



## **Kids Vote – Elementary** (Notes to accompany PDF version)

Page 1:

This unit of study:

- Introduces students to the concept of voting, using the Kids Vote Five Main Concepts:
  - My vote gives me power.
  - I have a right and responsibility to vote.
  - I study the candidates and the issues.
  - I register and vote.
  - I continue to make a difference.
- Integrates the Project Citizen problem-based methodology

Recommendation is to implement the unit of study...

- in chunks (break into smaller lessons). Logical breaking points are noted by yellow title page.
- in connection with standard curriculum - i.e. if studying "ecosystems" use that concept to guide brainstorm on issues/problems

Page 2: Give students time to come up with three issues or problems that are important to them. Encourage students to think about school, home, community issues. Three examples are provided. After the time expires, conduct a "think, pair, share". Ask students to share their list with a partner and agree about 2 issues/problems that are important to both of them that they will share with the whole class.

Page 3: Whole class - ask partners to select one of their top 2 issues to share with the class. Use the visual map to share issues. As a class, make note of repeats (if any) and teacher to compile a final list of problems. Teacher to ask the class - how can we decide which issue/problem we want to focus on? Teacher to facilitate the discussion, emphasizing the need to implement a fair process. Hopefully, a student will suggest voting.

Page 4: Ask students to define vote, as a noun and verb. Have students compare their definition to the dictionary's definition. Ask students to think of times when they have voted... examples: American Idol (vote by phone), online (vote with a click), etc.

Page 5: In this activity, "The Odd Vote", students will practice voting by exploring different ways to vote on various issues.

Page 6: Students will vote on this issue using their body.

Page 7: Students will vote on this issue using learner response systems (CPS, Senteo, etc.), if available. If learner response systems are not available, choose another method of voting (hands, paper ballot).

Page 8: Students will vote on this issue using paper ballots.

Page 9: Students will select a voting method and vote on this issue. The class will carry out the voting result. Debrief with these questions:

- Do you like voting this way? Why or why not?
- Did your friends vote the same way you did? Does this matter?
- There are times when a vote should be private. Why?
- On the final vote, did your vote give you any power? How? Emphasize that voting gives you power.

Tie back to the way kids will be voting in Kids Vote.

Page 10: After discussing the different ways to vote and the power in voting, ask students to vote on one more issue. Show the compiled list of problems/issues from page three and ask students to vote on which problem/issue they would like to focus on, learn more about, etc. Select a voting method that works best for class (using body, learner response system, paper ballot). Tally the results and announce which topic will be addressed.

Page 11: Hand out either learner response system or paper ballots to half the class. Ask those students who have either a LRS or paper ballot to vote. Tally the votes and carry out the decision. Students will spend time researching the issue. Some guiding questions:

- Why is this issue important?
- What are some existing solutions to the problem?
- Whom/what does this problem affect?

Page 12: Explain to students that the exercise was a non-voter simulation.

Page 13: After carrying out the decision, debrief with the whole class, using the questions as a guide. Spend time discussing the information students found regarding the problem.

Page 14: In this activity, students will study the candidates and the issues.

Page 15: Create a document that resembles this page, including pictures of each candidate and their name. Challenge students to identify the candidates.

Pages 16-18: Create a series of documents that include each candidate's picture and a brief quote pertaining to key topics (education, economy, health care). After reviewing each candidate's position, ask students which candidate they agree with.

Page 19: Ask students to come up with questions about the problem that they would ask each candidate to understand where they stand on [insert problem]. For example, if the issue was recycling, a good question to ask the candidates would be, "how are you going to motivate people to recycle?"

Pages 20-25: In the "Two Ballots" activity, students will vote twice. For the first vote, cover the red text so that students only see one word (in black). Write the results of the first vote on the board. Then, reveal the entire sentence and ask students to vote again. Write the results of the second vote on the board. Compare the two results and discuss the following:

- What difference was there between the first and second vote?
- Did you change your vote once you had all the information?
- Why is it important to gather information before we vote?
- Where can we get information before voting?

Pages 26-27: Have students look at bumper stickers and discuss similarities, differences, underlying themes. Why do candidates create and distribute bumper stickers? For visibility. Why do voters use bumper stickers? To show their support, to make their choice visible, to persuade others...

Page 28: Engage students in the task: to create their own bumper sticker that promotes a solution to the targeted problem.

Pages 29-30: Students will share one thing that they wish for Hawaii as it relates to the problem/issue. Have students vote on whether wishes are good (realistic) or bad.

Discussion questions:

- Can wishes come true?
- How can wishes for our state come true?
- Is there anything a young person can do to help these wishes come true?

Page 31: Help students connect wishes to actions. For each wish, have students brainstorm an appropriate action. Actions can be as simple as "pick up one piece of litter every day" to "write my representative a letter".

Pages 32-33: Summarize the five key concepts to conclude the lesson.