



citizens. not spectators.  
promoting youth civic and political engagement.



Center for Civic Education

## **Citizens, Not Spectators**

### **Lesson 3: Culminating Activity: In-Class Simulated Election**

#### **Teacher Resource 7: Who Does What and Where?**

A variety of poll positions can accommodate more than one student as a poll worker. Each student should be assigned a poll worker position. All students need to know the responsibilities of at least one other position so substitutions can readily be made. The website for the U.S. Elections Assistance Commission at <http://www.eac.gov> provides useful information about polling places and poll workers. In addition, the website includes links to your state registrar's office, provides suggestions to accommodate disabled voters, and explains how to account for military and absentee ballots, among other helpful topics.

#### **1. Polling Area Basic Setup: What Is Required and Why?**

Distribute the diagram of the polling area (Teacher Resource 6). The best source for this diagram is the registrar of voters. Each state has different requirements. If a staff person from the registrar's office is unable to present to your class, refer to the following websites for further information:

[http://www.sonoma-county.org/RegVoter/pdf/PollWorkers/PP\\_Setup.pdf](http://www.sonoma-county.org/RegVoter/pdf/PollWorkers/PP_Setup.pdf)  
[http://www.eac.gov/voter\\_resources/contact\\_your\\_state.aspx](http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/contact_your_state.aspx)

- The demonstration area serves two purposes: orderly entry into the polling area, and a reference area where voters can review the ballot and ask questions about the voting procedure.
- A monitored line (roped or taped-off) directs students to the registration table and assures that voters sign in there. It also lessens the likelihood of voter fraud. Although many states do not so designate these areas, this is a school-simulated election with entire classes entering the polling area. Students who are voting might become impatient and try to bypass the registration table.
- The registration table should have class lists and alphabetical breakdown signs. Another monitored line from the registration table assures privacy at the actual voting site.
  - If your school issues student identification cards, you should consider announcing the requirement to show them at the simulated election registration table. Voting will be allowed to those without cards; these students should sign in on Teacher Resource 8.

- Privacy voting booths or voting machines
- Ballot box or computerized ballot scanner area

Explain and emphasize to students that the entire polling area must remain apolitical. No discussion of candidates or questions, party buttons, stickers, or the like are allowed within the polling area. Poll workers themselves must remain apolitical. Offices up for election can be identified, but no candidate or party names should be mentioned.

## **2. Poll Workers and Their Responsibilities: Who Does What?**

Explain to the students that they are assigned a poll position that must be filled at all times. When a poll worker is ready to vote, another student will temporarily fill in the position. Point out the following positions on the polling place diagram (Teacher Resource 6) and explain each position's duties.

- **Monitors for demonstration area**  
This is an area set aside from the polling area. One or two students will monitor the voting apparatus and ballot. Voters have the opportunity to examine the ballot prior to voting. Students assigned to this position can also explain the voting process being used in the simulated election. Monitors cannot mention candidate names, political parties, or explain ballot questions.
- **Monitors for designated waiting areas**  
One or two students will monitor the line of students waiting to register at the registration table.
  - A group of students must monitor this area to ensure that all voters are signed in at the registration table. Only one voter per registration check-in poll worker should be allowed at the registration table.
  - A second group of students will monitor signed-in voters to direct them to privacy booths or voting machines as they become available. Tell students that this assures a voter's privacy in a booth or at a voting machine.
- **Registration table**  
Break down the class list alphabetically into three sections (e.g., "A–G, H–P, Q–Z"). Ask students to join the line that corresponds to the initial of their last name. In this way, several students can more quickly sign in a class of voters. Depending on the plan for the simulated election, three to six students can work with the class lists to sign in registered voters.
  - *Note:* Class lists should be organized according to the schedule for classes to visit the polling area. The schedule is necessary for a smooth flow of voters through the polling area.
  - One student will work with a sign-in sheet (Teacher Resource 8) for those students without student identification cards.
- **Ballot distribution**  
When privacy booths are used, one or two students can distribute ballots to those who

have been signed in at the registration table.

- **Voting apparatus**

If privacy booths are used, voters will go directly to the privacy booth with no assistance from poll workers.

- If older voting machines are used, station a student at each machine. The machine monitor will push the button that closes the curtains and clears the mechanism for a new vote. This poll worker must also keep the area around the voting machines clear. No voter should be waiting at the machine to vote.

- **Ballot finalization**

States use a variety of mechanisms for the completed ballot votes. Regardless of the procedure, monitors are needed at the site of a finalized ballot.

- **First vote**

In some elections, the first voter to complete a ballot is asked to ensure that the ballot box is empty before being sealed by you or the registrar. The voting may then proceed.

- **Computerized mechanisms**

One or two students should monitor the ballot entries.

- **Machine tally**

If older voting machines are used, the voter's choices are entered into the machine. The registrar of voters has the key to open the back of the machine. With the help of two students, the registrar usually reads off the numbers for each position on the ballot, and the students record the tally. The two student tally counts must match.

- **"I Voted" sticker distribution**

After completing the voting process, one or two students may distribute the stickers.