

VOTING AND ELECTIONS

Lesson Length: 1 hour + Extension Activities

Vocabulary & Expressions: Words related to voting, elections, and government; president, governor, and mayor

Language/Culture Point: Wh- question words

Objective: Students will learn about elections in the U.S. and their local officials.

Materials: Pictures of a voting booth/ballot box and the current president/governor/mayor, computer, projector, PPT Presentation: The U.S. Elects a New President, red/green/yellow Signal Cards, Conversation Cards: Government and Elections, newspaper article with corresponding worksheet, index cards, ball, *information about local citizenship classes, computer lab, internet connection*



STEP 1: ACTIVATE BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE


| Time Frame | Materials | Teaching Strategies |
|--------------|--|---------------------|
| 5-10 minutes | - Pictures of a voting booth/ballot box and the current president, governor, mayor | - Using Pictures |

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Display a large picture of a voting booth or ballot box.
2. Ask students, “Have you ever voted?” Find out if they are familiar with voting in elections for public office in their own countries.
3. Explain that, in the United States, citizens vote for people who make important decisions. Every four years, people vote for a new president, a new governor, and a new mayor. Explain that the president is the leader of the country, the governor is the leader of the state, and the mayor is the leader of the city. Write and draw on the board or show pictures to support this idea.
4. Ask students, “Is this like the government in your country?” Talk about how their countries’ systems are the same or different. Write key vocabulary on the board.

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STEP 2: MINI-PRESENTATION WITH PROMPT

| Time Frame | Materials | Teaching Strategies |
|------------|--|--|
| 10 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Computer and Projector - PPT Presentation: The U.S. Elects a New President  - Alternative: printed slides/ photographs/pictures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching with PowerPoint - Using Pictures |

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Show the presentation “The U.S. Elects a New President.” If necessary, update the presentation so that it is current and it reflects your region.
2. Because voting and elections can be challenging topics to discuss, run through the presentation three times:
 - 1st time: Students see pictures only while listening to you talk.
 - 2nd time: Students see pictures and key vocabulary while listening to you talk.
 - 3rd time: Students see pictures and corresponding text and read the story aloud with you, either through echo or choral reading.

STEP 3: DISCUSSION AND COMPREHENSION CHECK

| Time Frame | Materials | Teaching Strategies |
|------------|---|---|
| 5 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Red, green, and yellow Signal Cards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signal Cards - True/False Quiz |

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Make true and false statements about the presentation while the students use their Signal Cards to indicate True/False/I don't know.



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STEP 4: HIGHLIGHT LESSON FOCUS AND MODEL TASK

| Time Frame | Materials | Teaching Strategies |
|--------------|--|----------------------|
| 5-10 minutes | - Conversation Cards: Government and Elections | - Conversation Cards |

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Tell students, “Today we’re talking about the United States government and elections.”
2. Create Conversation Cards with questions that focus on using wh- question words.
For example:
 - Who is the president of the United States?
 - Who is the mayor of __?
 - Who is the governor of __?
 - When was the last presidential election?
 - When is the next presidential election?
 - Why do we have elections?
3. Give each student one card.
4. Go around the room and have each student read aloud his/her card. Clarify any unfamiliar words.

For more advanced students, create cards with higher level questions that may/may not begin with a wh- question word and that ask a follow up question. Examples include:

Do you like politics? Why/Why not?

Do you think voting is important? Why/Why not?

Where are you from? Is your country’s government the same as the U.S. government?

Would you like to be elected to office? Why/Why not?

Do you like to watch the news?

Have you ever voted in an election? Why/Why not?

Imagine you are the president of the United States. What do you do about __?

Imagine you are the governor of Texas. What do you do about __?



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STEP 5: GUIDED PRACTICE

| Time Frame | Materials | Teaching Strategies |
|------------|--|----------------------|
| 5 minutes | - Conversation Cards: Government and Elections | - Conversation Cards |

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Walk up to a student and ask him/her the question on your card. Help the student to answer the question, as necessary.
2. Switch and have the student ask you his/her question.
3. Once you've both asked your question, switch cards with the student so that you each now have a new card.
4. Walk up to another student and repeat the process.

STEP 6: SMALL GROUP WORK

| Time Frame | Materials | Teaching Strategies |
|------------|--|---|
| 15 minutes | - Conversation Cards: Government and Elections | - Conversation Cards - Question Asking and Answering |

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Give the students time to walk around and have discussions using the Conversation Cards. Make sure the students switch cards each time they change partners so that they're always asking new questions.

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STEP 7: HIGHLIGHT HOW ENGLISH WORKS

| Time Frame | Materials | Teaching Strategies |
|------------|---|---------------------|
| 15 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recent newspaper article - Worksheet prepared with wh- questions | |

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Review the different types of wh- questions: Who, When, Where, Why, and How. Give examples of each type of question, and invite students to give their own examples.
2. Pass out a recent newspaper article from:

 <http://www.thetimesinplainenglish.com>

(This is a website with free newspaper articles for English Language Learners. News For You is another good source.)

3. Read the article aloud as a class and clarify any new vocabulary.
4. Have students get with a partner and answer Who/When/Where/Why/How questions about the article.

STEP 8: QUICK CHECK AND REVIEW

| Time Frame | Materials | Teaching Strategies |
|------------|---|---------------------|
| 15 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Index cards with wh- question words written on them - Ball | - Ball Toss |

TEACHING ACTIVITY

1. Give each student an index card with a wh- question word. Have the students form a circle with you in the middle.
2. Throw the ball to a student and have the student shout out the word on his/her card, such as, "Who!"




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3. Ask that student a question that begins with “Who,” such as, “Who is the governor of __?”
4. After responding, have the student throw the ball back to you and repeat the process with the remaining students.

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EXTENSION ACTIVITIES: CITIZENSHIP IN YOUR COMMUNITY

| Time Frame | Materials | Teaching Strategies |
|------------|--|---|
| Varies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information about local citizenship classes - Computer lab - Internet connection  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Authentic Materials |

TEACHING ACTIVITY #1

Give students information about citizenship classes available in the community. If citizenship classes are held at your agency, ask the teacher if your students can visit a class.

TEACHING ACTIVITY #2

Take students to a computer lab and show them websites related to citizenship.

Possible activities include:

- Doing a general Google search of citizenship classes in your area
- Showing the website for the local consulate
- Introducing students to websites that offer citizenship exam practice, such as:



<http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/citizenship/>

