

# About Kids Voting USA Curriculum

## Philosophy

The Kids Voting USA classroom activities are designed to help educators address civic learning objectives, especially those that relate to voting and elections. The resource is comprised of engaging activities that foster group discussion and the use of critical thinking skills. The activities are designed to emphasize self-discovery in a cooperative setting. In this way students master and retain knowledge and concepts better and develop problem-solving skills, creativity, verbal skills and empathy - all of which are important for citizens. Also, group problem-solving provides a model of democracy. The Kids Voting USA classroom activities along with an authentic voting experience help students to live as thoughtful, active citizens in a democracy.

## Description

Kids Voting USA offers two resources for the classroom, one for primary school educators, *Kids Voting USA Classroom Activities: K-8*, and one for secondary school educators, *Kids Voting USA Classroom Activities: 9-12*. Within these two resources, the activities are categorized into grade divisions and then four themes.

### Grade Divisions:

- Lower Elementary, Grades K-2
- Upper Elementary, Grades 3-5
- Middle School, Grades 6-8
- High School, Grades 9-12

### Four Themes:

- Elections and Voting
- Democracy and the People
- The Right to Vote/Suffrage
- Active Citizenship

## Goals

The goals of Kids Voting USA classroom activities are for students to:

- Cultivate information-gathering and decision-making skills
- Develop higher-order thinking skills
- Develop empathy towards others
- Gain a knowledge and appreciation of suffrage, democracy, citizenship and elections
- Understand the direct voting process

## More About the Activities

Many of the Kids Voting USA classroom activities reinforce the language arts and math learning you are doing with your students. So while activity objectives are tied to civic learning, reading, writing, and math are often incorporated into the activities. Many of the activities also make service connections. Kids Voting USA places high value on activities that connect the classroom with the community.

## Curriculum Update

In recognition of the ever-changing political scene and the technological world we are living in, KVUSA is in the process of reorganizing the curriculum and creating some new activities. Once this project is completed, the curriculum will be categorized into the following themes: Elections and Voting; Democracy and the People; Informed Citizen; and Civic Engagement/Service Learning. The new activities will focus on various aspects including 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, technology and media, and the current political scene. A committee of teachers, social studies specialists, Kids Voting affiliates executive directors and graduate students will create six new activities. We believe that not only will this update be appealing to our participating teachers and students; these new activities will assist with the organization's expansion efforts as well.

