

Celebrate voting by teaching your kids how to vote!

WHY MOCK ELECTIONS?

One of the barriers to voting for new, young voters is an unfamiliarity with the process of voting. Mock elections can provide a great, hands-on way to teach kids of different ages about elections so that by the time they are old enough to cast a ballot, they will have the tools to participate in democratic elections and will value the power of their vote!



IN THIS TOOLKIT

Find instructions and materials to create mock elections for children of different ages:

[MY FAVORITE THINGS \(AGE 4+\)](#) - Ballot templates for kids to vote on their favorite foods, pets, colors, and other favorite things!

[TOP PICK COMPETITION \(AGES 7+\)](#) - Kids learn to vote for what they like in primary and general election contests.

[CREATE YOUR CAMPAIGN \(AGES 12+\)](#) - Kids create campaigns around the things they care about to better understand candidates and campaigns.



RESOURCES



Elections can be fun and exciting for kids. Before you launch into your family's mock election get your children interested in voting, democracy and elections using some of these great resources.

BOOK LISTS

VIDEOS

FOR YOUNGER KIDS

- Picture books about elections by [Read Brightly](#).
- 7 "best" kids books about elections, politics and voting by [ThoughtCo](#)
- Kids books about elections and voting by [Scholastic](#)

FOR YOUNGER KIDS

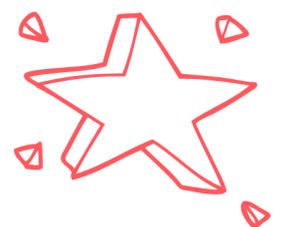
- PBS Kids' [You Choose](#) videos about democracy
- [Why should kids care about voting?](#) A Scholastic kid reporter asks Pres. Barak Obama
- [Sesame Street: Election Day](#) - With Big Bird and friends

FOR OLDER KIDS

- Books for tweens about elections by [Read Brightly](#).
- YA books about voting by [Seattle Public Library](#).
- Teen books about U.S. elections by [Barnes and Noble](#)

FOR OLDER KIDS

- [The Election Collection](#) of videos from PBS
- [Campaign Connection](#) videos by PBS, including Crash Course Government and Politics
- [History of Voting](#) - By Rock the Vote





For younger children, elections can be abstract and difficult to understand. Make things simple by asking your kids to vote about their favorite things.

- Use these ballots to create an election about favorite foods, pets or colors, or use the blank ballot to allow kids to vote about another favorite topic, like insects, animals, plants or anything else!
- Deposit ballots into a ballot box and give your kids stickers for voting.
- Use the ballot counter to tally up the votes.

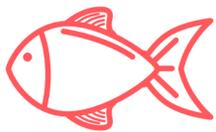
Ballot

FAVORITE FOOD

<input type="checkbox"/>		PIZZA
<input type="checkbox"/>		APPLE
<input type="checkbox"/>		TACO

Ballot

FAVORITE PET

<input type="checkbox"/>		DOG
<input type="checkbox"/>		CAT
<input type="checkbox"/>		FISH

Ballot

FAVORITE COLOR

<input type="checkbox"/>		BLUE
<input type="checkbox"/>		GREEN
<input type="checkbox"/>		RED

Ballot

FAVORITE _____

<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	



I Voted

FOR: FAVORITE FOOD



PIZZA

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Total votes



APPLE

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Total votes



TACO

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Total votes

I Voted

FOR: FAVORITE PET



DOG

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

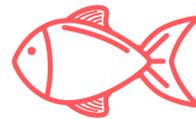
Total votes



CAT

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Total votes



FISH

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Total votes

I Voted

FOR: FAVORITE COLOR



BLUE

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Total votes



GREEN

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Total votes



RED

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Total votes

I Voted

FOR: FAVORITE _____



--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Total votes



--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Total votes



--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Total votes



Introduce the basics of narrowing down the field of candidates through primary elections by letting your children vote on something they love, like ice cream flavors.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Choose 6-8 flavors of ice cream and divide them into two categories, such as sorbets vs ice creams, or chocolates vs fruit flavors. Each category of flavors will receive its own primary election, with 3-4 flavors contending in each primary. Don't like ice cream? Try popsicle flavors. Or different candies, cookies, chips or any other treat your family enjoys. Consider providing tasters of each item to your voters to help them decide how to vote in each round.
- Enter the items in the Primary Election #1 and Primary Election #2 ballots below.
- Your family can split up and vote in different primaries, or all vote in both primary elections. Everyone may choose only one favorite in each primary - basing their votes on past experience, description or taste testing.
- The winning flavor from each primary election will advance to a final general election, with only two flavors competing. Enter the flavor names on the General Election ballot below.
- Give your kids stickers for voting and let them tally up the vote totals for each election contest.



Primary Election #1 Ballot

Vote for one item only using an X or check mark.

<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

Primary Election #2 Ballot

Vote for one item only using an X or check mark.

<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

General Election Ballot

Vote for one item only using an X or check mark.

<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

BONUS ACTIVITY:

Some states require voters to show identification at the polls in order to vote. Ask your kids to create their own voter ID cards. Assign one family member to be a poll worker to check IDs and hand out ballots. Talk about the [controversy around voter ID](#) and how strict voter ID requirements can be a barrier to voting.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

After the general election, as your family members some follow up discussion questions:

- Did anyone think that both the final candidates (flavors/items) on the general election ballot were strong?
- Did anyone think both the candidates were weak?
- Did anyone think that one candidate was clearly stronger than the other?
- If there were no primary elections, which candidate would you pick as your top choice from the original 6-8 choices?
- Was anyone disappointed with the outcome of the general election?
- Did your family start to divide into teams in support of competing candidates?
- Were the voters who supported the winning candidate good sports about winning? Were the losers good sports about losing?

Primary Election #1 Vote Totals

										<input type="text"/>
										Total votes
										<input type="text"/>
										Total votes
										<input type="text"/>
										Total votes
										<input type="text"/>
										Total votes

Primary Election #2 Vote Totals

										<input type="text"/>
										Total votes
										<input type="text"/>
										Total votes
										<input type="text"/>
										Total votes
										<input type="text"/>
										Total votes

General Election Vote Totals

										<input type="text"/>
										Total votes
										<input type="text"/>
										Total votes
										<input type="text"/>
										WINNER





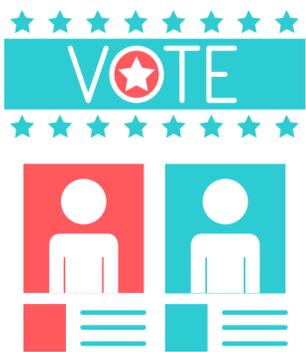
Older kids can learn about issues and campaigns by designing their own Presidential campaign. Follow these steps to create campaigns for a mock election in your family!

STEP 1: WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

- Start by thinking about what you would do if YOU were President. What issues would matter to you? How might you address those issues? What new rules would you create? Write down your ideas. Circle your top 3-4 picks.

STEP 2: CAMPAIGN POSTER

- Now that you know what kind of President you want to be, create a campaign poster. Use construction paper, markers, craft supplies or computer graphics.



STEP 3: PICK A RUNNING MATE

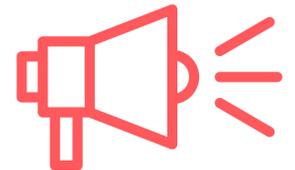
- Who would be a good Vice President in your campaign? It can be someone you know or a famous figure from the past or modern times. Who would help round out your experience and attract voters who might hesitate to vote for you alone?

STEP 4: SOLICIT ENDORSEMENTS

- What kind of organizations, businesses or leaders might support your campaign? Based on the issues and values you chose in Step 1, list 3-4 people or groups who might support your bid for President. Be careful who you pick - you want endorsements to attract voters, not drive them away!

STEP 5: MAKE A SPEECH

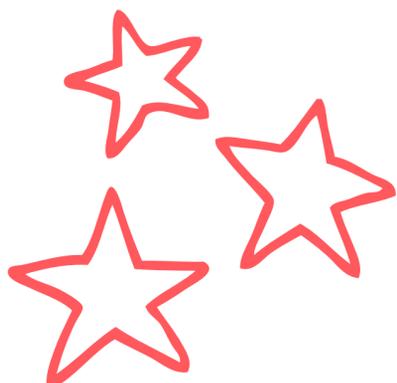
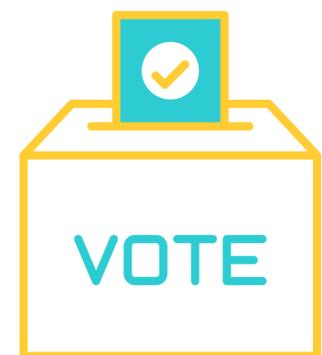
- Create a short speech (5 minutes tops) to convey your ideas and express why voters should choose you. HINT: Use your ideas from Step 1 and let people know about your running mate and endorsements. Practice your speech a few times to get comfortable with it.



HOLD YOUR MOCK ELECTION

Now that you've designed your campaign, it's time to set your campaign in motion and hold an election! Whether your family has only one candidate or many, now is the time to show your family what you've come up with.

- PUT YOUR CAMPAIGN POSTER OUT FOR DISPLAY
- GIVE YOUR SPEECH
- ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM YOUR AUDIENCE
- HOLD A VOTE



BONUS ACTIVITY:

Are there multiple candidates in your household? Consider holding a mock debate! Ask a parent or sibling to come up with questions for all the candidates.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

CAN YOU PRE-REGISTER TO VOTE?

In many states, teenagers may pre-register to vote even before they turn 18! Check to see if your state allows pre-registration.

SHARE VOTING WITH YOUR PEERS!

Spread the importance of voting to others by bringing civics education opportunities, like Democracy Class or mock elections to your school!