FPES
FLORIDA PRESS
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES INC.
FPESNIE.ORG

2020

ELECTION

Tampa Bay Times
NIE
newspaper in education
tampabay.com/nie

The election, civics education and your newspaper
By Jodi Pushkin, *President Florida Press Educational Services*

According to the Louis Frey Institute, research shows when students engage in simulated civic actions, they are prone to develop a positive political efficacy that contributes to lifelong engagement.

The 2017 Florida Legislature amended Section 1007.25, Florida Statutes, to require students initially entering a Florida College System institution or state university in 2018-19 and thereafter to demonstrate competency in civic literacy. The amendment also requires the Chairs of the State Board of Education and Board of Governors' to appoint a faculty committee to develop a new civics literacy course or revise an existing U.S. History or U.S. Government course to include the civic literacy content. The committee would also establish course competencies and identify outcomes that include, at minimum, the following:

- An understanding of the basic principles of American democracy and how they are applied in our republican form of government.
- An understanding of the U.S. Constitution.
- Knowledge of the founding documents and how they have shaped the nature and functions of our institutions of self-governance.
- An understanding of landmark Supreme Court cases and their impact on law and society.

The local newspaper is a great teaching tool to engage your students in civics education. Did you know that more than 60 percent of people with high exposure to newspapers in childhood are regular readers of newspapers as adults, according to a study conducted for the News Media Alliance, former Newspaper Association of America Foundation? That percentage is significant because statistically people who read the newspaper daily are more engaged citizens. Engaged citizens participate in their communities by voting and practicing good citizenship.

The goal of NIE programs is to create a generation of critical readers, engaged citizens and consumers. John F. Kennedy said, "Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource." The goal of NIE is to engage and develop that resource.

The newspaper is both a primary and secondary source for informational text. According to Scholastic magazine, "Informational text is a type of nonfiction — a very important type. Nonfiction includes any text that is factual. (Or, by some definitions, any type of literature that is factual, which would exclude texts such as menus and street signs.) Informational text differs from other types of nonfiction in purpose, features, and format."

The newspaper meets these specific characteristics of informational text. It is a logical resource for information about the natural, social and political world. The newspaper conveys information about the natural or social world. The articles are written from someone who knows information to someone who doesn't. The newspaper has specialized features such as headings and technical vocabulary.

To learn more about Florida's NIE programs, visit the Florida Press Educational Services (FPES) Web site at **fpesnie.org.**

Jodi Pushkin, the President of Florida Press Educational Services, is the manager for the Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education program. Pushkin holds an M.A. in English Education and a B.A. in writing and literature. She has worked in NIE since 2000. Pushkin is a former high school teacher. In addition to her work with NIE, Pushkin is an adjunct instructor at Saint Leo University and Hillsborough Community College.
Contact Pushkin via e-mail at **jpushkin@tampabay.com**.

Florida Standards

The Florida Department of Education defines that the Florida Standards provide a robust set of goals for every grade. Emphasizing analytical thinking rather than rote memorization, the Florida Standards will prepare our students for success in college, career and life. The Florida Standards will reflect the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers.

Building on the foundation of success that has made Florida a national model, The Florida Standards provide a clear set of goals for every student, parent, and teacher.

For more information on Florida Standards, go to the CPALMS website. CPALMS is the State of Florida's official source for standards information and course descriptions: **cpalms.org**.

The activities in this packet applies to the following Florida Standards for grades six through twelve.

Social Studies: SS.612.E.2.1; SS.612.W.1.3; SS.612.C.2.1; SS.712.E.1.2; SS.712.C.1.8; SS.7.C.2.2; SS.712.C.2.3; SS.712.C.2.4; SS.712.C.2.5; SS.712.C.2.7; SS.712.C.2.8; SS.712.C.2.9; SS.712.C.2.10; SS.712.C.2.11; SS.712.C.2.13; SS.712.C.3.6; SS.712.C.3.7; SS.712.C.3.13; SS.812.A.1.1; SS.812.A.1.2; SS.812.A.1.3; SS.812.A.1.4; SS.812.A.1.5; SS.812.A.1.6; SS.812.C.1.6
Language Arts: LAFS.612.RI.1.1; LAFS.612.RI.1.2; LAFS.612.RI.1.3; LAFS.612.RI.2.4; LAFS.612.RI.2.5; LAFS.612.RI.2.6; LAFS.612.RI.3.7; LAFS.612.L.1.1; LAFS.612.L.1.2; LAFS.612.L.2.3; LAFS.612.L.3.4; LAFS.612.L.3.5; LAFS.612.L.3.6; LAFS.612.R.1.1; LAFS.612.R.1.2; LAFS.612.R.1.3; LAFS.612.R.2.4; LAFS.612.R.2.5; LAFS.612.R.2.6; LAFS.612.R.3.7; LAFS.612.R.3.8; LAFS.612.R.3.9; LAFS.612.R.4.10; LAFS.612.SL.1.1 LAFS.612.SL.1.2; LAFS.612.SL.1.3; LAFS.612.SL.2.4; LAFS.612.SL.2.5; LAFS.612.SL.2.6; LAFS.612. W.1.1; LAFS.612.W.1.2; LAFS.612.W.1.3; LAFS.612.W.2.4; LAFS.612.W.2.5; LAFS.612.W.2.6; LAFS.612.W.3.7; LAFS.612.W.3.8; LAFS.612.W.3.9; LAFS.612.W.4.10

Newspaper in Education

The Newspaper in Education (NIE) program is a cooperative effort between schools and local newspapers to promote the use of newspapers in print and electronic form as educational resources. Our educational resources fall into the category of informational text.

Informational text is a type of nonfiction text. The primary purpose of informational text is to convey information about the natural or social world. Florida NIE programs provide schools with class sets of informational text in the form of the daily newspaper and original curriculum. NIE teaching materials cover a variety of subjects and are consistent with Florida's education standards.

Florida Press Educational Services, Inc. (FPES) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization of newspaper professionals that promotes literacy, particularly for young people. FPES members consist of daily and weekly newspapers throughout the state of Florida. Through its member newspapers, FPES serves educators, students and families in all 67 Florida counties. For more information about FPES, visit fpesnie.org, or email **ktower@flpress.com** or **jpushkin@tampabay.com**. Follow us on Twitter at Twitter.com/ nie_fpes.

Read “Why Voting is Important”

Vocabulary – write a brief definition of the following terms:

- Campaign
- Citizen
- Disenfranchisement
- Election
- Electoral College
- Poll tax
- Popular vote
- Representative
- Suffrage
- Swing state

****

1. What is the main point of the article?
2. What issues have citizens encountered that made voting more difficult?
3. Why is the voting style in the United States indirect?
4. Who was permitted to vote in the 1800s?
5. What laws have changed voting since the 1800s?
6. Explain in your own words why every vote counts?

****

Newspaper Connection:

- Look through the newspaper for examples of ways you can help alert others about this issue. How can you use your newspaper to become a voting advocate?

RESOURCE LIBRARY | ARTICLE

Why Voting Is Important

“Voting is your civic duty.” This is a pretty common sentiment, especially each November as Election Day approaches. But what does it really mean? And what does it mean for Americans in particular?

GRADES

5 - 8

SUBJECTS

Social Studies, Civics, U.S. History

Monday, May 11, 2020

A History of Voting in the United States

Today, most American citizens over the age of 18 are entitled to vote in federal and state elections, but voting was not always a default right for all Americans. The United States Constitution, as originally written, did not define specifically who could or could not vote—but it did establish *how* the new country would vote.

Article 1 of the Constitution determined that members of the Senate and House of Representatives would both be elected directly by popular vote. The president, however, would be elected not by direct vote, but rather by the Electoral College. The Electoral College assigns a number of representative votes per state, typically based on the state’s population. This indirect election method was seen as a balance between the popular vote and using a state’s representatives in Congress to elect a president.

Because the Constitution did not specifically say who could vote, this question was

largely left to the states into the 1800s. In most cases, landowning white men were eligible to vote, while white women, black people, and other disadvantaged groups of the time were excluded from voting (known as disenfranchisement). While no longer explicitly excluded, voter suppression is a problem in many parts of the country, as some politicians try to win reelection by limiting the number of specific populations of voters, such as African Americans.

It was not until the 15th Amendment was passed in 1869 that black men were allowed to vote. But even so, many would-be voters faced artificial hurdles like poll taxes, literacy tests, and other measures meant to discourage them from exercising their voting right. This would continue until the 24th Amendment in 1964, which eliminated the poll tax, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which ended Jim Crow laws. Women were denied the right to vote until 1920, when the long efforts of the women's suffrage movement resulted in the 19th Amendment.

With these amendments removing the previous barriers to voting (particularly sex and race), theoretically all American citizens over the age of 21 could vote by the mid 1960s. Later, in 1971, the American voting age was lowered to 18, building on the idea that if a person was old enough to serve their country in the military, they should be allowed to vote.

With these constitutional amendments and legislation like the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the struggle for widespread voting rights evolved from the Founding Fathers' era to the late 20th century.

Why Your Vote Matters

If you ever think that just one vote in a sea of millions cannot make much of a difference, consider some of the closest elections in U.S. history.

In 2000, Al Gore narrowly lost the Electoral College vote to George W. Bush. The election came down to a recount in Florida, where Bush had won the popular vote by such a small margin that it triggered an automatic recount and a Supreme Court case (*Bush v. Gore*). In the end, Bush won Florida by 0.009 percent of the votes cast in the state, or 537 votes. Had 600 more pro-Gore voters gone to the polls in Florida that November, there may have been an entirely different president from 2000–2008.

More recently, Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton in 2016 by securing a close Electoral College win. Although the election did not come down to a handful of votes in one state, Trump's votes in the Electoral College decided a tight race. Clinton had won the national popular vote by nearly three million votes, but the concentration of Trump voters in key districts in "swing" states like Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Michigan helped seal enough electoral votes to win the presidency.

Your vote may not directly elect the president, but if your vote joins enough others in your voting district or county, your vote undoubtedly matters when it comes to electoral

results. Most states have a “winner take all” system where the popular vote winner gets the state’s electoral votes. There are also local and state elections to consider. While presidential or other national elections usually get a significant voter turnout, local elections are typically decided by a much smaller group of voters.

A Portland State University study found that fewer than 15 percent of eligible voters were turning out to vote for mayors, council members, and other local offices. Low turnout means that important local issues are determined by a limited group of voters, making a single vote even more statistically meaningful.

How You Can Make Your Voice Heard

If you are not yet 18, or are not a U.S. citizen, you can still participate in the election process. You may not be able to walk into a voting booth, but there are things you can do to get involved:

- Be informed! Read up on political issues (both local and national) and figure out where you stand.
- Get out and talk to people. Even if you cannot vote, you can still voice opinions on social media, in your school or local newspaper, or other public forums. You never know who might be listening.
- Volunteer. If you support a particular candidate, you can work on their campaign by participating in phone banks, doing door-to-door outreach, writing postcards, or volunteering at campaign headquarters. Your work can help get candidates elected, even if you are not able to vote yourself.

Participating in elections is one of the key freedoms of American life. Many people in countries around the world do not have the same freedom, nor did many Americans in centuries past. No matter what you believe or whom you support, it is important to exercise your rights.

Read “9 Reasons We Need Young Voters More than Ever”

Vocabulary – write a brief definition for the following words and phrases:

- Crucial
- Demographic
- Disseminating
- Divisive
- Influence
- Notorious
- Neglect
- Partisan
- Strategic

****

1. What is the main point of the article?
2. In your opinion, explain which points discussed in the article are the most effective.
3. What special attributes do you people have that make it important for them to vote?
4. How can young people become educated voters?
5. In a fully developed paragraph, explain whether you agree or disagree with the points in this article.

****

Newspaper Connection:

- Research United States voting rules and laws. Search recent editions of the newspaper for articles that relate to these laws. On a piece of paper, write down the main ideas and facts of the article. Write down what you have learned about your community based on this article. Share what you have learned with your class.

9 REASONS WE NEED YOUNG VOTERS MORE THAN EVER

Young voters notoriously neglect the importance of voting, but their voice is an important one on both sides of the aisle. Key issues in every election increasingly relate to the concerns of students and professionals between the ages of 18 and 29, making it essential for members within that age group to educate themselves on political issues and take to the polls. While millennials represented nearly 50% of the entire voter population in the 2016 election, they were further divided along race, gender, and education lines when considering key issues from both candidates.

Why is it important to vote, especially if you fall within a crucial age demographic? Below are some of the most compelling reasons that young voters are needed more than ever in local, state, and national elections.

1. YOUNG VOTERS ACCOUNT FOR HALF OF THE VOTING POPULATION, MAKING THEM A POWERFUL POLITICAL FORCE.

The youth vote has the potential to be extremely influential in this country. While young voter participation in 2016 declined by 2% from a record 52% at the 2008 election, today the voting population includes almost equal parts millennials and baby boomers. As the boomer electorate decreases in size, experts suggest it is merely a matter of time before millennials become the largest and most powerful group driving future elections in the U.S. Unfortunately, not all who *can* vote *will*, meaning that fewer young people get to directly influence issues that might affect their lives for years to come, including college tuition reform and federal job programs.

2. YET OLDER AMERICANS ARE MORE LIKELY TO VOTE.

While young people make up a large portion the voting-eligible population, they're much less likely than those who are older to get out and vote. In 2016, only 19% of people aged 18-29 cast their ballot in the presidential election; at 49%, 45-64-year-olds accounted for the largest electorate last year.

Some reports have attributed the outcome of the election to a "missed opportunity" on the part of millennials to affect change en masse: while the majority of young voters actually cast ballots for Hillary Clinton, their low turnout was not enough to counter the ballots of older voters. For this, researchers are increasingly interested in methods of successfully mobilizing young voter groups. Duke University recently initiated an innovative project designing policy reform to increase turnout among the youth.

3. EVERY VOTE COUNTS.

Many young people cite feeling as though their vote doesn't count as their reason for not participating in elections. Millennials reported feeling especially disillusioned by both presidential candidates before the election in 2016, and many chose to sit out altogether as a result. In an America divided perhaps more than ever, every vote counts, especially those from one of the country's largest voting groups. President Barack Obama's election in 2008 is an example of this theory in motion, as his popularity with youth voters was one of the key elements of his campaign, giving him a large margin over competitors in a number of strategic states. Other elections in recent years have come down to just a few votes (Minnesota senator Al Franken won by just 312 votes in 2009 as one example), proving your vote does matter, maybe more than you realize.

4. YOUNG PEOPLE WERE HIT HARDEST BY THE GREAT RECESSION.

College debt and a lack of jobs dealt some of the most crippling blows to the financial futures of many young voters after the Great Recession in the late-2000s. Though unemployment rates have declined and millennials have found their footing in a new economy, policy change and reform in areas affecting college students, such as debt forgiveness and healthcare, are as crucial now as they were in the 2008 election.

The situation won't be changed by sitting idle while others make major political decisions. Youth voters who want to inspire change need to show their support for the candidates whom they feel best represent their needs. No one else is going to vote in the interest of young people except young people.

5. YOUNG VOTERS ARE AN INCREDIBLY DIVERSE GROUP.

The divisive nature of partisan politics is alive and well among young voters in today's world. So much so that the millennial electorate is expected to be the first demographic group with the ability to challenge the basic two-party system, potentially driving the need for alternative political parties whom millennials feel can represent the needs of a diverse population through a more inclusive agenda.

The same young adults in 2016 who were more likely to identify as liberals were also less likely to identify as Democrats. Currently, millennials are the most diverse voting group. Also of note? At 35%, a higher percentage of young voters identified with independent political views, rather than Republican or Democrat, than in the past three presidential elections.

6. YOUNG PEOPLE NEED TO CONNECT WITH POLITICS EARLY ON.

Participating in politics is a hard-won right in our nation. Some experts argue that young Americans with such potential for affecting political change don't exercise the right to vote as often as they should. Many even suggest that the voting age should be lowered in an effort to promote earlier voting among teenagers and young adults. Building a relationship with the political process as early as possible is key to making voting a lifelong habit: you may already be familiar with the phrase, "Vote early, vote often." If you're historically a repeat voter, you're much less likely to skip a trip to the polls in the future. This sort of habit-forming participation is key to driving policy and electing leaders who represent the needs of voters of all ages.

7. IT'S EASIER THAN EVER TO BE AN EDUCATED VOTER.

In today's tech-savvy world, there is no excuse not to vote because you don't know enough about the candidates. In fact, one might find it harder to escape day-to-day political news than subscribe to it. In an era in which Twitter is preferred means of communication for the President of the United States, Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat have become as crucial as the candidates' own websites for disseminating information about relevant issues. As this type of civic education in everything is typical for most Americans today, it isn't just beneficial in the months leading up the election but also on a day-to-day basis. The current online climate allows young voters to form a fuller picture of the candidates and their platforms in a medium they're familiar with.

8. THE YOUTH VOTE CAN SWAY THE ELECTION.

As mentioned before, your vote does matter, so much so that the collective "youth vote" could actually sway the election. Millennials have been credited with the decisive vote in the 2012 election of Barack Obama for a second term as president; Obama won 67% of the national youth vote, proving more popular in crucial states such as Florida, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, over his opponent Mitt Romney. In 2016, candidates campaigned hard for the 18-29 set, singling out initiatives to target millennials as a powerful electorate group. Why? Because they understand the necessity of winning approval from this voting majority.

9. YOU MAY NOT CARE NOW, BUT YOU MIGHT IN FOUR YEARS.

You may feel that choosing a president or a senator just isn't something that affects your life right now. You might not yet be struggling with issues like college debt or finding a full-time job. For many millennials, adulthood brings many new challenges, like college, marriage, buying a house, paying for your own health insurance, and/or starting a business, all of which could radically change your perspective on political issues. While you can't predict who or where you'll be in four years, you can be sure that the political officials elected into office and the policies they implement will impact your life in the coming months and years. Why not have a say? Speak up, make a choice, and take part in the election to protect your interests in your first few years in the real world.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED AND VOTE

No matter your age or voting history, the first step in getting involved should be to check your voter status; research how to register to vote in your state if you're not. If you are already registered in your state but have recently moved, you will need to update your address in order to provide current registration at your local polling place on election day. Some states now make it possible for you to register to vote online, though traditionally voters must register by mail or in person. You can, however, change your address online or via text message in some states, as well as search for polling places near you online.

Some states allow voting by mail for local, state, and even presidential elections. Students who are studying abroad or travelling during the election and thus, not in their home state or even in the U.S., must request an absentee ballot through the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) form. Although they are requesting an absentee ballot from outside of their home state or country, the student must still be registered to vote in their state of residence to be eligible to vote in a U.S. election while away.

Read “Great Speeches Still Matter”

Vocabulary – write a brief definition for the following words and phrases:

- Authenticity
- Civil rights
- Eloquence
- Memorialized
- Oratorical
- Vernacular

****

1. What is the main point of the article?

2. In your own words, describe the concept of public eloquence. Provide an example of this from the article.

3. Why does the author say rhetoric is a talent? What needs to be done to improve this talent?

4. What does it take to give an authentic speech?

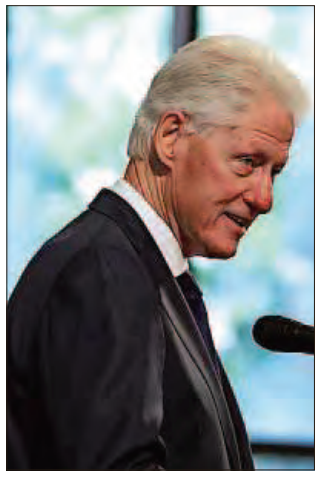
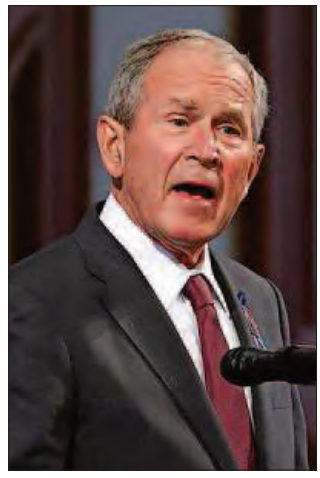
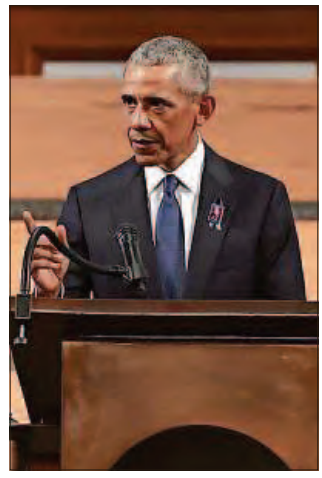
5. What does President Bill Clinton say made John Lewis a survivor?

****

Newspaper Connection:

- On July 30, 2020, the ***New York Times*** **published John Lewis’ final essay**. Read Lewis’ essay. You also can listen to the article by clicking on the audio link. Write a journal posting about your thoughts about Lewis’ words and message. Then look for an article in your newspaper that relates to a topic in Lewis’ prose. In your journal posting, write about how the article relates to the point Lewis is making.

Great speeches still matter

ALYSSA POINTER | Associated Press

Former Presidents Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama speak during the funeral service for the late Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta.

MARY MCNAMARA

Befitting the man it memorialized, the funeral of John Lewis in Atlanta was an oratorical symphony, a rhetorical masterwork of pride, praise and calls to continue the great man's work.

Three former presidents spoke, all with emotional admiration for the 80-year-old civil rights leader and longtime Democratic congressman from Georgia's 5th District, who died on July 17.

Barack Obama delivered the rousing, heartfelt keynote, in which he called on Americans to pay their respects to Lewis by continuing his work at a time when Black lives and voting rights remain at risk, but Bill Clinton and George W. Bush spoke just as powerfully and well of a man who always put truth before politics.

For a country confined by pandemic and, more important, a culture increasingly dependent on often unreliable social media platforms for the exchange of information, ideas, insight and calls to action, it was like a sustained rainfall in the middle of a drought — a reminder of the unique and necessary artistry of the spoken word.

Lewis certainly understood the power of public eloquence; at the age of 15, he famously heard Martin Luther King Jr. speak on the radio and it changed his life.

Arrested 45 times during more than half a century spent fighting for civil rights and beaten unconscious in 1965 on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, where he and 600 peaceful protesters marched toward the vicious batons of Alabama State Troopers, Lewis was very much a man of action as well as words.

But from his keynote before the 1963 March on Washington to a recent Zoom meeting in which he and former President Barack Obama spoke with a group of activists, Lewis was himself such a master of the microphone that when his final essay appeared in Thursday's *New York Times*, we could hear his voice as we read.

Quiet, calm and absolutely relentless, Lewis was a tireless and democratic speaker, as comfortable on late-night and morning talk shows as he was in Congress or at any VIP table. He said what he thought.

Obviously, no one is going to come to praise and bury John Lewis without preparing the best speech possible.

That kind of preparation — the crafting of tone and phrase, of pause and crescendo; the matching of message with music — has fallen out of favor recently. The turn-of-the-millennium rise of personal narrative as a valid and necessary social force gave us a new vernacular— "authenticity," which often values the awkward and imprecise over the polished, the raw and emotional over the thoughtfully argued or poetically rendered.

Since then, social media has become the preferred manner of social discourse, and with a reliance on immediacy, brevity and niche marketing, much of it is not designed for complex phrasing.

Don't get me wrong. The validation of personal narratives is one of the biggest cultural revolutions of all time. The definition of what makes anything good or valid, beautiful or important, has long been controlled by a relative few — including those deemed great public speakers. Relaxing the standards of oratory has, like social media, given millions too long kept silent the chance to speak without fear of being disparaged for noneloquence.

Unfortunately, our demand for "authenticity" has been accompanied by a rejection of the carefully considered. Rhetoric, which actually means the art of speaking or writing effectively, is considered elitist by some, synonymous with obfuscation or phoniness by others. Consistent messaging is often dismissed as "talking points" (as if repetition itself implies insincerity), and, as Hillary Clinton found, a ready-made response or speech is often dinged for seeming "over-thought" or "rehearsed."

Like pretty much everything, oration has long been judged by traditions and preconceptions: Women's naturally higher-pitched voices kept many of them from lists of great public speakers, and the preference for round vowels eliminates people whose accents do not conform. It's a talent, like the ability to deliver any great performance, and like any performative talent, it requires experience to perfect. Lewis, as former president Bush remembered on Thursday, began his oratorical career preaching to his chickens.

Still, if you think any of history's great speeches were not "over-thought" and in some way rehearsed, you're missing the point. Practice is the mother of authenticity.

Lewis spoke often about the preparation that allowed him and fellow activists to endure the threats and violence they experienced, the rigor that allowed them to overcome natural reactions of fear and rage.

Yes, there are people, born with natural eloquence, who can deliver impromptu words to make you weep or burn to improve the world this minute.

But watching the powerful, loving and rhetorically adept speeches delivered in honor of John Lewis, it was impossible not to also see the time, care and thought that went into them. Were they meticulously crafted and possibly rehearsed? Yes. Were they authentic? Absolutely.

During his eulogy, Bill Clinton recounted asking Lewis about the closest he had ever come to being killed while protesting. Lewis described a moment when, having been knocked down during a demonstration, he saw a man lifting a heavy pipe clearly aimed at Lewis' head. At the last minute, Lewis turned away and the crowd surged forward, separating the man from him; Lewis considered himself lucky to be alive.

Clinton, however, thought Lewis survived for reasons other than luck. "First, because he was a quick thinker. And second, because he was here on a mission that was bigger than personal ambition.

"Things like that sometimes just happen," Clinton said, "but usually they don't."

Mary McNamara is a culture columnist and critic for the Los Angeles Times.

Read “The Power of Active Citizenship”

Vocabulary – write a brief definition of the following words:

- abandoned
- grievances
- empowered
- authoritarian
- stalwart
- lobby

****

1. What is the main point of the article?

2. What is active journalism?

3. What is active citizenship?

4. What actions were taken by students?

5. What is the purpose of civics education?

****

Newspaper Connection:

- Look through the newspaper for examples of people participating in active citizenship? What actions are they taking? How and why are they doing it?

The Power of Active Citizenship

A Renewed Focus on Teaching Civics Education

By Bob Graham, Randi Weingarten

At the end of the day, the students at my school felt one shared experience—our politicians abandoned us by failing to keep guns out of schools. But this time, my classmates and I are going to hold them to account. This time we are going to pressure them to take action.

–Cameron Kasky, a junior at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School

Earlier this year, a horrific tragedy unfolded at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Broward County, Florida. On February 14, a former student walked into the school with an AR-15 semiautomatic rifle and murdered 17 students and staff in the deadliest high school shooting in American history. Only the 2012 mass killing at Sandy Hook Elementary School, with a toll of 26 young children and adult staff, resulted in a greater loss of life in a K–12 school. Since the Columbine High School shooting in 1999, 187,000 students have experienced gun violence at their schools, and active shooter drills are now commonplace.

We were devastated by the needless loss of life and anguished that yet another mass school shooting had taken place while commonsense gun safety legislation to protect America's students and educators lingered in Congress and many state legislatures. Yet we were heartened by what came next. Because, rather than allowing themselves to be further victimized, the students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas began to take matters into their own hands, meeting and networking on social media, speaking to the media, participating in vigils, organizing walkouts and demonstrations, establishing coalitions with others who share their outrage and goals, and traveling to Tallahassee and Washington, D.C., to lobby on behalf of meaningful gun safety laws.

In other words, the Marjory Stoneman Douglas students have been acting as informed and activated citizens, utilizing their constitutional rights to assemble and speak freely, and they have learned competencies to petition the government for the redress of their grievances.

It is notable that Florida, like most states, stopped teaching civics—the study of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in a democracy—in the 1960s, only to restore it by legislative action in 2010, with citizenship instruction making its way back into schools around 2011. (For more on each state's civics education requirements, see "A Look at Civics Education in the United States (//www.aft.org/ae/summer2018/shapiro_brown)" in this issue.) Thus, these Marjory Stoneman Douglas students were among the first wave of students in Florida public schools to be taught civics in nearly four

decades. For many of them, their civics education started in middle school and continued through a 12th-grade Advanced Placement government course where the teacher, Jeff Foster, espoused a simple mantra: "'If you don't participate, you can't complain about things.' I tell them in order to make a difference in the country, you need to participate. Unfortunately, we had this event happen [at Marjory Stoneman Douglas], and now it's in live action." Evidently, the education provided at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School served these courageous students well: they credit their teachers with introducing them to the civic knowledge and skills they have been using so effectively. Indeed, before the shooting, some students had just had this debate on guns in Foster's class.

The fact that these students feel empowered to take a stand on their own behalf is a testament to the value of educating young people on their rights and responsibilities as citizens in a democracy, as well as teaching them how to exercise the power of active citizenship.

An Antidote to Authoritarianism

The events in Florida are taking place at a time when democracy itself is confronting serious threats,* both in the United States and internationally. In October 2017, the Albert Shanker Institute brought together leading scholars and democracy activists from across the globe to discuss these challenges.[1] They are many: growing economic inequality, intense political polarization, government dysfunctionality and paralysis, the decline of civil society institutions such as organized

religion and organized labor, attacks on science and factual knowledge, and the emergence of movements of racial, religious, and nativist intolerance. The conference's participants, who included Han Dongfang, a leader of the independent unions in the 1989 Tiananmen Square democracy protests, and Mac Maharaj, a leader of the antiapartheid struggle who had been a prison mate of Nelson Mandela, agreed that the future of democracy cannot be taken for granted but must be actively promoted and secured by confronting these challenges. That is our work as citizens.

Education for citizenship is the first, essential part of securing the future of American democracy. (For more on the importance of civics education in preserving our republic, see "The Need for Civics Education (//www.aft.org/ae/summer2018/weingarten_snyder_allen)" in this issue.) This is not because—as some have incorrectly suggested—popular support for democracy is flagging or because today's youth are less committed to democratic governance than previous generations. In fact, the best evidence indicates that support for democracy has increased modestly and American youth are more stalwart in their support for democracy than those who are older.[2] Rather, it is because openness to authoritarian rule is greatest among those who are disaffected and disengaged from politics, and who are under the sway of prejudice toward fellow citizens of different backgrounds. When a person lacks a sense of his or her own power as a citizen, experiences a problem that dysfunctional democratic institutions have been unable to solve, and has little experience in working constructively with other citizens on common goals, he or she is more likely to give up on democracy and turn to a "strongman" to solve his or her problems. Education is a powerful antidote to this authoritarian temptation, because it can impart that needed sense of civic efficacy and common cause. We know from national and international studies that increases in educational attainment are highly correlated with increases in civic participation and support for democracy.[3] So the more education we provide to Americans—and the better we make that education—the healthier our democracy will be.

To be most effective, civics education must be resonant and relevant. Any serious effort to ensure that young people are fully educated about the values, processes, and institutions of democracy depends on accomplished and experienced teachers who both know their subjects

well and actively engage students in their learning. Research both here and abroad confirms that those students who understand democracy best—and who participate most actively in civic life as adults—are those whose teachers know their material and dare to run classes that involve students in civic work and in discussions of controversial subjects.

Civics instruction should be "bottom up." We need to teach students to interact directly with their government and make government respond to their concerns. The Marjory Stoneman Douglas students have done this, but it shouldn't take a shooting for students to become civically engaged. Civic engagement should begin close to home. It is more important to teach students how to seek effective action from their school board or persuade their city commission to place a stop sign on the corner than it is for them to know that there are 435 members of the House of Representatives. This concept of bottom-up civic engagement is what the book *America, the Owner's Manual: You Can Fight City Hall—and Win* is all about (see "Teaching Civic Engagement (//www.aft.org/ae/summer2018/graham-sb)" in this issue).

Teaching civics should be more than just understanding the structures and functions of government. In an era of "fake news"[†] and Internet conspiracy theories, it is crucial that students learn how to gather and evaluate sources of information, and then use evidence from that information to develop and support their ideas and advocacy positions.[‡] No polity can make wise decisions if its citizens do not know how to separate fact from opinion, and how to gather and weigh relevant evidence. Education for democracy shapes attitudes, values, and actions—it creates the foundations for a culture of democracy, not just an understanding of what it is. It takes time and long-term funding. It requires new forms of professional training.

Citizenship education at its best is a unification of foundational knowledge with civic values and key competencies. Together, these elements represent action civics. One of the biggest roadblocks to participatory democracy is the perception that everyday Americans can't influence government policy, and that only the privileged and special interests can command the levers of power or change bureaucracies. But if students can actually identify a problem in their school or community that is important to them, consider the options to solve that problem, marshal evidence in support of their selected

well and actively engage students in their learning. Research both here and abroad confirms that those students who understand democracy best—and who participate most actively in civic life as adults—are those whose teachers know their material and dare to run classes that involve students in civic work and in discussions of controversial subjects.

Civics instruction should be "bottom up." We need to teach students to interact directly with their government and make government respond to their concerns. The Marjory Stoneman Douglas students have done this, but it shouldn't take a shooting for students to become civically engaged. Civic engagement should begin close to home. It is more important to teach students how to seek effective action from their school board or persuade their city commission to place a stop sign on the corner than it is for them to know that there are 435 members of the House of Representatives. This concept of bottom-up civic engagement is what the book *America, the Owner's Manual: You Can Fight City Hall—and Win* is all about (see "Teaching Civic Engagement (//www.aft.org/ae/summer2018/graham-sb)" in this issue).

Teaching civics should be more than just understanding the structures and functions of government. In an era of "fake news"[†] and Internet conspiracy theories, it is crucial that students learn how to gather and evaluate sources of information, and then use evidence from that information to develop and support their ideas and advocacy positions.[‡] No polity can make wise decisions if its citizens do not know how to separate fact from opinion, and how to gather and weigh relevant evidence. Education for democracy shapes attitudes, values, and actions—it creates the foundations for a culture of democracy, not just an understanding of what it is. It takes time and long-term funding. It requires new forms of professional training.

Citizenship education at its best is a unification of foundational knowledge with civic values and key competencies. Together, these elements represent action civics. One of the biggest roadblocks to participatory democracy is the perception that everyday Americans can't influence government policy, and that only the privileged and special interests can command the levers of power or change bureaucracies. But if students can actually identify a problem in their school or community that is important to them, consider the options to solve that problem, marshal evidence in support of their selected

solution, identify which public decision-maker can make a difference and how he or she might be persuaded to take action, determine the best time and conditions to pursue a decision, attract allies to an expanding coalition of support, devise a plan to engage both traditional and new media, and propose credible fiscal solutions for challenges requiring public funding—then students can both move the needle toward success for the problem at hand and gain the confidence and experience necessary for a lifetime of action civics.

The active-citizenship approach we encourage focuses on five key principles for teaching action civics:

Help students recognize challenges or opportunities in their school, community, state, or nation that can be addressed through effective citizenship;
Instruct students on the competencies required for civic success (i.e., the skills of effective citizenship);
Provide students with foundational knowledge of democratic institutions and processes while teaching citizenship skills (e.g., exploring federalism to identify which level of government can resolve the challenge a student has selected);
Instill in students the dispositions of democratic citizenship, such as respect for fellow citizens of different races, religions, classes, and sexualities, and tolerance for different political viewpoints; and
Encourage students to utilize their newly learned skills, knowledge, and values to address the challenge or opportunity they have identified.[4]

We must provide students with the opportunity to acquire the above-described citizenship skills. Civics is not an accumulation of dry facts and abstract ideas. As with any endeavor that we wish to perform well, it must be practiced. You don't learn to play the piano by reading a textbook about the piano or even memorizing famous scores. You don't learn to make persuasive oral arguments by studying the science of speech or even watching great speeches. You learn to play the piano by playing the piano. You learn to make persuasive oral arguments by practicing such arguments. And you learn the skills of civics—the habits and attitudes of democracy—by engaging in civic activities.

America needs a "crash course" in civics. More important, we need to instill an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizens into our collective experience. Perhaps the need has grown so acute because civics education, like other areas of social studies, has been pushed to the back burner in American schools, a victim of the single-minded focus on English language arts and mathematics wrought by our recent national obsession with standardized testing. But, in a very real sense, the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School have proven the vibrancy and strength of American democracy. Despite the horror of their circumstances, they fell back on an education that provided them with the knowledge and skills to demand change from local, state, and national elected leaders. It is up to us to see that their citizenship education experience is provided to all American students.

Bob Graham is a former U.S. senator and governor of Florida. The author of four books, including America, the Owner's Manual: You Can Fight City Hall—and Win*, he currently leads efforts to encourage citizen engagement and train students to become future leaders through the Bob Graham Center for Public Service at the University of Florida. Randi Weingarten is the president of the American Federation of Teachers. Highlights from her career include serving as the president of the United Federation of Teachers, as an AFT vice president, and as a history teacher at Clara Barton High School in Brooklyn's Crown Heights.*

*For more on these threats, see "Hope in Dark Times" and "History and Tyranny" in the Summer 2017 issue (//www.aft.org/ae/summer2017) of *American Educator*. (back to the article)

†For more on the proliferation of fake news and the importance of civic reasoning in a social media environment, see "The Challenge That's Bigger Than Fake News (//www.aft.org/ae/fall2017/mcgrew_ortega_breakstone_wineburg)" in the Fall 2017 issue of *American Educator*. (back to the article)

‡For more on developing arguments and teaching evidence-based writing, see "For the Sake of Argument

Read “Activating Student Engagement”

Vocabulary – write a brief definition for the following words and phrases:

- cohort
- pedagogical
- ethical
- autonomy
- gelatinous
- flourish

****

1. What is the main point of the article?
2. Why is Weingarten excited to teach?
3. What is the focus of her lessons?
4. Who does Weingarten turn to for assistance in teaching?
5. Are the points made in this article relevant to today’s classroom?

****

Newspaper Connection:

- Research the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendment. Search recent editions of the newspaper for articles that relate to either of these amendments. On a piece of paper, write down the main ideas and facts of the article. Write down what you have learned about your community based on this article. Share what you have learned with your class.

Activating Student Engagement

By Randi Weingarten

Weingarten, bottom right, with her students at Clara Barton High School in 1994.

My passion for politics has been lifelong, but the art and science of turning that passion into student engagement was kindled in the classrooms of Clara Barton High School, where I learned how to teach civics education. While serving as legal counsel for New York City's United Federation of Teachers in the late 1980s, I had worked closely with Clara Barton, helping it through a health and safety crisis caused by construction work that had been improperly conducted on asbestos-containing insulation, ceilings, walls, and floor tiles. The relationships that were formed in that work led to an invitation to teach in the school, and I joined its faculty as a social studies teacher in September 1991.

More than a quarter of a century later, I can still vividly recall my excitement and anticipation—and my nervousness—the day I first stood in front of a political science class at Clara Barton. My students were intellectually curious, thoughtful, and hard working. As students of color, mostly of African descent, and with many first-generation immigrants from the Caribbean among their number, they brought a rich set of real-world experiences to the study of politics and government. The challenge for me as a new teacher was how to actively engage them in their learning so that their great potential could be fully realized.

Clara Barton had a solid cohort of experienced and accomplished educators, and I drew upon their professional expertise and advice as I developed my own pedagogical approach. They helped me more than I can ever properly thank them, in particular Leo Casey, with whom I taught several Advanced Placement (AP) United States Government and Politics classes. I had practiced law and litigated cases—in courts and in arbitration forums. I knew that the practice of law was more important than the study of law. Likewise, I had studied John Dewey's educational philosophy and believed in his focus on learning by doing, but I did not appreciate the full power of this approach until I saw how Barton teachers used it, and I began applying it in my own teaching.

For instance, one of my classes took part in the We the People civics competition on the Constitution and Bill of Rights. Students participated in mock congressional hearings and debates to demonstrate their ability to apply their knowledge and understanding of American government to contemporary issues. Since this was shortly

after the first Gulf War, students debated the war-making powers of Congress and the president. And, at a time when the Supreme Court had upheld laws criminalizing gay sexuality, they analyzed the rights of all Americans to privacy and intimacy. They spoke eloquently on the First Amendment protections of their speech in the schoolhouse, on how the principles of the Fourteenth Amendment should be applied to affirmative action programs, on what the Fourth Amendment had to say about police stopping and searching them on the street, and on whether the United States still needed a strong Voting Rights Act. And they related these questions to the very principles underlying American government—natural rights philosophy, republicanism, and the Lockean social contract.

In sum, my students learned how to be democratic citizens by actively using civic knowledge and practicing the skills of citizenship. Empowered by this method of education and its relevancy to their lives, they were motivated to give this work their all and went on to defeat schools from much more advantaged settings, winning the New York state championship and placing fourth in the nation in the We the People competition.

During my years at Clara Barton, I went on to teach courses in law, American history, and ethical issues in medicine, and I applied the insights I had acquired on how to actively engage students in their learning. My law class was centered on a mock trial, in which students acted out the different roles of judge, jury, prosecution, and defense. In my ethical issues in medicine class, our practical nursing students debated real-life challenges and dilemmas in healthcare, and, weighing values such as respect for life and respect for patient autonomy, discussed how they should be handled. In my history class, students engaged in a project of researching candidates for elected office and volunteering on the campaign of the candidate of their choice.

What I learned from my teaching is that engagement is essential. Student engagement and knowledge lead to critical thinking, confidence, judgment, and empowerment. While I am a teacher of social studies and civics, and my approach is rooted in my experience, the same practices of active student engagement—project-based instruction, student inquiry, and experiential learning—are no less applicable in other subjects. But I believe these practices hold a special

value and importance for civics education today: the future of our republic and democratic governance hangs in the balance at this critical moment, and active democratic citizenship is essential for its survival. Civics education, in which students learn democratic citizenship by practicing it, is essential not just for good education, but for democracy itself.

American Educator, *Summer 2018* Download PDF (349.05 KB) (https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ae_summer2018_graham-weingarten.pdf)

RELATED ARTICLES

Where We Stand
Renewing Adult Civic Engagement
By Randi Weingarten
HTML (//www.aft.org/ae/summer2018/wws) | PDF (//www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ae_summer2018_wws.pdf)

The Power of Active Citizenship
A Renewed Focus on Teaching Civics Education
By Bob Graham and Randi Weingarten
HTML (//www.aft.org/ae/summer2018/graham_weingarten) | PDF (//www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ae_summer2018_graham-weingarten.pdf)

Teaching Civic Engagement
By Bob Graham
HTML (//www.aft.org/ae/summer2018/graham-sb) | PDF (//www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ae_summer2018_graham-weingarten.pdf)

Activating Student Engagement
By Randi Weingarten
HTML (//www.aft.org/ae/summer2018/weingarten-sb) | PDF (//www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ae_summer2018_graham-weingarten.pdf)

A Look at Civics Education in the United States
By Sarah Shapiro and Catherine Brown
HTML (//www.aft.org/ae/summer2018/shapiro_brown) | PDF (//www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ae_summer2018_shapiro-brown.pdf)

The Need for Civics Education
Public Intellectuals Reflect on Democracy at Risk
With Randi Weingarten, Timothy Snyder, and Danielle Allen
HTML (//www.aft.org/ae/summer2018/weingarten_snyder_allen) | PDF (//www.aft.org/sites/default/files/ae_summer2018_weingarten-snyder-allen.pdf)

Read “Origin of the Species”

Vocabulary – write a brief definition for the following words and phrases:

- rhetoric incongruous
- factionalism
- partisanship
- successors
- maligned

****

Write a reaction blog to this article include the following ideas:

1. What is the main idea of this article?

2. Briefly outline the evolution the writer is discussing.

3. Which President’s quote do you think is the most insightful? Why?

4. What is mainstream media?

****

Newspaper Connection:

- Thomas Jefferson wrote, “A constitution has been acquired which, tho’ neither of us think perfect, yet both consider as competent to render our fellow-citizens the happiest and the securest on whom the sun has ever shone. If we do not think exactly alike as to its imperfections, it matters little to our country which, after devoting to it long lives of disinterested labor, we have delivered over to our successors in life, who will be able to take care of it, and of themselves.” What do you think this means? See if you can find examples of this ideal being represented in the newspaper. Write a paragraph explaining how the article represents what Jefferson wrote.

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

Origin of the Species

Up from the Ooze, Into the Mud—a Brief History of American Political Evolution

By David Von Drehle
Washington Post Staff Writer

An excerpt from Von Drehle's July 25 The Washington Post Magazine article in which he relates the history of America's major political parties.

Once upon a time in America, there was a political party that believed in a strong central government, high taxes and bold public works projects. This party was popular on the college campuses of New England and was the overwhelming choice of African American voters.

It was the Republican Party.

The Republicans got started as a counterweight to the other party: the party of low taxes and limited government, the party suspicious of Eastern elites, the party that thought Washington should butt out of the affairs of private property owners.

The Democrats.

The fact that our two parties have swapped platforms, rhetoric and core ideals so completely might be spun, by some people, as a shortcoming. Some people might paint the stark soullessness of our parties—which appear happy to argue the opposite tomorrow of what they argued yesterday, if that's what it takes to keep the argument going—as somehow a bad thing. After all, party-bashing is a surefire crowd pleaser.

In good times and bad, through crisis and calm, Americans have hated the parties. George Washington himself called them "truly [the] worst enemy" of popular government; his sensible veep, John Adams, lamented them, too. "There is nothing I dread so much as a division of the Republic into two great parties, each arranged under its leader and converting measures into opposition to each other," Adams wrote, even before the Revolutionary War had been won.

Roughly a century later, Theodore Roosevelt was sounding the theme, heaping scorn on Republicans and Democrats alike. "The old parties are husks," he declared, "with no real soul within either, divided on artificial lines, boss-ridden and privilege-controlled, each a jumble of incongruous elements, and neither daring to speak out wisely and fearlessly on what should be said on the vital issues of the day."

These days, Americans hate the parties because they are too polarized. Texas billionaire Ross Perot based his impressive independent 1992 presidential bid on a promise to end party squabbling. We also hate them because they are not polarized enough. In 2000, consumer advocate Ralph Nader justified his race for president by saying that Democrat and Republican were just two names for the same old thing.

But I'm here to say: Let's not go overboard. True, our feuding parties may be to blame for the gridlock, ill will, finger-pointing and score-settling that besmirches our current civic life. Also for the failure to project a clear foreign policy, the inability to control spending in an economic downturn and the frittering away of precious years as the ticking time bomb of health care and retirement costs threatens the prosperity of future generations.

Also for the heedless destruction of reputations, the facile reduction of genuine crises to mere debating points, the equally facile inflation of mere debating points into alleged crises and the subversion of national priorities to base factionalism and personal greed.

Who among us is without a flaw or two? ...

Unlike Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson lived long enough to see that the partisanship of their youth meant little compared with the values that endure: concord, trust and mutual respect. In his retirement years, Jefferson renewed his friendship with Federalist John Adams. The old rifts were repaired as the two men traded warm and wise letters, reflecting on all that had happened since they had worked together on the Declaration of Independence. In one of those unbelievable strokes by history's screenwriter, Adams died in Massachusetts precisely 50 years after he had signed that crucial document. It was July 4, 1826. They say his last words were, "Thomas Jefferson lives." The spirit was correct, though the words were wrong, for Jefferson had died that same morning in Virginia.

"We acted in perfect harmony thro' a long and perilous contest for our liberty and independence," Jefferson wrote to Adams in 1813. "A constitution has been acquired which, tho' neither of us think perfect, yet both consider as competent to render our fellow-citizens the happiest and the securest on whom the sun has ever shone. If we do not think exactly alike as to its imperfections, it matters little to our country which, after devoting to it long lives of disinterested labor, we have delivered over to our successors in life, who will be able to take care of it, and of themselves."

If we do not think exactly alike ... it matters little. Such brilliance! It reminds me of one more thing to be said in favor of our much-maligned parties. Now and then, they produce such leaders. Not as often as we would like, surely. But, so far, often enough.

Read “Outlook: Mean Season; Why the Rage, and Not Real Debate”

Vocabulary – write a brief definition for the following words and phrases:

- emanates
- incumbent
- contemptuous
- crude
- linguistic
- doctrine

****

Write a reaction blog to this article include the following ideas:

1. What is the main idea of this article?

2. What is the Wiesel’s argument?

3. Wiesel uses the rhetorical methods of logos and pathos to support his argument. Provide an example of each.

4. Do you agree or disagree with the points Wiesel is making in his article about elections? Be sure to support your ideas with specific examples.

****

Newspaper Connection:

- In his article, Elie Wiesel writes, “Rather than comparing one philosophical doctrine with its counterpart, the campaigns are succumbing to propaganda—propaganda that is striking for its excessive anger and its lack of elegance, generosity and even simple courtesy.” According to Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary, propaganda is “ideas, facts, or allegations spread deliberately to further one's cause or to damage an opposing cause.” Do political candidates use allegations to harm their opponents or cause? Look through the newspaper and at television news sources to find examples of what Wiesel would consider propaganda. You can fact-check the information by using PolitiFact or Snopes. Write a blog post exploring what you have discovered.

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

Outlook: Mean Season; Why the Rage, and Not Real Debate

Elie Wiesel

This clamorous and alarming election campaign, which should inspire and mobilize—on both sides—all that America has to offer in the way of political courage, open mindedness and vision for a bright future . . . well, I must sadly admit that it disappoints and depresses me.

Has it always been this way? Have we always had adversaries hurling insults at each other rather than allowing debate and analysis to influence undecided voters? Should we be afraid to trust the public to comprehend the issues in depth? One could almost say that the goal is not to inspire but to incite, not to inform but to dumb down.

I'm not talking about the candidates themselves. I have deep esteem for one and great respect for the other. They represent two political ideologies, two philosophies for this society, and each of us is free to choose the one with whom we identify.

But why the disagreeable, offensive tone that emanates from this event?

I've been living in this magnificent democracy since 1956. As a foreign correspondent for some time, I had the opportunity to watch the two parties campaign in a number of presidential races: John Kennedy vs. Richard Nixon, Lyndon Johnson vs. Barry Goldwater, Jimmy Carter vs. Gerald Ford. I have watched the elections of Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton.

In every case, the supporters and spokesmen of both the incumbent and the opposition expressed themselves with ardor, conviction and dedication.

But never with such violence as we see today.

Too many Democrats feel hatred—yes, hatred—for President Bush, and too many Republicans fail to hide their contempt for Sen. John Kerry. These two sentiments should be excluded during electoral contests.

Once upon a time, politics was a noble pursuit. Working for the polis, the city, the republic or the community signified a desire to give back what one had received. One had to be worthy of this honor. And many leaders were.

Nowadays the word "politics" evokes at best a contemptuous smile. We usually say it with a smirk. We instinctively suspect politicians of every sin, of any kind of scheme, of all sorts of manipulation. We consider them somewhat deceitful, a bit hypocritical, more than a little egotistical and certainly consumed with ambition. We watch them as though we expect to surprise them at any moment in flagrante delicto.

But politics is like money or love: Everything depends on what you make of it. For some, it's a matter of arrogance and power. For others it's more of a passion for justice, sacrifice and generosity.

Why this need, among people on both sides, to let the discussion be dominated by nastiness and ugliness? And why don't they listen to the voices calling for an end to this slide into the gutter? Do we care about what our children think as they watch this on television? What are they to make of the exchanges, insults and attacks among politicians? Why, once they finish school, should they choose public service, which not so long ago was a praiseworthy endeavor?

Of course political campaigns in the past had their share of verbal onslaughts, unfortunate remarks, and regrettable, simple and even crude comments. Politicians talk a lot, often too much; they say things that they later regret. But these were the exceptions, not the rule. Abiding by unwritten laws, the candidates and their colleagues sought to appeal to all that was decent, civilized and cultured in their rivals, and not to that which made them ugly.

We don't ask that they be prophetic orators, linguistic goldsmiths or inspired moralists; we simply ask that they not take voters to be ignorant or barely civilized. Why do they address us as though we are children or dimwits? To get us to reject this or that candidate and his political positions, it would suffice to show us their flaws and weaknesses. Why, in personalizing the conflict, do they try to shame one another? For that matter, why do they all but deny the past of one candidate and negate the honor of the other?

This presidential campaign is full of verbal violence. In fact, it's bursting with it. Instead of elevating the debate, this campaign is debasing it. Instead of examining the serious problems of a society in crisis, it's treating them in a superficial way. Rather than comparing one philosophical doctrine with its counterpart, the campaigns are succumbing to propaganda—propaganda that is striking for its excessive anger and its lack of elegance, generosity and even simple courtesy.

Nonetheless, the two candidates are right to call this election one of the most, perhaps even the most, important in recent American history. What's at stake is more than the victory of one party, and even more than the resolution of the situation in Iraq. What's at stake is the kind of world that will be shaped by the vote of the American people in November.

So many questions await their response, so many wounds must be healed, so much anguish weighs upon humanity. The whole world agrees that international terrorism represents a mortal menace for many countries and cultures. How do we proceed to uncover it, isolate it and conquer it? How do we understand its roots? Is poverty the cause? Is it nationalist or religious fanaticism?

America is waiting for an authentic and superior national debate on all these points.

How long must we wait?

The writer is a humanities professor at Boston University. This article was translated from French by Zofia Smardz.

Analyzing Text - The Constitution of the State of Florida

The Constitution of the State of Florida as revised in 1968 consisted of certain revised articles as proposed by three joint resolutions which were adopted during the special session of June 24-July 3, 1968, and ratified by the electorate on November 5, 1968, together with one article carried forward from the Constitution of 1885, as amended. The articles proposed in House Joint Resolution 1-2X constituted the entire revised constitution with the exception of Articles V, VI, and VIII. Senate Joint Resolution 4-2X proposed Article VI, relating to suffrage and elections. Senate Joint Resolution 5-2X proposed a new Article VIII, relating to local government. Article V, relating to the judiciary, was carried forward from the Constitution of 1885, as amended.

Sections composing the 1968 revision have no history notes. Subsequent changes are indicated by notes appended to the affected sections. The indexes appearing at the beginning of each article, notes appearing at the end of various sections, and section and subsection headings are added editorially and are not to be considered as part of the constitution.

Web link to The Constitution of the State of Florida: https://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Constitution
PDF link to The Constitution of the State of Florida: https://dos.myflorida.com/media/693801/florida-constitution.pdf

Constitutional Amendments

Changes to the Florida Constitution can be proposed by a joint resolution of the Florida Legislature, citizens' initiative process, the Constitutional Revision Commission, or the Taxation and Budget Reform Commission.

Proposed amendments require 60 percent approval from voters to pass [see Florida Constitution, Article XI, Section 5(e)].

Six proposed constitutional amendments or revisions will appear on the 2020 General Election Ballot. Students should use the following resources to examine the amendments:

- Florida Division of Elections
- Office of Economic and Demographic Research
- Ballotpedia

Going beyond the text

Analysis activity

Split your class into groups. Each group will be writing a fully-developed paragraph to present to the class at the end of their evaluations. Have each group analyze the text of one of the proposed amendments. Have the students break down the who, what, where, when, why and how points of the amendment.

- Who will be affected if the amendment passes?
- What will change and what will those changes be?
- Where will the changes be implemented?
- Why is amendment necessary? Why should this be a permanent change to the Constitution and not just a law?
- How will this amendment be implemented? How will it be enacted and paid for, if there are costs involved?

Next have your students view the *Tampa Bay Times* and League of Women's Voters breakdowns about the proposed amendments. Have the students in the group write if they agree or disagree with those other interpretations. Finally, ask the students to conclude if they would or would not vote to pass the amendment.

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

Analysis of Campaign Advertising

Select a political television commercial of at least 30 seconds. View it one to four times to complete the analysis that follows. Watch and listen carefully.

STEP ONE: WORDS, SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Divide your paper into three lengthwise columns. Title one WORDS for those of the narrator and other vocalizations; title a second column SIGHTS for the visual images presented; title a third column SOUNDS for any sounds other than the human voice.

Note those that take place in the first five to seven seconds, those that take place in the middle section, those that take place in the final five to seven seconds.

STEP TWO: ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST TIME SEGMENT

What mood has been created in the first five to seven seconds?

Do we hear the voice of the candidate? A generic voice—male or female, that of a child or older adult?

Does the candidate appear immediately? If not, what mood is created before he or she appears?

If the candidate does not appear, what is seen? What do you believe to be the visual intent?

Is there music? If not, what is heard and what is its emotional impact? Identify the music if you can.

Does the background music appeal to an older or younger generation?

STEP THREE: ANALYSIS OF THE MIDDLE TIME SEGMENT

What was the pace of words, sights and sounds in this section? Slow and introspective? Fast with a barrage of visual and aural stimuli? Conversational? Describe the colors in the ad. What image are they designed to convey?

Is the appeal to common sense or to your five senses? Is the appeal to reason or to emotion?

Has the candidate appeared or do others speak about and for the candidate? If it is others, who are they? Note their clothes, their accent, their race and where they are filmed.

If the candidate does appear, is the first image positive or negative in its impact on you? Why? What image is the clothing worn by the candidate designed to convey? Is the candidate presented as sincere, vigorous, knowledgeable, glamorous, trustworthy or what other quality of character? Does the candidate project as one who is experienced, innovative, a mediator or a leader?

Is the message of the advertisement apparent? Does it focus on one issue?

STEP FOUR: ANALYSIS OF THE LAST TIME SEGMENT

Has the political commercial employed any of the advertising strategies used to sell other products—sex appeal, testimonials, humor, name-calling, identification with a famous or well-known person?

The objective of the commercial is to persuade voters. How is this objective punctuated or highlighted in the last five to seven seconds? Has this been done through emotion, facts or slogans? Has the commercial presented what is right or what must change?

Do you note any change in the demographic profile to whom this ad is designed to appeal? Did music change? Were many ages represented by the end? Races? Sector of society?

STEP FIVE: FINAL ANALYSIS

Write a 150- to 250-word analysis of the entire 30-second political commercial. This may include as many of the steps one through four considerations as you find pertinent to the particular advertisement.

Going beyond the text – Logical fallacies

Analyzing Campaign Advertisements

For months, we have been inundated with campaign television advertisements. Many of them claim the facts speak for themselves, but the facts that are presented can be debatable. Oftentimes, campaign advertisements are filled with logical fallacies. A logical fallacy is an error in reasoning. This is different from a factual error, which is simply being wrong about the facts. To be more specific, a fallacy is an "argument" in which the premises given for the conclusion do not provide the needed degree of support.

A study of campaigns or the election process is not complete without examining the impact of advertisements and the role the media plays in disseminating them. A study of campaign advertising might begin with a review of the techniques of persuasion and/or editorial organization. Look for some political or other advertisements in the newspapers that use at least one of the following logical fallacies. Explain how and why the appeal is being used.

- **Hasty generalization**: This is a conclusion based on insufficient or biased evidence. In other words, you are rushing to a conclusion before you have all the relevant facts.
- **Ad Hominen**: This is an attack on the character of a person rather than his or her opinions or arguments.
- **Bandwagon**: A fallacy in which a threat of rejection by one's peers (or peer pressure) is substituted for evidence in an "argument."
- **Circular argument:** This is where a claim is restated rather than actually proving it.
- **Either/or:** This is a conclusion that oversimplifies the argument by reducing it to only two sides or choices.
- **Non-sequitur**: This fallacy occurs when the conclusion does not follow the premise.
- **Red herring**: This is a diversionary tactic that avoids the key issues, often by avoiding opposing arguments rather than addressing them.
- **Post hoc, ergo propter hoc:** This fallacy is committed when it is concluded that one event causes another simply because the proposed cause occurred before the proposed effect.

The following chart and questions are from the Library of Congress Cartoon Analysis Guide. Have your students use this chart and the questions to interpret the cartoons.

Cartoon Analysis Guide

Use this guide to identify the persuasive techniques used in political cartoons.

Cartoonists' Persuasive Techniques

Symbolism	Cartoonists use simple objects, or **symbols**, to stand for larger concepts or ideas. After you identify the symbols in a cartoon, think about what the cartoonist means each symbol to stand for.
Exaggeration	Sometimes cartoonists overdo, or **exaggerate**, the physical characteristics of people or things in order to make a point. When you study a cartoon, look for any characteristics that seem overdone or overblown. (Facial characteristics and clothing are some of the most commonly exaggerated characteristics.) Then, try to decide what point the cartoonist was trying to make by exaggerating them.
Labeling	Cartoonists often **label** objects or people to make it clear exactly what they stand for. Watch out for the different labels that appear in a cartoon, and ask yourself why the cartoonist chose to label that particular person or object. Does the label make the meaning of the object more clear?
Analogy	An **analogy** is a comparison between two unlike things. By comparing a complex issue or situation with a more familiar one, cartoonists can help their readers see it in a different light. After you've studied a cartoon for a while, try to decide what the cartoon's main analogy is. What two situations does the cartoon compare? Once you understand the main analogy, decide if this comparison makes the cartoonist's point more clear to you.
Irony	**Irony** is the difference between the ways things are and the way things should be, or the way things are expected to be. Cartoonists often use **irony** to express their opinion on an issue. When you look at a cartoon, see if you can find any irony in the situation the cartoon depicts. If you can, think about what point the irony might be intended to emphasize. Does the irony help the cartoonist express his or her opinion more effectively?

Once you've identified the **persuasive techniques** that the cartoonist used, ask yourself these questions:

What issue is this political cartoon about?

What do you think is the cartoonist's opinion on this issue?

What other opinion can you imagine another person having on this issue?

Did you find this cartoon persuasive? Why or why not?

What other techniques could the cartoonist have used to make this cartoon more persuasive?

Cartoons for the Classroom
Presented by NIEonline.com and the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists (AAEC)

King's dream and voting rights

By Dennis Draughon / Courtesy of AAEC

Talking points

1. What are these cartoonists saying about the state of Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream 50 years after his historic speech?
2. King's 1963 March on Washington helped pass the Voting Rights Act. What recently happened to the act?
3. Why were certain states singled out by the act?
4. What has recently occurred in some of those states?
5. Do voter identification laws hinder voting rights?
6. What are the pro and con arguments about those laws?

Between the lines

"I gave a little blood on that bridge in Selma, Ala., for the right to vote. I am not going to stand by and let . . . take the right to vote away from us." - Rep. John Lewis.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/voting-rights-economic-fairness-among-marchers-aims-as-they-mark-1963-march-on-washington/2013/08/24/215c1ba8-0c91-11e3-89fe-abb4a5067014_story.html

Additional resources

More by Dennis Draughon

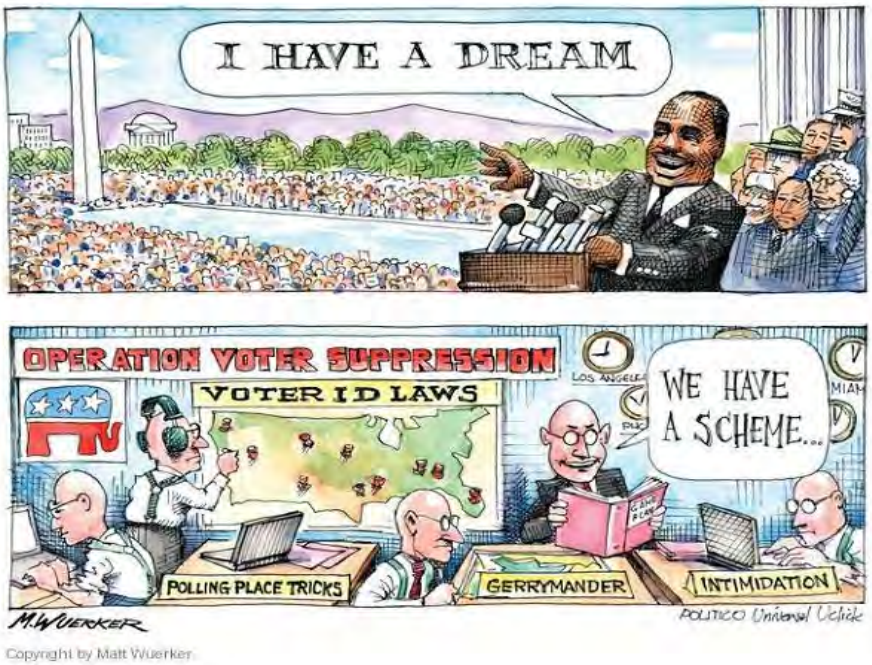
http://editorialcartoonists.com/cartoon/browse.cfm/DraugD

More by Matt Wuerker

http://editorialcartoonists.com/cartoon/browse.cfm/WuerkM

Association of American Editorial Cartoonists

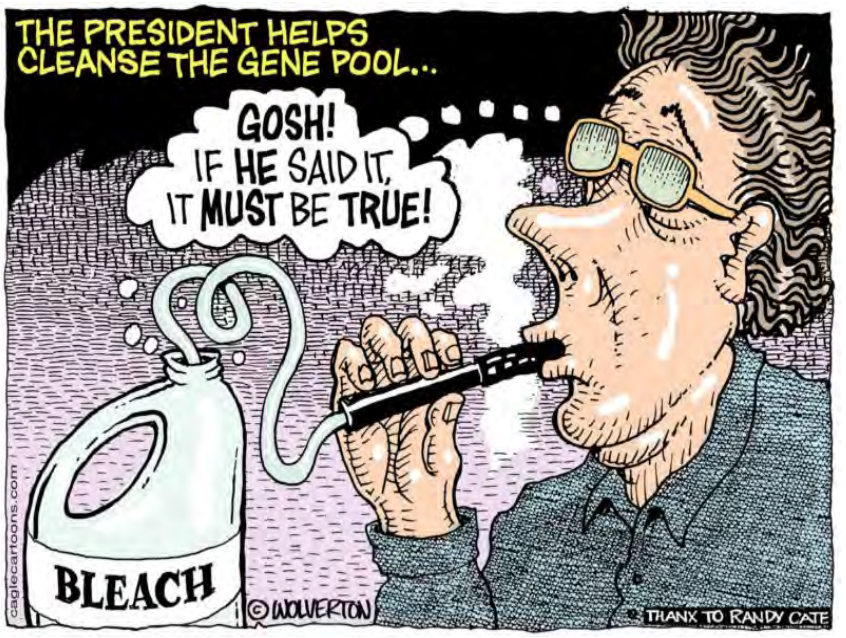
http://editorialcartoonists.com/



By Matt Wuerker, Politico.com / Courtesy of AAEC

Cartoons for the Classroom
Presented by NIEonline.com and the Association of American Editorial Cartoonists (AAEC)

How dangerous is bad information?



Monte Wolverton / Courtesy of AAEC

Talking Points

1. What do these cartoons say about President Donald Trump's statement in a press briefing last week that injecting a disinfectant might clean coronavirus from a patient's lungs?
2. What did doctors and public health officials say about the idea? Did anyone support it?
3. The president said later, "I was asking the question sarcastically." Do you believe him? Why or why not?
4. Can bad advice kill you?
5. How important is it to rely on solid scientific testing instead of wishful speculation?

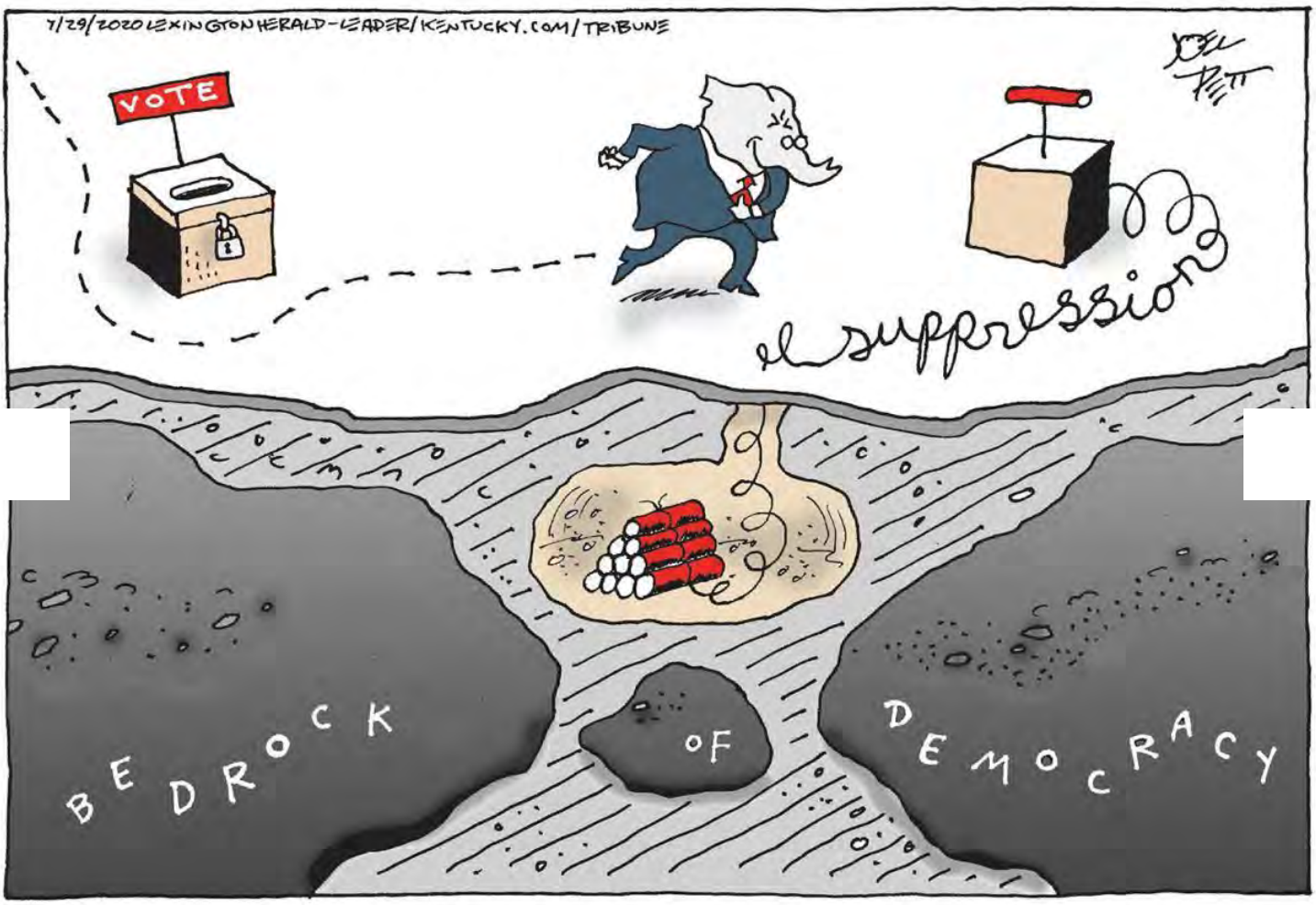
Between the lines

"I see disinfectant, where it knocks it out in a minute, one minute, and is there a way we can do something like that by injection inside, or almost a cleaning. " - President Trump
https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-nw-trump-white-house-sunlight-heat-fight-virus-20200424-7dnhtyxltvdazkp24mybuefmou-story.html

Additional resources

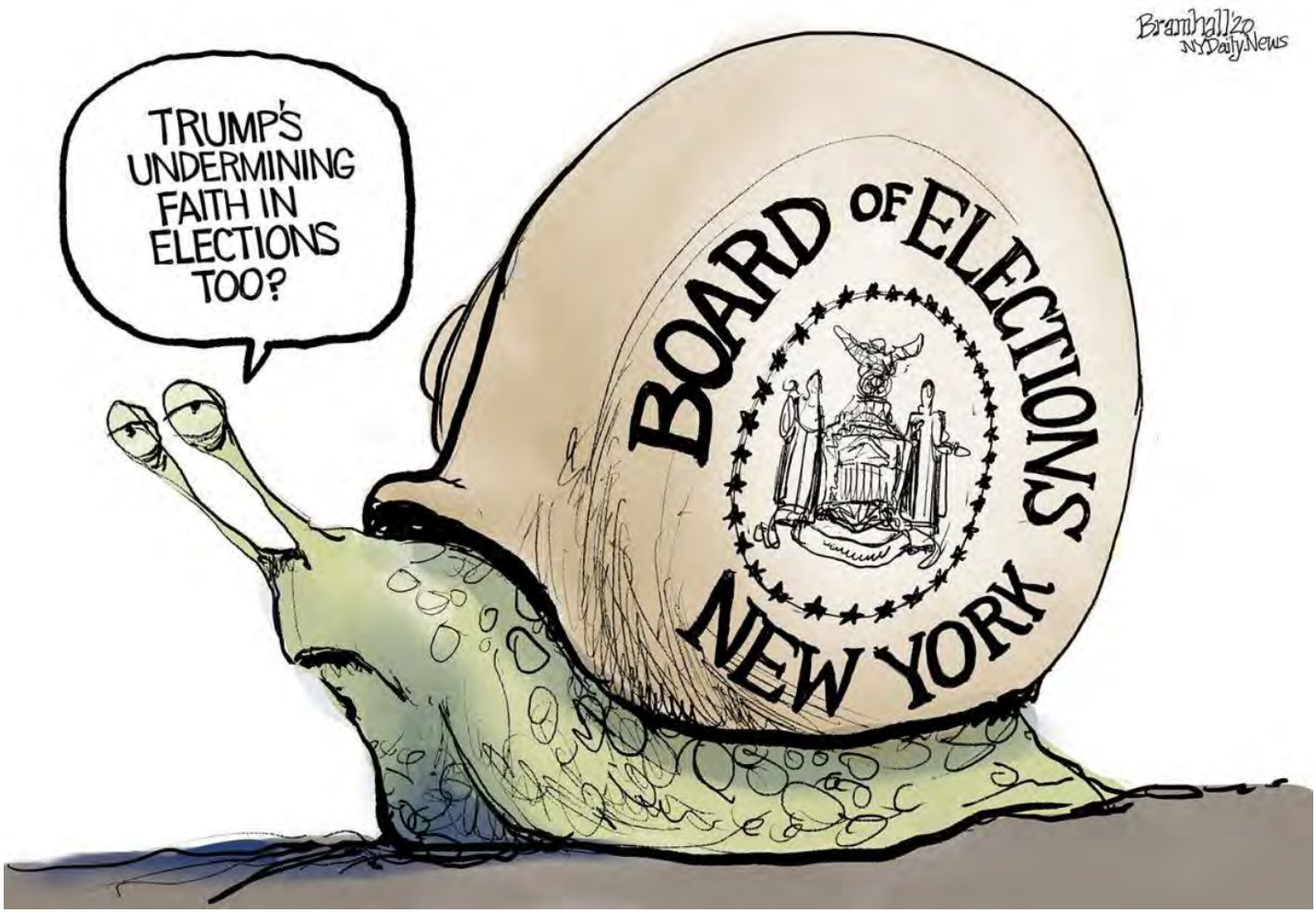
- More by Monte Wolverton
https://www.editorialcartoonists.com/cartoonists/wolvem/cartoons/
- More by Paul W. Berge
https://www.editorialcartoonists.com/cartoonists/bergep/cartoons/
- Editorial Cartoonists Association of American
http://editorialcartoonists.com/

Paul W. Berge / Courtesy of AAEC



Cartoons on the 2020 Presidential Election

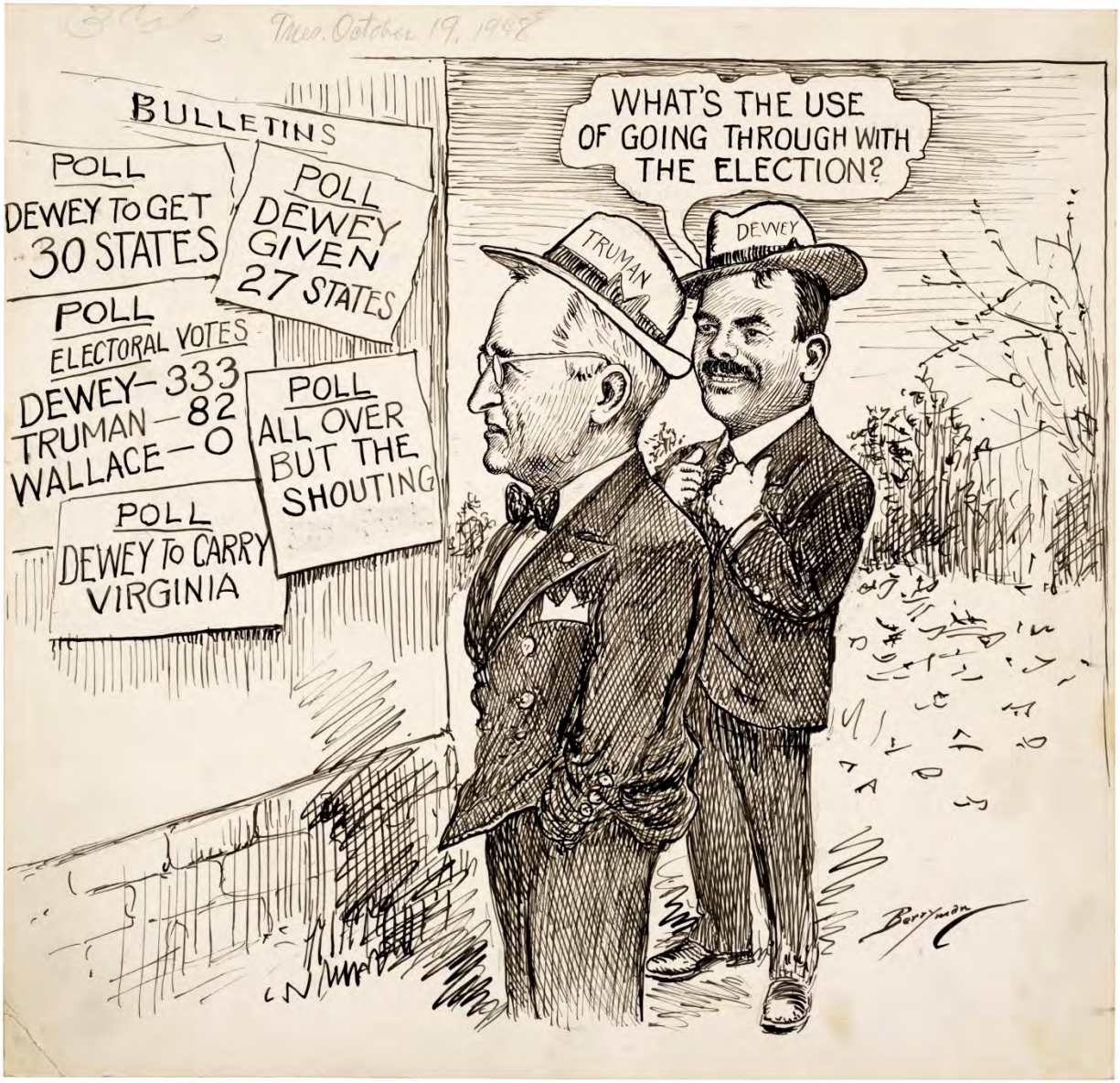
JOEL PETT/TRIBUNE CONTENT AGENCY



Cartoons on the 2020 Presidential Election

BILL BRAMHALL/TRIBUNE CONTENT AGENCY

Thurs. October 19, 1948




3 col
Sunday Star
THEY WONT AGREE ON ANYTHING!
YOU KNOW IT WAS A GREAT SESSION
I KNOW YOU OUGHT TO BE ASHAMED TO FACE THE FOLKS AT HOME
G.O.P.
DEMOCRACY
Bertrand


IT'S NOT GOING TO BE SUCH A RESTFUL MONTH AT THAT!
CONGRESS
EXPLANATIONS
QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED
ANSWERS
WHY I VOTED FOR
MAIN REASONS WHY I DID NOT VOT
HOME
Bergman


IT'S CRAZY!! THEY CAN'T HAVE AN ELECTION IF ONLY 75% OF THE PEOPLE VOTE!!
VIOLENCE DETERS IRAQI VOTERS
YEAH RIGHT. THEY SHOULD WAIT UNTIL ONLY 60% OF THE PEOPLE VOTE... LIKE IN THIS COUNTRY.
1-26-05 S.N.TIMES

Going beyond the text – PolitiFact FL

PolitiFact Florida is a partnership of PolitiFact and the *Tampa Bay Times* to help you find the truth in politics. Every day, reporters and researchers examine statements by Florida elected officials and candidates and anyone else who speaks up on matters of public importance. The reporters research their statements and then rate the accuracy on the Truth-O-Meter:

TRUE – The statement is accurate and there's nothing significant missing.
MOSTLY TRUE – The statement is accurate but needs clarification or additional information.
HALF TRUE – The statement is partially accurate but leaves out important details or takes things out of context.
MOSTLY FALSE – The statement contains an element of truth but ignores critical facts that would give a different impression.
FALSE – The statement is not accurate.
PANTS ON FIRE – The statement is not accurate and makes a ridiculous claim.

For more details, see the Principles of PolitiFact and the Truth-O-Meter.

Going beyond the text
Fact checking
Look at the latest fact checking information on the candidates for Florida Governor and Senator. Make a chart showing what the claim made is and what the determination from PolitiFact is for each candidate. Be sure to include who made the claim. Keep a chart for each candidate up until election day.

Going Beyond the Text

Voting rights
Did you know that for many decades of our country's history, the only people who could vote were white men who owned property? It's important not to take this right for granted – not only because it is the foundation of democracy and freedom in the United States, but also because so many people have struggled throughout history to ensure that all people would have an equal voice. Even today, people from all over the world continue to come to this country because of the freedoms and liberties that are so central to our lives. Have your students review the voting rights timeline from InfoPlease contained in this teacher guide. Have the students respond to each of the following questions in relationship to the timeline:

Comparing candidates
Active citizenship means being involved in your community. Part of that involvement includes knowing about your community and helping choose the leaders you think will benefit your community. What issues are important to you? Education? Crime? The economy? The environment? Safety? Transportation? Where do the candidates – potential community leaders -- stand on the issues that are important to you? Using the "Know Your Candidates" section from the *Tampa Bay Times*, included in this packet, analyze the people who want to lead your community. Compare the candidates running for County Attorney, Governor, State Senator, congress, school board, sheriff, county commissioner as well as the other offices in your area. Create a graphic organizer – chart, Venn diagram, web, infographic – to represent the facts. Share what you have learned with your class.

Fact vs. opinion
Knowing the difference between fact and opinion is very important, especially when it comes to information about your community and the people you hire to lead that community. Oftentimes, leaders try to influence young people by providing propaganda or false information to persuade the young people to join their side in an argument, cause or for an event. Look through the news sections of the newspaper. Select a few articles of interest and evaluate those articles for facts and opinions. Draw a line down the center of a piece of paper. Label one side Fact and the other Opinion. List statements in each category and discuss with your family and class why these statements fall into that category. Think about the content of the articles and the information on your chart. Thinking about the idea that facts can be persuasive, write an essay or blog post discussing the ideas you have read about and learned.

Voting by mail
People can vote in advance if they do not want to wait until Election Day to cast their ballots. All counties in Florida provide the option of early voting and voting by mail. Voting during a pandemic raises unique issues for people who want to vote yet are nervous being around crowds. There has been a lot of news articles about the reliability of voting by mail. Watch the video by the **Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections** to learn about voting by mail. Examine the chart on the next page provided by the Pasco County Supervisor of Elections. Look for articles in your newspaper about this topic. Create a blog post detailing the process of voting by mail and include your thoughts about this method of voting.

LIFE CYCLE OF A VOTE-BY-MAIL BALLOT

Secure Easy Fast

#YourVoteYourVoice 2020

REQUEST

www.PascoVotes.gov
1-800-851-8754
In writing to: PO Box 300 Dade City FL 33526

RECEIVE

- Ballots are mailed to voters approximately 40 days prior to the election if a request is already on file
- Requests received after the first 40-day mailing are processed within 24 hours and mailed daily

VOTE AND RETURN

- Mark your ballot and put in secrecy sleeve
- Put ballot and secrecy sleeve inside return envelope
- Sign and date the outside of return envelope where indicated
- Return in postage-paid envelope and allow 3-5 delivery days
- Ballot must be received in elections office by 7:00 p.m. election day

TRACK

- Go to www.PascoVotes.gov/TrackYourBallot
- Opt to receive text and/or email notifications
- Or call 1-800-851-8754 for a status update

SIGNATURE VERIFICATION

- Each returned ballot is recorded to the voter's record and the signature on the voter's record is compared to the signature on the envelope
- Signature is accepted or voter is notified of the signature difference or missing signature

SECURITY STORAGE

- Ballots are filed daily alphabetically by precinct
- Physical ballots are reconciled using a printout from the system of voters that returned ballots that day
- Ballots are stored in a locked vault with limited access by elections staff only

CANVASSING TABULATION

- Formal transparent process open to the public.
- Process is overseen by the county canvassing board composed of the supervisor of elections, a county court judge, and a county commissioner
- Ballot is removed from sealed envelope by volunteers of opposing parties
- Ballot is tabulated

VOTE BY MAIL
Track your ballot online
PascoVotes.gov
Secure, easy, fast

PascoVotes.gov
800-851-8754

Brian E. Corley
Supervisor of Elections
Pasco County

Para asistencia en español llame al 833-828-3224

Keeping Current: Constitution (from flrea.org)

Directions:

1. *Find a newspaper article dealing with the following topics.*
2. *Glue the article to the box or attach it to the paper.*
3. *State what happened in the article.*

Examples – Executive Branch – this article is about a police officer arresting someone for speeding. Right Box (place the article headline)

Article 1: Legislative Branch	
Article 2: Executive Branch	
Article 3: Judicial Branch and courts.	
Article 4: State government including governor.	
Amendment 1: freedom of speech, religion, or press.	
One article you found interesting and why.	

Activity courtesy of Donald Whitaker, Inverness Middle School

TEACHING TOLERANCE

STUDENT TASK

My Voice, My Voter's Guide

| Do Something | Grade Level 3-5, 6-8, 9-12

Subject: Civics

Rubric: Community Newsletter Assessment

What?

Students create a voter's guide including information about voters' rights, important voting dates and deadlines, and an overview of what to expect at the polls. Students share the voter's guide with friends, families and community members and ask them to sign the Teaching Tolerance Voting and Voices pledges, committing to use their voice or vote in the upcoming elections.

Estimated time

Two to three weeks

Why?

One of the ways young students become invested in the democratic process is by become empowered advocates for civic participation in their local communities. When younger students understand they have the power to use their voices in politics, they are more likely to be involved and register to vote when they are eligible.

How?

GET READY

The voter's guide can be as simple or robust as you would like it to be. (See step 1 for our recommended sections.) Each section can be undertaken as an individual project, as a class project or in small groups.

Determine the organization of the voter's guide. We recommend the following sections:

- **Registering to vote**
  Students research and write about voter registration in your state. They can answer questions such as: Are citizens automatically registered? Can voters register online? Can voters register on election day? Can young people pre-register to vote before they turn 18? Are special IDs required to register to vote in your state?
- **Voters' rights**
  Students research and write about voting rights in your state. They can answer questions such as: How does absentee voting work in your state? Are voters required to show ID to vote? Can people with felony convictions vote in your state? Does your state allow early voting?
- **Important dates and deadlines**
  Students research and create a calendar marked with important dates for the upcoming election. They can answer questions such as: What is the deadline for submitting voter registration forms? What is the deadline for an absentee ballot request? When does early voting begin? What is election day? When are the polls open on election day?
- **What to expect at the polls**
  Students research and write about basic procedures at the polls. They can answer questions such as: What will the ballot look like? How long will it take to vote? What IDs should voters bring? Who can help at the polls if you have questions?

This information is available through Rock the Vote. Download a state-specific event toolkit for information about registration, a list of important dates, and an overview of what to expect at the polls. Students can find more information about voters' rights on the website of your secretary of state and at rockthevote.org/voting-information.

GET SET

1. In a class discussion, ask students how important decisions are made in our communities and country. Assess students' knowledge about the voting process, and if needed, introduce them to the basics of voting.
2. Let students know that even though they may not be old enough to vote yet, they can still play a valuable role in the election process. Ask them how they think they can get involved. Tell them that one way they can get involved is by informing others about the election and asking people to register to vote.
3. Introduce students to the Do Something Student Planning Guide. Instruct them in mapping the steps necessary to complete the voter's guide.

4. Share the sample rubric (forthcoming) or adapt it into a checklist. Refer to the rubric to define expectations before students begin working.
5. Determine the audience for the voter's guide (other classes, other grades, families, larger school community, outside community members, etc.). Talk to students about their intended audience.
6. Assign topics and instruct students to research their topics and write a short summary of their findings.
7. Direct students to plan and draft their written work. Allow time for feedback, revisions and finalization.
8. Have students choose a format for the guide and consider the best format to use so that it reaches the widest audience. Also think about multiple formats and ways of presenting the guide so that it's accessible to all (people with hearing or vision impairments and those who speak and read a language other than English). Students can make their guides by hand, they can make them using "pamphlet templates" such as those found in MS Word, or they can make them as webpages.
9. Consider collaborating with other classes, your school counselor or community groups.

GO!

1. Copy and distribute completed voter's guides to other classes, other grades, families, the larger school community and outside community members.
2. Arrange an in-class "publishing party" during which students unveil their voter's guide and read one another's contributions. If possible, invite your intended audience.
3. Along with the voter's guide, print copies of the "Voices and Votes" Pledges. Encourage students to ask as many people as possible to sign a pledge to either use their vote or their voice in the upcoming election. You can even make this a contest, challenging another class to see who can get the most pledges.

Reflection

1. Students can give each other feedback orally or on sticky notes during the publishing party.
2. If you adapted the rubric, students can assess their own work using the checklist.

English language learners

English language learners can benefit from this task by working cooperatively with others and practicing sharing their ideas orally.

Connection to anti-bias education

Creating and sharing a My Voice, My Voter's Guide shows students they have the power to inform and call others to action.

TASK TEMPLATE

Enter your text here

TEACHING TOLERANCE

A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

DO SOMETHING!

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Community Newsletter Assessment Rubric

Criteria	Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Accomplishing 3	Exceeding 4
Content	Voting guide does not include required content.	The voting guide includes only limited content and information. It does not include any research or outside knowledge.	The voting guide includes some content and information. It provides basic information but does not integrate additional research and/or outside knowledge.	The voting guide includes significant content and information and integrates additional research and/or outside knowledge.
Appearance	The work lacks visual appeal and does not reflect effort or care in presentation.	The work includes some visual appeal and reflects some effort and care in presentation.	The work is visually appealing and reflects effort and care in presentation.	The work is visually appealing and reflects effort, attention to detail and care in presentation.
Creativity	No original, creative ideas.	Some original, creative ideas.	Clearly includes original, creative ideas throughout the work.	The work includes an array of original, creative ideas, combining topics and themes explored in class in novel ways.
Demonstration of Anti-bias Competency	Student shows emerging understanding of the expectations in anti-bias standard _____.	Student is progressing toward the expectations in anti-bias standard _____.	Student meets the expectations in anti-bias standard _____.	Student exceeds the expectations in anti-bias standard _____.
Collaboration/ Cooperation (optional)	Student worked individually and expressed little interest in collaborating with members of the group.	Student worked productively and was sometimes cooperative with other members of the group.	Student worked productively and cooperatively with other members of the group almost all of the time.	Student worked productively and cooperatively all of the time, made compromises and built off ideas of other group members.

TEACHING TOLERANCE

STUDENT TASK

Voting in Your Town

| Do Something | Grade Level 6-8, 9-12

Handout:
Do Something Student Planning Guide , Progress Monitoring Worksheet, Assessing Your School & Community , Voter Turnout , Voter Restrictions or Voter Fraud , Felon Disenfranchisement

Rubric: Voting in Your Town Rubric

What?

Students use online resources to analyze current voter registration and turnout rates in their state and local community. They also explore potential roadblocks to the voting process (e.g., felon disenfranchisement and voter fraud).

Estimated Time

One to three weeks

Why?

A functional voting system is imperative to a healthy democracy, and the current voting process in the United States has room for improvement. By working together to come up with solutions for improving voter registration or turnout, students can gain a wider perspective on issues relevant to their communities and better understand the link between social change and collective action.

How?

GET READY

1. Compile websites that are useful for finding data on voter registration and turnout, such as your state website, the U.S. Census Bureau, the United States Election Project, VOTE411.org, the Brennan Center for Justice, The Sentencing Project and FairVote. Note: If your class does not have reliable Internet access, prepare and provide printouts of relevant data sets for students to reference during the Get Set portion of the task.
2. Prepare handouts for students. (There are three at the end of this lesson with charts for students to help organize their thinking and areas for them

to summarize their findings.)

3. Assess students' prior knowledge of voting and voter registration. What do they already know, and what questions do they have?
4. Show the 40-minute classroom documentary *Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot*. The film kit includes a viewer's guide that goes into depth about how young people have advocated for voting rights.
5. Reiterate that this lesson is about voting rights and the democratic act of voting, not about voting for a particular candidate. For suggestions on how to talk with your students about an election and advice on mediating charged political conversations, refer to these resources:
    - Election 2016 Resources
    - Teach 2016
    - TT 54 PD Café
    - Polarized Classrooms

GET SET

1. Have students visit or read printouts from your state website, and the U.S. Census Bureau and the United States Election Project websites individually, in pairs or in small groups. Ask students to find and record data requested on the "Voter Turnout" handout.
2. Have students visit the websites of or read printouts from VOTE411.org and the Brennan Center for Justice to further research voting rules and regulations. Ask students to record the information requested on the "Voter Restrictions or Voter Fraud" handout.
3. Guide students in exploring or reading printouts from The Sentencing Project and FairVote to learn about the rules in their state regarding felon disenfranchisement. Ask them to complete the "Felon Disenfranchisement" handout.

GO!

1. Pose these questions to your students to inspire their thinking about how to improve voter participation in their communities:
    - What specific element of voter participation do you want to address?
    - How can you influence participation?
    - What outcomes are you seeking?
    - What specific actions can you take to bring about these outcomes?
2. Have students choose from this list of projects or create a new idea for how they will improve voter registration or voter turnout in their community:
    - Publish a public service announcement on social media channels.

- Write letters to local elected officials asking for their attention to voter participation.
- Write and perform a skit designed to teach their community about the importance of voting.
- Create and distribute a flyer that supplies voting information to members of the community.
- Create a public mural reflecting the importance of voting rights.
- Create a community bulletin board with information on how to register to vote.
- Organize a neighborhood voter registration day to help community members register to vote.
- Organize a local march to raise awareness about local political issues, candidates and voter registration.
- Check to see if there is a local chapter of the League of Women Voters and investigate how to get involved.

Reflection

Have students take time to reflect on their findings in writing (especially if they were working with partners or groups). Ask them: Today we face new barriers to voting, and some of the old barriers still exist. What would you be willing to march for?

English language learners

Learning about voting rights history and struggles is an important lesson for all, but it can be especially complex for students who are new to the country. Consider adding to this lesson a discussion of citizenship and voting rights for immigrants. You might also discuss the issue of campaign materials and ballots being available in different languages.

Connection to anti-bias education

Critically analyzing voting rights and access in the United States raises students' awareness of inequity. By summarizing voter turnout by subgroups, students see discrepancies and are prompted to draw thoughtful conclusions about how to change our voting system. The projects will empower students to take action on important social justice issues.

GRADES 6-12

Voting in Your Town

Criteria	Emerging 1	Progressing 2	Accomplishing 3	Exceeding 4
Presentation/ Outreach	The voter registration or voter turnout project contains many errors and does not engage the community.	The voter registration or voter turnout project has some errors and engages the community to only a minimal degree.	The voter registration or voter turnout project has only minor errors and engages the community.	The voter registration or voter turnout project contains no errors and engages the community, addressing their interests and needs.
Content	The voter registration or voter turnout project presents unclear ideas that are not relevant to themes explored in class.	The voter registration or voter turnout project presents surface-level ideas that are marginally relevant to themes explored in class.	The voter registration or voter turnout project clearly conveys ideas relevant to themes explored in class.	The voter registration or voter turnout project clearly conveys ideas relevant to themes explored in class and integrates additional research or outside knowledge.
Creativity	The voter registration or voter turnout project shows no evidence of original, creative ideas.	The voter registration or voter turnout project shows some evidence of original, creative ideas.	The voter registration or voter turnout project shows clear evidence of original, creative ideas.	The voter registration or voter turnout project includes an array of original, creative ideas, combining topics and themes explored in class with new ideas in novel ways.
Connection to the Central Text	The voter registration or voter turnout project does not connect to the central text or its themes.	The voter registration or voter turnout project includes a superficial reference to the central text or its themes, but does not dig deeper.	The voter registration or voter turnout project clearly incorporates the central text and its themes and shows some evidence of thoughtful interpretation.	The voter registration or voter turnout project reflects a sophisticated interpretation of the central text and its themes demonstrated by direct reference or incorporation of author's style and message.
Demonstration of Anti-bias Competency	Student shows emerging understanding of anti-bias standard_____.	Student is progressing toward understanding of anti-bias standard_____.	Student meets the expectations articulated in anti-bias standard_____.	Student exceeds the expectations articulated in anti-bias standard_____.
Collaboration/ Cooperation	Student worked individually.	Student collaborated with peers, but contributions were inconsistent.	Student collaborated well with peers, and contributions were consistent.	Student demonstrated exceptional collaboration skills, cooperating and building off the ideas of others.

Additional Resources

Elections: Teach students about the importance of democracy - Scholastic

Florida Department of Education and General Civic Education Resources

Florida Division of Elections

Florida Joint Center for Citizenship

PBS Learning Media: AN EDUCATIONAL GUIDE TO THE US ELECTIONS

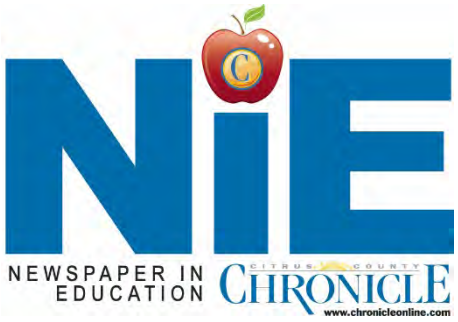
Vote Smart Civics Matter

Activities written by Jodi Pushkin, Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education
For more information, contact ordernie@tampabay.com.

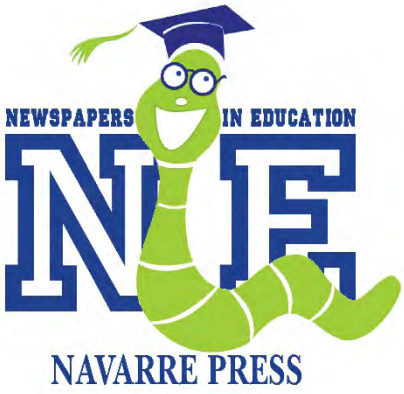

FPES
FLORIDA PRESS
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES INC.
FPESNIE.ORG


Tampa Bay
Times
NIE
newspaper in education
tampabay.com/nie


nie
NEWSPAPERS IN EDUCATION
The Palm Beach Post
REAL NEWS STARTS HERE


NiE
NEWSPAPER IN EDUCATION
CHRONICLE
www.chronicleonline.com


SUN
NEWSPAPERS
Charlotte • DeSoto • Englewood • North Port • Venice
America's BEST Community Daily™


NEWSPAPERS IN EDUCATION
NIE
NAVARRE PRESS


Sun Sentinel
nie
news in education


THE CITIZEN