



**How To Do It:**

## **A Guide to the National Student/Parent Mock Election**

**A**s we look to the 21st century, the country will be entering a new era with a new generation of leadership. I encourage you all to be active participants in the National Student/Parent Mock Election.”

— *Former President Bill Clinton*

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## **A c k n o w l e d g m e n t s**

The publication of *How To Do It: A Guide to the National Student/Parent Mock Election* would not have been possible without the significant contributions of many people. It is not possible to list all the participants here, but the contributions of each one are valued. The National Student/Parent Mock Election and Macmillan/McGraw-Hill would like, however, to acknowledge Kate Hackett, Tracey West, and Patricia Campie for their valuable editorial contributions to this project.

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McGraw-Hill School Division  
2 Penn Plaza  
New York, New York 10121

Printed in the United States of America



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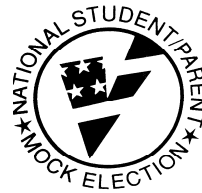
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## NATIONAL STUDENT/PARENT MOCK ELECTION

*The nation's largest voter education project*

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1980-1989

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The National  
Student/Parent Mock  
Election is non-partisan and  
non-profit (501C3)

Dear Educator,

On October 30, 2008, American students and many of their parents in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and around the world will cast their votes for senators, Congress members, and governors (where there is a race) and on key national issues.

*A Guide to the National Student/Parent Mock Election* is one of several free tools to help you and your students participate in this exciting experience. The guide contains suggestions for the kinds of hands-on activities that research has proven are far more effective than classroom lectures. While the guide was created by McGraw-Hill for the 1996 Mock Election, and refers to that event, the material contained within this guide should prove to be as invaluable to you in 2008 as it was to educators in 1996.

The only rule for participation in the National Student/Parent Mock Election is this: "There are no rules. The way that is right is the way that is right for you." We hope that you will use this guide as part of your school or school district's participation in the 2008 Mock Election. Please be sure to fax or e-mail an enrollment form to the National Student/Parent Mock Election. The enrollment will be forwarded to your state coordinator who will contact you and give you all the information you need on getting your school's votes counted and your students' voices heard.

This guide presents you with a smorgasbord of possibilities, but it's up to you to decide which and how much you will do. A school mock election coordinator could, for example, simply collect the vote tallies from each classroom, add them up and phone them in to "state election headquarters," or he or she could make Mock Election day an exciting event at school, complete with patriotic decorations, bands, speeches and young "election officials: who tally votes instead of the teacher. (One school phoned us on Mock Election night to say, "We thought you would like to know 14 candidates just left this school!")

"Preparing Students for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," the results of a survey by the American Association of School Administrators, includes among the 10 elements necessary to the content of education: "Knowledge of American history and government to function in a democratic society and an understanding of issues surrounding patriotism."



*The National Association of Secretaries of State and the National Association of Broadcasters Education Foundation have officially endorsed the National Student/Parent Mock Election.*

*"Teach children to read and they'll always read.  
Teach children to vote and they'll always vote."*



“Being involved in our representative democracy is critical for our nation’s future,” the American Association of School Administrators points out.

Thomas Shannon, former executive director of the National School Boards Association, added, “When students get involved, theory touches reality.”

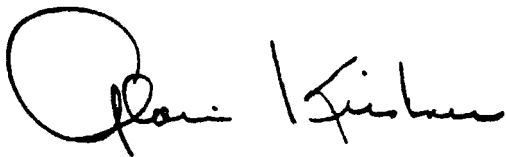
Among the most essential changes needed in elementary and secondary schools to prepare students for the 21st century, the study states, is to “respect all students’ ability to learn by promoting ‘active’ vs. passive learning.” This handbook – indeed, the National Student/Parent Mock Election in all its aspects – promotes “active” vs. passive learning.

We urge you to read the first two chapters of this guide first. The first chapter will give you an overview of how to use these experiential education activities to help your students meet the National Standards for Civics and Government. Chapter 2: “Evaluating Mock Election Activities” is placed next, and not at the end of the book, for a very important reason. Encourage your students to decide what they hope to learn by this experience, and, at the end, to evaluate what they have learned. In other words, we seek to empower students to take responsibility for their own learning and then to motivate them by providing learning activities they find so exciting they want to go on learning.

We hope very much that you will share the results of your experience with us and with all the other American teachers, students and parents around the world who will be participating with you.

We look forward with great pleasure to hearing from you on October 30, 2008, Mock Election Day, and to receiving your evaluation as soon as possible thereafter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gloria Kirshner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "K".

Gloria Kirshner  
*President*

2 Penn Plaza  
New York, New York 10121

*Roger R. Rogalin*  
President



To all Participants in the National Student/Parent Mock Election:

Welcome to the 2008 mock election. As we're going to press with this guide, the excitement leading up to the November election is building. Campaign news is flooding the newspapers, television, and the Internet. It's a thrilling, important event that touches all of our lives very deeply.

That's why the mock election is such a relevant educational project. It helps make the event real for millions of students, and serves as a catalyst for future generations to become enthusiastic participants in our democracy. After all, that's what living in a democracy is all about.

McGraw-Hill School Division is honored to participate in this effort. As leaders in Social Studies education, we've spent countless hours working with educators, researchers, the NCSS, and other experts to determine the most effective ways to make Social Studies come to life for young learners. We've learned many things. We've learned that when students understand the core principles of democracy, they're filled with a sense of empowerment. We've also learned that hands-on, interactive study is the best way to get students involved in their own learning process. The mock election accomplishes these things, and so much more. It's an outstanding opportunity to give students a gift of learning that they will remember long after they have left our classrooms.

This guide is filled with hundreds of ideas for incorporating the mock election in your school, community, district, and state. All of us at McGraw-Hill School Division wish you the best of luck. And remember—fill out the evaluation form on the next page and mail or fax it to the National Student/Parent Mock Election after the big day. We want to ensure that future participants will benefit from your experiences.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger R. Rogalin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "R".

Roger R. Rogalin  
President  
McGraw-Hill School Division

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# EVALUATION RESPONSE FORM

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Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

School District \_\_\_\_\_

School Level:     Elementary     Middle or Junior High     Secondary

Population of School (Number of Students) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address of School \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Class Level(s)/Grade(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Students in Class(es) \_\_\_\_\_

What were the principal ideas and bits of information the students seems to have learned from their participation in the Mock Election? What were the difficulties?

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Did the Mock Election have an effect on the voter turnout at the polls in the area the school serves?  
How do you know?

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A description of our Mock Election project and its results:

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Please evaluate how useful this guide was to you. Please tell us what you found most and least helpful and, especially, what you would like to find but didn't.

- of no use     of little use     of some use     very useful     extremely useful

Comments:

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We would very much like to hear from you. Please describe your project and the results, at whatever length is necessary. Use additional paper, if necessary, and fax it to us at (520) 742-3553. If you want to mail your result to us, our address is: National Student/Parent Mock Election  
PO Box 36653  
Tucson, Arizona 85740

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## **Some Frequently Asked Questions about the National Student/Parent Mock Election**

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### **When is Mock Election Day?**

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Mock Election Day falls on October 30, 2008.

### **Who may participate?**

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All young Americans, from kindergarten through college, their parents, grandparents, and teachers are invited to participate. You don't need to be a citizen or registered voter.

### **Is there a charge to participate in the National Student/Parent Mock Election?**

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There is no charge for participation or for materials. The National Student/Parent Mock Election until 2004-05 was funded by the United States Department of Education. Past corporate sponsors have included TIME, Time Warner, CNN, American Happenings, Macmillan/ McGraw-Hill, Electronic Data Systems, and Xerox Corporation.

### **Are there any requirements for participation?**

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The only requirements are that you vote for senators, congressmen, and governors (where there is a race), and on the key national issues that have been selected, and that all votes are forwarded to your "state election headquarters" on Mock Election Day, October 30, 2008. Schools and community groups are asked to name a school coordinator to collect all the votes from that school or organization before forwarding them into headquarters. We hope that your vote will be the culmination of a more extensive program designed by your school, school district, or organization, but that is up to you.

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### **What kinds of activities does the guide cover? Are you limited to those activities? Must you do them all?**

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The guide includes lesson plans for "Organizing Mock Press Conferences," "Involving Print and Electronic Media," "Organizing Quiz Team Competitions," and "Organizing Speeches and Debates," among others. There are no limits and no requirements regarding the voter education activities you undertake. The choices are all yours. We hope you will share your ideas with us!

### **How will we know the results of the vote?**

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They will be on the internet. See the Mock Election web site.

### **How do we know who our state coordinator is?**

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When you complete and fax, mail, or e-mail your enrollment form, the information will be forwarded to your state coordinator who will be in contact with you. The coordinator will provide you with all pertinent contact information. (If you do not hear from your state coordinator, please contact us.)

### **Are there district coordinators as well?**

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Some districts do have their own coordinator and even their own "election headquarters." If your district does have a coordinator, he or she will contact you. We welcome volunteers to serve as school and/or school district coordinators.

**Are any state ballot issues or candidates other than governor (where there is a race) and members of Congress included on the ballot?**

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State coordinators are free to add additional state issues and candidates to the ballot if they wish. If they do, they will notify you.

**Where do we get the ballots?**

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The issues ballot and the candidate ballot will be on the Mock Election web site.

**Do we vote for all members of Congress or only those in our district?**

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Generally votes are cast only for the members of Congress from your district. Where a school crosses more than one district, students are permitted to vote for the representative running for their district. The decision is the school's.

**Do parents vote in the National Student/Parent Mock Election?**

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Schools are free to encourage parent participation in any area they wish. In some districts parents vote, in others they help with registration (if a district chooses to "register" young voters before they vote), decorations, tallying votes, etc. The National Student/Parent Mock Election encourages parent involvement because research has proved that parents working with their children make a significant difference in school achievement. Once again, the choices are yours.

**Has the National Student/Parent Mock Election been proven to work?**

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The University of Colorado's formal evaluation of the National Student/Parent Mock Election found participating students showed increases in:

- political decision-making ability
- political informed involvement on current issues
- political the belief that voting is important
- political the belief that social studies classes are relevant.
- political the discussion of political and election topics with parents
- political a reduction in the feeling of powerlessness.

The National Student/Parent Mock Election was named semifinalist for the "Innovations in American Government" award from the Ford Foundation and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

**How did the National Student/Parent Mock Election begin?**

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The National Student/Parent Mock Election began as part of another project, the NBC Parent Participation TV Workshop, which sought to use television dramas to open communication between parents and children. We soon discovered that the elections were a huge national drama that could enable parents and children to talk with — and not at — each other. The first National Student/Parent Mock Election, in 1980, was run as part of the Parent Participation TV Workshop Project. In 1982, the National Student/Parent Mock Election was spun off as a separate nonprofit, nonpartisan organization devoted to voter education.

**Who endorses the National Student/Parent Mock Election?**

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The National Student/Parent Mock Election has been endorsed by the two national parties and over 50 cooperating educational, civic, religious and business organizations. In 2001, the National Student/Parent Mock Election was the first organization to receive the official endorsement of the National Association of Secretaries of State.

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## COOPERATING ORGANIZATIONS OF THE MOCK ELECTION

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American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

American Association of Retired Persons/  
National Retired Teachers Association

American Association of School Administrators

American Association of School Librarians

American Federation of Teachers

American Library Association

American Medical Association

Alliance Association for Educational Communications and Technology

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America

Boy Scouts of America

Broadcast Education Association

Camp Fire Boys and Girls, Inc.

Council of Chief State School Officers

Council of Great City Schools

Education Commission of the States

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

General Federation of Women's Clubs

Girl Scouts, USA

International Reading Association

Kiwanis International

League of United Latin American Citizens

League of Women Voters of the United States

LCMS Lutheran Schools

National Association of Elementary School Principals

National Association for Gifted Children

National Association of Secondary School Principals

National Association of Secretaries of State

National Association of State Boards of Education

National Association of Student Councils

National Coalition of ESEA Chapter I Parents

National Community Education Association

National Conference of Christians and Jews

National Council for Families and Television

National Council of La Raza

National Council of Teachers of English

National Education Association

National Parent Teacher Association

National School Boards Association

National Public School Boards Association

National School Public Relations Association

National Urban League

Rainbow PUSH Coalition

Skills USA – Vica

Broadcast and Communications Center of the North American Mission Board (Southern Baptist)

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations

Unitarian Universalist Association

United Church of Christ – Division of Higher Education

U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

YMCA of the USA

# Incorporating the New Civics and Government Standards in All Mock Election Activities

by Charles F. Bahmueller, Ph.D.  
Center for Civic Education

## OBJECTIVES

To ensure that active participation in the National Student/Parent Mock Election is undertaken by informed consent and is both responsible and meaningful, students are to gain knowledge and understanding of:

- ★ the fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy.
- ★ the American political system.
- ★ current political issues.
- ★ American political culture.
- ★ the place of the United States in world affairs.

## METHODS

The mock election provides teachers with an outstanding opportunity to incorporate the new National Standards for Civics and Government in their teaching.<sup>1</sup> All mock election activities can be built with the following strategies:

1. Impart knowledge and understanding of the American political culture and system, world politics, and fundamental American values and principles (National Standards Sections I–V).
2. Demonstrate the meaning of American citizenship, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and the dispositions necessary to further American constitutional democracy (National Standards, Section V, A–D, pp. 127–134).
3. Evoke the responsibility of citizens to participate in public affairs, especially through voting and voter-turnout campaigns (National Standards, Section V, C & E, pp. 131–132; 134–136).

1. The new National Standards for Civics and Government can be obtained from the Center for Civic Education, 5146 Douglas Fir Road, Calabasas, CA 91302 for \$13.20 (includes postage and handling).

I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but inform their discretion.”

—Thomas Jefferson

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# 1. Impart knowledge and understanding of the American political culture and system, world politics, and fundamental American values and principles.

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## A. WEEKLY MEETINGS

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Weekly meetings that follow the course of the campaign and a series of follow-up meetings after the end of the campaign can help students synthesize what they are learning as they participate in mock election activities. The weekly meeting is the teacher's golden opportunity to present the questions posed in the new National Standards, as well as to involve parents by inviting them to attend. These questions could drive topics of discussion at the meetings:

1. What is the rule of law (National Standards, pp. 91–93)? In what ways does the idea of the rule of law figure in the campaign? Only as a background assumption? In other ways?
2. What is the American idea of constitutional government (National Standards, pp. 99–100)?
3. What are the fundamental values and principles of American democracy? Which fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy, such as liberalism and republicanism (as defined by the National Standards pp. 8, 106–108), are directly or indirectly evident in the campaign? How do values and principles sometimes conflict (National Standards, pp. 105, 108–109)? Are there examples of this conflict in the campaign?
4. What is the meaning of American citizenship, and what are the rights and responsibilities of American citizens? Specifically:
  - ★ What does citizenship mean? How is citizenship acquired (National Standards, pp. 127–128)?
  - ★ What are personal, political, and economic rights of citizens (as defined by the National Standards, pp. 128–130)?
  - ★ How are each category of these rights relevant in the campaign?
  - ★ What campaign issues touch students, directly or indirectly?
  - ★ What are the responsibilities of citizens? What is politics? What do students think civic life, politics, and government are? How would students compare their experience with the National Standards' descriptions of civic life, politics, and government (pp. 89–90)?
5. What are the purposes of politics? How would students apply competing ideas about the purposes of politics and government found in the National Standards (pp. 90–91) to their experience?
6. What is limited government (National Standards, pp. 91–93)? Does the idea that government should be limited figure in the campaign? How? What is the relationship of limited government to political and economic freedom? Is this relationship apparent in any way in the campaign?
7. What is civil society (National Standards, pp. 91, 93)? How do the associations and organizations of civil society affect the campaign? Do students see evidence of the effects of the voluntary involvement of individuals? What kinds of groups are most prominent? Based on students' campaign experiences, how do they describe the relationship between civil society and politics?
8. What is American political culture (National Standards, pp. 103–104)? Is the U.S. Constitution invoked during the campaign? If so, how is it used?
9. What role does social diversity play in American politics (National Standards, pp. 101, 104)? How is the social pluralism of American society evident in the campaign? What categories of diversity, such as age, socioeconomic status, occupation, and race/ethnicity, play a direct or indirect role in the campaign? How important are they?

10. What is the place of the United States in world affairs (National Standards, pp. 121–126)? How does the United States interact with other nations of the world through diplomacy, trade, the military, immigration, and other ways, and how did issues involving American relations with the world affect the campaign?

---

## **B. RESEARCH**

Help students prepare for knowledgeable participation in mock election activities by thoroughly researching political issues and candidates via such resources as the Internet, the library, local party offices, public relations advisers of local candidates, and the National Student/Parent Mock Election’s own home page on the Internet ([www.nationalmockelection.org](http://www.nationalmockelection.org)). If feasible, create your own home page on the Internet and post information about your mock election activities and the general election. Publicizing your Internet address will turn your home page into an informational forum for others who are interested in the mock election. Those unfamiliar with the Internet could benefit greatly from student-developed Internet instruction manuals.

Also consider contacting or having students contact Project Vote Smart, the on-line student/volunteer project in Oregon. Project Vote Smart was founded by students and volunteers for the purpose of collecting “abundant, accurate, relevant information” on representatives and candidates nationwide, such as voting behavior and performance evaluations by all liberal, conservative, and special interest groups who publish them, including positions on issues, sources and amounts of campaign finances, and biographical histories.

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## **C. CAMPAIGN EVALUATIONS**

To more thoroughly understand the democratic process, students should objectively evaluate all aspects of each candidate’s campaign and the campaign in general—media coverage, newspaper, editorials, campaign speeches, campaign literature—and present their evaluations during and/or after the mock election (or real election) to other students and the public. (For more information on developing evaluations, see Chapter 2 of this guide; for information on publicizing your evaluations, see Chapter 4.)

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## **2. Demonstrate the meaning of American citizenship, the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and the dispositions necessary to further American constitutional democracy (National Standards, Section V, A–D, pp. 127–134).**

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Monitoring student and adult participation in election campaign activities and voting can help determine how well participation conforms, or fails to conform, to the traits of civic character necessary for the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy.

Try selecting several students to monitor mock election activities (speech-writing competitions, quiz-team competitions, mock press conferences, school forums, debates, local cable call-in shows) using an evaluation sheet as a basis for assessing participants’ contributions. Depending on the format chosen, students may need to consult with each other before rendering their assessment.

In school forums, students could appoint a specific spokesperson to deliver their assessments. An announcement of the assessment may or may not be made before the start of the event, depending on the judgment of the organizers. Viewers could be told during cable TV call-in shows that an assessment of callers’ contributions would be made at the conclusion of the program. Such an assessment might help increase awareness among viewers of others’ expectations of their participation and raise viewer interest in the program.

Students should enumerate the characteristics of thoughtful and effective participation in public affairs. For example, students could inform audiences that democratic discussion cannot include a disrespectful shouting match and that there are other important characteristics of discussions that further, or fail to further, the democratic process, and are part of the evaluation they are about to hear.

It should be understood that students should only mention faults or give praise where they think they have an adequate basis for doing so; and they should give praise where they believe it is due, not just blame. The purpose of the exercise is to help students understand how debate and discussion should be conducted and what kinds of behavior undermines the purpose of democratic debate. In evaluating participants and discussions, consider the points that follow.

### **A. THE MEANING OF AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP**

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Participants should be aware that citizenship means membership in a self-governing community, just as membership in clubs and other organizations is often required to participate in self-government, so membership (citizenship) in the political community is required to take part in its self-government (National Standards, p. 127).

### **B. THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS**

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Participants should be aware that citizens have responsibilities as well as rights (National Standards, pp. 128–132). They should know that responsibilities may be personal (such as taking care of oneself, supporting one’s family, adhering to moral principles, and accepting responsibility for the consequences of one’s actions) or civic (such as obeying the law, registering to vote and voting knowledgeably, being informed and attentive to public issues, and serving as a juror).

Participants should also be able to distinguish between personal, political, and economic rights and should understand that rights have limits. For example, personal rights include:

- ★ the right to privacy and personal autonomy.
- ★ freedom of thought and conscience.
- ★ freedom of movement and residence.
- ★ right to due process of law and equal protection of law.

Political rights include:

- ★ the right to vote and run for public office.
- ★ freedom of speech.
- ★ freedom of the press.

- ★ freedom of assembly.

Economic rights include the right to:

- ★ acquire, use, transfer, and dispose of property.
- ★ choose one’s work and change employment.
- ★ join labor unions and professional societies.
- ★ establish and operate a business.

Participants should also see that rights can conflict both with each other and with other values and interests. Examples include:

- ★ the right to a fair trial and the right to a free press.
- ★ the right to privacy and the right to freedom of expression.
- ★ conflict between the public’s right to know and the requirements of national security.
- ★ conflict between the right to property and the right of the public to take property for the public good (right of “eminent domain”).

### **C. PARTICIPANT DISPOSITION**

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Evaluation sheets should ask students to judge participants according to the criteria for furthering American constitutional democracy (National Standards, pp. 132–134):

- 1. Civility.** Do participants disagree without being disagreeable? Do they avoid hostile, abusive, emotional arguments? Avoid illogical arguments and make coherent arguments based on sound evidence or reasoning?
- 2. Open-mindedness and critical thinking.** Do participants consider others’ points of view or reject them out of hand? Do they question the validity of varying points of view, including their own?
- 3. Patriotism.** Are their arguments consistent with the fundamental values and principles of American democracy? If not, which values or principles appear to be undermined?

4. **Toleration of ambiguity.** Are participants tolerant of ambiguity in the matters they discuss? Do they realize that it is often difficult to be certain of factual evidence or of the application of moral or other values?
5. **Compassion.** Do participants show concern for the well-being of others, especially for the less fortunate? (This item is not intended to be partisan. It should not be interpreted as meaning those who object to particular public programs for the less fortunate are not compassionate. Such programs may be flawed or too expensive and compassion can be expressed in various ways other than public policy.)
6. **Courage.** Do participants stand up for their convictions when they might retreat from a challenge?

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**3. Evoke the responsibility of citizens to participate in public affairs, especially through voting and voter-turnout campaigns (National Standards, Section V, C & E, pp. 131–132; 134–136).**

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Emphasize the responsibility of young citizens to participate in elections knowledgeably and responsibly through newsletters, posters, and community activities that are part of the school program, and neighborhood campaigns to increase voter turnout. Related publicity should also inform citizens (and therefore students) of other activities, not only those related to elections, through which they can participate in community and political affairs. Different forms of participation appeal to different people and participants should be encouraged to find the forms that suit them best.

Explore ways to promote the message “If citizens want their voices to be heard, they must become active in the political process.” (National Standards, p. 135) Inform students and adults about opportunities for political participation (National Standards, p. 136) which might include, among others:

- ★ working for a candidate’s campaign. (Interested individuals can call campaign headquarters to find out what they can do.)
- ★ contacting elected and unelected officials at local, state, and national offices to voice their views or concerns.
- ★ joining and/or actively supporting social or political organizations that represent their point of view.
- ★ expressing their views to newspapers and TV stations/programs, in community meetings, or on Internet discussion groups/bulletin boards.
- ★ opportunities for appointment by local governments to local boards and agencies dealing with matters that concern them.

Finally, teachers should be aware that all mock election activities present an opportunity to include the ideas of the National Standards for Civics and Government. The mock election can make the new standards relevant to the concerns of election campaigns as well as to everyday life. Students should see that the standards are not only applicable at election time, but all the time: dealing with others humanely, understanding and accepting the basic requirements of social life in the daily life of the community, participating effectively in the formal and informal affairs of self-governance, and not just acting, but acting knowledgeably and responsibly.

# Evaluating Mock Election Activities

by Arthur Wells Foshay, Professor Emeritus  
Teachers College, Columbia University

## OBJECTIVES

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Teachers and administrators should be able to evaluate students' participation in mock election activities according to:


- ★ students' grasp of facts and definitions.
- ★ students' interpretations of the campaign.
- ★ students' own attitudes toward the campaign.

## METHODS

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The following steps will contribute to a successful evaluation of your activities.

1. Involve students in the evaluation process.
2. Create glossaries and handbooks.
3. Lead classroom discussions.
4. Use a scale system.
5. Write essays.
6. Share results of mock election activities.

 As the members of each generation live up to their responsibility as voters, they learn just what it means to be a government of the people, by the people, and for the people."

—Former President  
George H.W. Bush

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## 1. Involve students in the evaluation process.

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Students sometimes have strange ideas about the purposes of school activities. If teachers will start (and contribute to) class discussions of the criteria to be applied to their work, and if the criteria that emerge represent the results of these discussions, then it is likely that the students will “own” the criteria and that efforts to evaluate the outcomes of the various parts of the project will be part of what students learn. Students rarely know how to judge the quality of their own work. When teachers do it for them, students see the resulting grade, or comments, as coming from an external, not an internal, source. It is to remedy this situation that we strongly recommend that teachers inaugurate discussions of the criteria to be applied to a project at its start and as new parts of the project are undertaken. If this is done, it is less likely that students will see school work as “merely academic” and that the shockingly low correlation between school grades and life success (no matter how it is measured) will rise.

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## 2. Create glossaries and handbooks.

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Without an acquaintance of the facts, terms and definitions appropriate to the election process, further interpretation or understanding of the process would be impossible. Of course, if a student’s knowledge of the process stops with facts, language and definitions, nothing much has happened. Such limited knowledge is, of course, superficial. Facts and definitions are necessary but not sufficient.

Here are some suggestions for incorporating this knowledge in a meaningful way. With the teacher, students might develop a glossary of the language of the election process. Some obvious terms to be included are: *candidate, ballot, political party, issue, representative, senator, legislate(-tion), citizen, inauguration, budget, and primary election*. To evaluate this kind of knowledge, students could be asked to match terms to their definitions on a test that included more definitions than terms.

Similarly, the basic facts of the U.S. election process could be developed by the students into a short handbook that included the laws governing who may vote and who may be a candidate at the local, state, and national levels. Again, to evaluate students’ familiarity with this material, a combination of matching, multiple-choice and true-or-false items could be developed, perhaps jointly by students and teachers. (Remember that when writing multiple-choice and true-or-false items, the “wrong” answers must seem plausible to the unlearned.)

One other type of knowledge is relevant here: history. Students ought to be familiar with the development of the election process in the Constitutional Convention, as well as the more recent story of the 20th Amendment and the Civil Rights legislation, since these bits of history have to do with who may vote and since they lie behind some current political tensions.

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## 3. Lead classroom discussions.

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As students become acquainted with the necessary facts and definitions, they become able to interpret the campaign. To bring this about, teachers will want to ask leading questions, such as:

- ★ What issues does each candidate tend to stress? Why?
- ★ What ought to be the issues in the campaign?
- ★ What kind of person survives the primary and convention process?
- ★ Why are the Presidential candidates all white males?
- ★ Is the current election process a good way to choose a president? Can you suggest improvements?
- ★ Does the Electoral College conflict with the power of the individual voter?

At the elementary school level, possible discussion questions could include:

- ★ What are the most important things that the President should be working on now?

- ★ Should anybody who wants to be allowed to be President?
- ★ Think of something bad that has happened recently. Did the President want it to happen? (This is intended to elicit speculation on the powers of the presidency.)

These questions are illustrative. Teachers will think of better ones—questions that fit the students they face. The intent of these discussions is to start students thinking interpretatively and to elicit ideas that can be used as criteria by students and teachers in the course of both intermediate and final evaluations.

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#### **4. Use a scale system.**

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An attitude is a predisposition to act toward or away from some referent. A referent is what the attitude refers to or is concerned with—e.g., a course of action, a state of affairs, an object, a sensation. Strictly speaking, words like *beautiful*, *ugly*, *valuable*, *worthless* and other such adjectives are statements of attitude. Attitudes have a direction—either positive, negative, or neutral. They also have intensity. We like or dislike some things more than others. Information makes attitudes more intense. The more we know about something, the stronger, or more intense or caring, are our attitudes toward it.

Teachers will hope that students develop strong positive attitudes toward the election process, as well as toward aspects of the mock election. They will want to know the nature of such attitudes.

One way to obtain this information is to seek the direction and the intensity of attitudinal responses on a five-point scale. For example: The discussion of the X issue by candidate Y was:

1. a boring waste of time
2. not very important
3. neither important nor unimportant
4. very important
5. extremely important

In preparing an attitude scale, write the most negative and the most positive attitudes first, then the mildly negative, neutral, and mildly positive attitude statements. Most of the responses are likely

to cluster around the middle three points of the scale. Teachers will already know of students whose attitudes lie at either extreme since their attitudes (or feelings) and consequent behavior will probably have influenced the whole class climate one way or the other.

In general, a five-point attitude scale is the easiest to prepare and use and is accurate enough for our purposes here. The format of a five-point scale is as follows: strongly negative, mildly negative, so-so, mildly positive, strongly positive.

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#### **5. Write essays.**

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Another form of evaluation teachers will want to use is the essay question. Technology makes it possible for tape recordings of students' responses to be used, as well as written responses. In any case, the quality of the responses can be judged by the students as well as by the teacher. Papers and/or tapes should be exchanged among students for this purpose and the evaluations discussed in class.

Prizes can be awarded for outstanding responses; the most important prize is, of course, recognition. Perhaps a tape could be played or an essay read publicly on a radio station or on the school loudspeaker system. The prize could take the form of a letter of recognition from a prominent person or an object such as a dictionary or a good biography of a major U.S. political figure. Such prizes might also be accompanied by a small sum of money.

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#### **6. Share the results of mock election activities.**

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The directors of the National Student/Parent Mock Election are eager to hear how the project was carried on and about its effects, school by school and for the nation as a whole. It is to be hoped that busy teachers will find the time to let us know. To this end, a response form has been included with this guide. If teachers will send us the form, we will, in the degree that funds permit, respond with a summary (including quoted and attributed questions and doubts) of what has been said by teachers and what we think has been learned.

# Organizing Mock Press Conferences

by Jeff Mammengo, Public Relations Coordinator

South Dakota State Historical Society

and former Information Specialist

South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs

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## OBJECTIVES

Participating in a mock press conference can help students to:

1. explore the roles and responsibilities of a free press in a democratic society.
2. survey the responsibility of the press and individuals to monitor the activities of the government/public officials, social organizations, and political interests.<sup>1</sup>
3. analyze how the press prevents government from accumulating too much power.<sup>2</sup>
4. discover the role of the press in preserving political and economic freedoms.<sup>3</sup>
5. evaluate, analyze and critique press coverage.
6. formulate thoughtful, provocative questions.
7. recognize the importance of planning and preparation when involving the public or the media in an event.
8. develop interpersonal skills.
9. develop creative problem-solving skills.
10. practice work skills.

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## METHODS

The following activities will contribute to a successful mock press conference:

1. Explore the role of a free press in a democratic society.
2. Study the evolution of freedom of expression.
3. Analyze a real press conference.
4. Organize the mock press conference.
5. Take it further: organize other mock forums.

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1. This is a complex issue and relates well to many of the suggestions of the new National Standards for Civics and Education. Related issues include, among others, the purpose of the government (see the new standards, Section I) and the responsibilities of Americans (see the new standards, Section IV).

2. The new standards recommend that students gain a thorough understanding of the concepts of limited and unlimited governments (see the new standards, Section I, Letter B).

3. Many sections of the new standards are applicable here, including the relationship between limited government and political and economic freedom (see the new standards, Section I and Section V).

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## 1. Explore the role of a free press in a democratic society.

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Survey the historical struggle for a free press, such as the John Peter Zenger case, William Channing’s speech “Tribute to the American Abolitionists” (1936), and the sedition laws and acts of 1798 and 1918, or investigate historical events such as the Watergate Scandal and the role of Washington, D.C., reporters Woodward and Bernstein or the controversial Rodney King trials. Research censorship of music lyrics and/or information on the Internet or the Supreme Court case *Hazelwood School District vs. Kuhlmeier* (1988) in which the Supreme Court decided that a principal has the right to edit a school newspaper. Use these examples to explore the following ideas and questions:

- ★ fact vs. opinion
- ★ objective reporting vs. emotional appeal
- ★ What is the role of the press in exposing scandals?
- ★ Who decides what is appropriate and inappropriate information for public consumption?
- ★ How do public officials respond to the concerns of the citizenship?
- ★ Who influences the decisions of public officials?
- ★ What role does the press play in informing citizens and limiting government?
- ★ How does informing the public limit the power of government?
- ★ How can the public influence policy-makers and legislation by using the press?
- ★ What are an individual’s rights to freedom of expression?

To help students learn about the role of the media in society—how the public agenda is shaped, who/what influences reporters/the news we hear, the importance of representing both sides of the story, freedom of the press, the relationship between public opinion and the media—undertake a “Perspectives in Reporting” activity. Students can form teams that debate controversial issues such as a

current newsworthy global event, a historical event, major television speeches or a candidate’s opinion of environmentalism or family values. Students can also collect clippings of editorials or discuss the effectiveness and tactics of political cartoons.

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## 2. Study the evolution of freedom of expression.

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Study a sample of the contributions of Milton, Locke, Franklin, and/or Jefferson to freedom of expression. Analyze the decision to televise the O.J. Simpson trial (as well as the effects of televising the trial on the verdict of the case) or the press’s role in uncovering health risks associated with cigarette smoking. Use these examples to explore questions such as:

- ★ What section of the Constitution protects Americans’ right to a free press or an individual’s right to freedom of expression?
- ★ What is the difference between freedom of expression and advocacy of illegal action?
- ★ How can the public use the media to communicate with and influence the government and public officials? Why is this important?

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## 3. Analyze a real press conference.

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Explore these questions with students:

- ★ How is a press conference organized? What are its objectives? Who participates?
- ★ Which reporters and questions are most effective?
- ★ Do press reports reflect what students think happened?
- ★ Which candidates or public officials received positive/negative press coverage on which issues? Why?
- ★ How will the press conference affect Americans’ attitudes toward the candidates/public officials?
- ★ Which issues discussed were given highest priority and why?

- ★ How do political goals and media coverage influence national and international events? (For example, why do you believe President Clinton sent American troops to Bosnia? Because TV coverage made it apparent that American help was desperately needed? To protect America’s strategic interests? To reassert America’s world-power position? To increase the President’s own popularity or media coverage? For other reasons?)

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## 4. Organize a mock press conference.

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A mock press conference can be as simple or as elaborate as you wish. These are the basic steps:

- ★ Organize a planning committee.
- ★ Gather information and resources.
- ★ Assign role plays.
- ★ Prepare students.
- ★ Invite the audience.
- ★ Schedule a facility (if necessary).
- ★ Select the moderator.
- ★ Involve the media.
- ★ Host a reception (optional).
- ★ Keep track of event details.
- ★ Follow up.

### A. ORGANIZE A PLANNING COMMITTEE.

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Select a group of students who will assume responsibility for organizing the different aspects of the mock press conference.

Develop and post a timeline of the activities that will lead up to your mock press conference. Include a checklist of responsibilities. This will not only help you coordinate your press conference efforts but will also help remind your volunteers of their responsibilities.

### B. GATHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES.

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Journalists from local newspapers, TV and radio stations, and journalism departments of local colleges or universities can be wellsprings of information.

Perhaps a parent with journalism experience or a local journalist would give a talk about how press conferences are conducted or mentor your class through their mock press conference experience. Encourage students to uncover and explore the difference between professional reporting and inexperienced reporting. (How do articles in news publications differ from articles in tabloid publications? What kinds of questions do “pros” typically ask and how are they different from the questions of amateurs? Does the story present a logical case or does it attempt to appeal to your emotions?) List tactics used by the government, society, and businesses that can influence the media. Invite a public-relations person to speak to your class about how special interest groups “place” articles and why it is important to understand this process.

### C. ASSIGN ROLE-PLAYS.

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Choose volunteers for the necessary characters (possibly by holding an essay or article contest, an academic quiz bowl competition, or a speech-writing competition). Include mock or real candidates and their relevant staff (mock press secretaries, mock advisers for specific issues), a moderator, and mock journalists to question mock or real candidates (or stand-ins for real candidates) about specific issues.

In preparation, role-players should research their positions and the relevant issues and observe real role models in action. Does the conference involve a panel or a mob of reporters? Among 40 or 50 reporters and cameramen, how do journalists get their questions answered? What types of questions do public officials answer and why? How do some candidates avoid certain questions and/or reporters? Why do they avoid these issues/people? What is the objective of the press conference: to inform, to be elected or to persuade?

Encourage students to practice their role-plays at home with family members.

### D. PREPARE STUDENTS.

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Typically a candidate’s staff members research and thoroughly brief the candidate prior to press conferences about what issues may come up, how the candidate should respond to certain questions, and how the candidate’s opposition is likely to respond to the same questions. Students should inform themselves just as thoroughly for their mock press conference by:

- ★ phoning candidates' offices (phone numbers can be obtained by calling information or local party headquarters which are listed in the phone book).
- ★ creating a classroom bulletin board with clippings about candidates and issues.
- ★ calling local organizations such as the League of Women Voters.
- ★ researching a specific candidate or issue.

Encourage students to be mindful of their sources. What is the objective of the article or passage: to get the reader to vote for a candidate or make the reader sympathetic with a certain cause? Who wrote the story or may have an interest in publishing the story and why? What is the author trying to achieve? How might the author be influenced by the agenda of big businesses, social causes, and/or personal experiences? Is the story based on fact or opinion? What are the implications of the story to the people or organizations mentioned in the story? Will they try to bolster or hide similar reports? How does/can this affect the public? Why is this important?

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#### **E. INVITE THE AUDIENCE.**

Whom do you want to invite? Students, teachers, parents, the media, other schools in your district/area, the public, local businesses, local educational organizations, local sponsors, state and local political candidates, party chairs/members (Democratic, Republican, other minor parties), or other public officials? Assign the task of sending out invitations (with an RSVP) to students.

When contacting parents, ask them (and other family members, too) if they might like to play the roles of issues experts who ask the "candidates" about specific issues such as health care, education, taxes, or city zoning. Parents might also be able to help with planning and organization, transportation, tape recording, and other logistics.

When deciding whom to invite, encourage students to explore the objectives of their mock press conference and given these objectives, whom should be invited. Do you want to inform all voters? Do you want to reach unregistered voters? Will business regulations be discussed? Tax issues? Environmental standards? Education? Under what circumstances are real press conferences usually held? Who is invited and who is excluded, and why?

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#### **F. SCHEDULE A FACILITY.**

Depending on the number of attendees, you may or may not need to secure a facility for the event ahead of time. What capacity do you need? How many people will be attending? Is there adequate space for TV and radio reporters to maneuver their equipment? Do you need microphones or a P.A. system? Where will they be set up? Who will run them? Do you want to have microphones placed strategically throughout the room for audience questions? If you hold a reception afterward, will you use the same room?

Ask family members to help locate a suitable facility. They may have access to a hotel conference room, a business conference room, or an auditorium.

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#### **G. SELECT THE MODERATOR.**

Selecting a good moderator (student or adult) can mean the difference between a press conference with a few hitches and one of disorganized chaos. Look for a moderator who:

- ★ can think on his or her feet.
- ★ can control discussion and timing.
- ★ is knowledgeable about the candidates and issues.
- ★ facilitates participation from all guests, not just prepared speakers.
- ★ has a sense of humor.

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#### **H. INVOLVE THE MEDIA.**

Invite student reporters and/or real reporters to liven up the activities. If you invite the local media, consider establishing another student committee to facilitate news coverage. The committee's responsibilities might include:

- ★ answering press questions.
- ★ fulfilling requests for Mock Election information.
- ★ conducting follow-up calls to confirm media attendance.
- ★ sending thank-you letters to attendees.
- ★ ensuring that the needs (spatial, equipment, electrical) of the press are met.

Perhaps student journalists can draft a press release to send out to all local newspapers and TV and radio stations. In drafting a press release, help students understand what makes an event newsworthy and how to approach the media. Before sending press releases to media outlets, make sure students understand why certain stories are placed and others are not, and why articles are placed where they are in newspapers. (See Chapter 4: Involving Print and Electronic Media.)

Perhaps a student can videotape the mock press conference—it could be played where students and parents cast their votes in the mock election, released to the media, or edited by students into a video news release (VNR) to send out to all local media. (Contact your local TV station for further information about VNRs.)

Also consider hosting a mock election kick-off event for the media. In Indiana one year, the governor and participating mock election students jointly hosted a kick-off press conference.

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#### **I. HOST A RECEPTION.**

If you are planning a more elaborate program, give students the responsibility of securing a facility and/or donated refreshments for a reception. They will learn many lessons that will help prepare them for the real world, including: how to coordinate the efforts of different people simultaneously, the importance of timing, how to approach individuals about a cause or organization, and the importance of following up on conversations and/or commitments.

State and/or local candidates who cannot attend the entire program may make a brief appearance or speech at your reception. Be sure that the moderator or an appointed speaker thanks your guests for participating.

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#### **J. KEEP TRACK OF EVENT DETAILS.**

As the date for the mock press conference approaches, ask members of the student planning committee and/or other committees you have created to make a list of all the technical, logistical, and timing considerations necessary for a successful mock press conference.

Immediately preceding the event, have students check their list of nuts and bolts: Do all microphones and electrical equipment work? Will refreshments be delivered on time? Is there a clean-up crew? Are people available to help with minor emergencies (e.g., technical problems, runners for forgotten materials)? Is a back-up available if a moderator, mock candidate, or another participant doesn't show?

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#### **K. FOLLOW UP.**

After the mock press conference, study other sources of information about the same topic: French vs. Japanese, British vs. Russian, candidate vs. candidate as well as student vs. student. How are they different? Alike? Why? What/who do students think influenced the different perspectives (historical or cultural biases, personal preferences, censorship)? How did/could the public influence the candidate's point of view?

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### **5. Take it further: organizing other mock forums.**

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Instead of or in addition to your mock press conference, you may wish to organize weekly talk shows based on “Face the Nation” or “Meet the Press”.

Select a moderator, mock candidates and/or weekly guests, and mock journalists to debate different subjects weekly or perhaps monthly. Rotate the role-playing assignments to ensure the active participation of all students. Consider having reporters from the school newspaper report on the weekly debates (issues discussed, the outcomes) as well as the popularity of real candidates among students. Consider videotaping the event—perhaps local TV or radio stations would broadcast a segment. How do these types of talk shows influence American political culture and climate? Do they represent the conservative or liberal perspective and how can you tell? Do you consider these types of programs accurate? Unbiased? Informative?

# Involving Print and Electronic Media

by Jeff Mammengo, Public Relations Coordinator

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and former Information Specialist

South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs

## OBJECTIVES

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Participating in mock election media efforts will help students:

1. analyze the responsibility of the press in informing and representing the interests of the citizenship in common policy issues.<sup>1</sup>
2. discover what makes events newsworthy, the components of news stories, and how to get media coverage.
3. develop critical-thinking skills.
4. develop creative problem-solving skills.
5. hone research, organizational, and planning skills.
6. hone and develop writing skills.

## METHODS

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Following these steps will help you publicize your mock election events:

1. Develop a list of members of the media who may be interested in the mock election.
2. Invite members of the local media not only to cover your event, but to sponsor your event or serve as your partner.
3. Draft and send out press releases and/or media kits.
4. Follow up with phone calls to ensure your information has arrived and been forwarded to the right person.
5. Conduct editorial briefings for more elaborate events.
6. Consider other ways the media can help publicize your event.
7. Keep track of any coverage your event receives.

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1. Before students can fully understand the “interest of the citizenship,” they must have a working knowledge of the meaning of citizenship in the United States, and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. See the new National Standards for Civics and Government, Section V. Students should also understand the fundamental issues of Constitutional democracy to ensure their future protection as well as to recognize threats to the well-being of the citizenship. See the new standards, Section II.

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## **1. Develop a list of members of the media who may be interested in the mock election.**

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With the help of your students (or as part of a student homework assignment), develop a list of all the media in your area, including newspapers, TV and radio stations, magazines, and educational publications.

Learn the name of a specific contact for each source. For example, when contacting the print media, ask for the Newspaper in Education Coordinator or the publisher if seeking sponsorship of your event; ask for the education or news editor if you're seeking coverage. When contacting TV and radio stations, ask for the station manager if you're seeking sponsorship, and the news director or assignment editor if you're seeking coverage. Be sure to contact parents as well as the public relations office in your school or your school district (or perhaps the PR office of a local college or university) for agency contacts, press lists, and introductions. Other nonprofit agencies might have press lists or contacts they may be willing to share as well.

Other helpful resources include *Editor and Publisher*, *Bacon's Guides to TV and Newspapers*, your Yellow Pages, local college or university journalism professors and students, and library listings. You may also wish to visit local TV and radio stations and newspapers in person.

When developing your media list, be strategic and target two or three media sources that would be "big wins," then proceed to smaller venues. Don't forget the weeklies. Weekly newspapers, including shopper's guides, offer stories of interest to the local community. They are a major source of information for people outside metropolitan areas and it is usually easier to place stories in these publications.

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## **2. Invite members of the local media not only to cover your event, but to sponsor your event or serve as your partner.**

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Don't wait until everything is in place. Involve all media in the early stages of planning. As mentioned in Method 1, you may want to contact the Newspapers in Education Coordinator at your local newspapers. NIE Coordinators have helped past mock election efforts in many ways, such as providing promotional and curriculum materials; co-coordinating and sponsoring districtwide or citywide projects and events; marketing the program to schools, educators, public officials, and the public; and hosting workshops. In some states a larger newspaper or the Newspaper in Education Coordinator sponsors projects statewide. Call your NIE Coordinator and/or publisher to explore possible sponsorship or to get help promoting your mock election events. (It is important to note that your NIE Coordinator works in the marketing department of the newspaper, and not the editorial department.)

In addition to sponsoring or providing your event with coverage, the media can get involved in many other ways. Media members could sponsor a series of career education speeches or orientations. They could also provide classroom or school speakers to explain how television determines election winners, how newscasters and journalists prepare for interviews and cover campaigns, or how computers are used in today's elections. In preparation for developing their own media skills, students could observe newscasters interviewing candidates. You could also ask the media to encourage local citizenship education and mock election activities by holding station fairs and/or conducting polls.

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### 3. Draft and send out press releases and/or media kits.

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Assign students the task of drafting press releases for upcoming mock election activities. Explain that the purpose of a press release is to convince a news organization that your event is worth covering. Suggest or have them develop their own unique “angles” or “hooks” to introduce their press releases. Suggest that students include facts to entice the press to their event, such as special guests (e.g., state or local candidates) who might be attending the event. If students have difficulty preparing their releases, have them ask themselves, “What makes this event interesting? Why/how is this event different from other events? How does it tie in with current trends? How does this project enhance the community?”

Review the elements of a good press release:

- ★ **the lead**—the who, what, when and where of a story
- ★ **the tie-in**—background information that explains the why and how
- ★ **the body**—additional details about an event in descending order of their importance so an editor can cut the story from the bottom without losing vital information

Also review the standard format of a press release:

- ★ Use standard letter-sized paper.
- ★ Double-space the text.
- ★ Begin the headline one-fourth of the way down the page. Use all caps. Make sure the headline is no longer than two lines long.
- ★ Begin the text one-half of the way down the page. (This gives the editor room to rewrite the headline or give instructions).
- ★ Leave 1 1/4-inch margins on the left and right hand side of every page and 1 1/2-inch margins on the top of every page except the first (to give the editor room to write comments).

- ★ Type “-MORE-” at the bottom of each page of continuing text and “-30-,” “##,” or “-END-” at the end of the release. (Note: press releases generally do not exceed two pages.)
- ★ Number each page in the upper left-hand corner.
- ★ Include a name and number to contact for more information at the top of the first page.

Once students’ drafts are complete, help them analyze each other’s work—will a news editor find this story compelling? Why or why not? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this piece? What are the main messages you get from this press release? (See *Figure A* for an example of an effective press release.)

Along with your press release, you may also wish to include photos that help tell the story of your event. Busy editors may skim text but a photo can tell your entire story in one glance. Black-and-white glossy photos are best for print media, color for TV media. Try to include action shots that convey energy and enthusiasm, such as students campaigning, interviewing candidates, or conducting get-out-the-vote activities. Perhaps student photographers would include their own work. (Note: Send copies of photos, as any photos you send will probably not be returned to you.)

Before submitting the materials to the media, make sure students have proofread the press release and checked it for accuracy (facts, punctuation, spelling). Mail your class’s release about 10 days prior to the event and allow one or two extra days for late mail delivery. For monthly magazines, materials should be sent in three months ahead of the issue date and three to four weeks ahead of the event date for community bulletin boards. Deadlines for TV and radio stations vary, so call your local TV and radio stations for further information.

**Baltimore City Public Schools**  
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**Office of Public Relations**  
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**For Immediate Release**  
October 7, 2000

**ASSOCIATED STUDENT CONGRESS OF BALTIMORE CITY ANNOUNCES  
PRESIDENTIAL MOCK ELECTION PROJECT 2000**

The Associated Student Congress of Baltimore City (ASCBC), in cooperation with the Maryland Association of Student Councils (MASC), will hold a press conference on Tuesday, October 13, 2000, to announce the statewide Presidential Mock Election Project. The press conference will be held at 10:30 a.m. at the Westside Skill Center Tea Room located at 4501 Edmondson Avenue in Baltimore.

During the press conference Dr. Walter G. Amprey, Superintendent of Baltimore City Public Schools and Dr. Nancy Grasmick, Superintendent of the Maryland State Department of Education, will announce student participation in the 2000 Presidential Mock Election Project. Students from Baltimore City will cast mock ballots for President of the United States on Thursday, November 2, 2000, at Edmonson Senior High School in Baltimore.

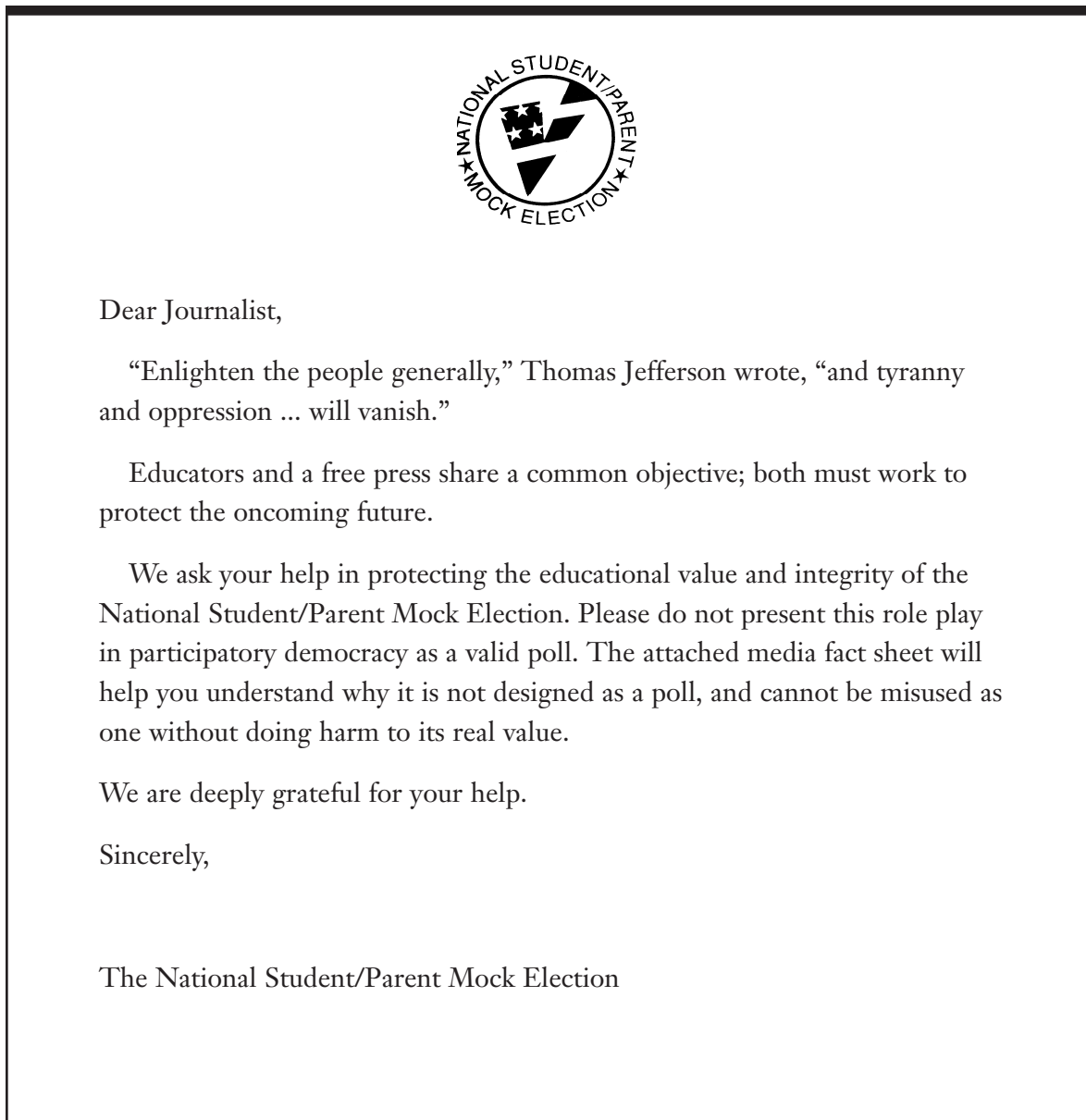
The purpose of the mock election project is to teach high school students to become involved in the election process. Additionally, students are encouraged to study campaign issues and to become active, productive citizens.

For additional information, please contact Terrence Suber, ASCBC, 555-8888, or Marcy Crump, Office of Public Relations, 396-8577.

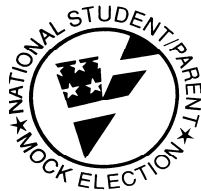
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To make your presentation more eye-catching and informative, you may wish to have students assemble a “Media Information Packet” that includes a press release, background information, the introductory National Student/Parent Election media letter (see Figure B) and fact sheet (see Figure C), and support letters to members of the media. Local media representatives may be willing to send you examples of briefing packets they have received in the past.

Please note: It is critical that the media understand the objectives of the National Student/Parent Mock Election and not mistake it for a prediction of the potential outcome of the real election. We urge you to send the introductory letter and fact sheet along with your press release or story. (The introductory letter below can be copied onto your school’s letterhead if you wish.)



**Figure B**



# MEDIA FACT SHEET

## THE NATIONAL STUDENT/PARENT MOCK ELECTION

### The National Citizenship Education Project

The purpose of the National Student/Parent Mock Election is to turn the sense of the powerlessness that keeps young people, and their parents, too, from going to the polls, into a sense of the power of participation. It is feelings of powerlessness, psychologists point out, that are the root cause of violence. The Center for Action Research (University of Colorado) found the National Student/Parent Mock Election REDUCED feelings of powerlessness. The project uses the motivation of the elections to teach the rule of law instead of the rule of gangs. We seek to help young Americans learn how, in a government “of the people, by the people, and for the people,” they can affect change with votes instead of violence, ballots instead of bullets. We hope to help today’s violence-prone generation learn it does not need a gun to be heard.

The National Student/Parent Mock Election is a citizenship education project that invites every American Student, from kindergarten through college level, parents, and grandparents, too, to participate. It seeks to help all generations become excited, involved, and comfortable with the electoral process.

**It is not, and cannot by any stretch of the imagination be considered to be, a scientific sampling.** The results cannot be used as the basis for an accurate prediction of the election. There is no uniformity of participation, of age levels, of preparation of voters, or of voting strategies.

In some locations parents vote, in others they do not. In some, student voters must register first, in others, they need not. In some, students vote their own choices, in others, their predictions of who the winners will be.

**It is not an exit poll.**

Much of the confusion about the influence of polls arises from a misunderstanding of the difference between exit polls, samplings taken after voters have left the polling booth, and polls taken prior to the national election. Pre-election polls, history has proven over and over again, have no effect whatsoever on elections. If they did, Tom Dewey would have been President! (The scientific and academic research to back this statement is available upon request.) Even if it permitted a scientific sampling, which it does not, the National Student/Parent Mock Election could not influence any election.

The National Student/Parent Mock Election asks the help of the media in using “The Election as Civics Lesson.” It asks the help of the media in passing on the legacy of our democracy to America’s future voters. It asks the media’s help in providing

motivation and recognition for young students and their parents, today’s and tomorrow’s voters. The late Dr. Ralph W. Tyler, director emeritus, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, stated, “Among the basic principles of learning are motivation and reward. Young people gain much greater interest and motivation in activities that get wide recognition. To see that their activities are recognized by the national news media is... exciting and stimulating.”

The National Student/Parent Mock Election is totally nonpartisan. It has had the endorsement of both major national parties. Note that Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr., as chairman of the Republican National Committee, called the National Student/Parent Mock Election “undoubtedly the most innovative and successful enterprise in history for involving our young people in the American political process.” TIME Magazine called it “the largest voter education project ever.” Senator Orrin Hatch called it “not only the largest voter education project ever, but also the largest violence prevention project ever.” Senator Ted Kennedy has said, “It will help us build a stronger nation for the future — and it will be an experience that none of the participants will ever forget.”

The National Student/Parent Mock Election has been funded until 2004-05 by the United States Congress. Both Democratic and Republican governors and/or their spouses have served as honorary chairs or co-chairs of their state’s Mock Election projects. The Council of Chief State School Officers has officially endorsed the project several times, as has the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, etc.

We ask the help of members of the media, and of the educational community, in properly presenting this citizenship education project to the public and carefully avoiding any possibility of misrepresenting it as a prediction. The world’s longest lasting democracy, and “last best hope,” is at stake. As the statistics on voter turnout show us, the risk is great, the dangers of civic illiteracy real.

The President, Senators, Congressmen, legislators and voters of tomorrow are all to be found in the classrooms of today.

Won’t you help us pass the torch to an educated and informed generation, one responsible for leading our nation in the 21st century?

Finally, be sure to contact the news wire services, specifically the Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI). Stories on the “wires” will go directly into every important newsroom in your area and can help increase your chances of placement. Send an advisory (see Figure D) to the AP Calendar at the AP and/or the UPI Advisor at UPI. (See the Resources section in the back of this guide for addresses).

While your students are creating their press releases and media kits, you may wish to intertwine lessons about the responsibility of the press to cover issues and events that may not be exciting or captivating to the public. Explore why this is important. Other relevant lessons might include an analysis of the kinds of stories that make the news every day, or instructions for locating and researching samples of successful press releases and stories.



**To:** UPI Daybook (or AP calendar)

(Address)

**From:** The League of Women Voters

June 9–15

The League of Women Voters in conjunction with the National Student/Parent Mock Election will sponsor a “get-out-the-vote” campaign the week of June 9–15. The campaign will kick off at Oak Grove Park on Sunday, June 9, with speeches by local candidates from 1–3 P.M. followed by refreshments and live music from 3–6 P.M. Voter registration booths will be open all day. Interested volunteers should contact Jane Leavey at 246/555-3274.

**Figure D**

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#### **4. Follow up with phone calls to ensure that your information has arrived and been forwarded to the right person.**

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The media will not come looking for you unless you find them and tell them your story. After your information is mailed, have students follow up with their media contacts to make sure a) that the releases were received and b) that reporters can attend the event. When speaking with a reporter, be succinct and make your event sound important. If a reporter cannot attend the event, suggest that students ask him or her for the name and number of a reporter who might be able to attend, and then have students follow up with their new contacts.

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#### **5. Conduct editorial briefings for more elaborate events.**

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Another way to inform the media about citywide or districtwide mock election events is to conduct—or arrange for students to conduct—a series of editorial briefings.

Editorial briefings inform media representatives about an event or organization, usually take place at the editor's office, and in this case, can help deepen media understanding of and interest in the mock election.

To organize an editorial briefing, call your media contacts and ask to set up a briefing at their convenience. With your students, prepare a presentation that tells reporters about the mock election, its objectives and purposes, its relevance to the community and importance to students, and what has been done locally in past years. Follow up your meeting with written information about the mock election that can be referenced by reporters for accuracy or to brief other reporters.

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#### **6. Consider other ways the media can help you get the word out.**

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In addition to writing or reporting the details of your event, the media can help get the word out in other ways, such as:

- ★ public-service announcements (PSAs).
- ★ community calendars.
- ★ TV and radio station editorials.

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##### **A. PUBLIC-SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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All TV and radio stations are required by law to provide free air time to public service organizations. You might consider developing a PSA to help get the word out about your mock election event. Contact the public-service or station manager at your local TV or radio station (also try local public access stations) and request a meeting to determine what the station's PSA specifications are and if they can help you produce your spot. When developing a PSA, you probably want to develop a 10-second spot (approximately 25 words), a 30-second spot (approximately 75 words), or a 60-second spot (approximately 150 words). The editor at the station may also be able to help you edit your PSA into all three of those formats. Also keep the following guidelines in mind:

- ★ Use short, upbeat sentences and talk in a conversational tone.
- ★ Explain how your information can help your listener/viewer.
- ★ Ask for action on the audience's behalf.
- ★ Tell your audience exactly what to do or where to go.
- ★ Instruct your audience to contact your program for more information (and include your name and phone number).

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**B. COMMUNITY CALENDARS**

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Community calendars are brief announcements for community members. Include mock election activities in these types or programs—many public officials listen to these programs to help keep them abreast of what is happening locally. Draft an announcement with the name of the project; the date, time, and location of the event; a brief statement of purpose; and the name and phone number of someone to contact for more information. This announcement should be typed, double-spaced, on standard letter size paper, with one announcement per page. Mail the notice well in advance of the event (three to four weeks) to the public relations director at the TV/radio station or the news editor at your newspaper.

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**C. TV AND RADIO STATION EDITORIALS**

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Station editorials are public discussions of the manager's or editor's views or opinions of a specific issue with a portion of the program allocated to opposing viewpoints. This is a great opportunity to air student debates about the issues or student interviews of opposing candidates. Make sure you are familiar with the station's editorials and understand its objectives and who its target audiences are before you commit to hosting, or having students develop, a segment of the program. To get a list of programs, call the stations and request a viewing schedule or copies of previous programs.

If you decide to participate in a public program, brainstorm and outline ideas with your students before calling the station manager or news editor. Explain how your project will benefit the community, and remember that listeners want entertainment, not just information, and that your visuals need to be colorful and compelling! (See Chapter 6: Organizing Local Cable Call-In Shows.)

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**7. Keep track of any coverage  
your event receives.**

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One week following the event, have students send press members who attended the event a packet of information that contains a thank-you letter, a list of several teachers, administrators and/or students who can speak about the mock election, and additional information for potential follow-up articles. (Giving each media outlet the same people to contact can help avoid confusion and misinformation.) If reporters do not cover the event or publish your story, don't complain—it's a sure way not to get future coverage. Be sure to help students understand why the story may not have been placed, what they can do better next time, and brainstorm other ways of attracting the press.

Remember that you will have some strikeouts. Try not to get frustrated. You are bound to hit some home runs, and that can be fun and rewarding.

# Using Newspapers to Teach About the Election

by Colette Yeich, Newspaper in Education Coordinator  
*The Hartford Courant*

## OBJECTIVES

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Using newspapers in classrooms as primary resources will help students to:

1. gain a deeper understanding of candidates, issues and the election process.
2. study the elections in a context of reality and connectedness to other events.
3. pursue informed discussions about politics and current issues.<sup>1</sup>
4. compare coverage of issues and candidates by different newspapers.
5. strengthen inferential and evaluative comprehension skills.
6. improve analytical reading skills.
7. develop lifetime habits of active participation in the election process and the government.<sup>2</sup>
8. synthesize different sources and writing styles for valuable information.

## METHODS

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Call national and local newspapers to order classroom newspapers. These activities will help enhance students' election learning:

1. Follow and analyze general election news coverage.
2. Collect and analyze polls.
3. Collect and analyze editorials.
4. Learn how to recognize advertising propaganda techniques.
5. Use the classified ad format to explore the responsibilities of public officials.
6. Use commentary to evaluate the results of the election.

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1. This objective incorporates many suggestions of the new National Standards for Civics and Government. Among others, review the standards suggestions about the relationship—both current and historical—of the United States to other countries. See the new standards, Section IV.

2. Two sections of the new standards discuss this objective. Guidelines regarding how students can participate in the political system can be found in the new standards, Section V. Guidelines regarding how citizens can take part in civic life can also be found in the new standards, Section V.

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## 1. Follow and analyze general election news coverage.

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### A. DOCUMENT CANDIDATES, ISSUES, AND EVENTS.

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Create a timeline documenting the most important events leading up to the election, or a candidate collage of headlines, photos, political cartoons, quotes, and campaign promises from newspapers, magazines, and campaign materials. Include party symbols, political jargon, names of special-interest groups, and national and domestic issues.

### B. TRACK CANDIDATE TRAVELS.

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Encourage students to track a candidate's travels on a U.S. map, using newspaper articles. What states do candidates visit most often and why? Is there a correlation between the number of visits to one state and the number of electoral votes allowed? When do candidates plan their visits and why?

### C. EXAMINE THE ISSUES.

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Using articles about candidates and the election, underline all references to campaign issues and investigate each candidate's stand on the issues. Explore such questions as: Are there major differences of opinion or just differences in approach? Does the candidate criticize the opponent rather than address the issue? On what issues do candidates take a strong position and why? Do candidates hedge on certain issues because of special-interest groups? Do their positions change when addressing different regions of the country? How does one candidate's beliefs about a given issue differ from another candidate's? Do candidates offer specific solutions to a problem or speak in generalities? How do these issues directly affect you, your family or your community? With whom are you aligned? With whom are your family members aligned? How do your opinions differ from the opinions of your family? Why? Who do you think special-interest groups (such as environmentalists, religious organizations, business people, ethnic groups) will support and why? How do reports about the same candidate or issue differ from newspaper to newspaper?

Using posterboard, develop a classroom chart of such topics as candidates' positions on issues, your class's position on the issues and/or candidates, and appeal of the candidates to special-interest groups.

### D. DEBATE THE ISSUES.

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Host a classroom debate on the pros and cons of an issue or candidate based on newspaper coverage. Divide the classroom into sympathizers and nonsympathizers. As the debate continues, students should move freely to whichever side influences them most. Which issues and tactics were most compelling? The least? What would convince the staunch opponents or supporters to switch sides? Ask students to explore with family members evidence that would persuade them to change sides. Write a press release about the debate and submit it to your local newspaper. (For more information, see Chapter 4: Involving Print and Electronic Media.)

### E. MONITOR PRE-ELECTION PRESS COVERAGE.

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Tally the amount of coverage each candidate gets preceding the election, including positive and negative articles, cartoons, advertisements, letters to the editor, and photographs. Which candidate received the most coverage (both positive and negative)? The least? How did it affect public opinion? The opinions of your family members? Which candidates did the newspaper endorse? Compare newspaper articles with TV news and ads about the same candidate. Are the images portrayed in each medium complementary or contradictory? Compare coverage of the same candidate in different newspapers. Are the news reports the same? Encourage students to write letters to the editor or draw political cartoons about their analysis of candidate press coverage.

### F. COMPARE CANDIDATE PLATFORMS.

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Compare the platforms of candidates within the same party. How are they the same? Different? What do Democrats support and oppose? Republicans? How do these parties differ from minority parties (e.g., the Green Party, Independents)? What effect does a figure like Ross Perot have on the major parties and their platforms?

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## **2. Collect and analyze polls.**

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Collect and analyze polls and surveys from various newspapers over several weeks and discuss their value and purpose. Who was sampled? Were the questions leading or objective? What is the relevance of polls to the outcome of the real election? How do polls differ or reinforce each other? How do recent polls differ from earlier polls? Why are they similar or different? What events have impacted a candidate's position in the polls? If the election were to be held today, how would your class/grade/school/family vote? Have students design a poll and question their schoolmates or family members. What is the difference between an objective question and one that prejudices the results? What is a "scientific sampling"? Polls are often interpreted by the public as indicators of which candidate will win an election. Is there any way an election winner can always be predicted? What is the difference between a preliminary poll and an exit poll? Compare past polls and actual election results. Which newspaper carried a headline declaring Thomas Dewey the winner of the Presidency in 1948? Why? Who actually won?

Suggest that students compile their findings and write a news article (for a school or community newspaper) about their results and how the results must be interpreted.

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## **3. Collect and analyze editorials.**

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Clip and post newspaper editorials on a bulletin board. What is the difference between an editorial and a news article? Analyze the contents by highlighting the editor's position, circling issues, underlining the facts, placing X's beside negative comments, boxing opinions, and starring solutions. Encourage students to respond to editorials with their own letters to the editor. Display on a bulletin board and use as a basis for discussion or debate.

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## **4. Learn how to recognize advertising propaganda techniques.**

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Collect campaign ads from different candidates. Review advertising propaganda techniques, such as glittering generalities, testimonials, and the "bandwagon" and "plainfolks" approaches. Which techniques can students recognize in campaign ads? What is the target audience? Is the advertisement effective, why or why not? Using clippings from newspapers (cartoons, headlines, articles, photos), create original campaign ads and have the class analyze each product. What propaganda techniques were used? To whom will this ad appeal and why? How could the ad be improved?

Encourage students to explore advertising propaganda techniques with their family members. Which techniques are used for different family members? When/where are these messages most prevalent (i.e., at what times on television, in what sections of the newspaper)?

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## **5. Use the classified ad format to explore the responsibilities of public officials.**

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Study the general format of classified ads as well as the responsibilities, privileges, experience, and salaries of national and local public officials. Discuss the duties, privileges, and compensation of public officials such as the President, Governor, and Secretary of State, and write classified employment ads for their positions.

What qualifications must a responsible journalist bring to the job? Write an ad for a news reporter, an editorial writer, a cartoonist, or a managing editor.

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## **6. Use commentary to evaluate election results.**

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Compare the results of the mock election with the results of the real election. In what ways are they similar or different and why? Which issues had the greatest impact on the election (both mock and real) and why? Using both pre-election and post-election press for references, did the candidates' messages remain consistent throughout the campaign? How accurate were the published polls? What efforts are the elected candidates making to fulfill campaign promises? What role did the press have in the success or failure of each candidate?

# Organizing Local Cable Call-in Shows

by Doris Freeling, Social Studies Supervisor  
Dallas Independent School District  
Dallas, Texas

## OBJECTIVES

The primary purpose for organizing a mock election television or radio program is to get students involved with their community in a real-world, life experience. In the process of developing their own television and/or radio programs, students will:

1. explore the role of the media in informing Americans about domestic and world affairs and foreign policies.<sup>1</sup>
2. identify opportunities to participate in the democratic process.<sup>2</sup>
3. discover the influence of the media on American political life.
4. objectively analyze TV programs, reports, and news.
5. survey the responsibility of the media to accurately represent all sides of the issues/candidates.
6. develop organizational and creative thinking skills.
7. practice time management, research, and prioritization skills.

## METHODS

The following steps will help you and your students successfully organize a local cable call-in-show:

1. Explore the role of citizens in media.
2. Analyze the media's current coverage of the campaign.
3. Plan and organize your cable call-in show.

**B**y law, public access television and radio stations must provide the public with equal opportunity to develop and produce programming for electronic media. This allows under-represented groups access to television and radio production to express their views and opinions to their communities, thereby extending their First Amendment right to free speech."

1. For the new National Standards for Civics and Government suggestions regarding the process by which foreign policy is developed and influencing factors, see the new standards, Section IV.

2. For the new standards recommendations about the opportunities for citizens to participate in political life, see the new standards, Section V.

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## 1. Explore the role of citizens in media.

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Explore the opportunities that the media provides for individuals to communicate their concerns and positions. Identify opportunities to become involved in the democratic process, such as writing letters to government officials and newspapers. Pose questions such as: How can individuals influence, or have individuals influenced, the government? What is the purpose of petitions and how do they function? What role do protests play in influencing public officials/legislation (e.g., Rosa Parks' role in obtaining equal rights for African Americans)? How did the famous Love Canal community gain the attention of the government? What role did the media play in that incident? How did environmental standards/legislation change as a result?

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## 2. Analyze the media's current coverage of the campaign.

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Compare opposing viewpoints on current issues and/or a candidate's platform using a notebook, bulletin board of press clippings, political cartoons or videotapes of candidate speeches. Explore issues such as U.S. involvement in Bosnia, recent government struggles to balance the budget or social services reform such as resolving unemployment wages. Pose questions such as: What role does the media play in informing the public of domestic and world affairs and foreign policies? Is it adequate? Does the media represent all sides of the issues? How does the liberal perspective, as given by the media or a candidate, differ from the conservative view? What do members of each camp include or omit in their testimonies? How does one candidate's position differ from another on current political issues? How does one candidate use the media to support or undermine another candidate? How can citizens become better informed? How have recent events, both national and international, affected the political climate? How will they affect policy/legislation? What have recent media stories about current issues included in their news reports?

What have they omitted? Why? What constitutes negative advertising? Should the media be responsible for running equal amounts of positive or negative advertising for each candidate? What information is included or omitted in a particular negative ad? How does the media affect the public through advertising (negative or positive) or by taking a certain position on an issue?

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## 3. Plan and organize your cable call-in show.

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Organizing a television program is not difficult, but requires preparation and planning:

- ★ Explore your options.
- ★ Determine the content of your show.
- ★ Determine the format of your show.
- ★ Determine your production needs.
- ★ Assemble a production crew.
- ★ Research candidate and campaign issues.
- ★ Contact public officials.
- ★ Produce your show.
- ★ Select a studio audience.
- ★ Consider the budget.
- ★ Develop a viewer/listener guide.
- ★ Publicize your show.
- ★ Involve the community.
- ★ Attend to detail.
- ★ Follow up.

## **A. EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS.**

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When considering the content (and format) of your program, remember that the possibilities are virtually unlimited! Your only restrictions will be determined by the resources available in your school or your school district. Though this lack of structure may seem overwhelming at first, there are many people and resources that can provide you with help and guidance. Be assured that local public television and radio access stations do not expect you to show up knowing exactly what you want to do—people seldom do! Before involving students, you may want to set up an appointment with a program counselor/planner at your local public television or radio station to discuss your ideas (both content and format) for producing a mock election program. These counselors/planners are public access station employees whose most important job responsibility is to help you focus and achieve your production goals. (Phone numbers for public access stations are usually listed in the Yellow Pages under “Television-Cable” and “Radio Stations and Broadcast Companies.”)

To get an appointment, you may have to become a member of the station. Membership is free but might require that you attend a preliminary orientation of the facilities and a brief explanation of public access media. Once you are an official member, you will have access to all the equipment (cameras, lighting, microphones, sound recording) and space (studios, edit rooms) you will need to produce your program.

## **B. DETERMINE THE CONTENT OF YOUR SHOW.**

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Public access allows you to air any type of programming you want as long as it does not include advertising and is not illegal (your local public access station manager can provide you will legal guidelines for television or radio). This covers an unlimited array of programs such as political viewpoint programs, children’s programs, inspirational programs, home cooking programs, and shopping programs.

To maintain some type of control and liability, the producer of a public access program is typically asked to sign an indemnification form that holds the producer (the person who is responsible for organizing the resources necessary to develop a program) liable for program content. The producer also reserves equipment (and cancels the reservations if necessary), schedules studio and edit time and submits the program to be aired. (In most cases, the producer or executive producer will be you—the teacher—as you are the adult taking responsibility for the project.) By signing this indemnification form, you agree that your program does not contain:

- ★ commercial programming or any material that promotes a product or service.
- ★ unlawful use of copyrighted material.
- ★ a lottery or lottery information.
- ★ slanderous material or an unlawful invasion of privacy.
- ★ material that violates state or federal obscenity laws.

## **C. DETERMINE THE FORMAT OF YOUR SHOW.**

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In addition to discussing possible formats with a program planner/counselor, encourage students to watch other public access or call-in shows to observe format, structure, and timing. What were the most positive/negative elements of the show? What issues were covered? What issues were not included that should have been? Was it well organized? How could the show have been improved? How did this show affect your opinions? How do you think it affected others?

Brainstorm, with students, all the potential ideas for your show. Will your show consist of:

- ★ a panel of political candidates, or students role-playing the candidates, debating election issues while viewers/listeners, from the studio audience or over the phone, react to what was said? (Expert guests knowledgeable in the issues or political analysts might provide additional insight.)

- ★ a mock election convention with student representatives from all schools reporting on the results of mock elections around the district or state? (School results could be tallied and projected on a television screen in the convention facility as well as on the television screen of home viewers. Junior high school students might attend to a phone bank while high school students role-play news anchors and commentators.)
- ★ a student-produced segment of a preexisting local access talk show or political viewpoint show?
- ★ a panel of community leaders, community members, local officials, students and/or parents debating candidate proposals to solve community problems?
- ★ a weekly program designed to inform the public about the election, candidates, and issues? (Each week might feature a different guest speaker such as a political science professor, member of a special interest group, spokesperson for a candidate, or political analyst.)
- ★ a short informational piece about your students' mock election projects, voter registration, or a candidate proposed city ordinance?
- ★ a student panel responding to viewer calls and questions, or a student moderator handling viewers' called-in questions after an interview with a guest or panel of guests?

Create and prioritize a list of all the other things you need to consider in this planning phase, including:

- ★ **personnel.** (Will you need a moderator, panelists, time keepers, hosts for special guests or the public if they are invited, student reporters and photographers, someone to distribute name tags?)
- ★ **program production crew.** (Will your students become trained crew members or will you have to find volunteers?)

- ★ **timing.** (How long should the program be? How much time should be devoted to each candidate/issue?)
- ★ **program scheduling.** (Do you want to schedule your program in a block of programming about the election or randomly during the day? When do you want your program to run: at night so that students can watch or listen to it with their parents or during the day so students can watch or listen to it during class?)
- ★ **time restrictions.** (If necessary, what issues will you include in or omit from the program?)
- ★ **caller questions.** (When will you accept them? throughout the show? only at the end? every five minutes?)
- ★ **interests you are representing.** (education, youth, business, rural or urban consumers?)
- ★ **nonpartisan presentation of the issues and/or candidates.** (Remember that the National Student/Parent Mock Election is a nonpartisan organization and all candidates must be given equal representation.)

Finally, you need to decide if you want to tape your program or host it live. Taped shows are far easier as you can rehearse the program, correct mistakes, and add or delete from the content as necessary. Taped programs also provide students with additional educational opportunities because they not only learn technical skills such as editing, but they also learn to compromise and cooperate as they develop a final program.

#### **D. DETERMINE YOUR PRODUCTION NEEDS.**

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Once you have decided on a format, make another appointment with a program counselor/planner from your local access station—perhaps he or she could come to your class. In this meeting, you should decide exactly what you need to produce your program—equipment, crew, timeline, facilities, and so on.

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## **E. ASSEMBLE A PRODUCTION CREW.**

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You will need to assemble a crew for your program that includes technical assistants such as camera operators, sound recorders, and lighting specialists. Many times the local cable or radio access station can provide you with a list of volunteers who might work on your crew. Or, perhaps your students will want to certify themselves for these positions by taking technical classes from the local access station.

## **F. RESEARCH CANDIDATES AND CAMPAIGNS ISSUES.**

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In addition to using the library, encourage students to request campaign materials, collect newspaper clippings and use the Internet. The Mock Election's Internet Home Page, located at [www.nationalmockelection.org](http://www.nationalmockelection.org), can help students research the candidates and election issues, using on-line resources.

You may wish to ask a campaign staffer to come speak to students about a candidate's campaign platform. Emphasize the importance of understanding the complete picture and incorporating all viewpoints into research and reporting, and help students understand how their own biases and perspectives may affect their viewpoint.

## **G. CONTACT PUBLIC OFFICIALS.**

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If you plan to involve public officials, be sure to invite them as soon as possible. (For more information about how to contact public officials, see Chapter 8: Organizing Speeches and Debates Before Students and Parents by Local Candidates or Stand-ins for Candidates.)

## **H. PRODUCE YOUR SHOW.**

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What approach or style do you want to utilize: documentary, informational, dramatic or innovative? What kinds of video direction will you need: camera moves, shot composition, special effects, title/credits, graphics? Will the audio component of your program consist of one or more of the following: narration, voice-over, music, natural sound, or sound effects? The only approach that is right is the one that works best for you.

However, we have discovered a few things that may be of help to you:

- ★ An informational format is usually most effective (unless you have extensive television production experience) because it is simple and straightforward.
- ★ Using more than one camera to record your program usually produces more difficulties than rewards because it's very difficult to coordinate two cameras, multiple cameras take up valuable space, and editing tape from two different cameras is extremely time consuming.
- ★ Save sound effects, narration, and voice-overs for the end. They are easy to lay into the tape and are often influenced by the visual content of the tape or the final outcome of the tape.
- ★ Begin the program with an establishing shot. The establishing shot is designed to familiarize viewers with the set, the audience and where the program is taking place. Also include a 30–60 second introduction at the beginning of the program that lists your objectives, topic, guests, and announce if audience members or members of the public will be participating.
- ★ It's best to develop a 30-minute program because most local access stations have a greater number of 30-minute time slots available than 60-minute time slots. Also consider that a) for every 10 minutes of taping, you will use about 1 minute in your final show, and b) the average attention span of a television viewer/radio listener is approximately 9 minutes.
- ★ Credits can be listed at the beginning or the end of the program.
- ★ The final tape (after editing, sound, and graphics are completed) should begin with the following items, in order: 30–60 seconds of color bars and tone (available from your local access station); a program slate that lists the name, and exact length of the program, the audio channel information, and the producer's name and phone number; a visual/audio countdown from 3–10; two seconds of blank black screen or silence; the program; and 60 seconds of a blank black screen or silence.

- ★ The advantage of television is that it can take viewers closer to the subject than they can often get on their own. For this reason, you should strive for a warm, intimate tone with close-up shots of candidates, students, the moderator, the audience, and set decorations such as the flag or maps.
- ★ If you include graphics in a television production (credits or titles of guests), they should remain on screen long enough for a viewer to read them twice. (Graphics also need to fit within a border that measures 10% of the screen on all sides. This is to accommodate differences in television screens.
- ★ Look directly into the camera as if you were looking directly into someone's eyes as you are having a conversation with them.

At this stage of the process, a script must be developed to guide the development and implementation of your program. Consider these points when developing your script:

- ★ What will your script look like: a two-column format, story board, shot list, outline, or all of the above? Developing a two-column script (see *Figure E*) is very efficient because the script incorporates direction for the moderators, guests, camera operators, sound operators, and set designers rather than having to create separate directions for each component of the production. Be sure to give a copy of the script to all participants including the production crew, students, directors, the local access station, and special guests.
- ★ When talking on camera or radio, always use singular pronouns. When viewers/listeners hear "you," they think "me"; when viewers/listeners hear "you all," viewers think "them."

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#### **I. SELECT A STUDIO AUDIENCE.**

If you want to include others in the studio audience besides students, whom will you invite? Candidates, mock election sponsors, schools from other districts/areas, parents, the public, local businesses and organizations, or party members? Who will send out invitations and thank-you letters to participants? students, sponsors, a cooperating organization?

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#### **J. CONSIDER THE BUDGET.**

Because local access television and radio are community services, most (if not all) facility and equipment usage will be free. However, some other items may require minimal funding, such as sound effects and background music, videotapes, costumes and props. Sometimes local access stations offer competitive grants for these items so be sure to check with a station program/counselor at the local access TV or radio station.

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#### **K. DEVELOP A VIEWER/ LISTENER GUIDE.**

Consider developing a viewing/listening guide for students with pre- and post-show objectives to stimulate student thinking. The guide might include pre- and post-program discussion questions as well as background information on the candidates and issues. Pre-program questions might be tied to vocabulary development. The questions would stimulate students to think about the issues in the program and help them understand words and/or issues that may be unfamiliar to them. This would strengthen the foundation on which to build new learning.

Post-show questions should be designed to help students develop higher level critical thinking skills and to increase their interest in the voting process. All questions should be related to the topics of the program.

**SAMPLE CABLECAST SCRIPT FROM DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

VIDEO	AUDIO
National Student/Parent Mock Election (still shot)	Music
Student Anchor #1	"Hello. Welcome to the National Student/Parent Mock Election."
Student Anchor #1 Student Anchor #2 Student Anchor #3	"I'm (insert name of Anchor #1) of _____ High School and my co-anchors are (names of Anchor #2) of _____ High School and (name of Anchor #3) of _____ High School."
Student Anchor #1	Give a brief overview of the National Student/Parent Mock Election project. Also mention that Anchor #2 will be keeping them abreast of the election returns from participating schools.
Student Anchor #2 Telephone number (still shot)	"Thanks (name of Anchor #1), that is exactly what I will be doing, but before I begin, let's look again at the telephone number that we want students to use in calling in their schools' results. That number is (insert telephone number). Call in by _____ P.M."
Student Anchor #2	"We have students from our schools who are here recording and tabulating the votes as you call in. Let me introduce them to you."
Student #4	(Student's name) _____ High School
Student #5	(Student's name) _____ Middle School
Student #6	(Student's name) _____ Middle School
Student #7	(Student's name) _____ Elementary School
Student #8	(Student's name) _____ Middle School

**Figure E**

VIDEO	AUDIO
Student Anchor #2 Election returns on monitor, by schools (still shot)	"Students began calling in their election returns ___ minutes ago, so lets go directly to the election return board to see how the schools are voting."
Student Anchor #3	Looking at Anchor #1: "You know (name of Anchor #1) this mock election is (give information on the mock election and its value. Talk about its outcomes.)"
Highlights of the Mock Election Program	Anchor #3 reads mock election program highlights as they appear on TV.
Student Anchor #1	"Let's go to (name of Anchor #2) for an update on the returns."
Student Anchor #2  Election returns on monitor	"Okay! More schools have called in."  Anchor #2 reads election returns as they appear on TV
Student Anchor #1	"For the past week or two, students in our schools have been involved in voter education. Students have learned that voting is a right as well as a responsibility.  As citizens of the United States, we have many rights.  (Name of Student #9) of _____ High School is going to tell us about the foundation of these rights that we have as citizens. (Name of Student #9)"
Student # 9 _____ High School (Prerecorded)	A prerecorded story on the Bill of Rights— (3–5 minutes)
Student Anchor #1 Student Anchor #3	Very brief interaction between Anchor #1 and #3 on what Student #9 said.
Student Anchor #1	Looking in the direction of the election return board: "It's time for another update on election returns from the schools."

VIDEO	AUDIO
Student Anchor #2	"Let's look at the update."
Election returns on the monitor (still shots)	Anchor #2 reads returns as they appear on TV.
Student Anchor #2	(Gives the number of minutes left for students to call in their voting results.)
Student Anchor #3	"Going to the polls to vote in this mock election program is not the first time students of _____ have exercised their right to vote in this way. Students of _____ voted in the 1998 National Student/Parent mock election. (Name of Student #10) of _____ High School looks at the Mock Election program from a historical perspective. (Name of Student #10.)"
Student #10 _____ High School (Prerecorded)	A prerecorded story on the National Student/Parent Mock Election History. (3 minutes)
Student Anchor #1	"Remember to vote on November 7, this coming Tuesday." (This is an announcement for parents and others who can vote in the real election.)
Student Anchor #3	"In addition to voting, we have other responsibilities as citizens."
Student Anchor #1	<p>"That's true. It is our responsibility to know the law and to uphold it, and to help make our schools and communities safe.</p> <p>"And many students in our schools are getting proactive in doing just that—learning about the law and the function of the court, and speaking out against crime.</p> <p>Let's go to _____ High School and meet the 2000 Mock Trial Team and _____ High School where (name of Student #11) will tell us about a project at _____ High School called Teens Against Crime." (The intent here is to correlate other citizenship-related programs with the mock election.)"</p>

VIDEO	AUDIO
<p>_____ High School 2000 Mock Trial Team Prerecorded</p>	<p>Team talks about the Mock Trial Competition and its value for students. (prerecorded)—3–4 minutes.</p>
<p>Student Anchor #1</p>	<p>"Let's go to (name of Anchor #2) for an analysis of the votes. (Name of Anchor #2)."</p>
<p>Student Anchor #2</p>	<p>Gives total number of votes from all schools.</p>
<p>Voting results on monitor. (still shots)</p>	<p>Anchor #2 reads results as they appear on TV.</p>
<p>Student Anchor #3 and #1</p>	<p>Brief interaction about election results.</p>
<p>Student Anchor #3</p>	<p>"Remember to vote on Tuesday. (This is an announcement for parents and others who can vote in the real election.) Let's go to _____ High School where (name of Student #12) will tell you where you can vote on _____." (Again, this is information for parents, et al.)</p>
<p>Student #12 _____ High School (Prerecorded)</p>	<p>3 Minutes Contrast the opportunity of voting and the accessibility of the polls today with long ago. The point to make is that there is no excuse for not voting. Read polling places as they appear on the TV. (This is for parents and others who can vote in the real election.)</p>
<p>Student Anchors #2, #1 and #3</p>	<p>Interaction among the three anchors about the value of the mock election experience.</p>
<p>Student Anchor #1</p>	<p>"Remember, voting is a right as well as a responsibility. Thank you for joining us in this cable show on the National Student/Parent Mock Election."</p>
<p>ALL students on stage:</p>	<p>MUSIC</p>
<p>CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</p> <p>Stand up, shake hands, laugh, talk.</p> <p>SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL TEACHERS Written by: _____ A Production of: _____</p>	<p>MUSIC</p> <p>MUSIC</p> <p>MUSIC</p> <p>MUSIC</p>

## **L. PUBLICIZE YOUR PROGRAM.**

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Public involvement in your program—whether attendance, call-in questions or participation— will enhance your program tremendously. To help get the word out about your program, consider involving print and electronic media (See Chapter 4), announcing the program on other local access programs or community bulletin boards, and having students design and distribute flyers and the viewers guide.

Your viewership will also increase proportionally to the number of people you involve in your show. Be sure to invite people to the taping or rehearsing of your show such as representatives from cooperating organizations, local sponsors or contributors, local elected officials, other teachers and/or students, and the school administration. You may want to consider serving refreshments at the taping/ rehearsal, as well as having several spokespeople who can discuss mock election goals and activities with guests.

## **M. INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY.**

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Local businesses may be able to provide recording tapes for your program, decorations for a television set, preprinted invitations to the event, refreshments for a reception, name tags for special guests, or— most importantly—advertising.

If you have the budget, student-created advertisements can help get the word out and encourage community participation. If funds are limited, consider public service announcements available from local TV and radio stations, flyers, announcements at meetings of local organizations, community newspapers, and press releases.

Student involvement in this process can help you reach more community members and will help students prioritize and manage their time and efforts (particularly if, as a home work assignment, they are asked to approach two local businesses).

## **N. ATTEND TO DETAIL.**

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Prior to the event, make sure all your bases are covered. Ask students to make lists of all the program details and who will be responsible for each: Where will the audience/panel sit, where will the phone bank be located, who will run the phone bank, who will answer the phones, who will keep time/enforce time limits, who will oversee the lighting and sound system, and who will decorate the stage?

## **O. FOLLOW UP.**

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After the event, consider asking students to write thank-you letters to all participants. Also encourage them to remain up-to-date on the issues and candidates. Perhaps students can organize another show closer to election time or even after the elections are over.

# Organizing School Forums on the National Issues to Be Voted On

by Pat Dobbs, Social Studies Teacher  
Crockett High School, Austin, Texas

## OBJECTIVES

Forums to discuss national issues will help students to:

1. think objectively and critically about politics and current issues.<sup>1</sup>
2. understand citizens' rights to differences of opinion.<sup>2</sup>
3. cast an informed vote (in the mock election and later in real elections) based on a solid informational foundation about the election issues and candidates' positions on the issues.
4. improve comprehension and debating skills.<sup>3</sup>
4. enhance planning and organizational skills.
6. involve family and community members in school activities.

## METHODS

Although voters rarely have the opportunity to vote on national issues, discussing the issues and each candidate's position on the issues (perhaps via an issues forum) is an ideal way to enhance knowledgeable participation in the electoral process.

The necessary ingredients for producing a successful issues forum are explained below. Although the list is sequential, you may not proceed exactly in this order.

1. Research issues and candidates.
2. Determine the scope of your forum.
3. Pick a date.
4. Pick a place.
5. Assess your resources.

★ According to a survey conducted by *The Washington Post*, the Kaiser Foundation, and Harvard University, of those questioned:

- ★ two-thirds did not know the name or party affiliation of the representative from their congressional district.
- ★ 40% could not correctly name the Vice President.
- ★ two-thirds did not know the name of the U.S. Senate majority leader.
- ★ almost half (46%) could not name the Speaker of the House.

Public discussions of current political issues and candidates, such as school forums, can help reverse that trend among America's future voters.

1. The new National Standards for Civics and Government suggest that students be knowledgeable of many concepts related to civics and government including American political culture, liberalism, and republicanism, and conflicts among values and principles in American politics. Student discussions of election issues can be broadened to include how the issues affect students directly as well as how the issues harmonize or conflict with the American concept of democracy. See the new standards, Section IV.

2. This requires study of the most basic values and principals of American democracy. See the new standards, Section II.

3. The new National Standards suggest that students must be able to undertake thoughtful and tolerant discourse regarding American politics. See the new standards, Section V.

6. Delegate tasks.
7. Involve the community.
8. Enlist parents/volunteers.
9. Commit celebrities.
10. Invite the public.
11. Contact the media.
12. Hold the forum.
13. Thank the participants.

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## 1. Research issues and candidates.

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Newspapers, magazines, television, and radio are ideal information sources for an upcoming election. Campaign materials can also be useful. (Also see the mock election's Web site page located at <http://www.nationalmockelection.org>.) A useful way to focus students is to have them create a weekly notebook of newspaper clippings that summarize and analyze election-related events. Students can also make cartoons depicting their views of the candidates and issues.

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## 2. Determine the scope of your forum.

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How many issues or candidates do you want to cover? How much time will be allotted to each? If you limit the issues and/or number of candidates, a forum might be held in a regular classroom during a regular class period. However, a large slate of candidates/issues will require a longer, more complex meeting in a larger setting.

At this stage it is helpful to encourage students to form small groups, with one student in each group taking notes, and brainstorm the nature of a successful forum and what is necessary to accomplish a successful forum. This technique will reveal issues you might not think of otherwise.

Most likely you will need a moderator to keep the event equitable and on task. To locate potential moderators, contact resources such as school faculty members, the League of Women Voters, staff members of local colleges or universities, local TV and radio stations, and newspapers.

If a student panel is to ask the questions, the composition, selection, and preparation of that panel is paramount. If questions are to be taken from the

floor, then an orderly process has to be pre-determined and implemented. Consider logistical questions, such as: "Where will the candidates, students, audience, and moderator sit?"; "How much time will be allotted to statements, questions, and answers?"; and "What will be the physical layout of furniture, sound equipment, microphones, and lighting?"

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## 3. Pick a date.

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Before choosing a date, consult others about potential dates for the issues forum to minimize conflicts with other community or school events. You may also wish to pass a list of possible dates by any special guests you wish to invite, such as candidates or a moderator, and select a date that is most convenient to all participants.

Once you have set the date, it becomes the target for all preparation and planning. Like an election or a military campaign, a successful school forum requires that certain things happen in a particular order at a specified time to reach the desired outcome. The key to this is to create a schedule by working backward from the date you plan to hold the forum.

A useful tool at this stage is a large desk calendar that has space for notes around each date. Mark down important dates (such as meetings and rehearsals) leading up to your forum on the calendar and display it where your students can refer to it. If necessary, keep one for yourself as a backup.

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## 4. Pick a place.

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Will you host your event in a public or private institution such as a school auditorium, gymnasium, large classroom, shopping mall, public library, federal building, college or university, or a corporate building? Many facilities are available for modest fees or for free as a public service. Restroom availability, refreshments, parking, access to good public transportation and a location central to your target audience are other important considerations. You may also wish to consider a hospitality room (near the facility for your event) for special guests, such as candidates and their staffs.

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## 5. Assess your resources.

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Resources are anything you can use to accomplish your goal. In a school forum, paper and pencils may be more important than sophisticated computers with electronic presentation devices. (Above all, the most important resources are the people resources—your students—who will plan, prepare, work, facilitate, and ultimately learn from the experience.) When making a list of resources, ask yourself: “What are we trying to do and what do we need to do it?”

Examples of resources include: money, office supplies of all types, copying equipment, faxes, telephones, cellular phones, computers/word processing machines, E-mail, U.S. Mail, internal distribution systems (such as school mail and/or office boxes), video cameras, VCRs, televisions, public address systems, two-way radios, recorders, community spaces (such as cafeterias, meeting rooms, auditoriums), lecterns, tables, chairs, stages, podiums, access to restrooms, and refreshments. The tools you use may be as much a matter of appropriateness as availability. For example, a box of index cards may be just as effective as a computer data base for keeping track of guests.

When accessing resources, you may need to rely on others not otherwise connected with your forum (a building manager, a sound technician, etc.). It is useful to contact and develop a relationship with these people early in the process to ensure that your forum will run smoothly.

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## 6. Delegate tasks.

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You can't do all that needs to be done by yourself. Think of yourself as a shepherd. You are trying to move a group of people toward a common goal. Divide your class into small groups and assign tasks. Solicit help from not only your students, but from outside resources such as fellow teachers, parents, your administration, the media, building security and custodians.

Student groups could be organized to take charge of the following tasks:

- ★ researching the issues to be discussed
- ★ contacting and inviting participants
- ★ contacting the media
- ★ working with community members and organizations
- ★ coordinating volunteers at the event
- ★ thanking participants

As you delegate tasks, encourage students to aggressively follow up with their assignments. If a group sends a fax or mails press releases to the media, for example, have them follow up with phone calls. If a group is responsible for reserving a location, make sure they call to confirm or receive a written confirmation. Point out that most of what you are attempting to do requires communicating clearly and as often as possible to the people you expect to respond and participate.

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## 7. Involve the community.

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Community involvement can make your forum a media event. Volunteers from civic groups such as the League of Women Voters, a neighborhood group, the PTA/PTSA, a local civic club, and the Optimists can mean sponsorship of, participation in, and community/media recognition for your forum.

If you have a budget, consider placing ads for your event in neighborhood publications such as newspapers, newsletters, the school paper or on local radio. In the absence of money, you must rely on networking, press releases, and public service announcements. Handbills and posters can be highly effective (and organized by students). Many places and organizations have bulletin boards, both electronic and traditional, where your event can be posted. (Chapter 4 of this guide has more detailed information about involving the media in mock election events.)

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## **8. Enlist parents/volunteers.**

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Parents and volunteers are invaluable resources because many have community contacts and because they represent a bridge to the real world that can make your forum relevant to your students. Invite parents to assist and attend. Because parents are taxpayers and voters they may be very good at making up questions for the forum. Teachers in your vertical team (feeder/receiver schools) or other area schools can also be asked to take part. You may simply wish to invite them as members of the community, or ask them to assist in such ways as keeping lists for each school, giving extra credit to students who attend from those schools, or organizing students from other schools to participate on the panel. You could also ask a local college or university instructor and/or organization to participate.

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## **9. Commit celebrities.**

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Contact candidates as early as possible as their calendars fill quickly as election day approaches. Inform candidates (or their staffs) that they can reach voters at your forum and invite them to bring election materials to distribute to the public. If you get a commitment from a candidate, contact that candidate's opposition and invite him or her to present his or her views on the issues. (It is essential that all candidates and sides of the issue be represented in some way at your forum.) If there are a number of candidates for different offices or issues to be discussed, assign each candidate/issue a time slot. Remember to schedule the arrival of candidates/spokespersons within the appropriate slots, as people with busy itineraries may not have time to attend the entire event.

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## **10. Invite the public.**

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The more you connect your forum to the larger community beyond your classroom and the school, the more involved your students are likely to become and the more they will learn. If you are conducting a candidate or issues forum connected to an upcoming election, consider an invitation list that includes students, parents, community members, the PTSA/PTA, the school staff, civic organizations, and of course, the candidates, their stand-ins, and knowledgeable spokespersons on the issues. Invitations can be sent out via fax, E-mail, U.S. Post, school mail, internal distribution, telephone, paid advertising in newspapers, school papers, radio, TV, handbills, PSAs (public service announcements), and press stories about the event.

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## **11. Contact the media.**

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Getting media coverage for your forum is a matter of identifying the media, obtaining telephone/fax numbers and addresses, and making contact early and often. The Yellow Pages are a useful source of media telephone numbers, but your school district or city public information office (PIO) may have a media list for press releases and public service announcements (PSA). The school district's PIO can be extremely helpful in these matters.

Once you have determined the time, date, and place of your forum and gotten commitment from the major participants, you can begin contacting the press. If your students, parents or other volunteers know people in the media field, ask them if you can use their contacts. (See Chapter 4: Involving Print and Electronic Media.)

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## 12. Hold the forum.

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Students took on a variety of tasks at the planning stage, and they'll also need to be assigned specific tasks for the event itself. You most certainly will want greeters, hosts, and hostesses for the public and the celebrities, and recorders to keep track of sign-in lists and hand out name tags (something else students can prepare). You will need time-keepers to assist the moderator and candidates with predetermined, agreed-to time limits. Student cameramen and interviewers can film interviews with candidates and/or spokespeople and make follow-up tapes for your classroom. (This is a wonderful educational experience for the camera operator(s) as well as the interviewer(s).) A student photographer can also be employed. The school/school district may also have television facilities to record and broadcast your forum. The key here is enlisting these resources early in the preparation.

If you have a place such as a table, shelf or another place accessible to the public, suggest that the various campaigns bring campaign materials for the public. Make sure this information is conveyed to both the public and the campaigns. A student may be assigned to this task.

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## 13. Thank the participants.

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Many people will have contributed to your school forum by the time it is completed. Having students send thank-you notes, letters, or faxes to those who helped with its success brings home the scope of their accomplishments and helps them reflect on what they have learned. (You may have already assigned a student committee to attend to this function.)

Throughout the process, keep in mind that a successful forum is one that involves your students in its planning, promotion, and production. Hands-on learning makes students stakeholders in the outcome. Because modern society is media-driven, the rules of McLuhan's Global Village apply, "Electronic media, the media of our time is an extension of the central nervous system. Today's youth understands this instinctively and lives it mythically and in depth." (*The Medium is the Message*) Generally speaking, the more you connect your event with the outside world, the better your chances for success. If you can produce a media event, a well-attended community function with lots of human interaction that receives recognition from within the school and beyond, and your students feel they had a major role in accomplishing this end, you will have had a successful forum. They, in turn, will learn skills they can never get out of books.

# Organizing Speeches and Debates by Local Candidates or Stand-ins for Candidates

by Shirley Jackson

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Portions of this article have been extensively excerpted with permission from *Inside Debates: A Practical Guide*, by the Commission on Presidential Debates

## OBJECTIVES

Organizing speeches and debates will help students and community members to:

1. increase knowledge of the issues facing America.<sup>1</sup>
2. understand the historical significance of these issues.<sup>2</sup>
3. debate the strengths and weaknesses of the programs offered as solutions to America's problems and the politicians who support them.
4. enhance spontaneous and logical thought processes.
5. express ideas clearly and effectively.
6. apply academic knowledge to life situations.
7. work toward a common goal with peers, school faculty, parents, and the community.
8. learn how to contact public officials.<sup>3</sup>

**D**ebates are the best device we have to inform and involve voters in the political process. Democracy, freedom, and free elections are breaking out across the globe."

—*Inside Debates: A Practical Guide*

1. Regardless of the issues you may choose for debates, the new National Standards for Civics and Government are applicable. For example, the new standards explicitly state that students must have an understanding of the fundamental ideas of American democracy before they can evaluate their responsibilities and the responsibilities that face our nation and its political leaders. See the new standards, Section II.

2. By understanding the historical events that contributed to today's political environment, students are better prepared to discuss the formation and potential success of new policies. For example, by studying the Bill of Rights and the inherent conflict of some individual rights, as stated in the new standards, students are better prepared to discuss contemporary issues related to personal rights. See the new standards, Section V.

3. The new standards also suggest that students learn how to identify and contact public officials by the fourth grade. See the new standards, Section III.

## METHODS

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“In whatever form, debates from the presidential to the local level have become the watershed events of American political campaigns. So if you’re going to put one on, it’s important to think ahead.”<sup>4</sup>

In preparing debates and/or speeches for students and parents, keep the following in mind:

1. Choose a format.
2. Obtain necessary resources.
3. Select participants.
4. Plan ahead.
5. Contact public officials.
6. Choose a site.
7. Invite the audience.
8. Schedule the program.
9. Involve the media.
10. Follow up.

“Please keep in mind that the steps outlined here can also apply to debates that do not feature candidates. Use them to plan debates on public issues or debates for students. The debate format can be adapted to almost any academic subject, and can teach students valuable communications skills.”<sup>5</sup>

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### 1. Choose a format.

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#### A. TYPES OF EVENTS

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A variety of event types, from the simple to the complex, can be used in conducting a student debate or series of speeches. Students can:

- ★ role-play the candidates and give speeches or debate in their names, answering questions posed by a panel of community members and/or parents.
- ★ debate with the candidates who are actually running for local elections, with questions posed by a panel of students and adults.

- ★ role-play candidates giving campaign speeches while an audience of real candidates listens.
- ★ form a panel and ask questions of the actual candidates and let the candidates make campaign speeches or debate each other.
- ★ debate their peers in a classroom setting.
- ★ develop student/parent debate teams to compete against each other.
- ★ debate each other before younger students to help younger students make educated, informed choices (this has become a tradition in Beloit, Wisconsin).

Another option is a Saturday Teen Summit in which several speakers are invited to address a variety of issues. Students attend the event just as they would a conference. They sign in, listen to speeches, attend question-and-answer sessions, and then break for lunch at the school where students can mingle informally with the guest speakers. Participants convene in the afternoon to review and draw resolutions for action. Consider an opening session with a keynote speaker and provide students with name tags and a program so they can attend the sessions that most interest them. Student Council members might act as facilitators, introducing the speakers and taking notes.

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#### B. DEVELOPING FORMATS

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The basic type of event you choose may vary, but the questions below will help determine the format of your event no matter which type you choose.

Today’s debates come in many sizes and shapes. Even if they don’t fit the traditional definition, various formats can show the candidates’ grasp of the issues and their ability to think on their feet. And they offer a distinct alternative to the 30-second television commercials that characterize many campaigns.

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4. “Inside Debates: A Practical Guide” by the Commission on Presidential Debates, page 1.

5. “Inside Debates: A Practical Guide” by the Commission on Presidential Debates, page 1.

Some of the major format questions include:

- ★ **Panel/moderator selection.** If the format you agree upon calls for a moderator and/or panelists, one good way to choose them is for each candidate and the debate sponsor to draw up a list of acceptable names, maybe six for each position. Then you, as the sponsor, could pare the names down to a common list. For panel members and moderator, you might consider journalists rather than people from special interest groups. Journalists are likely to be more objective and more experienced in asking questions in a broadcast setting. But above all, choose a moderator and panelists who have your and the candidates' trust.
- ★ **Topic.** What's the debate going to be about? It can be wide-ranging or confined to just a few issues—education and the economy, for example. If a series of debates is to be held, each one might cover a select group of topics.
- ★ **Length.** How long should the debate be? That will depend on a variety of factors, including whether or not it will be broadcast, the number of participants, and how many debates there will be. We think 90 minutes is just about right in most cases.
- ★ **Opening and closing statements.** Do you want the candidates to have opening and closing statements? They can provide a framework for the debate, and most candidates prefer them. But keep them brief. Consider three minutes for opening and two for closing—that's plenty.
- ★ **Questions and answers.** It's a good idea to set limits for both questions and answers. Panelists in the commission's debates were given 45 seconds for each question. Two minutes for answers, and two for responses by the other candidate, should give each contender enough time to make his or her points and for a broad range of questions to be asked. These time limits can be adjusted if you have multiple candidates. Remember that the length of questions and answers will determine how many questions get asked during the entire debate.
- ★ **Timing.** Timing and control of the opening statements, answers, and responses is critically important, especially in a broadcast debate. It is not a job to be assigned to the moderator—he or she has plenty of other things to worry about. The timer must be a responsible person who is acceptable to all parties. Remember that mistakes in timing can lead to claims of unfairness, the last thing a sponsor needs after the debate. You should also decide how to let the candidates know how much time they still have and when their time is up. Make sure that whatever device you use, either visual or audio, is clear to the candidates.
- ★ **Order of speaking:** Who gets to speak first and who finishes up? Sporting events have long since dealt with that question and offer a good solution. In the 1988 presidential debates, George H.W. Bush and Michael Dukakis agreed to a simple coin toss—the easiest and quickest way to settle the matter. Have more than two candidates? Draw straws or choose another easy selection process. Don't agonize over how to get all the candidates together for this decision. They can send representatives, or it could be done by phone if everyone trusts you.<sup>6</sup>

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6. "Inside Debates: A Practical Guide," by the Commission on Presidential Debates.

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## 2. Obtain necessary resources.

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A partial checklist of budget items would include the following:

- ★ **Debate hall.** Can you use a hall that will be provided free of charge, or will it have to be rented?
- ★ **Furniture.** Do you need to provide a raised platform for the speakers, lecterns, chairs for the audience?
- ★ **Electrical.** Will you need microphones? Additional lights? Additional power sources?
- ★ **Printed materials.** Will you need to print programs, posters, media credentials, or audience tickets? These will not only be helpful in promoting the debate, but will serve as memorable souvenirs afterward.
- ★ **Labor.** It may require professional help to put up and take down some equipment, particularly specialized broadcasting or electrical items. For most things, volunteers can provide invaluable help at no cost. Make sure extra hands are on deck if needed. Remember, you'll need to clean up afterward.
- ★ **Security.** Will you need to provide security if you're using a facility after its normal business hours?
- ★ **Cassettes/transcripts.** If you plan on recording the debate, and offering video cassettes, audio cassettes, or written transcripts, make sure they're figured in ahead of time. You have the option, of course, of charging users for tapes or transcripts in order to cover the cost of producing them.

This list isn't exhaustive, but it will give you a head start. As you'll see, many of these needs can be filled by obtaining facilities and services free of charge, but make sure you get clear agreements ahead of time.<sup>7</sup>

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## 3. Select participants.

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Now, who will participate? As a starting point, in a political debate you may want to include everyone (or stand-ins for everyone) whose name is on the ballot. To some extent, this decision depends on what kind of debate you're hosting. If you're planning a primary debate, you may want to first invite the contenders from one party, then hold a second debate for candidates of the other. The question of fringe candidates is a tough one and best decided on a case-by-case basis. Remember your goal: to get the voters the best information on candidates and issues.

In an issues debate, you could invite representatives from two or more organizations with competing views on the topic to be discussed. Or you could form debate teams—representatives from organizations with one position on an issue can square off against a team from organizations with the opposite position.

Student debates can be structured with students as candidate “stand-ins,” or they can focus on topics of community interest. Consider a student debate on a matter involving local education, for instance, or on a proposition or referendum which may be on the ballot.<sup>8</sup>

At Huntsville High School, the Student Council handles the “nuts and bolts” of the debate. They find adult representatives to form the panel that addresses the “candidates.” Teachers, the Mayor, the Superintendent, university professors, ministers, parents and business leaders all serve in this capacity. Panel members are given the same study materials as the candidates and develop their questions strictly on their own. Student “candidates” are not given the questions in advance, although they are encouraged to draft and place “study guides” on their podiums for reference, if needed.

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7. “Inside Debates: A Practical Guide,” by the Commission on Presidential Debates, pages 2 and 3.

8. “Inside Debates: A Practical Guide” by the Commission on Presidential Debates, page 4.

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## 4. Plan ahead.

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At Huntsville High School, a combined debate, rally, and straw election engages approximately 500 students, local politicians, staff, and parents each year. The event is sponsored by the English and History Departments and the Student Council. During the month preceding the event, both departments teach lessons about election issues, political parties, and candidates. Historical overview and appropriate literary pieces are integral parts of each lesson as are the contemporary events and issues themselves. Knowledgeable speakers (such as college or university professors, insurance agents, and lawyers) are invited to classrooms to provide added insight into specific areas such as economics, religion (Christian, Jewish, Moslem), health insurance, and geriatrics. Novels and short stories are supplemented with the writings of authors such as Jonathan Swift, Richard Wright, and Winston Churchill, as well as with presidential speeches and editorials found in national newspapers, periodicals, and local papers.

An active publicity campaign encourages students willing to act as student representatives of the presidential and gubernatorial candidates to apply. Those selected through a personal interview work closely with a mentor as they prepare to argue the positions of the candidate they will represent. Information on party platforms and candidate positions is gathered from sources such as newspaper and magazine articles, campaign offices, TV interviews, and the Internet. (Students researching issues and candidates can find helpful information on the Mock Election Internet page located at [www.nationalmockelection.org](http://www.nationalmockelection.org).) Students are encouraged to register to be members of state delegations, and students are divided according to the same percentage basis as the electoral college. Following the debate, they cast their votes by state to elect the winners.

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## 5. Contact public officials.

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If you plan to involve real candidates, be sure to invite them well ahead of the event. Organize a student lesson on writing letters to elected officials and candidates and encourage students to draft letters/invitations to public officials or candidates. Make sure students correctly address public officials. For example, a senator is addressed in the salutation as *Dear Senator Smith* and a representative is addressed as *Dear Congressman* or *Congresswoman Jones*. Also note that in the address of the public official (on the outside of the envelope as well as above the letter salutation) the title “Honorable” appears before the name of a Senator or Representative.

In letters to public officials or candidates, highlight the educational and nonpartisan aspects of the mock election and tell each candidate specifically why he or she should attend the event (civic duty, to get the word out, to campaign, to support voter education projects and/or the community). Be sure to let a candidate know if his or her opponent(s) plan to participate. Students should follow up their letters with phone calls to the scheduling coordinators of the respective public officials and candidates.

Next, you and the candidates have to negotiate the details of the debate. In order to make progress on dozens of daily decisions, ask each candidate to name a representative who has the power to speak for him or her. Find out how to contact those representatives quickly, including when they’re on the campaign trail.

In handling negotiations, be firm and be fair. Different candidates have different agendas. The role of the sponsor is particularly important in getting the candidates to agree on a whole range of debate issues. And remember, debates don’t always happen.

What do you need to negotiate? Each of the following format issues will be discussed in the next section, but to give you a partial list:

- ★ selection of a panel of questioners and moderator
- ★ debate topics
- ★ debate length
- ★ length of opening and closing statements
- ★ timing the debate and selecting a timer
- ★ order of speakers

Generally speaking, once decisions have been made on these and other issues, it's a good idea to put them in writing so everyone has the same understanding of the debate's ground rules.<sup>9</sup>

Public speakers are also sometimes available from the Department of Defense, NASA, or the Social Security Administration. Representatives of these departments will speak to organized groups free of charge as long as they are given several weeks advance notice.

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## 6. Choose a site.

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Where are you going to hold the debate? If it's going to be on television or radio, you could hold it in a production studio. That takes care of a lot of logistical problems, but it will limit the size of the audience. The alternative is suitable space in a civic auditorium, theater, school, or hotel.

Here's a list of some of the factors to consider when selecting a site:

- ★ **Broadcasting.** If you're going to televise the debate, get a TV expert to help you find a hall that's well suited to the technical equipment that will be needed. That could be someone from a local station or a freelance producer. Get his or her input on your options before you make a final decision. It will save you a lot of headaches and expense later.

- ★ **Audience.** Remember that a stage for the candidates, broadcasting equipment, and room for journalists will take up significant space. In the Commission's first 1988 debate, the useable space was reduced by 25% after all the cameras were put in place. Figure out how much room you want for audience seats before you select the site.
- ★ **Traffic.** If possible, choose a site where your debate isn't going to encounter unnecessary problems because of rush-hour traffic or other tie-ups. The local police department is the best source to advise you here.
- ★ **Neutrality.** Pick a place that's neutral. Also, make sure that it's easily accessible to the candidates, public, and the press.<sup>10</sup>

Huntsville High School uses its school auditorium, because a maximum capacity of 500 helps keep the event manageable. The Student Council decorates the auditorium, provides local coverage, and schedules special "guest" appearances such as George and Martha Washington, the Statue of Liberty, Uncle Sam, Abraham Lincoln, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Costumes are both made and rented. Arrangements are also made for an introductory speaker, the school choir, and representatives of the band. Many times the Pledge of Allegiance is led by a grade-school student.

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9. "Inside Debates: A Practical Guide," by the Commission on Presidential Debates, page 6.

10. "Inside Debates: A Practical Guide," by the Commission on Presidential Debates, page 5.

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## 7. Invite the audience.

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If you're going to use a public hall, who attends the debate is important. It's natural for each side to try to pack the hall with supporters, so guard against that by establishing a ticket policy early. One solution is to allot an equal number of tickets to each candidate and to strictly enforce the rules of conduct during the debate. Remember that time taken up with audience reaction is time taken away from the candidates and their views.

Here are some specific considerations to keep in mind:

- ★ **Noise.** The nature of your debate hall can greatly affect how noisy things might get. Uncarpeted cement floors, for instance, will magnify every audience move from claps to sneezes. The larger the audience, the more you need to consider this.
- ★ **Community interest.** As soon as a debate is announced, everyone in town will want tickets. Decide on audience size and ticket distribution early and firmly. One way to involve people who can't be given tickets is to have them serve as ushers or ticket-takers.
- ★ **Cameras.** Make it clear to ticket holders whether they can bring cameras or other electronic equipment before they arrive. Flashbulbs can be distracting to candidates and to TV camera crews. Establish your policy on this ahead of time.
- ★ **Safety.** Make sure the size of the audience and the seating plan are consistent with safe use of the hall. Checking with the fire marshal early may save changing things at the last minute.<sup>11</sup>

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## 8. Develop a program schedule.

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Huntsville High School's debate format is structured after those used on televised debates. A student moderates the debate and a time keeper monitors both responses and rebuttals. At the close of the debate, each candidate is given an opportunity to summarize his/her position.

Following the debate, which lasts about 90 minutes, both parties are given approximately 10 minutes to rally. A student whip, selected in advance, leads his or her party's rally. Students march around the auditorium with campaign posters for state and national candidates. The jazz band plays the appropriate patriotic music, but a P.A. system would work just as well. Rallying allows participants to unwind, and also injects a great deal of color and renewed enthusiasm. Following the rally, delegates cast their votes and then a roll call of states is made. Just as at the national convention, the representing delegate pitches his or her respective state, district or territory before they cast their votes. This process is based on the electoral college.

Because Huntsville High School combines so many activities into one event, all participants are given a program containing biographical information on the real candidates, party platforms, and the electoral college. Extensive preparation beforehand creates well-informed and well thought out questions—even the real candidates were impressed!

This format, with the necessary modifications, can work well with local, state, and national elections. Everyone becomes an active participant and students, staff, parents, and community members make the political process come alive. Modifications can also be made to these activities for schoolwide student body elections. This allows election activities to occur every year, not just in the nation's election years.

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11. "Inside Debates: A Practical Guide," by the Commission on Presidential Debates, page 10.

If you choose a simpler format, take the precautions necessary to ensure that the event adheres to the allotted time schedule. This might require that a time keeper strictly enforces responses and rebuttals. Also choose a moderator and spokesperson from each team to resolve issues that may arise over the course of the debate.

If you choose to organize a series of speeches given by students or candidates, the format of your program will be slightly different. You may want to have candidates, their role plays or stand-ins deliver typical campaign speeches or prepare answers to a predetermined list of questions. Whichever format you choose, be sure to leave time at the end of the program for a general question-and-answer session.

A program containing biographical and background information about each of the candidates will also be useful to those attending the event.

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## 9. Involve the media.

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Political debates are news events, and the news media have to figure in your planning. First, set up a system for giving credentials to the journalists who want to cover the debate. This allows you to identify and control the number of journalists who have access to the debate hall and other areas. It also allows you to fairly allocate space among the different news organizations who will want to send representatives.

Consider the needs of different types of media. Is the debate going to be televised? If so, every production detail is important. The height, shape, and size of the lecterns, for instance, can lead to more negotiations than a disarmament treaty. While candidates and their advisors need to be consulted on these matters, it's best to put all technical aspects of the debate into the hands of professionals. They can help you equip the hall for television, and decide where to place cameras, how to light the hall, whether power sources are sufficient, and how to position the candidates for good camera coverage. The technical problems which can arise from inadequate attention to detail are enormous. Recall the 20-minute silence during the 1976 Ford-Carter debate when all the sound went dead.

If a debate is to be simultaneously broadcast on radio, you will need to arrange for radio anchor positions which don't interfere with other aspects of the event. Are still photographers going to be in the hall? If so, you need to designate where, and make sure their equipment isn't distracting either because of noise or flash devices. Are you going to provide closed-captioning of the debate? Make the necessary arrangements ahead of time. Is the audience going to participate in questioning the candidates? Place standing microphones in the aisles for questioners to use.

Once the debate is over, many journalists will want to question the candidates and their advisors. Make sure you've identified an area where this exchange can take place. Post-debate commentary can be lengthy. Try to stage it in a location where it doesn't interfere with the process of cleaning up the hall and putting things back in order.<sup>12</sup> (See Chapter 4 of this guide for more information on this topic.)

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## 10. Follow up.

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Once the debate is over, the sponsor's tasks are thankfully fairly simple. Make sure the hall is restored to normal, and that equipment which was borrowed or rented is returned. If you have decided to produce transcripts or tapes of the debate, you will be providing journalists with a valuable tool for post-debate coverage. The sooner you can transcribe the debate and distribute copies, the more useful they will be.<sup>13</sup>

Back in the classroom, analyze what was said. What were the three main messages of each candidate? How do they differ from the three main messages of other candidates? To whom was the candidate trying to appeal? Why? What tactics and/or mechanisms were used? Encourage students to remain informed about the candidates and issues. Consider holding weekly meetings to follow the course of the campaign and address candidate fluctuations or flip-flops on the issues. Be sure to thank everyone who contributed to the event as well as special guests who attended the event.

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12. "Inside Debates: A Practical Guide," by the Commission on Presidential Debates, pages 11–12.

13. "Inside Debates: A Practical Guide," by the Commission on Presidential Debates, page 12.

# Organizing Speech-Writing Competitions

by Alan Haskvitz, Teacher  
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## OBJECTIVES

By participating in speech-writing competitions, students will:

1. develop a clearer understanding of the nature of government and the duties of elected officials.<sup>1</sup>
2. increase their knowledge of the candidates and their platforms.
3. compare and contrast writing and speaking styles.
4. participate in civic meetings and decisions.
5. understand the process by which an individual contacts public officials.<sup>2</sup>
6. improve research and writing skills.
7. develop organizational and creative thinking skills.

## METHODS

The following methods can be used to explore the art of speech writing with your students:

1. Study the art of speech writing.
2. Plan and organize a speech-writing competition.

1. Regardless of the type of competition, the speech contest fits neatly into the recommendations of the proposed National Standards for Civics and Government. These standards call for a more applied and active approach to the study of government and related institutions. Writing a speech for an elected official helps fulfill this goal and also assists students in reaching another goal of the new standards: active citizenship. To actively take part in the competition, students need to learn about election issues and candidates as well as about the method by which civic improvements may be implemented. Here, again, the objectives of the standards are being met as students demonstrate knowledge of the political process, the ability to define civic life and politics and a thorough understanding of the distinctive characteristics of American society. The new standards also suggest that students thoroughly understand the selection of our political leaders and the interacting, monitoring, and influencing aspects of the political process. Speech-writing competitions offer students this opportunity, as well as opportunities to master the listening, discussing, researching, and speaking skills the new standards mandate.

2. The new National Standards for Civics and Government suggest that students learn how to identify and contact public officials by the fourth grade. See the new standards, Section III.



It's not the quality of the winning entries that will determine your success, but the number of participants and the learning experience in general.

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## 1. Study the art of speech writing.

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Compare speeches of current candidates or public officials and historical speeches of prominent candidates or public officials. How do the writing styles of the speeches differ? What devices are used in each? Do they appeal to you logically? Emotionally? With what issues are today's citizens most concerned? Citizens of the past? How do the responsibilities of public officials today compare with the public officials in the past? (For example, compare the role of the president in ensuring a healthy economy now and before the stock market crash of 1929. How are they the same? different? How did the stock market crash of 1929 affect the president's economic responsibilities?) According to current candidates, how is the role of the government/public officials the same or different? How has the role of the government/public officials changed in the past 50 years? 100 years?

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## 2. Plan and organize a speech-writing competition.

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The following steps can be used for a variety of competition formats:

- ★ Develop the parameters of the competition.
- ★ Select a theme or topic.
- ★ Secure judges for the competition.
- ★ Provide students with sample topics.
- ★ Decide on a location and time.
- ★ Involve the media.
- ★ Generate interest in the competition.
- ★ Involve family members.
- ★ Judge the entries.
- ★ Present awards.
- ★ Follow up.

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### A. DEVELOP THE PARAMETERS OF THE COMPETITION.

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Choose a format for your competition:

- ★ writing a speech for an elected official
- ★ writing a speech on the given topic and presenting it before an audience of parents or elected officials
- ★ role-playing an elected official by writing and delivering a speech as he or she would (complete with costumes!)

Consider other logistics such as: When will the entries be due? What will be the maximum number of words accepted? Who will participate in the competition? Will the competition be limited to a class, grade level, school, or district? Will the top 10 entries be winners or will they be semifinalists who deliver their speeches in front of a panel of judges and an audience?

Another idea is to have schools prejudge all the entries and select the best at each level for finals. This can be done by limiting the number of finalists from each school or grade level. It is important to use this method so as not to lengthen final judging. This is especially important if you decide to have a public-speaking contest rather than, or in addition to, a speech-writing competition.

Once the entry rules are set and judges have been selected, be sure to give all teachers, possible participants, and judges copies of the competition guidelines.

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### B. SELECT A THEME OR TOPIC.

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The competition theme is an idea generator and the more it allows for individual interpretation the better. Stress themes and topics related to participatory democracy, such as the importance of voting and democratic institutions. Consider "What Difference Does One Vote Make?" as an example. Students might write about citizens' rights and/or responsibility to vote, or interview a family member. They might write about how elections in a democracy can be won with one vote, or times when one vote changed history. Students might review regulations about obtaining citizenship in the United States and the authority of citizenship.

One of the most natural themes would be an issue of concern to elected public officials. For example, students might draft Congressional speeches about budget cuts for a Senator who is working on cutting the federal budget. A member of your Senator's or Representative's staff can provide you with a list of his or her priority issues.

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### **C. SECURE JUDGES FOR THE COMPETITION.**

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Who will judge the entries: school principals or teachers? judges? retired teachers? members of the League of Women Voters? members of elected officials' staffs? local public officials?

The strategy for dealing with elected officials is straightforward. Using letterhead and emphasizing the importance and nonpartisan nature of the mock election, ask elected officials for assistance in the areas you deem necessary (e.g., providing examples of their speeches, judging entries, attending the event, listening to their "stand-ins"). Be sure to follow your letters up with phone calls and don't hesitate to be persistent. Many times public officials are difficult to reach because of their hectic schedules. If you get frustrated, try contacting the public official's community relations coordinator or scheduling coordinator. Keep track of those with whom you speak and ask to speak with them again whenever you contact that office. Addresses, phone numbers, and E-mail addresses for members of Congress are provided in the attached Resources Section and the phone numbers of local and state officials can be found in your phone book.

Congresspersons are especially vital as they are needed to place the winning speeches in the Congressional Record and also to provide assistance by writing letters of support to local constituents. Most Congresspersons have a newsletter and mention of your event in that epistle bodes well for the contest.

Recruit other potential judges through media announcements, posters, flyers, announcements at meetings of local organizations, school newspapers, and community newsletters.

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### **D. PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH SAMPLE TOPICS.**

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Providing sample topics is not an end in itself, but a tool to stimulate student thinking and encourage participation. A list of suggestions might include priority issues from a public official's office, political cartoons, quotes, or headlines from recent newspapers and magazines or the most important issues addressed at a local town meeting. Good sources for topics are *TIME* and *Newsweek*, the Mock Election's Internet page ([www.nationalmockelection.org](http://www.nationalmockelection.org)) and the *World Journal* for international current events.

If students write speeches for candidates, encourage them to read the candidate's past speeches to familiarize themselves with his or her presentation and writing styles. (To obtain past speeches, write to the candidate, whose name and address is usually listed with the local or state offices of his or her political party.)

Elementary students are going to represent a challenge because their preparation for a speech competition is more limited. To this end, a demonstration tape could help them in preparing their entries and provide assistance for other teachers.

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### **E. DECIDE ON A LOCATION AND TIME.**

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You may wish to hold the contest in a school or service organization's meeting hall. However, look into holding it in a large mall or public area where the students can get a larger audience. Check the school calendar to make sure there is not a conflict with important school functions. Usually the best times for this competition are those around election dates.

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### **F. INVOLVE THE MEDIA.**

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There are numerous ways to involve the media, from advertising your event on the local TV or radio station to having the local media sponsor your event. If winning students deliver their speeches before an audience of parents, teachers, community members, and local public officials, consider inviting local media to cover the event. (See Chapter 4 of this guide for more information on this topic.)

Videotape all the competitions so that parents and other interested parties can get a copy. (It's also of great value in case there is a close competition and the judges want to compare speeches.) If the media is unavailable, perhaps a videotape of the competition could be sent to local TV and radio stations.

### **G. GENERATE INTEREST IN THE COMPETITION.**

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Regularly circulating new information to participants or potential participants (re: new judges, prizes, etc.) will help generate and maintain excitement about your event. Schedule speakers for your classroom or school who are related to the competition theme (e.g., a real speech writer from a local campaign, the Registrar of Voters, or a speaker from the Board of Elections).

### **H. INVOLVE FAMILY MEMBERS.**

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Don't hesitate to ask family members for help; they typically seek out new ways to be involved in their children's education. They can provide students with primary research information about past elections, judge the competition, recruit public officials, secure facilities and/or resources, dress up and appear at the event as past politicians, or emcee the event. Don't let this list limit your thinking — the options are endless. Ask parents how they might like to be involved by sending a letter home with students.

### **I. JUDGE THE ENTRIES.**

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There are many examples for judging an event but consider a 60-point format — that's 10 points for each of six categories, including:

- ★ **organization.** Is the material well organized and does it have a clear introduction and conclusion?
- ★ **content.** Does the writing show that the contestant used the library and researched the subject matter?
- ★ **creativity.** Was the chosen topic appropriate and presented with an original flare?
- ★ **viewpoint.** Is it clearly presented and supported?

- ★ **topic.** Is the subject appropriate? Would this speech be given by a member of Congress or the Governor?
- ★ **overall presentation.** (grammar, syntax, appearance).

In many professional competitions, the average score for each entry is used after eliminating the highest and lowest scores.

For public-speaking competitions, consider these categories:

- ★ **presentation.** (clear voice, well-spoken, good use of body language)
- ★ **content.** (relates well to title and theme of competition, good use of quotations and primary sources)
- ★ **creativity.** Does the speech demonstrate a new way of thinking about or presenting the subject matter?
- ★ **making the point.** How well did the speech make its point? Was it well organized? Did it have a clear introduction and conclusion? Were there redundancies?
- ★ **impact.** Did the speech impact the judge about the issue or idea?

### **J. PRESENT AWARDS.**

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All participants, winners or not, should receive a certificate of participation. Perhaps local businesses (book stores, music stores, restaurants, or movie theaters) could provide gift certificates to participants, semifinalists or winners.

Also consider sending student speeches to the appropriate public officials or candidates, regardless of whether or not they are winners. Perhaps candidates or public officials will use your students' speeches in their own speeches.

### **K. FOLLOW UP.**

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Announcing the winners at the appropriate school board meetings brings credit to the student, teacher and school, and builds goodwill for next year's match. Also, thank-you notes, and copies of the *Congressional Record* if the winning speeches are printed, are a must for those who volunteered their services or donated prizes.

# Organizing Quiz Team Competitions

by Shirley Jackson

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## OBJECTIVES

Though quiz team competitions are often viewed as the pursuit of trivial knowledge, they encourage students to achieve academic excellence and increase their awareness of the world around them. Organize a quiz team competition to:

1. test students' accumulation and retention of knowledge in a real life situation.<sup>1</sup>
2. encourage independent study and academic excellence.
3. recognize and appreciate non-traditional venues for competition.
4. build self-esteem and school pride.
5. empower students with a new understanding of what has been, what is now, and what can be.<sup>2</sup>
6. provide opportunities for faculty, students, parents and the community to work together.

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## METHODS

Depending on the format of your event, the following steps may or may not be sequential:

1. Decide which department will take leadership in sponsoring the activities.
2. Get the support/approval of your administration.
3. Choose a format.
4. Delegate responsibilities and tasks.
5. Select contestants.
6. Choose the subject matter.
7. Decide event specifics: when, where, and how long?

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1. The new National Standards for Civics and Government emphasize an active approach to the study of civics and government and are applicable to quiz team competitions. For example, the new standards state that before a citizen can fulfill the continuance of American democracy, he or she must know the purposes and limitations of the Constitution as it was originally drafted. Quiz team questions about the Constitution can facilitate this understanding. See the new standards, Section III.

2. Students who study the past and present role of democratic law in American society are more likely to be able to analyze laws for future use. For example, by thoroughly studying and understanding important historical events regarding the rule of law, such as U.S. Supreme Court Case or Klu Klux Klan attacks, students can evaluate the need to limit the power of the government, and the need for equal protection of civil rights. See the new standards, Section III.

8. Involve parents and the community.
9. Determine regulations and scoring.
10. Prepare teams for the event.
11. Stage the quiz competition.
12. Present awards.

---

### **1. Decide which department will take leadership in sponsoring the activities.**

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Traditionally, activities dealing with history and current events have been left to Social Studies teachers; however, with the emphasis on across-the-curriculum learning, any department can take the lead in sponsoring a quiz bowl. In many ways, the English department may be in the best position to lead the activity—either alone or in cooperation with other faculty members. Within the English department one usually finds the debate team, creative writing courses, and speech classes. Anthologies now contain the writings of a wider variety of multicultural artists dealing with current issues. There is also a renewed emphasis on essays that tie nicely to current events. These are the basis for discussion that address the progress of humanity. What better point of departure for affecting attitudes and behavior in our youth? What better preparation for critical thinking?

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### **2. Get the support/approval of your administration.**

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Before introducing the idea to students, be sure to get the blessing of school administrators (or district administrators if you plan an inter-school competition). At Huntsville High School, we found overwhelming support—from both students and faculty—for the competition.

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### **3. Choose a format.**

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Competitions can involve any number of students depending on the resources, amount of time, and facilities available for your competition. The method is the same for each type of competition, but the amount of time and resources needed is proportional to the number of students involved. You may consider a student competition which takes place in several classrooms independently, or you can organize an inter-school competition with regional or district schools. Inter-school competitions encourage school pride and build excellence. Participating schools often reexamine their curriculums to ensure that their students are competitive. Some schools even have pep rallies before important competitions. In Alabama, mock election participants organized an inter-school “Family Feud” competition with election questions. Students loved it and traveled miles on school buses to cheer on the families from their own schools!

Of course, more involved formats require a significant time commitment from participants. Students, teachers, parents, community members, and other participants should be willing to volunteer time to the competition on weeknights or over a weekend. If students and volunteers do not offer their nights and weekends, you will have to choose a format that can be used in the classroom.

At Huntsville High School we have been actively involved in quiz bowls for the past six years and our brightest students are revered as much as our school athletes. Because our students are so interested in this type of competition we began our own in-school competition called “Battle of the Brains.” This is a schoolwide competition of four-member teams that takes place one Saturday each year. One of the many highlights of each event is a competition between the winning team and a team of faculty members.

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## 4. Delegate responsibilities and tasks.

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There is no need to feel that you have to do it all yourself, as this type of event emphasizes teamwork. Ask faculty, students, parents, and community members to share the burden of organizing and coordinating the event. Assign different people to various tasks including: securing a buzzer, developing/purchasing competition questions, soliciting local businesses for team T-shirts, and locating equipment (such as podiums, time clocks and microphones).

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## 5. Select contestants.

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Ideally, contestants form teams of four members each. This number is small enough to ensure that all members are fully utilized but large enough to facilitate cooperation and a team approach. Teams can be formed in many ways such as self selection, teacher pairing, or classroom competitions. However, teachers should be sure that teams are fairly well-matched so that the quiz team competition is both meaningful and challenging for all.

Choose a date by which teams must formally enter the competition. Consider an information card that must be given to a specific teacher or dropped in a box in a designated area such as the library or principal's office. Publicize the competition and entry deadline through a school publicity campaign, classroom announcements, announcements over the intercom, a notice in the school newspaper, and/or teacher announcements in classes.

If too many teams enter the competition, consider a preliminary competition to determine the teams that will participate in the final quiz competition.

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## 6. Choose the subject matter.

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The beauty of the mock election is its versatility. For a truly cross-curriculum competition, consider interweaving many disciplines such as civics, history, journalism, social studies, and geography. Traditionally our faculty and students make-up questions on specific topics with great success, but questions can also be purchased and adapted to a mock election event.<sup>3</sup> (See the Resource section at the back of this guide for a list of question providers.)

If you need help with ideas for the subject matter, consider visiting the Mock Election's Internet page (located at [www.nationalmockelection.org](http://www.nationalmockelection.org)).

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## 7. Decide event specifics: when, where and how long?

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Competitions can be limited to a single day or can extend over several days or weeks, depending on the number of teams competing and the logistics that best meet individual needs. We run at least three competitions simultaneously but in separate locations throughout the school. Other locations might include hotel conference rooms, meeting rooms at the local library, and college or university auditoriums.

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## 8. Involve parents and the community.

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School faculty members as well as parents, community leaders, and professors from Sam Houston University act as quiz masters, time keepers, and score keepers. Parents can help find useful research materials, coach participants, go along with the team as a cheering squad, provide transportation and/or refreshments, photograph or videotape participants, or canvass local businesses for help. They could also form teams to scrimmage student teams before the quiz team competition. Partnerships with local businesses can help defray expenditures such as the cost of questions, a buzzer system, awards, team T-shirts, or certificates of participation. (See Chapter 12 of this guide for more information on working with local organizations.)

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3. If you purchase questions, you will have to relate them to the purposes of the mock election.

Make your school and community aware of your competition. Place articles in school newspapers, poster school walls, create public service announcements, and contact local newspaper and radio stations. (See Chapter 4.)

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## 9. Determine regulations and scoring.

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There are numerous sets of regulations available through your local library. At Huntsville High School, we use the regulations that govern Texas state competitions. This helps our students familiarize themselves with the official rules if they are someday to compete at the state or national level. The standard quiz format calls for four competition quarters, and there is a standard method of scoring each of these quarters. (See *Figures F* and *G* for a sample list of rules and score sheet from the 1995 Sam Houston State University Texas Academic Challenge State Championship.)

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## 10. Prepare teams for the event.

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### A. HOLD WEEKLY MEETINGS.

Weekly meetings or practice sessions are ideal to help students sharpen their instant recall skills. It is best to simulate the actual competition situation with rapid-fire questions, scrimmaging teams (perhaps a team of teachers might be willing!) and, if available, a buzzer. (See the Resource section at the back of this guide for names of equipment suppliers. If funds are not available, building a buzzer might be a suitable challenge for physics students!)

### B. DRAFT PRACTICE QUESTIONS.

Drafting questions helps students learn to anticipate questions and provide answers quickly. Ask each team member to submit 10 practice questions a week.

### C. OBSERVE OTHER MATCHES.

Prepare your team for competition by viewing other matches, by scrimmaging against other schools in informal matches, or by tuning into weekly TV or radio contests. “Competing” against recorded TV or radio contests can help students simulate the competition environment.

### D. ENCOURAGE TEAM IDENTITY.

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Make or purchase matching shirts with your team’s name or logo.

### E. RECRUIT SUPPORTERS.

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If entering a formal inter-school competition, create a home-court advantage by recruiting a cheering squad to accompany you to the competition.

### F. HAVE FUN!

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Encourage your team members to enjoy themselves and the competition. In addition to winning the competition, make good sportsmanship one of your goals.

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## 11. Stage the quiz competition.

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I have found that a total of 24 student teams (of four members each) is manageable number. A random drawing the morning of the competition determines which teams are paired together. If there are an uneven number of teams, any given team might receive a “by” (or pass) for any given round to allow the competition to continue while accommodating an uneven number of teams.

The competition is single elimination, allowing only the winners to advance. In my experience, a competition structured in this manner lasts approximately 430 minutes.

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## 12. Present awards.

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While we are unable to afford scholarships, our “Battle of the Brains” competition awards medals to both the winning team and the runner-up. All other participants receive certificates of participation donated by local businesses.

In whatever capacity one participates in a quiz bowl, he/she is a winner. Preparation and friendly competition encourages excellence in everyone. It has been my experience that competing students pay closer attention in class and read more critically. Students discover things about themselves they did not previously know, and school becomes an active learning process where students enjoy empowerment as well as knowledge.

# 1995 SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY TEXAS ACADEMIC CHALLENGE STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

1. Each contest features two high school teams of four players each.
2. Teams must be accompanied by at least one adult supervisor. The advisor must be a school or school district employee. Although the playing team is not required to be coed, we encourage teams to field mixed teams if at all possible.
3. Points are scored by correct answers to questions having pre-stated values. No points are subtracted for wrong answers.
4. Should an answer be interjected from the audience, the question may be discarded at the official's discretion.
5. Questions requiring a person's name as an answer may be correctly answered by giving the person's surname only, provided there is no other person having the same surname with whom he or she might be confused (e.g., the Roosevelts). If more information is provided than is required for a correct answer and some portion of the information is incorrect, the whole answer will be deemed incorrect.
6. Substitutions are forbidden during the contest, but a team is not required to use the same four players in a subsequent match.
7. If at the end of the match, two teams have the same number of points, the tie is broken in a sudden-death playoff. The first team to answer a question correctly in overtime wins the game. All overtime questions are valued at five points.
8. Appeals regarding answers to questions should be lodged only by the team's advisor, not the players. Appeals may be lodged only at the quarter breaks or at the end of the game before the match is declared official. If a contestant wishes to discuss a protest with his or her advisor, they may work out a hand-signal to arrange a conference at the next break.
9. Decisions of the judges are final. The official declaration of the outcome of the match is irrevocable. A game shall not be replayed, even if the outcome could have been altered by judgment errors.
10. To be an eligible contestant, a student must be rolled in a participating high school at the time of the contest.

## FIRST AND FOURTH QUARTER RULES

1. All questions in these two rounds are "Toss Up."
2. Players may interrupt a question while it is being asked if they believe they can anticipate the answer required by the completed question.
3. The player first signaling readiness to answer by activating the electronic response system must wait to be recognized by an official as the eligible respondent. If a player gives an answer before being recognized, the question will be completed for the opposing team.
4. Consultation among team members is prohibited during the First & Fourth quarters. Any appearance of consultation will result in the loss of the opportunity to answer the questions currently being asked.
5. If the recognized player gives an incorrect answer or no answer, the first member of the opposing team to signal readiness may respond after being recognized.
6. If a team answers a question incorrectly before the question is completed, the question will be completed and the opposing team will be given an opportunity to answer.
7. If the quarter-ending tone sounds while the Host is asking question, he or she will stop and the quarter is finished. If the bell sounds during or after a player signals readiness to answer, the player may give the answer to the question—if he or she is correct, the quarter is ended; if wrong, the opposing team is given opportunity to answer and the quarter is ended.
8. The First Quarter is called the "Warm Up Round" and questions are worth 5 and 10 points. The Fourth Quarter is called "Stump the Experts" and questions are valued at 15 and 20 points.

## SECOND QUARTER RULES: THE BONUS ROUND

1. There are two kinds of questions in the Bonus Round: Toss Up and Bonus. The quarter starts with a Toss Up question. For each Toss Up question, all of the rules for the First and Fourth Quarters apply.
2. If a team is right on a Toss Up question, it gets a chance at a two-part Bonus question, worth a possible 30 points. The Bonus works this way: the team starts off with a 10 point question, and if they answer correctly they go on to a 20-point question. If the team misses any question at any level, that question and only that question is offered to the opposing team to answer. The Bonus stops there (awarding both team the points accumulated) and a Toss Up question follows. This pattern continues until the end of the round.
3. Consultation among team members is forbidden during Toss Up questions, but permitted and encouraged during Bonus questions. Answers to Bonus questions must be given by the team captain. The team captain does not need to be recognized before answering in the Bonus Round. The electronic response system is not used during Bonus questions.
4. If the quarter-ending tone sounds during a Bonus question, the team is allowed to finish its Bonus attempt (until incorrect) before the quarter expires.

## THIRD QUARTER RULES: "SIXTY SECONDS" ROUND

1. The Round begins with the lowest scoring team by selecting one of four categories offered by the Host. They will attempt to answer as many of 10 questions as they can within a 60-second period. If the teams are tied, the team which answered the last question correctly begins the round.
2. Each question is worth 10 points. If any team answers all 10 questions in a set correctly, they are awarded a 20-point bonus.
3. Consultation among team members is allowed during 60 seconds, and all answers must be given by the team captain.
4. The captain need not be recognized by the judge before responding, and the electronic response system is not used except to keep time.
5. The captain may respond before the Host has completed a question, but the Host will complete all questions after a right or wrong answer has been given.
6. After the 60 Seconds has expired, the second team may try to answer any questions the first team missed.
7. After sixty seconds expires, the second team tries to answer the questions missed or passed by the first team. After completing these attempts, the second team will select from the remaining three categories and play the 60 Seconds Round. Then the first team will be given the opportunity to answer the missed questions.
8. IMPORTANT: The team is playing against the 60 Second clock. The Host will give the team an indefinite period of time to answer a question until the 60 seconds expire. If the team does not know the answer, the captain must say "Pass" to move on to the next question. Once a team misses or passes on a question, they cannot later return to it.

# SAMPLE SCORE SHEET

Score keepers may wish to pencil an "R" for red or a "G" or green next to each question on the contest question sheets, in order to keep track of which team earned those points.

FIRST QUARTER:	ROUND TOTAL	
RED	(# correct x 10)	
GREEN	(# correct x 10)	
SECOND QUARTER:	ROUND TOTAL	CUMULATIVE TOTAL
RED (Toss-Ups)		
RED (Bonus)		
GREEN (Toss-Ups)		
GREEN (BONUS)		
THIRD QUARTER:	ROUND TOTAL	CUMULATIVE TOTAL
RED (standard questions)	(# correct x 10)	
RED (bonuses)	(# sweeps x 20)	
GREEN (standard questions)	(# correct x 10)	
GREEN (bonuses)	(# sweeps x 20)	
FOURTH QUARTER:	ROUND TOTAL	CUMULATIVE TOTAL
RED	(# correct x 20)	
GREEN	(# correct x 20)	

**Figure G**

# Organizing Voter-Turnout Campaigns

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## OBJECTIVES

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A successful voter-turnout campaign will help students and (in some cases) community members to:

1. increase awareness of voter-registration deadlines.
2. explore the link between voting and changes in government/policies.<sup>1</sup>
3. examine the foundations of the American political system.
4. promote cooperation between schools and the community.
5. develop interpersonal skills.
6. develop creative thinking skills and the ability to be part of a team.
7. increase voter turnout on election day.<sup>2</sup>
8. develop problem solving skills.

## METHODS

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A successful voter turnout campaign consists of the following phases:

1. Research historical incidents where one vote has made a significant difference.
2. Analyze voting trends and causes.
3. Plan and organize the campaign.

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1. For the new National Standards for Civics and Government's suggestions regarding the role of organized groups in political life, see the new standards, Section II. See also the new standards' suggestions about forming and carrying out public policy in Section V Letter F (pages 38–39) for K–4 Standards, Section III Letter F (pages 68–69) for grades 5–8 Standards, and Letter E (pages 117–120) for grades 9–12 Standards.

2. Among the many relevant topics of the new standards, voter turnout/registration campaigns can help students understand the need for political leadership and public service. See the new standards, Section V.

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## 1. Research historical incidents where one vote has made a significant difference.

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- ★ One vote made Oliver Cromwell Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England in 1645.
- ★ One vote caused Charles I to be executed in 1649.
- ★ One vote elected Thomas Jefferson president in 1800.
- ★ One vote made Texas part of the U.S. in 1845.
- ★ One vote saved President Andrew Johnson from impeachment in 1868.
- ★ One vote changed France from a monarchy to a Republic in 1875.
- ★ An average of only one vote per precinct passed women's suffrage in California in 1911.
- ★ Less than one vote per precinct, in one state, elected Woodrow Wilson President in 1912.
- ★ One vote made Tennessee the 36th state to ratify the 19th amendment, which gave women the right to vote in 1920.
- ★ One vote made Adolph Hitler head of the Nazi party in 1923.
- ★ A change of one vote per precinct in three states in 1968 would have made Hubert Humphrey president instead of Richard Nixon.

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## 2. Analyze voting trends and their causes.

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Questions such as these can serve as a springboard for discussion:

- ★ What are the responsibilities and rights of a voting citizen? How are these guaranteed and protected? (For example, what were the implications of the Voting Rights Act? What events led up to the Voting Rights Act legislation? What role did the Civil Rights Movement play in this legislation?)
- ★ When did African Americans earn the right to vote? (Constitutional Amendment XV) women? (Constitutional Amendment XIX) How did these amendments change government/politics at the time? Did more African Americans/women enter into political office? Why or why not?
- ★ What has caused the current decline in voter turnout? What are/will be the implications of this trend?
- ★ How has voter apathy affected other countries (for example, the Weimar Republic)?
- ★ Is voter participation increasing or decreasing in your state/district/area and why? To what else might these trends be connected (economic, educational, weather)?
- ★ What efforts have been made to increase voter turnout in your state/district/area? (*See Figure H.*)
- ★ How successful was Oregon's vote-by-mail project and why? Could it be successfully implemented in other states?
- ★ Organize student-run drives to register voters and/or get voters to the polls. Design events such as contests, parades, transportation, and telephone chains, or publish a special neighborhood paper about the need to vote or about the candidates and issues.

In 1993, Congress passed the National Voter Registration Act, also called the "motor voter law." This law stipulates that citizens be given the opportunity to register to vote:

- ★ when they apply for, renew, or change the address on their driver's licenses or non-driver ID cards.
- ★ at federally designated government agencies and military offices and other facilities designated by the state (libraries, schools, and clerk's offices).

Has your state implemented the motor voter registration law? Why or why not? What are the projected outcomes of this initiative? Why has this initiative been controversial? Three months after the National Voter Registration Act became law, two million Americans registered to vote in the 32 states that implemented the law. Government officials estimate that 18 million more Americans will register to vote before the '96 elections. How do you believe this will affect the outcome of the upcoming elections?

**Figure H**

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### **3. Plan and organize a voter turnout.<sup>3</sup>**

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The following steps can help you organize a successful voter turnout campaign:

- ★ List your goals.
- ★ Inventory your resources.
- ★ Schedule a location and date.
- ★ Determine the format of your event.
- ★ Delegate responsibilities. ? Involve parents and the community.
- ★ Publicize your event.
- ★ Follow up.

---

3. A Note of Caution: Registering new voters can be a political lightning rod if one does not take certain precautions. If you're planning and organizing a voter turnout campaign, protect your credibility. Obtain your administrator's approval at as many levels as necessary. Work with organizations whose reputation for nonpartisanship is unquestioned, such as the League of Women Voters or county election officials. Seek the endorsement of local representatives from both major national parties. Once you have a well-grounded plan, move forward fearlessly.

#### **A. LIST YOUR GOALS.**

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With your students, decide if you want to register voters or get voters to the polls. Who is your target audience? Consider targeting one segment of the voting population such as women, ethnic groups, and seniors. Targeting under-represented populations can be a very efficient use of resources, as well as a highly effective and broadly applicable teaching tool. The U.S. Census Bureau or your state and/or local election officials can provide you with voter statistics for your district.

#### **B. INVENTORY YOUR RESOURCES.**

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Spend a class period brainstorming the necessary and available resources. Do you have access to: money, office supplies, copying equipment, word processing machines, faxes and phones, video cameras, meeting rooms, tables, chairs, podiums, lecterns, refreshments, and so on? What do you need that you don't already have?

If your effort is going to include a voter registration drive, you'll need very specific resources, such as official forms. It may help to make a checklist of all the resources you'll need before you begin your effort (*see Figure I*).

Students can provide tremendous resources, both in terms of staffing and researching or coordinating tasks. Encourage parents to get involved; perhaps they have a personal contact at the local TV station who can help you get media coverage of your event, or they may have training in organizing community events. Does your community have local chapters of the Young Democrats or Young Republicans? Your most important resource is your local Board of Elections. Be sure you contact them early and work with them closely.

#### **C. SCHEDULE A LOCATION AND DATE.**

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When and where do you want your event to take place? Planning voter drives around other civic events can help you increase the number of people you reach. Consider choosing a central location or location near your target audience. For example, you could set up voter-registration booths for women at local grocery stores or outside a meeting of local business women; at college football games or concerts for young people; and at nursing homes for seniors.

## CHECKLIST FOR REGISTRATION SUPPLIES

- Identifying sign or poster
- Name tags for registrars
- Pens, pencils
- Forms for recording names and addresses of registrants
- Information on absentee voting
- Polling place list
- List of other registration sites and schedules
- Street directory
- Directions to elections office
- Change for telephone (to call elections office with queries)
- Stamps (if necessary to mail forms)
- Phone numbers of registration offices in adjacent jurisdictions
- Official Forms
- Registration form
- Change-of-address form
- Change-of-name form
- Change-of-party form (if there is and schedules party registration)
- Registration forms for neighboring jurisdictions (if permissible)
- Applications for absentee ballots

Make sure registrars are familiar with all the necessary forms. If the jurisdiction is covered under the language requirements of the Voting Rights Act,\* registration applications, signs, and all other materials must be printed in both English and the specified minority language.

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\* Jurisdictions in which (a) more than 5 percent of the voting age population are members of a single-language minority group—Native American, Asian American, Alaskan native, Spanish heritage—and the group's illiteracy rate is higher than the national illiteracy rate, or (b) a single language minority group comprises more than 5 percent of the population. The 1972 presidential election was conducted in English and the total voter registration turnout for that election was less than 50 percent.

Checklist reprinted from "Getting out the Vote—A Guide for Running Registration and Voting Drives," 1984 League of Women Voters Education Fund.

**Figure 1**

#### **D. DETERMINE THE FORMAT OF YOUR EVENT.**

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Consider the following possible formats:

- ★ **Organize a student contest to design a get-out-the-vote flyer.** To ensure adequate participation, prizes should be awarded on a first-, second- and third-place basis. The flyer winning first place could be duplicated and distributed throughout the neighborhood.
- ★ **Design political posters using headlines and pictures from newspaper and magazine articles.** For instance, one poster could be constructed displaying favorable headlines and photos of a particular candidate. Another poster could be constructed displaying unfavorable headlines and photos of that same candidate. This concept could be applied to other candidates as well as to each key issue. These posters might be used during a classroom debate, entered into a contest, displayed at a get-out-the-vote parade, posted on an informational school bulletin board, or displayed in local shop windows. If entered into a contest, the winners might have their designs posted throughout the community or receive gift certificates from local businesses.
- ★ **Organize a parade, complete with marching bands.** Invite spectators along the parade route to join the march for voter registration (which might end at a bank of registration booths). The parade could be led by a public official with a loudspeaker (perhaps the superintendent, the mayor, or even your congressperson). One school could be designated for the beginning of the parade and a different school, community center, church or library as the end. The designated end should be equipped with personnel, tables, pens, papers, and registration forms needed to register new voters. A school bus could be designated to accompany the parade participants in order to transport spectators who are unable to join in the march to the registration area. (You'll want to check with local officials to find out if you need a permit to hold such an event.)
- ★ **Organize a neighborhood walk to turn out the vote.** A small group of students, led by an adult advisor, could ring door bells and enlist their neighbors to register and go to the polls. A signed "contract" is most likely to produce results! A variation on the walk is a Halloween trick-or-treat turnabout. Students dressed in patriotic costumes request not candy, but a promise to vote.
- ★ **Publish a school or community newsletter.** Recruit student reporters, interviewers, photographers, and editors to create a newsletter that focuses on current election issues, candidates, and propositions which may directly affect the community. Students could interview neighborhood business owners and residents regarding the issues. Opinions published may be anonymous if desired. Students might also integrate information about the mock election into the newsletter, inviting the parents and community members to mock election activities to help them become better informed about the candidates and issues.
- ★ **Prepare a brochure or handbook with basic information about voter registration for distribution to the community.** Contact your local League of Women Voters and your County Clerk or other local election officials to be sure your information is accurate and up to date! (See *Figure 7* for a current sample.)
- ★ **Coordinate a telephone chain to register voters or get voters to the polls.** Students might telephone the parents of five schoolmates to provide them with voter registration requirements or voting information. Important information to convey includes: the date, location, and hours of the closest registration site; the requirements for registration; and information about how to get to and from the polls (public transportation, school bus shuttles, car pools, teen volunteers). Prior to Election Day students must also know where and when registered voters can vote, and what the documents voters need to take with them to vote. In order to

## BASIC INFORMATION FOR A REGISTRATION BROCHURE<sup>3</sup>

### WHO CAN REGISTER

- U.S. Citizens, 18 years old and above (except, in most states, convicted felons and those adjudged mentally incompetent)
- Residents of the jurisdiction (Include information if your state law permits 17-year-olds to register if they will be 18 by election day.)

### WHERE TO REGISTER

- Board of Elections address and phone number; include 24-hour message number, if office has one.
- Decentralized sites, with addresses and phone numbers
- Mobile units, if any, with schedules

### WHAT IDENTIFICATION IS REQUIRED?

- Birth certificate?
- Driver's license?
- Proof of naturalization?
- Other?

### WHEN TO REGISTER

- Hours
- Days of the week
- Registration deadline

### WHEN TO REREGISTER OR NOTIFY ELECTIONS OFFICE OF CHANGES

- After a name change or an address change (notification of change may be required, even if reregistration is not).
- After a name is removed from the list

### HOW TO REGISTER BY MAIL (IF POSSIBLE IN YOUR STATE)

- Where forms are available
- Where to send them
- Phone numbers to call to request forms, including your organization's, if permitted.

**Figure J**

**Note:**

Include your logo and motivational message as well as your office phone number, address, and hours. Consider whether you might have a single brochure that includes information on both registration and voting. This basic information may be already prepared and available from your local election office. Ask before you print your own.

3. "Basic Information for a Registration Brochure" reprinted from "Getting out the Vote—A Guide for Running Registration and Voting Drives," 1984 League of Women Voters Education Fund.

continue the chain, the student must be prepared to provide each contact with the name and telephone number of three additional telephone contacts. Students then ask each of their five contacts to telephone three additional contacts to help get the word out.

- ★ Provide transportation to voter registration sites or to the polls. Voter registration tables might be set up outside designated voter registration sites (churches, supermarkets, community centers, libraries, City Hall). Buses might transport students and registrants or take voters to the polls. One teacher rented a school bus to take her school's eligible voters to the polls to cast their first vote! The students carried an American flag into each polling place to celebrate their first votes and gave each other high-fives when they came out as voters. *Seventeen* magazine ran their photo.

Use the media, school newsletters, and other formats to inform those registering or voting of the hours the bus is available, where it can be boarded, its destination, and the approximate time they will return to the boarding site. Tables and chairs could be set up outside the bus while people wait to register. Students might offer to baby-sit the children of those who are registering or voting, stay with the ill or elderly while a caretaker goes out to vote, or exchange a chore (e.g., mowing the lawn) for time spent going to the polls. Try brainstorming how student time can be exchanged for time to register and vote.

- ★ Other format suggestions: One group in Tennessee organized a "Neighborhood Reunion" of local success stories. Doctors, lawyers, business people, and other professionals who once lived in a low-income neighborhood "came home" to meet the children now struggling to grow up there.

The event inspired voter turn-out campaigns to support the candidates who would help fund neighborhood improvement. The students' efforts resulted in the reopening of the local library and neighborhood pool.

In Mississippi, former Secretary of State Dick Molpus gave mock election participants a blank registration form and challenged them to each register one voter for future elections. Other schools have organized districtwide competitions to see which school could register the most voters.

Schedule a classroom visit with a local election official who can give you other ideas and suggestions for events and guidance in planning, registration, and voting requirements.

As students compile a list of event possibilities, suggest that they research their ideas (using the library, election officials, community contacts and/or business leaders) to make an educated decision and a well thought-out plan for the event.

If need be, clear your project, plans and/or registration sites with your school district and with relevant facilities or organizations. (Do you need a special permit to locate voter registration booths on city sidewalks? Do local ordinances regulate distribution of flyers on street corners?)

## **E. DELEGATE RESPONSIBILITIES.**

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Once the event or activity has been selected, assign teams of students to various tasks and responsibilities. For example, students can research voter statistics and registration laws (which differ from state to state). They may also volunteer to develop collateral materials or flyers. You may want to consider assigning each student team a different task, such as:

- ★ **manning voter registration booths.** Team members could organize a schedule and recruit volunteers. If possible, they could also coordinate student transportation to and from their locations. Note: "Getting Out the Vote, A Guide for Running Registration and Voting Drives" by the League of Women Voters Education Fund points out that "in jurisdictions that do not permit volunteer deputy registrars, local election officials are truly key, because you will need paid registrars to do the actual registering."

- ★ **researching candidates/campaign issues.** Consider assigning one team to each of the local, state, or federal candidates to research his or her positions on high-profile election issues (such as health care, taxes, immigration) as well as their proposals to solve these issues.
- ★ **organizing refreshments.** Several students might coordinate volunteers (home economics teachers and/or students, parents) to provide refreshments, make refreshments themselves, or ask local restaurants or grocery stores to provide refreshments.
- ★ **drafting canvassing scripts for a door-to-door voter registration campaign.** Team members might use preproduced scripts or research similar scripts, consult the League of Women Voters or local elections officials, and draft their own.

Have students make regular class presentations about their findings, efforts, and/or progress.

#### **F. INVOLVE PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY.**

At a minimum, involve parents in discussions with students at home. Note that the University of Colorado’s formal evaluation of the 1992 National Student/Parent Mock Election found that participating students showed increases in the discussion of political and election topics with parents. In addition to discussions of candidates and issues, help students to discuss the importance of voting with their parents, and perhaps persuade parents who are “too busy” of the difference their one vote can make. Try role-playing such discussions in class, then discussing the results of students’ efforts once they have tried their powers of persuasion on their family.

Consult your list of needs and, if possible, ask parents as well as students to help fulfill them. Community members, local organizations, and business can often provide resources and guidance. Suggest that students draft letters to community members (perhaps each student is assigned one business, organization, or election official) asking for their help in organizing the event, getting the word out, or providing resources. Some suggestions follow:

- ★ Local election officials may provide a facility or guidance in planning your event as well as impartial information.
- ★ Owners or managers of local businesses might donate resources or services to print event flyers (or simply display the flyers); man registration booths; allow use of their parking lots for voter registration; provide prizes for contests, posters, parade costumes, free advertising; or help with building parade floats.
- ★ Members of local organizations, such as 4-H groups, the PTA, and fraternal orders can help judge poster contests and provide refreshments.
- ★ Local candidates can speak at the end of parade routes, at centrally located registration events.
- ★ Members of the League of Women Voters, a National Student/Parent Mock Election national cooperating organization, may be able to offer event planning guidance and advice as a result of their own get-out-the-vote drives.
- ★ Parents may volunteer during the event or event preparation to shuttle students to and from registration booths, provide refreshments, participate in a neighborhood canvassing campaign, or man voter registration booths.

Reach out to everyone, even those who may have only nominal interest in the project. (See Chapter 12 of this guide for more information on this topic.)

If people are not interested at first, provide them with incentives. For example, local parades are a means for election officials or public candidates to campaign, and for local businesses to get free advertising by sponsoring or donating resources to the mock election.

Be sure that volunteers understand their responsibilities as well as the purposes of the mock election. If you are registering voters, double-check registration deadlines and requirements for registering so that your new voters are eligible for the upcoming elections.

## **G. PUBLICIZE YOUR EVENT.**

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The more places you publicize your event, the more people will become involved and the greater your chances will be for hosting a fun and successful event. Word of mouth can be your greatest advocate in getting the word out. Encourage your students and their parents to mention the event to their friends, families, and acquaintances at civic meetings, informal gatherings or impromptu meetings. Also try:

- ★ circulating announcements to local TV/radio stations and newspapers.
- ★ having students distribute flyers they have designed.
- ★ placing student-drafted announcements about your event in local publications, member mailings of local organizations, community bulletins boards, and on TV and radio stations.
- ★ running student-created PSAs in local media. (See Chapter 4.)
- ★ organizing a student telephone chain or letter-writing campaign.

Wherever your creativity may lead you, emphasize the nonpartisan and educational values of the mock election.

## **H. FOLLOW UP.**

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As always, acknowledge the efforts of those who helped or participated in your event with thank-you letters.

Evaluate your results with students. Did you reach your goals for registering new voters or getting voters to the polls (particularly if you targeted a specific group)? What was most effective/least effective about your efforts? How could you improve your event next time?

# Involving Local Civic, Business, and Religious Organizations

by Alan Haskvitz, Teacher

Suzanne Middle School, Walnut, California

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of involving the community in mock election activities are to:

1. garner support for mock election activities.<sup>1</sup>
2. secure a positive community atmosphere for mock election activities.
3. lay the framework for future mock election activities.
4. develop community relations skills in students, such as phoning, writing, and meeting with community contacts.<sup>2</sup>

## METHODS

The following steps will contribute to a successful effort to involve the community in your mock election events:

1. List your needs.
2. Begin your search.
3. Attend public meetings and appearances.
4. Catalogue your contacts.
5. Recruit help from schools, teachers, students, and parents.
6. “Sell” the mock election.
7. Contact public officials and community leaders.
8. Contact businesses.
9. Contact religious organizations.
10. Contact historians.
11. Explore other community resources.
12. Follow up.

1. The New Standards for Civics and Government recommend that students be able to explain the distinctive traits of American society and how they differentiate the American society from other societies. One of the traits the Standards recognize is the importance of volunteerism in American life. Students need to understand that as they ask local civic, business, and religious organizations to volunteer for their mock election projects, they in turn should volunteer some of their time to local groups and organizations. See the new standards, Section II.

2. The new standards suggest that students gain a deeper understanding of their community and their local government because most civic interaction takes place at this level. This includes asking community members and local officials to speak with students. See the new standards, Section III.



**M**y advice to mock election organizers and coordinators is “cast down your bucket.” You will be amazed at what it comes up with. This chapter is an overview of just how you can fill your bucket with both people and ideas.

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## **1. List your needs.**

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Make a list of everything you need to make your project successful, fun, and memorable. Don't hold back; remember that community members, businesses, and organizations have vast resources that often remain unused because no one has asked for them. For example, moving voting booths can be a problem, but local truck rental centers might provide a rental truck for free if you ask. (Other sources for rental trucks might include moving companies, lumber yards, shipping companies, and even local delivery people.) Other examples of "in-kind" donations might include food, office supplies, decorations, and film.

Put together a tight budget that includes all of your needs, and format it so that you can present it to potential sponsors.

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## **2. Begin your search.**

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The "Government Agencies" section of the phone book is a good place to start your search for potential partners. Also look through the Yellow Pages, specifically consulting such sections as "Education (Consultants and Services, Programs, etc.)," "Political Organizations and Candidates," and "Associations (Business and Professional, Education, Youth)." In both instances you are searching for names and ideas. Look for organizations that can help you in your outreach efforts, such as the library and educational consultants, as well as potential partners such as businesses and associations. Call the civic organizations you have discovered to introduce yourself and the mock election, and to explore possibilities for mutually beneficial relationships.

Don't forget that many phone books list the public library under the name of the facility and not as an agency. The library is a very important resource as the reference librarian frequently has access to lists of all the local businesses, civic, religious, and governmental organizations. Also contact the local offices of the Chamber of Commerce and the Better Business Bureau which will have lists of the area's business leaders.

If you are uncomfortable making blind phone calls, write letters—or have students write letters—to local organizations and follow up your letters with phone calls. In all your dealings with the public, whether they be through phone calls, letters or meetings, remember to emphasize the nonpartisan, win-win nature of the mock election. This means that students learn to be active informed citizens as proposed in the new National Standards for Civic and Government and that the community will experience the benefits of students empowered to work within the system. Don't get frustrated if you don't reach your contact on the first one or two calls. Be persistent!

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## **3. Attend public meetings and appearances.**

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Perhaps the best way to develop successful partnerships is through speeches and appearances. Community members often respond better to personal introductions and contacts than blind letters and phone calls. Expand your network by attending community events (such as City Council meetings, town meetings and meetings of local organizations) and telling the public about your project. Most meetings have a public forum at the beginning or end of the meeting which is open to all community members including students. Call the organization (listed in the phone book) for meeting schedules.

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## **4. Catalogue your contacts.**

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You should invest in a file or box of file cards to keep track of the names and numbers of all the resource people you contact, particularly those you need for a successful event and those that express interest in your project. This list will be the backbone of your operation. If you have a computer, these names should be entered into a database so that letters can be generated easily.

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## **5. Recruit help from schools, teachers, students, and parents.**

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Before reaching out to students and parents, you first need the support of local school board trustees and district superintendents. Check the school district office for the names and addresses of the appropriate people and write them a letter asking for their support. Include in your letter information about the mock election, its purposes and benefits, its national cooperating organizations and, if appropriate, community members and/or organizations that are already supporting the project. Remind educators about the new National Standards for Civics and Government, as well as the proposed History standards, which recommend that students be actively engaged in the learning process and that students relate historical events to current issues and potential future outcomes.

Once you have the support of the administration, ask local school districts, both private and public, to distribute letters to all teachers, students, and parents about the mock election. Include information about your event, what resources and assistance you need, and how community organizations and businesses can help (be sure to include requests for contacts as well as a list of resources). This method can help you reach at least half of all households in your community and maybe as many as 80%. The result is going to be a well-informed public and a reservoir of potential resources.

Ask students to follow up with their parents: Do their parents have suggestions for potential partnerships? Do they have any community contacts? Where do they work? Would they be willing to meet with the president or the owner of their company to discuss the mock election?

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## **6. “Sell” the mock election.**

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As you begin to contact potential cooperators, sell the “sizzle”—the many positive aspects of your mock election efforts. Tell them about your activity, its objectives, how many people will be involved and other organizations that have donated goods and services. Highlight the tremendous success the program has enjoyed previously in your community

(if mock election events have taken place in previous years) or in other communities throughout the United States as well as the fact that the national organization is backing your event.

Be sure to mention the benefits of participation to potential partners: free advertising, access to voters or potential customers, public recognition, and an opportunity to recruit new members.

When organizations agree to help with your project, be sure to mention them in all of your materials. As a way of thanking them, give your sponsors as much publicity and recognition as you can. They can be terrific public supporters of your event! For those who donate more than \$100, consider recognizing them at an awards ceremony as outstanding supporters of youth education.

Also keep the community informed of your progress using a “Dollar Thermometer”—a large sign, featuring a thermometer design, that you post in a public place to keep track of the amount of donations you receive. As community members see the thermometer “rise,” they will be more likely to jump on the bandwagon!

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## **7. Contact public officials and community leaders.**

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You need to develop a strategy for contacting public officials. The chain of command is relatively simple. Start at the top. Go to the mayor, the director of the Chamber of Commerce, or the head librarian. Using this approach you can get your message across quickly and decrease the chances that you are misunderstood.

If you don’t get any response from the top, try the next level down: community outreach directors, community relations personnel, and so on. Do you know anyone with a contact in the official’s office? Would he or she introduce you to their contact?

Perhaps the City Council or County Board of Supervisors would publicize mock election activities with local promotions. Public officials can also help by endorsing the mock election in public service announcements or community meetings, making public speeches at your event, serving as panelists or helping to register new voters. The mock election provides great (and free!) public relations for community leaders.

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## 8. Contact businesses.

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Businesses are also a great source of help. (You can use the same procedures as described in method 7 to contact businesses.) As you involve more and more businesses, the public will become increasingly aware of the mock election and your event inspiring greater public interest and morale. Every business has something to bring to the table, so don't curtail your creativity. They might help you support and publicize your project by purchasing an advertisement in a local newspaper announcing their support of your project. Businesses can also:

- ★ sponsor mock election events.
- ★ display flyers about mock election events or information on marquees.
- ★ donate paper for flyers.
- ★ decorate event facilities.
- ★ provide volunteers.
- ★ donate money.
- ★ supply prizes/awards.
- ★ provide refreshments.
- ★ donate photographic supplies for student photographers.

Consult your original list of needs and brainstorm creative providers for your necessities. If you need publicity, perhaps restaurants could hand out flyers with the meals they serve. If you need funds, perhaps students could pick up trash in a community auditorium or amphitheater for pay. If you need access to copying machines, perhaps the local library could offer their copying facilities in return for a book donation.

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## 9. Contact religious organizations.

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It's easy to obtain a list of religious leaders from the phone book or library. Religious organizations are usually eager to take part in this type of activity and have tremendous enthusiasm and manpower at their disposal. They can provide participants, volunteers, judges, locations, funding, community contacts, and many other resources.

You may also want to contact the local newspaper's city desk editor and ask the editor which reporter is handling the religious service listing. Contact that reporter, explain to him or her what the mock election is and what you are doing, and ask him or her for suggestions of whom to contact. Newspapers have enormous contact lists that could be valuable to you in enlisting community members in your project. Don't forget to enlist newspaper staff as potential judges, sources of questions for quiz team competitions, classroom speakers, and panelists for debates or speeches.

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## 10. Contact historians.

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Another frequently untapped resource is the community historian. Historians can give interesting and insightful lessons about the local area. Senior citizens can also relate stories about meaningful political events. Perhaps you could organize a panel of speakers to talk about political issues of the past. Senior citizens and the community historian might sit on the panel; perhaps the event could even take place in a senior-citizen home. Ask senior citizens to take part in other mock election activities as well.

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## 11. Explore other community resources.

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Other community members and groups can provide services including facilities, volunteers, and special knowledge. You may wish to approach:

- ★ **local theaters or malls.** Think how much more exciting your event might be if held in a venue such as these.
- ★ **photography clubs.** Ask a local photography club to help document the event. They might mount their pictures on poster board and display the posters in nearby malls or frequently-visited areas (such as bus stations, bank windows or the post office). This could be great advertising for the mock election as well as for the photography club.
- ★ **police officers.** Ask off-duty guards or police officers to volunteer at your event.

- ★ **the League of Women Voters.** They can also assist by helping to organize events, or providing volunteers and a wealth of information about candidates, their positions, public officials, voting requirements, and Congressional districts.
- ★ **local colleges or universities.** Representatives of these institutions can provide facilities, moderate debates, judge contests, provide contacts, advise you on how best to market the mock election, or provide statistical data and explanations.
- ★ **veterans' organizations.** The Veterans of Foreign Wars or the American Legion can provide flags for any event and may also help with volunteers.
- ★ **special needs organizations.** Members of these organizations or other community members can usually provide assistance with translating sign language or providing Braille materials. Contact your school district's communications specialist or speech teacher for help in locating these services. Hospitals can also provide wheelchairs or other specialty items for handicapped participants.

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## 12. Follow up.

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The last thing you should do is write a letter to those who have helped with your event. Invite them to attend your event to see the results of their help and support. To those who didn't participate, draft a letter asking them to consider assisting next year. Perhaps students could be assigned this task.

The National Student/Parent Mock Election has the potential to be a community-wide event that can bring pride to citizens and students alike. All of these suggestions can enable you to reach almost every individual in the area with minimal funds and time. Use what is available in your community and you will most likely find a vast amount of support just waiting to be lifted aboard.

In Lafayette, Indiana, a group of eighth graders and their teachers participating in the 1995 National Student/Parent Mock Election ACTIONS project raised \$500,000 in in-kind contributions and cash, with which they will build a community skating rink in the hopes of reducing violence in their community.

Cast down your bucket!

# Organizing Inaugural Balls

by Gloria Kirshner, President  
National Student/Parent Mock Election

## OBJECTIVES

The Great American Inaugural Balls are not a victory party for those who won the elections, but a celebration of democracy. They are a “bon voyage” party for the next generation of young leaders. Like all the generations that have gone before them, they too, must create their democracy anew.

Organizing an inaugural ball or other inaugural celebration as part of your mock election efforts will enable students to:

1. celebrate democracy.
2. explore the power and limitations of the presidency.
3. discover the controversies about presidential power throughout our history.
4. reinforce classroom lessons with active participation.<sup>1</sup>
5. experience open communication between parents and children.
6. involve the community in the work of schools.

## METHODS

The first Great American Inaugural Balls, in 1992, were a resounding success. The participants varied from inner city schools, to suburban schools in “silk stocking” districts, to rural communities; all levels of schools participated as well. The “balls” varied from an Indian powwow in South Dakota to formal ballroom dancing in Minnesota to a calypso band in Florida.

They all had one thing in common, a desire to open communication between parents and children in today’s troubled times, and to help young Americans in the 1990s chart their way through the churning waters that will mark their passage from childhood in the 20th century to adulthood in the 21st. A successful inaugural ball consists of the following phases:

1. Research the power of the presidency.
2. Plan and organize your inaugural ball.

1. Celebrating Inaugural Balls and the power of Americans to choose their leaders helps reinforce students’ understanding of the meaning and importance of the Constitution, as suggested in the New Nationals Standards for Civics and Government. See the new standards, Section III. The new standards also state that students should understand not only concepts related to limited government but also concepts related to the leadership role of political figures (and their abilities to fulfill these roles) to be able to participate intelligently in the evaluation of existing and proposed laws. See the new standards, Section I.



Somewhere among you may  
be the boys or girls who will  
be the presidents, senators,  
congressmen and women,  
legislators, and other leaders  
of the 21st century.

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## 1. Research the power of the presidency.

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“The American colonists fought for their independence from an autocratic king in 1776. Afterward, they sought to establish a government which would be without a powerful chief executive,” Kay Ashby Held and Janie Worst point out.

“The solution to the limitation of executive power was written into the constitution with the formation of the three branches of government: executive, legislative, and judicial. Each of these three branches were given means to ‘check’ or balance the power of the other two. For instance, no bills can be passed except by consent of both houses of Congress; all revenue bills must originate in the House; the President can veto legislation; the Congress can override the veto; and the Supreme Court rules on the constitutionality of law. These checks and balances have enabled our government to function for over 200 years without any one of the three branches becoming too powerful. To ensure that the Constitution would remain the basis of our government, the document was made ‘the Supreme Law of the Land.’

“Although the powers and limitations of the President are set down in Article II, throughout the years many interpretations of the limits of presidential power have been made.”

Review this concept with students, and survey the way these interpretations have changed throughout our history by exploring the following events and ideas:

- ★ Why did Henry Clay state on the floor of the House, “No commander in chief in this country has absolute power over life and death at his sole discretion”? Because such power would be “contrary to the laws and genius of our laws and institutions”? Why did he accuse President Monroe of telling Congress one thing and doing another? To which war was he referring?
- ★ On what basis did Abraham Lincoln justify the right to suspend the writ of habeas corpus (the legal protection afforded to any person under arrest to be brought before a judge and charged with a crime)? the right to order summary arrest (arrest without any warrant)? the right to confiscate private

property and the right to suppress free expression? How did he use executive proclamations rather than the legislative process to run the government?

Why did Lincoln, in asking Congress to ratify his measures, say he believed that “nothing had been done beyond the constitutional competency of Congress?” Why did the Supreme Court, in *ex parte* Milligan, only one year after the Civil War, affirm that the President had usurped the war power? Read *ex parte* Milligan. Do you agree with the majority opinion? Why? Why not?

- ★ Why was President McKinley accused of letting foreign policy preempt the precepts of fundamental laws in the U.S. actions in the Philippines and China, at the turn of the century?
- ★ Did Teddy Roosevelt have congressional authorization to take Panama?
- ★ Why did the late Senator Jacob Javits, sponsor of the War Powers Act, state that the seeds of the Vietnam war had been planted in Panama?
- ★ What led Theodore Roosevelt to sign a secret executive agreement stating he would regard with favor the establishment of a Japanese protectorate over Korea?
- ★ Why was Woodrow Wilson, who had been given more power by Congress during a war than any previous president, unable to carry the Congress with him when he sought to win the peace?
- ★ When were “term limits” first established for the President? When did the Supreme Court rule that “executive privilege” did not permit a president to defy a court order?
- ★ What effect did President Reagan’s purported involvement in the Iran-Contra affair have on the nation’s view of the powers of the president? What other incidents can you name? What do you believe will be the effect of the line-item veto?

- ★ What price might we pay for limiting the power of a President, especially as commander in chief, during a time of war? What price might we pay for weakening the “government of laws, not of men” outlined in our Constitution? What powers did the German parliament, the Reichstag, give to Adolf Hitler that led to the end of the Weimar Republic?

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## 2. Plan and organize your inaugural ball.

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The following steps will contribute to a successful inaugural event:

- ★ Choose a format.
- ★ Determine specifics.
- ★ Invite guests.
- ★ Involve parents.
- ★ Form committees.
- ★ Select a theme.
- ★ Plan activities.
- ★ Plan refreshments.
- ★ Make decorations.
- ★ Create a take-home booklet.
- ★ Record your event.
- ★ Involve the media.
- ★ Follow up.

### A. CHOOSE A FORMAT.

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Explore the following formats and considerations when planning your event:

- ★ **Decide how formal you wish to be.** You may wish to hold a traditional formal dinner or dance, with everybody dressed up in “black tie.” On the flip side, you may find that “down home” affair featuring games and dances is more appropriate.

Whether you choose a formal or informal affair will determine the guests you invite (see Method 4). For example, young children may be excluded from a formal dinner, but welcome at a less formal party. Either format, or all the variations in between, are acceptable!

- ★ **Plan the music.** A key ingredient of an inaugural ball is music. Will you have a band? The school band? Another group? Will you use recorded music?

No matter who is performing, try hard to keep the music intergenerational. Learning how to share and to care about each other’s needs is one of the most important lessons you seek to teach. Your ball is not just a party, no matter how much fun you plan. Under all the fun and games you have some very serious educational intentions. One of the most important lessons of the event may be that “We the People” can work and play together, whatever our differences may be.

This is your Inaugural Ball, to design as you will. The ideas in the pages that follow are to help you define your own design, no matter how different you wish it to be. Freedom of choice is one of our great American traditions. Tolerance for the choices of others is a custom we must work hard at to pass on to our children.

There are no rules for these Inaugural Balls other than that they must include both generations, must be drug and alcohol free, and nonpartisan. They are a celebration of the Inauguration of a new President in a “government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” They are a rededication of the ideals that made America a beacon of hope for all the world. Beyond that, the way that is right is the way that is right for you!

### B. DETERMINE SPECIFICS.

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- ★ **Place.** Once you have decided what the atmosphere of your ball will be, your next question is “where?” the school gym? cafeteria? a community center? a nearby university? a local hotel willing to make a pro-bono contribution? a bank or a corporation willing to let you have a portion of their space for the evening?

Make sure that the site will provide enough tables and chairs for all the guests you wish to invite.

- ★ **Time.** Choose the time on January 20, Inauguration Day, that is right for you. Some communities plan evening events, others daytime; some a full-scale dinner and dance, others a celebration during the classroom day. This is your party.
- ★ **Cost.** Will you sell tickets to the ball to help defray the cost, or keep the cost to a bare minimum? Will you raise funds for the ball by soliciting parents, and local storekeepers? Try putting the pros and cons on a sheet of paper. Involve young students in the decision. What information are you missing? What needs to be researched? Planning a party can be a great lesson in decision making! Be sure you involve the school administration as well. What rules and regulations are there that need to be complied with?
- ★ **Liability and security.** These are two important practicalities to keep in mind. The organization responsible for the ball accepts all liabilities. Are the premises you are considering safe? Is there adequate fire protection? police protection? parking space or public transportation? Do you need to set up a neighborhood watch while the partygoers are coming or going, or while they are inside? Once inside, will youngsters be permitted to leave and return at will? You may wish to post a list of rules at the entrance to the event.

### C. INVITE GUESTS.

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- ★ **Make a guest list.** A basic guest list could consist of students, parents, and school personnel. You may be pleasantly surprised by who else wishes to join you. Your members of congress, state legislators, governor, mayor, or other local officials may attend your event if invited. A reminder: the Great American Inaugural Ball is a nonpartisan celebration of democracy. Be sure to send invitations to both sides of the aisle!

You may also wish to invite representatives from the community: local business owners, members of volunteer organizations, or perhaps even the residents of a senior citizens' center.

You may also choose to make your event broader than your own community. Inviting parents and students from a school in a distant neighborhood is one way to help students learn to live in the pluralistic society in 21st century America.

Whether or not you wish to include young children in your event will probably depend on the type of format you have chosen.

- ★ **Create and send out invitations.** Have students design and/or create invitations that will be sent out to all guests, including politicians and dignitaries. Designing and writing the invitations is a great language arts lesson. (Please send samples of your invitations to the mock election committee.)

Students may also wish to write letters to accompany the invitations sent to politicians and officials. You could request that he or she send a letter of greetings to participants if unable to attend.

Students can create invitations with easily available materials; if you've chosen a more formal format, perhaps a local printer could contribute printed invitations—and programs too—in exchange for being permitted to place their company name on them. A local newspaper is another source that might contribute to the printing. Invite your contributors to attend your event and give them press recognition whenever you can.

### D. INVOLVE PARENTS.

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How do you get parents to come? The answer is so simple it sometimes escapes us. **By having their children extend the invitation and really mean it.**

We will never forget what a class of teenagers taught us at Cathedral High School in New York City. Only four parents had shown up for a parent participation event their teachers had worked long and hard on. “We can’t leave work early,” the parents said, or “The children travel from all over the city—we don’t feel any ties to the high school,” or “Teenagers don’t want their parents involved.” The “reasons” went on and on.

The children made the problem their own. The class wrote personal letters of invitation to each other’s parents, and followed up with personal phone calls. (A great language arts lesson, it turned out.) They put up their own posters in the school lobby. They gave spare posters to local shops to place in store windows. They sent out a class newsletter. (Another great language arts lesson.)

One girl spoke to the congregation at her church. Some wrote letters to the local newspaper, to employers, to radio stations. They organized their own “get out the parents” campaign. They won. Four weeks later, 40 parents showed up. One girl brought her minister as a surrogate parent when her mother could not come, one her grandmother, one her mother’s boyfriend. All were warmly received. All had a wonderful time.

Parents are pressed, harried, exhausted. But they are also lonely, bored, isolated—even in today’s fast-moving world. Make your Inaugural Ball an occasion that will be as much fun for the parents (including single parents, surrogate parents, foster parents, and grandparents) as it is for their children, and then let the children communicate that this will be a fun time for grownups, too. Let them take responsibility for the turn-out, but be there to help, guide, cajole, persuade. And follow up with your own telephone calls, your own “head counts.” Set a role model of persistence—it pays off.

Consider extending invitations to senior citizens in your community. One elementary school in Florida held a candle-lit “adoption ceremony” for surrogate grandparents from a local senior citizens home. The new grandparents told their young admirers about the elections they remembered. Some went back before Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The NBC camera crew that came for “just 15 minutes” stayed for the full day.

Research has long since proved that involving parents has a significant effect on school achievement, so your students will benefit from this effort as well.

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## E. RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS.

- ★ **Explore resources.** Don’t try to be a one-man band. The best of us have unplanned emergencies to cope with and need back-up help that is fully prepared to step in. If you try to go it alone not only will you be inviting problems, you will be missing an outstanding teaching opportunity. The Great American Inaugural Ball offers some great opportunities for cooperative learning, and for teaching that Fourth R—Responsibility. Why not ask for volunteers to work with the children? a local senior citizens group? civic group? the Junior League? your parent-teacher association? Everyone loves a party—especially if they are invited as a result of their hard work.
- ★ **Form committees.** Students and other volunteers could be organized into committees such as: Invitations, Decorations, Refreshments, Entertainment, Press, Contributions, Safety and Security, Transportation, Baby-sitting, Contests & Prizes, and Photography.
- ★ **Find a Master of Ceremonies.** An emcee can make a great contribution to your event, especially one with an ability to entertain members of all generations. Is there a teacher with a great sense of humor who can play this role? a father or mother? community leader? student leader? recreation director? entertainer? If you run out of possibilities, try local fraternal organizations, women’s groups, television stations, and newspapers. Somewhere, hiding under that bushel basket, is the talent you are looking for. If possible, involve your master of ceremonies in the planning stages.

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## F. SELECT A THEME.

You may wish to choose a theme for your Ball. One group of mothers in Memphis, Tennessee, organized a “White House Tea” as a National Student/Parent Mock Election activity. Couples came dressed as past presidents and their wives, with youngsters researching historic costumes to be sure they were accurate.

If you are concerned about the problems of being out at night in your community, an afternoon “Tea Dance” might be the perfect solution. You could, perhaps, carry the theme a step further and play the tunes that would have been dances for George Washington’s inauguration and on up. (Will someone volunteer to teach the minuet? the dances the “Baby Boomers” love?)

Try a brainstorming session on possible themes and ideas to go with them. You may be surprised with what students come up with. We were.

## G. PLAN ACTIVITIES .

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- ★ **Hold ice breakers.** Whether your Ball is formal or informal, traditional or adventurous, if you want parents and children who do not know each other to relax and enjoy each other, ice breakers can go a long way. How often have you been bored at a dance or party because all people did was “stand around?” Try the time-tested favorites, such as musical chairs, or a grand march (“Stars and Stripes Forever”). How about holding an Inaugural Parade? a conga line? a treasure hunt? a relay race? a “sing-a-long?” No, they won’t be doing those at the adults’ Inaugural Balls in Washington, D.C., but there were two children’s galas for the first time in 1992, and the President and First Lady attended both. How creative can your ice breakers be?
- ★ **Watch the real inauguration.** If the timing is right, you may wish to watch the Inauguration Ceremony together—after all, it is a milestone in American history. Make TV sets accessible to your participants if you possibly can, even a large screen TV if one can be had. You may wish to keep the TV tuned to inaugural coverage all evening, but be sure your own activities are sufficiently involving so that your ball does not turn into a TV party. The lesson is about creating your own celebration, not just watching other people have one.
- ★ **Hold dance contests.** Are there members of each generation who will engage in exhibition dance contests? Hold a contest and give prizes in different categories, such as rumba, rock-and-roll, the twist, or the Lindy. You could also hold a “name-the-dance” contest. Square dances are a great intergenerational activity. Perhaps parents could lead participants in multicultural dances such as the Hora, the Russian Bear Dance, or the polka. If you are including younger children, let parents limber up with “Skip to my Lou” or “Pop Goes the Weasel.” Let the youngest teach them how. A local dance instructor may volunteer to help lead participants in dances.
- ★ **Hold historical trivia contests.** History classes can have great fun making a list of questions for partygoers to test their skills. One elementary school class in Austin, Texas, sold their local radio station their program of “Presidential Minutes” about past presidents and earned \$5,000 for their school. Trivia questions could include: Which President was too big for the White House bathtub?... was a bachelor on his Inauguration Day?... said, “The business of America is business?”... said, “Ask not what your country can do for you...” What was the date of George Washington’s inauguration? Which presidential candidate(s) won the popular vote but were never inaugurated President?
- ★ **Inaugurate a “president.”** Award the honor of “Mr. or Madam President” to the student who writes the best essay on “The American Presidency and the Rule of Law,” or on “Why ballots are more powerful than bullets, votes are more powerful than violence?” The winner must give an inauguration speech. Or hold an election for “President for the Night.”  
  
Administer the oath of office and play “Hail to the Chief” for the winner. Let your President for the Night give his/her Inaugural Address, sit at a dais table accompanied by his/her aides—and, of course, the “Secret Service.”

## **H. PLAN REFRESHMENTS.**

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Refreshments can be as simple or elaborate as you wish them to be. Will you serve a nonalcoholic punch? tea or coffee? cookies? a spaghetti dinner cooked by students? cakes baked by each class? a school cafeteria meal? a potluck dinner? a banquet dinner at a nearby hotel for which parents must buy tickets? The decisions are all yours, but keep your refreshments in tune with the theme of your event. For the younger children a banquet is a big bore. Most teenagers prefer hamburgers and french fries. Would a local McDonald's or Pizza Hut help with a contribution in exchange for the publicity?

If parents are providing a potluck dinner, remember that these are the days of working wives; be sure there are some fathers on your refreshment committee.

## **I. MAKE DECORATIONS.**

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Your decorations will go a long way toward setting the tone for your Ball. They need not be expensive. How about the old reliable crepe-paper streamers and red, white, and blue balloons? (If you do permit smoking, be sure to separate the smokers from the potential fire hazards.)

Why not use children's paintings to help decorate the walls? posters from a poster contest? baby photos? (Match the children with their parents—or with the children their parents were.)

Other decorations could include old campaign posters, bumper stickers, and buttons contributed by local political organizations. (Remember, this is a bipartisan event.) Students could make American flags as the centerpiece for each table, or flags from each of the 50 states. (Paste them on sticks, then stand them in inverted Uncle Sam hats the children have made as well.) Is there time in your program for a rousing, flag waving sing-a-long? ("It's a Grand Old Flag," "Glory, Glory Hallelujah," "God Bless America"? Try putting the words on a screen with an overhead projector.)

Think about lighting when you plan your decorations. If there are harsh lights they can ruin your "atmosphere," despite all your efforts. A local electrician or theatrical producer may be able to help pro bono with ideas that are safe and inexpensive.

Local retailers may be willing to contribute fabric for table cloths that the school may keep, as well as items for raffle tickets that can be sold to defray expenses, or prizes for any contests you hold. (Retailers could display the logo of your Great American Inaugural Ball in their shop windows to tell the community they have contributed.)

## **J. CREATE A TAKE-HOME BOOKLET.**

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You may wish to enlist the English, Social Studies, and Art departments in this project. You may wish to create one booklet and photocopy it for each attendee, or have each student contribute a booklet he/she has compiled and decorated for families to take home as a memento. Subjects for take-home booklets could include the History of the White House and past Inaugurations, Supreme Court landmark decisions about the powers of the Presidency, and the assumption of powers not in the Constitution by Presidents in times of crisis.

## **K. RECORD YOUR EVENT.**

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You will want still photographers recording this event for parents and children, photographers who will send copies of their photos. If possible, try to get prints for parents and students and for yourself (and send photos to us at the mock election committee as well). Videotaping the event is another option.

Parents and students may volunteer as photographers or videographers, or your school district's public relations office may be able to provide someone. Remember that this is an occasion your students, and perhaps their families too, will remember for a lifetime. These will be their mementos.

## **L. INVITE THE MEDIA.**

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This is a very important part of your pilot effort. Be sure your Press and Publicity Committee stays on top of their responsibilities. (See Chapter 4 for more information on this topic.)

If volunteers from the local media help you organize your press efforts, be sure to invite them to your ball.

**M. FOLLOW UP.**

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As with all mock election events, be sure to send letters of thanks to everyone who volunteered and contributed in other ways to your inaugural ball. You may wish to form a thank-you committee for this purpose.

Another committee may take charge of keeping a record of your event, in the form of a scrapbook or a commemorative publication of some kind. This record could include photos, programs, fliers, posters, and any news articles written about your event.

# Organizing Activities at the Building Level

by Pat Dobbs, Social Studies Teacher  
Crockett High School, Austin, Texas

## OBJECTIVES

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Through organizing mock election activities at the building level, you can expect to:

1. plan mock election activities in schools.
2. encourage informed participation in the democratic process among students, parents, educators, and community members.
3. develop students' critical interpersonal skills, including speaking, listening, and the ability to be part of a team.
4. develop students' effective information assessing and processing skills, including the use of new technology.
5. enable students to acquire the writing skills that permit effective communication.
6. enable students to increase knowledge of American history and government necessary to function in a democratic society and an understanding of the issues surrounding patriotism.

## METHODS

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The following suggestions are intended to start you thinking and help you initiate discussions with your colleagues about organizing mock election activities in your building. Take what you need from these suggestions and leave the rest! The responsibilities of a school coordinator include the following:

1. Inform your school about the mock election.
2. Help determine which activities your school will hold.
3. Gather support for your activities.
4. Organize participation and activity implementation.
5. Involve parents.
6. Involve community members.
7. Involve public officials.
8. Involve local media.
9. Keep records.
10. Stay in touch with your State or District Coordinator.

11. Collect and tally your school’s vote and call it in to your state “Election Headquarters” on mock election night.
12. Evaluate your school’s mock election project and share your evaluation with the National Student/Parent Mock Election.
13. Apply for your award(s).

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## 1. Inform your school about the mock election.

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As a school coordinator, it is your job to inform everyone at your school about the mock election and mock election activities. This includes the principal, students, all teachers (not only social studies or civics teachers), school staff, and others. Everyone can contribute something to your project so be sure to include the entire school. For example, the food service staff might prepare refreshments for a mock election activity, or the shop class might build lecterns or stages for mock election quiz bowl competitions or speeches. The more people you involve, the more resources you will have to draw upon and the greater the experience for everyone.

It is also important to inform potential participants about the mock election as early as possible. You need time to disseminate mock election information and teachers need time to incorporate mock election activities into their lesson plans.

Be sure that your mock election materials include background information about the program as well as information about the benefits of mock election activities.

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## 2. Help determine which activities your school will hold.

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These are some examples of schoolwide mock election activities:

### ★ Bells Across America

On September 17, 1789, the United States of America ratified the Constitution and “since 1955 Presidents have proclaimed Constitution Week to remind all Americans that the Constitution is an important part of our daily lives.” (Bicentennial Commission advertisement for Constitution Week 1991.) When the Constitution was signed, Americans in all 13 states rang bells to commemorate the event and have been doing so ever since. Because the republic is founded upon free elections, it is very fitting that teachers use Constitution Week as a lead-in to mock election activities.

During Constitution Week, students at Crockett High School conducted “Bells Across America” bell-ringing ceremonies featuring recitations of the preamble to the Constitution and other appropriate passages. Groups, with the prearranged permission of other teachers, went from classroom to classroom carrying the message of America’s Constitutional birthday. The bell-ringing ceremony might also be conducted in a common area such as a courtyard or lunch room. Another school held a press conference and had their state representative lead the bell-ringing ceremonies after students explained the significance of the event.

All types of bells work well with this activity, including small, round Christmas bells and brass bells. Ask students to bring their own bells and be sure to have a few spares on hand for students who forget to bring theirs.

“Bells Across America” can even be conducted with one bell by passing it around the class, ringing it before and after each student recites a line from the preamble, and passing it after each line is read. Explanations in the students’ own words of the meaning of these passages might be interspersed and bell ringing done for each explanation.

- ★ **Constitutional Signing Reenactment**  
Another exercise for Constitution Week is a Constitution signing in which, on a blank page, students act out the signing of the document in 1787. The Constitution can also be decorated as a group or art class project. Consider preparing window or wall displays of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the founding fathers, perhaps with an emphasis of those parts of the document that refer to voting and voting rights.
- ★ **Displays**  
Posters and bulletin boards in or out of the classroom can be used in various ways with an upcoming election. Using stick pins or map pins and colored string, candidates can be tracked on a large map as they campaign about the country trying to get their message out. Cartoons, articles about the candidates and the issues, and campaign materials (posters, literature, bumper stickers, buttons) can be displayed. Campaign materials should be obtained from a candidate or party headquarters. Information about the candidates and issues is also available on the mock election's Internet page located at [www.mockelection.org](http://www.mockelection.org).
- ★ **An Internet Home Page**  
Create a Home Page for your school on the Internet and use it to disseminate information that will be helpful to mock election participants. For example, what are the voter registration requirements for your state? How can absentee ballots be secured? What position on funding education do the candidates for Congress in your district take? Use the Internet to find the information you need and to share that information with others (see the attached list of resources). Use E-mail to share ideas with other schools participating in the mock election. Get in touch with American schools overseas who are participating and exchange experiences and ideas. The only limits are the limits of your imagination.
- ★ **Mini forums**  
Invite all the candidates in one race to come to your school and debate the issues, or hold a "town meeting" in which an issue of local concern is discussed. (See Chapters 7 and 8 for more information on this topic.)
- ★ **Newspaper journals**  
One of the most useful tools for engaging students with election issues is keeping a newspaper clipping journal in which students are, on a daily basis, required to find, clip, and paste articles, cartoons, or ads about the election, the candidates, and the issues. These are turned in to teachers periodically for grading. (See Chapter 5 for more ways to use newspapers in the classroom.)
- ★ **Political rallies**  
Organize a political rally at your school. Invite candidates, or stand-ins for candidates, to come and campaign, distribute materials, and persuade voters to choose them on Election Day. Dress up your rally with raps, marching bands, balloon releases, or cheering squads with special cheers for their candidates.
- ★ **Radio shows**  
Consider creating a radio series to educate the community in preparation for the elections. One elementary school in Texas created a "Presidential Minutes" series that was not only broadcast by their local radio station but also won a \$5,000 contribution to the school. You can broadcast your series at the school during homeroom periods if the administration agrees.
- ★ **Role-playing** You may wish to divide the class into political parties. Each group can write and produce its own video and/or radio commercials using camcorders and/or audio cassettes which can be played to other classes or the public. In addition to commercials, the groups can produce their own bumper stickers, T-shirts, road and yard signs, campaign buttons and advertising displays on walls, bulletin boards, and corrugated board. Students can also research advertising rates, plan campaign budgets, and file financial expenditure reports. (For other ideas see the list of classroom activities in Chapter 15.)

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### **3. Gather support for your activities.**

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Once you have distributed information throughout the school, schedule a schoolwide meeting or a portion of a faculty meeting. To prepare yourself for this meeting, bring copies of mock election information to distribute as well as suggestions for school activities and how they might be implemented. Remember that the mock election is a multidiscipline project. Be prepared with a list of the many ways English teachers can help (from speeches and debates to readings on the foundations of democracy, and essay contests); math teachers can help (counting votes, mathematically predicting possible winners, analyzing federal, state, and local budgets); art teachers can help (posters, signs, school decorations, costumes); science teachers can help (analyzing environmental issues, the impact of new technology, the worldwide availability of natural resources); and music teachers can help (marching bands, patriotic songs, original compositions—perhaps a contest to write a song about “get out and vote”). Don’t be bashful about recruiting teachers’ families—the mock election can be a family activity for faculty as well as students! You may want to consider a preliminary meeting with a group of supportive teachers. Contact your State Coordinator for help—or your District Coordinator if your school district has one.

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### **4. Organize participation and activity implementation.**

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With the principal and perhaps a committee of supportive teachers, decide how students will participate in mock election activities. Will all classes participate or will activities be implemented only through Government and Civics classes? Will mock election activities take place throughout the semester or just before the elections? What locations will you use? What dates will you set aside? See the list of possible schoolwide activities at the end of this guide. Distribute information, ballots, recommended activities, and resource materials to teachers.

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### **5. Involve parents.**

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Another goal of the mock election is to involve parents in the education of their children. When circulating information about the mock election, be sure your materials reach parents. Consider sending letters or newsletters home with students, discussing the mock election at Parent-Teacher Association meetings as well as in individual teacher/parent meetings. Inform parents about your plans and ask for their help and suggestions. Many parents will contribute not only resources but also ideas that can enhance your activities.

In addition to reinforcing the lessons that students learn in school, parents can offer a ready and willing resource. They can be active (and public) supporters of your project or work to recruit community members that will publicly support your project. They can volunteer to help shuttle students to and from mock election activities or brainstorm ways community and/or government organizations can shuttle students (e.g., a bus to take students to the campaign headquarters of political candidates). Parents can help decorate facilities for mock election activities or solicit local businesses for decorations. The options are endless! You might consider asking parents to form a committee that offers students suggestions and help with planning and carrying out their projects, that brainstorms creative suggestions to help teachers and students accomplish their goals, or that simply makes themselves available for whatever is needed.

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### **6. Involve community members.**

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Newspaper in Education (NIE) is a nationwide program that provides excellent teaching materials and workshops and is sponsored by a major newspaper in many communities. The NIE Coordinator often publishes a section or page that features student comments, work and projects as well as a solicitation for student input including contests with significant prizes for winners. Many NIE Coordinators are already working with the mock election. If yours is not yet doing so, put them in touch with the National Student/Parent Mock Election so they can learn about the free materials available to them. If your paper does not have a local coordinator, check the newspaper of a larger nearby

town or city. (See Chapter 5 for more information on working with an NIE program.)

The League of Women Voters can also be very helpful. They have sponsored mock election events and activities in the past and offered invaluable resources such as activity volunteers, guidance in organizing voter turnout campaigns, classroom speakers, election information, and more. In many cities, the League of Women Voters publishes a free election voter's guide featuring issues, candidate particulars, and candidate position commentaries. Call your local chapter of the League of Women Voters for a class set of this publication. At Crockett High School, senior economics students distributed League of Women Voters guides to faculty members with their focus issues highlighted as a part of a class project on veteran's awareness vis-à-vis upcoming state constitutional amendments.

Other organizations such as local businesses, community service groups, professional organizations, and youth groups can provide a plethora of resources. Students or their parents may have contacts at these organizations and may be able to help you set up meetings to discuss potential partnerships or collaborations. Community organizations can provide any number of resources from awards for mock election essay contests to T-shirts for quiz team competitions to volunteer speakers. (See Chapter 12 for more information on this topic.)

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## **7. Involve public officials.**

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Get to know the officials responsible for registering voters and conducting elections. Local election officials often work through schools, particularly high schools, on voter education programs, and voter registration. Ask officials to come to your school to explain voter registration procedures and the elections process. In Travis County Texas (Austin), the tax collector (in the south, tax collectors collected the poll tax— now outlawed—and thus are now responsible for voter registration) and the county clerk have active on-going programs to register voters and get voters to the polls. The program includes designating senior social studies teachers as deputy voter registrars, providing classroom instructions for voter registration, and conducting an extensive mock election program using actual ballots and equipment with safeguards that prevent any mixing of the mock

election ballots with the actual ballots, both of which are counted electronically. (Contact the League of Women Voters if you are uncertain about who your local election officials are.)

Elected officials of all types are potential speakers on election issues. They, after all, are the ones elected and have a good grasp of the procedure particularly from a political angle. A popular or powerful elected official such as your congress person is not as remote as he or she may seem. Perhaps he or she is looking for a grass roots opportunity to meet his or her constituency. If you are thinking about having a state/federal official visit, you may want to put several classes or the whole school together in a project. Don't overlook parents as a resource in this area. Some parent of some student may be able to persuade an important official to come to your school.

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## **8. Involve local media.**

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The National Student/Parent mock election grew out of the Parent Participation TV Workshop Project, selected as one of the 11 outstanding examples for building public confidence in the schools. You will receive only positive coverage for mock election activities and cement the school's relations with the community. (See Chapter 4: Involving Print and Electronic Media.)

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## **9. Keep records.**

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Keep a record of the types of mock election activities that are being implemented as well as how many students are participating at each grade level.

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## **10. Stay in touch with your State or District Coordinator.**

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It is important that you remain in close touch with your State or District Coordinator (if your district has one). They will be sending you new and updated resource materials, as well as informing you about other mock election activities that are taking place and how the mock election votes from your state will be collected. Likewise, you should send your State or District Coordinator periodic updates about your activities.

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## **11. Select and train student election officials to collect and tally your school's vote and call it in to your district or state "Election Headquarters" on mock election night.**

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As school coordinator you will receive the candidate's ballots from your State or District Coordinator. (Issues ballots are part of the issues guide.)

If your school does not plan to use online voting, you need to duplicate and distribute mock election ballots to all participating teachers (to pass out to their students) prior to mock election day. With participating teachers, you can select and train student election officials to collect and tally the results of your school's mock election day. Once all students have voted, you will be responsible for calling your school's votes in to your State or District Mock Election Headquarters so that they can be forwarded to the National Mock Election Headquarters on November 2, 2000. Note: It is very important that all teachers in your school know that they submit their class totals to you and do not overwhelm the state "Election Headquarters" with more than one call from a school on mock election night. An alternative possibility this year will be voting online at [mockelection2000.net](http://mockelection2000.net).

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## **12. Evaluate your school's mock election project.**

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If you have read Chapter 2, "Evaluating Mock Election Activities," you will already have involved students in evaluating your school's success. If the faculty wishes to do an independent evaluation as well, go to it!

Above all, please remember to share the results of your evaluation(s) with the National Student/Parent Mock Election committee. You may use the official evaluation form (see page vii), or any other approach you wish to let us know what happened, what worked well for you, what needs improvement, and what we can do to help you better next time.

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## **13. Apply for your award(s).**

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The NASSP/John Herklotz Award (the National Association of Secondary School Principals) is given for "outstanding contributions in teaching democracy" and is for schoolwide mock election projects. The NASC/Ruth Hollander Award (the National Association of Student Councils) is given for "outstanding leadership in democratic participation" and is for student-led projects. If you believe your school's project was outstanding, be sure to complete the awards application (see Appendix 1) and send it in to us!

One of the purposes of the mock election is to ensure the continuation of democracy as today's students become our future leaders. In order for students to learn how to preserve and improve Constitutional government, they must understand the necessary conditions for its existence and the relationship between citizens, the Constitution and the government. (See the new standards, Section I.)

The new standards suggest that students gain a deeper understanding of the political process in America (at all levels: national, state, and local), how it evolved, and the implications of such documents as the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The standards further state that students should understand the major responsibilities of their local government. See the new standards, Section III.

# Organizing Mock Election Activities at the District Level

by Doris Freeling, Social Studies Supervisor  
Dallas Independent School District  
Dallas, Texas

## OBJECTIVES

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Through planning mock election activities at a district level, you can expect to:

1. reinforce classroom lessons with active participation.
2. develop students' research skills.
3. develop students' ability to classify information.
4. develop students' writing skills.
5. develop students' verbal skills.
6. develop students' critical thinking skills in relation to a political election.
7. enable students to learn voting procedures.
8. involve the community in the work of schools.
9. motivate eligible and future voters.

## METHODS

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The responsibilities of a district coordinator include the following:

1. Inform schools early.
2. Involve all schools in planning.
3. Facilitate the efforts of the school coordinator.
4. Help determine classroom activities.
5. Involve the media.
6. Involve parents and community members.
7. Evaluate and follow up.

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## 1. Inform schools early.

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As an organizer of a district mock election, you must inform your schools. The earlier you do this, the more time you will have to plan and disseminate mock election activities and resources to persons coordinating mock elections in individual schools. If necessary, create a team of teachers, parents, and students that actively supports the mock election and the information necessary to garner support: what the mock election is, who participates, and what the benefits are. Ask the superintendent for his or her endorsement of the mock election and communicate that endorsement to district principals. Be sure to contact school administrators, principals, teachers, parents, and others who might be interested in the mock election as well.

Once you have gained general support in the district, develop a list of coordinators at each school who will inform their school about the mock election and take responsibility for administering mock election activities in their school. These teachers can also provide you with support and advice, accompany you to public meetings, help you draft mock election materials, and more!

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## 2. Involve all schools in planning.

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Invite schools to help you plan the district's project so they have ownership of it. The earlier you let them know, the more time you will have to plan and disseminate plans and resources for mock election activities to persons coordinating the effort in individual schools.

To get the word out to the schools, write letters, use newsletters, and design and distribute flyers and posters. Be sure your initial information answers these questions:

- ★ What is a mock election?
- ★ What will students do?
- ★ What is the purpose of the event?
- ★ When will it take place?
- ★ What are the outcomes?
- ★ Why hold a district mock election?

- ★ What specific things will a mock election do for students in your district?

Although there are numerous approaches to involving all of a school district's schools in a mock election, be systematic. Try the following three-stage approach:

- ★ Assume that all schools want to participate in the mock election. Inform all schools of the event. Communicate with each school as if each has said, "Yes, our students will be involved." If you hit strong resistance or get no response, you may want to move on to the next stage.
- ★ After a few days or a week have passed, send mock election information to those persons having direct authority over the schools. If time pressure is a factor, ignore this procedure.
- ★ Finally, communicate with the general superintendent, either by direct or indirect methods. You can be quite deliberate here. If you have the superintendent's strong endorsement of the mock election project, communicate his or her endorsement to schools.

As your plans progress, be sure new information and updates reach each school, department head, school administrator, superintendent, teacher, and student. Circulate information to everyone who has expressed interest in mock election activities as well as those with direct authority over schools (e.g., principals).

Continue to publicize the project through flyers and posters (these are great for student design competitions!); announcements in school newsletters and publications; teachers' mailboxes, publications, and meetings; and community and school bulletin boards (at the post office, in local publications and newspapers). (See Chapter 4.)

If you have made all attempts to get all schools involved and have failed, still think of yourself as being in the wait-and-see phase. You can use some of your time to continue checking and rechecking to find out whether nonresponsive schools want to be involved. Remain actively engaged in trying to give all students in all schools the mock election experience. It's worth your time.

Try to provide an opportunity for as many students to participate in the mock election as possible. Be sure those who are invited to participate in your event understand your purpose! Do not become frustrated by a lack of response; sometimes several invitations are what it takes.

Create an open environment by welcoming the suggestions of others as well as by allowing schools to “come on board” at any stage in the planning process, even those that may have been disinterested initially. You might consider sending out a “resources needed form” to mock election participants to find out what resources they need and how you might help them.

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### **3. Facilitate the efforts of the school coordinator.**

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A critical phase of mock election activities is planning and organization by school coordinators who will be responsible for implementing the mock election and voter education activities in their schools. Give preliminary directions carefully, familiarizing yourself and others with pertinent information and critical dates. Set timelines for the implementation of all mock election activities in the schools. Activities for the school coordinator include the following:

- ★ With the principal, decide whether all teachers will participate. Remember that the mock election is an opportunity to involve multiple disciplines. English teachers, art teachers, math teachers, and science teachers, as well as social studies teachers, have much to gain. Also decide how activities and lessons will be implemented: Will voter education events/ lessons take place daily or weekly? Will events and activities include the entire school or individual classrooms?
- ★ Distribute information, ballots, recommended activities, and resource materials to teachers.
- ★ Keep a record of the types of mock election activities that are being implemented, as well as how many students are participating at each grade level.

- ★ Contact the District Coordinator for the latest briefing information and materials that may be helpful. (Materials should be sent to all school coordinators periodically.)
- ★ Select students (election officials) to collect tallies of election results from each class, or from the polling station within the school.
- ★ Compile the election results from each class to produce the school’s election results. Select students to call in the results to the District Mock Election Headquarters.

When recommending activities, be economical. Inviting candidates to speak at schools and allowing students to register people to vote will cost very little money, if any at all. Asking local businesses for in kind help will also keep down costs. (See Chapter 12 for more information on involving local organizations in your efforts.)

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### **4. Help determine classroom activities.**

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Exercise care in selecting mock election activities that will yield the best learning outcomes. Some suggestions for possible classroom activities include the following:

- ★ Invite candidates or their representatives to speak to a class or school. Be sure that all candidates from all political parties are given the same opportunity to speak.
- ★ Distribute ballots to students to take home and discuss with their parents. This will open a dialogue between students and parents regarding whether or not parents have registered to vote, the candidates and issues themselves, as well as how the issues could directly affect them, their daily lives and lifestyle. Send ballots home before mock election voting day so that parents can vote.
- ★ Arrange field trips to campaign offices where students can interview candidates and campaign workers and collect information and campaign materials.

- ★ Organize weekly discussions about the issues (from health care to safety to flat taxes) and arrange for one of the discussions to be aired on a local TV station. (See Chapters 6 and 7 for more ideas.)
- ★ Allow students to make posters to remind people to vote, perhaps local businesses will display the posters.
- ★ Allow students to take a poll or survey in the community and do some actual data collecting. Put numbers from the phone book in the computer and, on the basis of a sampling of the 100 families called, have students predict the winner of a political race.
- ★ Distribute shoe boxes to each participating class for collection of election news clippings. At the end of each week the best educational articles should be displayed on a centrally-located bulletin board. At the end of three weeks, the class with the most clippings should be treated to a popcorn party.
- ★ Do a pre- and post-test on voting requirements and procedures. Teach facts on voting requirements and procedures.
- ★ Bridge the “intergenerational gap” by organizing an Adopt-a-Grandparent Day to inform and invite grandparent participation in mock election activities.
- ★ Conduct a schoolwide orientation (especially for “first voting” students) of an actual election booth provided by county elections office.
- ★ Set up a polling station in a designated place in each school or classroom. The voting area should be decorated and patriotic music played while students wait to cast their ballots. Emphasize secret balloting—each student should be given privacy to vote.
- ★ Encourage students to participate in a “Get Out the Vote” campaign in their local neighborhoods. (See Chapter 11.)
- ★ Create a model senate to meet and debate public issues in homeroom, over lunch periods or in class. (Students need to be informed as they will cast their ballots on mock election day for national issues as well as for candidates.)
- ★ Involve students in the study of propaganda techniques used in TV ads and vocabulary relating to elections and the democratic process.
- ★ Encourage students to follow the events leading up to the real election on November 7, 2000, by reading the press. (See Chapter 5.)
- ★ Invite political candidates to a reception to meet and mix with their future constituents.
- ★ Distribute election information to the students, i.e., candidates’ biographies, issue sheets, overviews of the election process, and brief descriptions of the elective offices themselves.
- ★ Conduct simulated voter registration with students under 18 years of age.
- ★ Create a bulletin board on which students can post for discussion political cartoons and political advertisements collected from newspapers and magazines.
- ★ Invoke classroom discussions about voting and elections: “Why do you think some people don’t vote?” Generate an extensive list of answers on the board or overhead projector. After reviewing the list, ask students to brainstorm ideas to increase voter turn-out in elections. Conclude by having each student write a one-page essay supporting one of the ideas.
- ★ Invite the League of Women Voters to come to talk about the responsibilities of voting.
- ★ Organize all “first vote” students (18 years and older) for participation in a Legacy Ceremony, in which senior citizens pass on to new voters the legacy of one’s right and responsibility to vote.

- ★ Decorate empty store fronts or polling places for the election (“Fairmont students say thanks for caring!”) in red, white, and blue or Uncle Sam motifs.
- ★ After the real election in November, compare and discuss the election results of the real and mock elections. Continue to follow current events and reinforce the importance of voting and students’ responsibilities as citizens.
- ★ Encourage drama classes or clubs to prepare skits or dramatizations about voting or famous political speeches. Present them at Chamber of Commerce meetings, nursing homes, or other schools. (See Chapter 13 for additional suggestions for classroom activities.)

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## 5. Involve the media.

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Your local media can be a great ally in gaining supporters for the mock election and mock election activities. (See Chapter 4 for more information on this topic.)

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## 6. Involve community members and parents.

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Find creative ways to collaborate with other people and organizations, such as having members of the local chapter of the Bar Association talk with students about individual rights, or developing mentor relationships with local lawyers or public officials.

Invite community and family members to participate in the education of their youth. Circulate announcements and flyers or assign students to solicit at least one family or community volunteer. (See Chapter 12.)

Community and family members can also be great sources of public support. Ask parents and community volunteers and sponsors to write letters to the principal or superintendent or to public officials supporting mock election activities and the efforts of participants. Parents might also schedule meetings with educators to discuss mock election activities. Parent involvement will help reinforce the lessons and skills students learn in school.

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## 7. Evaluate and follow up.

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After the event, gather your supporters and participants to discuss the level of participation. What did the most successful schools do differently from other schools? How might you enroll new schools? How can you improve future events? What other types of events might you like to try?

Also encourage participating teachers to evaluate the activities themselves. Were activities constructive? Did students take an active role in planning and implementing activities? What did students learn? What did students like most/least? (See Chapter 2.)

Suggest that school coordinators report their activities to the National Student/Parent Mock Election committee (see page vii), or submit their efforts for a national award (see Appendix 1).

The new National Standards for Civics and Government stress active participation in the learning process as well as a set of concepts that students at each grade level should be able to explain. Mock election activities can help educators meet these goals. For example, the standards state that students should be able to explain the most important responsibilities of their local government. This is particularly important because citizens are most intimately involved with the government on the local level. The standards further suggest that teachers enlist the help of public officials to meet this goal. See the new standards, Section III.

# Organizing Mock Election Activities Statewide

by Bill Diamond  
Secretary of State, Maine

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## OBJECTIVES

Through planning a statewide mock election project, you can expect to:

1. help students and parents actively experience the electoral process and the rewards of civic participation.
2. encourage pride in U.S. citizenship and knowledge of individual responsibilities in a democracy.
3. increase voter turnout in the state.


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## METHODS

One of the mock election's secrets to success is this: it's easy to organize. Every state conducts the mock election a little differently. The only "musts" in the mock election are: 1) schools must culminate their local projects with a mock election on the day designated by the national office, and 2) participating states must compile and report their results to the "National Mock Election Headquarters." That's it. Most states, of course, are far too excited about the mock election to stop there and want to do more, not less.

The responsibilities of a state coordinator include the following:

1. Involve as many people and organizations as possible.
2. Emphasize the mock election's civic education goals.
3. Provide local support, but allow creative and inexpensive projects.
4. Establish a state election headquarters.

 The National Student/Parent Mock Election certainly ranks among the most outstanding democracy efforts for young people. As state coordinator of Maine's program, I know our experience has been extremely positive.

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## 1. Involve as many people and organizations as possible.

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The support of as many people and organizations as possible—even if the support is only nominal—will help your program.

Be inclusive from the very start by establishing a mock election steering committee. Such a group might include representatives of teachers organizations or civic education associations such as the Council for the Social Studies. The steering committee might also include non-profit organizations such as the League of Women Voters or the Parent Teacher Association. The National Student/ Parent Mock Election has the support of many national organizations and local chapters are often willing to help. A list of the national organizations, which may have a local chapter in your area, is available from the National Student/Parent Mock Election.

School administrators such as principals or superintendents can be helpful, and business leaders are sometimes willing to participate. A representative of the county or municipal elections officials should be on the steering committee. It's important to include a member of the media, as well. Use your own creativity when issuing invitations! It's best to keep this group to approximately 12 members.

Once you've established a steering committee, the networking opportunities expand immediately. The committee can be helpful in many ways, such as identifying and securing the resources to provide materials you plan to distribute to schools. These materials can be elaborate or simple. In Maine, we provide all schools with a one-page list of suggested activities and several mock ballots suitable for reproduction. We provide additional classroom material upon request. Some schools have developed their own curriculum and allow us to share it with other schools. Your steering committee can help you decide not only what to do, but also how to make it happen.

As part of our effort to recruit schools to participate in the mock election, all four members of our Congressional delegation and our Governor send a joint letter to every school principal in Maine asking them to join this program. We also send invitations to schools.

We want a great deal of participation in this project, and that includes allowing anyone to vote in

the mock election. Students and parents are the primary audience, but if a school wants their food service staff to participate, we're all for it. The mock election should be exciting and inclusive, not somber and exclusive. If somebody offers to get involved, we find a place for them. Don't turn away assistance. It's important that work be delegated. The mock election is labor-intensive and can be overwhelming. The more supporters, stakeholders or sponsors your mock election wins, the better your chances for a successful program with a high level of participation, enthusiasm, and public exposure.

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## 2. Emphasize the mock election's civic education goals.

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Whenever you are talking about the mock election—especially with the public or the media—emphasize that the event is an educational exercise designed to promote democracy and encourage voting. The mock election is not a poll or a survey and should not be considered as such. The results of the mock election do not reflect the real election in any way, accurately or inaccurately.

In the 1994 mock election, news releases in Maine used the following language:

The National Student/Parent Mock Election is a democracy education exercise that emphasizes the importance of voting and good citizenship. The program in Maine is intended for, but not restricted to, students in grades 3–12. Students, parents, and others sometimes cast ballots as part of this project. Mock election results are for the enjoyment of the participants and are in no way intended to predict, forecast, or otherwise be connected with the outcome of the real election.

You should not talk about how “it's interesting to see what young people think.” Such statements feed the unfounded criticisms sometimes leveled against the mock election by those who contend that it skews the results of the real election. Make it absolutely clear at all times that this project is about educating students, not about polling them. This is critical for the integrity of your project and will help ensure more candidates participate in your effort. In Maine's 1994 project, at least one candidate from almost every statewide race participated in the festivities. In many cases all the candidates participated, including those who are now addressed as Congressman, Senator, and Governor!

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### **3. Provide local support, but allow creative and inexpensive projects.**

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A successful mock election requires flexibility on a statewide level. Some schools conduct big projects, others small. Some schools set up realistic polling sites in cooperation with local election officials, and some don't. Some classes study the elections all semester, and some have a one-hour lesson on mock election day. Sometimes a class participates, and sometimes a whole school. The mock election allows for these differences and encourages local organizers to do as much as they are able.

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### **4. Establish a state election headquarters.**

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One of the things we do in Maine to support the program on statewide level is to organize a major event the night of the mock election. In 1994, hundreds of students from across the state convened at a conference hall to eat pizza, staff phone banks where election results were reported, and listen to candidates. Almost every major candidate, including those who would be elected to the U.S. Senate and Governorship, attended the event.

Even at this event, we tried to be creative and low-cost. For example, we decorated the hall by setting up folding tables around the perimeter of the site, giving one table to every political campaign that wanted one. Political campaigns signed up prior to the event and were allowed inside mock election headquarters several hours before the students. Campaign staffers brought shirts, signs, balloons, literature, and more. It turned out much like a big political convention or rally. Students volunteered to staff most of the jobs at the event, make speeches (or sing songs!) on behalf of candidates and introduce the candidates themselves. Mock election supporters got involved in many ways—they participated in everything from decorating facilities to shuttling

students to and from headquarters. The students loved it, the campaigns went crazy, and the media provided lots of coverage. And all of it was virtually free to the mock election. In Maine, private corporations provided the modest funds that were needed to buy food, rent a facility, and hook up phones for the event. (A videotape of this event is available from the National Student/Parent Mock Election national headquarters.)

Ultimately, we do not turn anyone away from the project in Maine. If a school wants ballots, we urge, encourage, and support them. The state coordinator doesn't have to make sure everybody does the same thing, but he or she does need to ensure that everybody has what they need. It doesn't always take a big budget. Postage and printing costs are likely to be your biggest expenses because communication is so important. A dose of enthusiasm goes a long way.

Mock election activities emphasize experiential education and can help educators incorporate many of the new National Standards for Civics and Government. For example, the standards suggest that students understand the relationship of limited government to individual freedoms (i.e., how political rights limit government, how a limited government protects political freedoms). See the new standards, Section I. By participating in a mock election, students gain a better understanding of the power of government, how government works, how individuals can participate in the political process, and individual rights. The Standards also state that students should be able to explain the most important responsibilities of state government and understand the powers of various political leaders, how government affects society, how diverse groups influence the government and vice versa, and the differences between Liberalism and Republicanism. See the new standards, Section III.

Maine students composed a song about Congresswoman Olympia Snowe when she was a candidate for the Senate and sang it to her on television. Senator Snowe remains an enthusiastic supporter of the National Student/Parent Mock Election.

# Appendix: Resources

## BOOKS

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*American Economy: Government's Role, Citizen's Choice* offers information about Government, Economics and Civics. Available for \$9.95 from Close Up Publishing, Dept. C16, 44 Canal Center Plaza, Alexandria, VA 22314-1592. Phone: (800) 765-3131.

*American Political Rhetoric and the Presidency* examines the effect of television on political campaigns from the early 1950's to the television persona of Ronald Reagan. Available for \$49.95 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: SSSService@aol.com.

*An Administrator's Guide to the U.S. Department of Education*, published by the U.S. Department of Education.

*The Almanac of American Politics* contains brief essays about every Congressional District in the U.S. and is published by the National Journal.

*Bacon's Guide to Newspapers* (see your local library)

*Bacon's Guide to Television and Radio* (see your local library)

*Between the Lines: How to Detect Bias and Propaganda in the News and Everyday Life* by Eleanor MacLean, published by Black Rose Books.

*Broadcasting Annual* provides a listing of all TV and radio stations in the country as well as titles and contacts within each station (see your local library).

*Choosing to Participate* (#IE102-15) is a grade 9–12 textbook that provides an antidote for student apathy, indifference and cynicism. Text builds citizenship skills by encouraging students to think about how they can make a difference to society. Available for \$17.50 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: SSSService@aol.com.

*Congressional District Data Book* published by the U.S. Bureau of Census. Contains statistical data for each Congressional District.

*Corporate Yellow Book: Who's Who at Leading US Companies*, published by Leadership Directories, Inc. (see your local library) *Current Issues Teacher's Guide* (#K1670-96) is

available for \$14.95 from Close Up Publishing, Dept. C16, 44 Canal Center Plaza, Alexandria, VA 22314-1592. Phone: (800) 765-3131.

*Early American Speeches: The Primary Source* contains speeches from Otis, Henry, Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Webster, Polk, Calhoun and Lincoln. Available for \$15.50 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: SSSService@aol.com.

*Editor and Publisher International Year Book* contains listings of all daily, weekly and special newspapers published in the United States as well as news and syndicate services and other news organizations and industry services. Published by Editor and Publisher, 11 West 19th Street, New York, NY 10011. Phone: (212) 675-4380.

*Editorial and Persuasive Writing* by Harry Stonecipher offers suggestions about writing news. Published by Communication Arts Books.

*Fifty Political Cartoons for Teaching History* by William Ray Heitzmann contains a collection of political cartoons drawn from various eras in American history. This book contains information on the background of each political cartoon and offers techniques for classroom utilization. Suitable for grades 7 through college. Available for \$25.00 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: SSSService@aol.com.

*First Amendment: What Americans Have Said About Freedom of Expression* is a selection of quotes and essays for high school students compiled by Louis Edward Inglehart, Professor Emeritus, Department of Journalism, Ball State University, Muncie, IN. Available for \$20.00 from the Newspaper Association of America, The Newspaper Center, 11600 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston VA, 22091-1412. Phone: (703) 648-1053. Fax: (703) 620-1265.

*How to Make Speeches* by Steve Allen. Published by McGraw-Hill.

*An Invitation to Your Community, Building Community Partnerships for Learning* by GOALS 2000, published by the U.S. Department of Education.

*The Joint Press Conference: The History, Impact and Prospects of American Presidential Debates* by D. L. Lanoue and P. R. Schrott, published by Praeger.

*Lovejoy: The Vigil* by Robert W. Tabscott is a historical docu-drama hosted by Maya Angelou about Elijah P. Lovejoy, a minister, editor, abolitionist and Maine native who became the nation's first martyr to freedom of the press in 1837. Lovejoy's struggle involved choosing between voicing his conscience or maintaining a comfortable silence and between his traditional religious convictions and his faith in secular constitutional freedoms. Suitable for grades 9 through college. Available in 1/2 inch or 3/4 inch video format. May be rented (\$27.50) or purchased (\$75.00) from Elijah Lovejoy Society, 11155 Clayton Road, St. Louis, MO 63131.

*Making Local News* by Phyllis Kaniss helps explain the elements and production of local news. Published by the University of Chicago Press.

*Mass Media and American Politics (Fourth Edition)* by Doris Graber studies the function of mass media in the public, media impact on individual attitudes and perceptions and media coverage of governmental institutions and political situations. Available from Congressional Quarterly, 1414 22nd St. NW, Washington, DC 20037. Phone: (202) 887-6706.

*The Media Game: American Politics in the Television Age* by Stephen Ansolabehere, published by Macmillan Publishing Co.

*Modern American Speeches: The Primary Source* (#PFF370-15) contains speeches by Bryan, McKinley, T. Roosevelt, Wilson, F. Roosevelt, Marshall, Eisenhower, Kennedy and King. Available for \$16.50 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: SSSService@aol.com.

*Municipal Yellow Book: Who's Who in the Leading City and County Governments and Local Authorities.* Published by Leadership Directories, Inc.

*The New National Standards for Civics and Education* available for \$13.20 (includes postage and handling) from the Center for Civic Education, 5146 Douglas Fir Road, Calabasas, CA 91302.

*Political Campaign Debates: Images, Strategies and Tactics* by M. Martel, published by Longman.

*Politics and People* (#SCB234-15) is a textbook that defines political behavior and offers lessons to contrast the two-party system with other approaches. Explores campaigns,

electioneering, exploring citizenship, pressure groups, public opinion, propaganda and citizens' impact on foreign policy and current issues. Available for \$10.50 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: SSSService@aol.com.

*Politics in America 1996* provides profiles for each member of the 104th Congress including committee assignments, interest group ratings, campaign finance data, district profiles, etc. Edited by Phil Duncan and Chris Lawrence. (see your local library)

*Preparing Students for the 21st Century* by Donna Uchida, Marvin Cetron and Floretta McKenzie addresses such issues as necessary student skills for the 21st century, how schools can prepare students for the 21st century, what the role of parents should be, etc. Published by the American Association of School Administrators. Phone: (301) 617-7802.

*Presidential Debates: The Challenge of Creating an Informed Electorate* by K. H. Jamieson and D. S. Birdshell, published by the Oxford University Press.

*The Presidential Debates: Media, Electoral and Policy Perspectives* by G. F. Bishop, G. R. Meadow and M. Jackson-Beeck, published by Praeger.

*Reach Every Kid* by Alan Haskvitz lists over 2,000 places kids can order free materials such as world maps, information about world leaders and government foundations, etc. Available on disk (please specify Mac or IBM format) or hardback for \$20.00 (including shipping and handling). Contact Alan Haskvitz, 9655 Carrari Court, Alta Loma, CA 91737. Phone: (909) 945-9942.

*Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* (see your local library).

*Responsibility of the Press* edited by Gerald Gross, published by Fleet Publishing Corp.

*Rhetorical Studies of National Political Debates* by R. V. Friedenberg, published by Praeger.

*Speaking of a Free Press* is a compilation of 200 years of quotations on press freedoms. For a free copy, contact the Newspaper Association of America, The Newspaper Center, 11600 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston VA, 220911412. Phone: (703) 648-1053. Fax: (703) 620-1265.

*TV News Contacts*, published by BPi Media Services. (see your local library)

*The Wit and Wisdom of PR Success* provides advice on every aspect of public relations including background information, leadership, communications, community and media relations, planning, publications and more. Available for \$12.00 from the National School Public Relations Association, 1501 Lee Highway Suite 201, Arlington, VA 22209-1100. Phone: (703) 528-5840. Fax: (703) 528-7017.

*World's Greatest Speeches* (#DOV130-15) contains speeches from the "Funeral Oration" by Pericles and St. Bern's "A Second Crusade" to Winston Churchill's "An Iron Curtain Has Descended" and Malcolm X's "The Black Revolution." Suitable for use in grades 10 and up as a historical reference and for those studying public speaking. Available for \$12.95 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 4214246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: SSSService@aol.com.

*Your Vote* (#TF104V-15) provides a history of two centuries of voting rights in America. Suitable for grades 9-12. Available for \$40.00 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: SSSService@aol.com.

## FILM AND VIDEO

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*The Election Process* explores history, analyzes the party system, and discusses how government is the responsibility of citizens. Available from Sunburst Communications, Inc., Pound Ridge, NY 10576.

*Future Vote Video Series* is designed to engage high school students in an issues-oriented assessment of candidates. Three videos are available: "The Environment at Risk: Responding to Growing Dangers", "America's Role in the World: New Risks, New Realities" and "People and Politics: Who Should Govern?" Contact Dr. Ceasar McDowell, Eileen Collins or Mimi Gleason at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Larsen Hall 414, Appian Way, Cambridge, MA 02138. Phone: (617) 496-3399. Fax: (617) 495-3626.

*How to Read Between the Lines* is a video produced the Wall Street Journal about analyzing news stories. Contact the Education Desk at the Wall Street Journal, 200 Liberty Street, New York, NY 10281. Phone: (212) 416-2000.

*How to Watch Television* is a film designed to help motivate students to watch television critically. Available from Educational Direction Inc./Xerox Educational Publications, 181 W. State St., Westport, CT 06880.

*The John Peter Zenger Trial Film* is available with a teacher's guide from Current Affairs Films, 24 Danbury Rd., Wilton, CT 06897.

*Privacy Under Attack* deals with privacy in relation to the freedom of the press. Available from Current Affairs Films, 24 Danbury Rd., Wilton, CT 06897.

*What is Journalism?* is a film about news analysis and a comparison of the functions and problems of print and broadcast journalism. Available from Guidance Association, 757 Third Ave., New York, NY 10017.

*Your Newspaper* discusses the following: What is a newspaper?, Preparation and Production, The News Story, Features and Columns, The Editorial Page and How Free Is Today's Press?. Available from Globe Filmstrips, 175 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010.

## INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND ASSOCIATIONS

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Associated Press Day Book, 2021 K St. NW, Washington, DC 20006. Phone: (202) 776-9470. Fax: (202) 776-9575.

Democratic Party, 430 Capitol Street SE, Washington, DC 20003. Phone: (202) 863-8000. Each state has its own party headquarters located state capitals; the party has many local organizations as well. (Check your phone book for local listings or call the national headquarters for unlisted party offices.)

Dr. Frank Fair, Coordinator of Academic Challenge Contests, Sam Houston State University, Department of Psychology and Philosophy, Huntsville, Texas 773412447. Phone: (409) 294-1174. Fax: (409) 294-3798.

The Federation of Academic Coaches and Team Sponsors (FACTS), PO Box 974, Rochester, Michigan 48308. Phone: (313) 781-5571.

Peggy Harrod, Panasonic Academic Challenge, PO Box 391, 1925 South Floral Avenue, Bartow, Florida 33830. Phone: (813) 534-0621. Fax: (813) 534-0767.

Shirley Jackson c/o Huntsville High School, 441 FM 2821 East, Huntsville, Texas 77340. Phone: (409) 2932626. Fax: (409) 293-2670.

League of Women Voters. Numbers of local chapters are listed in the phone book or are available from the League of Women Voters, 1730 M Street NW, Washington, DC 20036. Phone: (202) 429-1965.

National School Public Relations Association, 1501 Lee Highway, Suite 201, Arlington, VA 22209-1100. Phone: (703) 528-5840.

National TeleQuiz, Big Rock Road, R3 Box 3575, Washburn, WI 54891. Phone: (715) 373-5122.

The Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) maintains an electronic database of educational resources including curriculum and teaching materials, books on education, journal papers, conferences, etc. and is located on the Internet at [askeric@ericir.syr.edu](mailto:askeric@ericir.syr.edu).

Republican Party, 310 First Street SE, Washington, DC 20003. Phone: (202) 863-8500. Each state has its own party headquarters located state capitals; the party has many local organizations as well. (Check your phone book for local listings or call the national headquarters for unlisted party offices.)

Senator(s) and Representative(s). Letters to Senators should be addressed to Honorable \_\_\_\_\_, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510. Letters to Representatives should be address to Honorable \_\_\_\_\_, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515. Members of Congress can also be reached by calling the Capitol Telephone Exchange: (202) 224-3121 for Senators and (202) 225-3121 for Representatives. Congress' Internet addresses: [Congress2hr.House.gov](http://Congress2hr.House.gov) or [Gopher.Senate.gov](http://Gopher.Senate.gov) or [Gopher.House.gov](http://Gopher.House.gov).

State Board of Elections and/or local election officials (phone numbers are listed in the telephone book).

U.S. Census Bureau, 319 East Antietam Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740. Phone: (800) 392-6975.

United Press International Advisor, 1400 I St., Washington, DC 20005. Phone: (202) 898-8015. Fax: (202) 898-8057.

Colette Yeich, Hartford Courant, Newspaper in Education Coordinator, 285 Broad Street, Hartford, CT 06115. Phone: (860) 241-6447 or (800) 524-4242 ext. 6447. Fax: (860) 520-3050.

Young Democrats of America, 430 South Capitol Street SE, Washington, DC 20003.

Young Republicans of America, 440 First Ave. #303, Washington, DC.

## MAGAZINES AND PAMPHLETS

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*America's Growing Debt, Understanding the Budget Deficit* offers information about current events, Government and Economics and includes a free teacher's guide. Available for \$6.95 from Close Up Publishing, Dept. C16, 44 Canal Center Plaza, Alexandria, VA 22314-1592. Phone: (800) 765-3131.

*Black Caucus Reporter* published by the National Caucus of Black School Board Members. Contact Dr. Jeremiah Floyd at the National School Boards Association, 1680 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Phone: (703) 838-6740.

*Caution: This May be an Advertisement: A Teen Guide to Advertising* describes the kinds of persuasive techniques advertisers use and shows how advertising messages are conveyed. Based on the premise that consumers who are aware of advertisers' persuasive techniques will be less likely to buy what they don't want and don't need. Suitable for grades 9-12 and available for \$15.33 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: [SSSService@aol.com](mailto:SSSService@aol.com).

*Civics For Democracy: A Journey for Teachers and Students (#ESB100-15)* is a blueprint for activism that bridges the gap between classroom and community. A primer for the 12 techniques for citizen action (including lobbying and launching ballot initiatives), suitable for advanced students. Available for \$15.00 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 4214246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: [SSSService@aol.com](mailto:SSSService@aol.com).

*Community Service: Learning by Doing* is available for \$1.25 from the Council of Chief State School Officers, 400 Capitol St. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

*Foundation of American Citizenship* contains syllabi to train teachers in the instruction of American democracy with documents from Plato, Alexis de Tocqueville, Thomas Jefferson and other seminal figures in American political thought. The publication is available from the Council of Chief State School Officers, 400 Capitol St. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

*FUN Supplement* is an eight-page tabloid that provides challenges to be met by elementary students and family members working together as a team. Available for \$25.00 from the Newspaper Association of America, The Newspaper Center, 11600 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston VA, 22091-1412. Phone: (703) 648-1053. Fax: (703) 620-1265.

*Getting Out the Vote, A Guide for Running Registration and Voting Drives.* Write the League of Women Voters of the United States, 1730 M Street NW, Washington, DC 20036 and request publication #424. Cost is \$1.25 (\$.75 for members).

*The Guide to Parent Involvement Resources* is available for \$6.00 from the Council of Chief State School Officers, 400 Capitol St. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

*How Our Government Functions, How Laws are Made* and other free information about the government is available from your member of Congress, Care of the U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515. Request a list of free publications.

*How to Start an Interschool Quiz Competition* published by the University Research Company, PO Box 815, Cedar City, Utah 84721-0815.

*How To Teach the Election* by Marlene Cohn is available for \$2.00 from the National Council for the Social Studies, 3501 Newark St. NW, Washington, DC.

*Improving Student Performance Through Learning Technologies* is a free publication available from the Council of Chief State School Officers, 400 Capitol St. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

*Inside Debates: A Practical Guide* discusses, in detail, how to organize debates. Available from The Commission on Presidential Debates, 1350 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20036. Phone: (202) 872-1020.

*A Joint Enterprise with America's Families to Ensure Student Success* is available for \$5.00 from the Council of Chief State School Officers, 400 Capitol St. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

*Junior Scholastic*, a Social Studies news magazine for middle-school students. Published by Scholastic, Inc., 555 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. Phone: (800) 631-1586.

*The Kid's Guide to Initiating or Changing Laws* available from the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091. Phone: (703) 860-0200.

*The Kid's Guide to State Laws* available from the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091. Phone: (703) 860-0200.

*Messages and Meaning* helps teach students to read newspapers critically. Available from the International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, PO Box 8139, Newark, DE 19714-8139. Phone: (302) 731-1600 ext. 266.

*National Hispanic Caucus*, contact Congressman Ed Pastor, 223 Cannon HOB, Washington, DC 20515, attention Ester Aguilir.

*Pick A Candidate.* A guide to evaluating and prioritizing candidates and identifying campaign tactics. Write the League of Women Voters of the United States, 1730 M Street NW, Washington, DC 20036 and request publication #259. Cost is \$1.50 for 10 copies (minimum order).

*Public Relations and Publicity: Tools and Techniques for Student Organizations* is available from the National Association for Secondary School Principals, Department of Student Activities, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091-1537. Phone: (703) 860-0200.

*Recommended Criteria and Processes for Responding to a State and Voluntary National Standards for Education* is a free publication available from the Council of Chief State School Officers, 400 Capitol St. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

*Scholastic News* is a weekly newspaper for grades 1–6. Published by Scholastic, Inc., 555 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. Phone: 1-800-631-1586.

*Scholastic Update* is a Social Studies news magazine for secondary students. Published by Scholastic, Inc., 555 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. Phone: (800) 631-1586.

*School Board News* available from the National School Boards Association, 1680 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Phone: (703) 838-6740.

*The Student Council Handbook.* Contact Rocco Marano at the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091. Phone: (703) 860-0200. Fax: (703) 476-5432.

*Student Success Through Collaboration* is a free publication available from the Council of Chief State School Officers, 400 Capitol St. NW, Washington, DC 20001.

*TIME for Kids*, published by TIME, The Weekly News Magazine, Time & Life Building, Rockefeller Center, New York, NY 10020.

*Updating School Board Policies*, published by the National Education Policy Network of the National School Boards Association, 1680 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Phone: (703) 838-6740.

*Voting for Democracy*, a transcript of a symposium jointly sponsored by the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard and the American Broadcasting Companies, Inc. (and aired on ABC, January 22, 1984), Box 217, Ansonia

Station, New York, NY 10023. The symposium addressed such questions as “Why do so many Americans choose not to vote?” and “What has caused the steady twenty-year decline of voter participation?” (A Transcript is available for \$3.00.)

*The Women’s Vote: Beyond the Nineteenth Amendment* provides background information for discussions. Write the League of Women Voters of the United States, 1730 M Street NW, Washington, DC 20036 and request publication #425. Cost is \$1.75 (\$1.25 for members).

*World Press*, Box 1997, Marion, OH 43306-2097 can provide you with ideas for global current events discussions.

## **QUESTION - WRITING SERVICES**

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Academic Address, P.O. Box 20132, Birmingham, AL 35216

Academic Challenge, P.O. Box 4603, Rock Hill, SC 29731. Phone: (803) 328-8554.

Academic Hallmarks, P.O. Box 998, Durango, CO 81302. Phone: (800) 321-9218.

Answer Please!, 2409 Richmond, Matton, IL 61938. Phone: (217) 234-3771

Answers Plus A+, P.O. Box 411, Breese, IL 62230. Phone: (800) 235-1644

Brain Brawl Challenge, Box 3, Cowley, WY 82420. Phone: (307) 548-6334

IBA, P.O. Box 19553, Atlanta, GA 30325. Phone: (404) 355-8689

Kentucky Academic Assoc., 256 Academic Srvs. Bldg., Kentucky State University, Frankfort, KY 40601. Phone: (502) 227-6546

Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association, P.O. Box 53464, Oklahoma City, OK 73152. Phone: (405) 528-3385

Patrick’s Press, P.O. Box 5189, Columbus, GA 31906. Phone: (800) 654-1052

Q and A Scholastic, 424 West 7th Street, Chanute, KS 66720. Phone: (316) 431-1621

The Question Exchange, 1200 S. Ninth, Mattoon, IL 61938. Phone: (217) 235-1416

Question Express, Box 27, Cobb Town, GA 30420. Phone: (912) 865-2847

QNA, 1261 Carter Road, Decatur, GA 30030

The Question Well, 687 Burke Avenue, Prestonburg, KY 41653. Phone: (606) 886-2101

Questions Please!, 1238 Pincrest Circle, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Phone: (301) 495-0774

Questions Unlimited, P.O. Box 147, Columbus, OH 43214. Phone: (614) 846-7101

Sage Enterprises, 856 South Aspen, #13, Broken Arrow, OK 74011. Phone: (918) 451-2856

Straight A Quiz Questions, 1613 Cherokee Drive, Seneca, SC 29678. Phone: (803) 882-5764

The Thinking Cap, 4220 Park Hill Circle, Urbanville, IA 50322. Phone: (515) 278-5097

Triple Q Questions, P.O. Box 305, Vienna, IL 62995. Phone: (618) 949-3888

## **QUIZ SHOW EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS (EQUIPMENT CAN BE EXPENSIVE, SO SHOP AROUND)**

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Academic Hallmarks, P.O. Box 998, Durango, CO 81302. Phone: (800) 321-9218

Anderson Enterprises, 2331 Linden Drive, Salina, KS 67401. Phone: (913) 827-3014 or (913) 827-0685

Grainland Inc., 234 Lincoln Avenue, Clay Center, KS 67432. Phone: (913) 632-3101

IBA, P.O. Box 19553, Atlanta, GA 30325. Phone: (404) 355-8689

Logitek Electronics, 3320 Bering Drive, Houston, TX 77057. Phone: (800) 231-5870

Patrick’s Press, P.O. Box 5189, Columbus, GA 31906. Phone: (800) 654-1052

Quizzer LTD, 30 West Mission , Box 8685, Madison, WI 53708. Phone: (608) 258-9257

University Research, P.O. Box 815, Cedar City, UT 84720. Phone: (800) 526-4972

Zeecraft Tech, RFD #2, Box 157H, New Milord, PA 18834. Phone: (800) 862-7475

## ON-LINE SERVICES AND HELPFUL INTERNET ADDRESSES

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All Things Political

(<http://dolphin.gulf.net/political/html>)

DemocracyNet (<http://www.ned.org>)

FedWorld is an on-line service that provides access to governmental departments and agencies.

(<http://www.fedworld.gov>)

Government, Law and Society (<http://englishserver.hss.cmu.edu/Govt.html>)

Guides to Political Sciences Resources on the Internet  
(<gopher://marvel.loc.gov/11/global/socsci/politic/guides>)

Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents 1789–1989  
(<gopher://wiretap.spies.com/OO/Library/Classic/inaug.txt>)

Interactive Mass Media and Political Participation  
(<http://www.umich.edu/~jmjaffe/PoliCMC.html>)

League of Women Voters Voter Education Project  
(<http://www.oclc.org/VoteSmart/lwv/lwvhome.htm>)

National Student/Parent Mock Election  
([www.nationalmockelection.org](http://www.nationalmockelection.org))

Thomas is an on-line service that provides access to the Library of Congress. (<http://thomas.loc.gov>)

Vote Smart (<http://www.vote-smart.org>)

## TEACHING MATERIALS

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*America's Conscience: The Constitution in Our Daily Life* materials for grades 8 and up highlight freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. The first 13 activities help students define, identify and understand the concept of rights; the last seven focus on concepts of due process, equal protection, discrimination, and the ongoing constitutional battles over the 13th and 14th amendment. Available for \$20.00 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: [SSSService@aol.com](mailto:SSSService@aol.com).

*American Economy Teacher's Guide* includes lesson plans and handouts to teach how the government's economic policies and the nation's economy effect individual citizens and the nation. Available for \$9.95 from Close Up Publishing, Dept. C16, 44 Canal Center Plaza, Alexandria, VA 22314-1592. Phone: (800) 765-3131.

*American Political Rhetoric* offers notable examples of American political rhetoric suitable for grades 10 and up. Available for \$16.95 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: [SSSService@aol.com](mailto:SSSService@aol.com).

*Appreciating Our Freedoms* includes 24 award-winning lesson plans for grades K–12 designed for the study of the U.S. Constitution in honor of its Bicentennial. Each lesson specifies grade level. Available free of charge from The Kansas City Star, NIE Manager, 1729 Grand Avenue, Kansas City, MO 64108.

*Building Leadership for Life, A High School Leader's Class Curriculum*. Contact Rocco Marano at the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091. Phone: (703) 860-0200. Fax: (703) 476-5432.

*Campaign Financing: Politics and the Power of Money* (#MBP233-15) explores whether or not campaign contributions are a means for special interests to buy a politician's vote or a form of participation in the political process. Available for \$15.90 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: [SSSService@aol.com](mailto:SSSService@aol.com).

*Citizenship and Basic Skills* (#RIM103-15) is a four-part kit for grades 5–12 that emphasizes the development of skills essential in influencing government decisions: telephoning, letter writing, speaking and campaigning skills. Activities permit students to make presentations to government agencies. Available for \$17.50 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: [SSSService@aol.com](mailto:SSSService@aol.com).

*The Citizen Bee Guide to American Studies* contains teaching materials for History, Government, Economics and Geography. Published by the Close Up Foundation, 44 Canal Center Plaza, Alexandria, VA 22314. Phone: (800) 336-5479.

"Civic Spirit in Action" published by *Leadership Magazine*, October 1995. Available from the National Association of Student Councils, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091-1537.

*Computers in Government Polls and Politics*. Available from the Minnesota Educational Commuting Consortium, 3490 Lexington Ave. North, St. Paul, MN 55112.

*The Constitution and Newspapers: Partners in Freedom* teaching materials for grades 4–12 contain 12 worksheets, 30 activities and 11 Bill of Rights bulletin board cards. Includes a list of major concepts in press freedom, research topics, history of the press in the United States, relevant Supreme Court decisions and a copy of the U.S. Constitution. Available for \$10.00 from the Pennsylvania Newspaper Publishers Association NIE Committee, Lancaster Newspapers Inc., Chair, PNPA-NIE Committee, 8 West King St., PO Box 1328, Lancaster, PA 17603.

*Dangerous Songs: Censors, Rock and the First Amendment* (#RH767V-15) explores such issues as should rock music be subject to adult control as a proper exercise of a community's responsibility? Would such restrictions violate First Amendment rights? Interviews with songwriters, teenage listeners, parents and others are used to explore the issues surrounding this provocative controversy. Suitable for grades 7–12. Available for \$66.00 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: SSSService@aol.com.

*Educating for Democracy* materials offer practical strategies for teaching social responsibility in grades K–12 including lessons about democratic participation. Available for \$13.00 from Educators for Social Responsibility, 23 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. Phone: (617) 492-1764.

“Effective Communication” contains tips for writing press releases and producing public service announcements. Published in *Leadership Magazine*, November 1995. Available from the National Association of Student Councils, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091-1537.

*Electing A President; The Process* (#RB163V-15) traces the evolution of presidential elections from Washington to Clinton and introduce students grades 5–8 to eligibility for office, the electoral college, primaries, conventions and debates. Available for \$99.00 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: SSSService@aol.com.

*Electing Our President* (#FEA172-15) materials for grades 5–8 explain the history and process of presidential elections. Current headlines will mean more to students as they study topics such as the electoral college, the struggle for women's voting rights, nominating conventions, the running mate, public opinion polls, the

history of campaigning, etc. Available for \$8.99 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: SSSService@aol.com.

*Election '96 Presidential Election Kit* contains teacher's guides and films. The kit is for grades four and up and contains two videos (“Electing a President” and “The Presidency”), two posters (“The Path to the White House” and “The Electorate”), a 52-page resource guide and reproducible activity sheets that can be purchased as a unit for \$119.50 or as individual materials. Another video for grades five and up explains the history of newspapers with a focus on the freedom of the press and can be purchased for \$59.95 (available for preview). Contact Elaine Walstead at Knowledge Unlimited, PO Box 52, Madison, WI 53701-0052. Phone: (800) 356-2303 ext. 3032.

*Family Focus: Reading and Learning Together* is a kit to help parents and students learn to use newspapers together. Available for \$15.00 from the Newspaper Association of America, The Newspaper Center, 11600 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston VA, 22091-1412. Phone: (703) 648-1053. Fax: (703) 620-1265.

*Follow the Leaders Teacher's Kit* contains posters to help students chart the progress of candidates through the election, a curriculum guide for teachers and a list of magazines and news sources. Available for \$5.75 from Creative Information Services, 7460 Cortina, Atascadero, CA 93422.

*Free Press: A Need to Know the News* materials contain a video and teacher's guide available from Pathescope Educational Media, Inc., 71 Weyman Ave., New Rochelle, NY 10802.

*Hail To The Candidate: Presidential Campaigns from Banners to Broadcasts* (#SMN105-15) teaching materials for grades 5 and up celebrate 200 years of presidential campaigns and shows the devices used to capture voter attention from George Washington to George Bush. Available for \$24.95 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: SSSService@aol.com.

*Hail to the Chief: Presidential Election Game* is a board game with questions about past presidents, the Constitution, history and geography for various skill levels. Available from Aristoplay. Phone: (800) 634-7738.

“Implementing Districtwide Programs: If I Knew Then What I Know Now...” by Alison Adler. From *The Fourth R*, the newsletter of the National Association for Mediation in Education. Volume 57, June/July 1995.

*Law in a Free Society* Series contains curricular materials (K–12) designed to enhance the four concepts fundamental to democratic society: authority, privacy, responsibility and justice. Produced by Center for Civic Education, 5146 Douglas Fir Road, Calabasas, CA 91302. Phone: (800) 350-4223.

*Leadership Skills Kit* provides teaching materials to help students learn about representation, voting, communication, service projects, and community involvement. Available from the National Association of Elementary School Principals, 1615 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Phone: (703) 684-3345. Fax: (703) 548-6021.

*Make an Election a Real-World Lab* is a teacher’s guide to elections and politics. Write the League of Women Voters of the United States, 1730 M Street NW, Washington, DC 20036 and request publication #485. Cost is \$1.25 (\$.75 for members).

*Making History: A Social Studies Curriculum in the Participation* series helps teachers prepare students grades 7–12 for democratic participation in society by assessing controversial issues in students’ own lives. Students learn decision-making models, discuss strategies for change, etc. Available for \$19.00 from Educators for Social Responsibility, 23 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. Phone: (617) 492-1764.

*Maximize Your Performance with the Media and Train Your Fellow Educators to Work Effectively with the Media* materials by David R. Voss provide information about and guidance with media operations, public appearances and media relations. The kit comes with a two tapes (one audio and one video), a handbook and support materials. Available for \$159.00 from the National School Public Relations Association, 1501 Lee Highway Suite 201, Arlington, VA 22209-1100. Phone: (703) 528-5840. Fax: (703) 528-7017.

*The NLC Curriculum Guide* contains useful chapters about Communications, Evaluation, Conflict Resolution and Group Processes. Contact Rocco Marano at the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091. Phone: (703) 860-0200. Fax: (703) 476-5432.

*On The Campaign Trail: Decisions, Decisions* materials have students assume the role of a third-party candidate running for the presidency in this challenging simulation for the entire class. Starting behind in the polls, students must finalize a platform as they begin a whirlwind cross-country campaign tour to drum up support. Only one computer needed for the entire class. Includes guide, with reproducible materials, lesson plans and 30 student reference books. Available for \$149.95 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: SSSService@aol.com.

“Planning Big Events” published in *Leadership Magazine*, November 1993. Available from the National Association of Student Councils, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091-1537.

*Politix* (#K1758-96) materials put the student in the president’s shoes to deal with issues such as affirmative action, the death penalty, national welfare, the right to die, school prayer, gun control, health care and abortion, as they strive to gain the highest number of votes and become the president of the United States. Available for \$39.95 from Close Up Publishing, Dept. C16, 44 Canal Center Plaza, Alexandria, VA 22314-1592. Phone: (800) 765-3131.

*Secrecy and Democracy* materials help teachers explore with high school students the conflict between national security and an open government, the consequences of America’s system of checks and balances on the free press, etc. through controversial issues such as the creation of the CIA and the Iran/Contra Affair. Available for \$11.25 from Educators for Social Responsibility, 23 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. Phone: (617) 492-1764.

*Taking Action: American Works* (#PHX101V-15) materials show how national issues can be influenced by the work of committed local activists, this program encourages viewers to become involved in our democratic system. Available for \$89.95 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: SSSService@aol.com.

*Taking Part: An Elementary Curriculum in the Participation* Series helps teach students K–6 to make a difference in their world through democratic participation and empowerment, an introduction to decision-making models and an explanation of the electoral process. Available for \$17.10 from Educators for Social Responsibility, 23 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138. Phone: (800) 370-2515.

*Teaching Presidential Elections* (#CU162-15) materials for grades 9–12 provide 13 activities and four handouts to help students understand the importance of citizen participation in the presidential election process. Available for \$5.95 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: SSSService@aol.com.

*Teaching Presidential Elections '96 – A Guide for Educators* (#K1778-96) offers information and lessons about caucuses, primary elections, campaign workers and popular and electoral votes. Activities in this guide help students understand these terms and the role each element plays in the presidential election process. Available for \$5.95 from Close Up Publishing, Dept. C16, 44 Canal Center Plaza, Alexandria, VA 22314-1592. Phone: (800) 765-3131.

*Using the Newspaper in Secondary Studies* provides a curriculum guide for grades 7–12 to help teachers use newspapers as a learning resources in history, government, economics, geography, etc. Available for \$25.00 from the Newspaper Association of America, The Newspaper Center, 11600 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston VA, 22091-1412. Phone: (703) 648-1053. Fax: (703) 620-1265.

*Voter Education* by Elaine Stattler was designed as a nuts-and-bolts approach to teaching students K–12 about participatory democracy and the election process. Includes background material from the League of Women Voters. Each of four categories includes separate lesson plans for primary, intermediate and secondary level. Available free of charge from The Day, Community Relations/NIE Coordinator, 47 Eugene O'Neill Drive, New London, CT 06320.

*We the People, The President and the Constitution* (#K1311T) materials can turn your classroom into the Oval Office! Free teacher's guide includes handouts and student activities. Available for \$79.95 from Close Up Publishing, Dept. C16, 44 Canal Center Plaza, Alexandria, VA 22314-1592. Phone: (800) 765-3131.

*Why Bother Voting* (#WET124V-15) targets political apathy among young people (grades 9–12) in this program which blends humor, music and eye-catching graphics with historical and political facts to send teens the message that voting does make a difference. Available for \$69.95 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: SSSService@aol.com.

*Win at the Polls* is teacher handbook that gives the knowledge and tools needed to pass your next and all-important bond issue or school finance campaign. Available for \$195.00 from NSPRA, 1501 Lee Highway, #201, Arlington, VA 22209. Phone: (703) 528-5840. Fax: (703) 528-7017.

*You Are The President* (#OP111-15) materials seat students in the Oval Office, wrestling with a decision sure to affect millions. Students consider options in eight national crises from the 20th century, learn which choice was made and what the results were. Available for \$14.95 from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: SSSService@aol.com.

*You Be The Reporter; A Video Writing Workshop* materials contain the essentials of journalistic news writing for grades 6 and up. Available from the Social Studies School Service, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Rm. 12, PO Box 802, Culver City, CA 90232-0802. Phone: (800) 421-4246. Fax: (800) 944-5432. E-mail: SSSService@aol.com. EAC142V-15 VHS video \$119.00, EAC142L-15 Laserdisc \$169.00 and EAC142CDN3-15 CD-ROM \$199.00.