

TEACHING NOTES for Unit 19: Voting in Pinellas County

Objectives

After completing this unit, learners should be able to:

1. Describe at least 3 qualifications required to register to vote
2. Name at least 1 major political party
3. Tell how often we vote for President and for our Governor
4. Understand what a voter ID card is and when and how to use it
5. Use the Internet to learn more about national, state and local elections

Overview

This unit introduces the basics of how our voting system works: who can vote, when we vote, how, and where we vote. It also suggests why voting is so important to one's community and country.

Unit Segments

Theme Pictures (page 1) – The pictures symbolize many facets of the voting process: a polling place, a sample ballot, campaign signs, a voter signing in at the polling place and showing her voter ID card, somebody actually voting via a voting machine. The van says Supervisor of Pinellas County Elections on its side.

Vocabulary (page 2) -- The vocabulary words featured will allow a rudimentary understanding of some key words. Help students understand that there are many political parties (about 19 are currently recognized in the County), of which Republican and Democrat are the two largest. Explain that polling means the same thing as voting. Introduce any photos of elections or campaigns that may be running in the newspaper at this time.

Pronunciation (page 3) – The words are presented in word families, to illustrate the root words

Clap the Stress (page 3) -- focused study on stress, rhythm and intonation patterns. There is good opportunity here to practice three- and four-syllable words. Since many of these longer words are constantly in the news, students may already know many of them.

Conversations (page 3) -- Help students practice both parts of each conversation. Then offer similar, freestyle conversations. Have them ask you questions about voting as time permits. If some will be voting for the first time soon, practice the dialogues they will encounter at the polling place.

Who Can Vote? And When Can You Vote? (page 4) -- After helping students read and discuss these sections, ask about voting requirements and frequencies in other countries.

Where to Vote: At a Polling Place (page 5) – Before helping students study the text, help students explore the polling place illustration in detail. Point out the various stations: sign-in

desk, voting machines, sign-out area, etc. Point out the poll watchers, the poll workers, and the voters. If possible, have a sample ballot to hand around. It does not need to be a current one.

How to Register to Vote (page 6) -- is based on the County's online registration form. Help students understand what each item means and the proper format for providing it.

How to Use Voting Machines (page 7) If possible, show the video clip on which the pictures are based. The clip is located at www.votepinellas.com. After an initial discussion of each picture, have students take turns explaining how to vote using a voting machine.

Internet Activities: Finding County Voting Information (pages 8 and 9) – There are more written comprehension questions than usual. This will be helpful to those preparing to vote for the first time.

Writing about Voting (page 10) Here is a place for students to share previous voting experiences. If they have not voted in a national election, perhaps they recall voting informally for something, such as where to go on a field trip.