



Lesson Plan: Make Good Choices! Presidential Election

Activity Steps:

This lesson takes place over a two to three week period.

Purpose	Teacher	Learner
<p>Hook 2 – 5 minutes</p>	<p>Play recording, or show collage of headlines via PowerPoint, or on interactive whiteboard, of current news stories.</p>	<p>Hook 2 – 5 minutes</p>
<p>Into 5 – 10 min. / day over 4 days</p>	<p>(Day 1) 1: Ask what’s the most important issue for the planet today? For the country? For your neighborhood?</p> <p>(Day 2)</p> <p>2. Distribute Citizen Journals and first iteration of GRASPS. At this point, and throughout, emphasize the importance of doing their best work, and of making connections between discussions, and unfolding events, and Social Studies / historical information they have learned. It might help to ask for connections in class discussions as you go along.</p> <p>3. On board, post selected issues.</p>	<p>Students find three small pieces of colored paper on their table on which to write the answers to these three questions. The papers go into a container without further discussion that day.</p> <p>Students do quick-write on rights & responsibilities of citizens.</p> <p>Pair-Share discussions, 1 – 2 minutes per issue. After each pair-share, students write a paragraph for each issue, detailing their opinions and solutions.</p>



	<p>(Day 3)</p> <p>3: On pieces of construction paper, distribute 6 each labeled “mouth,” “nose,” “ears,” “eyes,” and “hair.” Ask students not to share their work.</p> <p>(Day 4)</p> <p>4: Place 2 small colored pieces of paper per student on their tables, one of each of two colors. Admonish secrecy.</p> <p>Collect papers, place in containers. Still give no explanation. This can lead to engaged anticipation!</p> <p>(Day 5)</p> <p>5. Make 6 identical head shapes, differently colored. Cut out body parts, or have a few students help with this task.</p> <hr/> <p>“Cut and paste” the issues, pulling from the Citizen Journals so that you’ve randomly assigned a response to each of the issues to one of 6 piles. Each of the piles will be the platform of a</p>	<p>Students draw the body parts listed on the papers they receive, then put them in the container.</p> <p>Students write a first name, male or female, not including the name of anyone in the classroom on one of the papers. On the second, they write a last name, again not of anyone in the class.</p> <p>(Possible Writing Prompt: Can you tell anything about a person by their name? Do people make judgments about others based on their first or last names?)</p> <p>(Writing Prompt: Do people make assumptions about other people based on their appearance? Give examples)</p>
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	<p>candidate. Type each of them up into a candidate's statement, making minimum changes to the language such as transitions, or introductions i.e. "My fellow Americans..."</p>	
<p>Through 1-2 weeks</p>	<p>5: Putting the candidate's appearance together: Select 6 gluers, and have the other students take turns drawing a body part and giving it to a gluer, until each head has all of its parts glued on. The idea is to make this as random as possible, to avoid bias towards a candidate!</p> <p>Attach first & last name combos to a completed head. Now you have your candidates which you can post on a board, wall, window, etc., along with their statement.</p> <p>Present 2nd (Election) GRASPS.</p> <p>Announce that these are 6 candidates running for office in a presidential primary. Check for understanding about primaries, election process, etc. Use Power Point slides and review previous learning. Access web or written information on primaries and caucuses.</p>	<p>Students take turns drawing body parts from containers. 6 selected students glue body parts to heads.</p> <p>Student(s) draw 6 first names and last names.</p> <p>Whole class discussion</p>



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	<p>Discuss the “two party system” in the U.S., and introduce the classroom “two party system,” represented by the Gummycats and the Rubberpelicans. Arbitrarily assign 3 candidates to each.</p> <p>Read aloud, or have a student read, one of the compiled candidate’s statements, attaching it to one of the candidates on the wall. Do the same with the remaining statements. Post the statements next to the candidates for continuing perusal.</p> <p>6: Each day post or introduce new information about the candidate. This can include fliers, copies of “news reports,” biographies of the candidates, celebrity endorsements, candidate debate dialogue, attack ads. These can be teacher or student generated. Discussion and journaling should take place daily to encourage critical thinking about the issues, information, persuasive or propaganda writing.</p> <p>Emphasize discussion about responsibilities and power of citizens to seek information, interpret its value, and be</p>	<p>Writing: Students reiterate day’s learning about election process.</p> <p>Selected students may read candidate statements to class.</p> <p>Discussion / Writing: How is understanding, & looking into candidate statements, part of active participation in the democracy?</p> <p>Students read new information, discuss, and journal on a daily basis.</p>
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	<p>involved in making choices of representatives.</p> <p>Discuss what happens if choices aren't careful, or if citizens don't participate, thereby allowing others to make the choices for them. Make connections with ancient Greek, Roman systems, tying to previous learning.</p>	
<p>Beyond</p> <p>1 hour + time (homework / in-class) for final writing assignments & self-evaluation</p>	<p>7. Hold the election. You may opt to have them vote for one of each party, or have them join a party and vote for their own candidate slate.</p> <p>Prompt journal writing: What influenced them either positively or negatively. How important (do they feel), is their one vote?</p> <p>A twist on the election process: Pass out election "ballots" which are folded in half and sealed. Inside each is a message letting them know, after they've voted, whether their vote counts. For example, the message might read: "Electronic voting machine error. Your vote not counted." Or, "On average, only 52% of the population votes in a general election. You are not part of that population." Count only the votes with messages that read</p>	<p>Students vote for candidate of their choice.</p> <p>Journal writing on how and why they made the choice they did.</p>



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	<p>“Congratulations! You participated in your representative democracy.”</p> <p>8: Announce winners. Lead class discussion about process.</p> <p>9. Give writing prompt: Write about the election process and the outcome; Make connections with the Greek, Roman legacy.</p> <p>10. Give reflection question to wrap up journal, “How important is active participation in a democratic process?” Include “what if there is little or no participation?”</p> <p>10. Have students write a self-evaluation based on GRASPS. Did they meet the learning criteria? What could they have done differently? What did they do well?</p> <p>What important connections to Greek and Roman history can they make?</p>	<p>Students participate in whole class discussion about the process.</p> <p>Students write in journals.</p> <p>Student writing.</p> <p>Students respond to final reflection question in journals.</p> <p>Students complete self-evaluation based on GRASPS</p>
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Special Needs of students are considered in this lesson:

This lesson easily lends itself to participation by all on a number of levels. Understanding of concepts is supported through multiple modalities including discussion, oral presentation, on-line technology and in-class visuals, and written materials. Based on need, writing may modified, or done with word processing. GATE students may take on some of the “propaganda” writing as an additional challenge.



Extension Ideas:

- Letter to parents describing the activity and inviting their participation i.e.: coming in to read posted candidate information, as well as at-home discussion with their children about real-world issues, candidates, and decision-making.
- Continued connection with elections going on in the real world through current events presentation and discussion.
- Fictional narrative writing about what happens if one or another candidate takes office. Turn that into a play and perform it.
- Research and writing about one of the issues.
- Students write political speeches from one or the other candidate and carry out Presidential Election.
- Classroom elections.