



CIVICS CLASSROOM CURRICULUM

CITIZENS CLEAN ELECTIONS COMMISSION ★ YOUTH VOTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

9th - 12th
GRADE LEVELS

LESSON 1
**VOTER APATHY OR
VOTER EFFICACY?**



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Civics Classroom Curriculum

Voter Apathy or Voter Efficacy?

 AZCleanElections.gov



TOPICS 	GRADE LEVEL
Elections Youth Voter	9 th - 12 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:

VOTER APATHY OR VOTER EFFICACY?



OVERVIEW

Citizen participation by an informed and motivated electorate is critical in maintaining a vital 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 are active on the grassroots level of politics, working passionately for the candidates of their choice, and would never miss a chance to have their voices heard by exercising their right to vote. How can we encourage each student, each person, to have a personal commitment to vote? What role does this play in their daily life?

I. Materials needed

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

II. Do Now/Warm Up

Pre-test: Use free association to write down the first words and concepts that come to mind when you think of voting. What election issues are important to you? To your family? What are a couple of issues that concern you? Your family?

**Note to teacher: Depending on time and technology, the teacher may want to employ a website like www.polleverywhere.com to create and display a “word cloud” of student responses for dramatic representation. Briefly discuss student responses.*

III. Student-Friendly Objective

Students will use an exit ticket and summative discussion 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 also explore a website (azcleanelections.gov) that will reinforce these notions.



IV. The Why of the Lesson

The right to vote is something that should not be taken for granted. When citizens do not exercise their right to vote they are transferring power and decision-making to others, perhaps even to a minority of the population, which then has an effect on their daily lives as well as the policies and trajectory of the nation. Our web search will show students the mission of Citizens Clean Elections Commission (CCEC) and how the nonpartisan organization encourages voter participation (and running for office) in Arizona.

V. Anticipatory Set

**Note to teacher: Please research and be prepared to discuss voter apathy (and some reasons for it, e.g., ballot fatigue—too many elections) and voter efficacy (and why one might feel a sense of it, e.g., confidence in the system).*

Briefly discuss:

- A. Have you ever voted on anything? What? (Think TikTok; All-Star voting; school officer elections, etc.) Why did you vote? What motivated you? Why didn't you when given the opportunity?
- B. What is voter apathy? What might cause voter apathy? What is voter efficacy? What would make someone feel a sense of voter efficacy?
- C. What school, local, state or national issues concern you? Your family?

VI. Activity: Hold a Mock Election

1. Assign every student a number of either #1 or #2; so that roughly half the class is in either group. One of these groups, unbeknownst to them, will eventually be the (registered) voters and the other group will not. Do not tell them yet!
2. Explain to students that they will be asked questions about various issues that could possibly be voted on. Use two or three 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.*

3. Ask students in either of the assigned groups (you decide) to raise their hand. At this time, explain to that group that they have not registered to vote, and they will not be able to participate in the voting.
4. Pose the questions to the remaining students and have them raise hands to vote.

For instance...

- A. In our class (or school), would you rather...or...?
 - B. Do you think that our city should activate red light cameras at intersections to cut down on red light runners?
 - C. Do you think the state should outlaw all cell phone uses while driving?
 - D. Would you vote to raise the minimum wage nationally to X dollars?
 - E. What historical candidate for President would you vote for?
5. Ask the students who were not allowed to vote how they felt about not being able to participate. Ask all students to consider the notion 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.

Option: Use Linoit.com to allow students to post, view, and share their thoughts on the board (like sticky notes).

VII. Activity: Online Scavenger Hunt

**Note to teacher: Explore azcleanelections.gov to prepare for your lesson. Please prepare to discuss and briefly explain the origin of CCEC and the Citizens Clean Elections Act passed by voters in 1998. Explain the initiative and referendum processes of getting a law passed in Arizona, as opposed to the regular legislative process. Also discuss how Clean Elections works by providing campaign dollars to qualifying candidates for office who then do not have to raise money from special interest groups or PACs (Political Action Committees, e.g., American Bankers Association PAC, National Conservative Political Action Committee, Giffords, and many more; you may choose your own examples of PACs), as well as the advantages/disadvantages of this option for the candidate and community.*



Ask students to go to the Citizens Clean Elections Commission website:

<https://www.azcleanelections.gov/what-we-do>

Click About Us, ask students to read...What is the Clean Elections Commission? as well as CLEAN ELECTIONS PROGRAMS and OUR MISSION.

**Note to teacher: Prepare to discuss Voter Education (election dates, issues, candidates, etc), Public Financing/Clean Elections Fund (public funding of candidates for office running a “clean campaign” and why a candidate might choose to do so) and Campaign Finance Enforcement (monitor campaign finance rules).*

Divide students into groups of appropriate size for your class, perhaps 4 or 5. Hand out a worksheet to each group consisting of the following questions with space for answers. Give students “think time” to discuss and answer the questions. Then discuss responses as a whole group.

- A. Based on your reading and research, what do you think is the “big idea” of Citizens Clean Elections Commission?
- B. What does CCEC do?
- C. How do functions and the mission of CCEC “improve the integrity of the Arizona state government and promote public confidence in the Arizona political process”? Promote the first amendment freedom of speech?
- D. Ask, Why would a candidate for office apply for public money from the Clean Elections Commission)? Why would one not? What do you think of the concept?
- E. Do you believe that the CCEC is a credible source for information about voting and elections?



VIII. Closure

**Note to teacher: Our top takeaways today are encouraging the desire to vote (civic responsibility) and what happens when we don't; voter apathy versus voter efficacy; and the role of Citizens Clean Elections Commission in promoting citizen participation in the election process.*

Exit ticket questions

(Summative questions posted for student responses and 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 is Citizens Clean Elections Commission? How was it formed?
What does it do (its function or mission)?

Discuss if time permits or perhaps begin tomorrow by sharing some of your students' responses.

IX. Homework

**Note to teacher: Please post to save time.*

1. On the CCEC website, please find and list the ways (at least 5) that Citizens Clean Elections Commission encourages citizen participation in the democratic process, i.e., voting and running for office.
2. Find and write down information on the next upcoming election and why it would be important for voters to participate in.



INTEGRATED STATE STANDARDS

Choose from the following standards for your lesson

SOCIAL STUDIES

HS.SP3.1 Develop and frame questions about issues and events in the discipline and determine the types of sources that will be helpful in answering these questions.

HS.SP3.4 Evaluate the credibility of a source by examining how experts value the source.

CIVICS

HS.C2.1 Explain the importance of individual participation in civic and political institutions.

HS.C2.4 Analyze the responsibilities of citizens.

HS.C2.6 Evaluate the contributions of individuals and groups, including Arizonans, who have played a role in promoting civic and democratic principles.

HS.C4.7 Apply a range of deliberative and democratic strategies and procedures to make decisions in the classroom, school and out-of-school civic contexts.

HISTORY

HS.H3.1 Analyze how societies, leaders, institutions and organizations respond to societal needs and changes.

ELA

9-10.RI.2 Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

9-10.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.

WRITING

9-10.W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

9-10.W.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection and research.

- b.** Apply grades 9-10 Reading Standards to informational text and nonfiction.

READING

11-12.RI.2 Determine and analyze the development and interaction of two or more central ideas over the course of a text to provide a complex analysis or objective summary.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

11-12.SL.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. .

- a.** Come to discussions prepared having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
- b.** Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines and establish individual roles as needed.
- c.** Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
- d.** Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

11-12.SL.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media and formats in order to make informed decisions and propose solutions, while evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies.



TECHNOLOGY

Creativity and Innovation: Knowledge and Ideas

P.O. 1 Analyze, evaluate and synthesize information to generate new ideas, processes or products.

Digital Citizenship: Safety and Ethics

PO 1. Determine when it is appropriate and safe to use various personal digital devices.

**Note to teacher: From the Arizona Department of Education website: State Social Studies Standards Grades 9-12*

COURSE CONSIDERATIONS FOR HIGH SCHOOL CIVICS/GOVERNMENT

Using inquiry in civics, high school students explore how to become active citizens. To become engaged citizens requires a knowledge of the history, principles and foundations of our republic. A comprehensive study of civics can be approached from many angles and perspectives with a focus on inquiry. A civics course can be organized in a variety of ways including thematic, chronological or chrono-thematic.

The course should include content from the following topics:

- Foundations of government including but not limited to the historical foundations and philosophical foundations of the American political system, the purpose and role of government and where government gets its authority
- Structures and function of tribal, local, Arizona and other states', national and international governments including but not limited to constitutional vs. non-constitutional governments, and how governments are organized, limits and powers of the legislative, judicial, and executive branch and comparative governments
- Institutions of the national government including but not limited to Congress, the President and the bureaucracy, federal courts; and institutions of the state government including the legislature, governor and the bureaucracy, and the state courts
- Law-making process including the role of deliberation and compromise



- Media, interest groups and political parties including but not limited to the how these linkage institutions connect the people to government and shape political and social interests, the role of the free press in the American political system, the origin and role of political parties, the two-party system, the role of third parties in American politics, and the social, political and economic positions of American political parties in history and the present day
- Media Literacy including but not limited to roles of media, types of media and media and consumer biases
- Elections, voting and voting behavior including but not limited to political socialization, creation of legislative and congressional districts, opportunities for participation, campaigns, types of elections including primary and general election processes (local, state and federal), laws governing elections, voter turnout and barriers to voting
- Citizenship including rights, roles and responsibilities of a citizen and the process for naturalization
- Civil Liberties and Civil Rights
- American political culture, values and principles that are basic to American constitutional democracy and the republic such as individual rights, popular sovereignty, common good, patriotism, rule of law, freedom of conscience and expressions, privacy and civil society, justice, representative government, checks and balances, freedom of religion, civilian control of the military and equality
- Public policy including researching current issues or policies at the local, state or federal level
- Foreign Policy including but not limited to formation and implementation

There are many topics to pursue in a Civics/Government course. Identify topical emphases to allow for the depth of study needed to effectively engage students/learners in the inquiry process and to educate students about the roles and responsibilities of citizenship.