



Webquest by Ms. Antonetta Cincotta

Introduction:

There is no right to vote in the United States Constitution, so each state's standards have evolved separately unless federal laws were passed that applied to every state. When this country was founded, only white men with property were routinely permitted to vote. Eventually African Americans and women gained the right to vote but this right did not come easily and need to be routinely defended. While our ancestors have bravely fought for the right to vote, every year many Americans choose not to vote. American citizens take for granted what many people around the world believe is a tool of empowerment, a tool that millions are denied in their own country – the right to vote.



Task:

Although students at Rondout Valley Middle School are too young to vote, you are not too young to realize the importance of voting. By participating in government you are empowered to make decisions that will affect you and your community. Unfortunately, many Americans do not take advantage of their right to vote. Why has our society become so complacent? How do we get more people to vote? Why do YOU believe voting is important?

Students will be working in small groups to address the above questions and create a proposal for a voter registration drive within the community. Students will have 2 weeks to prepare a presentation for their proposal. Each member of the group must actively participate in the planning process. Grades will reflect individual contributions, according to your work contract that has been accepted by your group, and group collaborations.

Process:

Create an innovative voter registration drive targeting a specific group based on the tasks specified below.

General Group Tasks

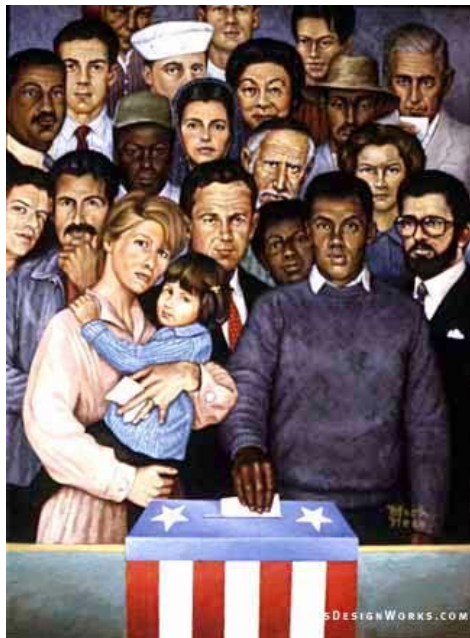
- Create a Title & Theme for the Voter Drive
- Determine a time or location for the Drive
- Identify key points of your drive which makes it unique from all others: which group are you targeting?
- Power Point presentation of the history of voting and the voting process as well as the proposal for your drive.

Step #1: Decide on a specific focus group for the voter drive you will create. What is the basis for choosing this group? Consider why it is important for your group to vote. Discuss specific concerns for your target group as a basis for the drive. What is the direct correlation between those who vote the most with legislation that has recently passed? Is there a direct correlation? What are the legalities for sponsoring a voter drive?

Step #2: Members of the group must decide what each will be responsible for contributing to the overall project. A work contract will outline the specific jobs that each member is responsible for and signed by each member. Each member is accountable for contributing to the overall project but each member's grades will not impact the grades of others.

Step #3: Create a brochure for your voter drive. Include necessary information about voting in New York State and the voting process. Include relevant information about the upcoming election. Remember to focus on the needs of your target group.

Step #4: Create a Power Point presentation of the US voting system which discusses a brief history of the voting process and how specific groups have fought to obtain the right in the US. The PowerPoint should also outline your strategies for a successful voter drive for your specific target group. How will your group encourage people to vote?



Evaluation:

| Evaluation Criteria | Unsatisfactory (zero Points) | Satisfactory (3 points) | Target (5 points) |
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| <i>General Information</i> | Gives no general information about details of the drive. | Provides most of the details of the drive but some details are unclear or missing. | Provides all of the clear details of the drive. |
| <i>Brochure</i> | No Brochure presented or large amounts of information about the drive are missing. | Brochure presented some information about the drive is missing. Neatly formatted. | Brochure contains all information about the drive. Neatly formatted. |
| <i>Power Point Presentation</i> | No Power Point presentation or large amounts of information missing. | Power Point Presentation with appropriate titles, headers, and content. Minor spelling and grammar errors. | Power Point Presentation with appropriate titles, headers, and content. Less than 2 spelling and grammar errors. |
| <i>Electoral College Information</i> | No overview or incorrect interpretation of electoral college. | Overview provided but not entirely correct interpretation of electoral college. | Accurate overview and interpretation of electoral college. |
| <i>Group Participation</i> | Little or no participation in the overall completion of the project. | Overall some participation in the completion of the project or presentation. | Regular participation in the completion of the project and substantial participation in the presentation. |
| <i>Interview of Government Official</i> | No interview completed. | Interview conducted but no real contribution of information gained included in the presentation. | Interview conducted with prepared, relevant questions and answers contributed to the presentation. |
| <i>Uniqueness</i> | No innovation demonstrated. | Innovative idea mentioned. | Innovative idea described and justification of focus for the voter drive discussed. |

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| <i>Voting Registration Form</i> | No example of printed forms. | New York State registration form printed. | NYS registration form, absentee ballot application, and information about voting requirements for NYS clearly explained. |
| <i>Voting Statistics</i> | None provided. | Information on 1 or 2 trends provided. | Information on general voting trends along with specified groups provided. |

Resources:

General Information

www.amsa.org/legislativecenter

www.fec.gov

www.npr.org

www.thedemocracydefenseleague.com

www.usca.edu/frazier/webquest/index.html

www.youthempowerment.com

Glossary of Election Terms

<http://www.pbs.org/elections/glossary/index.html>

Electoral College Information

<http://fec.gov/pages/elevote.html>

<http://archives.gov/federalregister/electoralcollege/calculator.html>

Government Sites

US Congress www.congress.org

US House of Representatives www.house.gov

President www.whitehouse.gov

US Senate www.senate.gov

New York State Government www.ny.gov

NYS Assembly www.assembly.state.ny.us

NYS Senate www.senate.state.ny.us

Ulster County Government www.co.ulster.ny.us

Programs & Political Parties

International Information Programs www.usinfo.state.gov

Rock the Vote www.rockthevote.org

Youth Vote Coalition
Democratic Party
Green Party
Independence Party
Republican Party

www.youthvote.org
www.democrats.org
www.gp.org
www.independencepartyofamerica.com
www.republicans.org

2008 Election Issues
www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2008