



ELECTION ACCOUNTABILITY

(Time varies)

OBJECTIVE

Students gather and track information that pertains to campaign promises.

MATERIALS

No materials are necessary for this activity.

GET READY

- ✓ Make sure that all your students have access to newspapers and news magazines.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Remind your students that being an active citizen does not begin and end with voting. Mention that it is also very important to hold our elected officials accountable for the promises they make well after they have been elected.
- ✓ Tell your class that they will be documenting the outcomes of elections so that they can reexamine campaign promises at a later date.
- ✓ Assign your students to collect newspaper articles and magazine clippings that detail the promises made by newly elected/re-elected officials.
- ✓ Using the articles and clippings they gathered, have your students make a chart that lists the elected officials and the promises that got them elected. Over the course of the school year, have your students occasionally revisit this chart. If the official has met the promise he or she made, then instruct your student to cross that promise off.

- ✓ By the end of the school year, students should examine their “promise” chart one more time. Students should evaluate how well the officials have kept their promises.
- ✓ Have a class discussion over the accomplishments and failures of the various officials.
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- ✓ Assign your students to either write to an official that has kept his/her promises or one that has not. Students can express their gratitude to the official for contributing to the community or they can challenge him/her to keep his/her promises.
- ✓ Have students volunteer to share their letters and any responses they get.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Do you think campaign promises are about getting elected or are they genuine?*
- ★ *What candidate(s) from the past election do you think made sincere campaign promises? What gave you this impression? How has this official been in keeping his/her promises?*
- ★ *Why might it be difficult to keep campaign promises?*
- ★ *What courses of action do we have if a candidate has not kept his/her promises?*