Active Citizenship in After School

Dear After School Provider,

Thank you for taking the time to review this packet of activities, particularly since as a person working with youth, we know time is one of your most precious commodities! Let's be honest – you get students right at the hour when they are most ready to release pent up energy from the day and are generally most uninterested in anything even slightly resembling a "lesson." To aid you in providing those students with engaging and meaningful experiences, we have developed a brief set of suggested activities to inspire active citizenship in the young people you are working with. These activities are designed with the after school setting in mind, which we believe requires that they:

- ✓ Are easy to implement
- ✓ Require little to no supplies
- ✓ Are purposeful, structured, and educational; while still being engaging, interactive, and fun
- ✓ Can be easily modified, regardless of the time frame you are working within, the space you are using, or the number of students you are working with

The activities you will find here are meant to get your youth excited about being an active citizen within their community, from learning about the voting process to tackling a community service project.

The following table of contents provides an overview of the various activities and how they relate to one another. As you know your population best, we encourage you to modify and change the activities as you see fit. And these are only a small sampling of what is available to you. For additional activities for use in the after school setting, go to www.civics.org (click on the "Database of Civic Resources" tab at the top of the page) or www.kidsvotingdurham.org.

Happy Teaching!

The North Carolina Civic Education Consortium ~ www.civics.org
Offering free activities & lessons, trainings for teachers and after school providers, and small grants funding up to $10,000
Contact Christie Hinson for questions regarding activities or additional resources at (919) 962-8389 or hinson@sog.unc.edu

Kids Voting Durham ~ www.kidsvotingdurham.org
Offering support to ensure our community's youth understand and believe in the power they have as active citizens and informed voters
Contact Carolyn Kreuger for questions regarding voter education resources and authentic voting experiences for youth at (919) 560-7321 or carolyn@kidsvotingdurham.org

DATABASE OF CIVIC RESOURCES

To access activities on various topics for use in the after school hours, take the following steps:

1. Go to www.civics.org
2. Click on "**Database of Civic Resources**" at the top of the page.
3. An introductory page to the database will open. From this page, click "**Enter the Database**."
4. Click on "**Schools**."
5. Click on "**Activities**."
6. Select a **topic** you would like to search (i.e. "elections & voting", "classroom management," etc.; *currently, only one topic can be searched at a time.*)
7. Select the **grade** you are seeking. (If you do not want to narrow activities by grade, you can leave the box blank and click "Search Activities".)
8. Click "**Search Activities**."
9. Titles of activities available under that topic will populate in the box on the right. To access an activity, simply click on the title you would like to explore. The activity will open in a PDF file. You can also save the activity to your computer.

Note: The database is constantly being expanded. If you find only a few lessons under your topic, check back in the future, or contact hinson@sog.unc.edu to make a request.

To access online lessons aligned to the NCSCOS, take the following steps:

1. Repeat steps 1 – 4 from above.
2. Click on "**Lessons**."
3. Select your **curriculum** (i.e. Social Studies)
4. Select your **grade** (i.e. 8th grade)
5. Select your **course** (i.e. North Carolina Creation & Development of the State)
6. Select the **competency goal** you are seeking, or select "**All**" to search all lessons available for the course selected.
7. Click "**Search Lessons**"
8. Titles of lessons available will populate in the box on the right. To access a lesson, simply click on the title you would like to explore. The lesson will most often open in a PDF file. You can also save the lesson to your computer.
   - Other than the PDF files, there are also power point presentations available in the Database. When clicking on these titles, a window will pop up allowing giving you the option to open or save the PPT file. Some school district's browser settings do not allow PPT pop-ups to open. Should you have trouble accessing such files, e-mail a request for an electronic copy to hinson@sog.unc.edu or call (919) 962-8389.

*Note: If you are searching by competency goal and would like to search a new competency goal number, you do not need to repeat all of the steps above. Simply change the competency goal number in the search box and re-select "Search Lessons." Lessons that are aligned to multiple goals will reappear under each goal.

If you are seeking a lesson or activity on a particular topic that you don't find in the database, contact Christie Hinson at hinson@sog.unc.edu or (919) 962-8389.

Active Citizenship in After School

~ Suggested Order of Activities ~

Activity Title & Duration	Summary	Materials
Introductory Activity, p. 1-2: Human Scavenger Hunt (see also "Get to Know You" activities) *(20 min.)*	Students learn new things about each other and begin to explore the topic of voting in an interactive game. (Additional "Get to Know You Activities" are provided on pages 3-6.)	• Copies of Human Scavenger Hunt handout, attached
Activity 1, p. 7-14: The Good, the Bad, and the Citizen *(Part I: 30 min.; Part II: 50 min.)*	As an introduction to this series of activities, tell students they will be exploring the role of an active, responsible citizen over the next few weeks. In this first activity, participants will begin by exploring the definition of a citizen, as well as the traits ideal and negative citizens possess. They will then discuss the responsibilities of citizens in depth by participating in an acting exercise and discussing the themes illustrated in the scenes. Ideally, this activity will culminate with a volunteer event or service learning project. (Activity Leaders should use Part I of this activity as an introduction to this unit; Activity Leaders can use their discretion whether to use Part II)	• Large sheet of paper with the outline of a human drawn on • Markers • Photocopies of role plays (if doing Part II of activity); attached
Activity 2, p. 15-16: Help Me! *(30 min.)*	Students will explore the concepts of generosity, helpfulness, and teamwork in this kinesthetic activity. **Activity Leader Note:** Remind students of their ideal citizen created in Activity 1 and highlight the fact that they will be focusing on the concept of ideal citizens helping one another in this activity.	None
Activity 3, p. 17-18: Kaboom! *(30 min.)*	Students practice team work while participating in a fun game. Through discussion, students explore why responsibility is an important trait for every citizen to exhibit. **Activity Leader Note:** Again, remind students of the ideal citizen they created in Activity 1, and explain that they will be focusing on the concept of responsibility and team work in this activity. The activity should end with students reviewing what they feel are the most important responsibilities of a citizen (such as voting, volunteering, etc.)	None (blindfolds are optional)
Activity 4, p. 19-20: An Introduction to Voting with "Ice Cream in a Bag" *(30 min.)*	Students will begin to focus on a citizen's responsibility to vote, then practice voting on a flavor of ice cream or other food item they would like to make and/or eat. **Activity Leader Note:** When introducing this activity, again remind students of the themes they have been exploring (ideal citizens, generosity, team work, helpfulness, responsibility, etc.) and tell them that in this activity you want them to focus on a citizen's responsibility to vote. ✓ Write the word VOTE in large letters at the front of the room. Give students a sheet of paper and ask them to write and draw everything that comes to mind when they think about this word. After approximately 4-5 min., allow students to share some of their thoughts. ✓ Ask students if any of them have ever voted for something before and allow them to explain. Also ask students what types of things people (young & old) vote for. Compile their answers in a list up front. ✓ Tell students that today, they will practice voting. Explain that they will be voting on what flavor of ice cream they would like to eat! (see the activity within) **If Activity Leaders do not want to have students make the ice cream as the activity within describes, they can also purchase ice cream to bring in for students to eat. Activity Leaders can also choose to have students vote on a different type of food they would enjoy (perhaps a food that doesn't melt!) such as candy, chips, etc. While the activity is written with the voting happening on one day, and the eating & discussion happening on the following day, Activity Leaders can do this all in one activity (you'll just need to have a good idea of which food students will vote on in their election).	• Ice cream ingredients or store bought ice cream (other foods that don't melt can be supplemented!)

Activity 5, p. 21-22: <u>Two Ballots</u> *(15 min.)*	Students explore why it is important to not only vote, but to also be an educated voter. **Activity Leader Note:** Remind students of their voting activity from Activity 4. ✓ Ask students to share why they think it is important for citizens to vote in the upcoming elections. ✓ Next, ask students to explain what they feel makes someone qualified to vote. Note their responses in a list on the board. • Continue with the attached activity as explained.	• Photocopies of ballots; attached
Activity 6, p. 23-24: <u>Meet the Candidates</u> *(45+ min.; work can be spread out over several days)*	Students will research candidates and then put together a page consisting of pictures and promises made by the candidates running for local, state, or national offices (Activity Leaders can choose which level(s) of government to have students focus on). **Activity Leader Note:** Tell students now that they have a good sense of what being an ideal citizen entails, and now that they know why it is important to vote and ensure they are an educated voter, they will be exploring the exciting candidates running for election in November! Tell students that even though they aren't 18 & can't "officially" vote, it is still important that they learn how to prepare to be an educated and informed voter. Explain that they can also help educate adults who can vote on the candidates. (Also tell students that while they can't officially vote, they can cast a youth ballot at a Kids Voting precinct, so it's important they know the candidates!) When students have completed this activity, allow them to share the information they found with classmates, and/or post their work in the school and allow them to add to it up to election day.	• Photocopies of "Meet the Candidates" sheet (attached) or blank paper (drawing paper, poster board, etc.) for students to design their own sheet • Scissors, glue, crayons or markers) • Informational materials on candidates (Activity Leaders can provide campaign literature, newspapers, magazines, television, or internet access to students)
Activity 7, p. 25-26: <u>Voting Simulation</u> *(50 min.)* **Optional Activity, p. 27-34:** <u>Non-Voter Simulation</u>	Students vote in a simulated polling place to become more familiar with the voting process. **Activity Leader Note:** In the "Voting Simulation" activity, students will vote using a process that is close to the actual voting process. After completion of this activity, again remind students that they can vote in the upcoming November election by going to a Kids Voting poll with their parent/guardian on election day! **Optional:** Activity Leaders can follow the same procedure for setting up the room as a polling place as outlined in the "Voting Simulation," but have the judge turn students away based on random criteria as described in the "Non-Voter Simulation" within. (Note that voting does not have to occur on three separate days as described in the activity; it is fine to have one vote on a topic of your choice take place during one day.) *Recommended Option:* Activity Leaders also have the option of assigning students particular voter role cards to simulate who can and cannot vote in a more realistic fashion (see the attached role cards). The "judge" will again turn certain students away based on the description on the back of their card. This can lead to a discussion regarding how throughout history, not everyone has always had the right to vote, thus further highlighting why voting is so important! (Use the discussion questions noted at the end of the "Non-Voter Simulation.")	• Paper ballots • Materials to set up room like an election site (i.e. table, ballot box, something to serve as a voting booth) • Polling Place Diagram, attached • Copies of role cards for voters, attached
Activity 8, p. 35-36: <u>Bumper Stickers</u> *(20 min.)*	Students will advocate for a candidate, cause, or issue through the creation of bumper stickers. **Activity Leader Note:** Tell students to continue thinking of the candidates and the issues they learned about in Activity 8. Tell them that in this activity, they can choose one political candidate or one political issue that they learned about and create a bumper sticker for him/her/it. Post student work in the school once completed.	• Photocopies of bumper sticker handout (attached) or art paper for students to design their own • Art supplies (markers, crayons, etc.) • Examples of real bumper stickers (optional)
Activity 9, p. 37-38: <u>Get Out the Vote!</u> or <u>Get Registered Commercials</u> *(30 min.-1 hour)*	Now that students have an understanding of the importance of being an active, ideal citizen and the importance of voting, they will try and increase the number of voters who participate in the upcoming Election Day. **Activity Leader Note:** Activity Leaders can use the attached ideas under "Get Out the Vote," and/or use the attached "Get Registered Commercials" to have students create dramatic skits encouraging the community to register to vote and/or vote.	None (unless students choose to create posters/flyers for their voter advocacy project)

Activity 10, p. 39-40: Things to Do on my First Day in Office *(30+ min.)*	Students will think of ways to improve their communities as if they were mayor and then envision their own role in making things better. **Activity Leader Note:** The activity as described within instructs students to list things they would want to do if they were Mayor. Activity Leaders may want to alter this activity and instead instruct students to create a speech in which they pretend to by Mayor and explain all the positive changes they will make to their city. Students can then deliver these speeches to their classmates during a future class. Activity Leaders can also have students complete this activity imagining they are President rather than Mayor. Activity leaders can help students who want to send their "Things to Do Sheet" to Durham's Mayor or one of the Presidential campaigns.	• Photocopies of "Things To Do On My First Day in Office" handout (attached) or notebook paper
Activity 11, p. 41-42: Wish Tree *(30 min.)*	Students will make wishes for their local community or country that express changes they want to see. **Activity Leader Note:** Activity Leaders can also focus the wish tree students create on their school, their city, their state, on a specific issue, etc. Once the tree is completed, discuss the ways such "wishes" can come true (i.e. vote, let your government officials know your desires, volunteer, encourage others to volunteer with you, etc.) Activity leaders can invite a Durham elected official to visit and "receive" the students' wishes. (Kids Voting Durham can help link programs to officials to visit.)	• Large paper tree trunk with bare branches (cut out and taped to wall) • Art supplies • Copies of attached star or leaf shapes (or students can design their own shape on paper and cut it out)
Activity 12, p. 43-44: Web of Our Community *(20-30 min.)*	Students expand their understanding of a citizen and examine a citizen's role as part of an overall community. Part of being an active, responsible citizen within the community is recognizing that each individual's actions affect the community as a whole. Thus, citizens who are active and engaged have a positive effect on those around them and those who are apathetic have a negative effect. In this activity, students create a "web" to explore the interconnectedness of citizens living within the same community.	• Yarn
Activity 13, p. 45-52: Windows to Our Community or Learn and Serve *(1+ hour)*	In this activity, participants will explore their community, creating a piece of art representing their community as it is, as well how it can be improved. Ideally the activity will culminate in participant identification of a community service project or volunteer opportunity. Activity Leader Note: As this unit culminates, ensure students understand all the ways they can impact their community. While they are not old enough to vote, they are able to make a difference through participation in a community service project!	• Art supplies (crayons or markers) • Photocopies of the attached "Windows to Our Community or 2 pieces of large art paper per student/partner (students can replicate the handout on the art paper) • Additional materials may be required depending which service project students select
Activity 14, p. 53-54: I Go To The Polls *(time varies)*	Now that students have explored the importance of active citizenship and voting, as well as explored the candidates up for election, students will travel to a Kids Voting precinct on election day and cast a youth ballot!	• KV Precinct
Activity 15, p. 55-56: Watching the Returns *(time varies)*	Students monitor the election returns to stay politically active.	• Copies of US map, attached • Red and blue crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Human Scavenger Hunt

Overview
Students learn new things about each other in an interactive game. This game can also be used as a way to practice classroom behavior expectations.

Grades
Any

Activity Type
Whole class

Materials
•Human Scavenger Hunt Questions, attached

Duration
20 minutes

Procedure
1. Tell students that they are going to play a fun game that will allow them to learn something new about each other. Explain that since they will be up and moving around at the same time, they should be careful and move safely about the room. Also explain that since part of this game is learning new things about one another, they should be willing to talk to any and everyone in the room, and not just gravitate towards people they know well.

2. Explain that using the sheet given to each of them, they should find someone in this room who a statement on the sheet is true for. (An example of the Human Scavenger Hunt is attached, but teachers are encouraged to change the questions and tailor them to things appropriate to your student's ages and interests.) In the first blank, they should write the person's name. In the second blank, they'll need to get some details from that person. Students should not use the same person more than once (unless you have a very small group), and students should say "thank you," "nice to meet you," or some other polite comment after speaking to someone. The first person who gets their entire sheet filled out and follows class expectations while playing wins a prize (optional).

Allow students to ask questions, and then tell them to begin.

3. It is the teacher's choice when to stop the activity. If you are playing for a prize, you may want to tell the first student who finishes to let you know privately, this way the game can continue a bit longer if you choose. Once most students finish, it is advised to stop the game.

4. After finishing, first debrief student behavior by asking: "What did you do well with while playing that game?" (you are looking for answers such as "We all participated," "We were respectful," "We didn't bump into each other," etc.)

Also offer positive reinforcement by sharing with students what you liked about the way they participated.

5. Finally, allow students to share the things they learned about each other, by asking them to report on each question from the scavenger hunt. For example, ask: "Who found someone who shared their favorite TV show with you?" Students will respond with the person's name they spoke to and what they said their favorite show is.

Directions: Find someone in this room who a statement below is true for. In the first blank, you'll write that person's name. In the second blank, you'll need to get some details from that person. You can not use the same person more than once, and you must say "thank you," "nice to meet you," or a different polite comment after you have spoken. The first person who gets their entire sheet filled out and follows class expectations while playing wins a prize. Good luck!

Find someone who…

1…has a favorite TV show_____(their name)

What is the show?_____(summarize their answer)

2…has traveled out of the state_____(their name)

Where did they go?_____(summarize their answer)

3…has voted before_____(their name)

What was voting like for them?_____(summarize their answer)

4…has a favorite college team_____(their name)

What is it?_____(summarize their answer)

5…can tell you three offices that people get to elect_____(their name)

What offices did they tell you?_____(summarize their answer)

6…did something mischievous when younger_____(their name)

What did they do?_____(summarize their answer)

7…will share something positive about themselves_____(their name)

What did they say? _____(summarize their answer)

8…can tell you why it's important to vote_____(their name)

What did they tell you?_____(summarize their answer)

- **Active Names**
  Participants should stand in a circle. Ask each person to think of a verb and action which starts with the same letter as their first name. Ideally the action will be something the participant enjoys (e.g., "Dancing Dana".) Each participant will step into the circle a bit, perform their action and yell their active name. Everyone in the group then copies the movement and repeats the active name.

- **Can You Find Me?**
  Give each participant and index card and have them write 3-5 statements about themselves (e.g. favorites, hobbies, vacations taken or dreamed of, biographical information, etc.) Ensure participants do not include their names however. Once everyone is finished, the facilitator should collect all of the cards, shuffle them, and randomly pass them out. Have participants then find the person with their card and introduce themselves.

- **Four Corners**
  This activity is a kinesthetic way for participants to learn more about one another's characteristics or opinions.
  - Option 1: Label the four corners of the room with large numbers, 1-4. Tell participants to listen to the characteristics you describe, and to go to the number that best describes them. For example, questions might include:
    - Do you have siblings? If you have 1 sibling, go to Corner 1; 2 siblings, go to corner 2; 3 or more siblings, go to corner 3; no siblings, go to corner 4. Once participants have moved to their corner, if your group is not incredibly large you can have them circle up and share on that topic. For example, in participants could be instructed to share a time their sibling got on their nerves, and participants in the "no siblings" corner could share whether they like being an only child.
    - Which pet do you prefer? Dogs-go to corner 1; Cats-go to corner 2; Some other type of animal-go to corner 3; Don't like animals at all-go to corner 4. (Optional: Once in their corners, participants in corner 1 and 2 could be instructed to share why they prefer this animal, and to tell about their own pet; corner 3 could be instructed to share which pet it is they prefer and why; and corner 4 can discuss why they don't like animals.
  - Option 2: Label the four corners of the room with Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. Tell participants you will read a statement, and they are to go to the corner of the room that represents their opinion on that issue. For example:
    - Chocolate cake is the best dessert on the planet.
    - School uniforms cut down on teasing, violence, and class disruptions.
    - The death penalty is an appropriate way to punish severe criminals.
    - American troops should be withdrawn from Iraq.
    When a group is first getting to know one another, facilitators should use less controversial questions. However, once group cohesiveness is established, this activity can be used as a kinesthetic way to discuss deeper topic.

- **Group-Grouping**
  This game is a kinesthetic way to allow participants to learn more about one another. The facilitator should prepare questions in advance which require participants to arrange themselves in relation to other people according to various individual and social characteristics. Questions can be simple, surface level questions to begin with, but can also be changed to deeper, value based questions once a foundation of trust has been built within the group. Examples include:
  - Find someone who:
    - had the same breakfast as you
    - has the same favorite type of music
    - has the same shoe size
    - has a different religious belief
    - you haven't met yet, but would really like to
  - Lineup according to:
    - number of siblings
    - how outgoing you consider yourself to be (introversion / extraversion)
    - how tired you feel this morning
    - number of states other than this one you have visited

- o Group yourselves according to:
  - ▪ the place where you were born
  - ▪ the place where you live
  - ▪ a place you would like to visit
  - ▪ your favorite place to hang out

- **"M & M" Game**
  Pass around a bag of M&Ms (or other multicolored candy, such as Skittles), tell participants to take 5 pieces, and tell them not to eat the candy yet! After everyone has 5 pieces of candy, write the colors on the board with a different question beside each. For example:
  - o Yellow-What is your favorite food?
  - o Green-Who is someone you admire?
  - o Red-What makes you happy?
  - o Brown-What do you enjoy doing in your free time?
  - o Orange-What are your goals for the next 10 years?
  Questions can vary; for example, they may be general "get to know you" questions or can be based on a particular theme you want participants to focus on.

- **Meet My Friend…**
  Place all participants in pairs and instruct pairs to tell one another all about themselves. Facilitators can assign particular questions that participants should answer in their pairs, or simply allow them to share whatever information they choose. Each participant will then introduce their partner to the group by saying "Meet my friend…", filling in their partners name and summarizing what they learned about him/her.

- **Pair and Share**
  Prior to participants arriving, the facilitator should create cards that contain an open-ended question. Place students into pairs (or small groups) and have each pair/group draw one question card. Participants should be given a designated amount of time to discuss. Pairs/groups that finish first may be allowed to return their card and draw another. Questions can be simple for groups that are just getting to know one another and more complex or theme based for groups that are more familiar with one another. Examples of questions include:
  - o What is your best attribute? What do you most need to improve?
  - o What is the biggest change that needs to take place in your community to make it a better place?
  - o Who is someone in your life that you greatly admire and why?
  - o What is your biggest fear?
  - o Where do you see yourself in 15 years? What will you be doing?
  - o Share one of your most embarrassing moments.
  - o If you were given a million dollars what would you do with it?

- **Peek-A-Who**
  Divide participants into two equal teams. Using a large piece of cloth or a blanket, the facilitator and a volunteer should separate the two groups by holding the blanket up between them (group members should squeeze in together so that neither team can see any member on the other side of the cloth). The facilitator should select one participant from either team to move up closer to either side of the blanket, so that they are face to face with the blanket between them. On the count of three, the facilitator and volunteer drop the blanket so that the two participants are facing one another. The first participant to call the name of the other participant wins and the other participant must now switch to the winning participants team. (It is important facilitators explain that the remainder of the group behind the playing participants must remain silent.) Repeat the process by again raising the cloth, selecting two more participants to move up to either side of the blanket, and again dropping the cloth on the count of three. The team that has the most participants on their side at the end of the game wins. As participants get better at the game, the facilitator can select two participants from each side to sit on either side of the blanket, so that four participants are playing at one time rather than two.
  Note: Groups who do not have a basic familiarity of one another's names will need time at the beginning to go around the room and introduce themselves.

- **Rotating Circles**
  Prepare a list of questions that you want the group to share with one another. Have the group form two circles, one inside the other, both containing the same number of participants. The participants in the inner circle should face a participant in the outer circle, so that everyone is paired up. Read a question and have the first pair answer it about themselves. Then, have the circles rotate in opposite directions so that they move one person over. Ask another question for the new partnership to answer. Questions can be general, or can be focused on a particular theme.

- **Sock it To Your Name!**
  This is a fun way for participants to learn one another's names. Participants should stand in a circle. Instruct everyone to introduce themselves one by one. Then, using a pair of rolled up socks (a ball, soft toy, or anything else that can be safely thrown will work also) the facilitator should say his/her name, followed by the name of someone across the circle, then throw that participant the rolled socks. This participant then repeats the process, saying his/her name, calling someone's name across the circle, and throwing that participant the socks. As participants get more familiar with one another's names, encourage them to go faster. Eventually, the facilitator can introduce another pair of socks into the game, so that more than one participant is calling someone's name and throwing socks. This heightens excitement but also requires the group to focus more.

- **The Big Wind Blows…**
  Have participants arrange their chairs into a circle and have a seat. The facilitator should stand in the middle and fill in the following statement with something that is true of him/her: "The big wind blows for everyone who…" For example, "The big wind blows for everyone whose favorite subject is Language Arts." All participants who the statement is true of must get up and find another empty seat. One person will be left standing in the middle, who then completes the statement for something that is true of them. Again, everyone seated who the statement is true of must scramble to find a new seat. The game can continue in this way for as long as the facilitator chooses.
  - o Note: Facilitators should set some ground rules when explaining how to play, reminding participants that though the game gets exciting, they should move safely within the circle. Facilitators may also want to make moving to the chair directly beside you illegal. If participants are using a room with no circles, use masking tape to mark the floor with X's where everyone is standing.

- **Two Truths and a Lie**
  Instruct participants to think of two truths from their own life, as well as a lie. Participants will take turn sharing these three statements, and the rest of the group must guess which statement is untrue of the three. This activity can be done in small groups or with the entire class, and serves as a fun way to learn more about one another.

- **Web We Weave**
  Instruct all participants to stand in a circle. Holding on to the end of a ball of yarn, the facilitator should say his or name and share something about himself/herself. (The facilitator should predetermine what information he/she wants participants to share, such as what they are looking forward to, a time they were proud of themselves, something positive about themselves, etc.) The facilitator then throws the ball of yarn to someone across the circle, who repeats the process of saying his/her name and something about himself/herself. He/she then holds on to a piece of the yarn and throws the rest of the ball of yarn to someone across the circle. Once all students have shared and held on to a piece of the yarn, a web will be formed. The facilitator should then lead a group discussing regarding how the web symbolizes the connections between everyone in the group, the importance of team work, etc.

- **Whatcha' Got In There?**
  Instruct participants to choose an item from their book bag, purse, pocket, etc. that relates to who they are in some way. In small groups, participants will share these items and explain how it represents their personality, likes/dislikes, background, or another aspect of who they are.

- **Who Am I?**
  Instruct participants to describe themselves in first person on a piece of paper, without stating their name or obviously giving away who they are. Each description should end with "Who am I?" Once finished, participants will give their descriptions to the facilitator and sit in a circle. The facilitator will read each paper out loud and the group must guess who it is. An example of a "Who Am I" is:
  - o "I am a person who was born in North Carolina, but lived in New York City for 5 years. I love spaghetti, reading, and going to the beach. My favorite books to read are the Harry Potter series. If you ever need help with your Math, I'm the person to come to, because I'm really good at it. Who am I?"

- **Wipe Out!**
  Pass around a roll of toilet paper and tell participants to tear off as many squares of toilet paper as they think they may need for the day. Once everyone has taken the amount they want, explain that each participant must share one thing about themselves for each square they have. This game is a structured way for participants to share facts about themselves yet keep things fun and light (since everyone is holding toilet paper after all!)

The Good, the Bad, and the Citizen

Overview
In this activity, participants will explore the definition of a citizen, as well as the traits ideal and negative citizens possess. They will then discuss the responsibilities of citizens in depth by participating in an acting exercise and discussing the themes illustrated in the scenes. Ideally, this activity will culminate with a volunteer event or service learning project.

Grades
K-9 (Part I)
5-9 (Part II)

Activity Type
Small Groups
Partner
Whole Group

Materials
- A large strip of paper (bulletin board or butcher paper)
- Markers
- Citizen Role Plays and Discussion Questions (attached)

Duration
1+ hour

Instructions

Part I: The Ideal Citizen

1. Lead group members in a verbal brainstorm of the word *citizen*. Encourage them to explore all aspects of the word that comes to mind. As a group, create a common definition.

2. Ask participants to silently think of what it means to be an *ideal citizen*. What types of thoughts, traits, characteristics, behaviors, actions, ideas, values, etc. would an ideal citizen have? Encourage their thinking by asking:
   - What type of person makes a community a good place to live and work?
   - How would an ideal community member act and behave? What might they think and value?
   - How would an ideal community member affect where you live (your neighborhood)? Your school? The places you go to for fun?

3. While students think, direct their attention to a large piece of paper lying on the floor. The paper should be large enough to contain the outline of a young person, which you should draw out before beginning this activity. Make the outline as large as possible and title it, *The Ideal Citizen*. (If your group is larger, you may divide participants up into smaller groups, with paper and a human outline for each group.)

4. Explain to participants that they are going to create the ideal, perfect citizen by filling up the inside of the person's outline with all the traits an ideal citizen would encompass. They may write words, draw pictures, use symbols, etc. Allow students to begin, monitoring their work as they write and draw on the inside of this human outline. As they work, continue to ask questions to facilitate further thinking and details. (For example, if a participant has written "respectful", ask the group to consider what respect means, and instruct them to add those specifics into their citizen).

5. Once finished, ask the group to step back and view their "ideal citizen." Instruct them to point out the attributes that they believe are most important and explain why. See if the group can come to a consensus on the top 5 traits an ideal citizen should have.

6. Next, following the same process as above, instruct students to consider a negative citizen, and what thoughts, traits, characteristics, behaviors, actions, ideas, values, etc. this person would encompass. Have students return to the large paper, and write words, pictures, symbols, etc. on the outside of the human drawing that represent a negative/bad citizen.

7. Once finished, discuss:
    *   Looking at everything on the outside of our citizen, which comment, symbol, picture, etc. represents what you believe to be the most negative or damaging part of a bad citizen and why?
    *   What do you think determines whether a person becomes an ideal citizen or a bad citizen?
    *   Why do you think it is important to be a good citizen? What consequences might we face if our community fills with negative/bad citizens?
    *   How might we encourage fellow community members to be "ideal citizens?"

Part II: Citizens: Good and Bad

8. Explain to participants that they will partner up and receive a role play (see attached) to act out in front of the group. The rest of the group will watch the role play, and determine whether they saw the traits of a good citizen, or a citizen who needs some improvement. Allow participants 5 minutes to practice their role play several times. Explain to students they do not have to memorize the lines and that the lines do not have to be exact when they act out the scene. The most important thing is that the gist of the scene is the same, even if the lines change. Allow students the creative freedom to create props and set up the scene as they wish.

9. Review the expectations of respectful audience members with your group and then allow partners to perform their role plays in front of the whole group. After the performance, the scene becomes a jumping off point for what can become deep and meaningful discussions. Use the questions underneath each role play as a discussion guide once the scene is complete. Leaders may decide to edit questions and/or allow the discussions to go in the direction students take them. It is also a leader's choice whether to use all of the scenes or just scenes addressing particular themes you wish your group to learn about and discuss. Scenes do not have to be performed in the order they are written.

10. Upon completion of the role plays and discussions have the group reflect by asking:
    *   Thinking about what we saw and discussed today and comparing those ideas to your own beliefs and actions, would you consider yourself an "ideal citizen"? Why or why not?
    *   How might you improve your traits as a citizen to become more ideal?
    *   Are some of the issues that were portrayed in the scenes issues that come up in our own school? Explain.
    *   As positive leaders, what can we do as individuals to show our community that we are working on being ideal citizens?
    *   What could we do as a group to show others that we mean to impact our community in a positive way as ideal citizens?

Follow Up Activities
Place students in groups and have them brainstorm a list of issues in their school and/or community at large that need addressing. (See the Consortium's "Windows to My Community" for an activity to guide students through this process.) Based on student responses and ideas, allow students to vote on a project they would like to complete, with the goal of being ideal citizens who help someone/something in their school and/or community.

Citizen Role Plays and Discussion Questions

Cut out the following boxes and assign one role play per partner. Give participants 5 minutes to practice their role play and become comfortable with it. When it is time to perform, review the expectations of being a respectful audience member, then allow partners to volunteer and share their role play. After each group, refer to the questions underneath and discuss with the entire group.

Role Play #1: Voting

A: Hey, it's Election Day! I'm going to vote. Do you want to come?

B: Man, no way. I'm going to play some basket ball. I don't have any time for that mess.

A: Are you sure? Voting is really important. If you don't vote, you don't have a say in the decisions the government makes for us.

B: So what? One vote won't make a difference. Besides, I don't know anything about any of those politicians.

After role play #1 discuss:
- Characterize the two citizens you saw in this scene. Were they ideal or not? Explain.
- Why did character B not care to vote? Do you feel that this is a common belief? Why?
- What could Person A have said to try and convince Person B to vote? Whose responsibility is it to educate Person B on the importance of voting, or to convince him/her to vote?

Role Play #2: Petitions

A; Hello. Could I have a moment of your time?

B: Sure.

A: I'm trying to collect signatures on this petition for doing away with our school's dress code. I feel like it is a restriction on a student's ability to be unique, and some people aren't comfortable in the style of the uniform. Would you sign this petition supporting our cause?

B: I can do that. I agree, those wool skirts are really uncomfortable. Good luck with your petition!

After role play #2 discuss:
- Characterize the two citizens you saw in this scene. Were they ideal or not? Explain.
- How might Person A's participation bring about change to the school dress code? What are other ways he/she could also try and change the dress code?

Role Play #3: Volunteering

A: So get this…Chris won't come with us to the mall, because he says he's going to that gross homeless shelter to serve food. Can you believe that? I mean, what's his deal not wanting to hang out with us?

B: I have no idea. I know I'm not spending my time feeding those people when I could be shopping. Let's just go.

After role play #3 discuss:
- Characterize the two citizens you saw in this scene. Were they ideal or not? Explain.
- Why is volunteering important?
- Why do you think some people choose to volunteer? Why do others choose not to volunteer?
- What is our responsibility in terms of those less fortunate living in our communities?
- What are some places in our own community that offer services to those less fortunate, or places where we could volunteer?
- In this scene, someone is going to volunteer at a homeless shelter. How do some members of our communities end up in less fortunate situations and in need of services such as the ones we just brainstormed? (*The group leader should facilitate answers so that myths are dispelled, such as "Homeless people just don't want to work.")

Role Play #4: Citizen Responsibility

A: You won't believe this! I just saw someone get mugged outside in the parking lot!

B: You did? What happened?

A: I was looking out the window and I saw these guys jump this other guy and take his back pack.

B: What did you do?

A: Nothing! I'm not getting involved in all that drama.

After role play #4 discuss:
- Evaluate the citizenship characteristics of Person A. Were they ideal or not?
- What other choices could Person A have made, other than "not getting involved"? (*The facilitator should make sure participants understand that they should never put themselves in danger in a situation like this; rather, they should call the police or go for help.)
- What about the person who robbed the citizen in the parking lot. How would you characterize this citizen? What causes some members of our community to make bad choices such as this?
- As a community of involved citizens, what are some steps we can take to protect our neighborhoods and communities?

Role Play #5: Participation in Local Government

A: I can't believe how out of date our text books are! I really think this is ridiculous. The students hate them, and it's impossible to teach out of them. They're awful!

B: There is a school board meeting tonight. Why don't we go and get on the list to speak about text book adoption? We could explain the situation to the board, and ask them to upgrade our books.

A: No, Oprah comes on at 4:00PM. I don't ever miss Oprah.

After role play #5 discuss:
- Characterize the two citizens you saw in this scene. Were they ideal or not? Explain.
- Why do you think citizens choose to do things like watching TV over participating in their local governmental meetings?
- What could Person B have said to Person A to try and convince him/her of the importance of missing Oprah and going to the school board meeting?

Role Play #6: Bullying

A: Hey, did you hear about Jackie Smith today in the cafeteria? She slipped on those cheap shoes of hers and fell down. Her lunch spilled all over her tacky polyester clothes! It was hilarious!

B: Are you serious? I can't believe I missed that! I would have loved to see her look that stupid. How embarrassing!

After role play #6 discuss:
- How would you describe the two people in this scene?
- Do things like this happen at your school? Do people tease, gossip about, or bully others? Why do you think some people choose to do this? How do you think it makes those being mistreated feel?
- Is the way you treat people part of being an "ideal citizen"? Explain.
- Why is it important to strive to form a safe school community, where teasing, bullying, gossiping, fighting, etc. is not tolerated? If these types of things happen at your school, what can you do to try and change the atmosphere? (The facilitator is looking for answers such as "Make sure I'm not doing it", "don't become part of the problem", "Let people know I'm not ok with teasing others", "Talk to teachers about it", etc.)

Role #7: Attending School
A: Hey, are you coming to the bus stop with me? If you don't hurry, you'll miss the bus and get to first period late.   B: Whatever, I'm not going.   A: Why not?   B: I just don't want to. School is stupid, and my parents don't care if I go anyway.

After role play #7 discuss:
- Why is it important to attend school, regardless of whether you want to or whether someone makes you?
- Why is attending school part of your responsibility as a citizen? (*You are looking for answers involving the fact that school is where we often learn civic responsibility, it's where we are educated, it's where we become literate, etc.)
- Discuss how all of these are crucial to the health of a democratic society.
- Why do you think that even though we've agreed on its importance, some students choose to drop out of school? Why is this dangerous to our society?

Role Play #8: Priorities
A: What are you up to this Saturday?   B: I'm going to Pleasant Valley Community Center. A group of us noticed that the yard in front is looking rough, so we are going to help them landscape it. We raised money to buy new flowers and everything!   A: That sounds like hard work.   B: It kind of is, but it's going to look so much nicer, and it will improve our community. Just think of how many more people will notice how nice the center looks, and maybe be more likely to go in and use the services, or volunteer to help out.   A: Ok, I was going to the movies on Saturday, but I think I can help out.

After role play #8 discuss:
- Characterize the two citizens you saw in this scene. Were they ideal or not? Explain.
- We discussed earlier why volunteering is important. How do you think these two people will feel about themselves and their community after volunteering?

Role Play #9: Gangs
A: Hey man, I'm going to hang out with my boys at the mall. Why don't you come along? If you are with us, everyone out their hanging out will look at you with some serious respect.   B: Aren't those guys in a gang? Are you sure you should be hanging out with them?   A: Are you kidding? If I go through the initiation, they are going to let me join. Why wouldn't I want to do that? They take care of me, they have my back, they even have some ways to help me make some money. No one messes with us. You should think about joining too.   B: What do you have to do to join?   A: Nothing much…just steal some stuff.   B: I don't know man. I'll think about it.

After role play #9 discuss:
- Is this scenario realistic? Do young people join gangs? Why do you think they do this?
- What are the negative consequences of being a gang member? What are the negative effects of gangs on our communities?

- What are some things we can do as a community to help keep young people out of gangs and to prevent violence?

Role Play #10: Making a Difference

A: I cannot believe everyone is fighting about whether or not to build the skate park here. I think it would be awesome. It would give us a place to hang out, and a safe place to skate. It isn't fair.

B: Isn't there a City Council meeting about it? I heard that people can sign up to speak. Why don't you go and tell them how you feel?

A: Why would I waste my time? One person can't make a difference. Besides, I'm too young. They would never listen to what I have to say.

After role play #10 discuss:
- Do young people sometimes feel like the person in this scene ("one person can't make a difference", "they would never listen to what I have to say because I'm young")? Why do people your age sometimes feel this way?
- What if all citizens thought that they couldn't make a difference, and thus didn't make their opinions known to their governments? How might this impact our society?
- Can one person make a difference? Explain. (allow students to express their honest opinions, but encourage them to see examples of how people can make a difference individually, and by encouraging others to stand behind them; for example, skate parks in Chapel Hill and Cary were constructed largely due to young people attending City Council meetings and advocating for their wishes)
- What types of things can you do as a young person to "make a difference" in your local governments, in your communities, in your schools, etc.? Why is it important to at least attempt to "make a difference"?

Role Play #11: Drug Use

A: Hey, what are you doing after school?

B: I'm not sure. Why?

A: Don't tell anybody, but my brother said he's got some strong stuff I can try. He said I can bring you too.

B: What do you mean by "strong stuff"?

A: I mean drugs. We can try something we've never done before. Just think about what everyone at school will say when they here we had the nerve to do it. You aren't scared are you?

B: No, I'm not scared. I'll meet you after school.

After role play #11 discuss:
- Why do you think some young people try drugs?
- What consequences might you face by just "trying" drugs?
- What choices did Person B have in this scene, other than agreeing to meet his/her friend after school? What choice would a good citizen make? Why might it be hard to make the choice of a good citizen, and decline a friend?

Role Play #12: Generosity
A: Hi there. My name is _____. I noticed that you started school here last week. Would you like to sit with me and have your lunch?
B: That's ok. You don't have to sit with me. I'm ok sitting by myself.
A: Why don't you come over to our table? I can introduce you to all of my friends. I'm sure it's hard being the new kid. I bet you miss your old school.
B: I really do. It's hard to move somewhere and not know anybody. It's pretty lonely. I would like to sit with you if you are sure it's ok.
A: Absolutely! Come on, I know everyone is going to love meeting you!

After role play #12 discuss:
- How would you characterize what person A did? What type of citizen was he/she being?
- How do you think person B felt before A came over? What can be difficult about being new in a school?
- Are there people who you think feel lonely at our school, even if they have gone here for years? Why might those people be lonely?
- In what ways can we extend our generosity and kindness and make them feel more welcome and included?
- Why is it important to be kind to other students, even if they aren't your friends? How might teasing or feeling "left out" effect our fellow classmates?
- How does it make you feel when you know you've made someone's day better, or helped them, or made them smile? (discuss the fact that if feels good to help others!)

"Help Me-Help Me!"

Overview
Students practice team work and the importance of helping one another in a fun game.

Grades
Any

Activity Type
Partner

Materials
None

Duration
30 minutes

Procedure
1. Students should choose partners and determine who is A and who is B.

2. Instruct Partner A to think of an activity that would be hard to finish on his/her own (i.e., a partner may choose to act out cleaning their room.) If students cannot think of something, tell them they can ask you for ideas. Tell A's they must also have a reason in their minds that this has to be done so quickly (for example, if they are acting out cleaning their room in a rush, in their head they may be thinking that their parents will be home any moment and they will be in trouble if the room isn't clean).

3. Explain to A's that in a moment, they will begin pantomiming this activity, which means they will pretend to be doing it and acting it out without using words. Since the activity they are acting out should be something they are worried about finishing, they should show this in their acting.

Explain that B's responsibility is to watch the pantomime and try to figure out what A is attempting to do. Once B's feel they know what A is doing, they should jump into the scene and pantomime helping A finish. Remind students that there can be no talking at any point in this activity. B's should also be careful about jumping in too soon.

4. Allow students to ask questions and then instruct Partner A's to begin their silent pantomime. B's should pay close attention and figure out how they can help A. Once they feel they know what A is doing, they can jump into the scene and offer assistance.

5. Once all partners have entered the pantomime, stop the exercise and remind students to remain silent. Go around the room and ask each B to say what they thought they were helping A finish, then have A say what they were actually doing and why it had to be finished so quickly.

6. Debrief:
   - Was anything difficult about that activity?
   - Were you both working on completing the same thing? If not, where did the miscommunication come from?
   - In what ways did your partner help you/try to help you?
   - Are there times in life when we may need assistance from others? Explain.
   - Why is it important to be willing to help others in our community? Why is it important to ask for help when you need it?
   - For those of you who didn't finish your task or were unable to help your partner, is this realistic? Are there times when we mean to help and don't end up helping? Explain. Are there also times when people, such as parents, are trying to help us, even though we may not want that help? What is an appropriate response for this type of help?

After debriefing, you can allow partners to switch roles and repeat the activity.

North Carolina
CIVIC EDUCATION
CONSORTIUM

Don't Let Me Go "KA-BOOM!"

Overview
Students use team work and explore responsibility by participating in a fun game. Through discussion, students explore why responsibility is an important trait for every citizen to exhibit.

Grades
Any

Activity Type
Partner

Materials
Blindfolds (optional)

Duration
30 minutes

Procedure
1. Tell students that they are going to play a game called "KA-BOOM," and the purpose of the game is to practice responsibility, teamwork, and to have fun.

2. Break students up into partners and have them choose to be A or B. Instruct the A's to line up on one side of the room side by side. Tell them to turn their back to the center of the room and close their eyes (if you don't trust your participants not to peek, blindfold them). Assure them that since they are part of a safe, caring classroom community, no one will mess with them while their eyes are closed.

3. Next, have the B's place items on the floor that would block the path of the A's if they were to walk across the room (books, a pile of pencils, jackets, backpacks, etc.). The teacher should just make sure that none of the objects used could cause harm. Ensure the students spread the objects around the whole room, so that the floor is evenly covered.

4. Once all items are placed, tell the group that all of the items on the floor, which the B's can see and the A's cannot, represent landmines. If they are stepped on or moved in anyway, they will explode with a loud "KA-BOOM", obliterating the poor person who has hit it.

5. Explain that A's must navigate across the room without opening their eyes and without hitting a landmine. The way that they will get across the room safe without going "KA-BOOM" is with the assistance of their partner B walking beside them and giving vocal instructions to direct them. B's responsibility is to navigate their partner-in-need to safety, keeping them from stepping on a landmine or from running into other A's using only their voice. B's may not steer their partners physically in any way, and should also keep A's safe from bumping into other A's.

6. Once students understand the rules, allow them to begin. The teacher should pay close attention to the A's and if any run into any of the landmines, yell "KA-BOOM" and tap them so that they know they have been blown up. When students are "blown up," you can have them step to the side and wait for the activity to end (as students are blown up, they can help the teacher monitor the other students.) Another choice is to have students start over and try again if they do not make it to the other side, which can lead to a discussion about how even when we don't succeed, we must continue to try.

Also, if your students are more motivated by competition, you can offer a prize to the first pair of which A reaches safety.

7. Once all of the A's have either made it safely to their partners, or sadly been obliterated, ask students to discuss in their pairs:
  • What is responsibility? How did responsibility play a part in this exercise?
  • Why is it important to be responsible in real life?

After a few moments, have partners report their thoughts back to the whole group. Further discuss:

- •For those of you who survived, what did it take for you to make it safely across the room? (facilitate a discussion of teamwork, care/concern, responsibility, etc.)
- •Why is it important that we always encompass and exhibit these traits within our classroom and within our community at large?

8. Tell partners you are going to play the game again, this time with B's closing their eyes (or being blindfolded) and A's being the leader. Have B's take their places and close their eyes, and again have A's rearrange the landmines to block the path the B's will take. Once A's have taken their places facing their partners across the room, tell them that the game is going to change a bit this round. Instruct A's that while previously B's could use words and explanations to navigate partners to safety, this time A's can only use sounds while navigating B's to safety. A's may make any types of sounds they want, but they cannot use any word or semblance of a word in assisting their partners. You can again allow A's to move closer to their partners as they navigate them through the landmines, but they may not touch them. Allow students to ask questions, wish them luck, and let them begin. Once more, monitor the B's to ensure they do not hit a landmine, again yelling "KA-BOOM" if they do.

9. Once all partners have made it to safety or unfortunately been obliterated, debrief:

- •How did the role you played this time in your partnership differ from before? Is it easier to be the person in trouble or the person helping? Explain.
- •What was different about the rules this time? Do you think only being able to use sounds rather than words changed the level of difficulty? Explain.
- •In life, are situations that require us to be responsible sometimes varying in difficulty? Explain. (For example, being responsible to clean up your room compared to being responsible and refusing peer pressure.)
- •What are various situations in which you as young people feel a sense of responsibility? What can be difficult about being responsible?
- •Even though being responsible can be very hard, why is it important to still be as responsible as possible?
- •How might this activity compare to situations in real life? As citizens of the same community, in what ways are we responsible for one another?
- •What happens when just one citizen of a community is irresponsible? What examples can you think of that illustrate how the irresponsible actions of one citizen can be harmful to others? (consider examples such as crimes <drunk driving or speeding that results in another's injury>, littering/pollution, not voting, etc.)

Culminating Activities
- • While this activity can stand alone as a fun game, you can also use this activity to focus students on a particular theme by asking, "What are the responsibilities of _____?" (i.e. What are the responsibilities of a citizen; What are the responsibilities of a community; What are our responsibilities to one another as members of this class; What are our responsibilities to people in our community who are less fortunate; etc.)

 Based on the theme you choose, continue into another activity or lesson specifically exploring that topic. For example:
- -"What are the responsibilities of a citizen"- See the Consortium's lessons *The Good, The Bad, and the Citizen* or *What Makes a Good Citizen*
- -"What are the responsibilities of a community"-see the Consortium's lesson *Web of My Community* or *Windows to My Community*
- -"What are our responsibilities to the environment", "What are our responsibilities in terms of participating in Government"- See *The Lorax*

ICE CREAM IN A BAG

(20-30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students work together to decide on an ice cream flavor and to create ice cream.

MATERIALS

Measuring cups, measuring spoons, milk, vanilla, sugar, rock salt, ice, one or more 1-gallon Ziploc® freezer bags, one or more 1-pint Ziploc freezer bags; eating utensils and bowls/cups; any ingredients needed to create the ice cream flavor the class has voted on

GET READY

✔ Gather your students together and tell them they will be eating as a class tomorrow, but first they need to decide on an ice cream flavor.

✔ Help your students hold a debate/forum and a vote to choose an ice cream flavor. Recommend the students pick a flavor that the majority of the class will enjoy — it is their goal to work together to find a flavor that everyone will like.

✔ Hold an "Ice Cream Election" and graph the results of the vote.

✔ Once the students have made a final decision, prepare the materials above for the day when you will be making the ice cream as a class. Make sure you have:

  ✔ measuring cups, measuring spoons, milk, vanilla, sugar, rock salt, ice, one or more 1-gallon Ziploc freezer bags, one or more 1-pint Ziploc freezer bags

  ✔ the ingredients needed for the flavor the class has voted on (ex. chocolate, strawberries, etc.)

  ✔ spoons and either bowls or cups

INSTRUCTIONS

✔ Help the students mix the following in 1-pint freezer bags:

  ✔ 1 cup milk
  ✔ 4 T sugar
  ✔ 1 t vanilla flavoring

✔ Put the following in the gallon freezer bags:

  ✔ 2 cups ice
  ✔ 3 T salt
  ✔ the sealed pint bag

✔ Seal the gallon bags.

✔ Pass the bags around so all can cooperate to make the ice cream. Students should gently squeeze the bags but also make sure the bags don't pop open.

✔ Eat the ice cream while discussing the questions below.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

★ *Was the flavor of the ice cream the flavor you wanted?* If the student says no, ask them if it was still a fair process. Remind them, if necessary, that they were able to express their opinion both verbally and in a vote.

★ *Would it be fair if we only let the boys vote on the flavor? Why not?*

★ *Were you happy with the flavor the class selected? Were you happy with the process we took to determine the flavor?*

★ *Was it hard to work as a class to determine the flavor of the ice cream? Why or why not?*

★ *Did the ice cream taste good even if you voted for another flavor?*

★ *Was it easy or difficult to make the ice cream as a class? Why?*

★ *If we did this again, what could you do to get more people to vote for the flavor you wanted most?*

★ *Do adults ever do anything similar to what we just did? Can you give me an example?* (elections, presidential debates, etc.)

Grades 3-5 | **ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP** | 10

TWO BALLOTS
(10-15 minutes)

OBJECTIVE
Students experience voting with and without adequate information.

MATERIALS
Two Ballots handout

GET READY
✔ Make enough copies of the *Two Ballots* handout for the number of students in your class.
✔ Cut the ballots apart.

INSTRUCTIONS
✔ Without any instruction, give the students *Ballot A* and ask them to vote.
✔ Have your students either tally the results as a group on the board or individually on a piece of paper. (Students may also graph the results of the vote at your discretion.)
✔ Give the students *Ballot B* and ask them to vote again. Tally (and graph) the results again.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
★ *What difference was there between "Ballot A" and "Ballot B"?*
★ *Did you change your vote once you had the information on "Ballot B"?*
★ *Why is it important to gather information before we vote?*
★ *Where can we get information before voting?*
★ *Have you already decided who you will vote for? If not, how will you get the information you need to decide?*

MORE!
Make extra copies of the two ballots for your students so they can share with adults at home.

Have students take a simple class poll by asking adults where they get most of their information before voting.

Ask your students to bring in any election articles, pictures, or materials for a bulletin board.

VOTE QUOTE
"Liberty without learning is always in peril and learning without liberty is always in vain."
– J.F. Kennedy

This lesson was developed by Edna Neprud, Kids Voting Georgia; Kelly Kline, Kids Voting California; and Bobbie May, Kids Voting Washington.

TWO BALLOTS

# Ballot A		

Ballot A

		YES	NO
1.	School	☐	☐
2.	Recess	☐	☐
3.	Ice Cream	☐	☐
4.	Homework	☐	☐
5.	Television	☐	☐

Ballot B

		YES	NO
1.	School will be year round.	☐	☐
2.	Recess will be replaced by 20 minutes of sit-ups & push-ups.	☐	☐
3.	Only garlic-flavored ice cream will be served in the cafeteria.	☐	☐
4.	There will be no homework on weekends.	☐	☐
5.	Television will be in the classroom — but only the commercials.	☐	☐

Ballot A

		YES	NO
1.	School	☐	☐
2.	Recess	☐	☐
3.	Ice Cream	☐	☐
4.	Homework	☐	☐
5.	Television	☐	☐

Ballot B

		YES	NO
1.	School will be year round.	☐	☐
2.	Recess will be replaced by 20 minutes of sit-ups & push-ups.	☐	☐
3.	Only garlic-flavored ice cream will be served in the cafeteria.	☐	☐
4.	There will be no homework on weekends.	☐	☐
5.	Television will be in the classroom — but only the commercials.	☐	☐

Grades 3-5 **ELECTIONS AND VOTING** 11

MEET THE CANDIDATES
(30-40 minutes over two days)

OBJECTIVE

Students put together a page consisting of pictures and promises made by the candidates running for office.

MATERIALS

Meet the Candidates handout; scissors, glue

GET READY

✔ Divide your students into pairs.

✔ Duplicate one copy of the *Meet the Candidates* handout for each pair of students.

✔ Collect, or have your students collect, local campaign literature and several recent issues of the local newspapers.

✔ Prepare scissors and glue for each pair of classmates.

INSTRUCTIONS

✔ Tell the pairs to look for a photograph of each candidate in an election and to also look for articles about the candidates' campaigns.

✔ Ask your students to watch the news and listen for promises that the candidates make. Give an example: John Jones says that he will bring new businesses to our town.

✔ Give students time to work on the *Meet the Candidates* handout the next day and possibly at home. (Students could alternatively work on this project in small groups.)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

★ *What promises have been made by the candidates?* (Continue until you have reviewed all the candidates.)

★ *Which promises seem most important to you? How do campaign promises help you decide how to vote?*

★ *Is there one candidate whose picture appears more often than the others? Do you think he/she is winning right now? Do you think the pictures are giving him/her an advantage?*

★ *What can we do if politicians do not keep their campaign promises?*

MORE!

Continue to collect campaign pictures and put them up on a bulletin board with the *Meet the Candidates* papers.

Bring up the concept of promises in other contexts: books the students read, classroom rules, etc.

MEET THE CANDIDATES

Candidate Name

Candidate Name

Candidate Name

Picture of Candidate

Picture of Candidate

Picture of Candidate

Campaign Promises

Campaign Promises

Campaign Promises

VOTING SIMULATION
(30-40 minutes)

OBJECTIVE
Students vote in a simulated polling place to become familiar with the voting process.

MATERIALS
Paper for ballots; material for a ballot box and voting booth; *Polling Place Diagram* handout

GET READY
✔ Choose an issue that will impact the students rather quickly. For instance, vote on what's for homework that evening or something fun such as determining the class's favorite color.
✔ Prepare ballots or determine a way to vote on blank pieces of paper.
✔ Prepare a simple ballot box and voting booth.
✔ Arrange a corner of the classroom to resemble a polling place as shown in the diagram.

INSTRUCTIONS
✔ Explain the roles of the various precinct workers and assign students to these roles. Seat them as shown in the diagram.
✔ Give one of the judges the registration sheet derived from "The Name Game" activity.
✔ Give the clerks lined paper to record the voters as they come in.
✔ Hand the ballots to the other judge.
✔ Seat the marshal by the ballot box.
✔ Ask a student to demonstrate by casting the first vote.

✔ Let each student go through the process of voting.
✔ Instruct the marshal to tally and announce the vote.
✔ Implement the vote.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
★ *Who can go to a polling place?*
★ *Have you ever gone with your parents? If so, where was it?*
★ *How do adults know where to vote?*
★ *If they don't know, how can they find out?*
★ *Can everybody vote?*
★ *Have you voted at the Kids Voting booth before? What was it like?*
★ *Where will you go to cast your Kids Voting vote this election?*
★ *Are there any rules in a polling place?*
★ *What do you think are good manners for a polling place?*

POLLING PLACE DIAGRAM
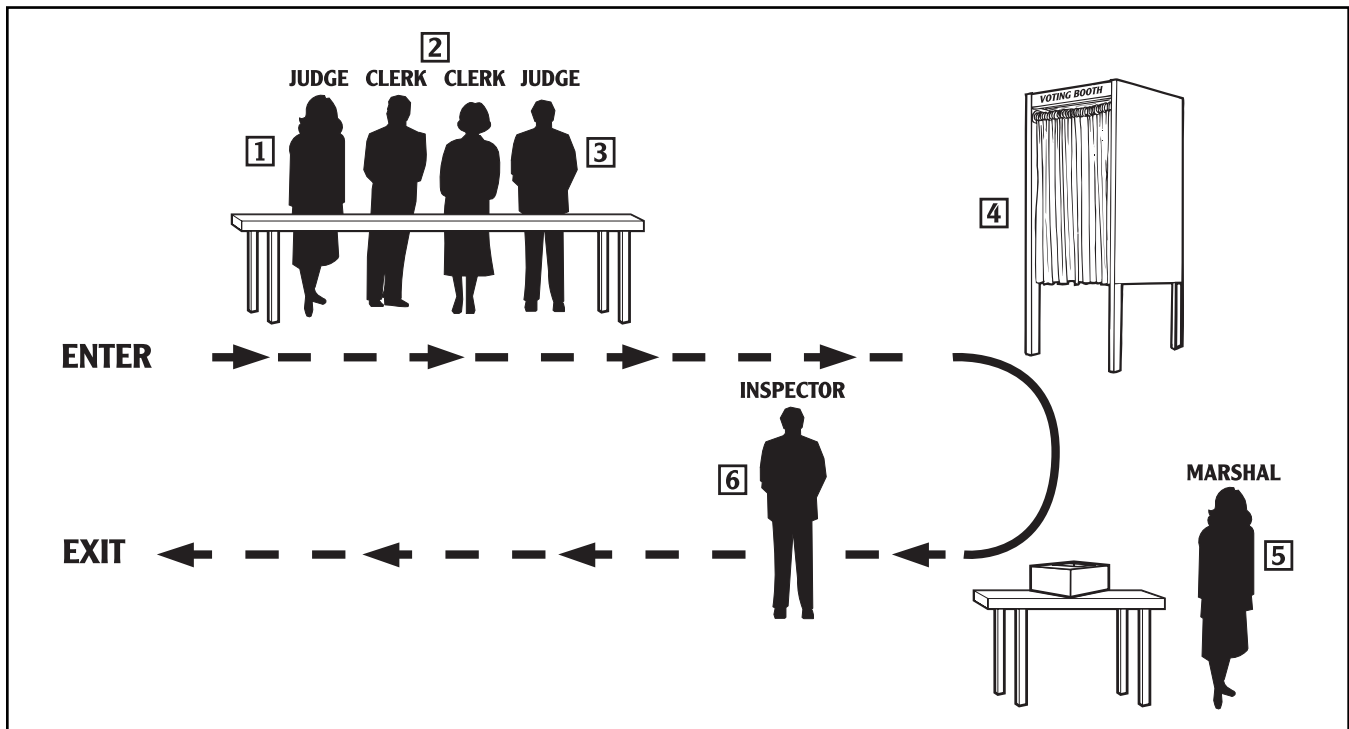
At the polls there are usually: one inspector; two judges — one Republican, one Democrat; two clerks — one Republican, one Democrat; and one marshal.

As you enter you will generally meet:

1 A judge with the register, a list containing the names of registered voters in the precinct, who will ask your name, find it in the register, and ask you to sign beside it

2 Two clerks, one for each party, who will add your name to a list to witness that you have voted

3 Another judge, who will hand you your ballot, and help you understand how to cast your ballot

4 A voting booth

5 The marshal, who will take your ballot and place it in the ballot box

6 The inspector, who oversees the polling place and assigns all the workers their duties

Poll workers have other duties. For instance the marshal makes sure that the law is kept. She watches that no one campaigns within 150 feet of the polls and she checks to see that everyone in line when the poll closes gets a chance to vote.

You, the voter, will:
1. Sign in by writing your name in the register
2. Take a ballot from a judge
3. Go to the booth and vote
4. Return your ballot to the marshal

Grades 3-5 | **ELECTIONS AND VOTING** | 17

NONVOTER SIMULATION
(45-60 minutes over the course of a week)

OBJECTIVE

Students understand the concept of suffrage – the right to vote.

MATERIALS

No materials are necessary for this activity.

GET READY
- ✔ Have three students volunteer to form a committee. Assign them to:
  - ✔ Choose three issues to vote on over the next three days that will directly affect the class, such as "We will study math all morning today" or "We will do extra homework tonight, but none tomorrow."
  - ✔ Choose unfair criteria to determine the right to vote on each of the issues such as "those with birthdays from January to June." Have different criteria for each of the three days. On the third day of voting you may want the voter criteria to be those who have not yet voted, so that everyone gets a chance to vote.
- ✔ Prepare a ballot box, ballots, a voting site, and voting issue signs.
- ✔ Supervise the ballot box and get ready to turn away students who do not have the right to vote.

INSTRUCTIONS
- ✔ Have the committee announce the voting issue each day and display it next to the ballot box. Do not display the voting criteria.
- ✔ Invite the students to vote one at a time by writing "Yes" or "No" on a ballot and placing it in the box.

- ✔ Instruct the members of the committee to quietly turn away those who do not meet the voting criteria.
- ✔ Announce the outcome and implement it. Repeat the process for the next two days.
- ✔ Inform the class that there will be a meeting held at the end of the week for complaints and discussion.
- ✔ Hold a class meeting to discuss the feelings of the students.

QUESTIONS FOR THE CLASS MEETING
- ★ *Did those with the right to vote have more power than those without? Do you know that the right to vote is called suffrage?*
- ★ *When you did not get to vote, how did it feel to be powerless?*
- ★ *Do you think the process of granting suffrage has always been fair? Why or why not?*
- ★ *Do you have a say in the decisions our government makes? If yes, how?*
- ★ *Does everyone use their voting privilege? Why or why not?*
- ★ *What other powers do you have in this community, this state, this country?*
- ★ *How did U.S. citizens achieve suffrage? Do citizens of other countries have the right to vote?*

Grades 3-5 | **THE RIGHT TO VOTE** | 2

Judge

Judge

Republican Clerk

Democratic Clerk

Marshal

Inspector/Chief Judge

White Male property owner,
30 years old

White Male, no property,
25 years old

African American Female,
21 years old

African American Male,
18 years old

Hispanic American Female,
16 years old

American Indian Male,
18 years old

You can vote!
White males 21 and over have been able to vote since the 1776 when the Declaration of Independence was signed and states eventually eliminated the requirement to own property.

You can vote!
White males 21 and over have been able to vote since 1776 when the Declaration of Independence was signed.

You can vote!
African Americans were given the right to vote by the 15th Amendment in 1870. However, 18-year-olds could not vote until 1971 when the 26th Amendment lowered the voting age from 21 to 18.

You can vote!
African Americans were given the right to vote by the 15th Amendment in 1870. But until the Voting Rights Act was passed in 1970 many were denied their right to vote through poll taxes, tests, and other means.

You can vote!
In 1947 the Supreme Court affirmed the right of Native Americans to vote.

You cannot vote!
In 1920 the 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote. But the minimum voting age in the US is 18. Three states are currently trying to lower the minimum voting age to 16 for local elections.

Hispanic Male, **28 years old,** **Non-citizen**	**Ethiopian Female,** **21 years old,** **Naturalized Citizen**
White Female, **40 years old** **Not registered to vote**	**African American Male** **20 years old** **Not registered to vote**
Hispanic Female, **18 years old,** **Parents are non-citizens** **Born in the US**	**Hispanic Male,** **101 Years Old**

You can vote!
You don't need to be born in this country to be a US Citizen. You can go through a process called "naturalization" where you are made a citizen of this countrty.

You cannot vote!
Only US citizens – either born in this country or naturalized – can vote.

You cannot vote!
Even though African Americans 18 and over have the right to vote, you have to register with your local board of elections in order to use your right to vote.

You cannot vote!
Even though women 18 and over have the right to vote, you have to register with your local board of elections in order to use your right to vote.

You can vote!
There is no upper age limit on voting! Vote in every election you can for as long as you can!

You can vote!
Every person born in this country is a citizen of the US regardless of whether their parents are citizens.

This judge has a register, a list containing the names of registered voters in the precinct. When each voter comes in the judge asks their name & address and finds it in the register to insure they are eligible to vote.

This judge hands each voter their ballot and helps the voter understand how to cast the ballot.

The Democratic clerk records the names of voters registered as Democrats to witness they have voted.

The Republican clerk records the names of voters registered as Republicans to witness they have voted.

The inspector (chief judge) oversees the polling places and assigns all workers their duties.

The marshal supervises voters as they put their ballot into the ballot box.

BUMPER STICKERS
(20 minutes)

OBJECTIVE
Students advocate for a cause or issue through the creation of bumper stickers.

MATERIALS
Bumper Stickers handout; paper (preferably label paper); drawing and writing materials

GET READY
✔ A few days in advance of doing this activity, ask your students to keep a watchful eye out for bumper stickers.
✔ Copy enough of the *Bumper Stickers* handout so that each student has one bumper sticker. Use label paper if possible.
✔ Cut the bumper stickers from the handout apart.
✔ Gather markers and crayons.

INSTRUCTIONS
✔ Discuss with students the purpose of bumper stickers. If possible, bring in examples and discuss what makes a bumper sticker effective.
✔ Draw bumper sticker examples on the board. First draw effective bumper stickers with catchy, large print. Next, draw ineffective ones with small, messy print. Then ask: *Which would you consider well done and eye-catching, and which would you consider poorly done and uninteresting? Why?*
✔ From the answers, keep track of what makes a good bumper sticker. List on the board the qualities of a good bumper sticker:
  ✔ Short, catchy message
  ✔ Large, neat letters
  ✔ Clear, heavy lines
  ✔ Bright colors

✔ Ask the class to describe bumper stickers they have seen and liked.
✔ Divide your students into groups of three.
✔ Instruct each student to design a bumper sticker promoting a favorite issue, candidate, etc. They may draw their design on scrap paper before using the label paper.
✔ Have students consult with their group members to make sure everyone used the graphic principles on the board.
✔ Let the students draw and color in their bumper stickers.
✔ Students can share their bumper stickers with the class for feedback.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
★ *Why do you think people put bumper stickers on their cars?*
★ *Do you think bumper stickers help sway people's opinions on issues, candidates, or other subjects? If so, how?*
★ *Do you think creating bumper stickers is a good way to express how you feel about something? Why or why not?*
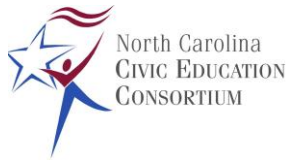★ *What are some other ways you can express or share an opinion?*

MORE!
If they get consent from the appropriate adult family member, students can place their bumper sticker on the family car.

Have your students help you collect bumper stickers for a bulletin board. Discuss whether they are effective or ineffective.

Grades 3-5 | **ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP** | 6

BUMPER STICKERS

BUMPER STICKERS

Create a "Get Registered" Commercial

Compared to other states in 2004, the turnout rate among 18 to 29 year olds in North Carolina ranked 40th overall. As the next federal and state elections quickly approach, how can we increase voter participation among such a vital segment of North Carolina's electorate? North Carolina young adults hold very different views than older generations, but are giving away their right to share these views and influence public policy.

As a young person, you know best how to encourage your peers to register to vote in the upcoming election. You will use this insight to plan a commercial to be used online to encourage greater voter participation. The internet has become a powerful tool for spreading ideas. In a study of 8- to 18-year-olds, nearly half used the Internet on a typical day in 2004, up from just under a quarter in 1999. This is your chance to design innovative approach to recruit young people to get involved in the democratic process!

Design a commercial to encourage young people to register to vote in the upcoming election. Make sure to consider the following questions when designing your commercial:
- ✓ Who do you think could best influence your peers to register? Fellow young adults? Famous citizens?
- ✓ What are the benefits of voting?
- ✓ Why is voting an essential trait of a healthy democracy?
- ✓ How are the views of young people different than older generations?
- ✓ Are there particular political stances that will excite young people? (i.e., stance on right to life, death penalty, gun laws, etc.)
- ✓ Who can register to vote?
- ✓ What is the process to get registered to vote?

Use the following video links as models for your commercial:
- http://www.rockthevote.com/music/featured-artist/soulja-boy-bday.html
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKLizKy2PO4

CULMINATING ACTIVITY: GET OUT THE VOTE!

(Time varies)

OBJECTIVE

Students participate in a variety of activities to increase the number of adult voters and/or kid voters who attend the polls on Election Day.

MATERIALS

The materials needed depend on what project the students decide to undertake.

GET READY

✔ See "The Right to Vote" and "Voter Apathy" in the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

✔ Have students brainstorm responses to the following question: "How can we increase the number of registered voters/kid voters who will attend the polls on election day?"
✔ Here are some possibilities to add to students' lists if they do not come up with them:
  ✔ Posters
  ✔ Flyers
  ✔ Letter to the editor of a local and/or school newspaper
  ✔ Public service announcement on the radio
  ✔ Voter registration drive
  ✔ Calling registered voters to remind them to vote
  ✔ Setting up a public display in the library, mall, or outside a grocery store
  ✔ Contacting neighbors, friends, relatives, etc.
✔ Decide which activity or activities students will undertake to increase the voter turnout. Students could work in small groups or the entire class could work on one project.

✔ Have students keep track of how many kids and/or adults they influence to vote. A large thermometer-type graph could be posted in the classroom and filled in periodically as students complete their activities. (Of course, they won't be able to discern the effects of all activities, for example, posters and flyers.) As a school or a class, students could set a goal to influence a certain number (100? 1000?) of people to go to the polls. If they worked with the adult population, they could check the Auditor's Web pages, contact the Auditor's office, and/or contact the Election Commissioner for voter turnout records. Be sure to compare results to the voter turnout of the last comparable election.
✔ After the election, discuss in class whether students think they made a difference.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

★ *What did you learn about the challenges of influencing people to vote?*
★ *Did you make a difference? If so, how?*
★ *Was this activity easier or harder than you thought it would be? Why?*
★ *What was the best approach in trying to get people to vote?*
★ *Do you think most citizens appreciate their right to vote? Why do you feel that way?*
★ *What challenges do we face that prevent people from voting? What can you do about those challenges?*
★ *What did this activity teach you about the right to vote?*

THINGS TO DO ON MY FIRST DAY IN OFFICE

(20-25 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students think up ways to improve their communities as if they were mayor and then envision their own role in making things better.

MATERIALS

Things To Do On My First Day In Office handout; writing and drawing materials

GET READY

✔ Duplicate the *Things To Do On My First Day In Office* handout for each student in your class.
✔ Prepare a Kids Voting bulletin board area to display the papers.

INSTRUCTIONS

✔ Say, *Have you ever wondered what the mayor of our community does? What do you think he does?* Listen to responses.
✔ While students brainstorm several of the mayor's jobs, write them on the board. They may include planning, listening to people's problems, getting things built for the community, etc.
✔ Distribute the handouts and say, *I want you to pretend that each of you has just been elected mayor of our city! Tomorrow will be your first day in office. What do you need to do, and want to do, starting tomorrow?*
✔ The students will list their priorities and, if they wish, color or decorate their papers.

✔ Have your students pair up to exchange papers. Each student should select their favorite idea from the other person's list.
✔ Make a master list of suggestions on the board.
✔ Ask your students if there are any suggestions on the board that they can do now; they can act on one of the suggestions, depending on its feasibility.
✔ Display the papers on your Kids Voting bulletin board, labeling them with the children's last names: "Mayor Smith," "Mayor Johnson," etc.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

★ *What are the qualifications you need to be the real mayor of our town?* (Review these for your community. Generally, you must be a resident for a specified time and a registered voter.)
★ *In what ways can you help to make the plans for our community come true?* (Choose some of the students' plans and brainstorm children's roles in bringing them about. Example: "Make our town cleaner" can translate into "We will never throw litter in the streets.")
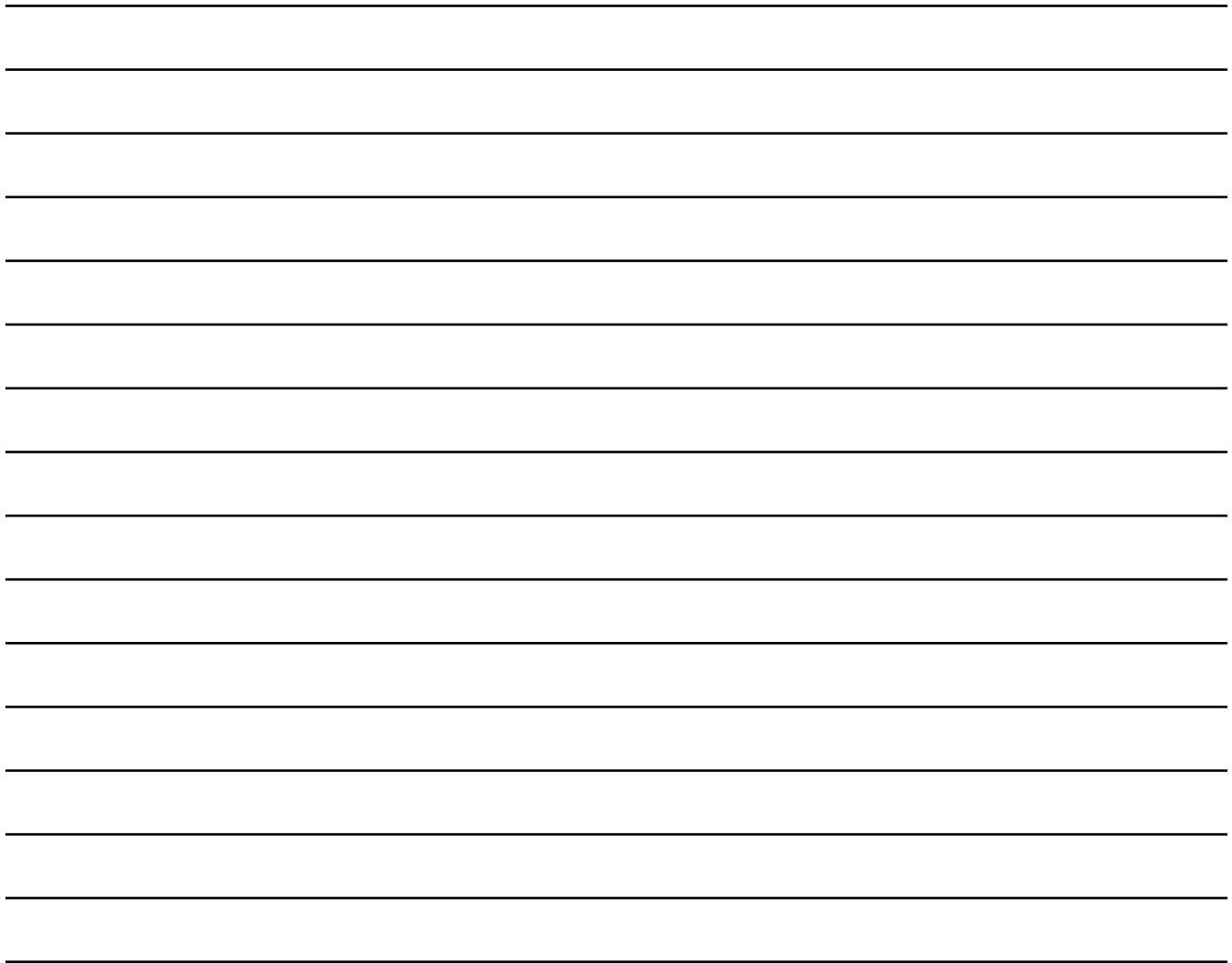
MORE!

Students can send their papers to the mayor or they can summarize their plans in a classroom letter. Mail the letter to the mayor's office or send it via e-mail.

Thanks to Carol Sharkey of Providence Day School, Charlotte, North Carolina, for this activity.

Grades 3-5 | **ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP** | 13

THINGS TO DO ON MY FIRST DAY IN OFFICE

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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                                    _____

Grades 3-5 | **ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP** | 14

THE WISH TREE
(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE
Students make wishes for their country that express changes they want to see.

MATERIALS
Star Cards handout; art supplies (crayons, markers, etc.); yarn; hole puncher; scissors

GET READY
✔ Find a large bare tree branch and place it in a pot filled with pebbles or design a large tree out of paper and attach it to a wall or bulletin board.
✔ Copy and cut apart a star card for each student.
✔ Prepare: one 8-inch-long piece of string or yarn for each student, crayons, markers, or colored pencils, scissors, and a hole puncher.

INSTRUCTIONS
✔ Instruct your students to cut out the star card, fold it in half, and color/decorate the cover.
✔ As they are working, ask them to make a wish for our country.
✔ Have your students draw or write their wish on the inside of the card and sign their names.
✔ Help them punch a hole in the corner and tie string through the hole.
✔ Hold a ceremony so the students may tie their cards to the tree. They may read or describe their wishes as they place them on the tree or share them more privately later on.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
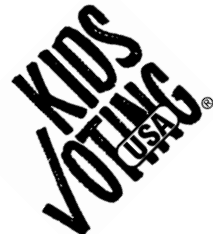★ *How can our wishes for our country come true?*
★ *Is there anything a young person can do to make these wishes come true?*
★ *How have we helped our country by participating in this activity?*
★ *If we practice self-discipline and patience in our classroom, how might that help?*
★ *Can you think of anyone who had a wish or a dream for our country and made it come true? Tell us about it.*

MORE!
As a class, brainstorm a wish for the community that the class can make a reality (such as a cleaner school or playground). Work together to make this happen.

STAR CARDS

"How lovely to think that no one need wait a moment.
We can start slowly changing the world. How lovely
that everyone great and small can make a contribution."
— Anne Frank

KIDS VOTING USA

"How lovely to think that no one need wait a moment.
We can start slowly changing the world. How lovely
that everyone great and small can make a contribution."
— Anne Frank

KIDS VOTING USA

Grades 3-5 | **ELECTIONS AND VOTING** | 21

The Web of My Community

Overview
Part of being an active, responsible citizen within the community is recognizing that each individual's actions affect the community as a whole. Thus, citizens who are active and engaged have a positive effect on those around them and those who are apathetic have a negative effect. In this activity, students create a "web" to explore the interconnectedness of citizens living within the same community.

Grades
Any

Activity Type
Whole group/class

Materials
Yarn

Duration
30 minutes

Procedure
1. Have all students stand in a circle and read the following:

"I want you to close your eyes and imagine where you live. Think about the things you love most about it. Think about the things you pass by everyday on your way to school or work that you glance at or hear in passing... The huge oak tree; the park; the sound of swing sets and the ice cream truck; a field of corn; old folks sitting on the porch of the retirement center, giving a little wave as you cruise by; the flowers outside of your school, bright flashes poking up from thick piles of dark brown mulch; the flag on top of the courthouse, flapping against a blue sky; your own home; the sound of dishes being washed; the smell of cut grass; your own room; your favorite snacks in the cabinets; your favorite CDs in the stereo; your favorite posters and pictures on the wall...

And then, imagine it all gone.

This is exactly what happened in 1996, when Hurricane Fran charged though North Carolina slapping our state with 115 mph winds and dumping as much as 10 inches of rain. It roared and ripped and screamed through counties and towns, cities and fields. And when it was finished, it left behind broken homes...broken trees...and broken hearts.

Water rose through homes, traveled through the ducts, soaked into the wood, stained the furniture and clothes, disintegrated pictures, and washed away symbols of memories. Fields remained where there were once neighborhoods. Crops were destroyed. Schools were ruined. Libraries were left with nothing more than wet, pulpy piles of paper that used to be books. Pets were missing. Trees were bent over, ripped by the roots from the ground. Citizens and police and firefighters were left sad eyed and exhausted.

And so, how does a community pull itself up from such devastation? How does it make it through the days and weeks with no power, no running water, no food. How does it build itself back, return to a normal day of school or work or life in general? What does it take to start from debris and heal those broken homes, broken trees, and broken hearts?

I want each of you to imagine that this is your community, or the community in the county right next to yours. What could you do or encourage others to help you do, to help a process of healing begin after the cold, wet fist of a hurricane has done its damage?

Think of something specific, great or small, that you could do to help this community."

2. Give students a few moments to think and then explain that you will start. Share your idea, such as "I would organize a book drive, where I encouraged people around the state to send their favorite books so that we could restock the library" or

"I would make cards for people who had lost something in the hurricane, just so they would know someone was thinking of them," then holding the end of the yarn and unraveling some of its length, throw it to someone else in the circle. Explain that once students receive the yarn, they will hold onto a piece, pull it tight, and share their own idea of how they could help. They will then repeat the process, holding their piece, unraveling it a bit, and throwing it to another person across the circle, who will then share their idea. As this process continues, a web will start to form in the middle of the circle. Remind students it is very important they hold on to their piece. As students participate, if they get stuck and cannot think of something, they can add to an idea that has already been shared. For example, "I really liked Christie's idea about the book drive. I would contact businesses outside of NC and see if they would donate books also."

3. Once all students are finished, have them look at the web they created. Ask them:
- What do you notice about this web that we have created? (you are looking for a student to point out that they are all part of it; they are all holding it together; etc.)
- What has connected us all in this web? What difference would our web have made in the community suffering from so much loss?
- Can one person make a difference? Explain. Let's say I wouldn't have started that book drive. Would it have really mattered?

As students discuss whether or not the actions of one person can make a difference, drop your hold on the yarn, which will create a difference in the look of the web. Discuss:

- What just happened? How did my letting go affect the web?
- Symbolically, how might just one person not helping their community affect the entire community?
- As citizens of a community, what are our responsibilities to each other and the community at large?

Culminating Activities
- Have students design bumper stickers that encourage helping others, generosity, volunteering, or other themes brought up through out the web activity.
- Do this activity by describing an actual problem in your community; once students brainstorm ways they can contribute and assist, have them put those ideas into action and volunteer

Windows to Our Community

Overview
In this activity, participants will explore their community, creating a piece of art representing their community as it is, as well how it can be improved. Ideally the activity will culminate in participant identification of a community service project or volunteer opportunity.

Grades
Any

Activity Type
Individual or Partner
Large Group

Materials
- Handout, "Windows to Our Community" or larger chart paper/poster board
- Art supplies (construction paper, glue, scissors, crayons/markers)

Duration
1+ hour

Instructions

Part I: Exploring Our Community
1. Lead group members in a verbal brainstorm of the word "community". Encourage them to explore all aspects of the word that comes to mind. As a group, create a definition, such as "a social group whose members live in an area, share government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage." Also discuss:
- What makes up our community? What might people see, hear, smell, do, etc. in our community?
- What do you most like about your community?
- What types of things need to be improved in our community?
- Why should we care about our community? Why should we care about things even if they don't affect us directly (i.e. if our community has people who are homeless, yet we are not homeless, why should we care)?

2. Explain to the group that they will be exploring their view of their own community in an art activity. It is the facilitator's choice whether this will be done individually or in partners.

3. First, give each participant a copy of the handout "Windows to Our Community". Instruct each participant to illustrate and note the positive things about their community on the handout. Make sure participants understand that there is no right or wrong. Students can use a mixture of words and art, and can create drawings that are literal or symbolic. Students may illustrate objects, places, people, actions, emotions, etc., but all should represent positive aspects of the participant's community. (Instruct students that they can draw/color across the two lines located on the handout.) You also may want to provide larger sheets of construction paper, poster board, or chart paper for students to use instead of the handout.

4. As participants finish, instruct them to make two cuts on their drawings on the two lines shown (cut from the bottom up, stopping where the line ends so that the flap will remain attached). This creates a square that can flip up. (If you have substituted larger paper for the handout, just have students cut that paper in the same way the handout shows.) Then, have them glue this along the edges (both sides and the top only) to a sheet of construction paper or additional piece of paper that is the same size as their art. Make sure participants only glue the edges, and that they do not glue the flip-up square.

5. Once finished, instruct participants to again illustrate their community, but this time focusing on things that they feel need improvement. Participants will illustrate these problematic objects, places, people, actions, emotions, etc. on the bottom glued page by lifting up the flap and drawing underneath it.

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6. Once all participants are finished, allow them to share their "Window to Our Community", first showing and discussing the positive aspects they noted, then moving on to the negative. As participants share, note their comments in a place all can see. When everyone has shared, discuss:
- What similarities were there in the positive things we noted about our communities?
- What similarities were there in the things that need improvement?
- If you were able to choose one community problem, which would you most want to improve and why? (allow students to choose several main issues)

Part II: Implementing a Community Action Plan

7. Based on student response, label several sheets of large paper with one issue highlighted on each. Tape them in various areas of the room. Instruct students to consider which of those issues they most care about. Give them a moment to think, since they must choose one. Tell them that it is important they choose an issue important to them, because they are going to be working in groups to brainstorm ways to address this issue. Then, tell students to go to the area of the room where that issue is labeled, and to circle up with the other students who arrive there. (If a particular area has too many students, split the group into smaller working groups.)

8. Next, hand out the attached Community Action Plan and instruct students that they will be working together to devise a realistic plan for the class to implement in terms of helping the issue they have identified as most pressing to them. Go over the steps as defined on the attached handout and allow students to discuss their ideas. As they work, circulate and encourage them to be as specific as possible. Based on your time frame, you may need to come back to this planning stage several times before implementing.
Note that the Community Action Plan may be more effective as a class activity, lead by the teacher, when dealing with students in K-5 grades.

9. Once groups have started and/or finished a first draft of their Community Action Plan Facilitate a discussion that brings to light governmental responsibilities and citizen responsibilities in fixing community problems. Ask:
- Who in our community is generally responsible for fixing problems such as the ones we have mentioned? (facilitate the discussion to focus on the balance between government involvement –lawmakers, police, committees, etc.- verses individuals.)
- How do we ensure that our lawmakers and government officials are doing their job and improving our community? In what ways can we communicate our communities' needs to lawmakers? (facilitate discussion around civic involvement, voting, reading the paper/watching the news to stay informed, attending open governmental sessions, participating by letting your opinion be known via meetings, letters to the editor, letters to legislators, etc.)

10. Once students have developed their Community Action Plans, focus on putting one into action!

Follow Up Activities
- Implement a service learning project, fund raiser, volunteer day, letter writing campaign, etc. based on the ideas posed by the group.
- Arrange for your group to attend a government hearing or meeting, arrange a visit from a resource person (representative from local or state government) or arrange a day of lobbying.
- Host a community evening displaying participant's art work and ideas on "Windows to My Community". Participants can give speeches about their communities and needed improvements, present skits based on community issues discussed, etc. Invite parents, community members, and government/community officials to attend. Use this event to advocate for a community wide volunteer day.

Community Action Plan

Identified Issue: _____

Group Members:

_____   _____   _____

_____   _____   _____

Describe the issue in detail and the negative impact it is having on your community:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Ideally, what would you like to see happen in terms of improving this issue? Brainstorm desired outcomes/visualize the end result:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Is there anything already being done to help improve this issue? If so, describe (i.e. organizations already addressing it, programs that exist, etc.) and rate their effectiveness thus far:

_____

_____

_____

Are there any of these organizations who we can work with to help solve this issue? (Identify any programs already established that we could volunteer for or who might be able to help us reach our goal):

_____

_____

_____

What ideas does your group have to help make this issue better in your community? First, imagine that you can do anything that comes to your mind…brainstorm and list everything that you can think of:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Now, considering who we are and possible resources, list ideas of things we can do to improve this issue:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

List the steps it will take to accomplish this:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What obstacles might you run into? How can you be prepared to circumvent these?

_____

_____

_____

What do we need to do today to GET STARTED?

_____

_____

Windows to Our Community

★ CULMINATING ACTIVITY: LEARN AND SERVE
(1 hour in class; time varies out of class)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn about different problems in the local community, choose one, and brainstorm ways they can make a difference.

MATERIALS

Newspaper articles; additional materials determined by the nature of the service project

GET READY
- ✔ Prepare newspaper articles that discuss community problems: trash, hunger, etc.
- ✔ Arrange to have someone from the community come to your class to speak about local community needs and problems.
- ✔ Consider things that will determine the nature of a service project: money, transportation, supervision, etc.

INSTRUCTIONS
- ✔ For homework one night, ask students to talk to their parents/guardians about what they think are the biggest problems in their community. The next day, have students share in class and add these ideas to a list of community problems on the board.
- ✔ Have your students come up with additional ideas to add to this list by having them read through the newspaper articles you collected. (You may want to distribute entire newspapers if your students are familiar with reading them.)
- ✔ Have your students add any additional community problems they can think of to the list.
- ✔ The next day, have someone from the community come to your class to speak about local community needs and problems. This

could be a public official such as the mayor or a city council member or someone who works for an umbrella social service organization such as United Way. Ask the speaker to talk with the class about current community problems. Encourage students to ask questions about the problems to learn more about how they originated and what solutions might be effective.
- ✔ Tell your class that they are going to address one of these problems, but first they need to decide which problem. Have your class vote to decide which problem to address.
- ✔ Now that you have a problem for your class to consider, ask your students to come up with possible solutions to the problem. List these ideas on the board.
- ✔ In order to identify the correct project for your class, encourage the students to think about which of these activities would be most feasible and desirable to execute. The following questions will be helpful to consider:
  - ✔ How much time do we have for the service activity?
  - ✔ What kinds of support do we need (money, transportation, adult supervision) and where can we find this support?
  - ✔ Which ideas are likely to have the greatest impact on the problem?
  - ✔ Which ideas do we most want to do?

Note: It is important as the teacher that you "veto" any ideas at this point that the students are advocating for that you find unacceptable or unreasonable. Be sure to explain to the students why that idea will not be included in the final list.

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CULMINATING ACTIVITY: LEARN AND SERVE (continued)

✔ Vote on one project idea for the class to complete.

✔ After completing the service activity, have students reflect on their experience in writing or discussion.

✔ To conclude the experience, celebrate students' efforts to make a difference. This could be as simple as a popcorn party, extra recess, a pizza picnic, or as involved as a public event in the community with student awards.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

★ *What are some of our community's needs and problems? Why do you consider these problems? How do you know these are needs and problems in our community?*

★ *Was it hard to come up with a service project for the class? Why or why not?*

★ *What was hard, easy, fun or difficult about the service experience?*

★ *Did the class make a difference?*

★ *What did we learn from this experience and how could we apply that learning to future efforts to improve our community?*

MORE!

If the service project the class undertook is not one that involved influencing public opinion, you might also consider one of the following activities for your class:

✔ Write a letter about the problem to a newspaper editor or a public official in the community

✔ Organize a public display with facts, artwork, and any other information you can think of

CULMINATING ACTIVITY: I GO TO THE POLLS

(Time varies)

OBJECTIVE

Students engage in an authentic voting experience.

MATERIALS

Election materials supplied by your Kids Voting USA affiliate

GET READY

✔ Have your students' voter registration cards handy. (They should have filled them out during *The Name Game* activity. If your students did not yet participate in this activity, consider doing it with them prior to them casting their votes.)

INSTRUCTIONS

✔ Tell your students, *Now that we know what voting is and why it is important, let's use our right to vote and make a difference!*

✔ Give your students back their registration cards prior to their voting experience so they can take them to the polls.

✔ Have your students participate in your local Kids Voting USA affiliate election. If you are not sure who your contact person is (whether a grade-level chair, school principal, etc.) visit our Web site: www.kidsvotingusa.org and click on "Affiliate Network." It will give you the contact information for your local Kids Voting USA affiliate. They should be able to give you the information you need.

✔ Have your students reflect, either verbally or in written form, both on their voting experience and on how they plan to continue to make a difference in their community.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

★ *How did it make you feel when you voted?*

★ *Does voting give you power? How?*

★ *How do you think it would feel if you were not allowed to vote?*

★ *Do all people vote who are able to? Why do some people not vote? How do you feel about that?*

★ *Why is it important to study the candidates and issues?*

★ *How can you get information about the candidates and issues?*

★ *What does it mean to register? Why is registering important?*

★ *Is voting the only way you can make a difference? What else can you do to make a difference?*

WATCHING THE RETURNS
(Time varies)

OBJECTIVE
Students monitor the election returns to stay politically active.

MATERIALS
U.S. Map handout

GET READY
✔ Copy one *U.S. Map* handout for each student.

INSTRUCTIONS
✔ Ask your students to take the maps home and watch the election returns on television or find them in the newspaper.
✔ Instruct them to choose a color for each presidential candidate (preferably blue for a Democratic candidate and red for a Republican candidate) and to color the states accordingly as they learn the results from television, the radio, or newspaper.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
★ *What happened when you went to the polls?*
★ *Did you have any problems? Any surprises?*
★ *Did the election turn out as you thought it would?*
★ *How do you feel about it today?*
★ *Were the election returns exciting to watch?*
★ *If you were planning an election returns show for kids how would you make it more exciting?*
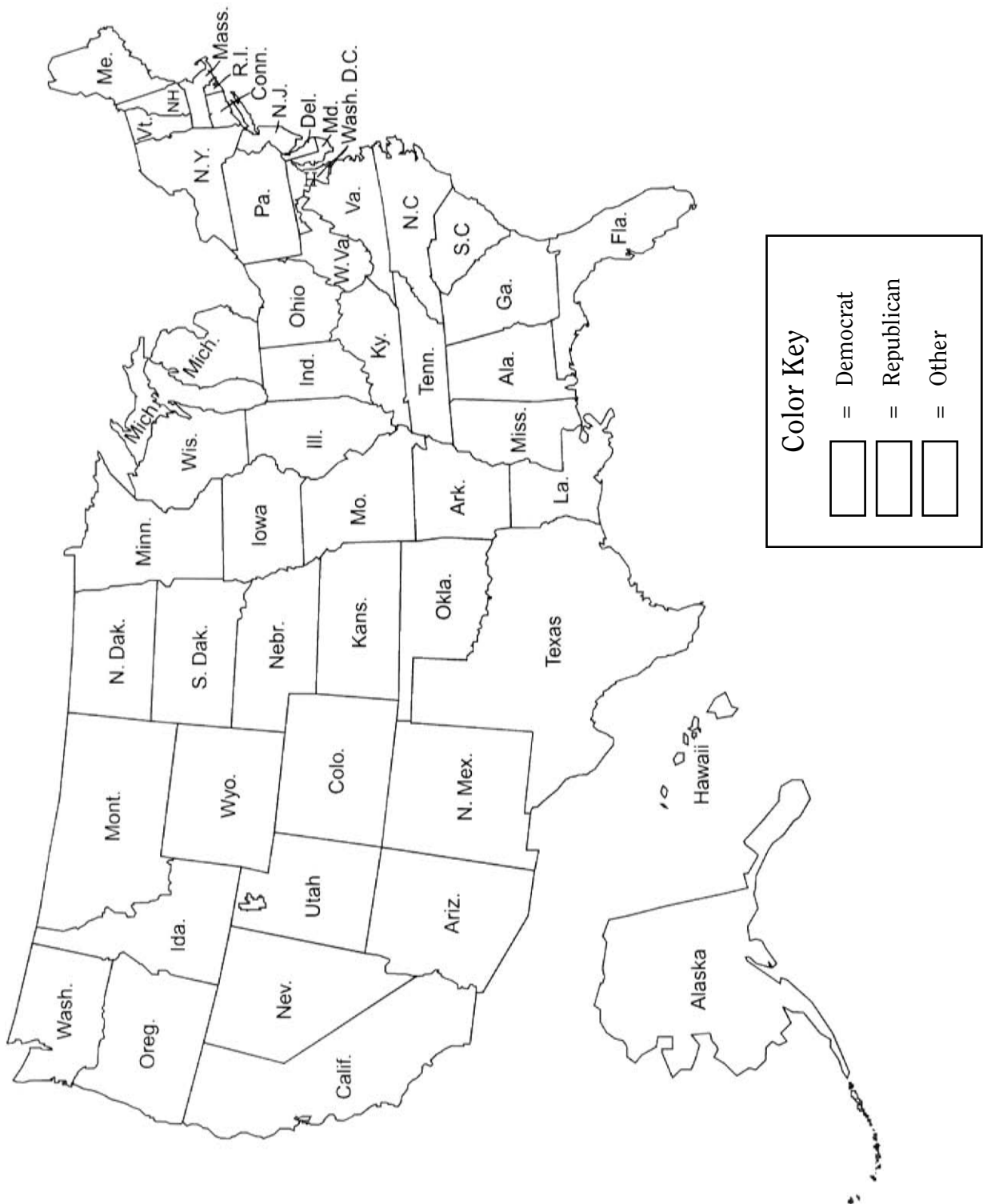
MORE!
For gubernatorial or other state elections, copy a state map showing counties. Follow instructions above.

VOTE QUOTE
"Politics is just another word for your future."
– Unknown

U.S. MAP

Color Key

= Democrat

= Republican

= Other

OVERARCHING QUESTIONS

MY VOTE GIVES ME POWER
- ★ What is a vote? What do you think it is like to vote?
- ★ What does voting accomplish?
- ★ Does voting make a difference? How?
- ★ What is an election?
- ★ What is the purpose of an election?
- ★ Are there different kinds of elections? Like what?
- ★ What power does voting have?
- ★ What happens when people do not vote?

I STUDY THE CANDIDATES AND ISSUES
- ★ What is a candidate?
- ★ What does a candidate hope to do?
- ★ How do candidates try to win an election?
- ★ Do you know any candidates in this election?
- ★ What is an issue?
- ★ Can you give an example of an issue?
- ★ What issues are important to you?
- ★ Why is it important to study the candidates?
- ★ Why is it important to study the issues?
- ★ What can you do to study the candidates and issues?

I REGISTER AND VOTE
- ★ What does it mean to register?
- ★ What do you think you do when you register?
- ★ Why is it important to register?
- ★ Do you need to register before you vote?
- ★ Why is it important to vote?
- ★ What do you accomplish when you register and vote?
- ★ Have you ever been to a polling place? What was that experience like?

I CONTINUE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
- ★ What does it mean to make a difference?
- ★ Does voting make a difference?
- ★ What else can you do to make a difference?
- ★ Do candidates make promises? Can you give me an example?
- ★ Do all candidates keep their promises once they are elected?
- ★ What can you do to make sure that candidates keep their promises when they are elected?
- ★ What do you think is important to do once an election is over?