



American Political Ideology and the Importance of Voting in the United States

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:
High School Social Studies:
Civics and Economics, 10th grade

Keywords: Voting, Popular Sovereignty, Democracy, Ideologies, Civic Participation and Responsibilities.

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: Voting in the United States is seen as rite of passage for many citizens. The simple task is seen as an act of civic duty as it is a change for people to make a mark on their society. As a Civics teacher, one of the key ideas I want to plant into students' minds is the importance of being an active citizen within their society. One of the first questions I ask of my students is whether or not they plan on voting in the future. Many times, early in the year, they all respond with "No" or "Not unless it's a presidential election!" Our government was founded on the beliefs of John Locke in that the government should be reflective of the will of the people, and a truly democratic society depends on the participation of its citizens.

My goal is for students to understand that they have the ability to be more participatory within their society and one of the first actions they can take is to research and become knowledgeable of social and political issues that plague their communities. Students can use this knowledge to push for change within their governments to ensure their government is reflective of the will of the people. By the end of this unit, students will have a greater understanding of their responsibility to be informed and active citizens to bring about change. They will build skills to create an opinion based off of fact, while identifying biases of their own and the presentation of platforms of candidates. They will be able to see they have the abilities to promote change through contacting their representatives and participating in elections for all causes and issues.

I plan to teach this unit during the Spring 2019 semester to 90 students in American History: The Founding Principles, Civics and Economics.

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Introduction

Rationale

According to the North Carolina Board of Elections, in the 2016 presidential election, 68.98% of registered voters cast ballots. However, in the previous non-presidential election in 2014, only 44.02% of registered voters participated.ⁱ The discrepancy in these voter statistics is a key part of why I want to include the importance of voting in this curriculum unit. Many students underestimate their ability to influence the government and their own communities.

Voting is considered an important civic duty going back to the writing of the Constitution. The founding fathers had a firm belief in the power of the people and promoting democracy through popular sovereignty. Ben Franklin is even attributed with a quote in which he is asked what type of government the Constitutional Convention decided on, responding with “A republic, if you can keep it.” Still today, it is important to remember the power of the vote is necessary to ensure the government is reflective of the interest of the people who are governed.

There are many movements to encourage higher turnout, but many of them go unheeded. Often times, when asked, students will respond that their vote does not matter, which is why they will choose not to vote. The understanding of participation in all forms within society is necessary to encourage active voting. Students need to understand the act of voting, the process of registering, finding a ballot, and making their choices. They need to be informed on local, state, and national issues so they can make decisions based on fact. The rise in social media has led to an abundance of opinions, so it is also imperative for students to be able to identify bias and dig through information to find a more complete view on issues. Through these lessons, students will learn their voice does matter and they can make an impact.

School/Student Demographics

Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) is a fairly large district with over 146,000 students within 170 schools. CMS includes students from 160 different countries creating a diverse system, and includes magnet programs in over 37 schools.ⁱⁱ One such magnet program that is included is the language magnet at South Mecklenburg High School, the school at which this curriculum unit was taught. CMS was also central in the desegregation of US public schools via the *Swann v CMS* landmark Supreme Court case. I include this information, as it will be included within the lessons to help students understand, on a local level, the changing role and identification of citizens, and their access to civic rights.

South Mecklenburg High School, the school in which this unit was initially taught, is a large and diverse school. In the 2017-2018 school year, there were 3,137 students enrolled at South Mecklenburg. The population is divided with 36% White demographics, 24% African American, 34% Hispanic, 3% Asian population, .4% American Indian, and 3% identifying as two or more. There are 284 LEP students, making up 9% of the population. The school also houses a Language Magnet program, as well as an IDEA (Innovation, Design, Engineering and Art) Academy. Students in these programs are also immersed in general education courses.ⁱⁱⁱ

This unit will be taught to sophomores in the “American History: The Founding Principles, Civics and Economics” course, a graduation requirement for all students. This unit will be taught to an array of classes, including: an honors level course, a standard level course, and a standard level course with 24 English Language learners, therefore many modifications may be needed to accommodate all learning needs.

Objectives

My goal for this unit is to have students analyze American political parties and ideologies and connect these ideologies with stances on current issues. I want them to understand their own political beliefs and align them with political parties, stances on issues, and candidates running for or currently holding office. Students need to be aware of the access they have to information and ways to be active in their society and with politics. They will also learn about the evolution of voting rights and goals over the history of the United States.

Students will understand the opportunity to contact their representatives, understand political platforms and candidate information, elected roles, and how to identify biases in the presentation of political stances from candidates and their peers. They will learn how to do effective candidate and political ideology research to clarify stances and understand their own personal opinions and goals when making a political decision. They will also understand the process of voting and elections through participation in a mock election.

Content Research

The United States came to be through a series of fights over ideological differences, many occurring early in the nation’s history. These ideological differences centered on the relationship between the people and those in charge. Many of the Founding Fathers believed that the government should be reflective of the people and the disputes came when the government was too controlling or unresponsive. The result of the early disputes led to a lasting key principle of American government; that of individual liberties, being core to the American spirit.

The interpretation of these ideologies has changed over time with the evolution of men and country. As different demographics, including citizens of color, women, and the LGBTQ+ community, have fought and gained rights to be treated equally and have equal opportunities within society and government, our interpretations of purposes of government has changed. The ideologies are constantly dissected with each cultural change. With each shift, there is a strong effort to determine what ideologies mean and how they were applied in the past, but most importantly how they can be effectively applied within the present and future.

Voting is considered sacred in the United States because of the strong belief that the government should be responsive to the people. During the Colonial era in America, many colonists feared that Parliament was neglecting to consider the needs and wants of the citizens living in the colonies. This was the key purpose of the fight for Independence. After the American Revolution, and in the early days of the United States, this need for directive by the people and for the people was central in considerations of the power of government.

At the beginning of the United States, the power for deciding who could vote was reserved for the states. Many states declared that only white, landowning men could vote. This

protected the interests of the powerful, the taxpayers, and those with a “stake in society”. This was not always the case, as some believed that the more people who had a voice, the more democratic and less “British” the new country would become.^{iv} However, it was widespread that those with interest in the success of the country should be heard while those who were poor and uneducated were not as necessary.

This belief that the poor and uneducated were not ideal voters led to a series of laws that would limit the disenfranchised from getting to the polls. However, by the 1840s, property requirement laws had diminished and the majority of white males were able to vote. The growth of the voting population would soon continue with the end of the Civil War.^v

The 13th amendment abolished slavery in 1865, the 14th amendment provided equal protection under the law to all citizens, mainly written to provide newly freed slaves with rights, and the 15th amendment, passed in 1870, granted the right to vote to all men, which cannot be denied “on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”^{vi} These laws were intended to extend rights to a new population of the country; however again, many laws were put into place to limit the abilities for the previous slaves to participate in their government.

Following the Reconstruction period, states, especially those in the south, saw an increase in the participation of black voters and therefore the interests of southern landowners became threatened. Many southern states started to write laws that would include poll taxes and literacy test requirements to vote. The issue that arose was that many of the newly freed slaves were too poor to pay a tax and were not educated to pass a literacy test.

During this period, another fight for suffrage was also occurring. Many women of wealth and land owning status had been able to vote, but with the shift in laws to limit the black male population from voting, women also lost their abilities to cast a ballot in many states. Women’s Rights movements started up throughout the country, with some states easily changing laws to allow women to vote, while others held fast. The National American Woman Suffrage Association fought tirelessly from the mid-1800s until the 1920s to gain equal treatment and voting rights for women. In 1920, the 19th amendment was ratified, declaring that the right to vote could “not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”^{vii}

Throughout these years, the black population continued to face discrimination at the polls. Many states still had laws that limited who could vote and required poll taxes. Black voters also faced threats and violence when attempting to cast their ballot. The Civil Rights Movement began after the end of World War II and gained strength in the 1950s through the 60s. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were results of the fight to gain equal rights and opportunities for the African American population.^{viii}

Often times, the insecurity that these voting limitation laws stemmed from was that of white men, who feared that the black and women populations would undermine their authority within the government. Black and Women voters were more likely to vote for equal treatment and assistance by the government. This would endanger the autonomy of the white property and business owners. Segregationists attempted to stifle the voices of the black population because they feared the changes in laws that might occur if black supported candidates gained office. However, these voices were key to a representative government of the people and for the people, all people included.

Equal opportunity has been a fight since the beginning of the United States but with a shift in demographics. First, and arguable still today, there is the black population, then the white population, and more recently we have seen the immigrant population becoming more active in the right to vote movements. In San Francisco, non-citizens were allowed to vote in local school board elections, which has led to a debate over the legality of these votes versus the need for this disenfranchised group to be able to vote for issues that affect them.^{ix}

In North Carolina, and in many states, another issue has risen in that of disenfranchised voters even more. Many have argued that due to budget cuts and the loss of voting precincts, the poor and minority populations of many counties have been limited in their abilities to vote. After the Supreme Court's decision in *Shelby County v Holder*^x ruled to limit the jurisdiction of the federal government in approval of election laws implemented by states, many states started to introduce new regulations that would end up limiting the poor and minority populations to vote. In North Carolina, this was seen alongside gerrymandering of the districts by the Republican led General Assembly. In the recent election, North Carolina voters passed the Voter ID Amendment, which would require citizens to present a valid North Carolina identification in order to vote.

In recent years, many groups have been pushing for young adults to get out and vote. Groups like Rock the Vote^{xi} have made efforts to educate young people on their need to vote. The importance of voting is to make sure that our government is limited and is doing what is best for the people, by the people. If the people are not being able to vote, then is it truly a democracy? With an increasingly active and educated young population, we can encourage change through action of these citizens who get out to vote.

Instructional Implementation

Teaching Strategies

Direct Instruction with Guided Notes

Each period of direct instruction will align with teacher made guided notes. There will be periods of lecture and video clips to instruct students on voting ideologies, elections and organization, political parties, other election purposes (referendums, recall, special elections) and the Electoral College. This direct instruction will be spread over many of the days to include additional information each day and have students build off of their knowledge and incorporate into their growing activity. Each day, students will have a new guided notes worksheet to complete throughout the lecture.

Lecture will be accompanied by PowerPoints that are focused on key terminology, quotes, images and data. The guided notes will include a quote, an image, and a multiple-choice question that will be completed as a class. These guided notes give multiple opportunities for learning. The notes area of each sheet will be mostly blank to allow students to create their own interpretation of the information given in direct instruction. The image and quote will be an opportunity to practice analyzing skills. The multiple choice question will allow for reading comprehension and test taking skill practice. The notes can also be a way to scaffold instruction, including as many details or as a few as you would

like. I give my higher students blank space to take notes on, but we still complete the multiple choice, quote and data analysis together. For English language learners, I have more vocabulary included in the notes.

Inquiry Based

Students will be doing research throughout this unit to identify patterns and answers to questions that they create. They will begin by getting basic information but then as questions arise, they will find the need to answer them through additional research. The first inquiry based assignment will be to identify and interview a government representative. Students will find that many of their beliefs do not align with those of the representative and will learn to create questions to clarify differences.

They will also learn how to identify bias and do additional research to find multiple perspectives. The second activity will be the ballot research activity, in which students will have to learn more about candidates, their platforms, and issues on the ballot. They will have to identify their own political beliefs and research to find the best alignment.

Movement Based

Students will be asked to move around the room to identify with political ideologies. This strategy will be used so that students will be physically involved but also so that they will see the idea that there will be differences in beliefs. When students are asked to move, they will end up in groups that will show patterns, some moving in identical ways while some are not completely aligned. This activity will be a physical interpretation of varying ideologies.

Journaling

Students will have a chance to reflect on discussion and material that they are learning regarding political ideologies, parties, and elections through journaling. Discussions about politics can create divisiveness and at times, many students may not want to speak up but will have their own thought processes occurring. This will give them an opportunity to identify and express these thoughts.

Close Reading

Students will engage with an article to introduce the topic of voting. In a close read, students will practice reading using the following guidelines over multiple readings. In the first reading, students will be asked to circle any words they do not know, underline/highlight anything they read connected to voting, and put a plus in the margins for paragraphs they understand and a question mark next to any paragraph that causes confusion. The second read will be as a group, during which we will define and clarify and confusion. The third read will be a partner read. Together, they will read the document one more time then complete the accompanied questions in a THINK PAIR SHARE method. This will allow for students to reflect on their thoughts and gains from the reading while sharing with another student to clarify issues and discuss differences.

Classroom Lessons, Activities, and Assessments

Day One: The Importance of Voting- Types of Elections, Voting Process, and Voting Rights

Students will receive direct instruction in an introduction that focuses on the importance of voting in a Democratic society. There will be reviews on the principles of government, specifically Popular Sovereignty. This direct instruction will also include descriptions of the voting process, types of elections and reviewing the evolution of voting rights.

Students will review the amendments through a matching activity. They will then participate in a close reading of an article on the importance of voting. Both the amendments review and article can be found in [Appendix 2](#). Instructions for close reading can be found in the Teaching Strategies section of this Curriculum Unit.

Day Two: Voting Ideologies and the Political Spectrum

This lesson will begin with students completing a chart of statements with their answers of if they agree or disagree with each statement. The outline of statements with a teacher answer key can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

Once completed, I will ask students to stand up and come to the center of the room. I will have three signs placed in different corners of the room: Agree, Disagree, and Unsure/In the Middle. I will instruct students that I will read each statement and if they agree or disagree with the statement to go to that sign. After each statement and movement, I will ask students why they chose to move to that area. At the end of the discussion, I will read the next statement. Due to time constraints, I usually choose three to four statements for the movement part of the activity.

I will then direct students to return to their seats. Each statement and stance (agree or disagree) will have a different alignment to a political ideology: Liberal, Moderate, and Conservative. I will post the alignments and have them add up the letters and determine if there is a strong majority for their answers. After they have completed their charts, I will explain that the M aligns with Moderate, L aligns with Liberal, and C aligns with Conservative.

Students then will receive direct instruction on the Political Ideology Spectrum and Voting Ideologies, as well as the alignment of ideologies with the platforms of the two parties in the United States, Republicans and Democrats. To end the class, I will have students journal on how their stances from the beginning align with one of the two parties. They will be asked to include if they have a strong stance on certain issues and give explanation as to why they have these strong or moderate beliefs.

Days Three-Four: Election Research

Students will be told that they are participating in their own election. They will have direct instruction on the requirements to vote and the different offices that are up for reelection. Students will spend the next three class periods preparing for the election by researching the

ballot. You can scaffold this lesson by limiting the offices that students will vote on. More advanced classes can research all candidates and issues on the ballot.

Students will first look into their own political ideologies and which party they best align with by taking multiple online tests. These tests will ask students about their stances on different issues. The tests and an accompanying worksheet can be found in [Appendix 2](#). Explain to your students that each issue would be considered a “Plank” and the broad stance on political ideologies is their “platform”. The tests take about 45 minutes to complete in full. I also instruct students to answer to the best of their ability because “in the real world”, many voters are also going in without having a full understanding of the issues. The outcome of this (and insecurity on the part of the students) can be discussed in the post-election debriefing.

To research the candidates, give students all websites to candidates running in the election. Students are directed to look at the information provided for each candidate to make a choice of whom they would vote for. They will complete a worksheet giving information of what issues the candidate is campaigning on and why they are choosing this candidate. Encourage your students to look back at their own political ideologies to find connections on issues. An example of the research page for candidates and issues can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

To research the issues on the ballot, first the issues must be introduced. Students will do research to figure out which political parties and candidates would support or go against the proposed issues on the ballot. They will then determine which political party aligns with their personal beliefs and if they would vote for or against the ballot referenda.

Day Five: Election Day

After completing their research, students will participate in a mock election held at the school. If it during an election year, organizations like First Vote NC and Generation Nation have mock online elections. Go to their websites and join to participate. The links can be found in the [Student and Teacher Resources](#). You can also set up your own election using an online testing website. During this activity, students will be asked to step into a “voting booth”, set up before hand and place their votes.

The next day, after tallying the votes, have a discussion with your students. Some questions to ask during this discussion include:

1. How did you FEEL while voting yesterday?
2. Did the results reflect your choices? How or how not?
3. What do you think will go well with these choices? (Think of government and societal issues... how will these choices handle them?)
4. What do you think will not go well with these choices? (Think of government and societal issues... how will these choices handle them?)

5. What do you wish YOU had done to be better prepared for this election?
6. What do you think INFLUENCED your decisions with this election?
7. Has this experience changed if you plan on voting in the future? WHY or why NOT?

Days Six-Eight: Identifying the Issues and Interviewing your Representative

This lesson will begin with review of the platforms of the Political parties. Students will then receive direct instruction on the issues that would be central to North Carolina and United States elections. The topics included will be economics, social issues, and possible referendums that are presented in local and state elections.

Students will be asked to form small groups of up to three. In their small groups, they will choose a North Carolina elected official to contact and interview. They will be given instruction to first research the candidate, their platform and stances on specific issues. They will then come up with questions to ask the candidate and reach out to the candidate to set up an interview, on the phone or in person. The directions for this activity as well as a rubric can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

This assignment will be due two weeks later as it will take time for students to set up and organize an interview with a representative. However, these three days will be spent researching and preparing for the interview as well as preparing for the ultimate assignment that will be to create an informative podcast using the research and interview.

The podcast will be an assessment to see if students can identify key local and state issues and relate their knowledge of the political parties and ideologies to current events. This will also give them opportunities to develop research, questioning, and analyzing skills.

ⁱNorth Carolina State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement. 2018. <https://www.ncsbe.gov/voter-turnout>

ⁱⁱ"Voter Turnout" 2018.

ⁱⁱⁱ 2017-2018 South Mecklenburg High School Improvement Plan Report. 2017.

^{iv} Ratcliffe, Donald. "The Right to Vote and the Rise of Democracy, 1787—1828." *Journal of the Early Republic* 33, no. 2 (2013): 219-54. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24768843>.

^v"Bill of Rights Institute." Bill of Rights Institute. Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/>.

^{vi} U.S. Constitution, amend. XV, sec. 1.

^{vii}U.S. Constitution, amend. XIX.

^{viii}"Civil Rights Movement." History.com. Accessed August 28, 2018. <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/civil-rights-movement>.

^{ix}"Non-Citizen Registration and Voting." City and County of San Francisco: Department of Elections. Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://sfelections.sfgov.org/non-citizen-registration-and-voting>.

^x"Shelby County v. Holder." Oyez. Accessed August 28, 2018. <https://www.oyez.org/cases/2012/12-96>

^{xi}"Rock the Vote." Rock the Vote. Accessed August 30, 2018. <https://www.rockthevote.org/>.

Appendix 1: Teaching Standards

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Essential Standards: American History: The Founding Principles, Civics and Economics

FP.C&G.2.7 Analyze contemporary issues and governmental responses at the local, state, and national levels in terms of how they promote the public interest and/or general welfare (e.g., taxes, immigration, naturalization, civil rights, economic development, annexation, redistricting, zoning, national security, health care, etc.).

- This standard will be addressed through the Election research and the Candidate interviews. Students will be asked to define their own political ideology through the election research and then understand how candidates would respond to the public interest through their platforms. Students will also be able to come up with questions to ask a representative in regards to specific issues at the various levels of government.

FP.C&G.2.8 Analyze America's two-party system in terms of the political and economic views that led to its emergence and the role that political parties play in American politics.

(e.g., Democrat, Republican, promotion of civic responsibility, Federalists, Anti-Federalists, Influence of third parties, precincts, "the political spectrum", straight ticket, canvass, planks, platform, etc.)

- This standard will be addressed through direct instruction and through the Mock Election research. Students will be able to identify the stances of the two political parties and how they approach issues through analyzing various platforms of representatives of each party. They will also identify their own political party alignments through ideology and party online tests.

FP.C&G.5.1 Analyze the election process at the national, state and local levels in terms of the checks and balances provided by qualifications and procedures for voting

(e.g., civic participation, public hearings, forums, at large voting, petition, local initiatives, local referendums, voting amendments, types of elections, etc.).

- This standard will be addressed through the mock Election, as students will learn the requirements to vote, the differences in various elections and will participate in researching and casting their own ballot.

Appendix 2: Teaching Activities

Lesson 1

AMENDMENTS REVIEW

Name _____

Place the correct amendment number beside the description.

- | | |
|---|--|
| _____ 1. Civil trial by jury | _____ 15. Two terms for President |
| _____ 2. Right to bear arms | _____ 16. Cannot be denied the right to vote because of race |
| _____ 3. Limits Congressional pay raises | _____ 17. Powers not denied to the states and not delegated to the national government belong to the states. |
| _____ 4. Senators elected by voters in each state | _____ 18. Presidential Succession |
| _____ 5. Decreases the amount of time between presidential elections and assuming office | _____ 19. Prohibition |
| _____ 6. The Bill of rights is not an extensive list of citizen rights | _____ 20. No excessive bail and no cruel and unusual punishment |
| _____ 7. Voting age 18 years old | _____ 21. No poll tax |
| _____ 8. Repealed 18 th Amendment | _____ 22. No unreasonable searches and seizures |
| _____ 9. Due process, no double jeopardy, no self-incrimination, eminent domain, Grand Jury | _____ 23. Speedy and public trial by jury, right to bring and cross-examine witnesses and right to an attorney |
| _____ 10. Defines citizenship and states must guarantee due process | _____ 24. Ballots for President and Vice President are on separate |
| _____ 11. Freedom of Religion, Assembly, Press, Petition, and Speech | _____ 25. D.C. is given three electoral votes |
| _____ 12. States cannot be sued by foreign states or members of that state. | _____ 26. No quartering of troops |
| _____ 13. Authorizes income taxes. | _____ 27. Abolishes slavery |
| _____ 14. Women's suffrage | |

Voter Apathy, Why It's a Big Problem

Read the following article and annotate using the following outline:

Voter Apathy, Why It's a Big Problem
By Stefanie Cragun

SYMBOL	MEANING
*	This is important
<u>underline</u>	Key word or detail
✓	I understand this question/idea
○	Unfamiliar word
?	I don't understand...
!	That's surprising or new info
∞	I made a connection.
scribble	"I'm thinking..."

Voter turnout is on the decline. We hear that a lot, every election the news anchor tells us about the low voter turnout. But so what right? Why does it matter?

Impact of Low Voter Turnout on Policy

Low voter turnout can lead to bad policy. If very few people vote, there is a very low chance that those in office will be voted out of office, regardless of what they do while they are in office.

Bad policy is not the political career ender that it once was. Most eligible voters don't even realize that there is a bad policy. Many of those who realize that the policy is bad, don't go to the polls to hold officials accountable.

Examples of this can be found in the many members of Congress who have been implicated in various scandals and still remain in office. If officials feel that there will be no repercussions from the voters for their bad behavior and bad policy, there is no incentive for them to do better.

Are We Really Getting the Best Candidate for The Job?

With a low voter turnout, it doesn't take many votes to get elected. A very simple example would be if 20 voters turned out to vote, it would take only 11 votes for someone to get elected. If most eligible voters did not actually want this candidate, it would not matter because they did not cast their ballot.

The wrong candidate can do a lot of damage from a position of power. Once he is in there, there is little anyone can do about it. Impeachment is rare, most of the time there is nothing to do but wait for the next election.

If the only people who vote are ones who are friends of the candidates and people who have worked to get the candidates elected, then our elections are really just a measure of who has more friends, not who can do the best job or who has the best ideas. It is a popularity contest.

Non Presidential Years

Voter turnout in the 2004 election was 64% of adults, according to the US Census bureau. In 2002, a non-Presidential election year, only 37% of adults came out to the polls (according to the Office of Election Assistance.) This shows that many people do not vote unless it is a presidential election year.

Who we elect to other positions is just as important as who we send to the White House. So what is the impact of all this? The minority who remain active in politics in non-Presidential election years can place whomever they choose into Congress or other offices without much trouble. This happens under the radar and most people don't even notice it.

We are very likely to end up with people in office who do not represent the interests of everyone, just those who helped get them elected.

Is It Really Democracy?

If only a few are casting ballots, at what point is it no longer a democracy? We are a country where every adult citizen over 18 has the right to vote regardless of religion, race, gender or wealth. If we don't exercise that right, we are leaving the decision of our government to others. Citizens leaving the decision of who governs and what those officials do for other people to make is a risk for our democracy.

In a democracy, citizens have more than a right to vote. In order to protect our democracy, we have a duty to inform ourselves about the issues and the candidates and then vote to voice our preferences. By leaving the decision to others we are condemning ourselves to live by their decisions and their rules.

What Can We Do?

Each person should read the papers, go online, whatever they can to learn about what the issues are and where the candidates stand on those issues. We should look past the personal attacks and character assassinations. (Who of us could withstand that kind of scrutiny and come out clean, we all have things we would rather not have as public knowledge.) We should make an informed decision and then go to the polls and formalize our decision.

If we know someone who does not know how to register to vote or where to vote, we should show them how and encourage them to vote. If someone says to you "Why bother, it doesn't matter anyway." You can try to change their mind or tell them "Do it anyway, just in case it does matter." That way you can encourage them to vote without having to argue with them about whether their vote matters or not.

Questions:

1. What is the problem presented by the author?
2. Who are the ones actually voting in elections according to the author?
3. Why are people being driven away from voting?
4. Why do people believe that "it doesn't matter anyway"?
5. What is the problem with government if people don't vote?
6. What are some steps that you can take to encourage those around you to vote?

Political Ideology Survey- ANSWERS

Directions: Answer the following questions by circling YES or NO. We will complete the boxes on the right AFTER the activity.

Do you feel...

YES (L) or NO (C)	1. Lunch should be free to all students	
YES (L) or NO(C)	2. The government should keep involvement in citizens' lives to an absolute minimum.	
YES (L) or NO (C)	3. School should provide uniforms to all students	
YES (C)or NO (L)	4. Organized religion (churches) serves an important role in society	
YES (L) or NO (C)	5. People should be allowed to criticize the government during times of crisis	
YES(C) or NO (L)	6. The government should not get to regulate businesses to maintain free enterprise.	
YES (L) or NO (C)	7. The government should make strict restrictions over who can immigrate to the United States.	
YES (L) or NO (C)	8. A woman should be allowed to have an abortion if she chooses to	
YES (C)or NO (L)	9. Teacher's salaries should be based on student's performance on state tests	
YES (C)or NO (L)	10. Government should spend more money on the military and less on social services	
YES (L) or NO (C)	11. Homosexuals should have the same rights as everyone else	
YES (C) or NO (L)	12. The death penalty should be used as a form of punishment for crimes	
YES (L) or NO (C)	13. The rich should be taxed at a higher percentage than the poor	
YES (L) or NO (C)	14. The government is responsible for protecting consumers from faulty products	
YES (L) or NO (C)	15. Drugs should be legalized	
YES (C) or NO (L)	16. The government should not regulate healthcare or create a government controlled health care system	
YES (C) or NO (L)	17. It is the right of every American to own a hand gun	



Political Ideology Survey

Directions: Answer the following questions by circling YES or NO. We will complete the boxes on the right AFTER the activity.

Do you feel...

YES or NO	1. Lunch should be free to all students	
YES or NO	2. The government should keep involvement in citizens' lives to an absolute minimum.	
YES or NO	3. School should provide uniforms to all students	
YES or NO	4. Organized religion (churches) serves an important role in society	
YES or NO	5. People should be allowed to criticize the government during times of crisis	
YES or NO	6. The government should not get to regulate businesses to maintain free enterprise.	
YES or NO	7. The government should make strict restrictions over who can immigrate to the United States.	
YES or NO	8. A woman should be allowed to have an abortion if she chooses to	
YES or NO	9. Teacher's salaries should be based on student's performance on state tests	
YES or NO	10. Government should spend more money on the military and less on social services	
YES or NO	11. Homosexuals should have the same rights as everyone else	
YES or NO	12. The death penalty should be used as a form of punishment for crimes	
YES or NO	13. The rich should be taxed at a higher percentage than the poor	
YES or NO	14. The government is responsible for protecting consumers from faulty products	
YES or NO	15. Drugs should be legalized	
YES or NO	16. The government should not regulate healthcare or create a government controlled health care system	
YES or NO	17. It is the right of every American to own a hand gun	



Lessons 3-5

My Political Ideology

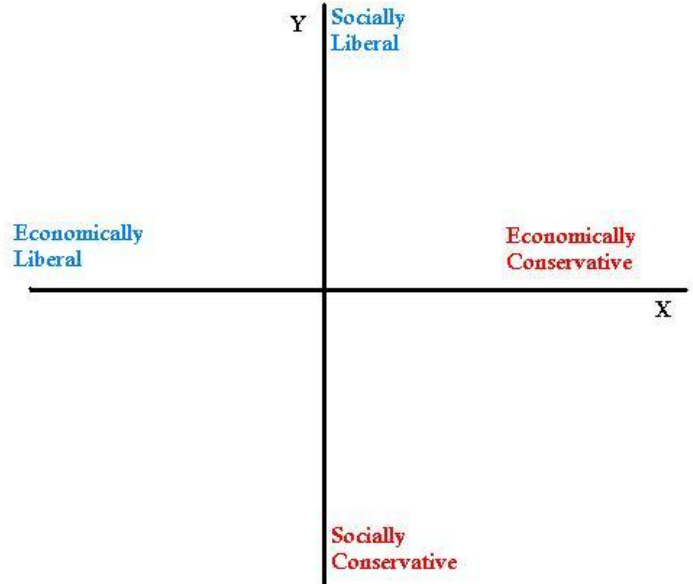
Political Ideology- <https://www.politicalcompass.org/test>

Complete the test and then place a large dot on the spot that it marks your results.

This test identified me as...

Economic Left/Right:

Social Libertarian/Authoritarian:



In the Left hand column, under “Elections”, **click on “US”**.

Which candidate are you CLOSEST to?

Why do you think that is (based on your answers)?

Political Party- <http://www.people-press.org/quiz/political-party-quiz/>

This test identified my political values as closest to _____.

Compared to others of my age, I am **more/less** _____.

Compared to others of my gender, I am **more/less** _____.

Compared to others of my race, I am **more/less** _____.

Compared to others my religion, I am **more/less** _____.

Thoughts on these outcomes?

Political Candidates- <https://www.isidewith.com/>

Complete the questions to get insight to how your beliefs align with candidates and policy.

If you are unsure what the question is about, click on “Learn More.”

If you are not complete for or against, then click on “Other stances” to see more options.

According to your answer, which House of Representatives candidate do you side the most with?

Which Presidential candidate for the 2020 election do you side the most with? Why?

Click on “Political Parties”. Which political party do you most align with according to this survey?

Whom should I vote for? 2018 Midterm Elections

District 9 Ballot: <https://vt.ncsbe.gov/RegLkup/SampleBallot?CountyID=60&ElectionID=115&BallotStyle=G039>

1. What is a MIDTERM Election and why is it important?
2. What elected offices are on this ballot?
3. What ISSUES are on this ballot? (Referenda and Bonds)
4. What is a REFERENDUM?
5. What is a BOND?
6. Define INCUMBENT

Research the candidates: Complete the Chart using the following websites as STARTING POINTS. On each candidate's homepage, you can usually find their stances on issues in an "About" or "Issues" page.

US House of Representatives District 9

Mark Harris- <https://www.markharrisforcongress.com>

Dan McCready- <https://www.danmccready.com/>

Jeff Scott- <http://lpmeck.org/jeff-scott/>

NC State Senate District 39

Chad Stachowicz- <http://www.chadfornc.com/>

Dan Bishop- <https://www.votedanbishop.com/>

NC House of Representatives District 104

Brandon Lofton- <https://www.loftonfornc.com/>

Andy Dulin- <https://www.voteandydulin.com/>

District Attorney District 37

Spencer Merriweather- <https://merriweatherforda.com/>

Board of County Commissioners AT LARGE (You may choose THREE)

Trevor M. Fuller- <https://tmfuller1.wixsite.com/mysite-1>

Ella Scarborough-

Jeremy Brasch-

Patricia (Pat) Cotham- <http://patcotham.org/>

Board of County Commissioners District 5

Susan B. Harden- <https://www.susanbharden.com/>

Matthew Ridenhour- <http://voteridenhour.com/>

Clerk of Superior Court

Elisa Chinn Gary- <https://elisachinngary.com/>

Sheriff

Garry L. McFadden- <https://www.mcfadden4sheriff.com/>

NC Supreme Court Associate Justice Seat 1

Barbara Jackson- <https://www.justicejackson.com/>

Christopher (Chris) Anglin- <https://anglin4justice.com/>

Anita Earls- <https://earls4justice.com/>

NC Court of Appeals Judge Seat 1

Andrew T. Heath- <https://heathforjustice.com/about/>

John S. Arrowood- <http://keepjudgearrowood.org/>

NC Court of Appeals Judge Seat 2

Jefferson G. Griffin- <https://www.jeffersongriffin.com/>

Tobias (Toby) Hampson- <https://tobyhampsonforjudge.com/>

Sandra Alice Ray- <https://www.sandraaliceray.com/>

NC Court of Appeals Judge Seat 3

Chuck Kitchen-<https://www.kitchenforcourtofappeals.com/home.html>

Michael Monaco, Sr. - <http://www.nc-monaco-2018.com/>

Allegra Katherine Collins- <https://www.allegracollins.com/>

NC District Court Judge District 26B Seat 1

Matt Osman- <https://judgemattosman.com/about/>

Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor (You may vote for TWO)

This website has info for all candidates:

<https://onyourballot.vote411.org/m/candidate-detail.do?id=17927802>

Tigress Sydney Acute McDaniel

David Michael Rice

Duncan David St Clair III

Lilly Taylor

Barbara Bleiweis

Nancy Carte

You should vote for...

Position	Name and Party (and website...)	THEIR Stance on Issues that you think are important	Why would YOU vote for them?
US House of Representative District 9			
NC State Senate District 39			
NC House of Representatives District 104			
District Attorney District 37			
Board of County Commissioners AT LARGE			
Board of County Commissioners AT LARGE			
Board of County Commissioners AT LARGE			

Board of County Commissioners District 5			
Clerk of Superior Court			
Sheriff			
NC Supreme Court Associate Justice Seat 1			
NC Court of Appeals Judge Seat 1			
NC Court of Appeals Judge Seat 2			
NC Court of Appeals Judge Seat 3			
NC District Court Judge District 26B Seat 1			
Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor			
Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor			

	Which POLITICAL PARTY would be FOR this amendment? WHY do they support it?	Find an INTEREST group that SUPPORTS this amendment. Give the name, website, and explain WHY they support.	Find an INTEREST group that is AGAINST this amendment. Give the name, website, and explain WHY they DON'T support it.
NC Constitutional Amendment 1			
NC Constitutional Amendment 2			
NC Constitutional Amendment 3			
NC Constitutional Amendment 4			
NC Constitutional Amendment 5			
NC Constitutional Amendment 6			

	Which POLITICAL PARTY would be FOR this Bond? WHY do they support it?	Find an INTEREST group that SUPPORTS this BOND. Give the name, website, and explain WHY they support.	Find an INTEREST group that is AGAINST this BOND. Give the name, website, and explain WHY they DON'T support it.
City of Charlotte Transportation Bonds			
City of Charlotte Housing Bonds			
City of Charlotte Neighborhood Improvements Bond			

Final Ballot Thoughts:

Did your choices align with your political ideology? How or how not?

How do you think your choices would positively impact the community/society?



What is going on in North Carolina?

It is important for citizens to understand what is happening in their society in order to be active civic participants. To understand the full extent of issues, research and questioning must be done. In this project, students will research, question, and inform others of their findings.

Students will be required to research and summarize an issue or person involved with the state or local government. They will showcase their information in a culminating project that informs the public via the creation of a podcast episode. Students will be able to showcase research skills, analytical questioning via interviews, and summarization and informing techniques via their podcast. They will utilize 21st Century Skills that include researching, interviewing, and technology creation.

Part 1. Background Research

20% - RESEARCH WILL BE COMPLETED AS A GROUP

In groups of three, you will research either an issue or a person who is involved in either North Carolina or Charlotte government. Each group will need to get their issue/person approved. To do this, we need a little bit of background information....

Choose a member of the government or an issue that is being pursued in North Carolina government. This could be a law that is proposed, an aspect of the budget, a member of the NC House of Representatives, NC Senate, Governor's office, or a judge. Do some research to learn and be able to explain the following:

For a government employee:

- Who are they? Personal History
- What is their role in government?
- What branch of government are they in?
- How did they get into office?
- When was their election? Details of their campaign?
- Who do they represent?
- Were they appointed? Who appointed them and why?
- What were their original stances on issues?
- What are their current stances on issues?
- What issues do they support?
- What actions in government have they taken in the past?
- What actions are they taking in government currently?

-Are they running for re-election?

For a specific issue:

- What is the issue?
- How was the issue brought up?
- When was the issue brought up?
- Who brought the issue up?
- Is this a partisan issue? If so, what are the viewpoints of each party?
- What is popular opinion on this issue? Include at least two different viewpoints.
- What has caused this issue to be brought up?
- What actions have been taken on this issue?
- What have been proposed solutions for this issue within government?
- What type of impacts could this issue have?
- Who are people that are involved in this issue that could give you more information?

Take detailed notes and record sources you used!

Research Response:

Complete a 3-page summary of information you found. This should include an introduction to the person or issue, a summary of the history of the issue or person in politics, stances on issues, and initial thoughts of actions being taken on the issue or actions the official has taken in government. This can be completed as a group, but all members' opinions and thoughts should be included.

Part 2. Interview to learn more

20%- QUESTIONS AND INTERVIEW COMPLETED AS A GROUP

Complete an interview with either your employee of choice or someone who is involved with the issue you have focused on. Interview aspect will include contact information, questions and interview transcript.

A. Create a list of questions.

The interview should include:

- Questions about the person- their history, their job, their responsibilities, and their viewpoints.
- Questions about current issues- person's stance on issues, actions they have taken, actions they are going to take.
- Questions about involvement in politics- what do they do? How does their job/role impact society? What do they wish to do in government in the future?

Questions should be open ended and students should engage with interviewee. While interviewing, make sure to record (and tell them you wish to record the session) so you can write a transcript following.

B. Set up the interview.

Find contact information. Reach out in multiple ways: phone, email, and even written correspondence. Try to set up an in person interview, but phone interviews will be accepted. Make sure you inform the person you wish to interview that the goal of the conversation is to be informative and it will be recorded so that a transcript can be created. You may also want to include topics that you wish to discuss.

C. The interview.

- On the day of the interview, make sure all members are present in some form!
- Have questions that each member will ask. Predict any follow up questions and have them prepared.
- Have a recording device as well as a member taking notes. Remind your interviewee that the interview will be recorded.
- If you are meeting your representative in person or via Skype, remember to DRESS and ACT PROFESSIONALLY. Address the representative politely (ma'am/sir, please, thank you, excuse me, etc.) Remember to thank you interviewee for their time.

Part 3. Reflect

20% - EACH GROUP MEMBER WILL COMPLETE THEIR OWN REFLECTION

After you complete the interview, write a reflection on your experience and what you have learned.

The reflection should include:

- A research based introduction to the person or issue
- A reflection of the interview of person or a person involved with the issue
- A personal reflection:
- On the issue and how it is progressing through government as well as predictions of its outcome.
- On the person, how and what they have done so far in government and what you think they will focus on or should focus on in the future.
- You should conclude with connections to our class and how you see them in action (Think: Federalism, Separation of Powers, roles of the government, history of NC and the creation of government, civic duties and responsibilities, social contract, etc.).

Part 4. Create a Podcast Episode

The first step of this final aspect is to compile all of your research.

What did you find out? What is most interesting to you? What do you want to tell people about? Discuss with your group members to determine the theme of your episode.

Next, write a script!

All members need to have a part. The script needs to be at least 3 pages, since you are going to be talking for at least 15 minutes. It should also be conversational! You don't want to just lecture at your audience, but you are here to inform them! Focus on your research and explain what you have learned as well as why it is important for the audience to know. Lastly, make sure you thank your interviewee for their time in the episode! It's always nice to be appreciated, but you will also be citing your informational source!

Lastly, Record!

For this step, you will need a computer with a microphone and a quiet space. As you record, speak loudly and clearly, but keep it comfortable! Jokes and laughing is okay, but keep it appropriate and on topic! If you mess up, just stop the recording and start again at the same place. We will edit later!

Extra extra: We also need to find a podcast creator software that we want to use. Do some research to find one that you think might be best for our project. I've done some research, but I'm going to need your help! We may also need to figure out how to best edit each episode! Again, I'm not too tech savvy (I can't even Snapchat correctly y'all, but I can Insta like no one's business!) so your help is greatly appreciated! Editing and finalizing the episodes is going to be the biggest hurdle for us as a class but we will do it!!

What is happening in the GA? Interview and Podcast Rubric

Category	4	3	2	1	0
Background Research 30%	Research is informed and sourced properly. Research gives guidance towards topics to interview with. Sources are varied (<5)	Research is mostly informed and sourced properly. Sources are varied (<5)	Research is general but includes a variety of information. Sources are limited (<4)	Research was vague and limited. Sources were also limited (<2)	Research was not completed or was inaccurate/lacked sources.
Interview Questions and Transcript 30%	Questions are detailed, varied and informed. Interview transcript/attempts (>10) is complete.	Questions provided are detailed, informed, or varied but limited. Interview attempt (>6)/transcript is provided	Questions provided are limited and fewer than 3 attempts at an interview were made.	Questions provided are limited but no attempt at interview.	No attempt at interview and no questions presented.
Podcast 40%	Podcast is informative, accurate, includes in depth research and includes participation from all members	Podcast is mostly informative but some generalizations and unsourced statements are included. Most of the podcast is research based and all members participate.	Podcast is somewhat informative but many generalizations and unsourced statements are included. Some of the podcast is research based and all members participate.	Podcast is mostly generalization and unsourced statements are included. Very little of the podcast is research based and not all members participate.	No podcast is given or podcast is uninformed and unfounded in any research.

Total Possible Points: 12/12 = 100%

Your Score =

Appendix 3: Student and Teacher Resources

Student Resources

"America's Most Popular Voting Guide for Elections, Political Issues, Candidates, and Poll Data." ISideWith. Accessed September 18, 2018. <https://www.isidewith.com/>.

-This website provides a quiz that asks a variety of questions about stances in regards to political issues. The results show alignments with different politicians or candidates, including what issues the quiz taker aligns with that person on.

"North Carolina State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement." NCSBE. Accessed September 18, 2018. <https://www.ncsbe.gov/>.

-This website provides information for voter resources, candidate resources, and voter guides. It also lists the rules and laws passed by the Board of Elections in regards to local and state elections. It is an excellent starting resource to find information regarding ballots and candidates.

"North Carolina General Assembly." North Carolina General Assembly. Accessed September 18, 2018. <https://www.ncleg.net/>.

-This website provides information for representatives in the North Carolina General Assembly as well as current legislation under debate. It is an excellent resource for students looking to find people and documents that are in the General Assembly, as well as find information about committees and representation within the legislative branch.

Rubenstein, Seth. "Political Party Quiz." Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. August 26, 2016. Accessed December 01, 2018. <http://www.people-press.org/quiz/political-party-quiz/>.

-This quiz is offered by the Pew Research Center. The Pew Research Center provides information regarding U.S. Politics and Policy. This quiz will determine which political party a student aligns with through a series of questions. It also allows the test taker to compare their results with others who are in their age, gender, party, race, and religious groups.

"The Political Compass Test." The Political Compass. April 21, 2018. Accessed September 15, 2018. <https://www.politicalcompass.org/test>.

-This website provides a Political Compass test that students can take to find their political spectrum alignment. The test has statements regarding a variety of government and societal issues and has the taker select their preferred choice. The results will show where the taker falls on the social and economic spectrum and alignments with other political leaders throughout the world.

Teacher Resources

"Civil Rights Movement." History.com. Accessed August 28, 2018.

<https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/civil-rights-movement>.

-This is a great website that gives a detailed description in chronological order of causes and events of the Civil Rights Movement, including the Woolworth's sit ins, a local NC topic.

"Bill of Rights Institute." Bill of Rights Institute. Accessed November 20, 2018.

<https://billofrightsinstitute.org/>.

-This website is helpful in providing primary sources and background information for United States government documents and the organization of government positions.

"Create an Authentic Civic Experience for Your Students!" First Vote NC. 2018. Accessed September 15, 2018. <https://www.firstvotenc.org/>.

-This website gives access to a simulated election and the detailed results for students to analyze after the end of the election. It provides lesson plans separate from the ones found in this curriculum unit to prepare students for upcoming elections.

"Generation Nation: Developing a New Generation of Civic Leaders." Generation Nation. Accessed September 15, 2018. <http://generationnation.org/>.

-Generation Nation provides many activities to prepare students for civic participation. Generation Nation also sponsors a youth council, giving students a chance to speak up with the CMS School Board and other government officials.

"Voter Turnout". 2018. North Carolina State Board of Elections & Ethics Enforcement.

<https://www.ncsbe.gov/voter-turnout>.

-This website provides an update for current voter turnout data since 1972. It would be helpful to use in a class discussion or data analysis of voter turnout data over the years.

Ratcliffe, Donald. "The Right to Vote and the Rise of Democracy, 1787—1828." Journal of the Early Republic 33, no. 2 (2013): 219-54. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24768843>.

-This was a very detailed description of the history of voting rights in the United States, with interesting insights into the change of voting rights prior to the Reconstruction period. It would be helpful to read for background information prior to direct instruction.

"Rock the Vote." Rock the Vote. Accessed August 30, 2018. <https://www.rockthevote.org/>.

-Rock the Vote is a helpful website to get information regarding voter registration information and local events that you can suggest to students. It is helpful to have students research voting rights using their resources provided.

"Shelby County v. Holder." Oyez. Accessed August 28, 2018. <https://www.oyez.org/cases/2012/12-96>

-Oyez.org offers detailed analysis of Supreme Court cases. It is helpful for background research as well as a resource for student research assignments.

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"America's Most Popular Voting Guide for Elections, Political Issues, Candidates, and Poll Data." ISideWith. Accessed September 18, 2018. <https://www.isidewith.com/>.

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"Background, Facts and History." Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Accessed November 20, 2018. <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/mediaroom/aboutus/Pages/default.aspx>.

"Bill of Rights Institute." Bill of Rights Institute. Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/>.

"Non-Citizen Registration and Voting." City and County of San Francisco: Department of Elections. Accessed November 20, 2018. <https://sfelections.sfgov.org/non-citizen-registration-and-voting>.

"Civil Rights Movement." History.com. Accessed August 28, 2018. <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/civil-rights-movement>.

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"North Carolina State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement." NCSBE. Accessed September 18, 2018. <https://www.ncsbe.gov/>.

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Ratcliffe, Donald. "The Right to Vote and the Rise of Democracy, 1787—1828." *Journal of the Early Republic* 33, no. 2 (2013): 219-54. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24768843>.

"Rock the Vote." Rock the Vote. Accessed August 30, 2018. <https://www.rockthevote.org/>.

U.S. Constitution, amend. XV, sec. 1.

U.S. Constitution, amend. XIX.

U.S. Constitution, amend. XXIV, sec. 1.

U.S. Constitution, amend. XXVI, sec. 1.

"Voter Turnout". 2018. North Carolina State Board of Elections & Ethics Enforcement.
<https://www.ncsbe.gov/voter-turnout>.