



Teacher-Parent Guide for Online Game

National Student/Parent Mock Election

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*“Teach children to read and they will read the rest of their lives.
Teach children to vote and they will vote the rest of their lives”*

To play this game, you will need one or more computers connected to the Internet, a Web browser and a flash plug-in.

You, the teacher or parent, should play the game first to familiarize yourself with its content and how it works. It's really very simple and mostly self-explanatory. Then you will set up the game for two or more students at each computer. They can take turns playing the game.

The game invites the student to run for Congress against a really spoiled woman, Roberta Glass, a fictitious character who thinks students have too much freedom and wants to bar them from access to any media—movies, music, books and video games—that aren't approved by the government.

The game is not intended to encourage students to run for election. It's a learning experience that teaches the principles of democracy.

Here is how it works once you connect at www.nationalmockelection.org/game

Click "Play the game," and you're on your way. The game will take you to five campaign stops, Debate (Justice), Press Conference (Religion), Freedom Academy (Expression), Rally (Assembly) and TV Studio (Privacy). At each stop, you're invited to click the red square at the upper right. If you want other briefings, click "Back" to return to Headquarters. When you are ready to exit Headquarters and go back to the game, click the red, white and blue Campaign Trail button. At each of the five campaign stops, you will face a quiz on the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and court decisions bearing on the rights we enjoy as Americans. You amass points for correct answers and gain stature in the opinion polls. When you are ready to exit one stop and go to the next, click the Campaign Trail button.

The game can be played as part of your school's participation in the National Student/Parent Mock Election, or you can use it in any class that touches upon civic responsibility or democracy or the election process. If you like, you can weave it into your curriculum. Use it during class or before or after classes for extra credit. Or you can assign it as homework or extra credit to students who have a computer and Internet connection at home. Just give them the above URL.

You could assign students to write one page about what they learned from the game, and that could be for extra credit.

The game is fun—you could let it be a reward for good work or good behavior.

You could play the game in a computer lab or classroom. For students who wish to play the game at home, you can teach them how to connect to it.

Students who play the game at home could play alone or with their parents.

The game is designed for Middle School students and up. It should be perfect for 8th to 11th graders studying U.S. government.

“The Road to the Capitol” makes a game of learning about the Constitution and Bill of Rights. Here are some suggested activities to augment the game for teachers and parents:

1. Organize a school book fair in which you ask publishers to let the schools sell their books on the Constitution and Bill of Rights with the schools sharing in the publishers’ profits. The school would benefit and the students and families would learn from these books as well.
2. Organize a book club for children and their parents at your public library. The idea would be for students and parents to check out books about the Constitution and Bill of Rights they can read and discuss at home.
3. Hold a mock trial before a students’ Supreme Court, using actual cases decided by the U.S. Supreme Court based on the constitutional issues, but withholding announcement of the Court’s decision until the students’ Supreme Court renders its decision. Invite parents.
4. Prepare an exhibit on the Constitution and Bill of Rights for your school library and/or your public library to educate students and their parents on the Constitution and Bill of Rights.
5. Organize a “Family Feud” with students from different classes and their parents competing to answer questions on the Constitution and Bill of Rights.
6. Create a board game based on issues in the Constitution and Bill of Rights for students and their parents to play.
7. Research/rent movies, documentaries and TV shows that touch on the Constitution and/or Bill of Rights that students can watch with their parents.
8. Read John F. Kennedy’s “Profiles in Courage.” Ask students and parents to choose their favorite profiles and explain what principles in the Constitution or Bill of rights are reflected in various profiles.
9. Write a play or skit (or a puppet show for younger children) about the Constitution or Bill of Rights to present at a school assembly. First, read about the debate of the Founding Fathers as they struggled to agree on the final documents.
10. Dramatize historic incidents in the battle for the rights of women, blacks and the accused. Invite the community to your performance.
11. Collect quotations from famous Americans and Supreme Court judges that speak of the rights of Americans. Ask a local printer to print and display your favorites.
12. Research the views of the Congress member who represents your community. Invite his/her representative to visit your school and discuss the Constitution and Bill of Rights.
13. Invite a staff member of your local newspaper to visit your class and discuss such topics as Freedom of the Press and national security. Encourage students to voice their own views. Perhaps the newspaper will publish the students’ views.
14. Find a pen pal in another English-speaking country with whom to exchange information about your rights as an American vs. his/her rights as a citizen of the other country and how those rights are protected (or not protected.)

15. Organize a mock TV prize program on which students and parents appear as guests trying to win the prize for their knowledge of the Constitution, Bill of Rights and important Supreme Court decisions.
16. Write a story about someone who had to decide whether to make a personal sacrifice to defend the Constitution or Bill of Rights.
17. Write a booklet for immigrants studying to become American citizens, enumerating “Your rights as an American citizen” and “Your responsibilities as an American citizen.”
18. Prepare an exhibit of minority Supreme Court decisions in one era that became the views of the majority in the next era.
19. Shakespeare wrote: “To thine own self be true.” Kierkegaard wrote: “To be that self which one truly is, is indeed the opposite of despair.” Gandhi wrote: “Happiness is when what you think, what you say and what you do are in harmony.” Write an essay on how the Bill of Rights protects your happiness as an American.
20. Organize a contest in which students and their parents can read through their newspaper in search of stories that discuss the rights of Americans guaranteed by the Constitution or Bill of Rights. The ones who find the most stories win.



For more information on freedom of the press, visit these sites:

1. (PDF) PressFreedom fin.gxd /27/04 Page 1
...to preparing your people for life in a democratic society where press freedom is a value we hold dear. Thus many journalism teachers and publication...
www.naafoundation.org/upload/pressfreedom.pdf
2. Freedom of the Press and the NIE
...Freedom of the Press and NIE. Let me state right from the first line of this column that I am a strong believer in Freedom of the Press and all the other rights...
<http://www.naafoundation.org/Home/NAAFoundation/Foundation-Update-Archive/Foundation-Update-Summer-2001/Freedom-of-the-Press-and-NIE.aspx>
3. Celebrate National Freedom of Information Day
...both.” — James Madison. Freedom of the Press...The Public’s Right to Know. Breaking news, investigations...
<http://www.naa.org/Government-and-Legal/Government-Affairs/First-Amendment/Celebrate-National-Freedom-of-Information-Day.aspx>
4. NAA Foundation
...Press Freedom in Practice. A manual for student media advisers on responding to censorship. (PDF File). New from Scholastic Press...
<http://www.naafoundation.org/ScholasticPress/Reports-and-Publications.aspx>