August, 2020

RE: Open-ended Questions/Extensions and Teacher Resources- Websites for the "Voting Made Easier" Digital Lesson

Dear Teachers,

The **"Voting Made Easier" Digital Lesson** will provide one hour of online instructional time **for your seniors**, in addition to the *additional learning opportunities offered in this attachment.*

"Pre-" and "Post-test" questions, part of our *in-person lesson*, are included below. Also included, are additional "Open-ended Questions/Extensions" and Teacher Resources-Websites.

Thank you for all you do for students!

Any questions, please feel free to contact me.

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"Voting Made Easy" PRE-TEST Open-ended Questions-- (We discussed these questions with students *before* we presented our in-person lesson):

1. About 47% of American citizens who are "eligible" to (able to) vote voted in the *2018 midterm election*. 55% of citizens voted in the *2016 Presidential election*. *Why don't more people vote?*

2. How do government laws and regulations affect *me*? *(Think about the recent events of 2020.)*

3. Where do you get your information? *How do you know it is reliable?*

4. What changes to laws have there been for who *is eligible to (able to)* vote? *(What groups of people are or have been prevented from voting?)*

"Voting Made Easy" POST-TEST Open-ended Questions-- (Teachers asked students for written answers to these questions *after* we had presented our in-person lesson):

1. What surprised you the most?

2. What ACTION (S) can or will you take as you think about 2020, this presentation and your role in our democracy?

3. What is your feedback?

More Open-ended Questions from the lesson:

- *Why would people WANT to work for any level of Government, either Local, State or Federal?*

- *Do you think one day you might like to work in Government?*

- *Do you agree that "Government" gets a bad rap? Why or why not?*

- *What does, "Your Vote, Your Voice" mean to you?*

- *Which would you rather be; "skeptical" or "cynical"?*

- *What issues are important to you? What issues are important to the older people in your life? Are they the same or different?*

- *Whose "issues" do elected officials care about if mostly older folks are voting? What do you think about that?*

- *How might third party candidates, like Green, Libertarian and Independent candidates affect elections and our two-party system?*

- ***Returning Citizens** are individuals in Pennsylvania convicted of a felony, who lost the right to vote while incarcerated but have voting rights restored following release from prison. They may need to **re-register** to be eligible to vote. Do you think this is a fair policy? Why or why not?*

"Extensions" might include:

- *Do some research about Voter Access today in the US and find where there are still barriers to voting for citizens. How do you feel about that?*

- *Do some research on your "issues" and cite the resources you use.*

- *Choose an issue and research both sides.*

- *Do some research to figure out the ideas and positions for each of the political parties.*

- *Explore this website; VotesPA.com. Was it helpful? Easy to navigate? What did you learn?*

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS of Greater Pittsburgh

TEACHER GUIDE TO VOTER RESOURCES   **August, 2020**

To decipher reliable sources know that **.com** is a company, **.edu** is an educational institution, **.gov** is any official government site (local, state or federal), and **.org** is a group with a purpose (research or business).

1. The League of Women Voters sponsors a website Vote411.org that gives personalized voting information that includes specific ballot information for each election in your vicinity, allows you to check your voter registration information and polling location, lists dates of upcoming debates in your area, and more.   https://www.vote411.org

2. For information about the Pennsylvania State government go to the Citizen information Center of the LWV of Pennsylvania   http://palwv.org

3. For information about the Federal Government go to the Federal Citizen Information Center www.usa.gov

4. Inspire2Vote is another nonpartisan effort to promote voter registration among high school students. This site directs you to the Pennsylvania voter registration form and information, and seeks to get students to pledge to vote. https://www.inspire2vote.org

5. Teaching for Democracy Alliance is a resource for teachers and students with specific activities and tools for engaging and informing students about elections and voting. It is coordinated by CIRCLE which is part of Tufts University Tisch College of Civic Life. Check out the sponsors of this group (LWV, Facing History and Ourselves, National Council for the Social Studies, Generation Citizen, PBS NewsHour Extra, iCivics, Close Up). The site provides specific teacher resources and specific teaching activities about voting and election process, current and controversial issue discussion and media literacy skills development!   http://www.teachingfordemocracy.org

6. iCivics is an organization founded by Sandra Day O'Connor that is game focused and provides teachers with free curriculum of short activities and teacher supports from rubrics and assessments to essay prompts. It is geared to Middle school students. https://www.icivics.org

7. Citizens, Not Spectators is sponsored by the Center for Civic Education, again a nonprofit, independent organization, that provides teachers and students with curriculum and activities. https://www.civiced.org/programs/citizens

8. Infoplease is a reference site with specific information about elections that gives good statistics. (It also is an encyclopedia so it has many other topics) https://www.infoplease.com/us/government/elections

9. FactCheck.org from the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania is a nonprofit whose mission is to monitor factual accuracy from major US politicians in the news (ads, speeches, news released, interviews). https://www.factcheck.org

10. OnTheIssues has a wealth of information about elections, candidates, issues and topics, past speeches and debates, local and state officials and all levels of government. https://www.ontheissues.org

11. VoteSmart , Facts Matter, is another great source for factual, unbiased information on candidates and elected officials, their positions on issues, and funding. http://votesmart.org

12. Engaging New Voters is a section of the NonprofitVote website whose purpose is to promote voting and elections.   https://www.nonprofitvote.org

13. VotesPa.com has Pennsylvania registration information and information on the new Election Law in Pennsylvania and information on election security.   https://www.votespa.com

8 Best Fact-Checking Sites for Finding Unbiased Truth

Megan Ellis Updated December 8, 2019

With deliberate misinformation campaigns and the continued prevalence of fake news, fact-checking sites are now more important than ever. So in the digital era, where news travels quickly through multiple channels, how do you check your facts? Here are five of the best fact-checking websites, like Snopes and PolitiFact, so that you can find the truth.

https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/

https://www.snopes.com

https://www.politifact.com

https://www.truthorfiction.com

https://leadstories.com

https://www.hoax-slayer.net

https://fullfact.org

Fact-Checking Sites with Bias?

There are a few popular fact-checking websites that do receive high ratings for factual reporting but do not qualify for this list due to receiving a biased score on MBFC:

- Fact Checker by Washington Post: Left-center bias
- CheckYourFact: Right-center bias
- FactMyth.com: Left-center bias
- Zebra Fact Check: Right-center bias
- ExposingTruth.com: Left-center bias

These biases emerge from the focal point of fact checks (such as fact-checking the right more than the left), or from the occasional use of loaded words to sway readers. While these websites do usually use credible sources, their focus indicates some level of bias.

Compiled by S. Duncan 7.13.20