



KNOW THE VOTE

(Time varies)

OBJECTIVE

Students experience voter apathy and ignorance.

MATERIALS

Materials for signs; materials for a ballot box; *Ballots* handout; clipboard; lined paper

GET READY

- ✓ Set up your classroom for a vote, but do not announce it to the class. Create a sign that says you are voting that day on (something that the students will care about). The sign should also say, "Place your ballot in the ballot box by the end of the day." The sign should list several options to choose from to answer the ballot question. Place the sign somewhere visible in the room.
- ✓ Make copies of the *Ballots* handout and cut enough ballots for each student in your class to cast one vote.
- ✓ Place a ballot box and the ballots somewhere in the room that is visible but not too prominent.
- ✓ Next to the ballot box leave a clipboard with lined paper. Label the paper "Voter Registration."
- ✓ For more information, see "Voter Apathy" in the Appendix.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Come up with something for your class to vote on, but do not make any announcements to the class regarding the vote. Set up the classroom as described above and see if the students can figure out the voting process. Note: if students ask questions of you individually (such as where the ballot box is), answer them, but do not share any information with the class as a whole.

- ✓ At the end of the day, point out the sign that announced the vote you held that day. Then point out the ballot box and ballots as well as the registration clipboard. Ask the class, *Who noticed these things in the classroom? What did you do? Did you vote? Did you tell other people to vote?*
- ✓ Check the voter registration sheet and the ballot box. Count the ballots and announce the outcome of the vote. Make it clear that you had to register on the sheet before you could vote and therefore only those people who registered had their votes count.
- ✓ There will be a mix of reactions in the classroom from those that were not aware of the vote, those that knew of a vote but did not know how to cast their vote, those that voted but did not register, and those that registered and voted. In the possibility that no one correctly registered and voted, you should make sure you registered and voted. Point out that because you both registered and voted you got to make the decision for the class without their input.
- ✓ Carry out the decision of the vote.
- ✓ Tell the class that there will be a similar voting opportunity the next day. At the end of the day, change the sign to reflect a new question. See how many more people register and vote the next day and make a note of it to the class.



KNOW THE VOTE (continued)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *How did you feel after the first day of voting?*
- ★ *How was this experience for you on the second day of voting?*
- ★ *If you did not vote the first day, why didn't you? (Didn't care...weren't sure what to do...)*
- ★ *If you voted the second day but not the first, what changed?*
- ★ *Why do you think 18-24-year-olds do not vote as much as other age groups in our country?*
- ★ *In general, why do you think so many people do not vote in our country? Is there anything we can do to change this?*
- ★ *How did you feel when you got to vote in this activity?*
- ★ *Did you know that there have been groups of people in our country who have not had the right to vote?*
- ★ *How do you think they felt? Why do you think they were left out of the process?*
- ★ *Can everyone in our country vote? Can everyone in the world vote?*



BALLOTS

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|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Ballot</p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Choice: _____</p> |