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| Subjects  Civics Government |
| Grades 3-5 6-8 9-12 |

Brief Description  
  
An experiment drives home to students the importance of voting!

Objectives

Students learn through a hands-on experiment why voting is important. They learn the potential impact of deciding not to vote.

Keywords

election, vote, citizenship, responsibility

Materials Needed

None

Lesson Plan

Voting is a privilege; nobody *has* to vote. In your classroom, you might re-create an experiment that more than 3,000 students took part in on Election Day 1996.

* At the start of class, tell students they have the opportunity to vote in a mock presidential election if they choose to.
* Provide ballots listing the candidates and a space for students to indicate their gender.
* Place the ballots in a location of the room where students can vote in private.
* Later in the day, tell students they are now *required* to vote.
* Tally the ballots separately. Lead a discussion with students as they respond to the following questions.

How do the two votes differ? Were boys or girls more likely to vote when given the option? Might an election be affected if only the people who *choose* to vote do so? How might people required to vote affect an election? Why is voting important?

Assessment

Assess students based on their participation in a discussion about the potential impact of a person's decision to or not to vote.

Lesson Plan Source

Education World

National Standards

[**Social Sciences**](http://www.education-world.com/standards/national/soc_sci/index.shtml):  
[NSS-C.K-4](http://www.education-world.com/standards/national/soc_sci/civics/k_4.shtml#NSS-C.K-4)  
[NSS-C.5-8](http://www.education-world.com/standards/national/soc_sci/civics/5_8.shtml#NSS-C.5-8)  
[NSS-C.9-12](http://www.education-world.com/standards/national/soc_sci/civics/9_12.shtml#NSS-C.9-12)