

**Lesson Topic: Rock the Vote**

**Supplies Needed:**

* Envelopes with voting steps
* Handout with further details of the voting steps
* Large sheets of voting slips

**Concepts and/or Learning Objectives:**

* Registering to Vote, Where & How?
* Choosing the Right Candidate – What Media Sources & Debates should you use?

**Introduction:**

Franklin D Roosevelt once said, “Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves and the only way they do this is by not voting.” Voting is our responsibility and civic duty as an American citizen. By voting, we show our country, our family, our friends that we are proud to be American. We can make a difference in our community and our country by educating ourselves on candidates and the issues, then heading to the polls to vote. Today we are going to look at what you need to do - first register to vote and then learn the tools to educate ourselves to make our vote count.

**Activity:**

You have the right to vote in Indiana if:

* You are both a U.S. citizen and a resident of Indiana; *and*
* You will be at least 18 years of age on or before the next General or Municipal Election; *and*
* You are not currently in prison after being convicted of a crime; *and*
* You have lived in the precinct where you vote for at least 30 days prior to the election; *and*
* You are registered to vote.

Investigate: What are the Steps to Rocking the Vote? (15 minutes)

1. Begin with breaking into small groups. Pass out envelope with the Matching Voting Steps activity. Have each group read the sheets and match together.
2. Invite groups to share answers to each step. Use 6 big wall sticky notes with “Step 1, Step 2…” listed on each page. Have each group tape which of the voting steps they think is Step 1 on the Step 1 page. Repeat for each of the six steps. Reveal the suggested voting step order and give more details on each step.
3. When all steps have been shared, ask if anyone would change the suggested order and why they would make that change.

Student Preparation: Researching the Candidates and Issues (15 minutes)

1. We’ve all heard the phrase “fake news” when discussing political issues. So, how do we decide what sources will give us facts? There are ways to search for reliable information.
2. Challenge your teens to talk in groups of three or four and think of reliable verse unreliable sources they may use when researching candidates. Have teens share those sources and why they are reliable or unreliable.
3. Share local and national ideas with the teens that may help them get the right information the first time they look for it.
   1. If you are researching a local candidate, the best way to get the right information would be to personally contact him/her. Most candidates enjoy speaking about their platform. A great option may be to host a candidate meet and greet at your home with a group of friends. Invite your friends to bring important questions they have for the candidate.
   2. Local newspapers are a great source of information. Many papers run Q & A sessions or will cover debates in their paper.
   3. When researching, use nonpartisan groups like League of Women Voters (Vote411), BallotReady, FactCheck, and Ballotpedia.
   4. Encourage teens to stay away from editorial and opinion pieces that may be in newspapers, magazines, or on social media.
   5. Teens should also be very careful when looking at an article located on any social media site. You must research the article to see if it is factual or not.

Challenge: You’re still too Young to Vote, taking Action before you can Vote (15 minutes)

1. Discuss Current Events. Invite teens to share ideas they could implement that would help them learn more about current events that are happening in their community and their world.
   1. Encourage them to watch local and national news broadcasts and read newspapers.
   2. Warn teens about double checking their sources to be sure they are getting unbiased views of issues
2. Host a Viewing Party. A great way to engage different age groups and backgrounds is to host a viewing party of a debate. Research questions to ask after the debate is over and be sure to lay the rules out so everyone’s ideas are respected.
3. Page at the Statehouse. The Indiana House of Representatives and the Indiana Senate both have Page Programs. A student is allowed one excused day from school to page in Indianapolis. Pages will tour the Statehouse, observe a legislative session, and meet and assist senators and representatives. More information can be found online. <https://www.indianasenaterepublicans.com/page-program> <https://indianahousedemocrats.org/student-opportunities/page-program> <https://www.indianahouserepublicans.com/page-program/> <https://www.indianasenatedemocrats.org/opportunities/pages/>

**Discussion Points/Reflection Questions:**

While voting itself is a pretty simple process, making an informed decision can take a bit of investigating and research. It is all worth it in the end to make a well-informed vote, because every vote counts. Your Vote is Your Voice…Be Heard!

**Sources:**

* Rock the Vote
* Accredited schooling online
* Thebestcolleges.org
* In.gov

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