

# Tennessee Secretary of State

## *Civics Lesson Plans*

### **Voting**

**Author:** Rebecca Marino, Arnold Memorial School

**Grade Level:** K-2<sup>nd</sup> grade

**Dated Created:** May 2016 (updated June 2018)

For additional lesson plans, visit [sos.tn.gov/civics/lessonplans](https://sos.tn.gov/civics/lessonplans).



### **Introduction:**

This is the third lesson in a civics unit for students grades K-2. This lesson introduces voting and addresses topics such as who can vote, why citizens should vote and how voting works.

### **Guiding Questions:**

- Who can vote?
- Why should a citizen vote?
- How does the voting process work?

**Learning Objectives:** In the course of the lesson, students will...

- Recognize that voting is a responsibility of a citizen.
- Understand voting is a way of making decisions.
- Know qualifications of voters.
- Understand how the voting process works.

### **Curriculum Standards:**

**K.22** (Social Studies) Demonstrate good citizenship and identify characteristics of citizens of the United States as described in the Constitution.

**1.30** (Social Studies) Summarize that voting is a way of making choices and decisions.

*Page 1 of 3*

**2.29** (Social Studies) Identify the rights and responsibilities of citizens of the United States.

**2.30** (Social Studies) Examine the amendments written to protect all citizens' right to vote.

### **Materials Needed:**

- Mock registration form (see attached)
- Mock classroom ballot (see attached)

### **Background:**

Democracy requires citizens to participate in their government, beginning with the duty to vote. Our national elections are always held the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November. In order to be able to vote, all states require that people need to be at least 18 years old and be U.S. citizens. Each state may have other specifications about voter registration deadlines and even the way people cast their ballot. For example, some states have all mail-in ballots and others vote on machines.

For Tennessee specific voting information, visit [GoVoteTN.com](http://GoVoteTN.com) or our election pages: [sos.tn.gov/elections](http://sos.tn.gov/elections). For other states, you can visit [CanIVote.org](http://CanIVote.org) to learn about their voting process.

### **Lesson Activities:**

1. Review responsibilities of a citizen and remind student that voting is both a right and a responsibility.
2. Ask students: why is it important to vote? Explain that voting is a way of making a decision and letting your opinion be known. Talk about how decisions are made in their family and in the classroom. Have they ever voted for which movie to watch or what to eat for dinner? Are there decisions they have voted on in the classroom?
3. Talk about qualifications a person must meet to vote. Explain that not everyone can vote (for example they must be a citizen of the United States, 18+ years old, etc.).
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> grade: Review yesterday's lesson and U.S. Constitution. Explain that when the Constitution was first written only white male property owners could vote, but over time amendments were added to the document. Amendments are changes/additions. Explain that the 15<sup>th</sup> amendment gave African American men the right to vote and the 20<sup>th</sup> amendment gave women the right to vote.
4. Explain that in order to vote in an election people must register to vote ahead of time (relate to signing up for lessons, sports teams, etc. which may be familiar). Tell students that they will be voting today, but first they must register. Give each

*Page 2 of 3*

student a copy of the registration form and have them fill out. This could also be used for students voting in the school student mock election for presidential candidates.

5. After registration forms are completed, tell students that they will be voting on an issue. Explain that people can vote for leaders or an issue in an election. (Choose an issue that is relevant to students, such as a game they will be playing or an activity for centers/recess.)
6. Discuss the “issue” and allow students to try to convince others to vote one way or the other.
7. Show students the ballot and explain it.
8. Have students bring you their registration forms. After they hand it to you and are “registered,” give the student a ballot for your class. Students will vote and then place their ballot in a designated ballot box. Remind them not to discuss their vote and to fold their ballot in half (voting is private and no one has to know how you voted).
9. After all student have voted, count/tally ballots as a class. You could also designate official “counters” to act as election officials and count the ballots. Discuss the results and why it is important the voting is done secretly.
10. Connect this voting process to the school student mock election that will be happening soon.

### **Assessment:**

Have kindergarten students turn to a partner and explain the voting process. Older students may write a short paragraph explaining the voting process and who can vote.

### **Extension Options & Resources:**

Book: *Vote!* by Eileen Christelow

Using a campaign for mayor as an example, Christelow offers some background history on voting rights; explains the voting process; and answers questions about registration, volunteering, fund-raising, and recounting ballots. With a Lexile level of 420, this books is appropriate for grades 1-4. (ISBN: 978-0547059730)

Activity: Have students write a letter to their parents/guardians asking them to vote and explaining why voting is important. Younger students can draw a picture with a sentence transcribed by the teacher.

# Registration Forms

Name

---

Grade

---

Teacher

---



Name

---

Grade

---

Teacher

---



# Ballot

\_\_\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_\_\_ NO



# Ballot

\_\_\_\_\_ YES

\_\_\_\_\_ NO

