

Assemble

Teaching Civics in an Election year

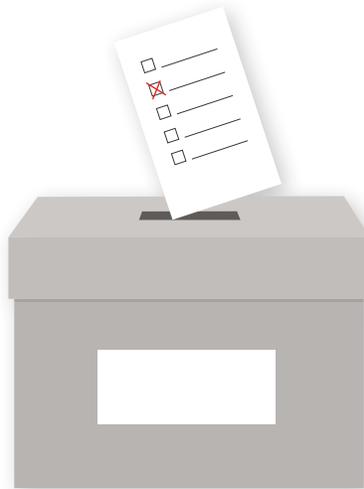


A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

While initially designed for 7th-12th grade civics and government teachers, this toolkit has been modified to provide resources and activities for parents of children in *all* grade levels.

An early start in civics education can help children develop an understanding of how to ask critical questions, become an educated voter, and learn how to speak to and engage with other citizens in productive ways to solve complex problems.

We hope this toolkit helps you guide your child through the civic process during the “teachable moment” of this election year.



myarkansaspbs.org/civics

WHAT IS AN ELECTION?

PRE-K-1ST GRADE

Arkansas PBS LearningMedia: [Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood](#)

Growing, Learning, & Fostering Independence

- In the Neighborhood Voting Booth
- Queen Sara Explains Voting
- Stop, Think and Choose
- You Can't Always Get What You Want
- How Grownups Vote

**Check out the support materials for help expanding on these videos!*

2ND-5TH GRADE

Arkansas PBS LearningMedia: [Your Vote Counts!](#)

This patriotic adventure teaches your child the importance of voting and that even kids get to make decisions.

**Check out the support materials for help discussing and exploring this learning opportunity!*

6TH-12TH GRADE

Arkansas PBS LearningMedia: [The Election Collection](#)

Voting and elections are an essential part of democracy. Keep up with election news, study the history and process of presidential elections, explore voting rights, and engage in debates.

**This collection includes documents, videos, lesson plans, interactives, and more!*

QUESTIONS TO ASK MY CHILD

PRE-K-1ST GRADE

- How does it feel when you get to do something that was your choice?
- Is it hard to go along with a group decision when it's different from your own choice?
- Have you ever lost in a running race or when playing a board game? How did that feel?

Winning games and having your choice picked can seem like more fun than losing, but playing the game is what's meant to be the most fun!

2ND-5TH GRADE

- What is a vote? Why is voting important?
- What does majority mean?
- What would it be like if you were president?

During an election year, children often see advertisements via television, radio, or social media about the presidential candidates. Engaging students in these discussions can heighten their interest in the world around them.

6TH-12TH GRADE

- What is the role of a citizen during an election cycle?
- How can citizens inform themselves about issues that are important to them or their communities? How can citizens learn about where candidates stand on these important issues?
- Are political campaigns important to the democratic process?
- How do issues discussed during an election year relate to issues that are important in our lives and the lives of those around us?

LEARN THE CANDIDATES

PRE-K-1ST GRADE

[PBS Kids “You Choose”](#)

This resource includes trading cards of a variety of presidents and their spouses, an activity to design your own campaign poster, facts about our current president, and a multitude of videos to help kids learn more about voting and civic duty.

**Please Note that this resource was created around the 2016 election but is still very relevant to this election cycle. If an updated version is made available, this document will be updated to reflect those changes.*

2ND-5TH GRADE

- Read the newspaper together (online or in print). Examine the candidates that you read about. Research them online to dig deeper. Encourage conversation, and help find answers to questions your child may have.
- Study political advertisements together. What is the response the candidate is trying to get from you, the viewer? Enthusiasm? Fear? Respect? Also, show your child the importance of fact checking. Research the claims that the advertisements make.

6TH-12TH GRADE

Access [iSideWith](#)

iSideWith is a website focused on finding and building new ways to boost voter engagement and education. The site has a quiz that provides questions on social issues, environmental issues, economics, education, and other election cycle topics. After answering “yes,” “no,” or “other stances” to each question, the website predicts which candidates you side with the most and at what percentage. Have fun, and do it alongside your child!

MOCK ELECTION

PRE-K-1ST GRADE

- Let your child vote on something relevant to them. Examples:
 - White milk or chocolate milk to drink with an afternoon snack?
 - Playing catch or playing kickball outside?
 - Watching *Molly of Denali* or *Xavier Riddle and the Secret Museum* on PBS KIDS?

If you have multiple children, have them all vote. If you have one child, invite family and friends to take part in the vote. If that isn't an option, have your children pretend to be someone else, and encourage them to vote from multiple perspectives. This will help your child understand how voting arrives at a majority decision. Once a decision is made, discuss how we may not always like the final outcome.

2ND-5TH GRADE

- Have you ever taken your child along to your polling location on Election Day? If so, talk about the experience with your child! Consider taking them with you to the polls this November.
- Set up a polling location in your home. Be as creative as possible.
- Allow your child to vote, and then compare their vote with the real results on Election Day!

6TH-12TH GRADE

- This [document](#) allows you to make a mock election ballot with your child's name. Have fun, and print a copy for yourself, too!

**When viewing the document, you will have the option to make a copy. Once your copy has been made, you can edit the document as you see fit.*

**Although this ballot is designed to look like a real paper ballot, modify it as you see fit to use with children of any age.*

ARTS & CRAFTS

PRE-K-1ST GRADE

- Use the [PBS Kids “You Choose”](#) resource to have your child design their very own campaign poster.
- Count down to Election Day by removing pieces from a patriotic paper chain made from construction paper and tape!

2ND-5TH GRADE:

- Help your child create a voting booth using a large cardboard box. Place the booth in a special polling location you’ve set up in your home for an even more creative experience.
- Have your child create their own campaign poster for each candidate.
- Create “Vote!” signs for your yard, and share with family and friends to help encourage your community to vote!
- Color in the states according to who wins on election night! You can find blank United States maps on most internet search engines.

6TH-12TH GRADE

- Design campaign buttons. Are any of the candidates using special catchphrases or hashtags? Does your child have any fun ideas for slogans or mottos?
- Make your own voter registration card. Be creative.

**While these have been put into grade level categories, we encourage you to utilize all of them with children of any age. Modify as you see fit.*

ARKANSAS RESOURCES

- **AR-CAN – The Arkansas Citizens Access Network:** The Arkansas Citizens Access Network (myarkansaspbs.org/arcan) provides unprecedented access to state government, giving Arkansas citizens a front row seat to legislative proceedings, board and commission meetings, and other government hearings and activities. The website is dedicated to livestreaming Arkansas state government events and meetings and serves as an important educational tool, allowing students to see their government at work while learning about public affairs and civic responsibility. AR-CAN is presented by Arkansas PBS.
- **Arkansas PBS Election Coverage:** Get to know the Arkansas candidates and their stances on important issues with the “Arkansas PBS Debates,” held each October during election years. In addition to keeping viewers informed about the candidates, Arkansas PBS also produces a program on proposed ballot initiatives. Debates and ballot initiatives are broadcast, livestreamed and available on demand. Learn more at myarkansaspbs.org/elections. Tune in to “PBS NewsHour,” “FRONTLINE” and other PBS programming for the latest in national election coverage. Visit myarkansaspbs.org/schedule for more information.
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- **myarkansaspbs.org/parents:** Arkansas PBS believes that parents are a child’s first teacher. Read our blog, sign up for our newsletters, and find resources from Arkansas PBS, PBS and PBS KIDS to help you on your parenting journey at myarkansaspbs.org/parents.
- **myarkansaspbs.org/educators:** Arkansas PBS is here to help support educators and education here in Arkansas. Read our blog, sign up for our newsletters, and access resources to impact student achievement at myarkansaspbs.org/educators.

OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

Visit these resources for a deeper dive into civics, the election, and the importance of voting.

- [Arkansas PBS LearningMedia](#)
- [PBS NewsHour](#)
- [iCivics](#)
- [C-SPAN Classroom](#)

SUGGESTED BOOKS FOR YOUR CHILD

AGES 4-9

- *Grace for President* by Kelly DiPucchio
- *We the Kids: The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States* by David Catrow
- *I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark* by Debbie Levy

AGES 10-14

- *Voting and the U.S. Government* by Papersalt
- *Voters: From Primaries to Decision Night* by Robert Grayson
- *The Kid Who Ran for President* by Dan Gutman

AGES 15+

- *Running* by Natalia Sylvester
- *The Voting Booth* by Brandy Colbert
- *Votes of Confidence: A Young Person's Guide to American Elections* by Jeff Fleischer

NEED HELP REGISTERING TO VOTE?

Visit the [Arkansas Secretary of State's elections webpage](#).

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M ALREADY REGISTERED? I NEED HELP FINDING MY POLLING PLACE

Check your voter registration status and find your polling place on [Voter View](#).
