

Voting in Your Classroom

Duration: 6 days (start on a Friday) 60-80 min periods

Grade Level: 3-5

Objectives:

- Students will Express an understanding of how civic participation affects policy by applying the rights and responsibilities of a citizen.
- Students will Give examples of issues faced by the state of Colorado and develop possible solutions.
- Students will discuss how various individuals and groups influence the way an issue affecting the state is viewed and resolved.

Essential Questions:

1. How can government answer questions about issues in a state in various ways?
2. How do diverse opinions enrich a community?
3. How does an individual's experience and background influence perception of an issue?
4. Why is it important to research issues and engage in civil debates?

CO Standards:

SS 4.4.1: Identify, investigate, and analyze multiple perspectives on civic issues.

Preparation: Bring in an article (or link to an article) relating to an issue in Colorado presently. This will be needed on Day 1.

Day 1 (preferably a Friday so that students can have the weekend to find an article or link to a current issue in Colorado): Introduce that you will be holding a debate and an election next week. You will be coming up with policies/ laws to vote on as a class regarding current issues in Colorado. Present the issue you found and guide a discussion around why this issue is important. Have students think of a “law” to help resolve the issue, and have them try to come up with an argument for and against the current issue. Draw a T chart on the board with one side saying “For” and the other side saying “Against”. You may have to explain that “for” means yes, and “against” means no. Write the students ideas in the chart.

Day 2 Students should have brought in their issue. Divide the class evenly into groups (3-4 students/group). Have them share in their groups what issue they brought in. Have them discuss their thoughts about each issue and how each side may see it (do they agree or disagree that this is a problem? How might they solve it?). The last 15-20 minutes of class have them decide which issue in their group they want to write a law for the next day, and have each group share what they are focusing on. Preferably, you want each group to focus on a different issue.

Day 3 In groups, each member should be assigned a role: **Speaker**(this person is in charge for speaking for the group, **Note Taker** (this person should have neat writing, take notes, and write the law/policy), **Researchers** (while everyone is researching in the group this person (or 2 people) should be making sure they are finding both sides of the argument). Have the groups research their issue to come up with a law or policy to solve their issue. They should write it in a way that will appeal to everybody and build a good argument for their law/policy. Let them know that tomorrow they will be “arguing” their case and explain their law to resolve their issue. Tomorrow is the “debate”.

Day 4 Debate day! Explain to students that a debate is a process that involves formal discussion on a particular topic. In a debate, opposing arguments are put forward to argue for opposing viewpoints. Remind them that they are to be respectful of each other. They will be putting forth their argument about why their issue is the most important to resolve, and why their law would benefit Coloradans the most. While a group is presenting, others should be thinking of counter arguments. When the group is done presenting, have students ask questions regarding their law. Tomorrow they will be able to revise/rewrite their law.

Day 5 Have students revise their law. They should take into consideration what their classmates said the previous day. Remind them that only one law can pass, and they need to try and appeal to everyone. At the end of the period, groups will turn in their law. ****You will need to type their laws into the ballot provided and print off one per student for tomorrow****

Day 6 Voting Day! Remind students that “for” is a yes, and “against” is a no. When everyone has turned in their ballot tally the votes. You can choose to display the results however you would like. Afterwards, discuss with students their opinion of the election process. Were the results what you expected? Why or why not? How would you have done things differently? How would you improve the process?

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Official Ballot

Issues

For

Against