



# VOTE SMART

## JUST THE FACTS

### Lesson 4 - Let's Take a Vote

#### **Standards: National Council for the Social Studies**

NCSS 10: Civic Ideals and Practices

#### **Objectives:**

SWBAT (students will be able to) explain the significance of voting.

SWBAT know how to vote.

SWBAT analyze different positions and arrive at a conclusion.

#### **Subject Matter:**

Voting, analyzing, drawing conclusions

#### **Materials:**

- Whiteboard
- Slips of paper
- Pencils

#### **Procedure: (30-40 min)**

1. Gather the students and ask them:
  - a. When you go out to eat at a restaurant, how does your family decide what restaurant to go to?
    - i. Do you take turns deciding? Does your mom get to pick? Do you pick the restaurant that the majority of people want to go to?
  - b. Does anyone know what "voting" means?
  - c. Can someone give an example of a time they voted for something?
  - d. Can you think of a time that we've taken a vote in our classroom?
  - e. Why do you think people vote?
2. If you have a computer and projector, display a Key Vote from [votesmart.org](http://votesmart.org). Note some of the key components of this page: there is a synopsis, pie charts featuring vote breakdown, and the result of the vote.
3. Explain that adults vote within their community. Voting helps adults work together in a town, state, or country to make decisions about important issues.
4. Remind them of the activity they did in Lesson 2: What makes a speech? In your small town of Rockville, after each group - the townspeople, the government, and the businessperson - gave their speeches, the town would have taken a vote to

decide what to do with the old rocks. In a voting system, the option with the most votes, in other words, the most popular option, wins.

Activity:

1. Explain to the class that they will be taking a vote today.
2. The vote will be on how to use the class's free time today. (If your class does not typically have free time, you can slot 20 mins into this lesson plan for free time).
  - Their options are:
    - i. Silent reading
    - ii. Group reading (teacher reading to class)
    - iii. A fun educational game
    - iv. Free writing
3. Before the vote begins, have the class discuss the pros and cons of each option. Ask students to volunteer to make a short argument in favor of an option (one student per option). After each student makes their argument, open the floor for anyone to make a counter argument. The amount of time allowed for arguments/counter arguments will be based on how much time the teacher chooses to allocate for this activity.
4. Settle the class down and explain that it is time to vote.
5. The vote will be cast by writing their selected option on a slip of paper. A small box will be at the front of the room and they will come drop in their vote.
6. As a class, tally the votes on the board by having one helper pull out each vote and read it to the teacher who will write it on the board.
7. Announce the winning option. Explain that this process is similar to how government works. Opposing people and groups make arguments for why the option they represent is the best choice. Then, a vote is taken and the option that receives the most votes wins. There is always frustration with this process, because at least one side does not get its way. Sometimes the losing party tries to reverse the decision or delay the process. However, despite the frustration of not having their option chosen, this class does not have time for an appeals process. Therefore, the losing parties must accept the vote and go along with the winning option.

Cool down:

Discuss with the class how they felt about the vote. Did they think it was fair? Do they think voting is helpful? Do they think there was a better way to make the decision? Congratulate them on finalizing their vote! Enjoy the selected free time!