

Introduction to Elections

In this lesson, students in elementary grades will get to know the voting process and how elections work. Choose which grade level fits best with your state social studies standards.

SUBJECT:

Social Studies

GRADE LEVEL:

Lower Elementary

Upper Elementary

OBJECTIVES:

Students will learn vocabulary associated with elections.

Students will learn the election process.

Students will learn the purpose of elections.

MATERIALS:

Ability to play videos from YouTube: "Voting for Kids: Why Voting is Important?" by Kids Academy (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GrG7zBUDiqQ>) or "YOU CHOOSE: Presley Talks About Voting" by PBS KIDS (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6oFLipB6g8>)

Book related to elections or the presidency. Possible Titles:

Duck for President by Doreen Cronin (Simon & Schuster 2004)

So You Want to Be President by Judith St. George (Philomel Books 2000)

Grace for President by Kelly DuPucchio (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers 2018)

Lillian's Right to Vote by Jonah Winter (Random House 2015)

What's the Big Deal about Elections by Ruby Shamir (Penguin 2020)

Amelia Bedelia's First Vote by Herman Parish (HarperCollins 2012)

TIME NEEDED:

Two or more class periods

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

Day 1

1. What is an election? Think-Pair-Share: Call on random groups/tables to share what they discussed.
2. Watch Kids Academy YouTube video or PBS Kids YouTube video.
3. Discuss how elections are used in our country to select leaders in cities, states, and the country. For example:

Adult citizens are able to vote to say who they think should be the leaders.

Elections take place at special times every year, but not all leaders are elected each year. For example, the president is elected every four years and so is the governor.

People who want to be one of the leaders are called candidates.

Voters choose which candidate they like best for each leadership job by filling out a form called a ballot.

Votes are kept private. All of the votes on the ballots are added up, and typically the person with the most votes wins.

4. Vocabulary Match: Individually or in groups, students will match the vocabulary word to the definition. Then, they will discuss the answers as a whole group. If your school or district social studies curriculum uses different definitions, be sure to adjust to use those and add any additional terms.

Election: When members of a group vote for their choice of leader.

Vote: How to share your personal choice for something.

Ballot: The form you fill out to say who you want to vote for.

Candidate: One of the people you can vote for in an election.

5. Practice casting your vote. Each student will receive a paper or electronic copy of a ballot. They will vote for their choice of a favorite item. Do as many as time allows. Examples: Favorite ice cream flavor (chocolate, vanilla, other); Favorite color (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink, white, black, brown, gray); Favorite type of pet (cat, dog, bird, fish, reptile, other)



Favorite Ice Cream Flavor

Chocolate

Vanilla

Other: _____

Submit

Once each person has cast their vote anonymously, share the results in a graph.

Discuss the results of the votes.

Day 2

1. Read a picture book related to elections. Pause during the reading to identify any vocabulary words or concepts from the previous day. Consider sharing books you did not read in library with teachers for use in their classrooms. If needed, include a copy of the definitions so the classroom teacher can call out vocabulary or key concepts as well.

2. Develop Questions. Brainstorm questions that students still have about elections, independently or in small groups. Share all of the questions with the whole group. Then, each individual or small group will select three questions they want to find answers to using resources in the library.

3) Explore Information. Using print nonfiction books in your library, a collection of eBooks like these from Epic! (<https://www.getepic.com/collection/17199839/elections-inquiry-activity>), and/or a database, students will seek the answers to their questions. Students can ask for help if they are unable to find answers after attempting on their own. Remind students that it is not always possible to find all of your answers in one source. They may have to search multiple places to find everything (which they may not have time to do in this one class period).

4. Students can share the answers they found to their questions using a program like SeeSaw or Flipgrid. They could also write their answers out on a graphic organizer to submit on paper. Students can also share their answers verbally with the whole class as well.

ASSESSMENT

Provide feedback to students on the answers they included in their Flipgrid, Seesaw, or paper products. Correct any misconceptions, give suggestions for questions left unanswered, and acknowledge successful inquiry results.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Get more ideas about how to teach about elections in Courtney Pentland's editorial, "[Connecting Students to the Political Process.](#)"

MLA CITATION

"Introduction to Elections." *School Library Connection*, February 2025, schoollibraryconnection.com/Content/LessonPlan/2254412.

<https://schoollibraryconnection.com/Content/LessonPlan/2254412>

Entry ID: 2254412

COPYRIGHT 2025 ABC-CLIO, LLC