

MOCK ELECTION IDEAS FOR YOUR SCHOOL

Listed below are a number of ideas that you may use in developing your mock election programs. Feel free to use these ideas or incorporate them into your own programs and curriculum.

Ideas to get you started

- Invite candidates to speak to your class or school assembly. In addition to the candidates for President and Congress, the candidates for the Maine Senate and Maine House of Representatives can be contacted to participate. Have students research the candidates' positions on the issues and prepare questions for the speakers.
- Create a Mock Election home page, or visit one of the many Mock Election related sites. Share information with other schools about your mock election activities.
- Establish a mock election committee in your town or school district. Involve the town clerk, other educators, senior citizen groups, the League of Women Voters, etc. Use this committee to plan events in your school that involve the whole community.
- Partner with your local municipal clerk or registrar. Invite them to visit your class and explain the voting process. Inquire about the possibility of having a mock election voting booth set up for students in the school.
- Assign students to political parties and conduct a convention with students taking part as candidates, campaign managers, speech writers, reporters, etc.
- Review newspaper articles and news reports on the candidates or referendum issues. Analyze the media's coverage of the candidates and issues. Hold weekly meetings to discuss the recent development in the campaigns.
- Plan and organize a speech-writing or quiz team competition.

Some Possible Outside Class Activities

- Arrange field trips to campaign offices. Volunteer to decorate empty storefronts for the election.
- Have students conduct a poll or survey in the community. Include activities that incorporate math skills such as tallying votes and graphing results.
- Divide the class into political parties and have each group write and produce it's own video and/or radio commercials using camcorders and/or audiocassettes. Have groups produce their own bumper stickers, T-shirts, campaign buttons, etc.
- Place student-drafted announcements and press releases about your event in local publications.
- Have students write letters to the editor of local newspapers encouraging people to vote on Election Day.
- Take a field trip to the town office or municipal voting place to see the actual voting booths and the ballot box or voting machines.

Suggested Activities for All Ages

- Design political posters using headlines and pictures from newspaper articles.
- Organize a student contest to design a "get-out-and-vote" flyer.
- Create a bulletin board on which student's can post for discussion political cartoons and political advertisements collected from newspapers and magazines. Plan a "Who's Who game to learn faces, names and backgrounds of candidates.
- Contact community historians and/or senior citizens to visit your classroom and relate stories about meaningful political events.
- Prepare skits or dramatizations about voting or famous political speeches. Have older students prepare a presentation on various issues for younger students.

Possible Activities for Older Students

- Have students write position papers pretending they are candidates. Write editorials about why they would vote for a candidate. Organize a student letter - writing campaign on a particular issue.
- Have students discuss what it means to be a Clean Election Candidate. Find out how much money is spent on candidate and initiative campaigns. Discuss what impact, if any, this has on elections.

Organize a mock press conference or analyze a real press conference. Focus on famous native politicians/historical figures. Also, you might have students track statewide election results.