

## Kids Voting USA Classroom Activities Overview - Middle School

*See last page of this document for instructions on accessing the curriculum*



GRADE	THEME	CONCEPT/ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	MATERIALS & RESOURCES	DESCRIPTION
<b>6-8</b>	<b>Elections and Voting</b>	<b>My Vote Gives Me Power</b>	<b>Students will develop an appreciation for the power and influence of voting.</b>		
		<b>Lesson 1:</b> Poll on Apathy	Students poll voters to examine voter responsibility.	Poll On Apathy handout (provided); construction paper; bulletin board	This lesson allows students to learn about responsibility and use graphs to display data.
		<b>Lesson 2:</b> Apathy Cartoon Analysis	Students analyze political cartoons portraying apathy to examine the value of voting.	Political Cartoon Analysis handouts 1 & 2 (provided); Apathy Cartoons handout (provided) Use political cartoons from <a href="http://www.charlotteobserver.com">www.charlotteobserver.com</a> as resource	In this lesson students learn how to obtain information from a new source.
<b>6-8</b>	<b>Elections and Voting</b>	<b>I Register and Vote</b>	<b>Students will understand what is involved in the registration and voting process.</b>		
		<b>Lesson 1:</b> Registration Simulation	Students simulate registration to become familiar with the process.	Voter Registration Application handout (provided); Application Instructions handout (provided); Kids Voting Registration Form handout (provided)	This lesson allows students to learn about the registration process and responsibility.
		<b>Lesson 2:</b> Polling Places	Students find their polling places to prepare to vote.	Polling Place Forms handout (provided)  List of local polling places from Kids Voting Charlotte/GenerationNation	This lesson shows students the versatility of community buildings.

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				<a href="http://www.generationnation.org">www.generationnation.org</a>	
		<b>Lesson 3:</b> Our National Symbol	Students participate in a primary election simulation and in a caucus simulation to explore and compare the processes.	Paper for ballots  Use this activity for school decisions and other issues relevant to students	This lesson has students learn how to compare and contrast two things in order to think critically and make a decision.
<b>6-8</b>	<b>Elections and Voting</b>	<b>Suffrage Then and Now</b>			
		<b>Lesson 1:</b> Suffrage Sequence Cards	Students study the history of voting rights to gain a better understanding of the right to vote.	U.S. Suffrage Timeline Cards handout (provided); U.S. Suffrage Timeline with Dates handout (provided)	This lesson teaches students American history through a game.
		<b>Lesson 2:</b> Vote Quotes	Students study famous quotes to learn the significance of the right to vote.	Vote Quotes handout (provided)  Find others on the web	This lesson requires students to interpret different texts.
		<b>Lesson 3:</b> Historical Debate – Women’s Suffrage	Students debate women’s suffrage.	A large piece of newsprint or butcher paper	This interactive lesson has students practice their presentation skills.
		<b>Lesson 4:</b> The Long Journey	Students explore the history of Native Americans and the right to vote.	The Long Journey handout (provided)	This lesson teaches students about Native American history through

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					writing.
		<b>Lesson 5:</b> 1965 Alabama Literacy Test	Students experience the injustice of voter discrimination.  Great questions for warm ups and prep, also	1965 Alabama Literacy Test handout (provided); Answers to Alabama Literacy Test handout (provided)	This lesson has students practice using primary sources to learn about information in the lesson.
		<b>Lesson 6:</b> Part of the Franchise	Students personalize the history of the right to vote.	Lined paper	This interactive lesson gives students a visual history of voting.
		<b>Lesson 7:</b> Who has the Power?	Students evaluate the history of the right to vote in America	Petition: I Want to Vote! handout (provided); Petitioner Descriptions handout (provided); Outcome Cards handout (provided)	This lesson is interactive and has students using presentation techniques.
		<b>Lesson 8:</b> Voting Barriers	Students consider the barriers to voting today, including their causes and impact.  Great to use for local, state or federal government, global studies, role-play, compare and contrast historic to present times, etc.	None	This lesson requires students to practice presentations and cause and effect relationships.
<b>6-8</b>	<b>Democracy and the People</b>	<b>What is Democracy?</b>	<b>Students will understand the principles that make a government democratic.</b>		
		<b>Lesson 1:</b> Types of Government	Students understand what democracy is within the context of other forms of government.	Types of Government handout (provided)	This lesson allows students to learn about other countries and build communication skills

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		<b>Lesson 2:</b> A Body of Information	Students consider all the ways that democracy impacts our lives.  Great to use for journaling, local, state or federal government, global studies, role-play, compare and contrast historic to present times, etc.	Butcher paper; multicolored markers; scissors; government agencies information  Use technology for web presentation	This interactive lesson gives students the opportunity to learn about the services the community provides.
<b>6-8</b>	<b>Democracy and the People</b>	<b>Democracy in America</b>	<b>Students will understand how America fits the model of a democracy.</b>		
		<b>Lesson 1:</b> Political History Interview	Students interview an adult to learn firsthand about the American democratic experience.	Political History Interview Questions handout (provided)	This lesson introduces students to primary sources and has them practice their writing skills.
		<b>Lesson 2:</b> Citizen's Jeopardy	Students learn about American democracy by studying 25 facts and then playing Jeopardy in two teams.	Citizen's Jeopardy handout (provided); small prizes	This interactive lesson allows students to learn history and practice teamwork.
		<b>Lesson 3:</b> If Elected...	Students consider the power of American democracy in action, making decisions as an elected leader would.  Great to use for local, state or federal government, global studies, role-play, compare and contrast historic to present times, etc.	Lined paper  Use web to identify issues and policies for decision-making	This lesson allows students to build communication and leadership skills.
<b>6-8</b>	<b>Democracy and the People</b>	<b>A Citizen's Rights and Responsibilities</b>	<b>Students will learn the rights and responsibilities of an American citizen.</b>		

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		<b>Lesson 1:</b> The “Right” Way	Students identify the rights guaranteed to them by the Bill of Rights.	The “Right” Way handout (provided)	In this lesson students learn about the Bill of Rights.
		<b>Lesson 2:</b> A Declaration	Students read an excerpt from the Declaration of Independence and interpret it in their own words.	A Declaration handout (provided)	This lesson requires students to analyze a source and practice interpretation and writing skills.
<b>6-8</b>	<b>Democracy and the People</b>	<b>Democracy in the World</b>	<b>Students learn about democracy in a global context</b>		
		<b>Lesson 1:</b> Democracy: Who? What? Where?	Students investigate questions about their government and other governments around the world.	Democracy: Who? What? Where? handout (provided)	This lesson allows students to learn about America’s government through research.
		<b>Lesson 2:</b> Pen Pals	Students contact other students around the globe to learn about different democracies.	Appropriate letter writing materials: paper, pens/pencils, envelopes, etc.	This lesson allows students to learn about another culture while practicing their writing skills.
		<b>Lesson 3:</b> A Message from Nelson Mandela	Students compare and contrast aspects of American and South African democracy.	A Message from Nelson Mandela to the Youth of America handout (provided)	In this lesson students practice comparing and contrasting and their writing skills.
<b>6-8</b>	<b>Informed Citizen</b>	<b>Gathering and Weighing information</b>	<b>Students will learn how to study the candidates and issues relevant to an election.</b>		

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		<b>Lesson 1:</b> Watching the Returns	Students monitor the election returns to stay politically active.	U.S. Map handout (provided)	This lesson requires students to use the media to obtain information.
		<b>Lesson 2:</b> Decision-Making Chart	Students gather and evaluate information to help them make an informed decision. Great activity for many uses.	Decision- Making Chart handout (provided)	Students work with charts and practice making informed decisions.
		<b>Lesson 3:</b> Judging Propaganda	Students learn to identify various forms of propaganda.	Judging Propaganda handout (provided); writing and drawing materials	In this lesson students are able to display their knowledge of propaganda techniques through pictures and writing.
<b>6-8</b>	<b>Informed Citizen</b>	<b>Technology/Media Literacy</b>	<b>Students will learn to use technology and media for information</b>		
		<b>Lesson 1:</b> Evaluate a website	Students learn how to become critical consumers of information on the World Wide Web and evaluate a Web site.	Evaluate A Web Site handout (provided); access to the Internet	This lesson allows students to learn about credible web sources.
		<b>Lesson 2:</b> Newspaper Scavenger Hunt	Students identify newspaper sections and evaluate articles to answer specific questions.	Multiple copies of a local or national newspaper; small prizes such as candy or pencils	This lesson familiarizes students with news sources through a game.

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<b>6-8</b>	<b>Informed Citizen</b>	<b>I Study the Candidates and Issues</b>	<b>Students gather and analyze information to think critically and make decisions</b>		
		<b>Lesson 1:</b> Solutions	Students gather information to prepare to vote.  Great to use for local, state or federal government, global studies, role-play, compare and contrast historic to present times, etc.	We Elect Leaders to Help Solve Society’s Problems handout (provided)	This lesson requires students to use the media to learn about government leaders.
		<b>Lesson 2:</b> Rate the Candidates	Students carefully study the candidates to make a voting decision.  Great to use for local, state or federal government, global studies, role-play, compare and contrast historic to present times, etc.	My Concerns and the Issues in This Election handout (provided); Rate the Candidate’s Experience handout (provided); Rate the Candidates’ Characteristics handout (provided)	This lesson has students research a candidate in order to learn how to make informed decisions.
		<b>Lesson 3:</b> Party Planks	Students examine the concepts of parties and party planks.  Great to use for local, state or federal government, global studies, role-play, compare and contrast historic to present times, etc.	Party Planks handout (provided)	In this lesson students learn about the two major parties by searching out information.

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		<b>Lesson 4:</b> Election Accountability	Students gather and track information that pertains to campaign promises.  Great to use for local, state or federal government, global studies, role-play, compare and contrast historic to present times, etc.	Web, news media, government websites	This lesson has students utilize media sources in order to practice their writing skills.
<b>6-8</b>	<b>Civic Engagement/Service-Learning</b>	<b>Communicating Your Position/With Others</b>	<b>Students will learn how to clearly and effectively communicate with others.</b>		
		<b>Lesson 1:</b> Debate the Issue	Students debate a topic and communicate effectively with one another.	Debate The Issue handout (provided); stopwatch; debate films	This interactive lesson allows students to practice presentation skills.
		<b>Lesson 2:</b> Complaints and Solutions	Students simulate the important task of answering complaint mail as mayors. They troubleshoot areas of conflict in communities. <b>USE FOR ANY ISSUES.</b> Great to use for local, state or federal government, global studies, role-play, compare and contrast historic to present times, etc.	Office of the Mayor Letter Form handout (provided); Complaint Scenarios handout (provided)	This lesson allows students to build communication skills and understanding of government and leadership.
		<b>Lesson 3:</b> Student Interviews	Students interview their classmates about their ideas on politics and voting.  Great to use for local, state or federal government, global studies, role-play, compare and contrast historic to present times, etc.	Lined paper; class list	In this lesson students practice interviewing skills and communication.

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<b>6-8</b>	<b>Civic Engagement Service-Learning</b>	<b>Working Together</b>	<b>Students learn the importance of teamwork and service</b>		
		<b>Lesson 1:</b> You Can Vote	Students work together to perform various actions.	Index cards; various props that can be used to act out the different sentences	This is an interactive lesson that has students practice inference skills and cooperation.
		<b>Lesson 2:</b> Design a Sign	Students work together to invent a slogan and sign for an issue or candidate, and use their math skills to keep sign sizes within the limits set by sign ordinances.	Design A Sign handout (provided); scissors; red, blue, and green markers; white paper	This activity integrates a lesson on measurement with an artistic design
<b>6-8</b>	<b>Civic Engagement/Service-Learning</b>	<b>I Make a Difference</b>	<b>Students will learn how to stay involved with civic affairs after an election.</b>		
		<b>Lesson 1:</b> It's Official	Students send letters to elected officials.  Use technology to send emails, communicate on Facebook, Twitter, etc.	Paper; envelopes; writing materials  List of officials and contact info at <a href="http://www.generationnation.org">www.generationnation.org</a>	This lesson allows students to practice effective communications.
		<b>Lesson 2:</b> Targeting Problems in my Community	Students learn about different problems in the local community, choose one, and brainstorm ways they can make a difference.	Local newspapers; Let's Make a Difference handout (provided)	This lesson allows students to get involved with their community and involves their parents.

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		<b>Lesson 3:</b> How're we Doin'?	Students survey neighbors and friends to assess the community's perception of its own problems.	Community Assessment Survey handout (provided); graphing materials	In this lesson students practice gathering and assessing information, and putting raw data into graphs.

Activity	Objective	Description
Overarching Questions	Students review lessons learned in Kids Voting activities.	Students are able to discuss orally or through writing what they have learned.
<u>Literature Connection</u> Elections and Voting – A Time for Courage Democracy – Government: How Local, State and Federal Government Works Informed Citizen – Landslide: A Kid's Guide to US Elections Civic Engagement – Fight On! Mary Church Terrell's Battle for Integration	Students read to further their understanding and application of themes and concepts.	Students are able to learn about government and democracy through reading and games.
Culminating Activity Elections and Voting – Use it or Lose it Informed Citizen – I Go to the Polls Civic Engagement – Toward a More Perfect Community	Students experience and explore elections, voting, democracy, civic engagement and more.  Activities, such as the Kids Voting mock vote, are coordinated by Kids Voting. In Charlotte region, contact <a href="http://www.generationnation.org">www.generationnation.org</a> for more information.	Activities help students to boost comprehension and interest.



## Using the Kids Voting USA Curriculum

To access free online lessons about elections and voting, democracy, media literacy, citizenship, civic engagement and more, take the following steps:

1. Go to [www.kidsvotingusa.org/curriculum](http://www.kidsvotingusa.org/curriculum)
2. A **login page** will open.

### New users

- Click on the “**register**” link
- Enter, and re-enter, **your email address**
- Fill in your **first name** and **last name**
- For affiliate name, write “**Kids Voting Charlotte**”
- Fill in your **school name** and **city**
- Choose your **state** from the drop-down box
- Create, and re-enter, a **password**
- Fill in the “captcha” **code**
- Click “**register**”

*Within a period of time, you will receive an email from Kids Voting USA a confirmation and other login information*

### Returning users

- Login using your email and password

3. After you log in, an **introductory curriculum page** will open. At the bottom of the page, select the appropriate links for

K-2 activities

3-5 activities

6-8 activities

9-12 activities

#### 4. Using the curriculum

The **Kids Voting USA curriculum** is designed to be **flexible and easy to incorporate** into existing lesson plans. Within each age grouping, activities are divided into 4 major themes. From the curriculum page, click on the appropriate theme to access the individual activities.

##### Elections and Voting

The intent of this theme is to educate students about elections, from gaining an appreciation of the power of voting including what suffrage is and why it is an important concept today to understanding the registration process and participating in an election. The theme's activities fall under three concepts: My Vote Gives Me Power; I Register and Vote; and Suffrage Then and Now. *Note: lessons in other themes tie in to elections and voting*

##### Democracy and the People

The intent of this theme is to provide an understanding of and a context for American democracy and citizenship, from the rights and responsibilities of students in their local, state and national communities to the world beyond. The theme's activities fall under four concepts: What is Democracy; Democracy in America; A Citizen's Rights and Responsibilities; and Democracy in the World.

##### Informed Citizen

The intent of this theme is for students to learn how to evaluate information, intelligently form decisions and communicate your positions to others. The theme's activities fall under three concepts: I Study the Candidates and Issues; Gathering and Weighing Information; and Technology/Media Literacy.

##### Civic Engagement/Service Learning

The intent of this theme is for students to practice the skills of democratic living as they learn important civic lessons in the classroom and participate in activities in their communities. The theme's activities fall under three concepts: Working Together; I Make A Difference; and Communicating with Others.

#### 5. For your convenience, a PDF file of each activity is available for printing

#### 6. **ESL resources** are also available on the website

#### 7. Curriculum is **aligned to national, state and district standards and goals**. Alignment guides for the Common Core, North Carolina Essential Standards for Social Studies and other correlations are being developed in mid-2012. This content will be posted at [www.generationnation.org](http://www.generationnation.org) and shared with teacher contacts. Contact [info@kidsvoting.org](mailto:info@kidsvoting.org) for information.