

or email? A tweet? A Tik Tok? Posters? Phone calls?

**Step 4:** Finally, design your **message**.

**Step 5:** Try it out! Can you convince someone in your home that it is important to respond to the Census?

### Phase 2, Step 2: Reflect and share!

After completing your action, share with others what you learned about the census and why it's important to engage in civic life!

- What did you learn throughout the process?
- What did you learn about yourself and your community?
- Why should young people know about the census?
- Why should everyone complete the census?

## Project 2: Elections

<b>Estimated Time</b>	10 hours
<b>Caregiver Support Option</b>	Adults can discuss texts with students and participate as interview subjects.
<b>Materials Needed</b>	Notebook or Journal
<b>Question to Explore</b>	How do we get people to vote?
<b>Student Directions</b>	Thank you for your commitment to our community! This guide is designed to help you take action for elections. Follow the directions for each phase to help you understand, investigate, reflect, and act to answer the question, "How do we get people to vote?"

**\*Printable Version - NOTE: if you have access to a digital device and internet, use this version instead:**  
<http://bit.ly/elections4-5>

There is an important election in 2020! We will be voting for the U.S. President and Congress, as well as state and local offices. **EVERYONE** can have a real impact on the election - even those who can't vote! In this activity, you will learn about elections, why they are important, and how people vote. Then you will come up with an action plan to convince more people to vote!

## PHASE 1: What is voting and why is it important?

### Phase 1, Step 1: Explore what the elections are and why voting is important.

Watch the following videos: [bit.ly/ELECTIONSVIDEO1](https://bit.ly/ELECTIONSVIDEO1) or [bit.ly/ELECTIONSVIDEO2](https://bit.ly/ELECTIONSVIDEO2) or read Source A included in this packet below, and then answer the following questions in your journal:

- What do you know about elections and voting that you didn't know before?
- Have people you know, or people in your family ever voted? Why or why not?
- Why should people vote?

**SOURCE A: U.S. Elections 2020: A Guide to the Race for the White House - The Guardian: adapted by NewsELA. Published 2/9/20.**

On November 3, 2020, Americans will go to the polls and vote. Here's a quick guide to the election process.

What's the 2020 election all about? Voters are choosing who will be the president for the next four years. Can President Donald Trump win reelection? All eyes are on the Democrats. They are in the process of picking a candidate to take on Trump.

In 2016, Trump won a surprise victory over Democrat Hillary Clinton. The Republican Party won states that people thought would vote for Democrats. In 2020, however, the Democratic candidate will be different. The issues are different. And the electorate – the people allowed to vote – has changed, too.

There are other positions at stake. All 435 seats in the House of Representatives are up for election. Voters will also decide on 34 of the 100 seats in the U.S. Senate.

**Who can vote?** In 2020, more than 250 million Americans will be able to vote. This group of voters will be different than in 2016. They are younger. About 33 percent of them will be voters of color. Ten percent will be Generation Z. These are people between the ages of 18 and 23. People who can vote do not always go to the polls, though. In the 2016 race, about 42 percent of voters did not cast a ballot. But the 2018 midterm race was different. More people turned out than to vote for open seats in Congress.

**What's about to happen?** Currently, the Democrats need to choose a presidential nominee. More than 20 people announced they wanted to run. More women decided to run than in previous years. Several candidates have dropped out. Now it is down to about a dozen candidates.

Candidates discuss issues in public debates. They answer questions about their platforms and ideas. Often, candidates need to have high polling or fundraising numbers to attend. Candidates without enough support have to drop out.

**What are the primaries?** Primaries are elections within the party. They take place in all 50 states. Washington, D.C., and territories such as Puerto Rico also have primaries. Most states have primary elections. People cast votes at a polling place. Some can mail ballots or vote online.

Candidates want to get the most delegates. Delegates represent voters from their state. Some states give all of their delegates to one candidate. Other states split up their delegates between candidates.

**What's a caucus?** A handful of states hold caucuses. They hold these instead of primaries. These community meetings can last for hours. People speak in support of candidates. The meetings hold many votes. Finally, one candidate is named the winner.

Primaries and caucuses begin early in the year. The Iowa caucuses are held first. Primaries in New Hampshire and South Carolina follow. Then comes the caucuses in Nevada. Iowa held its caucuses on February 3, 2020. Then, on March 3, 13 states will vote in primaries. This day is called "Super Tuesday." Super Tuesday often decides who will get the nomination.

**Then it'll finally be Election Day, right?** Not even close! The campaign gets even more intense. Trump will go up against the Democratic Party's choice. The candidates decide where to campaign next. They decide what voters to target. They focus on getting their supporters excited. There will also be several TV debates.

Finally, November 3, 2020, will come around. Americans will cast their votes. The votes are added up. Then, the Electoral College makes the official decision.

**How does the Electoral College work?** The Electoral College is a voting system. It is the final step in choosing the president. All 50 states and Washington, D.C., participate. There are a total of 538 electoral votes. This number includes two Senate seats per state, or 100 in total. It also factors in the number of congressional districts in states (435 in total). Also, Washington, D.C., gets three votes. Districts are based on population counts. A candidate needs 270 votes to win.

One candidate might get more popular votes. But they still might lose the election. How? Most states do not split their electoral votes. All of their electoral votes go to one person. It is the candidate with more than half of the popular vote.

Trump won the Electoral College in 2016. Clinton won the popular vote. Trump won several key states. He received 304 electoral votes. Clinton received 227 electoral votes.

### **Phase 1, Step 2: Connect with and collect information from others.**

Now, interview three or more family or community members by phone, email, or social media. Try to interview different people 18 or older who are different ages. Use the questions below, and other questions you want to ask.

Write down the responses to each question.

Sample questions for interviews:

- Did you vote in the last election?
- Do you plan to vote in the upcoming election?
- Why do you / do you not vote?
- What do you know about the upcoming elections?
- What do you know about the voting process?

**Reflection:**

- What do you know now that you didn't know before?
- Did the responses from any of the people you interviewed surprise you? Why or why not?
- What do you think about their answers? Are they the same or different?
- Do you think others have had similar or different experiences from those you interviewed?

**Phase 1, Step 3: Explore How to Vote in Illinois**

**Read all of the rules about how people can vote in Illinois using the source below, then answer the following questions in your journal:**

- In what ways is it easy for people to vote in Illinois?
- In what ways is it hard for people to vote in Illinois?
- Is it harder or easier to vote for some people?

**SOURCE B: [Rock the Vote - Voter Rights in Illinois](#)**

**Pre-Registration:** 17-year-olds who will be 18 by the next general election can pre-register to vote.

**Same Day Registration:** Illinois offers the opportunity to register to vote on Election Day. To register, voters must bring two pieces of identification: one must have their current address, and the other should be another form of ID.

**Automatic Voter Registration:** Automatic Voter Registration was passed in 2017, but the program has yet to be implemented.

**If You've Moved:** Illinois requires you to live in the state for at least 30 days before registering to vote.

**Documentation Requirements:** When submitting a voter registration application, no additional documents are required for your registration to be processed if you have a State ID or Social Security Number on file.

**Voting Rights Restoration:** Voting rights of convicted persons are restored upon one's release from incarceration. Returning citizens must re-register to vote after their rights are restored.

**PHASE 2: Plan and take action.****Phase 2 Step 1: Build Your Action Plan**

Here you will take action to ensure your community gets out and votes! You will **create awareness** for the 2020 election and why it is important, and get as many people as you can to commit to voting. Follow these steps to organize your awareness campaign.

**Step 1:** Reflect on what you learned about voting and why it's important. Decide which information will be most important to share with other people.

**Step 2:** Identify **what** you want to say and **how** you want to say it. What could you say to this audience that will make sure they vote?

**Step 3:** Next, choose the best way to reach people to make sure they vote. A letter or email? A tweet? A Tik Tok? Posters? Phone calls?

**Step 4:** Finally, design your **message**.

**Step 5:** Try it out! Can you convince someone in your home that it is important to vote?

### Phase 2, Step 2: Reflect and share!

After completing your action, share with others what you learned about voting and why it's important to engage in civic life!

- What did you learn throughout the process?
- What did you learn about yourself and your community?
- Why should young people be civically engaged?
- Why should everyone vote or encourage others to vote even if they can't?

## Project 3: Animal Survival Structures

<b>Estimated Time</b>	2-3 days - 4 activities
<b>Caregiver Support Option</b>	Support is optional but recommended for Activity 2: What animals have you seen? when children take a walk and look for animals. The whole family can also be involved in Activity 4: Making your Own Animal and Extension Activity 2: Who Would Win?
<b>Materials Needed</b>	Pencil, paper, coloring utensils. Optional Materials: paint, art supplies
<b>Question to Explore</b>	What adaptations are important for survival?
<b>Student Directions</b>	Each activity has directions for you to follow.

### Animal Survival Structures

We see animals around us every day. But how do they survive? What structures do they possess and adaptations do they have to help them? Complete this investigation to find out!

#### Activity 1: How do you survive?

Chicago is a city known for crazy weather! We have REALLY cold days and really warm days. How do you adapt?