

Lesson/Activity Title:

VOTING IN A DEMOCRACY



Time: approximately 45-60 minutes for lesson plan, and 30 minutes for the selected volunteer activity

Instructional Goals:

- The student will use PebbleGo to research democracy, voting, and the president.
- The student will learn the meaning of democracy and the importance of participating in elections.
- The student will connect information obtained on PebbleGo and translate knowledge into registering to vote and holding a mock classroom election.
- The student will create a bar graph representing data from a classroom vote.

Materials/Resources:

- Ballot box
- Volunteer Activity Ballot Page
- Classroom Voter Registration Page
- Magnetic counters (optional)

Procedures/Lesson Activities:

Focus

1. Write the word democracy for the students to see. Ask students if they know what this word means. Explain that democracy is a type of government where the citizens, or people, decide who serves as leaders in local and national offices. They express their opinions through voting in an election.
2. Ask students to think of reasons why it is important to vote, or have a say in who represents them. Then brainstorm examples of situations where one might cast a vote (student body president, club officer, mayor, U.S. president).

Teach/Model

3. Explain that students are going to learn about different aspects of the United States government including democracy, voting, and the president using PebbleGo.
4. Navigate to the U.S. Government section in the PebbleGo Social Studies database and project this to the class. Use the mouse to point out the three sections they need to read for this lesson: "Democracy," "Voting," and "President."
5. Allow students sufficient time to peruse the three articles in the Government section of the PebbleGo database.

Guided Practice



6. Ask students to describe how the election and voting process works. To prompt students, ask questions like:
 - › Why is it important to have democracy in the United States?
 - › Who can vote in an election?
 - › How do we choose our local government officials and our President?
 - › What would happen if we didn't have the right to vote? How would that affect our daily lives?
7. Explain to students that, as a class, they will choose one activity to do together that will help out the school or community. Tell them that because your classroom is a democratic one, students will get to vote on what volunteer activity they will do. One option will be picking up trash around the school (or a nearby park). The second option will be helping out in the school library. The third option will be creating greeting cards for a local nursing home.
8. Before allowing students to vote, ask what must happen before someone can vote in an election. If students do not remember the answer, remind them of what they learned in the Voting article in the PebbleGo database. Remind students that in a real election, a person must register to vote before participating. Show students the Voter Registration Page and read the requirements: Name, Age, Teacher, School, and School Address. Model writing your name, age, school, and address for students.
9. Have students fill out the Voter Registration Page and show students the place they should place their Voter Registration Page after completion. Follow up by asking students why the ballot does not ask for a voter's name, but the voter registration does. Briefly discuss the importance of keeping the voter's ballot anonymous.
10. Show students the Volunteer Ballot Page, and point out the three activities. Instruct students how to cast their vote for their favorite activity by placing a checkmark in the appropriate box.
11. Tell students to place their ballot in the ballot box (a cardboard box with a narrow opening to ensure anonymity) after they cast their vote.

Closure

12. Tell students that they will now count the votes and see them displayed on a bar graph. Draw the x and y axis of the bar graph on a white board. Write "Number of Votes" along the y-axis and "Volunteer Activity" on the x-axis. Allow room for each of the three activities along the x-axis.
13. Count the ballots together, one by one. For each vote, place a magnetic counter above its activity on the horizontal axis or use a marker to color in the bar graph. Continue to do this until all votes are counted. Count the number of votes received for each activity and write the total number at the top of each column.
14. Discuss the results with your class. Set a day and time to complete the volunteer activity selected.

Extend/Enrich

15. Students may create their own bar graph, rather than doing so as a class. Results should be tallied as a classroom, but students may draw and label their own bar graph.
16. Students may select a local representative and write a letter expressing their personal view on a problem they wish to change (i.e. adding recycling programs in public, building more accessible ramps for individuals with disabilities, etc.)

Volunteer Activity Ballot

Place a check mark next to the activity you want to participate in to help your school or community.

Picking Up Trash
Around School

Helping at the
School Library

Creating greeting
cards for a local
nursing home

Classroom Voter Registration

Complete your classroom voter registration form before voting for your favorite volunteer activity.

Name: _____

Age: _____

Teacher: _____

School: _____

School Address: _____
