

In November 2004, Americans will go to the polls to cast their ballots in an election that will have far-reaching consequences for the future direction of the United States. It is an important time for young people to get involved in this unfolding drama, as the election will have a direct impact on young people. Young people do not just have to be bystanders. They can get actively involved in the electoral process and beyond. This curriculum guide, developed as a collaborative effort among Chicago Public Schools, Mikva Challenge, and the Annenberg Public Policy Center – Student Voices Project, is designed to engage students in activities, conversations, and research related to the American electoral process. Each activity will help students meet state learning goals. As importantly, the activities serve as a prelude to engaging students in active service to their community at a time when participation in electoral politics is at an all-time low.

Many CPS students have earned service-learning credit by engaging in the American electoral process. Students have served as election judges, become deputy registrars to register new voters and worked on political campaigns through approved non-partisan organizations. This curriculum guide is designed to connect these important experiences with academic content. It is divided into four sections:

- ✓ Election Year Curriculum
- ✓ Internet Resources
- ✓ Service Project Ideas
- ✓ Glossary

Remember this is a curriculum guide. The teacher can determine the length of the unit. Use the resources in this guide as preparation for students participating in a service project that involves strengthening citizen involvement in the electoral process. Thanks for helping students gain a high quality service-learning experience.

Lesson 1: Voter Participation: Why Some Vote? Why Some Don't?

Goal: To understand who votes, who does not, and why?

Reading: *Young People and Voting, Voting By Age Group, and Why Are Young People Not Voting* from the Student Voices Project Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC), University of Pennsylvania

Activity: Interview Five People
Why Are Young People Not Voting
Get Out the Vote Commercials

Vocabulary: Constitution, amendment, voter registration, election, mass media, voter turnout, Get Out The Vote (GOTV)

State Goals: 14.A.1h: Evaluate the rights and responsibilities of the individuals within the family, social groups, community, or nation.
14.A.4h: Explain the influence of the Supreme Court and significant decisions on the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
14.A.3i: Analyze how public policy issues are influenced by government actions.

A. Young People and Voting

- ❖ Ask students to read the handout, *Young People and Voting*, and answer the following questions:
- ❖ Why should people vote? Who votes the most often? Who does not? Why do some groups vote more than others?

B. Why Are Young People Not Voting?

- ❖ Ask students to complete the worksheet and reading: *Why Are Young People Not Voting?*
- ❖ Activity: Have students design and role play Get Out the Vote Commercials.

C. Research Project

- ❖ Ask each student to interview five people and report back their findings the following day. They can interview family members, friends, fellow students, or teachers.
- ❖ Have the students use the *Voter Participation Research Project Survey* to conduct their interviews.

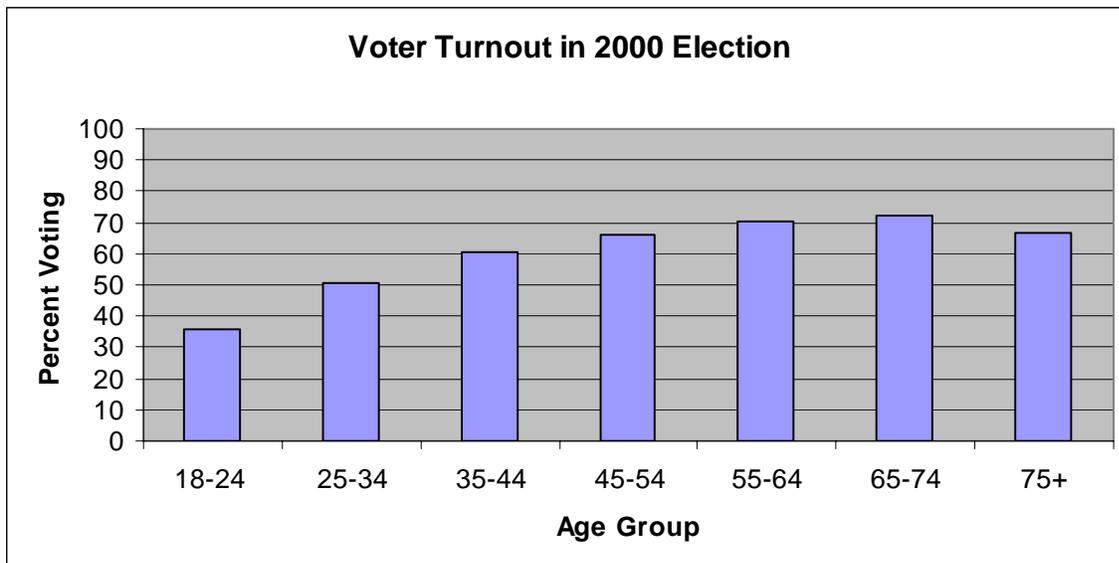
Young People and Voting

Increasingly, young people in America are choosing not to vote in elections and not to make their voices heard in politics and government. This is discouraging news since it was primarily young people who in the 1970s argued that the voting age should be changed. Before 1972, an American had to be 21 years of age or older to vote. However, in the 1970s, young people argued that the voting age should be changed from 21 to 18. If 18-year-olds are old enough to fight in Vietnam, they argued, they should be allowed to vote. In 1972, when the 26th amendment to the Constitution extended the right to vote to 18-year-olds, 50 percent of Americans aged 18–24 voted in the presidential election.

But what has happened in the years between 1972 and the present day? Look at the chart and graph below. In the 2000 presidential election, which category of registered voters had the highest percentage of actual voters? Which had the lowest percentage?

U.S. Census Report on Voting and Registration in November 2000

Age Group	% of age group registered	% of age group who voted
18-24	50.7	36.1
25-34	63.3	50.5
35-44	70.2	60.5
45-54	74.2	66.3
55-64	77.2	70.1
65-74	78.8	72.2
75+	78.0	66.5



Why Are Young People Not Voting?

What are your ideas about why these differences exist among American voters? Before reading the section below, write your own hypothesis of why you think 18-24 year-olds vote less.

Now let's look at a 1999 survey that interviewed many 18-24-year-olds across the country and asked them why they did not vote. See if you think the findings of this survey (below) hold for the young people you know. The findings included:

- Many youth are not learning about the political process from their families, with a large proportion never speaking to their parents about politics. Discussion with family members is one of the ways that young people in the past have learned about the importance of voting.
- Young people typically do not learn in school how to register and how to vote. Many do not know where to go to register to vote and feel as if they wouldn't know what to do if they walked into a voting booth.
- Young people do not feel that they have enough good information about candidates, parties, and issues. Many feel that an ill-informed vote is worse than not voting.
- Young people see few connections between the role of government and the concerns they currently face in their own lives. They want concrete reasons to vote and they want to know how voting will affect their lives.
- Negative political advertising and news coverage that focuses on scandal have encouraged young people to be cynical and distrustful of politics and politicians.
- Youth feel as if today's politicians are not talking to them or speaking to their concerns.

Now, come up with 3 strategies to get more young people to register and vote in the next election.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Get Out The Vote Commercials

5 Step Process for Creating Your TV Commercial

In small groups:

1. Discuss why young people age 18-25 do not vote. Think of 5-10 reasons.
2. Discuss what would make voting seem more interesting or important to this age group. Think of 5 to 10 reasons.
3. Now, think of this audience and create a list of three different kinds of commercials (skit, rap, play, poem, funny, serious).
4. Vote on your favorite idea for a commercial and begin to create your script.
5. Rehearse your script and make posters (if you need them).

Now, it's time to film your commercials... (role-play)

Voter Participation Research Project Survey

Interview 5 people and report back your findings to your classmates. You can interview family members, friends, fellow students, or teachers. *Remember: Interviewees must be 18 by November 2nd in order to vote and be eligible to participate in this survey.*

1. Do you plan to vote in the upcoming election on November 2nd? Yes No

2. Are you registered to vote? Yes No

If not, do you plan to register to by the October 5th deadline? Yes No

3. If you are registered, why are you planning to vote:

4. If you are not registered, why don't you plan to vote:

5. What are 3 issues that are important to you that you will consider as you determine for whom you want to vote:
1.

2.

3.

Lesson 2: Politics, Civic Action, and the Electoral Process

Goal: To understand the political process and being an active citizen

Activity: Civic Actions Continuum, Defining a Good Leader

Vocabulary: Civic engagement, democracy, lobbying, poll

State Goals: 14.B.1j: Evaluate how cultural beliefs affect citizenship.
14.C.1h: Describe responsibilities that citizens share during an election.
14.C.2i: Describe examples of individuals and groups whose volunteerism has benefited their local, state, or nation.
14.C.1j: Explain the voter registration process.
14.D.2g: Explain the benefits of highly involved citizens and society.

A. Polling and Survey Discussion of Research Results

Have students list the challenges and successes in conducting their survey from Lesson 1.

- ❖ What questions were better for respondents? Yes/no or open ended?
- ❖ Who did they interview and why?
- ❖ Any interesting stories regarding their surveys?

Break students into small groups (5 students/group).

- ❖ Make bar graphs within groups of results and discuss them.
- ❖ How many plan to vote and how many will not?
- ❖ How many are registered to vote?
- ❖ Develop a list of the reasons that people will be/will not be voting.
- ❖ Develop a list of the issues that people find important for the upcoming election.

Have each group report out to the whole class its findings and lead a discussion on the reasons to vote and not to vote.

B. Civic Action

How do people get involved in politics in this country? What does one usually think of when thinking of “civic or political” action? Is there more to do than just voting?

- ❖ Hand out the worksheet *Civic Action Continuum* and have each student complete it individually.
- ❖ Divide the class into groups of three or four.

- ❖ Ask each group to review their list and identify one or two civic actions that are the most important.
- ❖ Have students in that group be prepared to report their choice/s and give a rationale.
- ❖ You may want to ask your student groups to develop a one or two paragraph essay that explains and defends their choices.

(Optional) Collect news articles over the next week that discuss examples of participatory citizenship. Add new forms of participation to the list of participatory actions and think about how you would rate them on the continuum.

List on the board those civic actions that are deemed most important by the groups. Can your class reach consensus on one or two *most important* civic actions? Examine why people would choose or not choose to be involved in civic actions. What are the benefits? What are the potential negatives consequences?

C. Leadership

Ask your students to brainstorm a list of leadership qualities that would be important for individuals hoping to be involved in the civic actions deemed most important by your class.

Can they think of anyone who embodies these kinds of leadership qualities today? (Have the students name some important leaders throughout history? Why were they good or bad leaders?) From the student-generated list, which leadership qualities are most important?

Homework activity: Have your students research one current leader and bring into class a magazine or newspaper article about that leader. Have them explain to the class or write an essay on what makes that person a leader, why they chose them, and how they represent good leadership skills.

Part I: Considering Civic Actions

Think about each participatory civic action below. The actions are all things that various citizens do to strengthen their communities (local, state, national) as they participate in civic life in a democratic republic. For each action listed below, put a number next to it indicating whether you think it is not important, somewhat important, etc. For example, if you believe “holding elective office” is very important, you will put the number 4 next to line “A. Holding elective office.”

Not Important	Somewhat Important	Not Sure	Very Important	Most Important
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1	2	3	4	5
A.	Holding elective office ____			
B.	Registering to vote and voting ____			
C.	Working for a candidate ____			
D.	Lobbying a local lawmaker for a change on a issue in your neighborhood ____			
E.	Asking principal or LSC for a change on a school improvement project ____			
F.	Reading about or listening to your daily news ____			
G.	Obeying laws ____			
H.	Voicing your opinion in the discussion of an issue ____			
I.	Writing a letter-to-the-editor about a community, national, or international issue ____			
J.	Protesting anti-democratic actions ____			
K.	Wearing a button to support a candidate or issue ____			
L.	Being an election judge ____			
M.	Tutoring ____			
N.	Taking part in a food or clothing drive ____			
O.	Belonging to a neighborhood organization or service club ____			

Suggested application of activity:

Place masking tape in a straight line on the floor of the classroom. Simulate the above continuum with student standing along the tape at the point illustrating his/her feeling of its importance while holding a piece of paper on which the civic action is listed.

Lesson 3: Youth Issues Agenda

Goal: To be able to enumerate and explain political issues of young people

Activity: Stand and Declare, Youth Issues Agenda, Issues to Action, and Know Your Elected Officials

Vocabulary: Campaign, economy, policy agenda, politician, public opinion

State Goals: 14.D.4i: Defend a position on a political issue related to current events of national policies.
14.D.1j: Evaluate a public policy issue in terms of the costs and benefits from the perspective of different political and public interest groups.
14.A.2h: Categorize programs and services provided by governments into local, state, and federal levels.
14.B.4h: Distinguish between the powers, limitations, and responsibilities of the state government of Illinois and the federal government.

A. Stand and Declare Activity

- ❖ Post four signs around the classroom: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. (There is no “don’t know” or “undecided” because we are asking students to **decide** today.)
- ❖ Ask students to have pencil and paper ready.
- ❖ You will read the following statements and ask students to write down whether they strongly agree, agree, etc. for each question. After reading the three questions, ask students to move to the appropriate sign in the room.
- ❖ Once the groups have been compiled, give each group three minutes to discuss why they have chosen to stand where they stand.
- ❖ Now, ask each to name a reporter of their group who will represent the group’s feelings and thoughts to the whole class. (If you feel that your students are not able to handle the movement with good discipline, you can vary this part of the exercise.) You may, for example, ask them to remain in their seats and raise hands and then ask one volunteer to state why they have chosen to agree or disagree.
 - * Election campaigns usually address issues that are important to young people.
 - * One way to improve the economy is to give tax breaks to the top 2% income bracket.
 - * President Bush was justified in fighting terrorism by attacking Afghanistan after 9/11.
 - * Former Governor Ryan was correct to end the death penalty in Illinois.

After each question, ask students whether or not they have been persuaded to join another group. Ask the following questions to debrief the exercise:

- * For anyone who stood alone on a question, what was that like?
- * Did anyone change his or her mind? Is that a sign of strength or weakness in a leader?
- * Was it difficult to decide where to stand? Why?
- * How are issues framed by the media?

B. Building a Youth Issues Agenda

Ask your students to write down five community strengths and five community problems in and around the school, as well as in their neighborhoods. Have your students identify which problem is the most important and which strength is the most positive for the community.

Now put your students together in groups to share with each other their ideas on strengths and weaknesses in the community. Ask each group to identify its top one or two community strengths and problems.

As a whole class again, ask students to name the top two problems and strengths from each group. Once the list is compiled, begin to place the individual items into broad categories, i.e. environment, education, economy, etc...

Through this process, you have developed a youth issues agenda. It is a compilation of the issues that young people find to be most important.

C. From Issues to Action

Revisit the *Civic Action Continuum* from Lesson 2 with your students. Talk about the ways that citizens can get involved in politics in this country. (Optional: Have your students write a letter to a politician about an issue in their community.)

Now, have your students get back into groups and choose one of the top problems and choose a civic action strategy. What will they do to get their issues addressed? How would they use the strengths of the community to get their issue addressed? *See the Know Your Government Chart.*

After several minutes of discussion, have each group report their strategy to the whole class. Lead the class in a discussion about whether or not their issues are on the agenda in the upcoming election. If not, why not? How would a group of young people get their issues on the agenda?

12 - Election Year Service Learning

Activity: Have students find out who their elected officials are, especially local officials. What ward do they live in; who is their alderman; and where is his ward office located? Have them find their Mayor, State Representative, State Senator, Governor, Congressman, U.S. Senator, and the President as well.

Chart: Who serves you?
 Where should you go with your issues?
 Who are your elected officials?

Know Your Government:

Level	Federal	State	Local
Who Serves You	President US Senator Congressman	Governor State Senator State Representative	Mayor Alderman City Officials
Examples of Issues They Address	Foreign Policy Military Taxes Immigration	Education Social Services Jobs State Taxes	Crime Beautification Local Transportation Housing

Lesson 4: Personal Political Orientation

Goal: To understand the political spectrum

Activity: Place Yourself on the Political Spectrum

Vocabulary: Political party, issue, liberal, moderate, conservative

State Goal: 14.D.4i: Defend a position on a political issue related to current events of national policies.

14.D.1j: Evaluate a public policy issue in terms of the costs and benefits from the perspective of different political and public interest groups.

A. The Political Spectrum

Write out the political spectrum on the board:

Liberal

Moderate

Conservative

- ❖ Ask your students to brainstorm definitions to each term as a class.
- ❖ Now hand out the Political Spectrum activity page. Discuss with your students their thinking about the terms and decide on definitions for the terms on the page.
- ❖ Next, have students complete the remainder of the activity independently.
- ❖ Then have students meet in groups of three or four to discuss their questionnaires.
- ❖ Have each group report one key point of discussion.

Finally, ask students to journal or lead a discussion about the following question:
What are the factors (events, people, institutions, etc.) that have helped to develop my position on the political spectrum?

B. Issues on the Political Spectrum

- ❖ Break students up into small groups of 3-4 students.
- ❖ Now, have each group choose an issue (they may wish to use an issue they worked with in Lesson 3: Youth Issues Agenda) that is of interest to them.
- ❖ Have students refer to the political spectrum diagram that was drawn on the board.
- ❖ Once groups have decided on their issue have them discuss this issue from the perspective of liberals, moderates, and conservatives. Be sure to

appoint at least one person in each group to keep track of the perspectives on the issue.

- ❖ Have students present their issue to the entire class and the various perspectives on that issue.
- ❖ After all students present, discuss the trends that students see among the liberal, moderate, and conservative perspectives on various issues.

(Optional) Collect newspaper articles over the next week highlighting examples of different perspectives on the same issue. Have students read these articles in class and discuss them.

Political Spectrum: Where I Stand

Knowing your own beliefs about political ideology and political parties is necessary in making an informed choice about the officials you want to represent you and the actions you want them to take in government on your behalf. This activity is designed to give you the chance to reflect on what you believe and where you stand.

Step 1: Write definitions to the following terms:

Conservative:

Liberal:

Moderate:

Step 2: Define your position on the following topics by marking an X on the spectrums below.

Family

Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
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Education

Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
---------	----------	--------------

Social welfare programs

Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
---------	----------	--------------

National defense

Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
---------	----------	--------------

Economy

Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
---------	----------	--------------

Civil rights

Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
---------	----------	--------------

Overall, I would consider myself/my views to be:

Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
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Lesson 5: The Parties

Goal: To be able to identify the central philosophies of the Democratic and, Republican Parties and the role of Third Parties such as the Libertarian and Green Parties in American politics. To understand the art of lobbying and practice persuading people on a policy issue.

Activity: Persuading Power, Building a Base, Finding the Moderates in a Party

Vocabulary: Moderates, Lobbying, Third Party, Republican Party, Democratic Party, platform

State Goals: 14.D.4j: Explain the impact of a third party candidate or issue that had the effect of reforming an existing major political party.
14.D.6j: Analyze the platform of a political candidate or party.
14.D.7j: Summarize how past and present American political parties have gained or lost influence on political decision-making and voting behavior.

A. Persuading Power

- ❖ Divide your class into 5 groups. Two groups will be made up of the citizen lobbyists; the third group will be Conservative Republicans; the fourth group will be Liberal Democrats; and the fifth group will be Moderate Democrats and Moderate Republicans.
- ❖ Have all the students read Political Party Skinny and the Balance of Power in Congress paragraph.
- ❖ Have citizen lobbyist groups take one of the issues from the youth agenda and create a policy recommendation. Citizen lobbyists should prepare to lobby lawmakers on their policy recommendation. Remember that each lawmaker group must be persuaded differently on an issue based upon their ideology and interests.
- ❖ Next, have citizen lobbyists role-play persuading Democrats, Republicans and Moderates on their issue. Students should end all lobbying efforts by specifically asking for the support of the lawmakers on their recommendation.
- ❖ The class should evaluate the effectiveness of the citizen groups in adjusting their lobbying arguments to the different philosophies of the political groups. The lobbyists achieve victory if they can persuade 2 of 3 groups to support their proposed legislation.

Political Party Skinny (informal guide)

Conservative Republicans (Ronald Reagan)	Liberal Democrats (FDR)	Moderate Republicans (Nelson Rockefeller) and Moderate Democrats
<p>The Republican Party has come to dominate national politics by focusing on their core beliefs of less government, less taxes, traditional values, and a strong defense. Key Republican constituencies include religious groups, citizens angry about high taxes, business interests, and groups who are distrustful of government intervention into social problems and gun ownership. As the 2000 Presidential election showed, this party is very strong in what's called America's heartland and in Southern states.</p>	<p>The Democratic Party has traditionally aimed its attention on the 'working class' and supported unions and government programs that assist the poor and the middle class. Democrats, unlike Republicans, believe that government programs can effectively solve social problems. They are more willing to accept increased taxes if they can provide increased government services. Key constituencies are unions, people of color, pro-choice groups, gun control, and environmental advocates. This party tends to be stronger on the East and West Coasts.</p>	<p>There are fewer moderates in today's politics as America has become increasingly polarized between conservatives and liberals. However, the moderates are key because they are more unpredictable. Moderates tend to be conservative on tax and defense issues, but liberal on social issues such as abortion, social security, and the environment. The budget deficit is often a chief concern for moderates.</p>

Balance of Power in Congress

As you know, Congress is made up of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and to pass a law, both bodies must vote for proposed legislation. The President also has to sign the legislation unless the Congress can override his/her veto. Currently, the Republican Party controls Congress. Republicans hold a slight margin in the Senate and the House and the President is Republican, so any new laws have to appeal to Republican philosophy and self-interest. Moderates are the "swing votes" in Congress. As a lobbyist, you can be successful if you can get one party to support you and also a substantial number of moderates from the other party.

The citizen groups' task in the upcoming role-play will be to try to persuade two of the political groups to support a policy recommendation. Study the political philosophy of each group and develop a policy argument that appeals to each political group's beliefs. For example, a youth jobs program may appeal to a conservative or moderate if you can convince them that your policy will save the government money in the long run. Time permitting, students should switch roles so that everyone has a chance to lobby.

B. Third Parties and Creating Your Own Party

- ❖ Have students read background information on Third Parties and quick summary of Green and Libertarian Parties. Discuss why Third Parties struggle so much in American politics.
- ❖ Discuss what a Party Platform is with students and have students guess what the Republican and Democratic Party Platforms are on a variety of issues. Have students fill in the Platform Chart with their guess on party platform issues.
- ❖ Have students create their own political party and platform. Students should create an appropriate name for their political party and create a party platform of their own (i.e. The American Youth Party).

Third Party Background: ‘Third’ parties in American politics have had a tough time achieving success for a variety of reasons. Money and organization are critical to a success of a political candidate running for office, and the Democratic and Republican Parties have much larger organizations and greater resources than any other political party. Current election laws also make it difficult for other Third parties to compete due to signature requirements for running for office and/or fundraising laws that favor the two main parties. Despite these difficulties, some credit the Third party presidential candidacies of Ralph Nader (2000), Ross Perot (1992), and John Anderson (1980) for being decisive factors in who was elected President. The theory is that these candidacies took votes away from one of the parties and helped the other party win. Thus, Third parties may not win many elections but they can have a big impact on the discussion of issues and the final results of an election.

Green Party – Created by environmental groups (hence the name), this party attracted consumer advocate Ralph Nader to its ranks to run for President in 2000. “Greens” tend to be liberal to radical on most issues and strongly favor environmental protection, worker’s rights, business regulation, universal health care, and government social program’s to improve the lives of the poor.

Libertarian Party – Libertarians are even more anti-tax and anti-government interference than conservative Republicans. They believe that government by its very nature is wasteful and should not interfere or regulate the marketplace or intrude on individual liberties. A true blue Libertarian believes that government should limit itself to defense and law and order issues and leave individuals and businesses alone.

Party Issue Platform Stands

Issues	Democratic Party	Republican Party	Your Party (Give it a name)
Gun Laws	More gun control will make us safer. Hunting o.k.	Less gun control. Handguns and Hunting o.k.	
Abortion Rights	Pro-choice	Right to Life	
Health Care			
Poverty Issues			
Taxes			
War in Iraq			
Education			
Economic Growth			
College Financial Aid			
Environmental Issues			
Youth Issues (be specific)			

Optional Activity: Have students study the Republican and Democratic Party Platforms and ask them if the platforms accurately portray the views of George Bush and John Kerry (note: Party Platforms are created by the Parties' political bases and are often very orthodox in their opinions. Presidential candidates tend to emphasize more moderate views in order to win over independent swing voters.)

Service Activity: Have students create a Youth Platform in class. Students can hold a mock-Congress and propose, debate, and vote on various issues of the platform. The final platform can be sent to the media, political leaders, or a political party office (i.e. The Democratic National Committee, Republican National Committee).

Service Activity: Students can volunteer for a political candidate who appeals to them. Teachers should be careful to let students make their own decision and not bias them in any way. Please call Mikva Challenge at 312.863.6340 for help in this process. (*CPS organization approved to facilitate this activity.*)

Lesson 6: The Candidates

Goal: To understand who is running for office and where they stand on the issues

Activity: *You Be the Campaign Manager, You Run the Campaign, Getting the Message Out: Campaign Ads, Press & The Message*

Vocabulary: Campaign message, challenger, constituents, endorsement, incumbent, press release, campaign manager, stump speech

State Goal: 14.D.6j: Analyze the platform of a political candidate or party.
 14.C.4j: Analyze the political campaign commercials in terms of the tactics politicians, political parties, and political interest groups use to appeal to voters.
 14.C.6j: Evaluate the impact of propaganda on the role of the decision making within the political process.
 14.D.3i: Evaluate influences on elections.

A. Who are the 2004 Candidates?

Begin today by having the students list the candidates for the two major offices of the 2004 election season, the presidential and US Senate election. Write the candidates and their respective offices on the board.

Democratic Candidate for President

John Kerry

Republican Candidate for President

George W. Bush

Democratic Candidate for US Senate

Barack Obama

Republican Candidate for US Senate

Jack Ryan

After identifying the candidates, ask if students are able to identify where candidates stand on issues such as taxes, the environment, health care, and education.

B. What goes into running a political campaign?

Now, let the students take a turn running a campaign. Pass out the *You Are the Campaign Manager* Activity.

Students are divided into three small groups and assigned one of the three candidates: Candidate Blue, Candidate Red, and Candidate Orange.

Let the students role-play that they are running the campaign for that particular candidate. They should appoint one student in the group the role of campaign manager and one should be the candidate. Have the students design a commercial or a stump speech that convinces one of the listed swing voters to vote for their candidate. Present it to the entire class. (Note: If the groups are too big, break them up even further and have multiple groups managing the campaigns for the same candidates so that no more than 6 students are in each group.)

C. What Do Political Ads Tell Us?

Again, list the candidates on the board for the two major offices of the 2004 election season, the presidential and US Senate election. Ask the students if they have seen any campaign commercials for the candidates and if so what they were like. Discuss the important role that media plays in political campaigns. Obtain a copy of a few campaign commercials and have students watch them in class and complete the Getting the Message Out: Campaign Ads Activity in small groups or as an entire class. (Note: It may be helpful to watch the ad(s) one time then go over the activity then watch the ad again before having students discuss it.)

Optional Activity: You Run the Campaign! (Go to the end of this curriculum guide.)

You are the Campaign Manager for Candidate Blue

Candidate Blue is a 50 year-old white man who used to run a wireless phone business. He is a conservative candidate who believes in less government and that people need more religious values.

He is right-to-life on abortion, for the death penalty, and he wants local control for education. He is for vouchers and he does not favor government involvement in medical care (no prescription drug benefit for the elderly). He is also against gun control laws.

Candidate Blue believes that his honesty and lack of experience in 'sleazy' politics will appeal to voters looking for a fresh face.

Swing Voter Number 1 (the gut voter)

These kinds of voters do not like to read the paper or watch the television news. They will get the majority of information from TV and Radio commercials and vote with their gut. Swing Voter number one will choose the candidate who they think is the best leader and the friendliest.

Swing Voter Number 2 (the elderly issue voter)

These kinds of voters decide on their candidate by who will do the most for the elderly and will help them "make ends meet." They might get turned off though by a candidate who promises so much that they cannot deliver what they promise.

Swing Voter Number 3 (the contradictory voter)

These kinds of voters are a mix between conservative and liberal. They are right-to-life on abortion but for the death penalty. They are against hand gun control but for more money for education and health care. In short, they are both liberal and conservative. They end up voting for the candidate they hate the least.

Swing Voter Number 4 (the follow the leader voter)

These kinds of voters have trouble making decisions and are not very issue oriented. They tend to wait for the candidate who seems to be the strongest and they want to vote for the winner. The issues are less important than the personality.

Swing Voter Number 5 (the education voter)

These kinds of voters have kids in poor schools and they will vote for whatever candidate is the most convincing on the issue of education. They don't have any other big issues. They just want better schools for their kids.

You are the Campaign Manger for Candidate Red

Candidate Red is a fifty five year old woman who has held a statewide office for four years. She has not been in politics long but you, as the campaign manager, have risen fast in the political world. She has a winning personality and strong stands on abortion and education. She is pro-choice on abortion and for more education funding. She is for the death penalty and for more handgun control. She does not believe in the government getting involved in funding prescription drugs for seniors but she does think people need protection from abusive HMO's and insurance companies.

She thinks her winning personality and stands on education and abortion will appeal to voters.

Swing Voter Number 1 (the gut voter)

These kinds of voters do not like to read the paper or watch the television news. They will get the majority of information from TV and Radio commercials and vote with their gut. Swing Voter number one will choose the candidate who they think is the best leader and the friendliest.

Swing Voter Number 2 (the elderly issue voter)

These kinds of voters decide on their candidate by who will do the most for the elderly and will help them "make ends meet." They might get turned off, though; by a candidate who promises so much that they cannot deliver what they promise.

Swing Voter Number 3 (the contradictory voter)

These kinds of voters are a mix between conservative and liberal. They are right-to-life on abortion but for the death penalty. They are against hand gun control but for more money for education and health care. In short, they are both liberal and conservative. They end up voting for the candidate they hate the least.

Swing Voter Number 4 (the follow the leader voter)

These kinds of voters have trouble making decisions and are not very issue oriented. They tend to wait for the candidate who seems to be the strongest and they want to vote for the winner. The issues are less important than the personality.

Swing Voter Number 5 (the education voter)

These kinds of voters have kids in poor schools and they will vote for whatever candidate is the most convincing on the issue of education. They don't have any other big issues. They just want better schools for their kids.

You are the Campaign Manager for Candidate Orange

Candidate Orange is a forty-five year old Congressman who is running for Governor because he thinks he can get more done as a Governor than as a Congressman. He is well connected politically to a powerful Chicago family and he has developed a strong reputation in progressive circles for women's issues, health care, and the environment. He is strongly pro-choice on abortion and you, as the campaign manager, are for helping seniors pay their prescription drug costs. He is for the death penalty and you are for more handgun control laws. Candidate Orange's campaign is also advocating for more money for education.

Orange thinks voters will like him because he is young, energetic and will stand up for seniors and education.

Swing Voter Number 1 (the gut voter)

These kinds of voters do not like to read the paper or watch the television news. They will get the majority of information from TV and Radio commercials and vote with their gut. Swing Voter number one will choose the candidate who they think is the best leader and the friendliest.

Swing Voter Number 2 (the elderly issue voter)

These kinds of voters decide on their candidate by who will do the most for the elderly and will help them "make ends meet." They might get turned off, though; by a candidate who promises so much that they cannot deliver what they promise.

Swing Voter Number 3 (the contradictory voter)

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Swing Voter Number 5 (the education voter)

These kinds of voters have kids in poor schools and they will vote for whatever candidate is the most convincing on the issue of education. They don't have any other big issues. They just want better schools for their kids.

Getting the Message Out: Campaign Ads

Candidates use television, radio, and the Internet to take their message to the public. Candidates often spend a great amount of time and money to make television ads with the right “feel”. Candidates know that television influences how voters feel. By combining the audio and video candidates can create certain emotions with ads.

Activity: Watch and discuss campaign ads. Consider the following elements and questions when analyzing the ad...

Message... What is being said? Who is being targeted?

Voice... Does the candidate speak? In what kind of tone?

Music... What kind of music is used? How does the music influence the video? What kinds of sounds do you hear?

Feeling... How does this ad make you feel? Do you feel good or bad about the candidate? Are you more willing to vote for the candidate as a result of the ad? How do you think this ad was able to make you feel the way you did? What does the theme of the ad seem to be?

Setting... Where does the ad take place?

Props... What props are used in the background (flags, books, etc.)?

Dress... How are the people dressed—formally or casually?

Expression... What facial expressions are used (laughing, crying, grinning, etc.)?

Action... What action is taking place (what are people doing)? Is there more than one person? How does it relate to what is being said?

Other elements of the ad that stand out...

Press & The Message

Receiving positive press coverage is an extremely important part of a campaign. Not only is it helpful in persuading potential voters, but also it is essential in gaining the support of contributors and political allies. Positive press coverage shows people that the candidate has a chance of winning and is worth the investment. The campaign press secretary is the person responsible for creating positive press coverage for the candidate. In order to achieve this goal, the campaign must have a clear message.

The campaign message is your summary of what the campaign is all about—why people should vote for your candidate, the values that guide your campaign, the issues important to the campaign (no more than 3), and why your opponent should not win. It should be a brief statement and should be simple and easy to understand.

Examples:

- Mr. Smith and his family lived in this community for the past 30 years. He understands and cares about the challenges faced by families in the community. Mr. Jones has lost touch with the community.
- Many working families in this community rely on quality childcare. Mr. Jones voted against House Bill 847, which would have expanded funding for training childcare providers.

Activity: Based on television ads, radio commercials, newspaper articles, or campaign literature, what are the campaign messages for your candidate? For his/her opponent?

Candidate: _____

Message: _____

Opponent's Message: _____

Lesson 7: The Campaign Issues

Goal: To understand and evaluate campaign issues: what is being addressed and what is not by candidates, parties, and the media

Activity: *Issues Comparison Chart*

Vocabulary: Caucus, letter to the editor, platform, special interests

State Goal: 14.C.6j: Evaluate the impact of propaganda on the role of decision-making within the political process.
14.A.4i: Analyze how public policy issues are influenced by government actions.

A. Issue Research: What are the Issues?

Ask your students to brainstorm a list of campaign issues. These issues may already be addressed in the campaign or may be part of the youth issues agenda developed in Lesson 3 that are not being addressed by the candidates. Have students settle on 2-3 issues for the entire class to research.

Assign the following research to be completed in the classroom, after school, or at home, depending on computer access and availability:

- ❖ Research the background of the one or two issues identified by the class
- ❖ Choose one candidate and research his/her position on the issue(s)
- ❖ Prepare a report on the issue(s) and candidate's position on the issue(s)

Have students either hand in a report or give oral reports to the whole class or in party caucuses. For example, create groups of students who have been assigned Republican Senate candidates to research, etc.

Some students may find that their issues are not addressed directly by the candidates. Be sure to discuss this with students. Why are some of the issues most important to young people not addressed by candidates for political office? How did these issues get on the agenda? What can young people do to get these issues on the campaign policy agenda?

B. What Issues are in Focus?

Refer to the Youth Issues Agenda developed by the class in Lesson 3. Hand out the

Issues Comparison Chart Activity and have students complete it in small groups or as a class. If students complete this activity in small groups have them report back to the entire class.

Have students discuss the similarities and differences among the issues being focused on by different groups. Are there certain issues that are important to youth, candidates, and the media? Are there issues only important to youth or the candidates?

Have students discuss how the various groups convey their feelings on the issues important to them. How do the candidates communicate their issues? How does the media communicate its issues? How do young people communicate the issues important to them?

If students selected an issue that is not addressed by candidates or media (or that is not of high importance to candidates or the media), have students write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper or to an elected official that discusses why this issue is important and should be addressed and how it might be addressed or possible solutions.

Optional activity: Now have students choose ONE issue that they want to learn even more about. Have students find a newspaper article or information about the issue that they have chosen and share it with the class.

III. Service Projects

Voter Registration Drive: Students might consider conducting a voter registration drive so they are both educating eligible voters about the issues and providing an opportunity to register to vote. A voter registration drive is a fairly straightforward activity but requires good logistical planning. Things to consider:

- ❖ Be sure to find out the last day for voter registration before the upcoming election and plan your drive accordingly.
- ❖ Students might identify voters in the school and assign individual students to make sure each potential voter is registered.
- ❖ Before the registration, hand out leaflets to students and put up posters promoting the registration drive.
- ❖ Buttons and table decorations can be used to promote issue education and voting.
- ❖ Students might consider taking their registration drive to other venues as well – a political rally near City Hall, the community’s busiest shopping areas, other school functions such as sporting events or parent/teacher conferences.
- ❖ Students might also consider working with local TV stations and newspapers to create and air/publish a public service announcement (PSA) to promote voter education and registration.

Mock election: Students might also organize a mock election for their class, school, or community. Things to consider in preparation for mock election:

- ❖ Determine the issues and candidates that will go on the “mock” ballot.
- ❖ Develop the method of voting to insure the right of “secret” ballot.
- ❖ Determine how ballots will be tabulated.
- ❖ Share results with students in the school.
- ❖ Compare the results of the mock election to actual election results.

Voter Guides: This option is particularly effective as a group project because it involves many discrete pieces of research and involves production as well as research and writing. To create a valuable voters’ guide, students need to include the local or student issues they have researched and the candidates’ positions on those issues. In this way, they will not simply reformat information that is already published. Printed versions may be distributed through the school or in institutions in your areas such as community or senior centers. Web versions may be posted on your school’s web site.

Public Service Announcement (PSA): Students can use the research from their issue research teams to script, rehearse, and perform public service announcements. By law, public service announcements must not be partisan (since “public service” means “for everyone”) and therefore should focus on general voter awareness. Students may wish to conduct Get Out the Vote announcements, studying voter patterns, learning who does not vote, and then devising strategies to get the message across to that audience. If your school has a video camera, students can make

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a video PSA. Also, with an audio tape recorder, students can record an announcement and submit it to local radio stations. Students who have expertise in languages other than English can create an announcement in that language and submit it to broadcasting stations that use that language. In addition to broadcasting, students may also air announcements on the school's P.A. system or present them at assemblies.

Mock Debates: The students may stage mock candidate debates in which they further explore candidate positions through the process of deliberation. Each "candidate" (played by a student) might work with a team of fellow student researchers to combine the research from each issue research team to gather information on the candidate's positions. Other students can develop the questions and create the formatting. Debates might be videotaped and submitted to local media, or local journalists might be invited to attend to cover the event.

Candidate Forum or Town Hall Meeting: Students can schedule an informational forum inviting candidates to discuss issues with students or citizens in a town hall format. Students can prepare questions in advance as well as take some from the audience on issues important to the election, especially youth issues.

Serving as an Election Judge: Register with the Board of Elections to serve on Election Day as an election judge. You will help run the polling station and aid in people voting. Election judges are vital to having an honest and accurate election.

You Run the Campaign Simulation: Or do it all! Do a combination of some or all of the activities in a campaign simulation at your school. See the handout, *You Run the Campaign*, for details of how a campaign simulation can be carried out in your school.

Optional Activity: You Run the Campaign!

Think politics can be too negative? Too many campaign ads right before Election Day, that do not tell you what you need to know about the candidates or the issues? Want a chance to do it right? You and your classmates will have that chance by taking on this “You Run the Campaign” simulation in your school. You’ll run the campaign for one of the candidates in your local elections this year. You’ll base your campaign on the issues, telling voters (other students in your school) what you would do to make their lives better if you were elected to office. You’ll try to get endorsements, make public appearances, develop campaign ads, score points in a debate –and win the election (in your school).

Your class’s challenge: Find out as much information as you can about your candidate’s positions on issues (especially those young people care about) and about what leadership qualities and experience your candidate would bring to the office. And then get the word out to as many other students in your school as possible.

Note: Your teacher should check with your school’s principal first to get permission to run a campaign for the entire school.

Here’s how it works:

Students will be divided into teams, with each one representing the campaign of a candidate in this election. A formal announcement about your class’s project should be made in your school to let other students know what you will be doing through the campaign. Then, each campaign team will begin by researching the candidate’s positions on issues of concern to youth. Within each team, students will take on these jobs.

THE JOBS

Candidate. You will represent the viewpoints, positions, and arguments of the actual candidate in public appearances at the school and in the mock debate.

Speech Writers. You will write speeches for the candidate, as well as produce op-eds or columns, arguing the candidate’s case, for the school newspaper.

Media consultants. You will develop the candidate’s campaign ads and create brochures, flyers, and (if you have access to a video camera or tape recorder) TV and radio ads.

Public Relations Consultant. Your job is to organize press conferences, write press releases, and schedule public appearances for the candidate.

Voter Registration. A candidate can’t get elected without registering voters. You will be responsible for getting eligible voters registered before the deadline.

Debate and Mock Election Coordinator. You will help negotiate the terms for the debate with the other candidate(s), coach your candidate before the debate, and work on mock election set-up.

THE ACTIVITIES

Make a Campaign Announcement. You need to let your entire high school know that they will be experiencing the campaign, first-hand, through your class's simulation. Tell them to be on the lookout for campaign events!

Schedule Public Appearance. Candidates need to get out and meet people and get their messages across. Think about what kind of activities are being held at the school this campaign season –a school picnic? A soccer or hockey game? – and schedule times for your “candidate” to speak.

Seek Endorsements. The real candidates are working furiously during the campaign to get the endorsement of police officers, firefighters, unions, and teachers. Which groups or organizations can you go to in your school to get similar endorsements of your candidate? Don't forget your school's newspaper.

Hold a Press Conference. If you want to highlight a plan your candidate is proposing, schedule a press conference and invite your school's student journalists to attend. Try writing a press release, which summarizes the plan, to hand out to the journalists.

Develop Campaign Materials or Campaign Ads. Think about your candidate's central message that you want to get across to voters and develop campaign materials, including posters, to post around the school. Other possibilities include writing a “radio ad” that could be read in school during announcements or shooting video for a television campaign ad that could be played during school.

Hold a Mock Debate. Ask your principal if you can hold a mock debate before the entire high school or some part of the school. Choose a moderator and questioners, and set ground rules for how long each candidate has to answer questions. Depending on the format your class chooses for the debate (will the candidates questions each other, will a panel of student leaders be asking all the questions, etc.) you will need to determine who will write the questions for the candidates.

Hold a Mock Election. On Election Day, hold a mock election to see how well you have done. Ask all students in the high school to vote. Good luck!

IV: Resources

A. Web sites/Organizations

Chicago Board of Elections: www.chicagoelections.com

State of Illinois Board of Elections: www.elections.state.il.us

Federal Elections Committee: www.fec.gov

Cook County Board of Elections: www.voterinfo.net

Illinois Senate Race: www.ilsenate.com

Student Voices Program: www.student-voices.org/chicago

Mikva Challenge: www.mikvachallenge.org

City of Chicago: www.cityofchicago.org

City Council Web site: www.cu.chi.il.us/CityCouncil

Center for Voting and Democracy: www.fairvote.org

Project Vote Smart: www.vote-smart.org

National Youth Vote Coalition: www.youthvote.org

PBS Elections: www.pbs.org/elections

Ad Watch web site: www.factcheck.org

V: Glossary

amendment	Process by which changes or additions are made to the U.S. Constitution (ex. the 19 th amendment granted women the right to vote).
campaign	A candidate's plan of action to provide information to and interact with voters to win their votes on Election Day.
campaign manager	The person in charge of the field operations, fundraising, and media for a campaign during an election.
campaign message	The theme guiding a candidate's election effort and all materials (i.e., brochures, literature, letters, posters, advertisements) produced by the campaign.
caucus	A meeting of party members for selecting delegates to a state or national nominating convention.
challenger	A candidate who runs against the incumbent for a particular office.
civic engagement	Process by which individuals choose to participate in activities that have the potential to impact political policies on a community, state, or national level such as attending a local school council meeting, working on a political campaign, registering to vote, or participating in a protest.
conservative	A person to the right of center on the U.S. political spectrum. Of the two main political parties, the Republican Party is regarded as being the more conservative. Conservatives tend to uphold tradition and oppose major changes in laws and institutions. Change, when thought to be necessary, should be gradual and minimal. Conservatives generally oppose "big government" and support free-market economic policies and low taxes.
constituent	The people represented by an elected official or politician.
Constitution	The written principles and laws upon which the U.S. democratic system is based that direct political processes and procedures.
democracy	A government structure in which power is vested in the people and exercised by elected officials who represent the people.

Democratic Party	One of two major political parties in the United States, developed in 1828 as a faction of the Republican–Democratic party. Today Democrats often favor a large governmental role in addressing economic and social issues.
economy	The way a society organizes the production and distribution of its goods and services.
election	The process of choosing public officials by voting.
endorsement	Public announcement of support for a candidate, usually by an organization or another elected official.
Get Out the Vote	Efforts conducted by a candidate’s campaign and other organizations using phone calls, literature, letters, canvassing, and other methods to remind people to vote on Election Day; also referred to in the political sphere by its acronym of GOTV.
incumbent	A current public official running for reelection for the same office.
independent	A voter who does not belong to a political party and claims to vote for candidates not because of party identification but for the individual qualities of each candidate or issues they represent.
issue	An item or area of concern recognized as a problem by a group of individuals who attempt to place it on a political agenda.
letter to the editor	A letter written by a community member or leader that takes a particular stance on an issue that is printed in the opinion–editorial section of a newspaper or magazine.
liberal	A person to the left of center on the U.S. political spectrum. Of the two main political parties, the Democratic Party is generally regarded as being more liberal. Liberals tend to favor greater federal power and involvement to remedy social inequities, and to support freedom of personal choice and behavior.
lobbying	The act of trying to influence or sway candidates or public officials to address a certain issue in their campaigns or in legislation.
mass media	All print and broadcast communication outlets, including newspapers, magazines, Internet, television and radio.
moderate	A person who takes a position in the center of the U.S. political spectrum. Can also be a person who takes a position at in the center of one of the two major political parties.

platform	The publicly stated policy agenda or goals set by a political party or a candidate to appeal to voters.
policy agenda	A compilation of issues and corresponding recommended solutions important to a certain population, group, or community.
political party	An organization of people who share similar views about government and public policy and who work together to elect candidates to office.
politician	An individual elected to an office to represent constituents.
poll	A survey conducted to measure public opinion, or during an election, voter's views of the candidates; special tracking polls may be used to predict the outcome of elections.
press release	A one-page document including the important details of an event (i.e, the who, what, when, where, and why) used by organizations and political entities to inform and invite the media to attend events such as press conferences.
public opinion society.	A belief or view shared by a majority of the people in a
Republican Party	One of two major political parties in the United States, developed in 1854 in opposition to slavery with former members of the Whig Party. Today Republicans often favor a small governmental role in addressing social and economic issues.
special interests	Individuals and organizations that attempt to influence the political process so as to advance their own interests (ex. corporations, labor unions, and any number of advocacy groups). They seek favorable legislation or other benefits from public officials by providing them with research information, voting endorsements, and financial contributions. Politicians of one party will often denounce the special interests associated with the other parties while portraying the special interests associated with their own party in a favorable light.
stump speech	A public address given by a candidate to communicate their agenda for political purposes on the campaign trail. Candidates generally have a standard stump speech containing their message and agenda that can be slightly modified for different audiences. This term originated when actual tree stumps were used as political platforms for candidates.

swing voter	A voter who has no allegiance to any political party and whose unpredictable decisions can swing the outcome of an election one way or another (ex. NASCAR dads or soccer moms).
third party	A political party that organizes to elect candidates and represent issues and ideologies not always found in the platforms of the two major political parties. In the United States, any party other than the Republican Party and the Democratic Party.
voter registration	The process voters must complete before Election Day to be placed on the list of eligible voters.
voter turnout	Number of registered voters casting ballots at the polls on Election Day or by absentee ballot.