Guiding Questions:

* Who is allowed to vote?
* Why do we vote?
* Why is voting important?

General Overview:

* The Set-up: Voting is important. It impacts a lot of things that happen in our lives.
* The Problem: A lot of people don’t vote (First Vote Activity)
* The Solution: Registering to vote is easy, y’all.

Introduction:

* Warm up with some ideas about voting. Assess where the students are already, and move forward with the lesson accordingly.
  + What kinds of things do we vote on in the US? (Possible answers: President, Senators, Representatives, Governors, Attorney General, Mayors, Town Council Members, Superintendents of schools -- in NC). Remember, the US is a representative (indirect) democracy, so *we* don’t vote on laws, but we vote on people who will make laws for us.
  + Write up these people on the board. What are some of the things that they decide that impact us? If students aren’t providing quality answers, it’s okay to feed them some/provide some yourself.
* If you were to vote on something in your classroom, what would that process look like? What might be some of the problems with doing that for the entire US?
* In order to make sure that votes are counted correctly, in the US you need to register to vote.

Analyze the North Carolina Voter Registration:

* If it seems reasonable/at the level of your class, have students spend 3 minutes coming up with some requirements of voting by examining the North Carolina Voter Registration form. If not, save this portion to the end of class, and present it as part of “the solution” (i.e. look how easy it is to register to vote)
* For those with iPads, visit QR code on screen **[POWERPOINT]** or pass out one version to each table for schools without iPads.
* For our purposes, in order to vote in North Carolina you only need 3-4 things:

1. You must be 18 years old
2. You must live in North Carolina (this means you only vote in North Carolina)
3. You must be a US citizen
4. You cannot *currently* be serving a sentence for a felony (after sentence, your voting rights are restored -- if you think this will take too much time to explain, it’s okay to gloss over it)

* See if students agree with these requirements. Does anyone disagree? Point out that these laws are subject to change, and most of them have changed over the course of US history.

The Problem:

* So registering to vote is pretty easy, right? What’s the problem, then?
* Well, part of the problem is that even when they *can* vote, a lot of people don’t. And that can have an impact on the results of elections!
* Have the students stand up and get in a line at the front of the class. You’re going to have them represent the people in North Carolina between 18 and 29 years old. These numbers are based off of 24 students -- if there are more/fewer, adjust by having more/fewer sit down.

*It’s a big presidential year! Some of the most controversial and talked about candidates are running. Everywhere you turn there is news about the election.*

*Tap students #1 and #2. Darn, you’ve had a lot going on and forgot to register. Sit*

*down*

*Tap #2 and #3 students, too bad you forgot to fill out an absentee ballot and you*

*were on vacation in the Bahamas during the entire early voting and election. Sit*

*down*

*Tap student #4. You don’t think voting makes a difference. Sit down*

*Tap student #5. The line was long and your phone battery was low. Sit down*

*Tap students #6 and #7. You just couldn’t decide between the two candidates so*

*decided not to vote at all. Sit down*

*Tap student #8. You didn’t know where your polling place was. Sit down*

*Tap students #9 and #10. Your mad your candidate isn’t one of the options so you protested by not voting. Sit down.*

*Tap student #11. You didn’t know enough about the candidates to make an informed vote. Sit down.*

*Tap student #12. You were studying so hard for your homework in college that you completely forgot. Sit down.*

*In the 2016 presidential election, which included a long ballot of statewide*

*candidates, ONLY 50 % of 18 to 29 year olds voted. Look around at all of your*

*classmates sitting down. Do you think it would have made a difference if they voted?*

*Now let’s look at the 2014 elections for Senators and Representatives. Everyone stand up again.*

*Go around and tell 80% of the class to sit down. (If it’s 24 kids have everyone but*

*5 kids sitting down).*

*Do you think it would have made a difference if all these young people sitting*

*down voted?*

*Last one- local elections. These are elections for mayor, town council, and other local positions.*

*Everyone stand up one more time. All but two of you sit down. That represents*

*the percentage of young people that voted in the 2015 local elections in Raleigh.[[1]](#footnote-0)*

Framing the Solution:

* Ask students for some of the reasons that people don’t vote. Have them brainstorm ways to solve some of those problems.
* If you didn’t have them do it earlier, now is the time to talk about voter registration (see above with registration form).
* How often are there elections? Every year! Not every position is up for election (such as presidents, who are every 4 years), but there are decisions being made every year!

Wrap Up:

* Have students write down two reasons that voting is important and two things that they can do to encourage other people to vote in their CIVICS journal. Their “ticket to leave” is your approval of the journal page.

1. Courtesy of First Vote NC, c 2017 [↑](#footnote-ref-0)