EDRD 730 TEXT SET
Elections & Voting

The institution of elections is one of the four fundamental beliefs Americans still hold dear to this very day, along with:

- A firm belief in the rights of the individual.
- A fundamental belief in the federalist system of government.
- An historical belief in a private economy, or Capitalism.

Elections are the ultimate expression of approval or disapproval of leaders, and it is no coincidence that most of the amendments to the Constitution have to do with or relate to the right to vote. In short, elections and voting are concepts that are extremely important to the understanding of American government, and to our rights as individuals and citizens.

Among this set of texts are books included to aid students of all ages. The beauty of this subject is that no book can be too childish in nature for any one student. The picture books provided here can be just as useful to a High School senior as well as a fifth grader.

Hopefully, these texts can and will be implemented in a way that will provide aid and understanding to any lesson being attempted in the classroom.

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Non-Fiction

- Feinberg, Barbara Silberdick. *Electing the President*. New York, NY. Henry Holt and Company, Inc. 1995.

"Electing the President" is a rather in depth look at the process of exchanging power from one person to another in the executive office. Although the book is thin, it is nearly 50 pages and includes facts, tables and detailed intricacies about past elections and candidates. One notable detail is political a political cartoon from 1884 showing Grover Cleveland "being tormented by his illegitimate child" (p. 31).

The appendix has many useful tables for a student to utilize, two interesting ones being "Where the Presidents were Born" and "Governors Who Became President". Although the book is a bit dated, the detailed descriptions of the election process can be much useful in the classroom.

This book would be best utilized as an aid to students who may be doing a project based assignment on an election or elections in general, so that they can take a quick look at the tables and charts included in the book.

- Raber, Thomas R. *Election Night*. Lerner Publications Company. 1988.

"Election Night" is a book simply explaining the election process in America. The book, nearing 80 pages, gets more in depth with its coverage focusing on the behavioral and cognitive aspect of politics, such as voter turnout, attitudes and beliefs, campaign strategy and enfranchising. There are definitely great concepts to expose high school or middle school students to, one of which is the mentioning of Horace Greely, editor of the New York Tribune who lost the 1872 Presidential election to Ulysses S. Grant.

This book would be great as a reference to have during lectures, as points in the book deal with historical moments and not simply the institution of voting.

- Capua, Sarah De. *Voting*. Children's Press. 2002.

With 40 pages and big print, "Voting" is an intimidating look at the electoral process with information that includes the 2000 Presidential election. The book focuses more on the physical and tangible aspects of voting, such as balloting, registering and legalities such as who can vote.

The end includes a special message encouraging participation called "why you should vote". This section encourages participation on all levels – state, local and even school and community levels. This book is probably geared more toward an elementary school audience.

With that said, a difficult concept and process is being simply explained. The teacher can use this book as a way to simplify facets of the process in lectures and assignments.

- Frodin, Dennis B. *Voting and Elections*. Regensteiner Publishing Enterprises, Inc. 1985.

"Voting and Elections" is another book geared more toward the elementary age student. Unlike some other books this one includes an interesting historical perspective on voting in America, and a section called "The First Voters" which explains historically how voting originated in the Greek city/states. The book also includes a glossary and an end section on the importance of voting, obviously hoping to foster participation in younger readers. The book uses large print and basic language, and mostly works to differentiate our Democracy and limited government from other forms of unlimited government.

This book would be great for middle school due to the emphasis on limited and unlimited government, a concept they will see time and time again as they enter high school.

- Giddens – White, Bryon. *National Elections and the Political Process*. Heinemann Library. 2006.

"National Elections and the Political Process" reads more like a textbook than a typical work of non-fiction. At 32 pages, it is still loaded with text and is probably a middle school level book.

One great thing about this book is that it is up to date, featuring 2004 information with a picture of Barack Obama delivering the keynote address to the Democratic Convention. Even more informative is an entire section on the debated 2000 presidential election, and an even more important breakdown of the Supreme Courts decision to stop recounting in Florida.

A good time to utilize this book would be when going over the judicial branch of the government, specifically the Supreme Court and its powers emphasizing the 2000 presidential election and how the Supreme Court has nothing to do with the electoral process.

Picture Books

- Maestro, Betsy and Maestro, Giulio. *The Voice of the People.* Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books. 1996.

"The Voice of the People" is a unique picture book on elections in that all of the illustrations are completely original – typical in most books such as *The Polar Express*, but not of a book that has to show real people in a realistic fashion. The images are in detail of real life personalities. The book is very detailed on text, and rather plain in tone. It seems to have been completed right before the 1996 presidential election.

The book details the framing of the Constitution, and goes into the roles of elected officials at the federal level. One neat illustration is an actual paper copy (or picture of) the 26th amendment proposed to Congress.

The plain tone makes this not an ideal book for a read aloud segment, nor is it ideal to guide lectures – instead it would be better served as a recommended reading that is readily available at the teacher's bookshelf.

- Christelow, Eileen. *Vote!* New York, NY. Clarian Books. 2003.

"Vote!" is a cute story following a small town mayoral election between a black female candidate named Chris Smith and a white candidate named Bill Brown. The reader is guided along by Elmer and Sparky, Smith's two dogs who explain what is happening in every picture.

The book cleverly details strategy, participation, debating and even scandal in a tangible way kids can understand as Angela, Chris' daughter, helps on the campaign trail trying to spread their message to the voters. The illustrations are excellent, and the book is a lot of fun.

This, unlike the previous book, would be a great book to read aloud as it has humor mixed in with real concepts the kids will need to know. Plus, given the nature of the election being a local election, the class could go over the differences between the bigger scale of a federal election and the smaller more intimate scale of a local election.

- Cronin, Doreen. *Duck for President.* New York, NY. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers. 2004.

"Duck for President" is precious. Aimed most definitely at younger ages, it details the accounts of Duck (the duck's name) who, tiring of chores on the farm that every farm animal must do one way or another, holds an election and votes Farmer Brown out of "office". He soon ascends to the Governorship and then finally the Presidency, thinking that each higher office will be easier than the one before it.

What he learns is a lesson in civics, that it is indeed hard to run a state, or a farm for that matter. Cronin fits in very well images from past Presidencies including JFK's infamous Cuban missile crisis photograph as well as Bill Clinton's appearance on the Arsenio Hall Show.

Obviously this book details a rags to riches story somewhat, despite the fact it is unrealistic to assume a duck can win the presidency (unless you use your imagination). The students could be asked to identify presidents who made it to the white house amid tough challenges or large odds, i.e. Abraham Lincoln in 1860 or Bill Clinton in 1992.

- Mitchell, Margaree King. *Granddaddy's Gift.* Bridgewater Books. 1997.

"Granddaddy's Gift" centers on the civil rights movement and the right to vote. In it, a little girl is shown the importance of an education by her grandfather in 1960s Mississippi. Her grandfather eventually becomes the state's first black registered voter, amid much racism and persecution. The little girl learns through her grandfather the gift of an education.

The book makes no mistake about connecting education with voting. At the end of the book, the little girl is 18, and was subjected to no literacy test on the Mississippi state constitution. She had registered to vote and had the power to have her voice heard in elections. This book could come in very handy amid any unit dealing with civil rights, or the extension of suffrage from blacks to women, and the repeal of the Jim Crow laws throughout the south, or amid a lesson on Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas. The possibilities are endless with this one. The students could write a critical essay on the book detailing their possible response when the girl's church was burned down in response to her grandfather's registering to vote.

- Sisulu, Elinor Batezat. *The Day Gogo Went to Vote*. New York, NY. Little, Brown and Company. 1996.

This book centers on South Africa and the elections that took place in 1994 shortly after the fall of Apartheid under the British. It refers naturally to the right to vote, and how important and symbolic it can be. The book brings up a few notable concepts, such as balloting and civil rights. As depicted in the book, voting rights in South Africa were no less vigorous of a struggle than they were in America.

This book would be great to use in a history lesson, preferably in a world history lesson on Africa and apartheid. Students could very easily detail the plight of Gogo, the elderly 100 year old grandmother who gets to vote for the very first time in her life, and compare that with the plight of American civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X and even Rosa Parks.

Young Adult Novels

- Carbin, Carole Lynn. *Issues in American History*. New York, NY. Franklin Watts. 1985

This book documents the right to vote in America, and goes through the many struggles of different groups – African Americans, women and young voters – on their quest to be represented in their government. The book is geared for high schoolers, and is rather dense and informative as it takes on a strict chapter format and is nearly 100 pages long.

In the framework of rights, the book details some institutional information as landmark Supreme Court cases and other issues such as gerrymandering (Baker v. Carr). The sections dealing with the specific groups are detailed and should add well to any lesson on voting. One possibility for this book would be to assign it as a reading, over the course of a month, a week, etc, and have the student write out similarities and differences between the struggles in an essay format. This could be a minor or a major assignment, but it would get the students reading about abstract concepts and would also have them writing.

- Samuels, Cynthia K. *It's a Free Country! A Young Person's Guide to Politics and Elections*. Macmillan Publishing Company. 1988.

"It's a Free Country!" details various processes within elections. The book is ıick, and is more appropriate for the later middle or high school levels. At nearly 115 pages long, the book goes through a history of what looks like free speech in America, as well as voter turnout and political participation. The book is a "behind-the-scenes" look at how the American political system works, and focuses also on individual political figures and their ascent to politics.

These looks at figures are displayed in the book as snapshots, or dialogue boxes as a student would commonly see them in a regular textbook. The figures are not always instantly recognizable, an admirable trait as the student can learn about more obscure personalities in politics such as Bill Bradley or Hubert Humphrey (obscure as far as today goes, anyway). This book could be used as reading to gain institutional information as well as biographical information on key players in politics as well.

- Gutman, Dan. *The Kid Who Ran For President.* New York, NY. Scholastic Press. 1996.

Taking a more humorous turn in politics is a book about a boy, named Jodson, who is so disillusioned with both political parties (Republicans and Democrats are used, the author does not substitute fake parties), that he decides to run for president himself. A kid as president?..The book is reader friendly at nearly 150 pages and is aimed at middle school students, preferably to be read over the course of a semester. One interesting historical anecdote, and a rather inaccurate one, is how Jodson enlists his elderly black neighbor friend to join as his running mate. When asked who she last voted for, she replies "Franklin Dellllllllllllano Roosevelt". While it is humorous the way she says his name, it is unlikely she got the right to vote legally, especially down South.

This book could make for some great debate, as the students studying a unit on voting could pick out the intricacies about laws pertaining to voting, such as how can a kid run for president if the Constitution specifically states the president must be at least 35 years of age? This contrasting would illuminate lessons learned in the classroom.

- Lynch, Chris. *Political Timber*. Harper Collins Publishers. 1996.

Gordy Foley is a regular carefree high school senior, until he runs for mayor of his small town. Gordy has the honor of being apart of a family political machine, and his grandfather and former mayor, Fins Foley is in jail due to charges of fraud. Now, Fins wants Gordy to run for mayor to carry on his name. In this process, Gordy finds out about the adult world of politics and just how cruel it can be. Student will be exposed to an entertaining story as well as the intricacies of local small town politics.

Students can relate to the story of a senior just trying to be normal, yet trying to do something great. In the midst of this, Gordy is subjected to the "political machine", the bosses behind the candidates who end up being corrupt and untruthful, the very qualities that turn the mass public away from voting. Students could be asked how this makes them feel about the process, and more importantly, what needs to change.

- Dunahoo, Terry. *How to Win a School Election.* Venture Publishing Company, 1989.

This book is sort of a user's guide for running for a school wide election, and employs many aspects discussed in government textbooks. The book runs alongside the non-fiction category, and can be a great resource for kids who are, not surprisingly, running for a school wide office.

The book details tips on strategy, petitioning, creating a platform, oratory and campaigning. The best aspect of this book is that it takes these components and makes them seem realistic and "doable". One very obvious assignment students could have would be for them to run their own mock campaigns in the class, assigning a candidate, a treasurer, and manager, and others. They would decide strategy and campaigning issues, and would have a limited time to do it as an activity setting. The book could be used as a guide.

Media Resources

- Judith St. George & David Small. *So You Want to be President?* Weston Woods Videos. 2000

This video is a 20 minute animated look at 42 presidents, including George W. Bush. It uses humor and satire to entertain students while providing facts about the presidents. The video jacket suggests various activities to do with the kids before and after the viewing.

While the video may be elementary in nature, everyone enjoys animation, and while high school students may resent the level of programming they will get something out of it. Do not hesitate to show this to students, if only to illustrate the point that abstract ideas and figures are being displayed simply and there is nothing wrong with that.

- George Newall and Radford Stone. *School House Rock!* Scholastic Rock, Inc.

Everyone is familiar with School House Rock, especially the infamous "How a Bill Becomes Law". This video collection contains many songs and sing-a-longs having to do with government and history. The songs include such topics as the Constitution, the American Revolution, The Founding of America and more notably Women's Suffrage.

Although the film is dated and intended for a younger audience, middle school students and high school students alike can still get into the humor presented in these videos. Everyone has some memory of watching School House Rock, and the songs might display a bit of information for the students to come away with.

- Anonymous. *Primary Colors.* Universal Pictures. 1998.

The film directed by Mike Nichols and starring John Travolta, Emma Thompson, Billy Bob Thornton, Kathy Bates and Adrian Lester, the movie details the events loosely of the Clinton campaign amid the 1992 Democratic nomination in Iowa and then on to New Hampshire. The book's author was anonymous, but at this time they have since come forward with their identity. The movie avoids real close up evaluations of institutional information, but it is discusses in passing, and the students could use information they have acquired to make sense of the movie's setting – such as the fact that this is not a general election but a primary, and the student have to distinguish between the two.

Although the movie is rated R and appropriate for high school seniors only, it is well worth the risk to display the emotion, scandal and passion that goes into running a campaign for the presidency.

- Drew, Robert. *Primary.* Docurama, Drew Associates. 1960

This film, done by acclaimed writer and director Robert Drew, follows John F. Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey as they battle in the tense Wisconsin state primary in 1960. This again is key, as this gives the students insight into how the election process works, and this film displays just how long and tiring the road to the white house can be.

With narration involved, Drew was one of the first to film in the trenches and capture rare moments of campaigning on behalf of the two candidates. This video could be shown in conjunction with a unit on the nomination stage, and the students could be asked to cite how the nominating process has changed since 1960, and what has stayed the same. They can use memories from past elections if they wish, such as the 2004 Democratic nomination.

- *Election Day.* Schlessinger Video Productions. 1996.

This is a video that should probably not be used for older students, even though most any information pertaining to elections can be beneficial to them. This video is aimed at the K – 4 group, and is at or around 25 minutes long. The video itself is apart of a holiday series for kids on how Americans celebrate certain holidays, and this particular one is one Election Day.

Developed in 1996, the video details various levels of activity that precede an election such as rallies, conventions, and the process of voting itself. The video also takes on an historical aspect, going over the history of voting, and perhaps the most interesting section on the "attributes of a good leader". Different levels of public office elections are also introduced, as well as the various constitutional amendments that extended the right to vote to various citizens.

This would be a great tool for high school students to use as a review. Since the video itself is aimed at a much younger audience, at the time of viewing the material will seem much less intimidating to the typical senior government student.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_the_United_States - Wikipedia, Online Encyclopedia.

If you were to go to www.electionworld.org, you would be redirected to www.wikipedia.org. Although a few bits of information within wikipedia are questionable, the information in this section is transferred from a reliable database for accurate results. The heading is listed under "politics of the United States", and details and summarizes various institutions in America such as culture, political parties and elections. The elections section breaks down various results in the makeup of Congress, and the 2004 election.

Also, the site has a very detailed and informative account of the development of the two-party system in America. The account for my purposes seems accurate and detailed enough. This section should be extremely useful for projects and research papers that students might do during a unit on political parties.

www.fec.gov – Federal Election Commission Homepage

This website is the well known official home of the Federal Election Commission. It is a well developed site, being that of a government entity. A majority of the information within the site are rather bland and wordy, as the sole purpose of the commission is to enforce campaign finance laws. The website exists merely as a window to the public because campaign finance is open for anyone to see.

This site would come in extremely handy on the eventual unit on campaign finance, which is represented by the standards. Although this site would not be as interesting as other "pop politics" sites such as CNN, it could be used to illustrate factual points such as how many votes were cast in what presidential election (information is only given from the 1996 election onward).

http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/ - Homepage of CNN, search for "2004 election".

This website is published by CNN, and is a step-by-step analysis of the 2004 election. This site has loads of information and is incredibly user friendly. How long this section will still be operating is in question, but it has been nearly two years and it is still running. Students can get detailed election results by state and local counties. For instance, pulling up South Carolina will illustrate our country's "winner-take-all" system, that while some counties did go for John Kerry, George W. Bush received more votes overall, and South Carolina's 8 electoral votes all went for Bush. Another great thing about this map is being able to locate the strands of strength for each candidate. By clicking on "Kerry strength", you can see (as is a common fact) that overall Democratic strength lies in the Midlands, especially in the center of Richland County. But the centers of Republican support lie in the upstate.

This site can be well implemented as an aside to students for interests' sake. This would also be a great tool for accompanying a lecture, but the class would definitely need a smart board in order for this to happen. Overall, this site is a great resource.

http://www.fec.gov/pages/ecmenu2.htm - Federal Election Commission.

This is an off-shoot from the Federal Election Commission website with a section pertaining to the Electoral College. The Electoral College is always a hot button issue, as when I taught a lesson on it before I came to graduate school, the students had various feelings about the way we elected our President.

This site is great because it comes from such a reliable source (or unreliable depending on how much of a conspiracy theorist one is) in the federal government. The section contains a PDF document that outlines the basic history and reasons, pro and con, for the establishment of the Electoral College. There is also a link to view and examine past Electoral votes and popular votes in various elections.

I would first and foremost use the document explaining the reasons behind the establishment of the Electoral College. This would be a great way to start off a lesson, a unit or a discussion. Many of the ideals presented are controversial, especially today. Students would benefit from reading such a scholarly work and being able to understand it, with the aid of teacher guidance of course.

http://usinfo.state.gov – State Department

Lastly, this website is the official website of the U.S. State Department. Considering this is a government sponsored site and the government is being controlled by the Republican Party, it is surprising how neutral much of the reporting is in these stories. The site has a useful section on the upcoming 2006 Midterm elections, as well as various links (http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/politics/election.htm) to "mega sites" as well others on information regarding elections. This could be a great resource for students look to do a project on elections.