



CIVICS CLASSROOM CURRICULUM

CITIZENS CLEAN ELECTIONS COMMISSION ★ YOUTH VOTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

7th - 8th
GRADE LEVELS

LESSON 1
YOUR RIGHT IS TO VOTE



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Civics Classroom Curriculum

Your Right is to Vote

 AZCleanElections.gov



TOPICS 	GRADE LEVEL
Voting and Voting Rights Elections	7 th – 8 th

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:

YOUR RIGHT IS TO VOTE



OVERVIEW

How can we encourage each student, each person, to have a personal commitment to vote? In this lesson, students are encouraged to think about the value, power and responsibility of voting, as well as the results of choosing not to vote.

Active participation is critical in maintaining a successful democracy. Too often, our citizenry can be described as complacent and disinterested. The lack of participation by youthful voters is especially concerning. On the other hand, many people would never miss a chance to have their voices heard by exercising their right to vote. This is an effort to encourage your students to put themselves in the latter category.

An important skill in today's world is the ability to find and navigate websites in order to gather information, compare and contrast viewpoints, determine the legitimacy of the content on the website and make good decisions. This lesson provides the opportunity to search the Citizens Clean Election Commission website and others for interesting and useful information on voting, candidates, elections and much more.

This is a multi-day lesson on voting and democracy. Appropriate State Standards are provided below the lesson plan.

I. Materials needed

Teacher and student access to the internet (laptops, computer lab, cell phones, etc.); playing cards. Teacher and students will reference the Citizens Clean Elections Commission website (azcleanelections.gov).

II. Do Now/Warm Up

Directions to students: Use free association to write down the first words and concepts that come to mind when you think of “democracy.” What are the first things that come to mind when you think of voting? What election issues are important to you? To your family?

**Note to teacher: Depending on time and technology, the teacher may want to employ a website like polleverywhere.com to create a “word cloud” of student responses on the board for dramatic representation. This displays a cool visual of students’ thoughts on voting. Briefly discuss student responses to the Warm Up.*



III. Student-Friendly Objective

Students will participate in a whole class discussion and write a brief essay during closure to exhibit an understanding of the importance of voting and participating in a democratic society in order to appreciate the value of and need for civic responsibility and the effects of elections on their daily lives. Students will explore a website (Citizens Clean Elections Commission) that will reinforce these notions.

IV. The Why/Big Idea

Voter education and participation is essential for a thriving democracy. The right to vote is something that should not be taken for granted. When some individuals or groups do not vote, they are transferring power and influence to others. As a result, a minority of our citizens often elect our leaders and determine our policies, which in turn affects our daily lives, whether we like it or not, in areas such as education, taxes, foreign policy and war, student loans, health care and more. Our online search will show students the mission of CCEC and how the non-partisan organization encourages voter participation (and running for office) in Arizona.

V. Anticipatory Set

Briefly discuss:

- A.** Have you ever voted on anything? What? (Think social media; All-Star voting; school officer elections, etc.) Why did you vote? What motivated you? Why didn't you when given the opportunity?
- B.** What school, local, state or national issues concern you? Your family?
- C.** Show the 4-minute video, Arizona's Voter Crisis, found on the Citizens Clean Elections Commission website (azcleanelections.gov/how-government-works/voter-crisis). Discuss. What is the voter crisis? (apathy/my vote doesn't matter; distrust of government; lack of time to research the issues and understand the choices, etc.). In the 2016 Presidential Election, how many registered voters did not vote? (25%). What is a primary election? (An election to select the candidate from each political party). How many registered voters participated in the 2016 primary elections? (only 1 in 3). Where does Arizona rank in voter turnout? (43rd). In general, which age group of voters does not participate as much as they should? (younger voters). What age group does tend to vote? (older voters, e.g., "Boomers."). What are "independent voters?" (Citizens who do not register as Democrats or Republicans, but as Independents); they are one-third of registered voters in Arizona). What happens when others vote and you do not? (Someone else gets to decide on who is elected and what laws are passed, often a small plurality of voters). What can you do? (Be informed and vote!).



VI. Lesson: Hold a Mock Election

- A. Assign numbers to students. Certain students, unbeknownst to them, will eventually be the (registered) voters. Do not tell them yet!
- B. The teacher will explain to students that they will be asked questions about various issues that could possibly be voted on. Use 2 or 3 of the issues that students expressed an interest in and concern about in our earlier discussion during the anticipatory set. These will be the issues that students will “vote” on. Try to include interesting, current and relevant local, state and national issues, e.g., a controversial issue in your community; a city issue like red light cameras; a state issue like outlawing cell phone use while driving; a national issue like raising the minimum wage.

**Note to teacher: It would be ideal to make one question an actual classroom decision, for instance, How do you want to review for the next test, a Jeopardy game or an extra credit worksheet? In this way, students will be invested in the outcome of the vote.*

- C. Based on the assigned numbers, explain who will and who will not be able to participate in the voting.
- D. Pose the questions to the remaining students and have them raise their hands to vote.

For instance...

1. In our class (or school), would you rather...or...?
 2. Do you think that our city should activate red light cameras at intersections to cut down on red light runners?
 3. Do you think the state should outlaw all cell phone use while driving?
 4. Would you vote to raise the minimum wage nationally to X dollars?
- E. Ask the students who were not allowed to vote how they felt about not being able to participate. Ask all students to consider the idea that when they do not vote, they are deferring the power and decision-making for the things they care about, like what happens in class or the school, or who will become President of the United States, to the ones who do.



VII. Closure

Class discussion:

1. Why is it a citizen's civic responsibility to register and vote?
2. What happens if you don't (participate in the election process; register and vote)?
Where is the power?
3. What are a couple of issues that concern you? Your family?

Closure writing assignment, one paragraph: Why is it important to exercise your right to vote and what happens if you don't?

VIII. Assignment

Go to the Citizens Clean Elections Commission website (azcleanelections.gov). Explore the website. Answer the following questions:

1. What do you find most interesting?
2. What is most informative?
3. What information can you find that might help you?
4. Why do you think this is an unbiased (reliable) website? What is the evidence?
5. What might a biased or unreliable website look like or try to do?



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.