

# 2020 Presidential Election

## Student Mock Election Handbook

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# Getting Started

## Step 1: The Voter Registration Process

1. Determine when and where you will conduct your mock election. Suggestions: library, cafeteria, gym, computer lab (if you will be conducting your election on computer), or classroom.
2. If your mock election will involve a voter registration drive, you need to get your students registered to vote. In order to mirror the adult population process, we suggest that students complete the actual voter registration application **(Attachment #1)**.
3. If you are going to conduct a voter registration drive, you need to develop criteria for students who are eligible to register to vote. The criteria should parallel Texas requirements so that the students are familiar with the parameters for voting. These can include an appropriate age requirement for your grade(s) and a residency element such as enrollment in their school. **(Attached is a list of the qualifications and voting requirements in Texas, Attachment #2.)**
4. Establish the last day students may register to vote. (The state of Texas requires that a person must register 30 days before an election.)
5. Students should submit completed applications to their teacher, or other designee, who will then complete a voter registration certificate for each student **(Attachment #3)**. Give each "registered" student a voter registration certificate on colored paper. Instruct students to bring their certificate to the polling place on Election Day.
6. Prepare a list of registered voters. From your class roster, create an alphabetical list of those students who are "registered to vote." This list should be prepared after your voter registration deadline and should include only those students who complete a voter registration application by the established deadline. You can either use the attached Project V.O.T.E. Combination Form **(Attachment#4)**, or you can create your own list of registered voters.

### Hints:

- For elementary students, you might want to have the older students help with the voter registration process.
- You might want to send home a copy of the voter registration application (especially K-4), so that parents can assist younger students in completing the application.



## Step 2: Conducting a Voter Registration Drive

The following are some steps you can take to encourage your students to register:

- Select students to serve as volunteer deputy registrars. These students will handout voter registration applications and keep a list of those registered.
- Post flyers in and around your school, classrooms, etc.
- Mention the drive during morning announcements and assemblies.
- Have a slogan contest to encourage participation.
- Set some goals for the number of students you want to register, possibly have a large chart to color in as the number grows.
- Have a logo contest. Give a prize or award to the student who designs the best logo.
- Have a “red, white, and blue” lunch day where all desserts are patriotic colors.
- Have students wear red, white, and blue, or have a student dress up like Uncle Sam.
- Ask the band to play patriotic, All-American music during your “voter registration rally.”

### Reminder:

In the adult population, you need to be registered 30 days prior to any election in which you wish to vote. You can implement the 30-day rule as appropriate by age, for purposes of the mock election.



### Step 3: Getting Ready for Mock Election Day: What You Will Need

Take an inventory of materials that you might want to use for your mock election that you should plan on getting now. Suggestions:

- “I Voted” stamp  
(You may have this made at any rubber stamp store.)
- “I Voted” stickers  
(see attached prototype that can be copied on standard Avery labels #SL107 - 1.625 circular **Attachment #5**).
- Pens
- List of Registered Voters
- Combination Form
- Ballots
- Ballot Box(es)
- Voting Booth(s)
- Tables for qualifying student voters
- Chairs for election judge and clerks
- Tally Sheets
- Name badges for Election Judge and Clerks

### Step 4: Appointment of Election Judges and Clerks

We would recommend that you appoint one student as the election judge and a minimum of two students as the election clerks. Students serving as the election judge and clerks will prepare the polling place, qualify voters, and count ballots. The election judge and clerks should take an oath (**Attachment #6**) and should wear name badges.

### Step 5: “E” Day-Setting Up Your Polling Place

1. You may set up the polling place in any way that is most convenient for you and in a manner that will get your voters in and out in an efficient manner. Attached you will find a diagram of how to physically set up your polling place (**Attachment #7**).
2. Although the adult population’s polling place hours are from 7 a.m. until 7p.m., you may want to schedule your mock polling place hours during school hours and follow the procedures set forth in the pages that follow.

### Step 6: Counting or tabulating the results.

*Good luck with your mock election and have fun with it!*


## Attachments

### Attachment 1: Voter Registration Application (Front – English)


<b>Texas Voter Registration Application</b>		For Official Use Only	
Prescribed by the Office of the Secretary of State		VK17.2011EJ3	
Please complete sections by printing LEGIBLY. If you have any questions about how to fill out this application, please call your local voter registrar.			
<b>1 These Questions Must Be Completed Before Proceeding</b>			
Check one			
<input type="checkbox"/> New Application	<input type="checkbox"/> Change of Address, Name, or Other Information	<input type="checkbox"/> Request for a Replacement Card	
Are you a United States Citizen?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Will you be 18 years of age on or before election day?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If you checked 'No' in response to either of the above, do not complete this form.			
Are you interested in serving as an election worker?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>2</b> Last Name Include Suffix if any (Jr, Sr, III)	First Name	Middle Name (if any)	Former Name (if any)
<b>3</b> Residence Address: Street Address and Apartment Number. If none, describe where you live. (Do not include P.O. Box, Rural Rt. or Business Address)		City	TEXAS
		County	Zip Code
<b>4</b> Mailing Address: Street Address and Apartment Number. (If mail cannot be delivered to your residence address.)		City	State
			Zip Code
<b>5</b> Date of Birth: (mm/dd/yyyy)	<b>6</b> Gender (Optional)	<b>7</b> Telephone Number (Optional) Include Area Code	
<input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> / <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> / <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	( <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> ) <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> - <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	
<b>8</b> Texas Driver's License No. or Texas Personal I.D. No. (Issued by the Department of Public Safety)		If no Texas Driver's License or Personal Identification, give last 4 digits of your Social Security Number	
<input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>		XXX-XX- <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> I have not been issued a Texas Driver's License/Personal Identification Number or Social Security Number.			
<b>9</b> I understand that giving false information to procure a voter registration is perjury, and a crime under state and federal law. Conviction of this crime may result in imprisonment up to 180 days, a fine up to \$2,000, or both. Please read all <u>three</u> statements to affirm before signing.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am a resident of this county and a U.S. citizen;</li> <li>I have not been finally convicted of a felony, or if a felon, I have completed all of my punishment including any term of incarceration, parole, supervision, period of probation, or I have been pardoned; and</li> <li>I have not been determined by a final judgment of a court exercising probate jurisdiction to be totally mentally incapacitated or partially mentally incapacitated without the right to vote.</li> </ul>			
<div style="font-size: 3em; font-weight: bold; display: inline-block; margin-right: 10px;">X</div>		Date <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> / <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/> / <input style="width: 40px; border: 1px solid black;" type="text"/>	
Signature of Applicant or Agent and Relationship to Applicant or Printed Name of Applicant if Signed by Witness and Date.			


## Attachment 1: Voter Registration Application (Back – English)

*Fold on line and seal before mailing*

  
**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**  
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 4511 AUSTIN, TX  
POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

**NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES**

  
**SECRETARY OF STATE  
ELECTIONS DIVISION  
PO BOX 12887  
AUSTIN TX 78711-9972**



*Fold on line and seal before mailing*

<p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You must register to vote in the county in which you reside.</li><li>• You must be a citizen of the United States.</li><li>• You must be at least 17 years and 10 months old to register, and you must be 18 years of age by Election Day.</li><li>• You must not be finally convicted of a felony, or if you are a felon, you must have completed all of your punishment, including any term of incarceration, parole, supervision, period of probation, or you must have received a pardon.</li><li>• You must not have been determined by a final judgment of a court exercising probate jurisdiction to be totally mentally incapacitated or partially mentally incapacitated without the right to vote.</li></ul> <p><b>Filling out the Application</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the application carefully, fill it out, sign and date it and mail it to the voter registrar in your county or drop it by the Voter Registrar's office.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All voters who register to vote in Texas must provide a Texas driver's license number or personal identification number issued by the Texas Department of Public Safety. If you don't have such a number, simply provide the last four digits of your social security number. If you don't have a social security number, you need to state that fact.</li><li>• Your voter registration will become effective 30 days after it is received or on your 18th birthday, whichever is later. Your registration must be effective on or before an election day in order to vote in that election.</li><li>• If you move to another county, you must re-register in the county of your new residence.</li></ul> <p>Please visit the Texas Secretary of State website, <a href="http://www.sos.state.tx.us">www.sos.state.tx.us</a>, and for additional election information visit <a href="http://www.votetexas.gov">www.votetexas.gov</a>.</p> <p>Este formulario está disponible en español. Favor de llamar a su registrador de votantes local para conseguir una versión en español.</p>
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## Attachment 1: Voter Registration Application (Front – Spanish)

<b>Solicitud de registro electoral en Texas</b>		<small>Exclusivo para uso oficial</small>	
<small>Por orden de la Secretaría de Estado</small>		<small>VR17.2011S.13</small>	
<p>Favor de llenar cada sección con letra de molde LEGIBLE. Si tiene preguntas sobre cómo rellenar este formulario, por favor comuníquese con su registrador de votantes local.</p>			
<p><b>1 Debe contestar estas preguntas antes de proseguir</b></p> <p>Marque un recuadro</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> Nueva solicitud                  <input type="checkbox"/> Cambio de domicilio, nombre y/o otra información                  <input type="checkbox"/> Reemplazo de tarjeta         </p>			
¿Es usted ciudadano de los Estados Unidos?		<input type="checkbox"/> Sí	<input type="checkbox"/> No
¿Tendrá 18 años cumplidos antes o el día de la elección?		<input type="checkbox"/> Sí	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<p>Si marcó 'No' como respuesta a cualquiera de las preguntas anteriores no llene esta solicitud.</p>			
¿Tiene interés en participar como trabajador electoral?		<input type="checkbox"/> Sí	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>2</b> Apellido Incluir sufixo si lo hay (Jr, Sr, III)	Primer nombre	Segundo nombre (si aplica)	Nombre anterior (si aplica)
<b>3</b> Domicilio residencial: Número y calle, y número de apartamento o interior. Si no existe un domicilio, describa donde vive (no incluya apartados postales, rutas rurales o dirección del trabajo).		Ciudad	TEXAS
		Condado	Código postal
<b>4</b> Dirección postal: Número y calle, y número de apartamento o interior (si no se puede entregar el correo en su domicilio residencial).		Ciudad	Estado
			Código postal
<b>5</b> Fecha de nacimiento: (mm/dd/aaaa)	<b>6</b> Sexo (Optativo)	<b>7</b> Teléfono (Optativo) Incluya código de área	
<input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Masculino <input type="checkbox"/> Femenino	( <input type="text"/> ) <input type="text"/> - <input type="text"/>	
<b>8</b> No. de licencia de conducir de Texas o no. de identificación personal de Texas (Expedido por el Departamento de Seguridad Pública).		Si no tiene licencia de conducir de Texas o no. de identificación personal, proporcione los 4 últimos dígitos de su número de Seguro Social.	
<input type="text"/>		XXX-XX- <input type="text"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/> No tengo licencia de conducir de Texas/Número de Identidad Personal de Texas ni un número de Seguro Social.			
<p><b>9</b> Entiendo que el dar información falsa para obtener una tarjeta de registro electoral constituye un delito de perjurio bajo las leyes estatales y federales. Cometer este delito puede resultar en privación de la libertad hasta 180 días, multa de hasta \$2,000 o ambos castigos. Por favor lea cada una de las <u>tres</u> declaraciones antes de firmar.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• soy residente de este condado y ciudadano de los Estados Unidos;</li> <li>• no he sido condenado por un delito grave, o en caso de ser delincuente, he purgado mi pena por completo, incluyendo cualquier plazo de encarcelamiento, libertad condicional, supervisión, período de prueba, o se me otorgó un indulto; y</li> <li>• no se me ha declarado, total o parcialmente, como discapacitado mental sin derecho al voto, por el fallo final de un juzgado de sucesiones.</li> </ul>			
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 100%; position: relative;"> <span style="position: absolute; top: 0; left: 0; font-size: 40px; font-weight: bold;">X</span> </div>		Fecha <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>	
<small>Firma del solicitante o su agente (apoderado) y relación de éste con el solicitante, o nombre en letra de molde del solicitante si la firma es la de un testigo, y fecha.</small>			


## Attachment 1: Voter Registration Application (Back – Spanish)

*Doble por la línea y selle antes de enviar*

  
**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**  
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 4511 AUSTIN, TX  
POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

**NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES**

**SECRETARY OF STATE  
ELECTIONS DIVISION  
PO BOX 12887  
AUSTIN TX 78711-9972**



*Doble por la línea y selle antes de enviar*

<p><b>Requisitos</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hay que registrarse para votar en el condado donde reside.</li><li>• Hay que ser ciudadano de los Estados Unidos.</li><li>• Hay que tener por lo menos 17 años con 10 meses de edad o más para registrarse, y hay que tener 18 años de edad para el Día de Elecciones.</li><li>• Hay que no haber sido condenado por un delito grave, o en caso de ser delincuente, haber purgado la pena por completo, incluyendo cualquier plazo de encarcelamiento, libertad condicional, supervisión, período de prueba, o haber obtenido un indulto.</li><li>• Hay que no haber sido declarado total ni parcialmente, como mentalmente discapacitado sin derecho al voto, por fallo final de un juzgado de sucesiones.</li></ul> <p><b>Rellenar la solicitud</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Revisar la solicitud detenidamente, rellenarla, firmarla, escribir la fecha y enviarla por correo al registrador de votantes de su condado o llevarla en persona a la oficina del Registrador de Votantes.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Todo votante que se inscriba para votar en Texas deberá proporcionar un número de licencia de conducir de Texas o un número de identificación personal emitido por el Departamento de Seguridad Pública de Texas. Si no tiene tal número, basta con proporcionar las últimas cuatro cifras de su número de seguro social. Si no tiene un número de seguro social, deberá declarar que no lo tiene.</li><li>• Su registro de votantes entra en vigor 30 días después que se reciba o cuando usted cumpla los 18 años, cual ocurra más tarde. Su registro deberá ser válido en o antes del día de elecciones de cierta elección para poder votar en tal elección.</li><li>• Si se muda a otro condado, hay que volver a registrarse en el condado de su nueva residencia.</li></ul> <p>Por favor visite la página Web de la Secretaría del Estado de Texas, <a href="http://www.sos.state.tx.us">www.sos.state.tx.us</a>, y para información adicional sobre elecciones visite <a href="http://www.votetexas.gov">www.votetexas.gov</a>.</p> <p><small>This application is available in English. Please contact your local voter registrar to receive a copy in English.</small></p>
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## Attachment 2: Qualifications and Requirements for Voting in Texas

**To be qualified to vote in Texas, a person must:**

1. must be at least 18 years old on Election Day;
2. be a United States citizen;
3. have not been determined by a final judgment of a court exercising probate jurisdiction to be:
  - a. totally mentally incapacitated; or
  - b. partially mentally incapacitated without the right to vote;
4. have not been convicted of a felony or, if so convicted, has:
  - a. fully discharged the person's sentence, including any term of incarceration, parole, or supervision, or completed a period of probation ordered by any court; or
  - b. been pardoned or otherwise released from the resulting disability to vote;
5. is a resident of this state; and
6. is a registered voter.



## Attachment 3: Voter Registration Certificates

Duplicate the following certificates for students to complete after they have registered to vote. The current color of certificate is orange.

BI-9(3B).IN3

Name, Voter Registrar  
Telephone Number  
Address  
City, State, Zip

Secretary of State's Office  
Elections Division  
1-800-252-VOTE (8683)

### RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

VOTER REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE (Certificado de Registro Electoral)		
COUNTY (Condado)		
DOB (NAC)	Gender (Sexo)	Valid From (Válido desde)
Year of Birth (Año de Nacimiento)	Place No. (Núm. Pobl.)	Exp. (hasta)
Name and Permanent Residence Address (Nombre y dirección residencial permanente)		

**X**

VOTER MUST PERSONALLY SIGN HEREIN NAME IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIPT, IF ABLE  
(El votante debe firmar este boleto personalmente al recibirlo, si puede.)

For Office Use  
(Únicamente del Puesto)


Name and Mailing Address (Nombre y dirección de correo)

Name, Voter Registrar  
Telephone Number  
Address  
City, State, Zip

Secretary of State's Office  
Elections Division  
1-800-252-VOTE (8683)

### RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

VOTER REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE (Certificado de Registro Electoral)		
COUNTY (Condado)		
DOB (NAC)	Gender (Sexo)	Valid From (Válido desde)
Year of Birth (Año de Nacimiento)	Place No. (Núm. Pobl.)	Exp. (hasta)
Name and Permanent Residence Address (Nombre y dirección residencial permanente)		

**X**

VOTER MUST PERSONALLY SIGN HEREIN NAME IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIPT, IF ABLE  
(El votante debe firmar este boleto personalmente al recibirlo, si puede.)

For Office Use  
(Únicamente del Puesto)


Name and Mailing Address (Nombre y dirección de correo)



# Attachment 4: Project V.O.T.E. Combination Form

## Project V.O.T.E. Combination Form (Listas Combinadas de Proyecto V.O.T.E.)

Type of Election (Tipo de Elección)	Precinct Number (Número de Precinto)
Date of Election (Fecha de la Elección)	Authority Conducting Election (Autoridad Administrando la Elección)

Number (Número)	Signature of Voter (Firma Usado Abajo)	Number (Número)	Grade (Grado)	Name of School (Nombre de Escuela)	School District (Distrito Escuela)	Name of Voter (Poll List) (Nombre del Votante) (Lista de Votantes)	Number (Número)
51		15					15
41		14					14
31		13					13
21		12					12
11		11					11
01		10					10
6		9					9
8		8					8
7		7					7
6		6					6
5		5					5
4		4					4
3		3					3
2		2					2
1		1					1

## Attachment 5: I Voted! Stickers



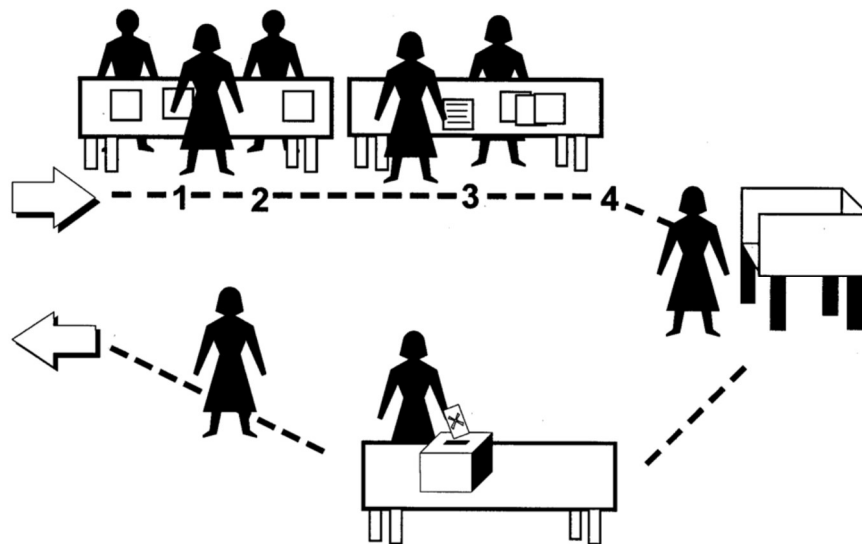
## Attachment 6: Oath for Election Judges and Clerk

*"I swear (or affirm) that I will not in any manner request or seek to persuade or induce any voter to vote for or against any candidate or measure to be voted on, and that I will faithfully perform my duty as an officer of the election and guard the purity of the election."*



## Attachment 7: The Voting Process Step-by-Step

1. Election Official asks if the voter has moved, asks for voter registration certificate (In the real election, in-person voters will need to show an approved photo ID or sign a statement called a reasonable impediment declaration explaining why they cannot obtain a ID and then must show supporting documentation. For high school students old enough to vote, encourage them to visit [VoteTexas.gov](http://VoteTexas.gov) or call 1-800-252-VOTE to make sure they are prepared with the right ID to vote in person. A school ID is not an approved form of photo ID.)
2. Election official stamps "voted" next to voter's name on list of registered voters.
3. Election official enters voter's name on combination form (poll list) and voter signs on the corresponding signature line.
4. Voter picks up ballot and proceeds to voting area.



5. Voter steps into private voting area and votes ballot.
6. A voter with a disability (and any voter who wishes to) is entitled to cast a ballot using a DRE (Direct Recording Electronic) device.
7. Voter deposits voted ballot in the ballot box (Paper and Optical Scan) or voter casts votes directly on the voting machine (DRE).
8. Voter exits polling place.



## Preparing the Polling Place

Use the information below as a checklist in order to prepare your polling place for your mock election.

1. The presiding judge administers the election officials' oath to himself or herself and to the clerks (Attachment #6).
2. The judge reviews a work schedule and assignments with the clerks. The list of registered voters and combination form must be prepared by the election judge before voting begins on election day (use student roster) **(Attachment #4)**.
3. Physically arrange the polling place (Attachment #7).
  - Place table(s) and chairs near the entrance to the polling place for the clerks who will be accepting the voters.
  - Establish a voting area.
  - Voting booths that provide voters privacy while voting must be provided at all polling places (adult voting booths must meet regulatory specifications for voting booths or have been approved for use by the Secretary of State).
  - Arrange the voting booths in such a way that they are in view of the election officials, watchers, and persons waiting to vote but are separated from voters who are waiting to vote. Prevent access to the voting area through any entrance other than the one designated.
  - Place instruction cards in each voting booth.
  - Place non-erasable markers in each voting booth where voters will be preparing their ballots.
  - Establish an area convenient to the voting booths, in view of election officials, for placement of the ballot box in which voters will deposit their voted ballots.
4. Establish an area for counting voted ballots. This area should be in a separate room from the voting area, or removed from the voting area as much as possible, so that individuals counting ballots cannot be heard nor the voted ballots seen by voters.
5. Place the following election forms and supplies on each table.
  - List of registered voters (student roster).

- Combination form.
  - The “voted” stamp and stamp pad for stamping the list of registered voters. While it is not necessary that the election officers use a stamp pad and voted stamp, they must make a notation on the list of registered voters that a person has voted.
  - Official ballot with photographs (**Attachment #9**)
  - Official ballot without photographs (**Attachment #10**)
  - Register of spoiled ballots.
6. Each polling place will offer at least one Direct Recording Electronic device or “DRE”. DREs are paperless, computerized voting units that allow voters with disabilities to vote directly on the system. Depending on the type of DRE, special needs voters may use headphones or other assistive devices to help them vote independently and secretly. (Limited Exception: Sparsely populated jurisdictions conducting non-federal elections may not be required to provide a DRE if a notice of exemption is given to the Secretary of State 90 days before an election.)
7. Post sample ballots, Distance Markers and voter information.
- Post sample ballots, if available, in easily observed locations within the polling place.
  - Post distance markers (Attachment #8) 100 feet in each direction from all entrances through which voters may enter the building in which the polling place is located.
  - A notice of the number of voters who have voted must be posted at an outside door to the polling place every two hours, beginning at 9:30 a.m.
  - Post Voter Information poster (Attachment #11).
  - Post Voter Complaint Poster (Attachment #15).
8. Open and inspect the ballot box(es).
- Make sure that each ballot box is empty.
  - Each ballot box should have a working lock and a key that opens the lock.

## 9. Prepare the official ballots.

- Record the total number of ballots received.
- Inspect the official ballots to see that they are properly-printed and numbered.
- Place the presiding judge's full name on the back of each ballot. (Ballots may be signed or stamped as needed throughout the day.)
- Mix the signed or stamped ballots so that they are not in numerical order.
- Place the mixed ballots face down on the acceptance table.

## Persons Allowed in the Polling Place

1. Election judge and clerks.
2. Persons admitted by presiding judge to preserve order (teacher, principal, etc).
3. Persons admitted to vote (approved mock election students).
4. Children under 18 accompanied by their parent(s).
5. Poll watchers.
6. Interpreters.
7. Persons accompanying disabled voters.
8. Voting system technicians (technical support)
9. State and Federal inspectors.

## Casting the Ballot

See Attachment #12.

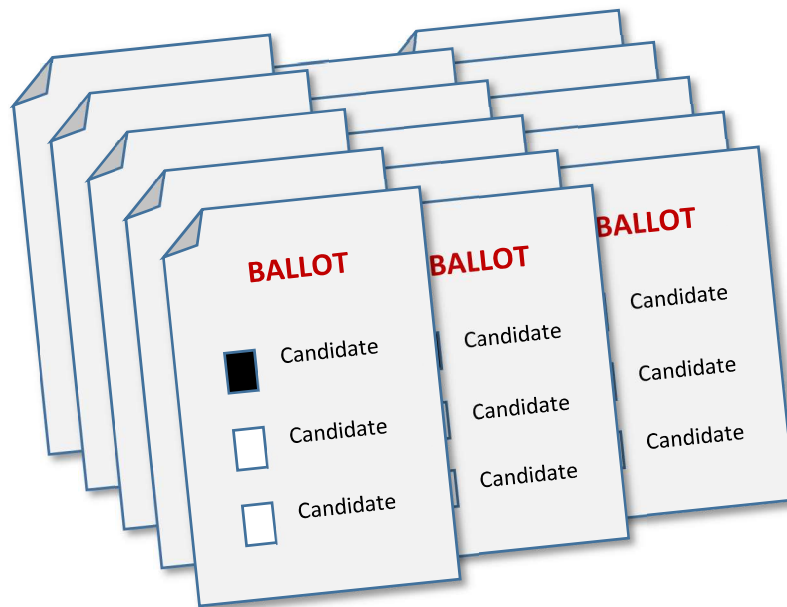
## Counting the Ballots

1. A tally list should be completely filled out (**Attachment #13**). No marks should be made on any ballot by an election official, except if a ballot is not counted.

An election officer must indicate on the back of the ballot the reason for not counting the ballot. Please see **(Attachment #14)** for instructions on completing tally sheets.

2. After the election is over, the judge should remove all ballots from the ballot box.
3. An election official should read the votes cast on each ballot out loud.
4. If the voter makes an irregular mark on their ballot AND if the voter's intent can be determined, the ballot should be counted. (For example, if a voter circles a candidate's name instead of marking an "x" in the candidate's square, the Judge may have enough information to determine the voter's choice.)
5. As each vote is read, a tally should be put beside the corresponding name or measure on your tally list.
6. Tally lists should be compared often to remedy mistakes or incorrect counts.

*For specific procedures and more information on conducting an election, please refer to the Handbook for Election Judges and Clerks published by the Office of the Secretary of State.*





**NOTE TO ELECTION OFFICIAL:**  
Post this sign 100 feet from the  
entrance of the polling place.

***DISTANCE MARKER***

***NO ELECTIONEERING OR LOITERING***

***BETWEEN THIS POINT AND THE***

***ENTRANCE TO THE POLLING PLACE***

---

It is unlawful for any person to electioneer or loiter, while the polls are open, within 100 feet of the entrance to the polling place. Any person who violates this provision may be found guilty of a Class C misdemeanor.

## 2020 Texas Student Mock Election

### OFFICIAL BALLOT (BOLETA OFICIAL)

#### Instruction Note: (nota de instrucción)

Vote for the candidate of your choice by placing an "X" in the square next to the candidate's name.  
(Vote por el candidato de su preferencia marcando con una "X" el cuadro a la izquierda del nombre del candidato.)

#### Presidential (presidencial)

☐

**Donald J. Trump**  
Republican Party  
(Partido Republicano)

☐

**Joseph R. Biden**  
Democratic Party  
(Partido Democrático)

☐

**Jo Jorgensen**  
Libertarian Party  
(Partido Libertariano)

☐

**Howie Hawkins**  
Green Party  
(Partido Verde)

## Presidential Write-In (Voto Escrito Presidencial)

☐

**President R. Boddie**

☐

**Gloria La Riva**

☐

**Brian Carroll**

☐

**Abram Loeb**

☐

**Todd Cella**

☐

**Robert Morrow**

☐

**Jesse Cuellar**

☐

**Kasey Wells**

☐

**Tom Hoefling**

## 2020 Texas Student Mock Election

### OFFICIAL BALLOT (BOLETA OFICIAL)

#### **Instruction Note:** (nota de instrucción)

Vote for the candidate of your choice by placing an "X" in the square next to the candidate's name.

*(Vote por el candidato de su preferencia marcando con una "X" el cuadro a la izquierda del nombre del candidato.)*

#### **Presidential** (presidencial)

☐

**Donald J. Trump**  
Republican Party  
(Partido Republicano)

☐

**Joseph R. Biden**  
Democratic Party  
(Partido Democrático)

☐

**Jo Jorgensen**  
Libertarian Party  
(Partido Libertariano)

☐

**Howie Hawkins**  
Green Party  
(Partido Verde)

## **Presidential Write-In (Voto Escrito Presidencial)**

☐

**President R. Boddie**

☐

**Brian Carroll**

☐

**Todd Cella**

☐

**Jesse Cuellar**

☐

**Tom Hoefling**

☐

**Gloria La Riva**

☐

**Abram Loeb**

☐

**Robert Morrow**

☐

**Kasey Wells**



## Attachment 11: Voter Information - English

3-7  
Prescribed by Secretary of State

Sections 62.011, 62.015, and 68.005, Texas Election Code; U.S.D.C. S.D. Tex. Civil Action No. 2:19-cv-00199 (Docket No. 890)  
8/2016

<b>DATE OF ELECTION:</b>	<b>POLLS WILL BE OPEN DURING:</b> EARLY VOTING FROM _____ TO _____ AND 7:00 AM TO 7:00 PM ON ELECTION DAY
--------------------------	---

VOTER INFORMATION

**You Have:**

- (1) The right to a ballot with written instructions on how to cast the ballot.
- (2) The right to cast your vote in secret and free from intimidation.
- (3) The right to receive up to two more ballots if a mistake is made while marking the ballot.
- (4) The right to ask the polling place official for instructions on how to cast the ballot, but not for suggestions on how to vote.
- (5) The right to bring an interpreter to assist you as you qualify to vote if you do not understand the English language.
- (6) The right to assistance while casting your ballot if you cannot write, see the ballot, or understand the language in which it is written.
- (7) The right to report a possible voting rights abuse to the Secretary of State or to your local election official.
- (8) The right to cast a provisional ballot if your name does not appear on the list of registered voters.
- (9) The (1) right to cast a provisional ballot (a) if you do not have one of the acceptable forms of photo identification listed below, which is not expired for more than four years, and you do not have a reasonable impediment to obtaining one of these forms of identification or (b) if you have, but did not bring to the polling place, one of the seven forms of acceptable photo identification listed below, which is not expired for more than four years, and (2) the right to present one of the acceptable forms of photo identification listed below, which is not expired for more than four years, to the county voter registrar's office within six (6) calendar days after election day.
- (10) The right to vote once at any early voting location during the early voting period within the territory conducting the election.
- (11) The right to file an administrative complaint with the Secretary of State concerning violations of federal and state voting procedures.

**You may not:**

- (1) Vote in an election in which you know that you are not eligible to vote.
- (2) Vote twice in an election.
- (3) Provide assistance to a voter who is not eligible to receive assistance.
- (4) Suggest how another person should vote by word, sign or gesture while in the polling place.
- (5) Intimidate, threaten, or coerce any person from voting or attempting to vote.
- (6) Electioneer or loiter within 100 feet of the entrance to the polling place or inside the polling place.
- (7) Buy or sell your ballot.
- (8) Deposit a ballot in the ballot box that was not given to you by an election official.

**You will have to present one of the following forms of acceptable photo identification in order to vote, unless you have a reasonable impediment to obtaining one of these forms of acceptable photo identification or you qualify for one of the other exemptions identified below:**

- (1) Texas Driver's License issued by the Department of Public Safety ("DPS")
- (2) Texas Election Identification Certificate issued by DPS;
- (3) Texas Personal Identification Card issued by DPS;
- (4) Texas Handgun License issued by DPS;
- (5) United States Military Identification Card containing the person's photograph;
- (6) United States Citizenship Certificate containing the person's photograph; or
- (7) United States Passport.

With the exception of the U.S. citizenship certificate, the identification must be current or have expired no more than 4 years before being presented for voter qualification at the polling place.

**Reasonable Impediment to Obtaining Identification:** If you have not been able to obtain one of the forms of acceptable photo identification listed above, and have a reasonable impediment to obtaining such identification, you have the right to execute a Reasonable Impediment Declaration and present one of the following supporting documents:

- (1) valid voter registration certificate;
- (2) certified birth certificate (must be an original);
- (3) copy of or original current utility bill;
- (4) copy of or original bank statement;
- (5) copy of or original government check;
- (6) copy of or original paycheck; or
- (7) copy of or original other government document that displays your name and an address (though an original is required if it contains a photograph).

**Other Exemptions:** Voters with a disability may apply with the county voter registrar for a permanent exemption to presenting acceptable photo identification in the county. Also, voters who (1) have a consistent religious objections to being photographed or (2) do not present an acceptable form of photo identification listed above because of certain natural disasters as declared by the President of the United States or the Texas Governor, may vote a provisional ballot, appear at the voter registrar's office within six (6) calendar days after election day, and sign an affidavit swearing to the religious objection or natural disaster, in order for a provisional ballot to be counted. Please contact your county voter registrar for more details.

**The Secretary of State's Office may be contacted toll-free at 1-800-252-VOTE (8683), via e-mail at [elections@sos.texas.gov](mailto:elections@sos.texas.gov), and by regular mail at: Elections Division, P.O. Box 12060, Austin, Texas 78711 to report election violations.**

## Attachment 11: Voter Information - Spanish

<p>Secciones 62.011, 62.015, y 63.001, Código Electoral de Texas; U.S.D.C. S.D. Tex. Acción Civil No. 2:13-CV-00193 (Docket No. 895)</p>	<p>7-7 Prescrito por la Secretaría de Estado 8/2016</p>
<p><b>FECHA DE LA ELECCIÓN:</b></p>	<p><b>LAS CASILLAS ELECTORALES ESTARÁN ABIERTAS DURANTE LAS VOTACIONES TEMPRANAS DE _____ A _____ Y DE 7:00 AM A 7:00 PM EL DÍA DE LAS ELECCIONES.</b></p>

**INFORMACIÓN ELECTORAL**

**Usted tiene:**

- (1) Derecho a recibir una boleta electoral con instrucciones por escrito sobre cómo ejercer su voto.
- (2) Derecho a emitir su voto en secreto y sin intimidación.
- (3) Derecho a recibir hasta dos boletas adicionales si ha marcado erróneamente la boleta.
- (4) Derecho a pedir instrucciones al funcionario de la casilla electoral sobre cómo ejercer su voto, pero no para pedir sugerencias sobre por quién o por qué votar.
- (5) Derecho de traer con usted un intérprete para que le traduzca durante el proceso de verificación en la casilla si usted no entiende inglés.
- (6) Derecho a asistencia mientras emite su voto si usted no puede escribir, ver la boleta, o entender el idioma en el cual está escrita.
- (7) Derecho a reportar posibles abusos en contra de sus derechos electorales con la Secretaría de Estado o con su funcionario electoral local en su localidad.
- (8) Derecho a ejercer su voto provisional si su nombre no aparece en la lista de electores registrados.
- (9) Derecho a (1) ejercer su voto provisional (a) si no cuenta con una de las formas de identificación aprobadas con fotografía listadas en este documento, que no se haya vencido más de cuatro años antes de ser presentada, y no tiene un impedimento razonable para obtener una de estas formas de identificación o (b) si tiene una de las siete formas de identificación aprobadas con fotografía listadas también en este documento, que no se haya vencido más de cuatro años antes de presentarla, pero no la trajo al sitio electoral, y (2) derecho a presentar una de las formas de identificación aprobadas con fotografía listadas en este documento, que no se haya vencido más de cuatro años antes, a la oficina de registro electoral dentro de seis (6) días después del día de la elección.
- (10) Derecho a votar una vez en cualquier sitio donde se estén llevando a cabo las votaciones tempranas durante el periodo de las elecciones tempranas dentro del territorio donde se esté llevando a cabo la elección.
- (11) Derecho a presentar una queja administrativa ante la Secretaría de Estado con respecto a violaciones de los procedimientos electorales estatales y federales.

**Usted no puede:**

- (1) Votar en una elección si usted sabe que no cumple con los requisitos para votar.
- (2) Votar dos veces en la misma elección.
- (3) Prestarle ayuda a un elector que no cumple con los requisitos para recibir asistencia.
- (4) Sugerir verbalmente, por medio de señas o gestos, por quien o por qué debe votar una persona que se encuentra en la casilla electoral.
- (5) Intimidar, amenazar u obligar o coaccionar a una persona para que no vote o considere no votar.
- (6) Hacer campaña, propaganda electoral o merodear a menos de 100 pies de la entrada al centro de casillas electorales o dentro del mismo.
- (7) Comprar o vender su boleta.
- (8) Depositar una boleta en la urna electoral si usted no recibió esa boleta por parte de un funcionario electoral.

**Usted tendrá que presentar una de las siguientes formas de identificación aprobadas con fotografía para emitir su voto, si no tiene un impedimento razonable para obtener una de las formas de identificación aprobadas con fotografía o califica para una de las excepciones nombradas a continuación:**

- (1) Licencia de Conducir de Texas expedida por el Departamento de Seguridad Pública ("DPS", según sus siglas en inglés);
- (2) Certificado de Identificación Electoral de Texas expedido por el DPS;
- (3) Tarjeta de Identificación Personal de Texas expedida por el DPS;
- (4) Licencia para Portar Armas de Fuego de Texas expedida por el DPS;
- (5) Cédula de Identificación Militar de los Estados Unidos con fotografía;
- (6) Certificado de Ciudadanía de los Estados Unidos con fotografía; o
- (7) Pasaporte de los Estados Unidos.

Con la excepción del certificado de ciudadanía estadounidense, la identificación debe estar actualizada o no haberse vencido más de 4 años antes de ser presentada en el sitio de votación para poder ejercer su voto.

**Impedimento Razonable para obtener una identificación:** Si no ha podido obtener una de las formas de identificación aprobadas con fotografía nombradas anteriormente, y tiene un impedimento razonable para obtener una de esas identificaciones, usted tiene derecho a llenar una Declaración de Impedimento Razonable y presentar uno de los siguientes documentos:

- (1) Certificado de registro electoral válido;
- (2) Acta de nacimiento certificada original;
- (3) Factura reciente de servicios públicos original o copia;
- (4) Estado de cuenta bancaria original o copia;
- (5) Cheque del gobierno original o copia;
- (6) Cheque de pago original o copia; o
- (7) Documento del gobierno con su nombre y dirección (se requiere documento original si el documento contiene una fotografía).

**Otras Excepciones:** Electores con alguna discapacidad pueden solicitar una excepción permanente por medio de la oficina de registro electoral de su condado. Electores que presentan (1) una objeción religiosa continuamente a ser fotografiados o (2) que no presenten una forma de identificación aprobada con fotografía de la lista nombrada anteriormente debido a ciertos desastres naturales declarados por el Presidente de los Estados Unidos o por el Gobernador del Estado de Texas, pueden emitir un voto provisional, presentarse en la oficina de registro electoral dentro de seis (6) días después del día de la elección, y firmar una declaración juramentada en la cual afirma su objeción religiosa o desastre natural, para que su voto provisional sea contado. Por favor comuníquese con la oficina de registro electoral de su condado para más detalles.

**Puede contactar a la Oficina de la Secretaría de Estado llamando gratis al 1-800-252-VOTE (8683), por correo electrónico a [elections@sos.texas.gov](mailto:elections@sos.texas.gov), y por correo postal a: Elections Division, P.O. Box 12060, Austin, TX 78711 para reportar violaciones electorales.**

## Attachment 12: Voting Instructions for Paper Ballots - English

If you do not understand these instructions, please ask an election official for help.

### HOW TO VOTE:

- Marking devices are provided in each booth.
- Mark an "X" in the square to the left of the name of the candidate or proposition indicating the way you wish to vote.

### TO VOTE FOR A CANDIDATE:

- Place an "X" in the square next to the name of the candidate of your choice in each race.

### WRITE-IN VOTING FOR CANDIDATES

- A write-in candidate is a candidate whose name is not printed on the ballot.
- In most elections, write-in votes will be counted only for those whose names appear on the list of Declared Write-in Candidates.
- The list of declared write-in candidates is posted in each voting booth.
- Place an "X" in the square next to the blank write-in line or write-in column and write in the name of that person on the blank line provided in that race.
- If a write-in line or column is not available in a particular race, write-in voting is not permitted.
- Write-in voting is not permitted in runoff elections or other elections where the law prohibits such voting.

### TO VOTE ON PROPOSITIONS:

- To vote "For" or "Against" (or "yes" or "no") on a proposition, place an "X" in the square next to "For" or "Against" (or "yes" or "no")

### DEPOSITING THE BALLOT:

- Check your ballot after voting to be sure that your voting choices are clearly marked.
- Fold the ballot before depositing it in the box.
- Deposit your ballot in the ballot box.

### REPLACING A MISMARKED OR DAMAGED BALLOT:

- If you make a mistake, tear or damage your ballot, take it to an election official and get a new one. You may receive up to two more ballots if a mistake is made while marking your original ballot.

## Attachment 12: Voting Instructions for Paper Ballots - Spanish

Si no comprende estas instrucciones, favor solicite ayuda a un oficial electoral.

### COMO VOTAR

- Dispositivos de marcación se proveerán en cada cabina de votación.
- Marque con una "X" en el espacio cuadrado a la izquierda del nombre del candidato o de la propuesta indicando la manera en que desea votar.

### PARA VOTAR POR UN CANDIDATO

- Marque con una "X" en el espacio cuadrado al lado del candidato de su preferencia en cada carrera.

### PARA VOTAR POR CANDIDATOS POR INSERCIÓN ESCRITA

- Un candidato por inserción escrita es aquel cuyo nombre no aparece impreso en la boleta.
- En la mayoría de las elecciones, sólo se contarán los votos para aquellos candidatos cuyos nombres aparezcan en la lista de Candidatos Declarados para Elección por Inserción Escrita.
- La lista de candidatos por inserción escrita estará publicada en cada cabina de votación.
- Marque con una "X" en el espacio cuadrado al lado de la *línea* o columna en blanco de candidato por inserción escrita y escriba el nombre del candidato en la *línea* en blanco proporcionada en esa carrera.
- Si una *línea* o columna por inserción escrita no se encuentra disponible para una carrera en particular, no se permite la votación por inserción escrita.
- No se permite votar por inserción escrita ni en elecciones de desempate, ni en otras elecciones donde la ley prohíbe explícitamente la votación por inserción escrita.

### PARA VOTAR POR PROPUESTAS

- Para votar "A Favor" o "En Contra" (o "sí" o "no") en una propuesta, marque "X" en el cuadrado al lado de "A Favor" o "En Contra" (o "sí" o "no")

### PARA DEPOSITAR LA BOLETA

- Revise su boleta después de votar para asegurarse de que sus elecciones de votación estén claramente marcadas.
- Doble la boleta antes de depositarla en la caja.
- Deposite su boleta en la caja para boletas

### PARA REEMPLAZAR UNA BOLETA MAL MARCADA O DANADA

- Si usted se equivoca o si daña su boleta, devuélvala al oficial electoral y obtenga otra. Usted puede recibir un máximo de dos boletas más, si comete un error al marcar su boleta original.



## Attachment 13: Tally Sheet

PLACE FIVE TALLIES IN EACH SQUARE.

**EXAMPLE:**

## TALLY SHEET

[illegible]

See reverse side for instructions

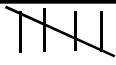
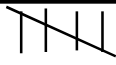

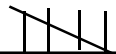

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct tally sheet kept by me for the above described election.

Signature of person who kept sheet \_\_\_\_\_



## Attachment 14: Tally Sheet Instructions

1. Each tally sheet must have:
  - name of candidate or proposition;
  - date of election;
  - precinct number;
  - type of election;
  - name of presiding judge; and
  - signature of person keeping the tally sheet.
2. When counting, one person should call out the vote indicated on the ballot, while the other person records the vote tally.
3. Record all write-in votes on the tally sheet following the same tallying procedure used for those candidates or propositions listed on the ballot.

Candidate 1			
Candidate 2			

**Example:** Place five tallies in each square.

4. On completing the count, each counting officer computes the total number of votes cast for each candidate or proposition and enters the totals in the last column on the tally sheet.

# Voter Complaint Information

You may report **any** complaint about the conduct of this election, including **voting rights violations** and **complaints** about local election officials administering the election, to:

Any Election Texas Secretary of State's Office			
<b>By Calling:</b>  (800) 252-8683 (512) 463-5650	<b>By Writing:</b>  Office of the Secretary of State P.O. Box 12060 Austin, Texas 78711	<b>By Emailing:</b>  elections@sos.texas.gov	<b>By Faxing:</b>  (512) 475-2811

- If you contact the Secretary of State in writing either by mail, fax or email, include your contact information in case additional information is needed.

Federal Elections U.S. Department of Justice			
<b>By Calling:</b>  (800) 253-3931 (202) 307-2767	<b>By Writing:</b>  Civil Rights Division U.S. Department of Justice Room 7254 - NWB 950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. Washington, DC 20530	<b>By Emailing:</b>  voting.section@usdoj.gov	<b>By Faxing:</b>  (202) 307-3961

Local Elections Local Contact Information for this Election			
You may also file affidavits of potential criminal election violations involving local elections with your local county attorney or criminal/district attorney for investigation. Consult your local directory for phone numbers.			
<b>Name of Election Official:</b>			
<b>Phone Number:</b>	<b>Mailing Address:</b>	<b>Email Address:</b>	<b>Fax Number:</b>

# Información para denuncias de votantes

Usted puede presentar **cualquier** denuncia sobre el proceso de esta elección, incluso sobre **delitos contra derechos electorales y denuncias** sobre los funcionarios electorales locales encargados de administrar la elección, a:

Todo tipo de elecciones Secretario de Estado de Texas			
Llame al:	Escriba a:	Por correo electrónico a:	Por fax al:
(800) 252-8683 (512) 463-5650	Office of the Secretary of State P.O. Box 12060 Austin, Texas 78711	elections@sos.texas.gov	(512) 475-2811

- Si se comunica con el Secretario de Estado por escrito, bien sea por correo, fax o correo electrónico, favor de incluir su información de contacto en caso de que se requiera información adicional.

Elecciones federales Departamento de Justicia de los Estados Unidos			
Llame al:	Escriba a:	Por correo electrónico a:	Por fax al:
(800) 253-3931 (202) 307-2767	Civil Rights Division U.S. Department of Justice Room 7254 - NWB 950 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W. Washington, DC 20530	voting.section@usdoj.gov	(202) 307-3961

Elecciones locales Información de contacto local para esta elección			
También puede presentar declaraciones juradas al procurador del condado o al procurador penal/del distrito para la investigación de posibles delitos penales electorales en elecciones locales. Consulte su guía local para números telefónicos.			
Nombre del funcionario electoral:			
Núm. de teléfono:	Dirección postal:	Dirección de correo electrónico:	Núm. de fax:

## Voting: A Historical Perspective

Early in our nation's history, many people were denied the right to vote. The Framers of the Constitution could not decide who should be granted this right and therefore left the decision to state governments. Most of the state governments extended this privilege to white, male property owners. African Americans, women, and Native Americans were denied this right. State governments reasoned that a person with property would have more to lose if a bad government came to power. They felt that these individuals would vote for people who would be careful to protect property. During the 50 years following the adoption of the U.S. Constitution, the right to vote was given to all white men. However, African Americans, women, and Native Americans were still denied the right to vote. It took many years of hard work before these groups would gain this right.

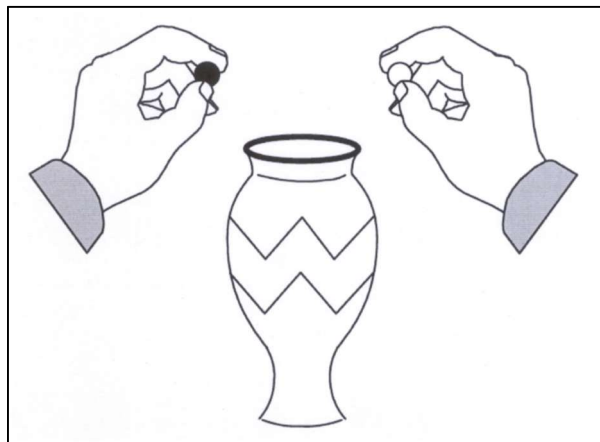
Texans have had the right to vote since the time Texas was a part of Mexico. The Mexican Constitution of 1824 provided that the legislators, governor, and vice-governor were to be elected by "popular vote." But not all Texans have really had the right to vote since then. Some Texans acquired the right to vote later. African-American men in Texas were not allowed to vote before 1869. In the Constitution of 1869, they were given the right to vote. But no women had the right to vote in Texas until 1918. Then women were allowed to vote in primary elections but could not vote in general elections. In 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution gave all women the right to vote in all elections. Even though these rights were given, African Americans and Mexican Americans were often denied the right to vote until the United States Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This law made it illegal to deny people the right to vote because of their race or color. Beginning in 1902, a poll tax was collected from people who wanted to vote. People who could not afford to pay the tax were denied the right to vote. In 1966 an amendment to the Texas Constitution removed this poll tax and since then all citizens who meet the eligibility requirements are allowed to vote in all elections in Texas.

## Voting Systems: A Historical Perspective

The power to govern is exercised, either directly or indirectly, through our right to vote. Voting is our way of making decisions or stating our opinion by expressing satisfaction or dissatisfaction with public officials.

There are many methods used to vote. The oldest and most common form of voting is the “voice vote.” This method was used in the early American Colonies in the 1700s and is used today by civic organizations, clubs and in classrooms. In this method, the voter simply responds aloud with an appropriate “aye” or “nay,” “yes” or “no” to the issue to be voted upon. This method has one significant drawback—it does not provide for secrecy. Voting in secret is necessary to protect the voter from undue influence, persuasion, coercion, and bribery when voting. It protects the voters' rights to express their opinions.

Another old popular method of voting requires that each voter be given two balls, one black and the other white. The black ball signifies a “no” vote and the white ball signifies a “yes” vote. The voter simply drops the appropriate ball into a container to vote. This method is the origin of the expression “to blackball” meaning “to vote against.” While providing for secrecy, this method of voting allows for only “yes” or “no” votes and can be quite cumbersome if there are a number of issues to be voted upon.



The method of voting used in Texas today is derived from the Australian Ballot System. To vote under this system, the voter marks a uniform ballot while alone in a booth. If paper ballots are being used, the following is required:

1. The ballots must be uniform in paper quality, size, color, and inking to ensure that one person's ballot cannot be singled out to determine how it was voted.
2. The ballots must be printed at public expense.



3. The names of all candidates for the same office must be on each ballot to ensure that each voter is selecting from the same list of candidates.
4. The ballots must be distributed only to registered voters and only one ballot is given to each voter.
5. There must be absolute secrecy in voting.
6. Only official ballots must be counted.

Besides voting on paper ballots, people in Texas also vote on a variety of different electronic voting systems with accessibility features that allow voters with disabilities to cast a secret ballot, including ballot marking devices and DREs (direct record electronic systems). The type of voting system used at your polling place will depend on the political subdivision (e.g., county, city) in which you live. Regardless of the device used, the secrecy of the vote must be ensured.

New ways of voting are being tried. These include voting by telephone or online, using computers. People are constantly trying to invent new methods of voting that are cheap to build and to maintain, that are easy for the voter to use, that provide a fast and accurate vote count, and that protect the secrecy and honesty of the vote.

It is important to note that decisions being made in your capitol city can and will change your life. It is also important to know that we all play an important role in decisions being made. As citizens of this great state and nation, we have a voice in government through utilization of our right to vote. Let your voice be heard, learn about the candidates and issues. When you become of age, cast your ballot — exercise your voice — **VOTE**.



## Voting Methods and Systems

Three major kinds of voting methods are used in Texas today. These methods are paper, optical scan, and DREs (direct record electronic systems or accessible voting equipment). The type of voting device used at your polling place will depend on the political subdivision (e.g., county, city, school district) in which you live, keeping in mind that some political subdivisions may use multiple methods. Visit our website at [www.votetexas.gov](http://www.votetexas.gov) for a list of voting methods.

On October 29, 2002, President Bush signed HR 3295, the Help America Vote Act ("HAVA"). This federal legislation came about due to issues that surfaced in the close Presidential Election of 2000. HAVA is the federal election reform bill that came about to help alleviate those election system problems and to help restore confidence in the election process.

HAVA meant many election-related changes for Texas. Most notably, a couple of the voting systems that had been used in Texas for many, many years went away January 1, 2006. The punch-card voting system and the lever voting machines, or mechanical voting systems as they are called in the curriculum, went away.

Other major election reform changes that became effective January 1, 2006, as a result of HAVA are:

1. Every polling place in Texas must have a voting system accessible to voters with disabilities. These voting systems must be able to allow a disabled person to vote independently. The new electronic voting systems (DREs or accessible voting equipment) being used across Texas are equipped with a headset and an audio ballot. Note: this requirement was already in place in Texas prior to the enactment of HAVA.
2. If poll workers can't find your name on the list of registered voters, you will be offered the option to vote **provisionally**. What is this provisional ballot? It is a ballot that is separated and will not be counted until the voter's eligibility is verified by the voter registrar within 6 days after the election. You will sign a statement saying that you understand that you can vote a provisional ballot, but it will be kept separate from the other voted ballots cast at your polling place. It will be kept in a secret envelope (so nobody knows how you voted) and sent to the Voter Registrar of the County in which you live, to verify that you are a registered voter. If it is determined that you are a registered voter, your provisional ballot will be counted by a group of individuals referred to as the early voting ballot board. If you are not registered to vote, your ballot will be not counted. You will be notified by mail by the presiding Judge of the Early Voting Ballot Board as to whether your provisional ballot was counted or not counted with the reason provided no later than 10 days after the local canvass.

## A. Paper Method

This is the simplest voting method. It is used by many small jurisdictions because it is also the least expensive way to count ballots. When using the paper method, voters mark their ballot by hand with an indelible marker or pen (a marker that cannot be erased). Paper votes can be counted only by hand.

## B. Optical Scan

There are several types of optical scan voting systems, but they all operate in a similar manner. With an optical scan system, voters mark their printed paper ballots by either connecting “arrows,” or filling in “bubbles” next to the candidates’ names. The votes are then counted by an electronic ballot counter that counts the “bubbles,” or the “arrows.” When the ballots are counted, the electronic system automatically computes the totals for each candidate.

## C. DREs (Direct Recording Electronic Systems or Accessible Voting Equipment)

When a voter votes on a DRE or accessible voting equipment, he or she does not vote on a physical, paper ballot, but votes directly on the machine. There are several types of DREs or accessible voting equipment available for use in the election, but they all tabulate the votes. There are various styles of DREs/accessible voting equipment -- dial, button (like ATM machine) and they look different, but the commonality is that when you vote on a DRE/accessible voting equipment, your vote is directly input electronically into the machine. There is an electronic summary page on this type of voting system and you can go back and forth between the pages to make sure that the voting system has captured the votes you intended to cast, but you do not currently get a hard-copy receipt of the way that you have voted. There is a lot of controversy, nationally, about this type of voting. For now, in the year 2020, the law does not require Texas to have a paper ballot receipt for DREs/accessible voting equipment.

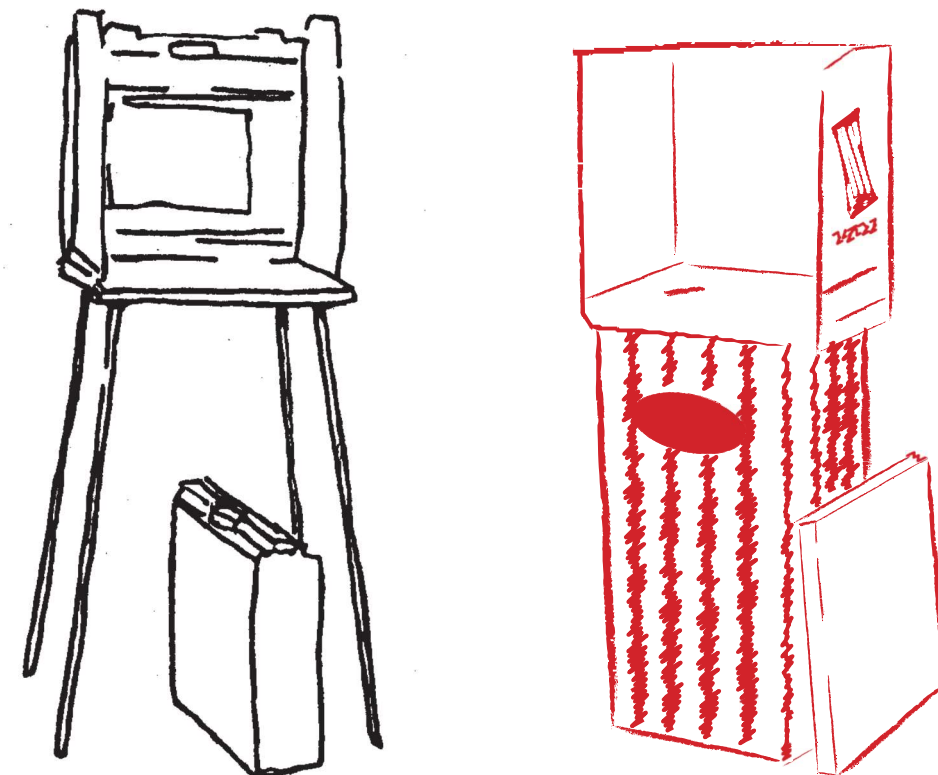
**NOTE:** To meet your voting machine, and for a complete listing of voting systems currently being used by Texas counties, please visit <http://votetexas.gov/voting/how>.

## Voting Booths

There are many kinds of voting booths used in Texas. The following are examples of booths you might see at your polling place. Keep in mind that "official" voting booths such as these are not necessary, as long as the booths provide voters privacy while voting. Voting booths must meet the regulatory specifications for voting booths, or must have been approved for use by the Secretary of State.

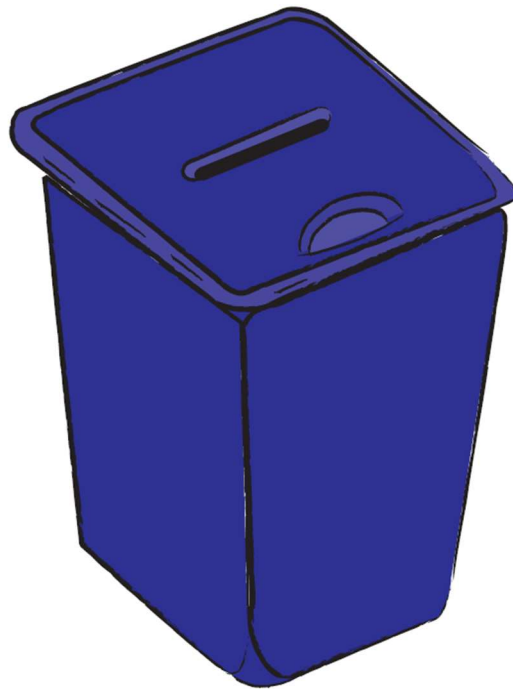
The voting booth on the left is made of polyethylene and is designed for both optical scan and paper ballots, and collapses to form its own storage case. Note: there is an adapter kit available for use by voters with disabilities which converts the self-contained booths to comply with the Federal "Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act," thereby eliminating the need for additional booths.

The voting booth on the right is constructed of corrugated board, light weight, inexpensive, and folds down to create its own carrying case.



## Ballot Boxes


Below is an example of a ballot box used for elections. No matter what type of box is used, it should have a visible wide slot for ballot deposits, and should always remain locked during the course of an election to ensure security of the ballots. In elections where paper or optical scan ballots are used, four ballot boxes are used. One box is locked and placed in an area established for depositing voted ballots. The remaining boxes are kept in a secure place in view of the election officials. These boxes are replacements for the ballot boxes being used for the deposit of voted ballots. Each box containing voted ballots that are not being used must be sealed so that no additional ballots can be inserted into the box, and the seal must be signed by the presiding judge, an election clerk, and two watchers of opposing interest (if present).






# Instructions for Electronic Voting

Fill in the Bubbles

OFFICIAL BALLOT (BOLETA OFICIAL)		SAMPLE ELECTION (ELECCION DE MUESTRA)	
A	SAMPLE CUSTOMER	B	ANY MONTH 99, 2018
<b>INSTRUCTION NOTE:</b> Vote for your choice in each race by completely filling the oval beside the candidate's name. You may vote for a write-in candidate by writing the name of the candidate on the line provided, and filling the oval beside the line. Use only the marker provided. <b>(NOTA DE INSTRUCCION:</b> Vote por su preferencia en cada carrera por llenar completamente el óvalo al lado del nombre del candidato. Usted puede votar por un candidato elegible para recibir votos inserción escrita por escribir el nombre del candidato en la línea provista y por llenar el óvalo al lado de la línea. Solamente use el marcador provisto.)			
		<b>United States Senator (Senador de los Estados Unidos)</b> <input type="radio"/> Florence Nightingale <input type="radio"/> Henry Ford <input checked="" type="radio"/> Francis Scott Key <input type="radio"/> _____	
		<b>Railroad Commissioner (Comisionado de Ferrocarriles)</b> <input type="radio"/> Julius Caesar <input type="radio"/> Al Capone <input type="radio"/> Calamity Jane <input type="radio"/> _____	

**MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT**  
(Asegure que cuente su voto.)


**TO VOTE FOR A STATEMENT, CANDIDATE, OR FOR A WRITE-IN, BLACK IN THE OVAL BESIDE YOUR CHOICE.**

(Para votar a favor de una declaración, un candidato, o para votar por escrito, oscurezca el óvalo al lado de su preferencia.)

**USE ONLY THE SPECIAL PENCIL PROVIDED**  
**BY YOUR ELECTION OFFICIALS**  
(Use solamente el lápiz especial provisto por los oficiales electorales.)

**VOTE BOTH SIDES OF THE BALLOT**  
(Vote ambos lados de la boleta.)


**DO NOT FOLD YOUR BALLOT!**  
(Favor de no doblar su boleta.)

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS,  
PLEASE ASK YOUR ELECTION OFFICIALS**  
(Si usted tiene alguna pregunta, favor de dirigirla a los oficiales electorales.)

# Electronic Voting

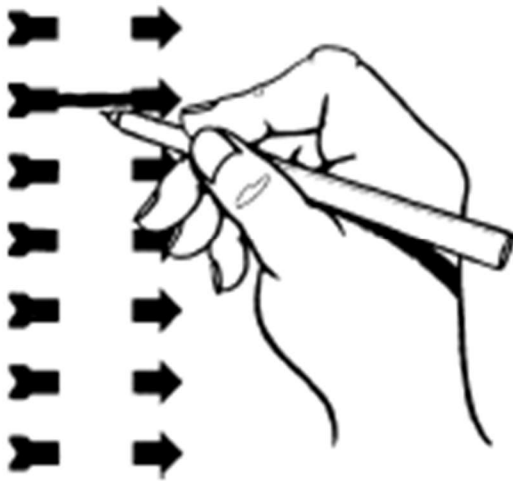
Fill in the Bubbles

Vote Both Sides

		<b>General Election Ballot Header</b> Disney General Election County of Disney November 4, 2014		Precinct Name 3-B	
Instruction Note: English- To cast a vote, completely fill in the option box of your choice.		<b>U.S. Senator</b> Vote for One (Straight Party contest)			
<b>Straight Party</b> A vote in this contest will mark all contests included in the Straight Party Race.		<input type="checkbox"/> Minnie Mouse Red			
<input type="checkbox"/> Red		<input type="checkbox"/> Daisy Duck Blue			
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue		<input type="checkbox"/> Wendy Green			
<input type="checkbox"/> Green		<input type="checkbox"/> Timon Yellow			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yellow					
The following contests are "Office Contests"		<input type="checkbox"/> Write-in			
<b>Governor</b> Vote for One (Straight Party contest)		<b>Criminal District Attorney</b> This contest has no options			
<input type="checkbox"/> Mickey Mouse/Goofy Red					
<input type="checkbox"/> Donald Duck/Scrooge McDuck Blue		<b>U.S. Rep., District ABC</b> Vote for One (Straight Party contest)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Peter Pan/Tinkerbell Green		<input type="checkbox"/> Dopey Blue			
<input type="checkbox"/> Simba/Nala Yellow		<input type="checkbox"/> Doc Yellow			
<input type="checkbox"/> Write-in		<b>Railroad Commissioner</b> This contest has no options			
		<b>Justice, Supreme Ct, Ptc 2</b> Vote for One (Write-in option only)			
		<input type="checkbox"/> Write-in			

Vote Both Sides

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR MARKING BALLOT



**TO VOTE**

**DRAW A LINE  
CONNECTING THE  
HEAD AND TAIL  
OF THE ARROW  
THAT POINTS  
TO YOUR  
CHOICE**

**VOTER,  
MAKE SURE TO CHECK  
YOUR BALLOT FOR ANY  
STRAY MARKS OR SMUDGES.**

**USE ONLY THE SPECIAL PEN OR PENCIL PROVIDED**

**IF YOU MAKE AN ERROR  
PLEASE RETURN YOUR BALLOT TO THE ELECTION OFFICIAL  
AND REQUEST A NEW BALLOT**

## Sample Ballot – Electronic Voting

ANY COUNTY, U.S.A. DEMONSTRATION BALLOT		
TO VOTE, COMPLETE THE ARROW(S)   POINTING TO YOUR CHOICE(S), LIKE THIS:		
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <b>STRAIGHT PARTY</b>             To vote a Straight Party Ticket, complete the arrow pointing to the Party of your choice. (Vote for One)         </div> <div>           VIRGINIA PARTY              OHIO PARTY              OREGON PARTY    <hr/> <b>PRESIDENT &amp; VICE-PRESIDENT</b> (Vote for One Pair)             ZACHARY TAYLOR and MILLARD FILLMORE              WM. H. HARRISON and JOHN TYLER              JAMES MONROE and DANIEL D. THOMPKINS              _____              (WRITE IN, IF ANY)  <hr/> <b>U.S. SENATOR</b> (Vote for One)             EVERETT DIRKSEN              DOLLY MADISON              JOHN HANCOCK              _____              (WRITE IN, IF ANY)         </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <b>STATE OFFICES</b> </div> <div> <b>GOVERNOR</b> (Vote for One)             POCAHONTAS              HENRY FORD              FRANCIS SCOTT KEY              _____              (WRITE IN, IF ANY)  <hr/> <b>COMMISSIONER OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE</b> (Vote for One)             SUSAN B. ANTHONY              MAMIE EISENHOWER              ELEANOR ROOSEVELT              _____              (WRITE IN, IF ANY)         </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <b>STATE OFFICES cont.</b> </div> <div> <b>ATTORNEY GENERAL</b> (Vote for One)             GEORGE WASHINGTON              ALBERT EINSTEIN              THOMAS A. EDISON              HELEN KELLER              _____              (WRITE IN, IF ANY)  <hr/> <b>RAILROAD COMMISSIONER</b> (Vote for One)             TROY AIKMAN              MICHAEL JORDAN              NANCY KERRIGAN              MARY LOU RETTON              NOLAN RYAN              CLYDE DREXLER              EARL CAMPBELL              _____              (WRITE IN, IF ANY)            _____              (WRITE IN, IF ANY)         </div>

## Sample Voting Machine

The patented iVotronic™ Touch Screen Voting System is the premier voting solution for jurisdictions who prefer paperless voting. Available with a 15" full-color display, the iVotronic is wireless, multilingual, and ADA-compliant. Voters may securely cast their vote for each race and/or ballot proposition simply through the touch of the screen. Its Audio Ballot feature easily assists those voters who are visually impaired. Weighing only 14.35 pounds, the iVotronic is the most portable system in the industry enabling curbside voting and wheelchair access, and it is powered either by 120-volt AC current or a rechargeable battery cartridge. To ensure voter intent and ballot correctness, the iVotronic prevents the voter from over-voting and alerts the voter of under-voted races.

1. **Activate ballot**

You or a poll worker will activate your electronic ballot by inserting it into the appropriate slot. Next, touch language of choice with your finger.



2. **Select candidate**

To select your candidate, touch the box next to the name. To de-select, touch the box again. The iVotronic will not allow you to vote for more people than may be elected to any one office.



3. **Review ballot**

After completing last ballot page, touch "review" and carefully review the selection review screen. To change or make a new choice, touch the box next to candidate or office name, and then touch box next to new selection.



4. When finished, press the flashing red "vote" button to cast your ballot. "Thank You For Voting" screen means you have properly cast your ballot.

### Disclaimer:



Above is an example of an iVotronic Touch Screen Voting System by Election Systems & Software. The Secretary of State's office is not affiliated with this company. This information is being provided as an educational tool for students.

The Secretary of State's office does not endorse or promote products or services the vendors provide nor is it the intention of our office to exclude any vendor that is not mentioned.

\*Have students go to <http://votetexas.gov/voting/how> to cast a "virtual ballot."



## Voting Instructions - English



<b>1. Select Language</b>  <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #800000; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">ENGLISH</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn the SELECT wheel to highlight the language of your choice.</li> <li>• Press ENTER.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Enter Access Code</b>  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">ACCESS CODE</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Clave de Acceso</div> <div style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold; text-align: center;">2248</div> <div style="font-size: 0.8em;"> Date: 09-27-01  Time: 21:00:51  Place: Courthouse  Pct: 0102 </div> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn the SELECT wheel to highlight the first number of your Access Code.</li> <li>• Press ENTER.</li> <li>• Repeat for each number.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Make Choices</b>  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">State Rep. District 36</div> <div style="background-color: #0000FF; color: white; padding: 2px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Charles A. Lindbergh </div> <div style="padding: 2px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Grover Cleveland </div> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">State Rep. District 36</div> <div style="background-color: #FF0000; color: white; padding: 2px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Charles A. Lindbergh </div> <div style="padding: 2px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Grover Cleveland </div> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn the SELECT wheel to highlight your ballot choice.</li> <li>• Press ENTER.</li> <li>• The box to the left of the choice changes to red.</li> <li>• To change your choice, turn the SELECT wheel to your new choice and press ENTER.</li> <li>• You may use NEXT and PREV to move through the ballot pages.</li> <li>• To get help, press HELP.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Review Choices</b>  	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div> <b><u>Read the Ballot Summary Page carefully.</u></b> </div> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To Change a choice from the Ballot Summary Page, Turn the SELECT wheel to highlight the line wish to change, and press ENTER.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Cast Ballot</b>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only <b><u>after</u></b> all desired choices have been made, press CAST BALLOT from the final Ballot Summary Page to deposit your voted ballot in the ballot box.</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <div> <b>Pressing CAST BALLOT from the final Ballot Summary page completes the voting process and records the ballot.</b> </div> </div>

### Disclaimer:

Above is an example of an e-Slate voting machine by Hart Intercivic. The Secretary of State's office is not affiliated with this company. This information is being provided as an educational tool for students.

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## Voting Instructions – Spanish

<p><b>1. Escojo el Lenguaje</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: red; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 10px auto;">Español</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gire la rueda SELECT para destacar el lenguaje de su preferencia.</li> <li>Oprima ENTER.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Inserte su Clave de Acceso</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">ACCESS CODE</div> <div style="text-align: center;">Clave de Acceso</div> <div style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold; text-align: center;">2248</div> <div style="font-size: 0.8em;"> Date: 09-27-01  Time: 21:00:51  Place: Courthouse  Pct: 0102 </div> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gire la rueda SELECT para destacar el primer número de su Clavede Acceso.</li> <li>Oprima ENTER.</li> <li>Pepita para todos los números.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Marque sus Selecciones</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">State Rep. District 36</div> <div style="background-color: #e6f2ff; padding: 2px;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Charles A. Lindbergh </div> <div style="padding: 2px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Grover Cleveland </div> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <div style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">State Rep. District 36</div> <div style="background-color: red; padding: 2px;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Charles A. Lindbergh </div> <div style="padding: 2px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Grover Cleveland </div> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gire la rueda SELECT para destacar su preferencia.</li> <li>Oprima ENTER.</li> <li>El cuadro a la izquierda de su selección cambiará a rojo.</li> <li>Para cambiar su selección, gire la rueda SELECT a su nueva selección y oprima ENTER.</li> <li>Se puede usar NEXT y PREV para mover por las páginas de la boleta.</li> <li>Para pedir asistencia, oprima HELP.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Repase sus Selecciones</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;">  </div>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <p><b><u>Lea con cuidado la Página del Resumen de Boleta.</u></b></p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Para cambiar una selección en la Página del Resumen de Boleta, gire la rueda SELECT para destacar la línea que quiera cambiar, y oprima ENTER.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Eche la Boleta</b></p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px auto;">  </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solamente <b><u>después</u></b> de marcar todas sus selecciones, oprima CAST BALLOT en la última Página del Resumen de Boleta para echar su boleta votada en la urna electoral.</li> </ul> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <p><b>Cuando oprima CAST BALLOT en la última Página del Resumen de Boleta, se acaba el proceso de votar y se consigna la boleta.</b></p> </div>

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## Early Voting in Texas

Special rules apply for military voters and overseas citizens.

### In Texas, voters may choose between two kinds of early voting:

1. early voting by personal appearance; and
2. early voting by mail.

Voting early in person is now basically the same as voting on election day; any registered voter can walk in and vote. To vote early by mail, a voter must state one of several legal reasons.

#### If you are a registered voter, you may vote early by mail if:

- you will be away from your county on Election Day and during the early voting period;
- you have a disability
- you are 65 years of age or older on election day; or,
- you are confined in jail, but eligible to vote.

**To vote early by personal appearance**, you must vote in person at the main early voting polling place or at any other designated early voting branch location during regular hours.

**If you are eligible to vote early by mail**, you must submit an application for a ballot to the early voting clerk:

- before the close of business on the 11th day before election day. If you fax or email your application, a hard copy must be mailed and received by the county within 4 business days.

Applications for a ballot by mail are available from the early voting clerk (County Clerk's Office) or the Secretary of State's office 1.800.252.VOTE (8683).

#### To submit an application by mail you must:

- send your application by regular mail or by common or contract carrier;
- you may submit the application by FAX if a FAX machine is available at the early voting clerk's office.

**Exception:** If you are voting early because of an expected absence, you may apply in person for a ballot by mail before the first day of early voting by personal appearance (usually the 17th day before the election). Your ballot must be mailed to an address outside the county.

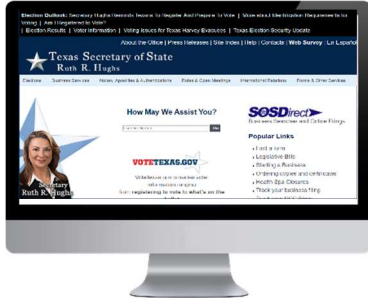
The marked ballot must be postmarked by 7pm on election day and returned to the early voting clerk by 5pm on the next business day after election day and must be returned by mail or by common carrier. You may find answers to questions about places and hours for early voting by contacting the early voting clerk's office or the administrative offices of the political subdivision conducting the election.

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For further information about early voting, contact the Elections Division of the Office of the Secretary of State at 1.800.252.VOTE (8683) or you may find it on our website at [www.votetexas.gov](http://www.votetexas.gov).

## Early Voting by Mail

1.



Pick up application form from the County Clerk's office or go to the Secretary of State's website at [www.votetexas.gov](http://www.votetexas.gov) and learn how to make an informal application.

2.



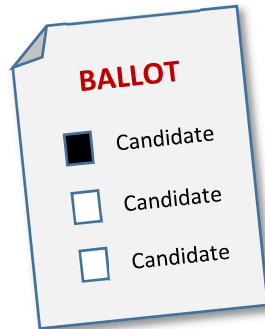
Submit an application by regular mail or common contract carrier (or by fax if fax is available).

3.



Receive ballot from early voting clerk by mail.

4.



Mark ballot

5.



The marked ballot must be postmarked by 7pm on election day and returned to the early voting clerk by 5pm on the next business day after election day.

*\*Special rules apply for ballots being returned from outside the United States.*

## How Important is a Vote?

Engage students in conversation about how a vote is incorporated in many ways in their everyday lives. For instance, are there any other examples of how one or a few votes can make a significant difference in their Student Council election, prom queen and king, homecoming queen, most likely to succeed, most comical in class, etc? Reality shows and any current programs are also good examples of how voting affects contestants. Think about it, an election is a selection of people, issues, or objects.

## Majority v. Plurality

In Texas, there are two methods of being elected to an office. Majority means that a candidate must get more than 50% and 1 one vote in order to be elected to public office. Plurality means the candidate must receive more votes than any other candidate for office in order to be elected.

## Electoral College

A candidate who receives the most votes for the office of President in Texas will have "won" Texas, and their designated elector candidates will become the presidential electors for the state of Texas. Other states may have different procedures for assigning their electoral votes. In Texas, the national popular vote does not determine who receives the electoral votes for the state of Texas. Instead, a candidate must receive the largest share of the votes cast by Texas voters in the Presidential race to receive Texas' 38 electoral votes.

For electors who are associated with a political party's nominee, that elector must be nominated as one of that political party's presidential elector candidates. The process for doing so is defined by party rule and may vary slightly between the parties. If you wish to serve as a presidential elector for a party-affiliated candidate, you may wish to reach out to the party itself. If the party's nominee for president receives the most votes for that office in Texas, then that party's elector candidates will become the presidential electors for Texas and will cast Texas' electoral votes in the presidential election.

For electors who are associated with independent or write-in candidates, the candidate will need to provide signed, written statements of consent from the 38 individuals who will serve as their presidential elector candidates. In the event that the independent or write-in candidate receives the most votes for the office of president in Texas, those 38 individuals will become the presidential electors for Texas and will cast Texas' electoral votes in the presidential election.

## Major Idea!

Conduct a voter turnout campaign to encourage voter education/voter turnout.

## Learning Objective

A successful voter-turnout campaign will help students and (in some cases) community members to:

1. increase awareness of voter-registration deadlines
2. explore the link between voting and changes in government/policies
3. examine the foundations of the American political system
4. promote cooperation between schools and the community
5. develop interpersonal skills
6. develop creative thinking skills and the ability to be part of a team
7. increase voter turnout on election day
8. develop problem solving skills

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*Reprinted with permission of the National Student/Parent Mock Election (NSPME) by C.J. Archer, Retired Elementary School Educator, Ventura County, California*



## Why the Donkey? Why the Elephant?

Two unlikely animals—the donkey and the elephant—have become the universally recognized symbols of the Democratic and Republican Parties. The great American political cartoonist of the nineteenth century, Thomas Nast, (1840-1902) is credited with these endearing and politically rallying “foes” representing America’s two great parties.



The donkey made its debut as a political symbol in the Presidential election of 1828 when Andrew Jackson’s opponents labeled him a “jackass” for his populist views and slogans. Jackson turned this name calling to his advantage by adopting the donkey as his campaign motif. During his presidency, the donkey was often used to depict his stubbornness.

But it was not until 1870 that Nast showed a donkey in Harper’s Weekly, kicking a dead lion—Edwin M. Stanton, a controversial Republican who had recently died. Nast did not intend the donkey to represent the Democratic Party, but a faction of the party with which he disagreed. Nonetheless, the symbol captured the public’s fancy and stuck.



The Republican elephant was “born” in another Nast cartoon. In 1874, the year after President Grant began his second term, the old New York Herald came out with an editorial raising the false cry of “Caesarism” against Grant for supposedly aspiring to be a dictator by seeking a third term.

In that same year, in yet another attempt to boost newspaper sales with sensational headlines, the New York Herald ran a story that was to become known as the Central Park Menagerie Scare of 1874. The story, though a hoax, was effective in its dramatic description of zoo animals escaping and searching for prey.

Nast exploited the coincidence of these two hoaxes to lampoon the Herald’s editors, demagogic Democrats crying “Caesarism,” and Republicans who were bending under the Democratic-inspired bad press surrounding Grant.

The cartoon shows an ass (the Democrats), having put on a lion’s skin (the old New York Herald), roaming about in the forest, and amazing himself by frightening all the foolish animals (other newspapers, the public, etc.) he meets within his wanderings. One of the “foolish” animals was an elephant—intended as a criticism of the Republicans—grown weak and unwieldy.

Today, the donkey and the elephant have become the accepted symbols of America’s Democrats and Republicans. As former United States Representative Wright Patman observed, “Democrats consider the donkey a symbol of homely, down-to-earth appeal. Republicans look upon the elephant as standing for intelligence and impressive strength.”

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*Source: Political Parties, Two-Party Government, and Democracy in the United States, The Taft Institute for Two-Party Government*

## Political Parties in Texas

A person desiring to start a political party in Texas must form an organization, elect a chair and other necessary officers. The organization must have a name of three words or less. The organization must establish rules on electoral procedures and file those rules with the Secretary of State.

The general eligibility requirements to be a candidate for a public elective office in Texas are that a person must:

1. be a United States citizen;
2. be 18 years of age or older on the first day of the term to be filled at the election;
3. have not been determined totally mentally incapacitated or partially mentally incapacitated without the right to vote by a final judgment of a court;
4. have not been finally convicted of a felony, from which the person has not been pardoned or otherwise released from the resulting disabilities (completing the punishment is not the same as being released from the disabilities)
5. have resided continuously in the state for 12 months and in the territory from which the office is elected for six months;
6. satisfy any other eligibility requirements prescribed by law for the office.

These requirements do not apply to an office for which the federal or state constitution or a statute outside the Election Code prescribes exclusive eligibility requirements.

Once a candidate meets the eligibility requirements, he/she must determine the application filing requirements depending on his or her political party's method of nomination. In addition, filing requirements vary according to whether the candidate is a major party, independent, third party or write-in candidate.

A third party, or a "new political party," may nominate candidates by convention or primary election if the party's nominee for governor in the most recent gubernatorial election received at least 2% but less than 20% of the total number of votes received by all candidates for governor. Parties whose candidates received 20% or more are required to hold a primary election. A party must make nominations of candidates by a convention if not authorized to nominate by primary election.

## **Nomination by Convention Method**

To be considered for nomination by a convention, a candidate must make an application for nomination. Minor parties nominating by convention must hold: precinct conventions, county conventions, district conventions, and state conventions. The chair of each convention will certify the nominees.

## **Minimum of Precinct Participation Required**

To be entitled to place their nominees on the general election ballot, third parties must first file a list of precinct convention participants with the Secretary of State. The list must include the residence address and voter registration number of each participant. The number of signatures must equal at least 1% of the total number of votes received by all candidates for governor in the most recent gubernatorial election.

The list of precinct convention participants may be supplemented by petitions signed by registered voters who have not voted in a primary election or participated in another party's convention during the voting year. The petition may not be circulated until after the date of the party's precinct conventions.

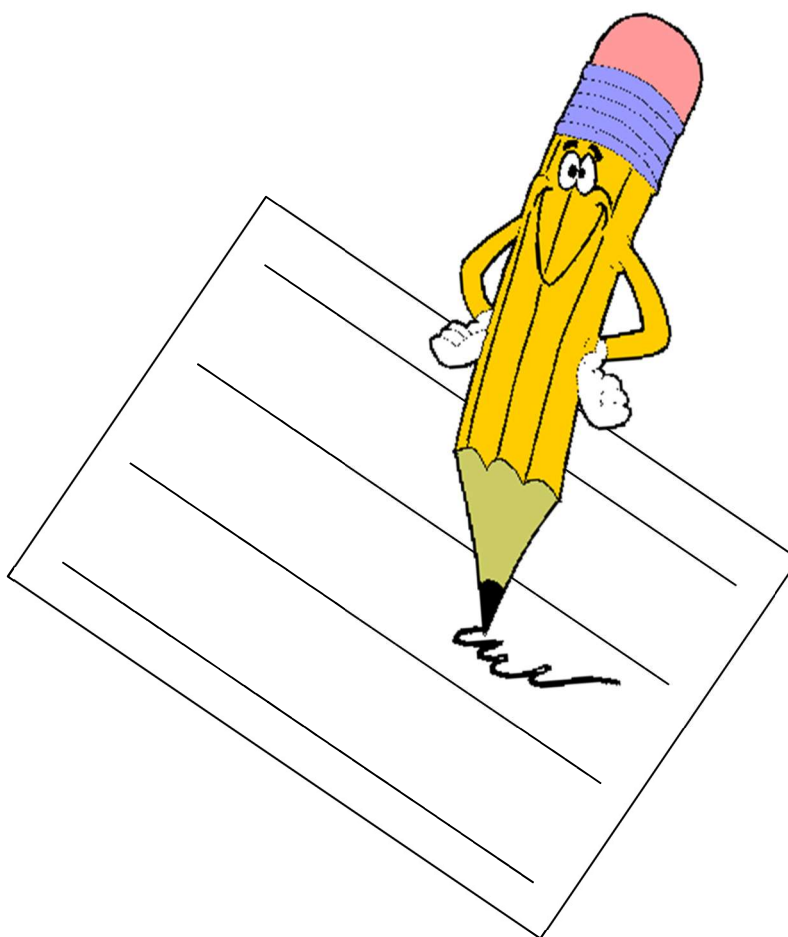
Once a third party is on the general election ballot, the political party is entitled to have the names of its nominees placed on the ballot, without meeting the petition requirement, in each subsequent general election following a general election in which a party nominee for statewide office received at least 5% of the vote for that office.

## **How to become an Independent Candidate**

An Independent Candidate may have their name placed on the general election ballot as an independent candidate if they are not affiliated with a political party. If you vote in a party's primary elections or participate in a party's conventions, you thereby affiliate with the party. An Independent Candidate will need to file a Declaration of Intent during the time a Major Party must file their application. After the primary elections (or after the primary runoff election, if the office seeking is involved in a primary runoff election), the candidate will need to collect a required number of signatures from registered voters who have not participated in the general primary election or the runoff primary election of a party that has nominated, at either election, and submit an application to either the Secretary Of State or County Judge depending on the office being sought.

## How to become a Write-In Candidate

In order to become a write-in candidate in the general election, a person must file a Declaration of Write-in Candidacy with either the Secretary of State or County Judge, as appropriate. A Write-In Candidate must either submit a filing fee or a nominating petition signed by a certain number of qualified voters. A person who was a candidate for office in the primary election is ineligible for a place on the list of write-in candidates for that same office in the succeeding general election for state and county officers.



## Suggestions for Classroom or Extra Credit Activities

- Visit your local Voter Registrar's office.
- Obtain a copy of your parents' voter registration certificate(s).
- Complete a mock voter registration application.
- Identify and/or visit a polling place, or the location where your parents vote. Write a short report describing what you observed.
- Contact your League of Women Voters to identify groups within your community that are involved with voter registration activities. Contact those groups to see how you may become involved.
- Name five objects that are necessary in a polling place in order to conduct an election.
- Make a poster or other visual display that depicts why people should vote and exhibit it at your school or local library. Example: an event, historical depiction, historical figure connected with why voting makes a difference.
- Design a ballot box or voting booth.
- Design a logo to encourage people to vote.
- Write a short story on why voting is important.
- Interview a candidate running for statewide, county or city office.
- Make up a song, poem or skit about voting and display or perform it in a public place.
- Interview 10 people to find out:
  - If they are registered to vote.
  - If so, did they vote in the last election?
  - If they did not vote in the last election, why didn't they vote?
  - Did they vote early or on Election Day?
  - If they are not registered, give them your local Voter Registrar's telephone number so that they can request a voter registration application.
- Find out the date of the next local election in your area or look up important dates on the Secretary of State's web site at [www.votetexas.gov](http://www.votetexas.gov).
- Collect three newspaper clippings that discuss elections or voting.
- List two or more areas in your community where voter registration applications or posters are displayed.



- Find out the type of voting equipment used in your community. (i.e., paper, electronic.) Visit the Secretary of State's website at [www.votetexas.gov](http://www.votetexas.gov).
- Obtain a copy of an official sample ballot (hint: look on the web).
- List five elected state officials and the length of term they are elected to serve.
- Identify the members of the Texas Legislature who represent the county where you live.
- Research to find instances in which one vote or only a few votes made a difference in an election. (See attached "One Vote Makes a Difference.") Write a short report discussing what you found.
- Pretend that you are an election official and prepare a speech to convince people why they should vote. Present the speech in a public place.
- Pretend that you are running for office and make a commercial using a video camera or tape recorder that persuades people to vote for you. Play the commercial for your class.
- Read about the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Write a short report discussing how this legislation affects you and your friends.
- Determine where early voting locations have been placed during the last election by interviewing the county clerk or elections administrator for your county.
- Explain to the class how to vote early in Texas. Describe where you would put an early voting location in your county to make voting more accessible.
- Find out what the qualifications are to serve as an election judge or clerk.
- Research political campaigning in Texas. What are campaign contributions and are there limits to the amount of money an individual or group may give to a candidate?
- Define the following terms: lobbyist, bribery laws and disclosure laws.
- Explain the basic steps in the legislative process on how a bill becomes a law.

## Candidate Campaign Evaluation

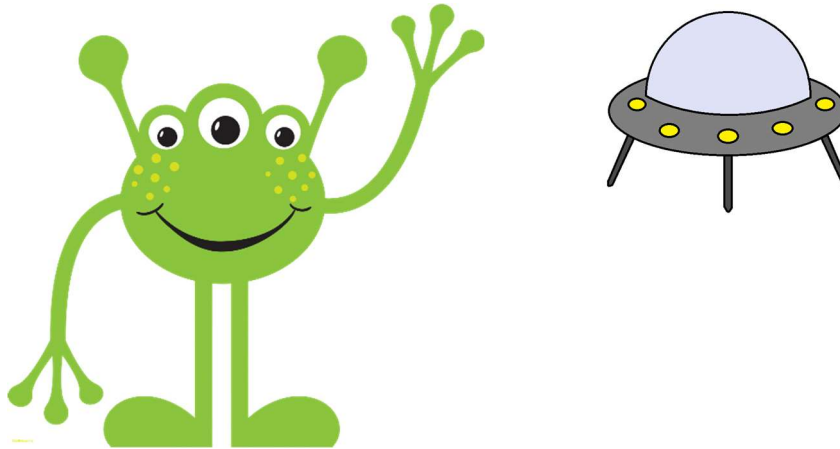
Answer the following questions with a yes or no.

1. Is the candidate smiling?
2. Is the candidate considerate and sincere?
3. Does the candidate take the time to meet the voters?
4. Does the candidate take the time to shake hands and make introductions?
5. Does the candidate pass out buttons or name cards?
6. Does the candidate give voters brochures about the issues?
7. Does the candidate talk about future plans?
8. Does the candidate have posters and signs around the community?
9. Have you heard the candidate make a speech?
10. Do the candidate's ads mention the office being sought? Do they ask for your vote?
11. Do the candidate's ads say something catchy which you will remember?



## A Visitor from Outer Space

It is 2050. You are living a quiet, prosperous life in Texas. You are quietly watching television with your family when a news bulletin comes over the TV station. You immediately see that this is not the normal type of news bulletin because there is what looks like a very strange creature on the screen--the only thing familiar is that he is speaking English. He tells you that he and his people have gained control over all of the communications networks in the United States and that everyone had better pay attention to what he has to say. You change the channel--and just as he said--there he is on every station. He begins to speak very loudly. You gather your family around you because you are beginning to worry about what he is going to do. His speech is as follows:



*My name is STHGIR. I am from the planet NAGWITHAL in another galaxy where the inhabitants are far superior to the beings on this planet EARTH. Just as we have gained control over the communications of the United States, we have the ability to take complete control over every one of your lives. We do not want a war between our planet and yours, but we do want to control some things so that we can live in peace and harmony with you. We have looked at some of your laws and the way your government operates and have found that they give too much freedom to the individual. Therefore, we are going to conduct a survey to try and arrive at a decision about which both you and I will be happy. As I have said, I do not want to take everything away from you, but I can't allow you to live as you have in the past. Therefore, I am giving you a list of ten of the rights that you now have according to your Constitution. You are to look over the list and decide which of the ten are most important to you. I will allow you to keep FIVE of the ten rights, the five which get the most votes from all the citizens of the United States.*

## Rights & Freedoms

You are to rank the following rights in the order in which you would give them up, with 1 being the right you would give up last and 10 being the one you would give up first. After you have completed your ranking, you will receive further instructions.

**Directions:** Rank from 1 to 10 your most important rights (1-most important, 10- least important).

- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to bear arms
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to freedom of speech
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to legal counsel
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to protection from cruel and unusual punishment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to freedom of the press
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to jury trial
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to freedom of religion
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to peacefully assemble
- \_\_\_\_\_ Protection from self-incrimination
- \_\_\_\_\_ Right to protection from unreasonable searches and seizures

**Suggestion:** This exercise can be used for elementary grade levels as well. Teachers may want to list rights on index cards and have students rank them accordingly.

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**Disclaimer:** This activity is for educational purposes only. This story is fictitious and should not be taken out of educational content. The purpose of this exercise is to teach students the importance of constitutional rights and the significance of historical documents.

## A Presidential Scavenger Hunt

Scavenge your house for the following campaign materials. Collect items 1-8 in an envelope or folder and label each one with your name and date. Remember, neatness counts, so please use scissors for cutting. Then tape or glue articles to construction paper.

If you can't find an original, photocopies will be accepted.

### Ready, Set, Go... Find:



- ☐ 1. An article about a candidate for President.
- ☐ 2. An article about one of the candidate's opponents.
- ☐ 3. A letter from a Presidential candidate asking for money.
- ☐ 4. A political cartoon about the Presidential race.
- ☐ 5. A picture of two of the candidates for President.
- ☐ 6. Results from a recent Presidential poll.
- ☐ 7. A paid television or radio spot for a candidate.  
(list the source, day and time.)

**Bonus:** On the back, list as many candidates as you can who are running for President, but are not Democrats or Republicans. Find an original piece of campaign memorabilia (such as a bumper sticker, shirt, button, etc.)

Scavenger Hunt

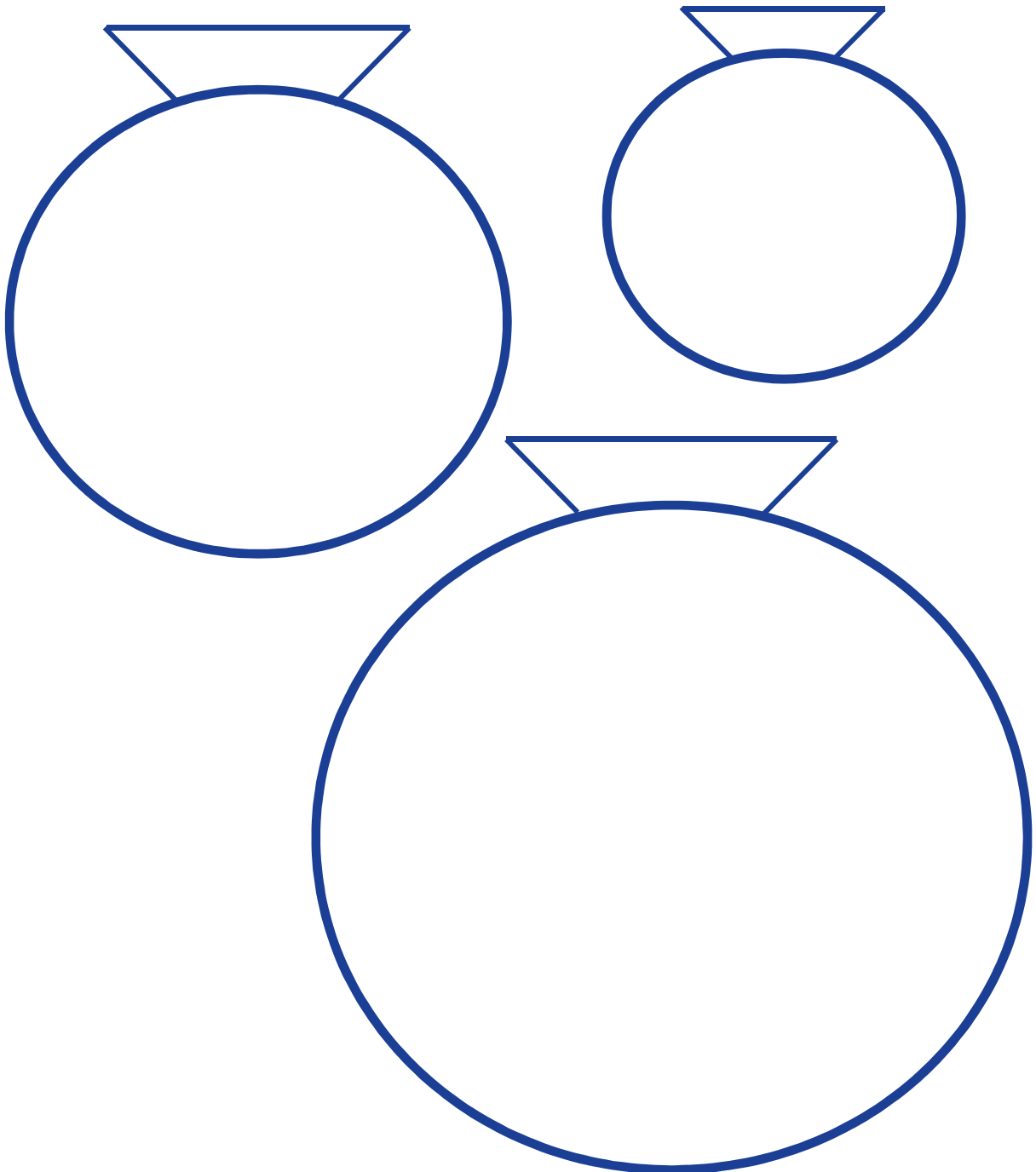




## Campaign Activities

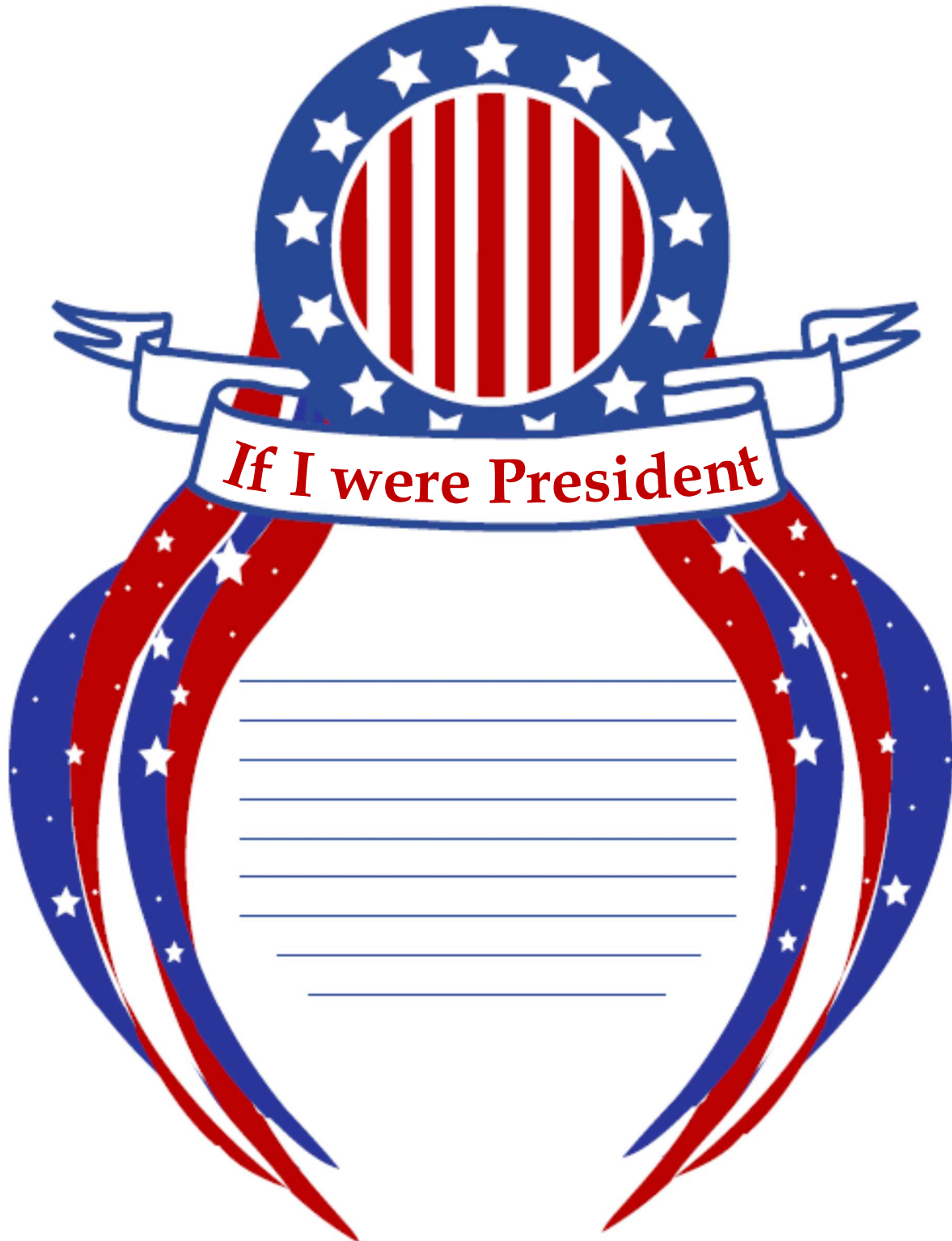
### Campaign Buttons

**Instructions:** Using the templates below, create buttons that best suit your campaign needs. When you have completed your buttons, cut them out and attach with a pin.



## Campaign Slogan

**Instructions:** Using the button below, create a campaign slogan that best describes the reasons why voters should elect you to be the next President of the United States. When you have completed your button, cut out and attach with a pin.



## The Media

**Activity:** Using various mediums, such as television news, radio news, newspapers, magazines, political debates, campaign literature and polls, have students identify major campaign issues. Topics such as healthcare, the environment and crime are usually at the forefront of any campaign. How do candidates communicate their stand on these issues to the public? Lead the class in a discussion about how a candidate's reputation is shaped by the media and how candidates can manipulate the media to present a particular image to the people.

### Instructions:

- Following a Campaign in the Media
- Divide the class into 2 groups.
- One group will be responsible for covering the campaign of the Republican candidate for President, and the other will watch the progress of campaign for the Democratic candidate for President.
- Have each group report daily on the status of "their" candidate. Included in their report should be updates on where the candidate stands on various issues and what they have done publicly to support their campaign.
- A student from each group will be responsible for following campaign expenditures. Have these students report on what the candidates are spending to advertise their campaign. This will make the class aware of the cost of running a campaign.
- A student from each group will keep up with the polls. Have these students report daily on any new information. When there have been significant changes, have the class discuss what might have caused these changes. For example: Did one of the candidates say something, in a debate or otherwise, that could have swayed a group of voters "to the other side?"
- A student from each group will keep an account of campaign promises. Create a chart with the name of each candidate at the top of the page. Draw a line down the middle of the chart with the name of each candidate at the top of the page. Draw a line down the middle of the chart dividing the two candidates. When a candidate makes a promise, document this on the chart. Keep this chart somewhere in the classroom where students can look at it often. Keep the chart on display after the election, so that students can discuss whether these promises have been kept. Have the class research previous campaigns. Lead the class in a discussion about whether or not other candidates have kept their campaign promises.

# Propaganda

## Activity

Define Propaganda and discuss how candidates use a campaign strategy and political advertising to shape public opinion. Lead the class in a discussion about the importance of a candidate's reputation and the public's opinion of that candidate. Have the students read the seven propaganda techniques. Have students give an example of how each of the techniques have been used from their own experience. You may want to create a homework assignment, in which each student must find an example in the media of one of the techniques discussed. Have each student report his or her findings to the class.

<b>Name Calling</b>	Giving people or things a bad name in order to cause criticism or rejection without examination of the evidence.
<b>Transfer</b>	Using the prestige of one person or thing to make us approve of another person or thing.
<b>Glittering Generality</b>	Almost the opposite of name-calling: gaining acceptance or approval of a person, thing or product by association with "virtue" words or phrases that sound impressive but have little meaning.
<b>Testimonial</b>	Having a well-known, respected person endorse a person, idea or product.
<b>Plain Folks</b>	Trying to demonstrate that someone or something is good because of close association with the values and tastes of the "average" person: creating the impression of being "one of the guys."
<b>Bandwagon</b>	Attempting to convince people that almost everyone else is doing the same thing: therefore, you should too, so as not to feel left out. Appeals to the "monkey see, monkey do" mentality.
<b>Card Stacking</b>	Using a combination of tactics to build support or to cause rejection for a person, idea or product. True statements presented in a misleading way.

## Involving Print and Electronic Media

### Major Idea:

Students will participate in mock election media efforts. Following these steps will help you publicize your mock election events.

### Learning Objective

Students will:

1. analyze the responsibility of the press in informing and representing the interests of the citizenship in common policy issues
2. discover what makes events newsworthy, the components of news stories, and how to get media coverage
3. develop critical-thinking skills
4. develop creative problem-solving skills
5. hone research, organizational, and planning skills
6. hone and develop writing skills

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### Develop a list from members from the media who may be interested in the Mock Election

With the help of your students (or as part of a student's homework assignment), develop a list of all the media in your area, including newspapers, TV and radio stations, magazines, and educational publications.

Learn the name of a specific contact for each source. For example, when contacting the print media, ask for the Newspaper or Education Coordinator or the Publisher if seeking sponsorship of your event, or ask for the education or news editor if you're seeking coverage.

When contacting TV and radio stations, ask for the station Manager if you're seeking coverage. Be sure to contact parents as well as the public relations office in your school or your school district (or perhaps the PR office of a local college or

university) for agency contacts, press lists, and introductions. Other nonprofit agencies might have press lists or contacts they may be willing to share as well.

Other helpful resources include Editor and Publisher, Bacon's Guides to TV and Newspapers, your Yellow Pages, local college or university journalism professors, students, and library listings. You may also wish to visit local TV and radio stations and newspapers in person.

When developing your media list, be strategic and target two or three media sources that would be "big wins," then proceed to smaller venues. Don't forget the weeklies. Weekly newspapers, including shopper's guides, offer stories of interest to the local community. They are a major source of information for people outside metropolitan areas and it is usually easier to place stories in these publications.

Invite members of the local media not only to cover your event, but to sponsor your event or serve as your partner.

Don't wait until everything is in place. Involve all media in the early stages of planning. As mentioned in Method 1, you may want to contact the Newspapers in Education Coordinators at your local newspapers. NIE Coordinators have helped past mock election efforts in many ways, such as providing promotional and curriculum materials; co-coordinating and sponsoring districtwide or citywide projects and events; marketing the program to schools, educators, public officials, and the public; and hosting workshops. In some states a larger newspaper or the Newspaper in Education Coordinator sponsors projects statewide. Call your NIE Coordinator and/or publisher to explore possible sponsorship or to get help promoting your mock election events. (It is important to note that your NIE Coordinator works in the marketing department of the newspaper, and not the editorial department).

In addition to sponsoring or providing your event with coverage, the media can get involved in many other ways. Media members could sponsor a series of career education speeches or orientations. They could also provide classroom or school speakers to explain how television determines election winners, how newscasters and journalists prepare for interviews and cover campaigns, or how computers are used in today's elections. In preparation for developing their own media skills, students could observe newscasters interviewing candidates. You could also ask the media to encourage local citizenship education and mock election activities by holding station fairs and/or conducting polls.

### **Draft and send out press releases and or media kits**

Assign students the task of drafting press releases for upcoming mock election activities. Explain that the purpose of a press release is to convince a news



organization that your event is worth covering. Suggest or have them develop their own unique “angles” or “hooks” to introduce their press releases. Suggest that students include facts to entice the press to their event, such as special guests (e.g., state or local candidates) who might be attending the event. If students have difficulty preparing their releases, have them ask themselves, “What makes this event interesting? Why/how is this event different from other events? How does it tie in with current trends? How does this project enhance the community?”

### Review the elements of a good press release:

- **The lead**-the who, what, when, and where of a story;
- **The tie-in**-background information that explains the why and how;
- **The body**-additional details about an event in order of their importance so an editor can cut the story without losing vital information.
- Review the standard format of a press release:
- Use standard letter-sized paper;
- Double space the text;
- Begin the headline one-fourth of the way down the page. Use all caps. Make sure the headline is no longer than two lines long;
- Begin the text one-half of the way down the page. (This gives the editor room to rewrite the headline or give instructions);
- Leave 1 1/4-inch margins on the left and right hand side of every page and 1 1/2-inch margins on the top of every page except the first (to give the editor room to write comments);
- Type “-MORE-” at the bottom of each page of continuing text and “-30-”, “###,” or “-END-” at the end of the release. (Note: press releases generally do not exceed two pages);
- Number each page in the upper left-hand corner; and,
- Include a name and telephone number to contact for more information at the top of the first page.

Once students’ drafts are complete, help them analyze each other’s work – will a new editor find this story compelling? Why or why not? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this piece? What are the main messages you get from this press release?

Along with your press release, you may also wish to include photos that help tell the story of your event. Busy editors may skim text, but a photo can tell your entire story in one glance. Black-and-white glossy shots are best for print media, color for TV media. Try to include action shots that convey energy and enthusiasm, such as students campaigning, interviewing candidates, or conducting get-out-the-vote activities. Perhaps student photographers would include their own work. **(Note:** Send copies of photos, as any photos you send will probably not be returned to you.)

Before submitting the materials to the media, make sure students have proofread the press release and checked it for accuracy (facts, punctuation, spelling). Mail your class release about 10 days prior to the event and allow one or two extra days for late mail delivery. For monthly magazines, materials should be sent in three months ahead of the issue date and three to four weeks ahead of the event date for community bulletin boards. Deadlines for TV and radio stations vary, so call your local TV and radio stations for further information.

To make your presentation more eye-catching and informative, you may wish to have students assemble a “Media Information Packet” that includes a press release and background information. Local media representatives may be willing to send you examples of briefing packets they have received in the past. Send an introductory letter and fact sheet along with your press release or story.

While your students are creating their press releases and media kits, you may wish to intertwine lessons about the responsibility of the press to cover issues and events that may not be exciting or captivating to the public. Explore why this is important. Other relevant lessons might include an analysis of the kinds of stories that make the news every day, or instructions for locating and researching samples of successful press releases and stories.

### **Follow up with phone calls to ensure that your information has arrived**

The media will not come looking for you unless you find them and tell them your story. After your information is mailed, have students follow up with their media contacts to make sure:

- (a) that the releases were received; and
- (b) that reporters can attend the event.

When speaking with a reporter, be succinct and make your event sound important. If a reporter cannot attend the event, suggest that students ask him or her for a name and number of a reporter who might be able to attend, and then have students follow up with their new contacts.

## Conduct editorial briefings for more elaborate events

Another way to inform the media about citywide or districtwide mock election events is to conduct, or arrange for students to conduct a series of editorial briefings.

Editorial briefings inform media representatives about an event or organization and usually take place at the editor's office, and in this case, can help deepen media understanding of and interest in the mock election.

To organize an editorial briefing, call your media contacts and ask to set up a briefing at their convenience. With your students, prepare a presentation that tells reporters about the mock election, its objectives and purposes, its relevance to the community and importance to students, and your meeting with written information about the mock election which can be referenced by reporters for accuracy or to brief other reporters.

## Consider other ways the media can help you get the word out

In addition to writing or reporting the details of your event, the media can help get the word out in other ways, such as:

1. Public-service announcements (PSAs).
2. Community calendars.
3. TV and radio station editorials.

### 1. Public Service Announcements

All TV and radio stations are required by law to provide free air time to public service organizations. You might consider developing a PSA to help get the word out about your mock election event. Contact the public-service or station manager at your local TV or radio station (also try local public access stations) and request a meeting to determine what the station's PSA specifications are and if they can help you produce your spot. When developing a PSA, you probably want to develop a 10-second spot (approximately 25 words), or a 30-second spot (approximately 150 words). The editor at the station may also be able to help you edit your PSA into three of these formats. Also keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Use short, upbeat sentences and talk in a conversational tone.
- Explain how your information can help your listener/viewer.
- Ask for action on the audience's behalf.
- Tell your audience exactly what to do or where to go.

- Instruct your audience to contact your program for more information (and include your name and phone number).

## **2. Community Calendars**

Community calendars are brief announcements for community members. Include mock election activities in these types of programs-many public officials listen to these programs to help keep them abreast of what is happening locally. Draft an announcement with the name of the project; the date, time, and location of the event, a brief statement of purpose, and the name and phone number of someone to contact for more information. This announcement should be typed, double-spaced, on standard letter size paper, with one announcement per page. Mail the notice well in advance of the event (three to four weeks) to the public relations director at the TV/radio station or the news editor at your newspaper.

## **3. TV and Radio Station Editorials**

Station editorials are public discussions of the manager's or editor's views or opinions of a specific issue with a portion of the program allocated to opposing viewpoints. This is a great opportunity to air student debates about the issues or conducting a Student Mock Election - student interviews of opposing candidates. Make sure you are familiar with the station's editorials and understand their objectives and who their target audiences are before you commit to hosting or having students develop a segment of the program. To get a list of programs, call the stations and request a viewing schedule or copies of previous programs.

If you decide to participate in a public program, brainstorm and outline ideas with your students before calling the station manager or news editor. Explain how your project will benefit the community, and remember that listeners want entertainment, not just information, and that your visuals need to be colorful and compelling!

Create your own website, with information pertaining to your goals and vision. Many websites offer free tutorials on how to set up your own website online. You can play with the idea and add virtually any kind of information you feel is necessary to get the word out. Others who are interested in the issue you represent, on the internet, will be lead to your website directly. For example, most businesses utilize their website as a means of displaying their corporate profile, list of products as well as things such as their contact details and e-mail address. Other examples of entities utilizing websites to their advantage include newspapers, schools, churches, counties, individuals, companies, and local and federal government agencies worldwide. The potential to reach out to vast areas of the world, using the internet, are almost unimaginable.

## Keep track of any coverage your event receives

One week following the event, have students send press members who attended the event a packet of information that contains a thank-you letter, a list of several teachers, administrators and/or students who can speak about the mock election, and additional information for potential follow-up articles. (Giving each media outlet the same people to contact can help avoid confusion and misinformation.) If reporters do not cover the event or publish your story, don't complain-it's a sure way not to get future coverage. Be sure to help students understand why the story may not have been placed, what they can do better next time, and brainstorm other ways of attracting the press.

You will want to monitor any coverage your event does receive. If a reporter places a story about your event, ask him or her for several copies of the piece. If he or she cannot provide copies, ask parents to monitor the media for you. You may also wish to contact a local media monitoring service (or local public relations firm that maintains a media monitoring service) and ask if they will contribute to your mock election by including the mock election in the list of topics their service monitors. Phone numbers for media-monitoring services and public-relations firms can be found in the Yellow Pages. Check the headings titled "Public Relations," "Video Monitoring or Clipping Services," or "Video Production."

Remember that you will have some strikeouts. Try not to get frustrated. You are bound to hit some home runs, and that can be fun and rewarding!



## Websites

Many have links to other helpful sites and/or a search engine feature.

- To learn the “when, where and how” of voting visit: [www.VoteTexas.gov](http://www.VoteTexas.gov)
- Visit our site for many links to other useful sites: [www.sos.state.tx.us](http://www.sos.state.tx.us)
- Providing news relating to the states: [www.pewstates.org/projects/stateline](http://www.pewstates.org/projects/stateline)
- Providing election news on a national level: [www.electionline.org](http://www.electionline.org)
- Provides interactive games for K-12 graders: <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/>
- User can sign up to receive weekly e-mails on the best political sites to visit: [www.aboutpolitics.com](http://www.aboutpolitics.com)
- Provides money in politics data: [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org)
- Provides information specific to Texas politics: [www.texastribune.org/texas-weekly/](http://www.texastribune.org/texas-weekly/)
- Selected by the American Political Science Association as the “Best Political Web site” in existence: <http://votesmart.org>
- Vote online regarding current topics or find your representatives: <http://news.yahoo.com>



## Resource List

<b>Texas Secretary of State Elections Division</b>	PO Box 12060 Austin, Texas 78711-2060 (512) 463 – 5650 (800) 252 – VOTE (8683) <a href="http://www.sos.texas.gov">www.sos.texas.gov</a> <a href="http://www.votetexas.gov">www.votetexas.gov</a>
<b>Federal Elections Commission</b>	999 E Street NW Washington, DC 20463 (800) 424 – 9530 <a href="http://www.fec.gov">www.fec.gov</a>
<b>Texas Republican Party</b>	<a href="http://www.texasgop.org">www.texasgop.org</a>
<b>Texas Democratic Party</b>	<a href="http://www.texasdemocrats.org">www.texasdemocrats.org</a>
<b>Libertarian Party</b>	<a href="http://www.lptexas.org">www.lptexas.org</a>
<b>Green Party</b>	<a href="http://www.txgreens.org">www.txgreens.org</a>
<b>County Election Officials</b>	<a href="https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/county.shtml">https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/county.shtml</a>

## Important Elections Dates

### November 3, 2020 General Election

<b>First Day to Apply for Ballot by Mail</b>	<b>Wednesday, January 1, 2020*</b>  *First day to file does not move because of New Year's Day holiday. An "Annual ABBM" or FPCA for a January or February 2020 election may be filed earlier, but not earlier than the 60th day before the date of the January or February election.
<b>Last Day to Register to Vote</b>	<b>Monday, October 5, 2020</b>
<b>First Day of Early Voting</b>	<b>Tuesday, October 13, 2020</b>
<b>Last Day to Apply for Ballot by Mail</b> <i>(Received not Postmarked)</i>	<b>Friday, October 23, 2020</b>
<b>Last Day of Early Voting</b>	<b>Friday, October 30, 2020</b>