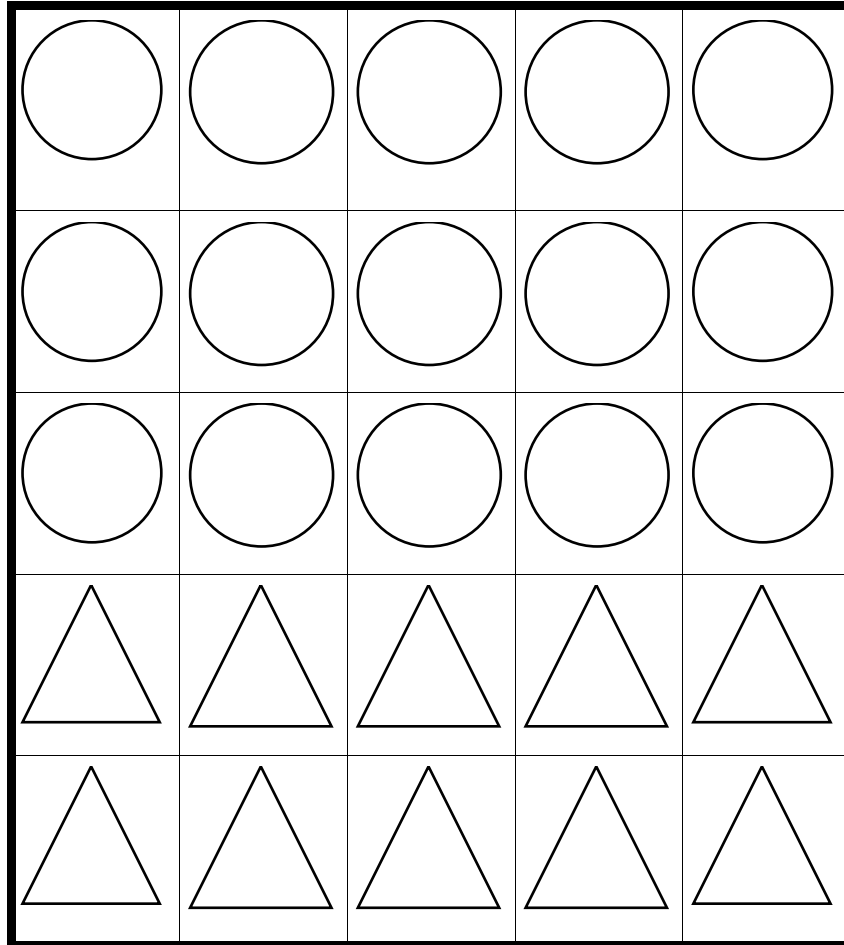# Slice and Dice the Vote Sample 1
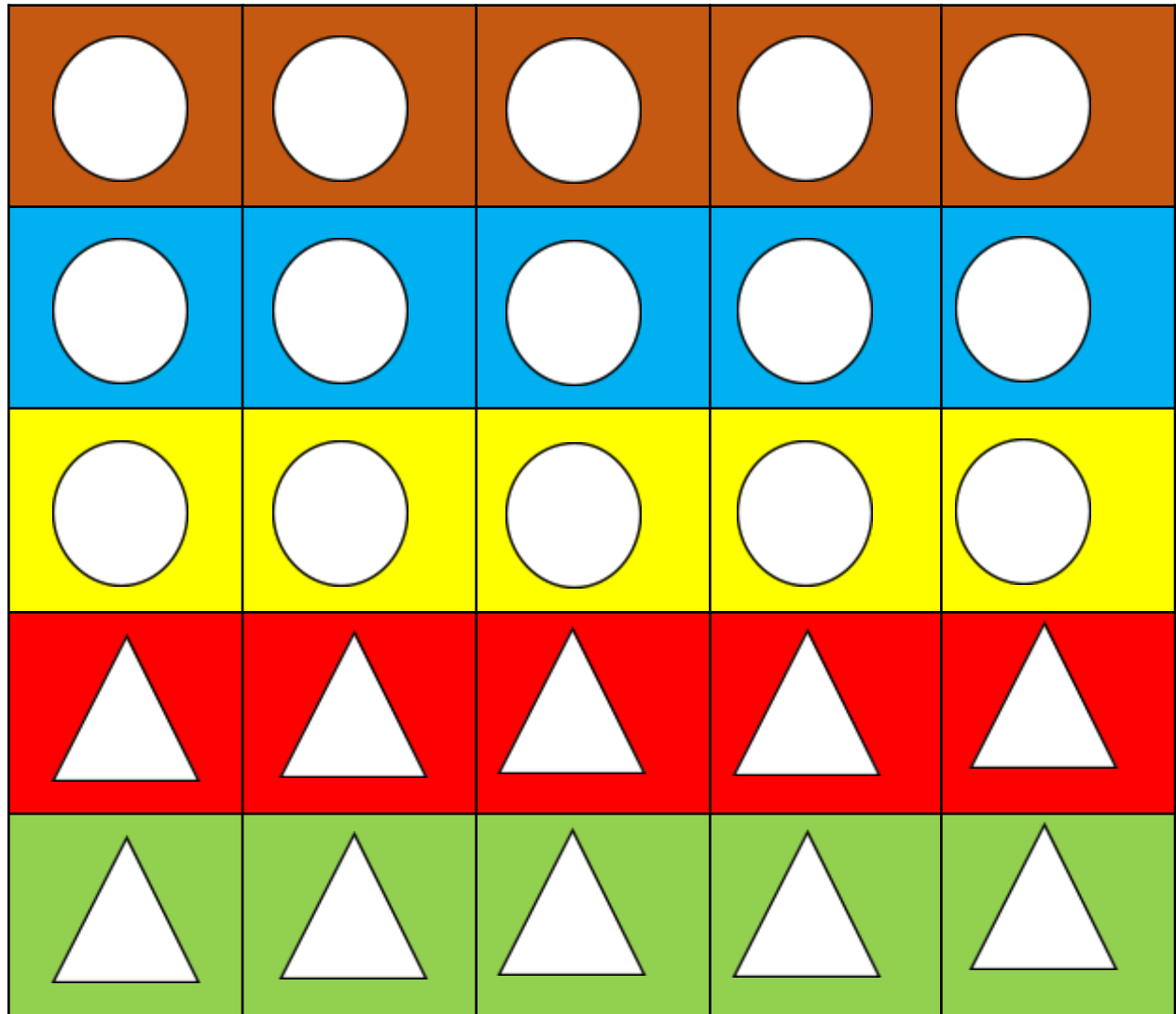
Slice and Dice the Vote Sample 2
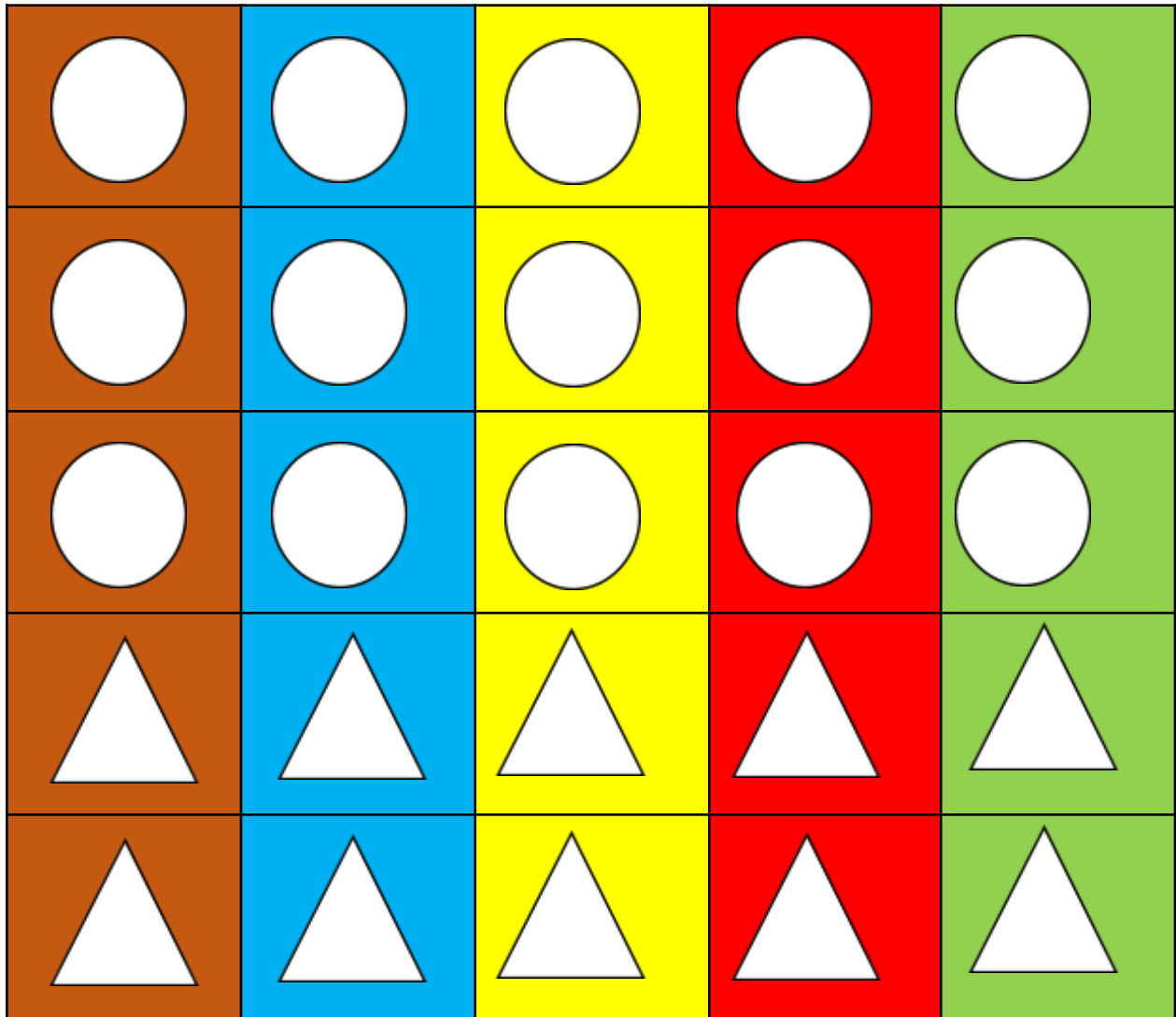
Slice and Dice the Vote Sample 3

Slice and Dice the Vote Blank

The circles and triangles represent voters. Use background colors to represent the districts. You can change the district of a voter by changing the background color of the square in which it "lives."

1. What percentage of voters are circles? What percentage are triangles?
2. Divide voters into 5 contiguous districts with an equal number of voters in each so that the circles and triangles are fairly represented.
3. Divide voters into 5 contiguous districts with an equal number of voters in each so that the triangles have no representation.
4. Divide voters into 5 contiguous districts with an equal number of voters in each so that the triangles win 60% of the districts.
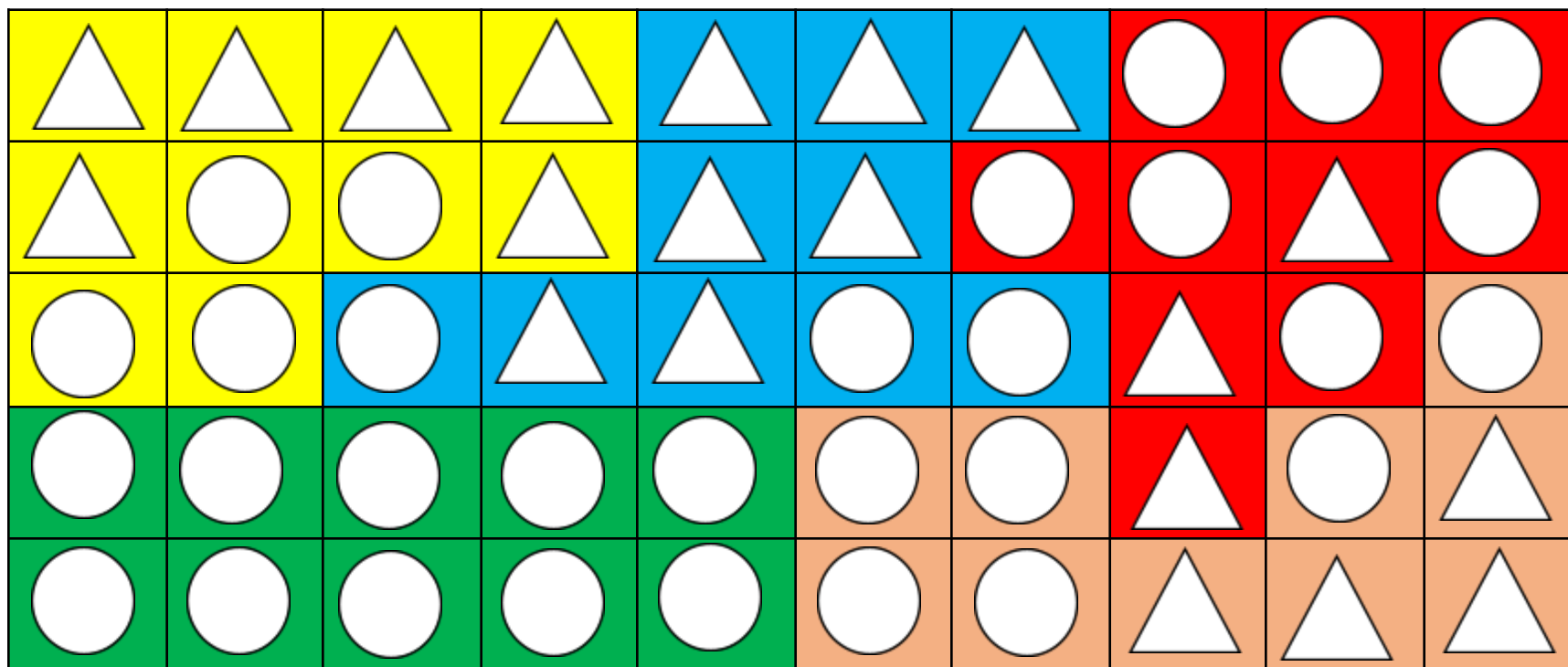5. What other configurations can you discover?

Pack the Vote: Blank

The circles and triangles represent voters. Use background colors to represent the districts. You can change the district of a voter by changing the background color of the square in which it "lives."

1. What percentage of voters are circles? What percentage are triangles?
2. Divide voters into 5 contiguous districts with an equal number of voters in each so that the circles and triangles are fairly represented.
3. Divide voters into 5 contiguous districts with an equal number of voters in each so that the triangles have no representation.
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5. What other configurations can you discover?

Pack the Vote Sample 1

Pack the Vote Sample 2

Pack the Vote Sample 3
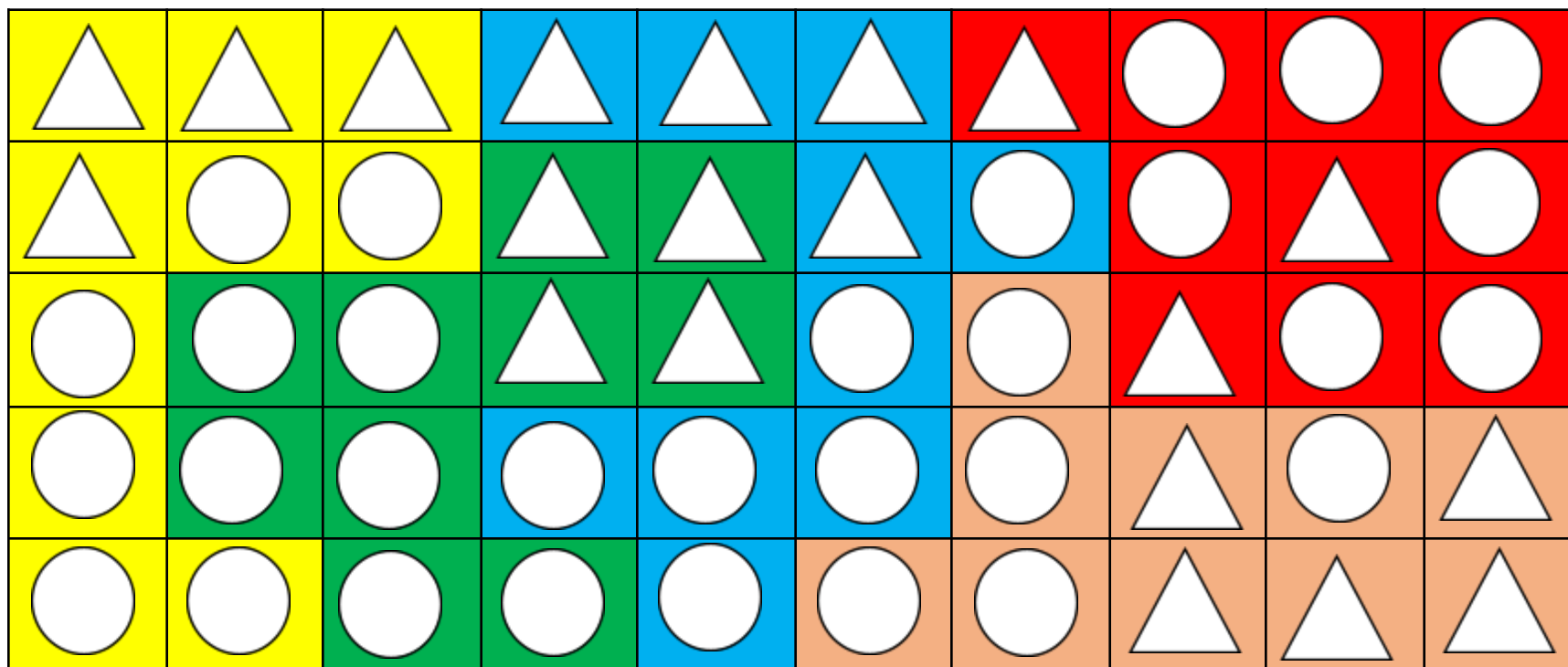
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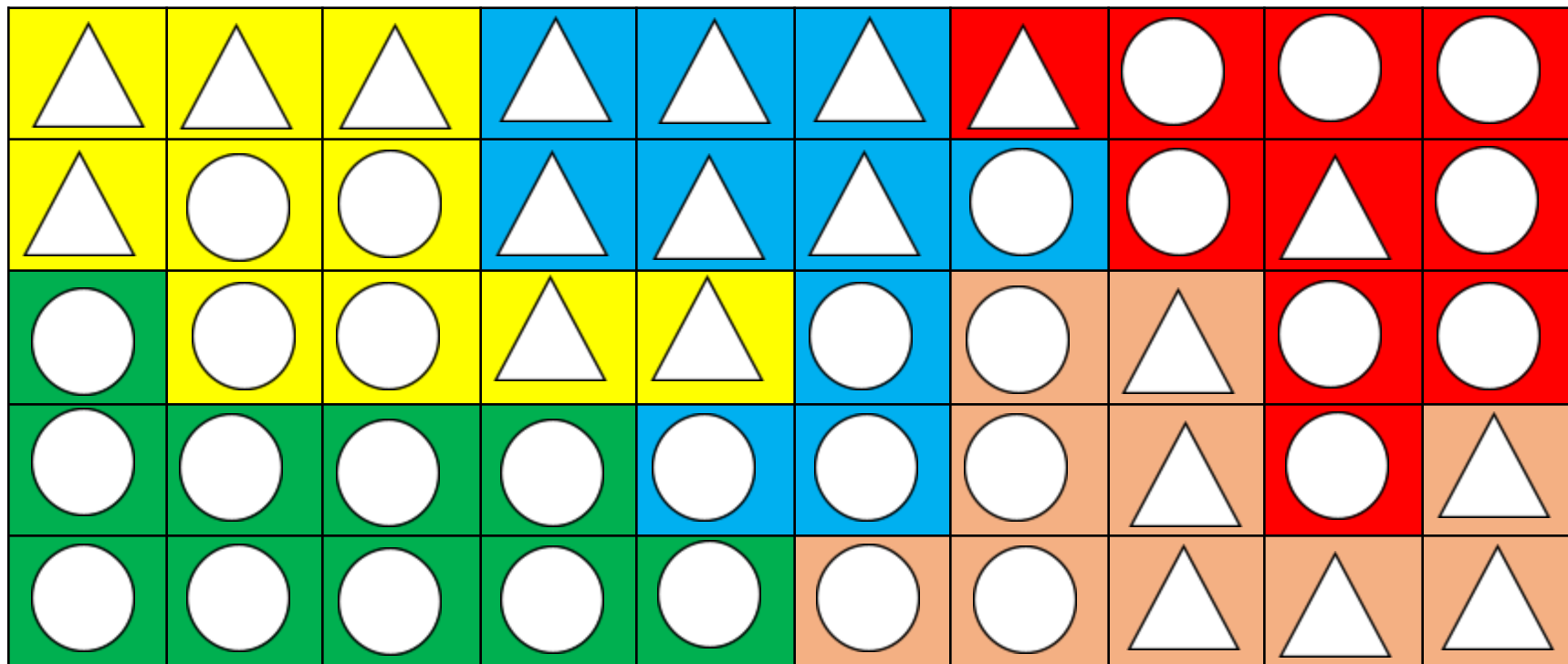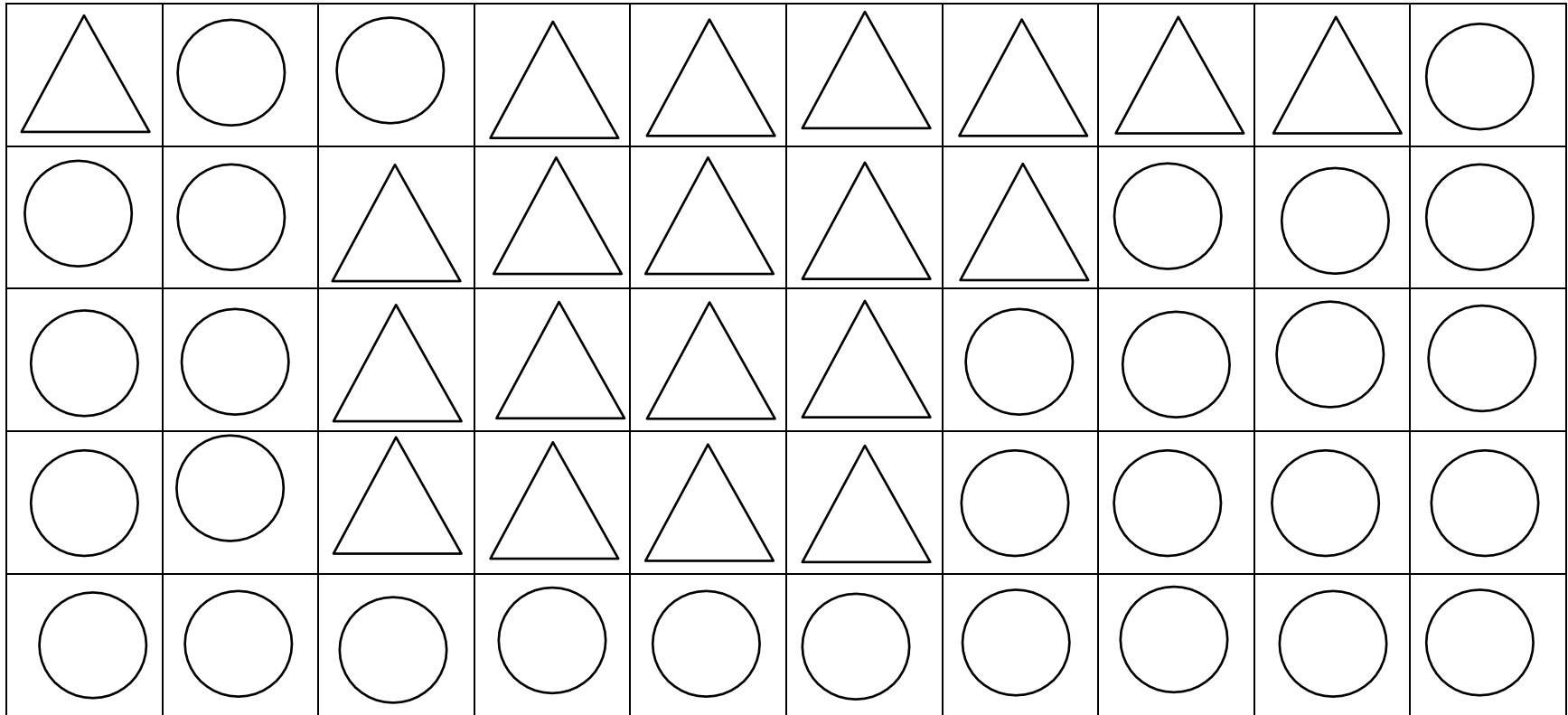5. What other configurations can you discover?

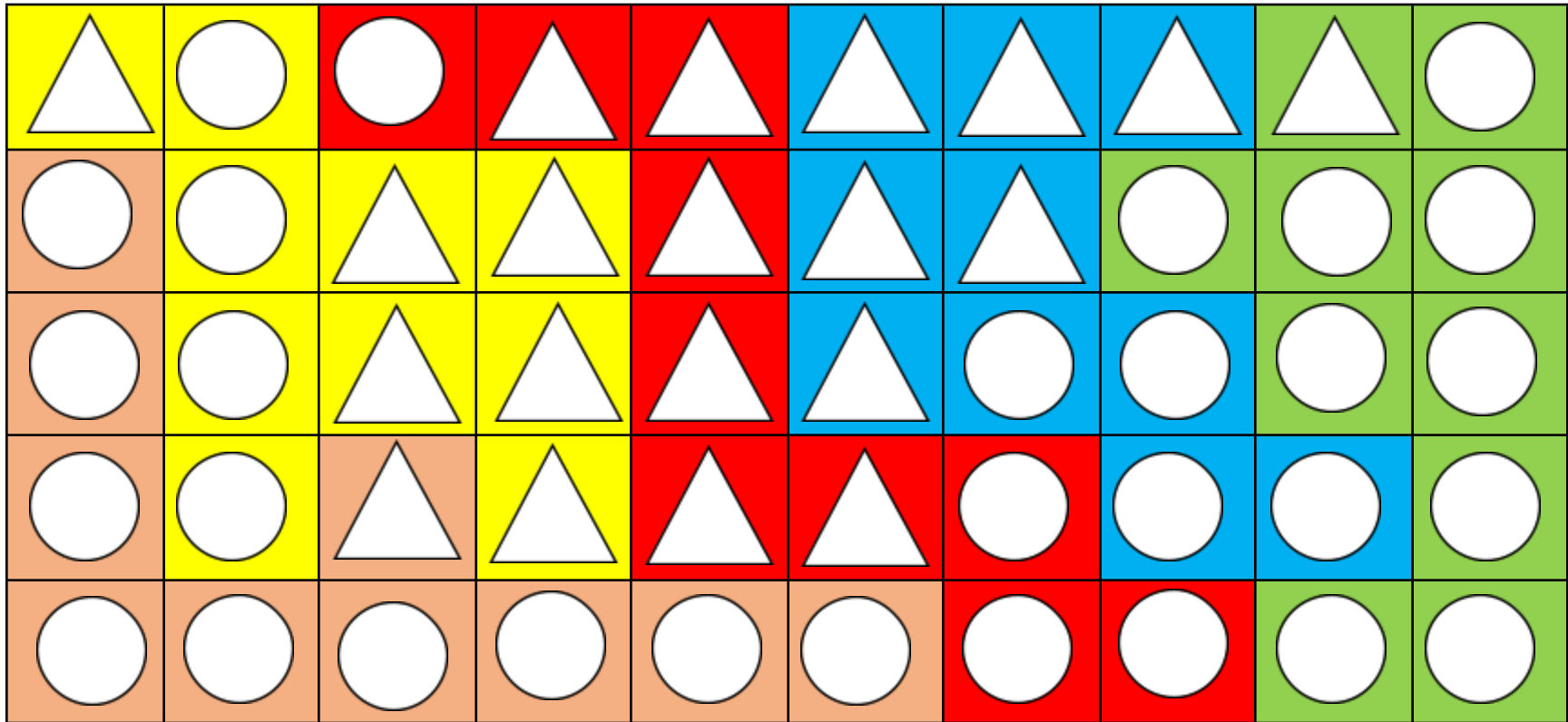# Crack the Vote Sample 1

Crack the Vote Sample 2

Crack the Vote Sample 3

Is Voter Fraud a Big Deal?

Uses Vote Worthy Part 1 Segment 3   *Listen*

Background Reading

Past United States elections were no strangers to voter fraud. The Gilded Age of the late 1800s was fraught with corruption, and voter fraud ran rampant. Unlike today, there was no secret ballot, so who you voted for was public knowledge and political machines often intimidated or bribed people into voting for their preferred candidate. The results were rigged elections and corrupt government officials.

It was common knowledge that the voting system needed to be fixed. So, reformers during the Progressive Era sought to fix many of the Gilded Age voter fraud problems. They worked to make elections more "free and fair" by introducing the "Australian Ballot," commonly known as the secret ballot, to protect voters from political machine intimidation. The secret ballot protected voters' privacy by keeping who they voted for a secret. Kentucky was actually the last state to adopt the secret ballot, which it did not do until in 1891! Before 1891, voting in Kentucky was done out loud by voice, making voters vulnerable as their vote was public knowledge. Minorities, the poor, and vulnerable people were sometimes pressured into voting against their conscience, as powerful political players pressured them to vote out loud for certain candidates. After the secret ballot was introduced, voter fraud decreased dramatically.

The 2020 election brought voter fraud back into the spotlight as accusations were made of large amounts of voter fraud happening via mail-in ballots. Chants of "stop the steal" could be heard behind reporters covering precinct workers counting ballots. These accusations caused Americans to question what they thought they knew — that elections were free and fair. Some Americans even questioned the validity of the election process itself. Across the U.S., legislatures introduced hundreds of bills designed to either expand and protect voting rights or restrict voting access and protect election integrity.

This podcast segment delves into voter fraud, past and present, and discusses the tension between measures to make our elections fair by safeguarding against fraud and making our elections free by safeguarding against voter suppression.

Using the podcast as a starting point for students to listen and engage in these important issues, this lesson takes a look at voter fraud during the Gilded Age and examines the effectiveness of Progressive Era reforms and our current voting system. Ultimately, students will answer if they think voter fraud is still a big deal.

Discussion Questions

1. How prevalent was voter fraud in the past?

2. What measures have been taken to reduce voter fraud?

3. How prevalent is voter fraud presently?

4. Is there enough voter fraud to consider it an issue which threatens the validity of our election process?

5. How has fear of voter fraud impacted voter suppression?

Key Vocabulary

butterfly ballot: a ballot used in Palm Beach County, Florida, during the 2000 presidential election; the space that voters pressed to mark their choices was misaligned with the row of the given candidates, causing some people to accidentally vote for a candidate other than the one they intended to vote for

Free and fair election: an election in which voters can decide whether or not to vote and can vote freely for the candidate or party of their choice without fear or intimidation and in which all voters have an equal opportunity to register and have their votes counted

Lyndon B. Johnson (1908-1973): the 36th President of the United States; among his achievements was signing into law the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which prohibits racial discrimination in access to voting

political machine: in U.S. politics, a party organization, often headed by a single boss or small group, that controls the votes of supporters to maintain political and administrative control of a city, county, or state

regulatory safeguards: laws or regulatory measures put into place to help ensure that elections are fair and free

Shelby County vs. Holder: a landmark 2013 U.S. Supreme Court decision that struck down the constitutionality of a provision of the 1965 Voting Rights Act

voter fraud: an intentional corruption of the election process in which an individual voter or voters engage in activities such as duplicate voting, impersonation of another voter in order to vote twice, vote selling, or voting where or when not eligible to vote

voter suppression: activities intended to influence the outcome of an election by discouraging or preventing specific groups of people from voting

Suggested Activity

Compare the occurrence of voter fraud in the past (i.e., the Gilded Age) to the present using the suggested sources and evaluate the effectiveness of measures taken to reduce voter fraud during the Gilded Age.

Students can explore sources in small groups and share with the class. The teacher may record student responses in a Venn diagram on the board.

Evaluation Criteria for Student Work

Students will construct an argument backed with evidence from the sources to address the question: Is voter fraud a big deal?

Optional Extension

Students may create public service announcements informing the community about the actual prevalence of voter fraud in modern elections and/or ways in which the vote might be suppressed and how.

Suggested Sources

Voter Fraud Map at the The Heritage Foundation website:

https://www.heritage.org/voterfraud

Associated Press article on 2020 election voter fraud:

https://apnews.com/article/louisville-kentucky-voting-2020-a9b7e2f33a94ec269b31f0e9e88b5d70

Congressional Research Institute article on measures to curb voter fraud (Gilded Age):

https://congressionalresearch.org/SecretBallot.html

YouTube video The History of Voter Fraud:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_YnP3mz4dg

Brennan Center for Justice article on Voting Laws Post-2020 Election:

https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voting-laws-roundup-february-2021

Ballotpedia resources on 2020 Election Disputes:

Kentucky Academic Standards

Social Studies

HS.C.PR.3 Evaluate intended and unintended consequences of public policies locally, nationally and internationally.

HS.UH.CH.2 Analyze changes to economic policies, the size of government and the power of government between 1890-1945.

HS.C.PR.2 Analyze the role of elections, bureaucracy, political parties, interest groups and media in shaping public policy.

Resource created by Bonnie Lewis

Background Reading for Is Voter Fraud a Big Deal?

Past United States elections were no strangers to voter fraud. The Gilded Age of the late 1800s was fraught with corruption, and voter fraud ran rampant. Unlike today, there was no secret ballot, so who you voted for was public knowledge and political machines often intimidated or bribed people into voting for their preferred candidate. The results were rigged elections and corrupt government officials

It was common knowledge that the voting system needed to be fixed. So, reformers during the Progressive Era sought to fix many of the Gilded Age voter fraud problems. They worked to make elections more "free and fair" by introducing the "Australian Ballot," commonly known as the secret ballot, to protect voters from political machine intimidation. The secret ballot protected voters' privacy by keeping who they voted for a secret. Kentucky was actually the last state to adopt the secret ballot, which it didn't do until in 1891! Before 1891, voting in Kentucky was done out loud by voice, making voters vulnerable as their vote was public knowledge. Minorities, the poor, and vulnerable people were sometimes pressured into voting against their conscience, as powerful political players pressured them to vote out loud for certain candidates. After the secret ballot was introduced, voter fraud decreased dramatically.

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This podcast segment delves into voter fraud, past and present, and discusses the tension between measures to make our elections fair by safeguarding against fraud and making our elections free by safeguarding against voter suppression. Using the podcast as a starting point, this lesson takes a look at voter fraud during the Gilded Age and examines the effectiveness of Progressive Era reforms and our current voting system. Ultimately, students will answer if they think voter fraud is still a big deal.

Election Laws in Kentucky

Uses Vote Worthy Part 1 Segment 3   *Listen here*

Background Reading

In the 2020 General Election, in-person voting was difficult, even risky, because of the COVID19 pandemic. Like many states, the Commonwealth of Kentucky allowed temporary changes to make it easier to vote. One change was to allow voting by mail with no excuse required. Any registered voter was allowed to use a mail-in absentee ballot if they wished, rather than voting in person. Another was to allow early voting in addition to voting on the regularly scheduled Election Day.

After the election, many states began working on legislation regarding elections. Some of the laws were intended to make some vote-by-mail and early voting options permanent. Others laws were aimed at getting rid of, or at least limiting, the vote-by-mail and early voting options. Measures were introduced that might make voting more or less convenient for voters. Almost all the bills included measures to strengthen election security.

In many states, the debate over election reform and election security has been fiercely partisan. In Kentucky, however, in 2021 the Kentucky General Assembly passed a compromise bill supported by both Republicans and Democrats.

According to a story on National Public Radio, "Before the pandemic, Kentucky had some of the most restrictive election laws in the country. The state allowed people to cast ballots early or by mail only if they had an excuse — like a medical condition, or if they temporarily reside outside their home county." (Listen to the full story, "Kentucky Election Reform Effort Gets Bipartisan Backing.")

The bill that was passed will change that. Some of the provisions in the bill are:

• Allowing three days of early voting, including one Saturday;

- Voters will need an excuse to vote by mail (such as age, disability, residing outside the state in the military or in college) but they can request their ballot online;

- Allowing voters to fix their signature if they signed a mail-in ballot incorrectly;

- Counties can create "vote centers" that can be used by any registered voter in the county and drop boxes for absentee voters.

The bill also includes measures to make the voting and ballot counting process more secure. Understanding exactly what is being proposed in a bill is the first step in making an informed decision about whether you oppose or support the bill, but it is not an easy process. Most people rely on summaries of the bills provided by news media.

The Kentucky Legislative Research Commission maintains a website to provide information about any bills that are introduced in the Kentucky General Assembly. It provides a summary of the bill, any documents related to the bill, and any legislative action taken. It also breaks the bill down into indexed sections.

Visit the Kentucky Legislative Research Commission website (https://legislature.ky.gov/Pages/index.aspx) and search for HB 574, an ACT relating to elections. What can you learn about this bill?

Discussion Questions

1. What is an absentee ballot?
2. How were election laws about temporarily changed in Kentucky for the 2020 General Election?
3. House Bill 574 proposes three days of early voting in Kentucky. Do you agree with this idea? Why or why not?
4. How did information found at the LRC website compare to what you might read in a news story about a bill? What are advantages and disadvantages of both sources?
5. Is it important for a state government to provide access to the complete text of bills that are proposed? Why or why not?
6. Is it important for citizens to keep themselves informed about bills that are proposed? Why or why not?

Key Vocabulary

absentee ballot: a ballot completed and cast (or mailed in) before an election by a voter who is unable to be present at the polls

Kentucky General Assembly: the state legislature of Kentucky, comprised of the Kentucky Senate and Kentucky House of Representatives

Kentucky Legislative Research Commission (LRC): Created in 1948, this state agency provides support to the state legislature. It is co-chaired by the President of the Kentucky Senate and the Speaker of the Kentucky House of Representatives. Sixteen members are selected form the leadership of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The LRC provides staff and research support, produces educational materials, and maintains a reference library and website.

vote by mail: Every state allows mail-in voting, but many restrict eligibility for mail-in voting by certain criteria. In 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic, many states gave all voters an excuse to vote in the General Election.

Teaching Tips

- Election laws are complex, and the language used in proposed bills can be difficult to understand. It might not seem worth the effort to research bills that are being considered by the Kentucky General Assembly unless students understand how these bills impact real people.

- Navigating the website of the Kentucky Legislative Research Commission is difficult. You may want to assign students to work in groups to look at the site to try to find information related to House Bill 574 from the 2021 General Session. If time is not available for this, you may want to use just the summary provided in the Background Reading and adjust the discussion accordingly.

- If you have not already established norms for civic discourse in your classroom, this is an excellent opportunity. The ability to engage in civil discourse with respect for diverse opinions is reflected in both the Kentucky Academic Standards for Social Studies and the national standards. It is also a core competency in Social and Emotional Learning. An easy approach is the THINK test for determining if a comment is appropriate: T—is it true, H—is it helpful, I—is it inspiring, N—is it necessary, K—is it kind.

Suggested Activity

After students listen to the podcast, read the background, and visit the LRC website, lead them in discussing the background questions. Ask them what they have read or heard about election law changes on other states. How do these changes compare to the new election law passed in Kentucky? Note that some Kentucky lawmakers wanted the election reform bill to go farther and allow voters to vote by mail "as a matter if convenience" instead of requiring an excuse. What is their opinion of that?

Lead the class in identifying circumstances that might make it inconvenient or difficult for a voter to cast their vote in person. If students are having trouble getting started, ask them to consider factors like: lack of reliable transportation; single parents with young children and no childcare; physical or health problems that might make it difficult to stand in line but do not

qualify as a disability; fear of COVID19 or other health concerns. Does having election processes that help voters overcome difficulties like this matter? Why or why not?

Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to invent a fictional character who would be impacted if voters could request mail-in ballots as a matter of convenience. (You can work with groups or assign character types in order to get character with diverse circumstances.) Have each group develop a brief, creative presentation on how this person would be impacted by restrictions on mail-in voting and/or voting reforms relating to mailing ballots. They might make a poster, develop a skit, write a song, make a slide presentation, etc. Although they will use their creativity, they should strive to make their presentation factual rather than opinionated.

Ask them to consider whether each presentation clarifies the impact of the restrictions on mail-in ballots on individual voters.

As a follow-up, you might have them:

- keep track of news relating to voting bills passed in the U.S. after the 2020 election;

- select another section of the Kentucky bill and assess the impact on individual voters;

- research and create persuasive arguments for written, oral, or visual presentation relating to mail-in voting, early voting, or other aspects of voting access;

- discuss creative approaches to voter education.

Kentucky Academic Standards

Social Studies

HS.C.I.CC.1 Engage in civil discussion, reach consensus when appropriate and respect diverse opinions relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in civics.

HS.C.I.CC.2 Engage in disciplinary thinking and construct arguments, explanations or public communications relevant to meaningful and/or investigative questions in civics.

HS.C.I.CC.3 Engage in disciplinary thinking and apply appropriate evidence to propose a solution or design an action plan relevant to compelling and/or supportive questions in civics.

Reading and Writing Literacy Practices

- Recognize that text is anything that communicates a message.

- Employ, develop and refine schema to understand and create text.

- Utilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others and the world.

- Engage in specialized, discipline-specific literacy practices.

- Apply high level cognitive processes to think deeply and critically about text.

Reading Guiding Principles

- Students will integrate and evaluate content presented in print/non-print forms of text found in diverse media and formats.
- Students will compose informative and explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content.
- Students will use a variety of strategies to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases, consulting reference material when appropriate.
- Students will acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking and listening in order to be transition ready.

Resource created by Judy Sizemore, Education Consultant

Background Reading for Election Laws in Kentucky

In the 2020 General Election, in-person voting was difficult, even risk , because of the COVID19 pandemic. Like many states, the Commonwealth of Kentucky allowed temporary changes to make it easier to vote. One change was to allow voting by mail with no excuse required. Any registered voter was allowed to use a mail-in absentee ballot if they wished, rather than voting in person. Another was to allow early voting in addition to voting on the regularly scheduled Election Day.

After the election, many states began working on legislation regarding elections. Some of the laws were intended to make some vote-by-mail and early voting options permanent. Others laws were aimed at getting rid of, or at least limiting, the vote-by-mail and early voting options. Measures were introduced that might make voting more or less convenient for voters. Almost all the bills included measures to strengthen election security.

In many states, the debate over election reform and election security has been fiercely partisan. In Kentucky, however, in 2021 the Kentucky General Assembly passed a compromise bill supported by both Republicans and Democrats.

According to a story on National Public Radio, "Before the pandemic, Kentucky had some of the most restrictive election laws in the country. The state allowed people to cast ballots early or by mail only if they had an excuse — like a medical condition, or if they temporarily reside outside their home county." (Listen to the full story, "Kentucky Election Reform Effort Gets Bipartisan Backing" at the npr.org website.)

The bill that was passed will change that. Some of the provisions in the bill are:

- Allowing three days of early voting, including one Saturday;

- Voters will need an excuse to vote by mail (such as age, disability, residing outside the state in the military or in college) but they can request their ballot online;

- Allowing voters to fix their signature if they signed a mail-in ballot incorrectly;

- Counties can create "vote centers" that can be used by any registered voter in the county and drop boxes for absentee voters.

The bill also includes measures to make the voting and ballot counting process more secure.

Understanding exactly what is being proposed in a bill is the first step in making an informed decision about whether you oppose or support the bill, but it is not an easy process. Most people rely on summaries of the bills provided by news media.

The Kentucky Legislative Research Commission maintains a website to provide information about any bills that are introduced in the Kentucky General Assembly. It provides a summary of the bill, any documents related to the bill, and any legislative action taken. It also breaks the bill down into indexed sections.

Visit the Kentucky Legislative Research Commission website (legislature.ky.gov) and search for HB 574, an ACT relating to elections. What can you learn about this bill?

Voting Rights: How Should We Balance Our Citizens' Access to Their Constitutional Voting Rights with Keeping Elections Secure?

Uses Vote Worthy Part 1 Segment 3   *Listen here*

Background Reading

In the United States, voting is a Constitutionally protected right. The Ninth Amendment established the fact that citizens have "unenumerated rights" that are not specifically listed within the Constitution including, according to the Supreme Court, the right to vote. The Fourteenth Amendment's "Equal Protection Clause" expanded the reach of protection for citizen's rights (including the right to vote) from laws made by the federal government to state and local laws, as well. The Fifteenth Amendment prevents any discrimination in voting rights on the basis of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." The Nineteenth Amendment, which celebrated its centennial anniversary in 2020, extended the right to vote to women. The Twenty-fourth Amendment outlawed poll taxes, which were used in many places to suppress the right of poor people and people of color from voting. Finally, the Twenty-sixth Amendment established the voting age as 18.

In addition to the Constitution's specific protections, citizens' right to vote has been upheld by historic Supreme Court cases. In legislative terms, the most significant laws protecting the right to vote arose from the work of leaders and citizens during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, culminating in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which outlawed poll taxes, literacy tests, and other methods which suppressed citizen's right to vote.

In this podcast, voting rights are discussed in light of concerns about large gatherings of people during the Covid-19 pandemic. During the 2020 election, Kentucky and many other states created more ability for voters to use absentee ballots or vote early. High turnout was

anticipated in the podcast discussion and was realized on and before election day 2020. Fears of both voter fraud and voter suppression were also discussed, especially in regard to the Supreme Court ruling in Shelby County v. Holder, a decision which allowed states to more easily make alterations to voting practices, for example, by having fewer polling places, purging voter rolls (which, if not done carefully, can remove eligible voters), and putting into place more ID requirements.

According to a recent briefing report from the nonpartisan United States Commission on Civil Rights, the Department of Justice should, "pursue more Voting Rights Act enforcement in order to address the aggressive efforts by state and local officials to limit the vote of citizens of color, citizens with disabilities, and limited English proficient citizens." (https://www.usccr.gov/pubs/2018/Minority_Voting_Access_2018.pdf) This point is countered by many opinion polls, which show American's trust in our electoral systems is low. (https://www.npr.org/2020/01/21/798088827/american-distrust-of-the-voting-process-is-widespread-npr-poll-finds)

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways is voting fundamental to democracy?

2. What does the slow but consistent expansion of voting rights over the course of American history say about what it means to be a citizen?

3. What are the benefits of allowing citizens to vote over multiple days? What are the potential unintended consequences?

4. Should all citizens be allowed to use an absentee ballot to vote by mail? Why or why not?

5. Given that voting rights are the bedrock right of citizens in a democracy, what reasoning could be given for restrictions to that right?

6. In what ways could states raise American's confidence in elections, while refraining from restricting the rights of citizens to vote?

Key Vocabulary

absentee voting: voting by mail before election day

ballot box: a sealed container used to store paper voting ballots before they are counted; often used as a symbolic name for voting in general

early voting: casting a ballot at a voting location before election day

election fraud: illegal interference with the results of an election, either by artificially raising or lowering the number of votes cast for a given candidate or party

Shelby County v. Holder: Supreme Court case regarding the Voting Rights Act of 1965, with important ramifications for modern voting rights

voter suppression: strategies (usually laws) that seek to influence the outcome of elections by preventing or discouraging certain citizens or groups of citizens from casting their votes; common voter suppression techniques include things that make it difficult for voters to exercise their constitutional right to vote, for example, shortening the hours when polling places are open

Suggested Activity

After reading the Background and listening to the podcast, students will debate Voter ID laws using a Socratic Circle.

Students will be using this article from the Newsela website: "Pro/Con: Do We Need Voter ID Laws?" found at https://newsela.com/read/election-2020-procon-voter-id/id/2001004945/?collection_id=2000000398&search_id=4eab6816-37e5-4006-bfdd-359ee7c3fe9e

1. Split your class into two sections. Have one section read and annotate the sections headed "PRO: Voter ID Laws Prevent Fraud And Build Voter Confidence." Have the other section read and annotate the sections headed, "CON: Harmful Voter ID Laws Only Help Republicans Hold Onto Power." Remind students that the goal of the debate is to understand both sides of the story, so they will discuss the position they are reading about, even if it does not align with their current thoughts. The objective is to learn more about both sides and understand how to defend a position with evidence. At the end of the lesson, students will have a chance to express their informed opinion on their Exit Slip.

2. Position half of the chairs into an inner circle and ask all "Pro" readers to sit in a chair. Position another chair directly behind each inner circle chair and ask all "Con" readers to sit in an outer circle chair.
   3. Give each student a copy of the Inner Outer Discussion Rubric. (Found at end of lesson plan and as Printable PDF.) Give each student a copy of the discussion rubric and ask them to read through the potential points for various discussion techniques. Tell students that their goal is to gain 5 points, using whatever combination of discussion techniques from the rubric which they are able to utilize.

3. Ask them to write their name on the rubric next to "Name" and pass it to the person sitting directly in front or behind them in the circle. After rubrics are exchanged, ask the Feedback Partner to write their name next to "Feedback Partner." The Feedback Partner

must pay close attention to the discussion, noting on the rubric when the person in front of them makes a relevant comment or has a tick mark in the "negative" section.

4. Depending on the size of your circle, set a timer for three to five minutes and ask the inner circle to begin a discussion on the merits of voter ID laws. Before beginning the discussion, remind inner circle members that the outer circle did not read the "Pro" article, so their discussion should be sure to contextualize the case for someone who has not read the article.

5. After the timer rings, pause the discussion. Ask the inner circle students to turn and face their partners in the outer circle, who will provide feedback about the discussion using the TAG method. (Shown at end of lesson plan and in accompanying printable PDF.)

6. Set the timer for another five to eight minutes and allow the discussion to finish.

7. Reverse the inner and outer circles and repeat the process with the merits of the "Con" argument. Be sure to remind the new outer circle students that they must be sure to keep track of the discussion points made by the person sitting in front of them in the new inner circle.

8. Conclude the discussion and collect the Feedback Rubrics.

9. Ask students to complete the Exit Slip (found at end of lesson plan and in printable PDF).

Evaluation Criteria for Student Work

A student's Exit Slip should show an understanding of the pro and con positions regarding voter ID laws. Their personal opinion about how voter rights should be balanced against election security should be backed by evidence from the lesson.

The discussion rubric will also give the teacher a clear idea of whether the student engaged in appropriate, evidence-based discussion.

Suggested Supplemental Sources

Kentucky Voter Registration Portal: https://vrsws.sos.ky.gov/ovrweb/govoteky

Annenberg Guide to the United States Constitution/Ninth Amendment: https://www.annenbergclassroom.org/ninth-amendment/

Annenberg Guide to the United States Constitution/Fourteenth Amendment: https://www.annenbergclassroom.org/14th-amendment/

Annenberg Guide to the United States Constitution/Fifteenth Amendment: https://www.annenbergclassroom.org/15th-amendment/

Annenberg Guide to the United States Constitution/Nineteenth Amendment:

Info on Voting Rights Act of 1965: https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=100

Ballotpedia page on Voting in Kentucky: https://ballotpedia.org/Voting_in_Kentucky

WHAS11 Oct.12, 2020 article "Where's my absentee ballot? How to track your ballot online": https://www.whas11.com/article/news/politics/elections/voter-access/absentee-ballot-tracker-kentucky-indiana-election/417-a961d0ab-e196-4a29-868a-f0f921a9098b

Oyez website article on Shelby County v. Holder: https://www.oyez.org/cases/2012/12-96

Kentucky Legislative Research Commission website info on 2020 House Bill 574 relating to election laws in Kentucky: https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/record/21RS/hb574.html

Kentucky Academic Standards

Social Studies

HS.C.CP.2 Analyze legislative, executive and judicial branch decisions in terms of constitutionality and impact on citizens and states.

HS.C.PR.3 Evaluate intended and unintended consequences of public policies locally, nationally and internationally

HS.C.KGO.1 Explain how the Kentucky Constitution embodies the principles of rule of law, popular sovereignty, separation of powers and checks and balances.

Resource created by Katie Booth, N.B.C.T.

TAG Feedback Sentence Starters

T Tell something you liked...

- I think your example was...
- I really enjoyed...because...
- Your work displays...
- The strongest part of your work was...
- It really touched my heart when...
- I could really connect with...

A Ask a question...

- What are...?
- What do...?
- Should you...?
- Why is...?
- Why do...?
- Where is...?
- When does...?
- Did you consider...?

G Give a positive suggestion...

- One suggestion would be...
- I think you should add...
- Don't forget to...
- Think about adding...
- I'm confused by...
- You might want to change...
- One problem I see...
- I strongly suggest...
- One minor mistake...
- If you...it might...

Voter ID Laws Debate: Exit Slip

1. What is the main idea of the "Pro" side?

What are two pieces of evidence used to support this argument?

2. What is the main idea of the "Con" side?

What are two pieces of evidence used to support this argument?

3. Now that you have heard both sides of the argument, what is your informed opinion about the balance between Constitutional voting rights and keeping elections secure?

Inner Outer Discussion Rubric

Feedback Partner:

Positive	Score	Negative	Score
Makes a relevant comment(1)		Interrupts (-2)	
Draws another person into the discussion (1)		Monopolizes the discussion (-1)	
Makes a connection (2)		Uses inappropriate language (-1)	
Evaluates or refers to another person's opinion (1)			
Uses vocabulary regarding specific content or concepts taught in this class (1)			

Background Reading for Voting Rights

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- Think about adding...
- I'm confused by...
- You might want to change...
- One problem I see...
- I strongly suggest...
- One minor mistake...
- If you...it might...

Inner Outer Discussion Rubric

Feedback Partner:

Name _____			
Positive	**Score**	**Negative**	**Score**
States an analysis (2)		Does not pay attention/distracts others (-2)	
Makes a relevant comment(1)		Interrupts (-2)	
Supports a position with facts (2)		Makes irrelevant comment (-1)	
Draws another person into the discussion (1)		Monopolizes the discussion (-1)	
Recognizes contradictions in another person's statements (2)		Engages in personal attacks (-1)	
Makes a connection (2)		Uses inappropriate language (-1)	
Asks a question that moves the discussion along (1)			
Evaluates or refers to another person's opinion (1)			
Builds on previous point (1)			
Uses vocabulary regarding specific content or concepts taught in this class (1)			
TOTAL SCORE	/5		

Local Government

Uses Vote Worthy Part 2 (Podcast 4), the question from Soreyda Benedit-Begley (at about 43:27) [Listen](#)

Background Reading

Elections for national and state officials sometimes overshadow the importance of local elections — elections at the county or city level. But in many ways local elections have a more immediate on the daily lives of citizens than national and state elections. In Kentucky, these county officials are elected:

- county judge/executive
- justice of the peace (commonly called magistrate)
- county attorney
- county clerk
- property valuation administrator (Ky. Const., sec. 99)
- sheriff
- jailer
- coroner
- constable
- county surveyor

Kentucky's Legislative Research Commission (LRC) website has an informational bulletin, ["Duties of Elected County Officials,"](#) which summarizes the duties of each official in county governments in Kentucky. (https://legislature.ky.gov/LRC/Publications/Informational%20Bulletins/ib114.pdf) A chapter on each office sets out its most important duties, as well as its powers, qualifications, compensation, and historical background.

Cities also have elected officials such as mayors and city council members, and some cities and counties have merged governments. The LRC informational bulletin "Kentucky Municipal Statutory Law" explains the Kentucky laws about municipal and urban-county governments and provides examples of organizational plans. (https://legislature.ky.gov/LRC/Publications/Informational%20Bulletins/ib145.pdf)

Another local election is that of school board members. Elections of school board members have a direct impact on the learning experience of students in the school district the board oversees. The Kentucky School Boards Association website has information about the responsibilities of school board members. (https://www.ksba.org/BeingaBoardMember.aspx)

By learning more about the elections and elected officials in your own county, school district, and community, you become an informed citizen who can discuss issues that impact you directly.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you know about the structure of your local government? How could you find out more?

2. Can you identify any locally elected officials? Who are they and what are their roles? What are their duties and responsibilities? How could you find out more?

3. What do you know about your local school board? Who are the members? What are the responsibilities of the school board? How could you find out more?

4. Have you ever attended a school board meeting or meeting of the city council? What is the benefit of attending meetings like this?

5. Do you think you would be interested in running for a local office? Why or why not?

Key Vocabulary

municipality: a city or town that has corporate status and local government.

urban-county government: one unified jurisdiction that includes one or more cities and their surrounding county

Teaching Tips

- In the Vote Worthy podcast Joshua A. Douglas and Renee Shaw emphasize the importance of local elections. Understanding the functions of county or municipal governments and the roles played by elected officials helps engage students in the political process. The resources cited in the Background Reading are an attempt to simplify local government structures in Kentucky, but they are lengthy documents with multiple layers. If you decide to focus on either of these entities, you might want to have students focus on just the structure of local government and one to three of the positions of elected officials. You could also divide the class into small groups and ask each group to focus on one position and prepare a report for the class on what they have learned. You might also opt to focus on the local school board, which is much less complicated.

- Internet research will help students get started, but a personal experience is much more impactful. Try to arrange an in-person or ZOOM interview with a local official as outlined in Activity Two.

- Whatever your focus, keep in mind that some of the students in the class might have family members who are elected officials. Others may have heard parents or other people make unflattering remarks about local officials or school board members. You could ask students to identify who currently holds each position, but keeping the focus on the structures of local governments and the roles of each elected official instead of focusing on individual officials or board members will lessen the likelihood of conflict. Still, it is always worth refreshing students 'memories about the process of civil discourse. Consider using these educational resources from the website of the United States Courts:

    - [Civility Self-Reflection Exercise - Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions](https://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/educational-resources/educational-activities/civil-discourse-and-difficult) | United States Courts (https://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/educational-resources/educational-activities/civil-discourse-and-difficult)

    - [Setting Ground Rules - Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions](https://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/setting-ground-rules-civil-discourse-and-difficult) | United States Courts (https://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/setting-ground-rules-civil-discourse-and-difficult)

Suggested Activities

Activity One

After listening to the podcast question, sharing the Background Reading, and using one or more of the discussion questions, tell students that you are going to collaborate to create a wall chart with information about local government including the structure of the government and information about various elected positions. You could use chart paper, poster board, or another material. Determine what will be included in the wall chart and who will be responsible

for each section. Develop criteria for what each segment must include. You might decide on a common format or allow individuals/small groups to be creative in their design, but there should be a common understanding of what information must be included.

You might want to have students use sketch noting as they brainstorm and refine their ideas. The flexibility of sketch noting allows students to see connections as they work rather than trying to impose connections at the outset. It engages students who are visual or spatial thinkers as well as those who are stronger in verbal thinking. It also provides ideas for how to use format their section of the wall chart. You can use sketch note templates or blank sheets. Encourage students to use a combination of words, phrases, creative lettering, images, visual elements like arrows and boxes, and color. (Find more information about Sketch Noting at the [Verbal to Visual](https://www.verbaltovisual.com) website. (https://www.verbaltovisual.com)

Activity Two

Arrange for a classroom interview with an elected official, either in-person or remotely. Remind students of proper interview techniques and note taking and lead them in practice sessions. Discuss the tone you want to set for your interview – inquisitive but not adversarial.

Lead students in doing background research so that they are not asking superficial questions that they could answer with minimal research. As a class, determine your overall focus and brainstorm ideas for topics. Rather than having each student ask an individual question, divide the class into small groups and allow each group to decide on the roles each member of the group will play. It helps to have one student in each group ask the question while others take notes. This allows the interviewer to maintain eye contact and demonstrate attentiveness. You might have one person in each group in charge of coming up with a follow-up question based on what the interviewee says.

Remind students that good interview questions cannot be answered "yes" or "no" and are not multiple choice. Phrasing like "could you tell me about…" or "I've always wondered about…" allow the interviewee more range in their response. Remind students to thank the interviewee.

Each student should take notes on all the responses from the interviewee, not just during their segment of the interview. (Sketch noting is also an excellent tool for note taking.)

Sometimes an interviewee will answer a question you have not asked yet in response to another question. Students need to be alert for this and have alternate questions prepared so that they do not ask repeat questions.

After the interview, have students work individually or in their groups to write articles based on the interview. Compare the articles that are written. How many different perspectives are there? Are there any factual discrepancies?

A variation might to be to interview candidates running in local elections. In this case, the focus might be on their platforms as candidates rather than on their experience in office. Remind

students that this type of interview is about providing candidates with the opportunity to share their perspective, not for the students to express their opinions.

<u>Activity Three</u>

As a class, create a public education campaign to inform classmates or the public about local governments and local elections. Begin by discussing possible topics and formats. Different groups of students might develop materials in different formats, such as a series of articles for the local newspaper, a series of short podcasts, or videos for YouTube.

Kentucky Academic Standards

Social Studies

HS.C.KGO.3

Describe how active citizens can affect change in their communities and Kentucky.

HS.C.I.CC.1

Engage in civil discussion, reach consensus when appropriate and respect diverse opinions relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in civics.

HS.C.I.CC.2

Engage in disciplinary thinking and construct arguments, explanations or public communications relevant to meaningful and/or investigative questions in civics.

HS.C.I.CC.3

Engage in disciplinary thinking and apply appropriate evidence to propose a solution or design an action plan relevant to compelling and/or supportive questions in civics.

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- Recognize that text is anything that communicates a message.
- Employ, develop and refine schema to understand and create text.
- Utilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others and the world.
- Engage in specialized, discipline-specific literacy practices.
- Apply high level cognitive processes to think deeply and critically about text.

Reading and Composing Guiding Principles

- Students will integrate and evaluate content presented in print/non-print forms of text found in diverse media and formats.

- Students will compose informative and explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content.

- Students will use a variety of strategies to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases, consulting reference material when appropriate.

- Students will acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking and listening to be transition ready.

Resource created by Judy Sizemore, education consultant

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- county judge/executive
- justice of the peace (commonly called magistrate)
- county attorney
- county clerk
- property valuation administrator (Ky. Const., sec. 99)
- sheriff
- jailer
- coroner
- constable
- county surveyor

Kentucky's Legislative Research Commission (LRC) website has an informational bulletin, "Duties of Elected County Officials, which summarizes the duties of each official in county governments in Kentucky. (https://legislature.ky.gov/LRC/Publications/Informational%20Bulletins/ib114.pdf) A chapter on each office sets out its most important duties, as well as its powers, qualifications, compensation, and historical background

Cities also have elected officials such as mayors and city council members, and some cities and counties have merged governments. The LRC informational bulletin "Kentucky Municipal Statutory Law" explains the Kentucky laws about municipal and urban-county governments and provides examples of organizational plans. (https://legislature.ky.gov/LRC/Publications/Informational%20Bulletins/ib145.pdf)

Another local election is that of school board members. Elections of school board members have a direct impact on the learning experience of students in the school district the board oversees. The Kentucky School Boards Association website has information about the responsibilities of school board members. (https://www.ksba.org/BeingaBoardMember.aspx)

By learning more about the elections and elected officials in your own count , school district, and community, you become an informed citizen who can discuss issues that impact you directly.

Should the Voting Age Be Lowered?

Uses Vote Worthy Part 2 (Podcast 4), the question from Karen Armstrong Cummings (at about 29:20) Listen

Background Reading

The right of citizens to vote is one of the basic rights that defines a democracy, but this right was not explicitly stated in the original text of the U.S. Constitution. The first mention of the right of citizens to vote was made in the 14th Amendment, ratified in 1866. This amendment stated that if the right to vote was denied to any male inhabitant of a state, "being twenty-one years of age, and citizens of the United States," the basis of representation for that state would be reduced. This set the stage for the 15th Amendment, ratified in 1870. There were two sections to this amendment:

Section 1

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2

The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Some states found a way around allowing all citizens to vote by imposing a "poll tax" for the right to vote. It wasn't until 1964 that this practice was made unconstitutional by the 24th Amendment. In the meantime, after decades of advocacy, women had finally gained the right to vote when the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920.

Even though the 15th Amendment stated that citizens of the United States could not be denied the right to vote on the basis of race or color, Native Americans were not entitled to vote until the passage of the Snyder Act in 1924, which granted citizenship to all Native Americans born in the U.S. The Constitution had left it up to the states to decide who could vote, and the Snyder

Act was not a constitutional amendment. It was not until 1964 that all the states allowed Native Americans to vote.

During World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt lowered the age for the draft into military service to 18. People began advocating for the voting age to be lowered to 18 as well, reasoning that if young men were old enough to be drafted to fight in a war, they were old enough to vote. Two states, Georgia and Kentucky, changed their voting laws to allow voting by 18-year-olds in 1943 and 1955 respectively, but it was not until the 26th Amendment was ratified in 1971 that the voting age was lowered to 18 nationwide.

There is now a national movement advocating for another Constitutional Amendment to lower the national voting age to 16. But making an amendment to the Constitution is not an easy process. First, both the U.S. House of Representative and the U.S. Senate must pass a resolution by a two-thirds majority. A proposed Constitutional Amendment does not require the signature of the President. Instead, the document is sent to the National Archives and Records Administration. This office creates information packages and sends them to the governors of each state. At the state level, the amendment can be ratified by the state legislature or by a constitutional convention. A proposal becomes an amendment when it has been ratified by three-fourths of the states (38 out of 50). So far, a proposal to lower the voting age to 16 has failed to pass in the House of Representatives, but it could be only a matter of time before 16- and 17-year-olds are allowed to vote in all state and national elections. In fact, in some communities, 16- and 17-year-olds can already vote in some local elections.

To learn more about the debate and see a status report on youth voting, visit the National Youth Rights Association website. (https://www.youthrights.org/issues/voting-age/voting-age-status-report/)

Discussion Questions

1. What reasons might there be to lower the voting age?
2. What reasons might there be to NOT lower the voting age?
3. Would you support lowering the voting age? Why or why not

Key Vocabulary

abridged: diminished or reduced in scope

advocacy: public support for a cause or policy

Amendment: an addition or to the U.S. Constitution

constituents: voters

denied: refused

Draft: mandatory enrollment of individuals into the armed forces

poll tax: tax of a fixed sum on every liable individual regardless of income or resources. Prior to 1965, payment of a poll tax was required in order to register to vote in a number of states.

ratification: formal confirmation

Teaching Tips

While the process of amending the Constitution is complex, the amendments related to voting are refreshingly straightforward, making it an easy topic to discuss. Unfortunately, politicians do not always set a positive example of civil discourse. If you have not already done so, you may want to establish norms with your class before doing the activity. Consider using these educational resources from the website of the United States Courts:

- Civility Self-Reflection Exercise - Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions | United States Courts (uscourts.gov)

- Setting Ground Rules - Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions | United States Courts (uscourts.gov)

Suggested Activity

Role-Play a Constitutional Amendment: Explain to students that they are going to pretend that a proposal for an amendment to lower the voting age has been passed by the U.S. Congress and sent to the states for ratification. They will role play the process of a state legislature in deciding whether to ratify the proposed amendment. Each student will be a state representative and the teacher will be the Speaker of the House.

Project this proposed amendment:

> **Right to Vote at Age 16**
> **Passed by Congress x.xx.xxxx**
> **Proposed Amendment**

Section 1
The right of citizens of the United States, who are sixteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.

Section 2
The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

As Speaker of the House, introduce this proposed amendment and explain that it has been passed out of the appropriate committee at the state legislature and is ready to be debated on the House floor. Tell the "representatives" that you will give them a week to prepare for debate. Explain to students that although representatives are not required to consult their constituents on each measure that comes up for a vote, it is their job to represent their constituents (and constituents often contact their representatives to voice their opinions). Assign your "representatives" to conduct a survey of at least five people regarding their opinions about lowering the voting age. They should collect not only information about how many of their "constituents" support or oppose the bill, but at least one reason for each opinion, including one direct quote.

Engage students in creating criteria regarding how this information should be compiled and presented. They might create a chart or printed document or a slide show to share with the class. In addition, they need to articulate their own opinion with at least one argument to support it. Their opinion does not have to reflect the opinion of a majority of their constituents.

To begin the debate after opinions have been collected, provide each representative a set amount of time to make their presentation. As Speaker of the House, you will lead and guide the discussion. You may also determine if the bill must be passed by a 2/3 majority for ratification or if a simple majority is adequate. You could have students vote by raising their hands or conduct a secret ballot.

After the vote, lead a discussion about the process. Did any "representatives" change their own initial opinions after hearing from their constituents? Were they influenced by the presentations of their colleagues? Which presentations were the most compelling? Why?

Discuss whether there is a way that you might share what you have learned from the project with classmates or the community as a voter education project.

Kentucky Academic Standards

Social Studies

HS.C.CV.2

Assess how the expansion of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights and human rights influence the thoughts and actions of individuals and groups.

HS.UH.CE.5

Evaluate the ways in which groups facing discrimination worked to achieve expansion of rights and liberties from 1877-present.

HS.C.I.CC.1

Engage in civil discussion, reach consensus when appropriate and respect diverse opinions relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in civics.

HS.C.I.CC.2

Engage in disciplinary thinking and construct arguments, explanations, or public communications relevant to meaningful and/or investigative questions in civics.

HS.C.I.CC.3

Engage in disciplinary thinking and apply appropriate evidence to propose a solution or design an action plan relevant to compelling and/or supportive questions in civics.

Reading and Writing Literacy Practices

Recognize that text is anything that communicates a message.

Employ, develop and refine schema to understand and create text.

Utilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others and the world.

Engage in specialized, discipline-specific literacy practices.

Apply high level cognitive processes to think deeply and critically about text.

Reading and Composing Guiding Principles

Students will integrate and evaluate content presented in print/non-print forms of text found in diverse media and formats.

Students will compose informative and explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Students will use a variety of strategies to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases, consulting reference material when appropriate.

Students will acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening to be transition ready.

Resource created by Judy Sizemore, education consultant

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to allow voting by 18-year-olds in 1943 and 1955 respectively, but it was not until the 26th Amendment was ratified in 1971 that the voting age was lowered to 18 nationwide

There is now a national movement advocating for another Constitutional Amendment to lower the national voting age to 16. But making an amendment to the Constitution is not an easy process. First, both the U.S. House of Representative and the U.S. Senate must pass a resolution by a two-thirds majority. A proposed Constitutional Amendment does not require the signature of the President. Instead, the document is sent to the National Archives and Records Administration. This office creates information packages and sends them to the governors of each state. At the state level, the amendment can be ratified by the state legislature or by a constitutional convention. A proposal becomes an amendment when it has been ratified by three-fourths of the states (38 out of 50). So far, a proposal to lower the voting age to 16 has failed to pass in the House of Representatives, but it could be only a matter of time before 16- and 17-year-olds are allowed to vote in all state and national elections. In fact, in some communities, 16- and 17-year-olds can already vote in some local elections.

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What Does It Mean to Be an American?

Uses Any of the Vote Worthy Segments

Background Reading

Vote Worthy, a series of podcasts relating to elections and voting, includes a musical interlude featuring an excerpt from Madeleine Peyroux's original song, "What Does It Mean to Be American?" Podcasts often include music to enhance the listening experience. Tom Martin, producer and host of the Vote Worthy podcasts, says that many of his productions tend to be 'talk heavy" and that "contextual music can serve to hold the listener's attention while also advancing the story."

Martin first heard Peyroux's song on one of his Spotify playlists, and it immediately struck him as a perfect fit for the Vote Worthy series. As he explains, "We were producing Vote Worthy at a moment when the question she raises with the song could not have been more timely. I did a search, found her manager, got in touch and requested permission to use the song for our production, explaining our non-profit status and the context. Their response was an immediate thumbs up — that they were pleased that the song would be used in such a way."

Madeleine Peyroux has a unique perspective on what it means to be American. A native of Athens, Georgia, she spent her childhood in New York and California, often listening to the music of her parents, especially jazz and blues. When she was 13, her parents divorced and Madeline moved with her mother to Paris. She began performing with street musicians in Paris when she was 15 and later toured Europe with a vintage jazz group. Her mainstream success began in 1996 with the release of her debut album, *Dreamland*. In 2004 her album *Careless Love* sold half a million copies.

"What Does It Mean to Be American?" is one of her many original songs. After its release Peyroux began creating what she calls "monthly birthday card" videos featuring montages of Americans that she considers to be her personal heroes. As she explained with the release of the first one in January 2021: "I have been trying to create a list of my personal heroes for many years. To celebrate the spirit of 2021 and my recent single release, I thought I might share by posting a monthly birthday card based on that list. So, Happy January Birthday to some of my American Heroes! Love, Madeleine"

The videos are posted on her Facebook page and on YouTube. Here are YouTube links to the January-March 2021 heroes videos:

January   February   March

Peyroux's LinkTree page includes links to more information about her and a full video of the song "What Does It Mean to Be American?" The full song is also available on YouTube.

Discussion Questions

1. After students listen to the podcast (play enough for students to understand its intent and to hear the use of the song — at least one segment), and the song and watch one or more of the "birthday card" montages, ask students if they think this song was a good choice for the series. Why or why not? What did the song add to the podcast?

2. Ask students what stood out to them about the lyrics? (If you want show the lyrics or have students read them, they are available online at azlyrics.com.)

3. Which of the "heroes" that Peyroux honored did they recognize? What do they know about these people? How could they find out more? Why might these people be considered American heroes? Are there connections between the people in the montage and the lyrics of the song?

4. Ask if someone has to be famous to be considered a hero. What are the qualities or accomplishments that define a hero? What qualities or accomplishments would define an American hero?

5. Ask students whom they would honor as American heroes if they made a similar montage. Why would these choose these individuals? Ask them to record their choices and a few notes for a later activity.

Teaching Tips

These activities could be used in a social studies, civics, media, music, language arts, or communications class. Just as the song "What Does It Mean to Be American?" interjects creative expression into the analytical discussion of voting rights, processes, challenges, and reform movements, these activities allow you to interject creativity into the consideration of two essential topics in high school civics:

• HS.C.CV.3 Analyze impact of the efforts of individuals and reform movements on the expansion of civil rights and liberties locally, nationally and internationally.

• HS.C.KGO.3 Describe how active citizens can affect change in their communities and Kentucky.

The activities provide opportunities for students to think about what makes someone an American hero from their personal perspective. Students can consider famous people or ordinary people in their community or family.

These activities also provide an opportunity to explicitly integrate social/emotional learning into your curriculum, specifically social awareness and relationship skills. Encourage students to celebrate the diversity within your classroom as one aspect of what it means to be American and to take the opportunity to learn about the perspectives of their classmates.

It is critical that all suggestions and viewpoints be treated respectfully. If you have not yet established guidelines for civil discourse in your classroom – or if students need a refresher – you could use these resources provided by the website of the United States Courts:

- Civility Self-Reflection Exercise - Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions | United States Courts (uscourts.gov)

- Setting Ground Rules - Civil Discourse and Difficult Decisions | United States Courts (uscourts.gov)

Each of the following activities could be done as standalone activities or they could be combined in a variety of ways depending on your time frame and the needs of your class.

- Activity One invites students to research the people that Peyroux honored as American heroes and share their discoveries.

- Activity Two asks students to identify their own American heroes and share their rationale for the tribute.

- Activity Three is a group activity (small group or whole class) to create a visual representation of the heroes they identified in Activity Two. This could be a bulletin board with photos and/or original artwork; a composite slide show; a video montage; a mural, etc.

- Activity Four focuses on music, inviting students to add their own lyrics to Peyroux's song or another suitable melody or original musical composition.

- Activity Five is a media project that builds on one or more of the preceding activities.

Suggested Activities

Activity One: Responding to Music/Video and Going Deeper

Choose and show one of Peyroux's "birthday card" videos and ask students: In addition to being heroes in her eyes and having January birthdays, what do the Americans in the video have in common?

Assign students to research the people included and make a presentation to the class about the person's life and accomplishments. Ask students to go beyond a superficial recounting of the

professional life of the person they research and consider their struggles, the causes they espoused, their values, and their legacy. In what way does each person represent something heroic about America? Finally, ask students if they can see a connection between the person they have researched and the lyrics in the song. Work with students to develop criteria for the presentations.

After the presentations are completed, revisit the discussion questions.

Activity Two: Individual Expressive Text: Who Are Your America Heroes?

Discuss the qualities that make someone a hero. Who were the everyday heroes during the COVID19 pandemic? How did the actions of these everyday heroes impact others? Who are some of the people that they consider to be heroes in their community or family? What makes them heroic?

Divide students into small groups and have them take turns sharing ideas about people that they consider to be heroes. Remind students to be respectful and focus their attention on the person who is sharing. Encourage them to ask questions and give positive feedback.

Ask each student to create a text (remembering that a text is anything that communicates a message) that honors one of their personal American heroes. You can assign a specific format (essay, bio-sketch, poetry, visual, media or performing art, etc.) or allow free choice. Work with students to develop criteria for the texts and create a time frame that allows a mid-point check-in with their small group, a draft sharing for feedback from the small group, and a classroom presentation.

Activity Three: Visual Arts: Convey Meaning through Collaborative Visual Arts

Before you begin, consider the intent of the work and the end product you have in mind. Will this be an in-class project or will you share it with a wider audience? This could be a bulletin board, digital montage, slide show, a group mural, or a step in developing the multimedia project in in Activity Five. You could incorporate original visual art or photographs, copyright-free images from the Internet, written text that is artistically presented, etc. These could include or be based on the work done in Activities One and/or Two.

You may select the question that your visual art project will address or engage your students in the choice. Possible topics are:

- What does it mean to be American?

- What does it mean to be an American hero?

- Who are our American heroes?

- How can/have the actions of individuals and reform movements impacted the expansion of civil rights and liberties?

- How can/have active citizens affected change in their communities?

- What are the civic responsibilities of individuals within American society?

You could make these decisions before presenting the project to your class or you could engage students in making some of the choices. Ask students to consider how the images in Peyroux's video montage for "What Does It Mean to Be American?" answered the question in the title. How did they relate to the issues of voting rights and reforms in the Vote Worthy series? How can you use visual imagery to explore some of these same questions?

Activity Four: Music: Convey Meaning through Musical Collaboration

You could engage students in creating new verses for "What Does It Mean to Be American?" using Peyroux's melody, but keep in mind that this would be limited to an in-class project to avoid copyright infringement. If you want to do something that could be shared with a wider audience, you could use music that is copyright free such as the wide libraries of music found on Bensound at https://www.bensound.com/. If you are teaching a music class or have musically inclined students in your class, you could even consider original compositions.

Students who are not comfortable performing music can contribute to the creation of lyrics and also fill different roles in this activity if you include recording, such as audio technician, sound editor, or sound mixer. Some students are adept at using apps like Garage bad and can contribute in that way.

You may select the question that your musical collaboration will address or engage your students in the choice. Possible topics are:

- What does it mean to be American?

- What does it mean to be an American hero?

- Who are our American heroes?

- How can/have the actions of individuals and reform movements impacted the expansion of civil rights and liberties?

- How can/have active citizens affected change in their communities?

- What are the civic responsibilities of individuals within American society?

You could make these decisions before presenting the project to your class or you could engage students in making some of the choices.

Activity Five: Media Production

You can use any of the products from Activities One through Four as part of a media production or start from scratch. The focus for this activity is integrating music into "talk heavy" productions, whether video or podcast.

Divide students into small groups and ask each group to select one of these topics to explore in their production (or assign a topic related to the Vote Worthy podcasts):

- What does it mean to be American?

- What does it mean to be an American hero?

- Who are our American heroes?

- How can/have the actions of individuals and reform movements impacted the expansion of civil rights and liberties?

- How can/have active citizens affected change in their communities?

- What are the civic responsibilities of individuals within American society?

You can assign the format (interview, discussion, report, reading, etc.), parameters such as length, and criteria. As part of the criteria, each project should integrate music appropriate to the topic. Music could be used as an intro, an outro, a bridge between segments, or background. It should contribute to but not dominate the tone and content of the production.

As Tom Martin explains, "Context and tone matter… It's important to remember that you are moving through a story, so dwelling on any given piece of music too long can distract, even derail train-of-thought. Also, always respect the artist by crediting them in the close of the podcast."

Ask your students to submit a brief explanation of why they chose the music they did for their production and how they feel it contributed to the tone and content.

Kentucky Academic Standards

Social Studies

HS.C.RR.1 Evaluate the civic responsibilities of individuals within a society.

HS.C.RR.2 Explain how active citizens can affect the lawmaking process locally, nationally and internationally.

HS.C.CV.3 Analyze the impact of the efforts of individuals and reform movements on the expansion of civil rights and liberties locally, nationally and internationally.

HS.C.KGO.3 Describe how active citizens can affect change in their communities and Kentucky.

HS.C.I.CC.1 Engage in civil discussion, reach consensus when appropriate and respect diverse opinions relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in civics.

HS.C.I.CC.2 Engage in disciplinary thinking and construct arguments, explanations or public communications relevant to meaningful and/or investigative questions in civics.

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- Employ, develop and refine schema to understand and create text.
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- Students will use a variety of strategies to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases, consulting reference material when appropriate.

- Students will acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking and listening in order to be transition ready.

Visual and Performing Arts

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic technique and work for presentation.

Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

Resource created by Judy Sizemore, Education Consultant

Background Reading for What Does It Mean to Be An American?

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Peyroux's LinkTree page includes links to more information about her and a full video of the song "What Does It Mean to Be American?" The full song is also available on YouTube.

Student-Created Podcasting

Uses any two of the Vote Worthy segments   *Listen here*

Background Reading

The informational podcasts in the Vote Worthy series were produced in 2020 and early 2021, a time when national attention was focused on the general election. The intent was not to advocate for a party or candidate but to help a broad audience understand the complex issues of voting rights and processes.

Podcasting is a unique combination of both technology and the creative arts. It enables us to utilize new technologies to broadcast, edit, and publish, while reaching out to an unlimited audience. There is great potential for personal and community learning by creating and disseminating authentic, real time, historical artifacts.

Discussion Questions

1. What podcasts have you listened to? What would you say is the purpose of the podcast? Who is the intended audience?
2. Have you created a podcast yourself? What was the purpose? Who was your audience?
3. Have you recorded interviews, readings, or discussions using digital equipment? What was the experience like?
4. Have you done any editing of audio? What was the experiencer like?

Key Vocabulary

copyright: the exclusive legal right, given to a creator, to publish, perform, film, or record literary, artistic, or musical material, and to authorize others to do the same.

copyright free: not protected by copyright

credits: a list of acknowledgements of those who contributed to the creation of a media work

podcast: a digital audio file made available on the Internet for streaming or downloading to a computer or mobile device

Teaching Tips

Getting Started

- Before you and your students begin creating your own podcasts, listen to several podcasts of different genres, formats, and lengths. The Vote Worthy series is an excellent example of an informational series. Other quality podcasts can be found at sites such as National Public Radio, StoryCorps, or The Moth.
- Encourage students to use critical listening skills, noting the length, format, purpose, topic, tone, and intended audience of the podcast. Ask them to notice: Is there music or other sound effects? Are credits included?
- When you are ready to engage your students in creating podcasts, begin with the equipment you have on hand – iPods, Chromebooks, or smartphones. Probably the most important piece of equipment to add is headphones. Even an inexpensive set allows students to hear not only their own voices but also any background noise.
- Editing, recording, and mixing can be done using GarageBand for Apple or Audacity for PCs. The Anchor.fm app allows you to record, edit, and publish. If you want to publish for a more restricted audience, you can use your teacher or school website.
- Be aware of students who do not have full media releases and give them important roles like researchers, producers, mixers, or sound engineers.

Using Podcasting in the Social Studies Classroom
By Teresa Brewer, Buckhorn High School

My students have found podcasting to be an exciting opportunity for student-driven research as well as a creative outlet. Students can design and create a product to share, rather than use a textbook or Internet text for learning. This hands-on approach encourages personal interaction through interviews and recordings. Students take that material back to their studio for a final mix-down and edit. The learning gained from the edit and production process can be used in a variety of settings outside the studio and even in the work force. I feel like everything we learn inside or outside the classroom should help prepare students for life's next steps, whether that is college, a vocational setting, or work.

A couple of years ago my students wanted to focus on our culture and heritage. They developed an after-school program, which was student designed and led. They wrote for a grant they called "Heritage in the Arts." Once they received the grant, they hosted a series of after-school classes on activities such as basket-weaving, writing, painting, cooking and canning, and quilting, to name a few.

As these classes were in progress, students used iPads and simple lapel microphones to conduct a series of interviews with participants, who told us their personal stories of how these activities used to be a part of everyday life. One family had three generations present for the basket class. Entire families joined us for the cooking and canning class. We even decided to publish a local cookbook for the whole community. We enjoyed hearing about our local history and traditions from people who lived it. What an excellent opportunity to glean our local history from the young and old alike!

Once the stories were recorded, the students began to cut and edit. Questions from the interviewer can be edited out. Background noise can be cleaned up or a track of background music can be added to set the stage for the story the listener is about to hear. Students may even choose to add sound effects to make the podcast better or more exciting to listen to.

My students enjoyed the process so much that, in that same year, we built a small in-school studio to go along with our portable studio. We are still growing and have partnered with our local college to offer even more technology and recording opportunities for our students.

I am so glad that my students have an opportunity to master 21st century learning skills while creating something to be shared and enjoyed by all. History is not all in the past, we live it out each and every day. Podcasting is a fun way to get community buy-in, explore your local history and heritage and share it out in a versatile way. My students have enjoyed integrating local history, technology, and creativity in developing podcasts.

Suggested Activity

Step 1: Critical Listening
Begin by having students listen to at least two of the segments in the Vote Worthy series. Including at least part of Program 2 (the program with questions from various Kentuckians) is a good idea since it has a different format than the segments in Program 1. Ask students to analyze Vote Worthy by noting these elements:

- length
- format
- purpose
- topic

- tone
- audience
- music or other sound effects
- credits

Also ask them to listen for content that provides information that is new or of particular interest to them or that they do not fully understand.

Discuss what they noted about the format. Was it the same in both segments, or was there a difference? If different formats, which did they find more engaging?

What did they notice about the music? Was the selection appropriate? Did it add to the flow of the story? Did it make the podcast more appealing?

Step 2: Brainstorming
If you have done one of the other Vote Worthy lessons, you could use that as a springboard for determining a topic for your podcast. Or you could divide students into small groups and have them identify a topic they would like to use for an original podcast. You can work as a class to create a single podcast or have students work in groups to create podcasts.

Have students consider and define their podcast's purpose and intended audience. This is a good time to discuss the difference between facts and opinions and have them consider how they will distinguish between these in the podcast.

As a class, consider the format you will use. Do you want to have a host moderating a discussion with experts or answering questions? Do you want to record an interviews with local elected officials or community leaders and include excerpts from the interviews? Do you want to use a narrative approach? What are advantages and drawbacks of each approach?

If you are creating more than one podcast, will you use a common intro and outro? What credits should be included?
Will you use music to add to the flow? This is a good time to discuss copyright and resources for copyright free music. (E.g., https://www.bensound.com/, Pond5, Freesound, Creative Commons and Incompetech)
You can determine these parameters yourself or engage students in the decisions. You might have small groups pitch proposals for podcasts and discuss which are feasible and appropriate for your purpose and audience. If possible, select several or combine ideas from several proposals.

Step 3: Creating the Podcast(s)
Determine the roles of the students in the process (researchers, interviewers, narrators, experts, editors, sound mixers, etc.) You could have them complete job applications for their positions including any qualifications or past experience they have related to the position.

Have students work in teams to:
- research the topic
- create storyboards, outlines, or scripts for each segment
- conduct and record interviews if you are using them
- identify and download music
- create a script for the intro and outro (including credits) and record these
- record any narration or discussion
- select clips and combine them into segments
- edit
- review as a class and make any final edits
- publish!

Additional Resources
- Creating Podcasts (KET Media Arts Toolkit) at https://ket.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/media_arts_classroom7/creating-podcasts/

- KQED Teach's Podcasting with Youth Radio at https://teach.kqed.org
- Audio Recording Tips (KET Media Arts Toolkit at https://ket.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/tips_how_to2/audio-recording-media-arts-toolkit/

Kentucky Academic Standards

Social Studies

HS.C.I.CC.1 Engage in civil discussion, reach consensus when appropriate and respect diverse opinions relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in civics.

HS.C.I.CC.2 Engage in disciplinary thinking and construct arguments, explanations or public communications relevant to meaningful and/or investigative questions in civics.

HS.C.I.CC.3 Engage in disciplinary thinking and apply appropriate evidence to propose a solution or design an action plan relevant to compelling and/or supportive questions in civics.

Reading and Writing Literacy Practices
- Recognize that text is anything that communicates a message.
- Employ, develop, and refine schema to understand and create text.
- View literacy experiences as transactional, interdisciplinary, and transformative.
- Utilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others, and the world.
- Apply strategic practices, with scaffolding and then independently, to approach new literacy tasks.
- Collaborate with others to create new meaning.
- Utilize digital resources to learn and share with others.
- Engage in specialized literacy practices.

Reading and Composing Guiding Principles
- Students will integrate and evaluate content presented in print/non-print forms of text found in diverse media and formats.
- Students will compose informative and explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content.
- Students will use a variety of strategies to determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases, consulting reference material when appropriate.
- Students will acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking and listening in order to be transition ready.
- Students will conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- Students will gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source and integrate the information for the purposes of analysis, reflection and research while avoiding plagiarism.

Media Arts
- Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.
- Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.
- Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic technique and work for presentation.
- Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
- Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Resource created by Teresa Brewer, history teacher at Buckhorn High School, and Judy Sizemore, education consultant

Background Reading for Student-Created Podcasting

The informational podcasts in the Vote Worthy series were produced in 2020 and early 2021, a time when national attention was focused on the general election. The intent was not to advocate for a party or candidate but to help a broad audience understand the complex issues of voting rights and processes.

Podcasting is a unique combination of both technology and the creative arts. It enables us to utilize new technologies to broadcast, edit, and publish, while reaching out to an unlimited audience. There is great potential for personal and community learning by creating and disseminating authentic, real time, historical artifacts.

Supplemental Resources

The Annenberg Guide to the United States Constitution. An interactive guide with original text and explanations of the meaning of each article and amendment

The Avalon Project (Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Law Library). Dozens of documents relating to law, history, and diplomacy, including The American Constitution-A Documentary Record and The Federalist Papers

Ballotpedia. Searchable online "encyclopedia of American politics."

GovTrack.us. Comprehensive source of legislative information and statistics. Includes extensive information about Kentucky politics and public policy.

iCivics website. Nonpartisan Civis education resource founded by Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'cConner is 2009; includes games and curriculum units on a wide range of topics.

Joshuadouglas.com. The blog of University of Kentucky law professor Joshua A. Douglas, who is featured in the Vote Worthy podcasts. Includes information about his book and links to numerous articles he has written on a variety of topics relating to voting and elections.

Kentucky Educational Television Public Affairs web pages. Information about public affairs programing on Kentucky Educational Television (KET), whose managing producer Renee Shaw is featured in the Vote Worthy series. Includes links to KET live streams of Kentucky General Assembly sessions and key committee meetings.

Kentucky Legislative Research Commission website. Official website of Kentucky's General Assembly, including comprehensive information on legislators, bills, and Kentucky laws, along with informational bulletins and teacher resources.

National Youth Rights Association website. Information on a variety of issues relating to youth rights, including extensive resources on voting age.

PBS Electoral Decorder. An interactive cartogram that enables students to explore all presidential elections to date. Found in PBS LearningMedia, a searchable repository which has numerous other resources relating to elections and civic.

United States Courts website. Information about federal courts, judges, and judgeships, including Educational Resources.

Glossary

19th Amendment: ratified August 18, 1920, the amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women the right to vote

abridged: diminished or reduced in scope

absentee ballot: a ballot completed and cast (or mailed in) before an election by a voter who is unable to be present at the polls

absentee voting: voting by mail before election day

advocacy: public support for a cause or policy

Alpha Suffrage Club: the first black women's suffrage club in Chicago, founded in 1913 by Ida. B Wells; its goals included giving voice to African-American women (who were excluded from national suffrage organizations such as the National American Woman Suffrage Association) and promoting the election of African Americans to public office.

amendment: an addition or to the U.S. Constitution

Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906): an American social reformer and women's rights advocate who played a key role in the women's suffrage movement

ballot box: a sealed container used to store paper voting ballots before they are counted; often used as a symbolic name for voting in general

bipartisan: representing the involvement or input of more than one political party

butterfly ballot: a ballot used in Palm Beach County, Florida, during the 2000 presidential election; the space that voters pressed to mark their choices was misaligned with the row of the given candidates, causing some people to accidentally vote for a candidate other than the one they intended to vote for

census: a complete counting of a population and recording of specific information. In the United States, an official census is legally mandated by the Constitution to take place every ten years. The results determine, among other things, the apportionment of seats in the U.S. House or Representatives.

constituents: voters

contiguous: connecting without a break

cracking the vote: drawing district lines so that like-minded voters are split into multiple districts to dilute their voting power

denied: refused

direct election: an election in which people vote directly for the person, persons or political party that they want to see elected to a political position

drop box: public boxes into which voters can drop their ballots as opposed to going to a polling location to vote in person

early voting: a process to allow voters to cast their ballots before a scheduled election day

election fraud: illegal interference with the results of an election, either by artificially raising or lowering the number of votes cast for a given candidate or party

Electoral College: Established in Article II, Section 1 of the U.S. Constitution, the Electoral College is the formal body which elects the President and Vice President of the United States.

faithless electors: Electoral College electors who do not vote for the candidates for whom the elector had pledged to vote and instead vote for another person

federalism: a type of government in which the nation is not simply one single unit, but a collection of state governments under the banner of one national government, each of which has important roles, responsibilities, and identities

free and fair election: an election in which voters can decide whether or not to vote and can vote freely for the candidate or party of their choice without fear or intimidation and in which all voters have an equal opportunity to register and have their votes counted

draft: mandatory enrollment of individuals into the armed forces

general election: a regularly held election for political office

geopolitical unit: a political jurisdiction or area based on location

gerrymandering: drawing the boundaries of an electoral district to favor one party or class

interstate compact: An agreement between two or more states

Kentucky General Assembly: the state legislature of Kentucky, comprised of the Kentucky Senate and Kentucky House of Representatives

Kentucky Legislative Research Commission (LRC): Created in 1948, this state agency provides support to the state legislature. It is co-chaired by the President of the Kentucky Senate and the Speaker of the Kentucky House of Representatives. Sixteen members are selected form the leadership of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The LRC provides staff and research support, produces educational materials, and maintains a reference library and website.

Lyndon B. Johnson (1908-1973): the 36th President of the United States; among his achievements was signing into law the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which prohibits racial discrimination in access to voting

municipality: a city or town that has corporate status and local government

National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA): an organization founded in 1869 by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton that worked for women's right to vote

National Popular Vote plan: A plan that has been enacted into law in 15 states that will, if and when it takes effect, award all the Electoral College votes belonging to those states to the winner of the national popular vote rather than to the winner of the state popular vote

National Woman's Party: an American political organization formed in 1911 to work for women's suffrage; its main leader was Alice Paul.

nonpartisan: not biased toward any particular political party

packing the vote: drawing district lines so that like-minded voters are packed into as few districts as possible

partisan: representing the involvement or input of a single political party

Alice Paul (1885-1977): an American suffragist and women's rights advocate who was a primary strategist in the work to pass the 19th amendment

polarization: division into two sharply contrasting groups

political machine: in U.S. politics, a party organization, often headed by a single boss or small group, that controls the votes of supporters to maintain political and administrative control of a city, county, or state

political platform: a candidate or political party's statement of principles, goals and stands on issues

poll tax: tax of a fixed sum on every liable individual regardless of income or resources. Prior to 1965, payment of a poll tax was required in order to register to vote in a number of states.

popular vote: in the U.S. presidential election, the vote made directly by qualified voters as opposed to the Electoral College

primary election: an election to determine which candidates will represent political parties in the general election

ranked choice voting: A system of voting that allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference rather than simply voting for one candidate

ratification: formal confirmation

redistricting: the redrawing of political district lines following the U.S> Census to reflect population representation

regulatory safeguards: laws or regulatory measures put into place to help ensure that elections are fair and free

Shelby County v. Holder: a landmark 2013 U.S. Supreme Court decision that struck down the constitutionality of a provision of the 1965 Voting Rights Act; had important ramifications for modern voting rights

suffrage: the legal right to vote in elections

turnout: the percentage of eligible voters who cast ballots in an election

urban-county government: one unified jurisdiction that includes one or more cities and their surrounding county

vote by mail: Every state allows mail-in voting, but many restrict eligibility for mail-in voting by certain criteria. In 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic, many states gave all voters an excuse to vote in the General Election.

voter fraud: an intentional corruption of the election process in which an individual voter or voters engage in activities such as duplicate voting, impersonation of another voter in order to vote twice, vote selling, or voting where or when not eligible to vote

voter suppression: activities intended to influence the outcome of an election by discouraging or preventing specific groups of people from voting; strategies (usually laws) that seek to influence the outcome of elections by preventing or discouraging certain citizens or groups of citizens from casting their votes; common voter suppression techniques include things that make it difficult for voters to exercise their constitutional right to vote, for example, shortening the hours when polling places are open

voting bloc: a group of voters whose common concern or concerns around certain issues are so strong that it tends to dominate their voting decisions, causing them to vote together in elections

Ida. B. Wells (1862-1931): An African American journalist, educator and leader in the early civil rights and women's suffrage movements; she was a co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1909.

"winner takes all": an Electoral College approach in which the winner of the most popular votes receives all of that state's electors; every state with the exception of Maine and Nebraska use this system

women's suffrage: the right of women by law to vote