



# CIVICS CLASSROOM CURRICULUM

CITIZENS CLEAN ELECTIONS COMMISSION ★ YOUTH VOTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

**7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>**  
**GRADE LEVELS**

## LESSON 5

**THE BASICS ON HOW POLITICAL  
CAMPAIGNS ARE FUNDED**



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# Civics Classroom Curriculum

## The Basics on How Political Campaigns are Funded

 AZCleanElections.gov



TOPICS 	GRADE LEVEL
Campaign Financing Voting and Voting Rights	7 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

The Citizens Clean Elections Commission (CCEC), in partnership with expert curriculum writers, presents the Civics Classroom Curriculum lesson series, which covers a variety of relevant topics including democracy, elections, government, and the political party system. This is a part of CCEC’s youth voter education and outreach initiative.

These lessons in Civic Education aim to promote an understanding and appreciation of the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy, encourage participation and civil dialogue, and develop civics skills such as critical thinking, researching, and determining fact versus fiction or opinion.

Research shows that lifelong voters cast their first votes early in life. The lesson plans adhere to Arizona’s classroom teaching standards and are applicable within more than one subject. The respective subjects are listed in the Integrated State Standards section of this module. The lesson plans were designed with teachers in mind and with utmost admiration for their important work.



# LESSON PLAN:

## THE BASICS ON HOW POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS ARE FUNDED



### OVERVIEW

In this lesson, or project, students will choose an issue to research (related to State Standards on civics, elections, political parties or democracy, as well as Language Arts and technology), write questions to which they would like to find an answer, examine and evaluate multiple sources to find information to answer the questions, present reasonable explanations of their findings and finally, organize the evidence into a coherent argument. Students will learn about an important social studies/government topic in depth, learn to find and assess sources and learn to develop an argument on the subject.

The following is a multi-day lesson plan for a middle school class. Appropriate State Standards are listed below the lesson plan.

#### I. Materials needed

Students will need access to the internet and a laptop or computer. Teacher and students will reference the Citizens Clean Elections Commission website ([azcleanelections.gov](http://azcleanelections.gov)).

#### II. Do Now/Warm Up

Direct students to the Citizens Clean Elections Commission website ([azcleanelections.gov](http://azcleanelections.gov)). Click on Run for Office>Decided to Run>How Clean Funding Works. Read The Funding Options paragraph.

*\*Note: Clean Elections options only apply to statewide offices, e.g., Governor, and not to local offices, e.g., Mayor, or federal offices, e.g., President or Congress.*

**Questions for discussion:**

- What legislation provides for clean funding for candidates? (The Clean Elections Act).
- Where do candidates for office historically get the money to run for office? (Private and corporate donations, Political Action Committees and other organizations).
- What is the money used for in a campaign? (Signs, advertising, TV ads, to pay staff, meetings, etc.).
- If a candidate does not want to ask for money from private and corporate sources, what is the “clean elections” option? (If they can get enough small five dollar donations to qualify, candidates for legislative and statewide offices can get money from the Clean Elections Commission to run).
- What are some considerations to using the clean funding option? (The candidate does not have to spend time raising money and can focus on the issues; the candidate does not feel an obligation to any particular donor, especially big donors, in considering issues or potential legislation).
- What do you think about this option (clean funding)? What would you do?

**III. Student-Friendly Objective**

Students will choose a civics issue and write a persuasive essay using the information that they research (and evaluate) on multiple websites in order to thoroughly understand a topic and take a side on an issue that affects themselves and their families.

**IV. The Why of the Lesson**

It is important to understand our roles and responsibilities in a democratic society as well as to think critically about various issues that citizens must consider that affect our daily lives and well being.

**V. Anticipatory Set**

Students will now be presented with a variety of important, relevant civics topics from which to choose for their projects. Having a choice of topics serves to increase student investment in the assignment (self-determination is a big motivator). The teacher may write or display topics and devise a method for students to select theirs, perhaps a lottery of some sort.

*\*Note to teacher: You may wish to make this a cooperative learning lesson by assigning (or allowing the selection of) a topic to a group of 4 or 5 students to write the discovery questions, do the research, write persuasive essays and present findings and opinions to their classmates for discussion. You may also want to create a rubric to make the expectations clear for students, e.g., 3-5 discovery questions; a 1-2 page persuasive essay; X number of sources; 3-5 minute presentation to class, using a choice of technology to deliver; total points for the project, etc.*

Possible topics for research (You may add or remove as you see fit):

**Citizens Clean Elections Commission:** Examine the Run for Office tab. Analyze what is involved in the process. Consider whether you might someday want to run for office. If you can, interview someone who has run for office...local, state, federal.

**Citizens Clean Elections Commission:** If this is an election year and there are propositions (statewide ballot measures) to be voted upon, choose one or two of the propositions and consider the pros, cons and possible outcomes for the state and for you and your family. If it is not an election year, there are usually still initiatives being discussed and petitions being circulated for various issues.

Use this project opportunity to create a "Get Out the Vote" campaign. Research other efforts and then create and share your own.

**Citizens Clean Elections Commission:** Voting, Candidate Debates. If this is an election year, take a look at the debate schedule, watch a debate and present an analysis of the candidates' and ideas, as well as your opinion.

**Citizens Clean Elections Commission:** Voting, Candidate Compass. If this is an election year, take a look at the Candidate Compass. Present a summary and analysis of the platforms of various candidates, as well as your opinions.

**Voting Rights Act of 1965:** What did this law provide? What is its significance? What changes have been made (in 1975, for instance; and a more recent Supreme Court decision on the need for its provisions)?

**Kahn Academy:** State voting laws influence voter turnout. Some states have structural challenges (ex: voter IDs); others have less to vote (ex: early voting; election day registration). Analyze the issue of voter suppression.

Research the history of voting rights in the United States and provide a chronology and synopsis of the major events and laws.

**Citizens Clean Elections Commission:** How to Vote. Register to Vote. Examine all of the sections of the How to Vote tab and the Register to Vote information and provide a summary and analysis of the entire process.



**Citizens United:** Research and explain this Supreme Court decision. From there, examine the idea of “money in politics” by researching the implications of the decision and provide your thoughts on the subject.

Investigate the party platforms of the two major political parties, Democrat and Republican (there are others, e.g., Libertarian, Green Party). Learn about Independents. Research, compare and contrast the official party platforms of the two major parties.

## VI. Lesson/Delivery

After choosing their topic, students will follow these directions for their project:

1. Write 3 questions that they would like to know/find out about the topic.
2. Research and write down 3 online sources that they will use to investigate the topic and potentially find the answers to their questions. Include an assessment of why each of the online sources is valid and reliable. Did they discover one that is not?
3. Research and take notes on the definition of the issue and list the pro and con arguments.
4. Write a persuasive essay on their topic, including the pros and cons and their opinion.

## VII. Closure

Ask a few student volunteers to read their persuasive essays to the class. Lead a class discussion on what the opposing argument might be in each case.

## VIII. Homework

Collect the assignment (project) given in the lesson: 3 questions; 3 online sources; research notes: arguments for and against; and the completed persuasive essay.

Assign students to reduce their persuasive essay to the length of a letter to the editor and submit it to the local newspaper.

**Or:** Have students (or groups) prepare a presentation, e.g., Prezi, PowerPoint, etc., to deliver to the class and lead a discussion on the topic.



## INTEGRATED STATE STANDARDS

Choose from the following standards for your lesson

### GRADE 7

**7.SP.3.1** Create compelling questions and supporting questions that reflect enduring issues about the world, past and present.

**7.SP.3.2** Use evidence drawn from multiple sources to develop and support claims and counterclaims in response to compelling questions.

**7.SP.3.5** Evaluate the relevance and utility of sources based on information such as author, date, origin, intended audience and purpose.

**7.SP.3.6** Construct and present arguments based on claims and counterclaims while pointing out the strengths and limitations of those arguments.

**7.SP.3.7** Construct and present explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples and details, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanations.

**7.SP.4.3** Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument.

**7.SP.4.4** Compare the central arguments in multiple secondary sources on a related topic using multiple types of sources.

**7.RI.6** Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.

**7.RI.8** Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.

**7.RI.9** Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.

**7.RI.10** By the end of the year, proficiently and independently read and comprehend informational texts and nonfiction in a text complexity range determined by qualitative and quantitative measures appropriate to grade 7.

**7.W.1** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

- a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
- c. Use words, phrases and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons and evidence.



- d. Establish and maintain a formal style.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

**7.W.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above).

**7.W.6** Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

**7.W.7** Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

**7.W.8** Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

**7.W.9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection and research. Apply grade 7 Reading Standards to informational text and nonfiction.

**7.SL.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- a. Come to discussions prepared having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
- b. Follow rules for collegial discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
- c. Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.

**7.SL.4** Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, appropriate vocabulary, facts, details and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume and clear pronunciation.

**7.SL.5** Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.

## GRADE 8

**8.SP4.6** Construct and present arguments based on claims and counterclaims while pointing out the strengths and limitations of the arguments.

**8.SP4.7** Construct and present explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples, details with relevant information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanations.

**8.SP4.8** Present arguments and explanations on topics of interest to others to reach multiple audiences in and outside of the classroom print, oral and digital technologies.

**8.C1.2** Demonstrate civic virtues that contribute to the common good and democratic principles within a variety of deliberative processes and settings.

**8.C1.3** Analyze the influence of personal interests and perspectives when people address issues and problems in government and civil society.

**8.C1.4** Engage in projects to help or inform others such as community service and service-learning projects.

**8.C2.1** Analyze the powers of citizens in a variety of governmental and non-governmental contexts.

**8.C2.2** Explain specific roles, rights and responsibilities of people in a society.

**8.C2.3** Analyze concepts and ideals such as majority and minority rights, civil dissent and the rule of law.

**8.C3.1** Describe the impact of political and civic institutions such as political parties, interest groups, elections and the media in shaping policy. Key concepts include but are not limited to political party platforms, structure of parties on a national, state and local level including precincts, primary and general elections, presidential nominating system including conventions, congressional elections including congressional districts, gerrymandering and census, electoral college including how electors are chosen in Arizona, types of interest groups and role of the media.

**8.C3.3** Compare the structures, powers and limits of government at distinct levels in the United States.

**8.C4.2** Assess specific rules and laws (both actual and proposed) as means of addressing public problems.

**8.C4.3** Analyze the purpose, process, implementation and consequences of decision making and public policies in multiple settings and at different levels including the national, state, local (county, city, school board) and tribal.

**8.C4.4** Identify, research, analyze, discuss and defend a position on a national, state or local public policy issue including an action plan to address or inform others about the issue.

**8.C4.5** Analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at the local, regional and global levels, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem. Apply a range of deliberative and democratic procedures to take action and solve the problem.

**8.H2.1** Explain how different beliefs about the government's role in social and economic life have affected political debates and policies in the United States.

**8.RI.1** Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**8.RI.2** Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

**8.RI.8** Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

**8.RI.9** Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

**8.RI.10** By the end of the year, proficiently and independently read and comprehend informational texts and nonfiction in a text complexity range determined by qualitative and quantitative measures appropriate to grade 8.

**8.W.1** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

- a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
- b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
- c. Use words, phrases and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons and evidence.
- d. Establish and maintain a formal style.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

**8.W.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

**8.W.6** Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

**8.W.7** Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

**8.W.8** Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

**8.W.9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. Apply grade 8 Reading standards to informational text and nonfiction.

**8.W.10** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**8.SL.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- a. Come to discussions prepared having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
- b. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
- c. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
- d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views based on the evidence presented.

**8.SL.2** Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

**8.SL.4** Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

**8.SL.5** Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.