



WHAT IS A MID-TERM ELECTION?

(One 50-minute class)

OBJECTIVE(S)

Students learn the purpose of a mid-term election, differences between mid-term elections and presidential year elections, and their state's role in the next mid-term election.

MATERIALS

"What is a Mid-Term Election?" informational handout	Computer/Internet Access
"Mid-Term Elections in My State" worksheet	

GET READY

- ✓ Secure access to computers or computer lab with internet access.
- ✓ Make enough copies of the "What is a Mid-Term Election?" and "Mid-Term Elections in My State" sheets for each student.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Help students understand the purpose of a mid-term election by going through the "What is a Mid-Term Election?" informational handout.
- ✓ Have students go online to conduct a web quest to discover the offices in their state up for election using the "Mid-Term Elections in My State" worksheet. This worksheet is

designed to correspond to the Election Projection web site, but students should be able to use either website listed in "Additional Resources" to fill it out.

- ✓ Once all students have finished the web quest, discuss the answers as a class. It may also be helpful to bring additional resources such as photos and campaign materials to provide students more information about the candidates running in your state.
- ✓ Students could visit campaign offices or mail letters to request additional information about the candidates.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Why do you think it is important to have overlapping election terms instead of conducting all elections in the same year?*
- ★ *Why do you think fewer people vote during mid-term elections? What can we do to help change that?*
- ★ *Why do you think officials are elected for different term lengths?*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ★ *Election Projection web site:*
<http://www.electionprojection.com/> (scroll to the bottom of the screen and click on the name of your state)
- ★ *US Elections web site:*
<http://www.uselections.com/uselections/> (scroll to the bottom and click on your state on the U.S. map)



WHAT IS A MID-TERM ELECTION? continued

What is a Mid-Term Election?

Mid-term elections are elections that are held half-way through a President's four year term. This election does not include voting for the Presidency, but does include elections for many members of Congress, the state legislatures, and many state governors.

The members of the House of Representatives are elected for two-year terms. Because of this, each candidate for representative is on the ballot during every presidential-year election and mid-term election.

Senators from each state are elected to six-year terms. Approximately one-third of senate seats are listed on the ballot during each mid-term election.

Most governors are elected for four-year terms; and, therefore, approximately half of state governors are up for re-election during mid-term elections.

Most *incumbents*, or senators and representatives who already serve in Congress, are re-elected to their position. In fact, nearly 90% of Congressmen who run for re-election keep their seat. Because of this, the country often focuses its attention on *open-seat races*, or elections in which the current senator, representative, or governor is not seeking re-election. In an open-seat U.S. Senate race, there is no incumbent so the race is much more competitive.

Mid-term elections are especially important because they often determine how much power the president will have for the rest of his term. Mid-term elections decide what political party will have the majority in the House and Senate. If the political party majority in Congress is different from the political party of the president, each may have a harder time getting bills or laws to pass. If the majority political party in Congress is the same as the president, it may be easier for both parties to pass laws and regulations.



WHAT IS A MID-TERM ELECTION? continued

Mid-Term Elections in My State

State: _____

Date of Primary Elections: _____

Election Day: _____

Is there an open seat in the U.S Senate race? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, whose seat is opening? _____

Is there an open seat in the U.S House of Representative race? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, whose seat is opening? _____

Is there an open seat in the Governor's race? _____ Yes _____ No

What political party does your current Governor belong to?

_____ Democrat _____ Independent _____ Republican
_____ Other: _____

How many U.S. House of Representatives in your state belong to each political party?

_____ Democrats # _____ Independents # _____ Republicans
_____ Other: _____

How many U.S. Senators in your state belong to each political party?

_____ Democrats # _____ Independents # _____ Republicans
_____ Other: _____



WHAT IS A MID-TERM ELECTION?

continued

What is the name of state's:

Governor? _____

Lt. Governor? _____

U.S. Senior Senator? _____

Junior Senator? _____

How many House Districts does your state have? _____

U.S. House District Members? (Place commas between each name.)
