

## **LESSON 7: TYING IT ALL TOGETHER**

### **Lesson Overview:**

This lesson ties all the aspects of election reform. It allows students to pool their knowledge to organize a cable call in program. It gives students the hands-on experience to increase knowledge about the necessity of election reform.

### **Teaching Procedures:**

#### *Activity 1:*

Organize a cable call in program led by a panel of members of your class to discuss the problems of election reform. Contact your local public access cable television station to arrange for airtime. (See the guide to the National Student/Parent Mock Election on the curriculum page of this Web site [www.nationalmockelection.com](http://www.nationalmockelection.com)).

#### *Activity 2:*

Choose one member of the panel to have the main responsibility for each of the various potential topics. Refer to the classroom bulletin board on which you continue to post the latest election reform news.

*Some helpful Web sites are Democracy Dispatches at [www.demos-usa.org](http://www.demos-usa.org), ElectionOnline at [www.electionline.org](http://www.electionline.org), and AOL's [www.governmentguide.com](http://www.governmentguide.com)*

#### *Activity 3:*

Invite parents and friends to a pre-airtime rehearsal to see if you are ready for the kinds of questions callers might ask. Invite another class to be your mock audience and see if you can field their questions.

Which topics do you need to investigate more thoroughly to be ready for all potential questions? Use your class reference file and the Internet to fill in the gaps.

#### *Activity 4:*

Organize the class into two teams for an election reform quiz contest. The members of the winning team will win the right to be the panel that fields the questions on the air!

#### *Activity 5:*

Organize a publicity committee for the program.

Notify public officials to watch, and even call in questions if they wish. Remind them this is the students' day. Make the most of it!

Invite the press to report on your expertise.

#### *Activity 6:*

After the cable call in program has been completed, have students reflect on the following information:

The present generation of young Americans under the age of 18 constitutes the largest population group in the nation's history. If present trends continue, most of these 70.2 million children and youth will not go to the polls and vote. In the congressional elections of

## Conclusion

1998, eligible 19- to 24-year-olds represented 39 percent of the voting-age population, but less than 20 percent of them went to the polls.

Which approach to election reform do you believe will provide Americans with accurate, fair, and truly democratic elections in the 21st century? Have students compare their initial list of ideas regarding changes in the election process that they made at the beginning of the unit to their current views.

Why has election reform been called the civil rights revolution of this generation? What will *you* do to participate in the making of our nation's history at this critical time?

Brainstorm: How could your generation of voters and voters-to-be change the course of history if they decided to do so?

Act on your brainstormed ideas.