



# **VOTE SMART**

## **JUST THE FACTS**

### **Lesson 2 - Why Are Representatives Important?**

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

NCSS 6: Power, Authority, and Governance

NCSS 10: Civic Ideals and Practices

#### **Objectives:**

SWBAT (students will be able to) explain why representatives are important in age-appropriate language when prompted.

#### **Subject Matter:**

Last time we learned about what a representative is. Today we're going to talk about why representatives are important in our country. Not all countries, or even our country, have always used representatives. Representatives let us all be a part of making the rules we all live by. Grown ups choose these representatives, and in turn the representatives promise to do what's best for the people who chose them. Representatives help all Americans have a voice in how we make our laws.

#### **Materials:**

- Classroom rules
- Slips of paper with students' names
- Some type of container

#### **Procedure: (35-40 min)**

1. Note: this assumes students participated in the classroom rule-making process in some way. Gather students on the carpet and refer to the classroom rules. Remind students of the role they took in making the rules. Ask the students to imagine that they had not participated in making the rules, or remember a time when the rules didn't make sense to them. After giving the students a moment to think, ask students to volunteer how they felt or would have felt in that situation. Place emphasis on whether or not they wanted to follow the rules in that situation.
2. Now ask students to think about the rules for grown ups discussed in the last session. Would it be fair if most grown ups didn't have a say in those rules? Encourage students to apply their own feelings about having a say in the adult world. After a few minutes of discussion, tell students that this is *why representatives are important*.

3. Tell students that we're going to play a couple of games to explore the concept. First, you're going to choose a king. You'll pick this student randomly by drawing a name from a hat. This student will then get to pick an inside game, choose who gets to play the game, and make any rules for game play that they'd like. After a few minutes of play, bring students back to the carpet to discuss how that worked, how they felt, and if they thought it was a good system.
4. Tell students that you are going to repeat the activity, but this time they're going to choose representatives. Have students nominate other children that they think would be good at making rules for the class to follow. After you have about five nominations, have the students do a blind vote to choose 3 representatives. These representatives must now work together (with support where necessary) to choose an indoor game and supervise it, much the way the king did in the last activity. After a few minutes of play, bring students back to the carpet to discuss how that worked, how they felt, and if they thought it was a good system.
5. Briefly review the content of the lesson, making sure to emphasize that *representatives give us all a voice*. Let students know that next session we will be learning about our representative.