



CIVICS CLASSROOM CURRICULUM

CITIZENS CLEAN ELECTIONS COMMISSION ★ YOUTH VOTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

9th - 12th
GRADE LEVELS

LESSON 5
**REAL-LIFE ELECTION
ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE**



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Civics Classroom Curriculum

Real-life Election Issues of Importance

 AZCleanElections.gov



TOPICS 	GRADE LEVEL
Self-learning/research Government Political parties	9th - 12th

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:

REAL-LIFE ELECTION ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE



OVERVIEW

Students have discovered the who, what, when, where and why of voting as it affects their family life and their own, as well as their roles and responsibilities as a citizen in a democratic system in previous lessons. They have examined the duties of elected officials, the levels of government and the elected offices of government that we rely on for essential services. They have considered real-life issues that are of concern to them now and in the future as reasons to vote and be actively involved in the political system. In this lesson, students in groups will choose a topic to research in depth, for instance the role of political parties or women in politics, and share their findings with their classmates.

This multi-day lesson is designed to encourage student research, analysis and presentation of important issues that surround elections, voting and politics.

I. Materials needed

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

II. Do Now/Warm Up

According to the Citizens Clean Elections Commission, “The most important socioeconomic factor affecting voter turnout is education. The more educated a person is, the more likely they are to vote, even controlling for other factors that are closely associated with education level, such as income and class.” Discuss with your elbow partner why you think this is the case. After a few minutes, ask students to share their thoughts with the whole class.



Display on the board the photograph provided with this lesson plan (baby on father's shoulders)

Ask: In looking at this picture, what do you think or feel? What might be the message of the photo? How might you caption this photo?

III. Student-Friendly Objective

Students will use digital presentation technology to present their findings on a voting/ election issue of their choice which they have researched, analyzed and summarized in order to create in-depth discussions on critical election issues.

Other presentation possibilities include having students create a video, a slide deck, an infographic, a podcast, a blogpost or other options.

Possible tools to employ include: Google Slides, Prezi, Canva, We Video, iMovie, Edublogs, Adobe Spark, Thinglink, etc.

**Note: Teachers may not ask students under the age of 13 to create accounts where they need to give personal information without parental consent (COPPA.org). Many of these tools do, but this is a high school lesson, so it should not be an issue.*

IV. The Why of the Lesson

The skills of research, analysis, collaboration and presentation are critical to the success of students in their professional careers. Having a choice of important election topics as well as the means to present their findings allows self-determination and creates investment in the process as well as the issues themselves.

Glossary/Vocabulary:

- Political Party
- Propositions
- Statewide Ballot measures
- Ballot measures
- Debate



V. Anticipatory Set

The teacher will establish groups (depending on class size), present a list of the issues from which each student group will select one to research, and enact a selection process (a lottery?) by which student groups have some autonomy in choosing a topic of interest to them without duplication. Self-determination (choice) enhances student buy-in for this and any project.

VI. Activity

Here are some possible topics for research, analysis, and presentation. You may want to eliminate some and/or add some of your own. Please see azcleanelections.gov for ideas and research.

Glossary/Vocabulary:

- Citizens Clean Elections Commission: Examine the How to Run for Office tab. Analyze what is involved in the process. Consider whether you might someday want to run for office.
- 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.
- 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: Elections, Candidate Debates. If this is an election year, take a look at the debate schedule, attend a debate and present an analysis of the candidates’ and ideas.
- Citizens Clean Elections Commission: Elections, Candidate Compass. If this is an election year, take a look at the Candidate Compass. Present an 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)?
- Citizens Clean Elections Commission: About Us; What is a Clean Election? Start with a definition of what a “clean election” is from the website and then research the pros, cons and real-world realities of such.

- Citizens Clean Elections Commission: Register to Vote. Examine all of the sections of the Voting tab and the Register to Vote information and provide a summary and analysis of the entire process.
- Research what it means to be conservative and to be progressive. Define each philosophy, list and analyze policy differences and analyze what changes have occurred in recent years.
- 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.
- Choose a current local, state or national issue of interest to you. Research the topic and produce a podcast of your findings and opinions.
- 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.

VIII. Closure

Each group will display its technology and research skills by making a presentation to the whole class so all students get the benefit of their classmates' research and analysis of civic issues.

IX. Homework

Based on what you learned from your research, write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper (or an elected representative) expressing your viewpoint.



INTEGRATED STATE STANDARDS

Choose from the following standards for your lesson

STRAND 1

Concept 1, PO 1.

Analyze, evaluate and synthesize information to generate new ideas, processes or products.

Concept 4, PO 1.

Create innovative products or projects using digital tools to express original ideas.

Concept 4, PO 2.

Use digital collaborative tools to synthesize information, produce original works and express ideas.

STRAND 2

Concept 2, PO 1.

Communicate and collaborate for the purpose of producing original works or solving problems.

STRAND 3

Concept 1, PO 1.

Identify and defend effective keywords, phrases and strategies for conducting information searches.

Concept 1, PO 2.

Evaluate diverse information sources.

Concept 2, PO 1.

Locate and synthesize information utilizing advanced search strategies including a variety of search engines, metadata search engines, deep web searches and databases.

Concept 2, PO 2.

Defend the authority of primary and/or secondary sources used in research.

Concept 2, PO 3.

Evaluate information identifying facts, opinions, bias, inaccurate and misleading information by analyzing multiple sources.

Concept 2, PO 4.

Synthesize research information to create new understandings and innovative solutions.

Concept 2, PO 5.

Apply ethical use of information and media by respecting the principles of copyrights, intellectual freedom and property rights, using information and media technology responsibly and citing resources appropriately.



STRAND 5

Concept 1, PO 6.

Advocate and exhibit legal and ethical behavior when using technology.

Concept 2, PO 1.

Exhibit digital citizenship by consistently leading by example and advocating social and civic responsibility to others.

STRAND 6

Concept 1, PO 3.

Choose technology applications appropriate for the audience and task.

Concept 3, PO 1.

Identify and use online help and other support to learn about features of hardware, software and connectivity as well as to assess and resolve problems.

Concept 4, PO 1.

Transfer understanding of current technologies to new and novel learning situations.