



BALLOTREADY CURRICULUM

Preparing Students as Informed Voters



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About BallotReady

BallotReady seeks to create a more informed electorate and strengthen our democracy by helping voters vote informed, all the way down the ballot. As a nonpartisan voter education technology company, BallotReady helps voters around the country see their entire ballots, view aggregated information about candidates and ballot initiatives, and share their completed ballots with their friends and networks.

Why? Because elections matter, and not just for picking the person at the top of the ballot. BallotReady gives voters a quick and easy tool for researching and understanding every candidate and referendum on their ballot.

To do this, BallotReady aggregates information from multiple sources, including from candidates' websites, social media, press, endorsers, and boards of elections for the latest, most accurate details about candidates and referendums, with everything linked back to its source. BallotReady reaches out to candidates as well to confirm details and request more information.

Our service was born out of our founders' shared realization that being an informed voter was far too complicated in our modern democracy. Recognizing that very few voters are prepared to fill out an entire ballot, Alex Niemczewski and Aviva Rosman launched BallotReady in 2015 with the mission to improve voter turnout by promoting pre-voting research and ballot completion. With more than 1 million site visits in 2016, BallotReady has become a leading voter preparation tool that also leads to increased voter turnout. Working with researchers at MIT, BallotReady was able to demonstrate that visitors to the site were 20% more likely to show up to vote.

Why this Curriculum?

Informed voters make our democracy better, but educating your students with unbiased, civically-minded information has become increasingly difficult. Our curriculum will help you walk your students through the voting process with nonpartisan, fact-focused information. With BallotReady's teacher-designed curriculum, you will educate your students about the history and process of voting in the United States. Students will consider the importance of various elected offices at all levels of government and determine what issues are most important to them. By the end of this mini-unit, students will engage with our free voter guides. This innovative resource will help them feel informed and confident, whether they are casting their first votes this fall or in future years. BallotReady gives students an engaging and hands-on way to learn about the importance of civic engagement, voting in a democracy, and learning about every candidate on the ballot.



Unit Objectives

By completing this unit, students will be able to...

1. evaluate primary and secondary sources to analyze the history and purpose of voting rights in the United States.
2. conduct accurate research to distinguish between primary and general elections, to learn about state-specific voting requirements, and to create a plan to vote.
3. describe at least three public policy issues and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to public policy issues.
4. articulate the difference between federal, state, and local offices.
5. explain the impact that specific elected officials can create for their constituents.
6. gather information from digital sources to support analysis, reflection, and research on political candidates.

Time and Materials

This unit was designed to be completed in 4 to 5 days of 60-minute class periods. Suggested materials are listed within each lesson.

Age of Use Recommendations

We recommend this curriculum for use with students in grades 8-12.

Please note that the Website and the Services are not directed at children under 13. We do not knowingly collect or solicit personally identifiable information from children under 13; if you are a child under 13, please do not attempt to register for the Services or send any personal information about yourself to us. If we learn we have collected personal information from a child under 13, we will delete that information as quickly as possible. If you believe that a child under 13 may have provided us personal information, please contact us at info@ballotready.org.

For more information, please view our Terms of Use at <https://www.ballotready.org/terms>.



Lesson 1:

Why and How We Vote

Common Core Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1 and 6-8.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1 and 9-10.2
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1, 11-12.2, and 11-12.3
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.7, 8.8, and 8.9
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7, 9-10.8, and 9-10.9
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7, 11-12.8, and 11-12.9

Essential Questions:

What does the Constitution tell us about our right to vote?
How have an increasing number of Americans gained the right to vote over time?
What opportunities do I have to vote in the United States today?
How do I go about the process of voting and registering to vote in my state?

Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to...

1. evaluate primary and secondary sources to analyze the history and purpose of voting rights in the United States.
2. conduct accurate research to distinguish between primary and general elections, to learn about state-specific voting requirements, and to create a plan to vote.

Materials Needed:

1. A classroom set of computers or laptops is ideal for this lesson. However, this lesson can also be adapted to work with one teacher computer. Adaptations are noted throughout the “Procedure” section of this lesson plan.
2. Copy of BallotReady student handout for each student
3. Copy of “Timeline of U.S. Voting Rights” handout for each student

Procedure:

1. Do Now (see student handout): The Constitution- the document that outlines how our government works- starts with the words “We the people...”. Why do you think that the people that wrote the Constitution chose to start with those words? What do you think



that those words say about our government? Discuss answers with the whole group after giving students time to individually complete.

2. Have students examine the timeline on this lesson's student handout. In the right-hand column of the timeline, students should make annotations regarding thoughts or questions that occur to them as they look over the timeline. Below the timeline, students should answer analysis questions about the timeline.
3. If each student has access to a computer, have them log on and do a quick internet search for the difference between primary and general elections. Discuss student findings.
 - a. Adaptation: If only one classroom computer is available, open up a webpage, and project it at the front of the room. As a class, do an internet search for the difference between primary and general elections. Discuss which key terms to use in the search, and how to identify credible sources and information.
4. The lesson will transition into understanding *how* to vote. Have students go to BallotReady's website (<https://www.ballotready.org/>). Have students type in their home address, and click on the "Submit" icon.
 - a. If only the teacher has access to a computer, project the website on the screen at the front of the class. Type in the school's address, and click on the "Make a Plan to Vote" icon. Have students record the address of the local polling place on the student handout.
 - b. **Please note** that the BallotReady website and the services are not directed at children under 13. Do not have children under 13 type in their home addresses. We suggest using your school's address as an alternative. If student's type in the school's address, explain that the candidates on the ballot may be slightly different than those they would see on a ballot based on their home address, because their home address may be in a different polling area, precinct, or district.
5. Once the page has loaded, have students click on the icon that says "Make a plan to vote."
 - a. Model for students the process of walking through the different steps on this webpage. Explain to your students that early voting is an option, but only at certain locations. Ask students to click on the date denoted as "Election Day" and go on to find where their polling place would be. Point out to them that your polling place can differ even from your neighbor across the street, so it is very important to know where you should go to vote.
 - b. **If your students are too young to vote:** If your students are under 13, have them find the polling place for the address of the school. Have them record this polling place on their student handout.
 - c. **If your students are eligible to vote this election cycle:** Follow the directions in step 5a, but have students make a plan to vote and let them submit their email/phone numbers if they wish to receive reminders leading up to Election Day.
6. Explain that different states have different voting requirements. Have students do an internet search for their state's voting requirements (students may type in the name of their state, followed by the words "voting requirements" as search terms). Discuss what websites students find, and the reliability of those websites (note: each state's Board of



Elections or Secretary of State website is probably a good place to start). Have students record the requirements that they find.

- a. Again, if only the teacher has access to a computer, complete step 6 above together as a class by projecting a webpage at the front of the classroom, and completing the search together.
7. Next, have students record their thoughts about the voting requirements on the student handout. Discuss with the class as time allows. Suggestion: discuss how vote I.D. laws vary from state to state, and what students think about this.
8. Have students complete the “Closing/Exit Slip” section on the student handout.



Lesson 1 Student Handout

Do Now: Read the text to the Preamble of the United States Constitution (found below). Use the text to respond to the questions that follow.

Preamble to the United States Constitution

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

1. The Constitution- the document that outlines how our government works- starts with the words “We the people...”. Why do you think the writers of the Constitution chose to start with those words?
2. Based on the text, what do you think the founding fathers envisioned the role of citizens in the government to be?

Timeline Analysis: Read and annotate your handout called “Timeline of U.S. Voting Rights.” When you are finished, use the handout to answer the questions below.

1. Describe 2-3 trends that you notice in the timeline.
2. How would you summarize the way that voting rights have been given or restricted over time?



3. Based on the information provided, what are the characteristics of an eligible voter today?
4. Think again about your answers to questions 1 and 2. Keeping that information in mind, why do you think that it is important to vote?

Primary and General Elections: Using the internet and your understanding of reliable sources, search to find the difference between primary and general elections. Record your findings below:

Primary Elections:

General Elections:

Make a Plan to Vote: After watching your instructor locate their polling place, find and record your own polling place in the space below.

Voting Requirements Research: Complete an internet search for your state's voting requirements. You may want to type in the name of your state, and then the words "voting requirements." Try to find a reliable source like your Secretary of State office website.

What are the requirements to vote in your state? Consider things like voter qualifications, ID laws, etc.



Using the same website, record any information present about how to register to vote in your state. If your website does not contain voter registration information, search for a new one.

What do you think about the voting requirements and registration process in your state? Would you add, take away, or change any of the requirements or processes? Why?

Closing/Exit Slip: Think about a friend or family member living in your state who you would like to encourage to vote. Describe to them in detail the process that they would have to go through to be able to vote.



Lesson 1: Timeline of U.S. Voting Rights

Date	Event	Your Annotations
1776	The Declaration of Independence is signed. Voting rights are established throughout the 13 colonies for Protestant white males who own property.	
1787	The United States Constitution is adopted but does not declare a national standard for voting. Voting rights are determined by individual states.	
1790	The Naturalization Law is passed, stating only free white immigrants can become naturalized citizens.	
1848	The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo concludes the Mexican American War and gives citizenship to Mexicans living in new U.S. territory; English proficiency is required in order to vote.	
1856	All white men are given the right to vote; property ownership is no longer a requirement in any state.	
1868	The 14 th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is ratified, granting citizenship to former slaves. Voting rights are still left up to the states.	
1870	The 15 th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is ratified, giving African American men equal right to vote. Some states enact voting taxes and literacy test requirements in order to register to vote.	
1882	Congress passes the Chinese Exclusion Act, which barred people of Chinese ancestry from becoming naturalized citizens of the United States.	
1884	The Supreme Court rules that Native Americans are not defined as citizens by the 14 th Amendment.	
1887	The Dawes Act is passed, granting citizenship to Native Americans who relinquish their tribal affiliations.	



Date	Event	Your Annotations
1890	The Indian Naturalization Act grants citizenship to Native Americans through an application process.	
1919	Native Americans who serve in the military during World War I are granted U.S. citizenship.	
1920	The 19 th Amendment to U.S. Constitution is ratified, giving women the right to vote.	
1922-1923	The Supreme Court rules that people of Japanese and Asian Indian origin are not eligible to become naturalized citizens.	
1924	The Indian Citizenship Act grants citizenship to all Native Americans.	
1943	The Chinese Exclusion Act is repealed.	
1952	The McCarran-Walter Act grants all people of Asian heritage the right to become citizens.	
1961	Citizens of Washington, D.C. are given the right to vote for United States President.	
1964	The 24 th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is ratified and declares that the right to vote cannot be withheld for failure to pay any taxes. This eliminates poll taxes.	
1965	The Voting Rights Act is passed, which forbids states from imposing discriminatory restrictions (such as literacy tests) on who can vote.	
1971	The 26 th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is ratified, lowering the voting age to 18.	
1975	Amendments to the Voting Rights Act require voting materials to be printed in multiple languages.	
2000	A federal court determines that residents of U.S. territories, while legally defined as citizens, are not eligible to vote in U.S. elections.	



Lesson 2:

Understanding the Issues

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1, 6-8.2, and 6-8.4;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1, 9-10.2, and 9-10.4;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1, 11-12.2, and 11-12.4;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.8;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.8, and 9-10.9;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.8, and 11-12.9

Essential Questions:

What are public policy issues?

How do different candidates for political office address public policy issues differently, and how are they influenced by their political party affiliations?

What issues matter to me the most?

How do I judge potential solutions to various public policy issues?

Objective:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to...

1. describe at least three public policy issues and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to public policy issues.

Materials Needed:

1. A classroom set of computers or laptops is ideal for this lesson. However, this lesson can also be adapted to work with one teacher computer. Adaptations are noted throughout the "Procedure" section of this lesson plan.
2. Copy of BallotReady student handout for each student.

Procedure:

1. Do Now (See student handout): Rank these public policy issues in order from the most important to you to the least important to you: Crime, Immigration, Education, Healthcare, the Environment. If you don't know very much about these issues, just do your best. Next, list as many *other* public policy issues as you can think of.
2. If students have access to computers, have them search the internet for definitions of the public policy issues listed on the student handout. When they are finished, have students discuss in small groups and consider why each of these issues is important to a large number of American voters.



- a. If only one classroom computer is available, project a webpage at the front of the class, and conduct an internet search together. Also consider using a classroom set of dictionaries, if available.
3. Next, have students brainstorm a list of news organizations that they know about. Have them then go to the websites of those organizations.
 - a. If only one classroom computer is available, complete this part of the lesson together as a class, or consider gathering copies of several newspapers and distributing them to students in small groups.
4. Have students identify and write down on this lesson's handout the title of 3 articles that they identify, and write down which public policy issues are discussed or implicit in those articles.
5. Have students pick one of the articles that they found, pair up, and explain to their partner what that article tells them about a public policy issue. Students should record what their partner says on the student handout. Consider bringing the class back together and hearing from various students about their articles and public policy issues as a check for understanding.
6. Working independently once again, students should use the news article that they described to their partner to identify potential solutions to the public policy problem described in the article. Have students find and use other articles about that same public policy issues if they have difficulty finding different solutions to their public policy issue within one article.
7. On the student handout, have students write down which solution to their chosen public policy issue they think is the best solution, and why.
8. Have students repeat steps 6 and 7 with different public policy issues and news articles as time allows.
9. Have students complete the Closing/Exit Slip portion of the student handout.



Lesson 2 Student Handout

Do Now: Before the 2016 Presidential Election, Americans [ranked](#) issues directly related to [gun laws](#), [immigration](#), [minimum wage](#), [healthcare](#), and [climate change](#) as the top issues on their minds. Rank these public policy issues in order from the most important to you to the least important to you: If you don't know very much about these issues, just do your best.

1. _____ (Most important to me)
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____ (Least important to me)

Why did you rank the issues in that order?

Next, list as many *other* public policy issues as you can think of:

Exploring Policy Issues:

1. Complete the table below by doing an internet search to help you define each issue listed. In the second column, explain why you think many Americans care about each issue.

Define these issues in your own words after doing an internet search:	Why do you think this issue matters to a large number of Americans?
Gun Control:	
Immigration Reform:	



Minimum Wage:	
Right to Healthcare:	
Climate Change:	

1. Brainstorm a list of different news organizations that you've heard of (example- Chicago Tribune):

2. Next, find the website of one of those news organizations. On that news website, find 3 articles that have to do with a public policy issue like the ones that you defined above. Write down the public policy issue that relates to that news article.

Example:

"New Laws for Doctors and Patients"

Healthcare

Name of news article:

Public policy issue related to that article:

Name of news article:

Public policy issue related to that article:

Name of news article:

Public policy issue related to that article:



3. After you complete #3 above, turn to a partner and tell them about one of the articles that you found. Write down what *your partner tells you* about their articles, and what public policy issue the article is related to.

Title of one of my partner's news articles:

Public policy issue related to my partner's article:

4. Now, pick one of the news articles that *you* found, and find some potential solutions to the public policy problem described in the article. For example, if the public policy issue in the article is crime, some solutions could be "hiring more police officers," or "invest in violence prevention programs."
5. Out of the solutions that you found in your article, which solution seems like the best one to you? Why?

If you have extra time: Find a second article, and repeat what you did in numbers 5 and 6 with the new article.

Closing/Exit Slip: Name 3 public policy issues that you learned more about during this lesson. In your opinion, what makes a solution to a public policy problem "good"? What makes a solution to you public policy problem "bad"?



Lesson 3:

The Offices We Vote For

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2, and 6-8.4;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2, and 9-10.4;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1, 11-12.2, 11-12.4, and 11-12.9;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.7, 8.8, and 8.9;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7, 9-10.8, and 9-10.9;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7, 11-12.8, and 11-12.9

Essential Questions:

What are the responsibilities of different elected officials, and how do they impact the lives of their constituents?

What is a ballot referendum, and why do we vote on them?

What are the differences between national, state, and local elected offices?

How do the types of elected officials vary from district to district?

Objective:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to...

1. articulate the difference between federal, state, and local offices.
2. explain the impact that specific elected officials can create for their constituents.

Materials Needed:

1. A classroom set of computers or laptops is ideal for this lesson. However, this lesson can also be adapted by providing students with an informational text that describes various elected officials. Adaptations are noted throughout the “Procedure” section of this lesson plan.
2. Copy of BallotReady student handout for each student.

Procedure:

1. Do Now (See student handout): Students should independently fill in the chart by brainstorming five elected officials that they know of. If needed, you can define an elected official for students as “someone who works in a public office because they were elected by the people they serve (constituents).” Students should continue to complete the chart by writing what they believe to be the job description for each of these elected officials.



2. Begin discussing student “do now” responses by asking students what elected offices they are aware of. See if any students are able to name any lesser known/unusual office. Verbally take note of how many different offices you are able to name as a class.
3. Continue discussing the “do now” by asking students what the most frequently named elected officials are responsible for doing. You can push students further by asking what evidence they have to support their conclusions or by asking them to respectfully add to/correct a classmate’s answer if they hear something incomplete or incorrect.
4. Divide students into small groups of 5 and ask them to find Section 1 on their student handout. Direct students to discuss and agree upon different definitions for the 3 levels of government that we have in the United States: federal, state, and local. If they are unsure, encourage students to make an educated guess.
5. As a class, discuss and agree upon definitions of federal, state, and local government. To save time, you may provide students with the correct definitions and ask them to correct their own answers.
6. Explain to students that today they will be responsible for learning about and teaching their classmates about some of the most common state and local elected officials. Using their handouts and computers (if available), ask each small group to divide the ten given elected officials amongst their group members.
 - a. Please note: This part of the lesson will be difficult to complete if a class set of computers is unavailable. If a class set of computers is unavailable, consider providing definitions of a variety of elected offices to give to students on a separate handout, and have them define those elected offices in their own words on the BallotReady handout for this lesson.
7. Give students 15-20 minutes to independently research and record information on their assigned elected officials.
8. Bring students back together, and inform them that they will each have five minutes to teach their group about the responsibilities of each elected official they researched and to answer any questions. Instruct students to listen, take notes, and ask questions when they are not teaching. Set a digital timer for 5 minutes and make sure that students are rotating roles in 5 minute increments.
9. To end class, bring students back together ask them to independently complete the exit slip to turn in before the end of class.



Lesson 3 Student Handout

Do Now: Today, we will be learning about the many public officials that we have the opportunity to vote for. While the exact offices we vote for can vary from district to district and election to election, it is true across the United States that all elected officials have the opportunity to impact the lives of their constituents (that's us!). In the chart below, brainstorm any five elected officials that you know of, and explain what you think they are responsible for doing in that role.

So we are all on the same page, an elected official is someone who works in a public office because they were elected by the people they serve.

Elected Office	What are the duties and responsibilities of this elected office?
<i>President of the United States</i>	<i>Leader of U.S. government, commander-in-chief of military, executes and enforces the laws</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Levels of U.S. Government: While the exact offices on each ballot can vary throughout the United States, all Americans vote for officials across three levels of government. In your small group, use your collective background knowledge to discuss and agree upon what you believe to be the definition of each type of government listed below.

Federal _____

State _____

Local _____



Jigsaw: In your small group, equally divide and research the following state and local offices. Be prepared to teach your group members about each of your assigned offices and answer any questions they may have.

*Note: Not all of these elected officials will be on the ballot in every district or in every election cycle. However, these are ten of the most common elected officials, so it is likely that you may encounter them at some point as a voter!

Elected Official	State or Local	Description of Responsibilities
County Commissioner		
Attorney General		
State Comptroller		
District Attorney		
County Clerk		
Governor		
Circuit Court Judge		
Secretary of State		
County Assessor		
Sheriff		



Closing/Exit Slip:

1. Identify one elected official that you were previously unaware of.
2. In your own words, explain the roles and responsibilities of this official.
3. Why would it be important for a voter to be informed when choosing a candidate for this office? What ability does this official have to impact the lives of their constituents?



Lesson 4:

Using BallotReady to Prepare to Vote

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2, and 6-8.4;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2, and 9-10.4;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1, 11-12.2, 11-12.4, 11-12.9;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.7, W.8.8, and 8.9;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7, 9-10.8, and 9-10.9;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7, 11-12.8, and 11-12.9

Essential Questions:

How do voters use research and factual information to make informed choices when voting?
What are the different political offices that constituents vote for?
How do local electoral offices impact the daily lives of constituents?
When and where do I go to vote?
What issues do I care about, and how should I factor in those issues when deciding for whom to vote?
What is on a ballot, and how do you fill it out correctly (write-ins, referendums, uncontested, more than two options, vacancies, etc.)?

Objective:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to...

1. gather information from digital sources to support analysis, reflection, and research on political candidates.

Materials Needed:

1. A classroom set of computers or laptops is necessary for this lesson.
2. Copy of BallotReady student handout for each student.

Procedure:

1. Do Now: (See student handout): In your opinion, what makes a candidate qualified for office? Discuss answers as a class.
2. After sharing responses to the Do Now, have the BallotReady website pulled up and projected on the screen at the front of the classroom. *Note: We suggest that teachers type in the school's address, to show students how to get started with the BallotReady



voter guide. If each student has access to a computer, have them type in their home address.

- a. Please note that the BallotReady website and the services are not directed at children under 13. Do not have children under 13 type in their home addresses. We suggest using your school's address as an alternative. If student's type in the school's address, explain that the candidates on the ballot may be slightly different than those they would see on a ballot based on their home address, because their home address may be in a different polling area, precinct, or district.
3. Once the voter guide is pulled up, take students on a short tour of the layout of the website. Make sure to note:
 - a. The various elected offices listed on the left-hand side of the website
 - b. The Biography, Stances, and Endorsements information that appears once you click on the name of a candidate (if applicable for the elected office shown)
 - c. Scroll to the bottom of the voter guide, and note the text that says "This is not an official vote." Remind students that the voter guide that they are looking at is a voter preparation tool, and not an actual method of casting an official ballot.
 - d. Instruct students to ignore the "Make a Plan to Vote" icon. We will use this at the end of the lesson *after* students have made their ballot selections.
4. Pick an elected office from the left-hand side menu (we suggest choosing a lesser-known office) and model/"think aloud" your thought process for choosing a candidate. This should not have to include any information about your political preferences, but rather a focus on the kinds of information that a voter might find important in choosing a candidate. The think-aloud could include considering the relative strengths and weaknesses of each candidate's biographical information (if available). For example, how do you view the candidates education history or previous experience? Continue to model your thought process by comparing the issue stances of at least two candidates on a chosen topic, noting similarities and differences between the candidates on that topic.
 - a. Please note: When it says "No stance information currently available," this means that BallotReady was unable to aggregate this information or confirm its validity. In these instances, we suggest encouraging students to look for further information on candidates' websites by clicking on the link icon under the candidate's name.
5. Check for understanding: After modeling how to find one similarity and one difference between the candidates' stances on a chosen issue, have the students find one more similarity or difference between the candidates' stances, and record that similarity or difference on the provided companion handout (see student handout).
6. Continue modeling how to navigate the BallotReady website by doing a "think aloud" about the different endorsements that the candidates have received. Your "think aloud" should include (1) what organizations have endorsed each candidate, and (2) what those organizations do/might do, and (3) what those endorsements indicate about the candidate.
7. Have students pick a different endorsement from the one that you modeled, and record the following information on their student handout: (1) What endorsing organization they chose, (2) what that organization is/does (have students click on the links next to the



endorsement to help them get more information about the organization), and (3) an inference about what the endorsement says about the candidate.

8. Before releasing students to fill out their voter guide independently, draw their attention to the “Add to my Ballot” icon by each candidate’s name. Remind them that they need to use this icon to make their selections for each elected office.
9. Depending on the length of the ballot in your district, give students 20-30 minutes to make ballot selections independently.
10. If students are able to finish filling out their voter guide, have them print it (if available), or have them email their completed ballots to themselves (if available). If students are able to print their ballots, have them either take it with them to their polling place (if they are eligible to vote), or have them share and discuss their completed ballots with their parents.
11. Finally, have students complete the last question on the student handout as an exit slip.



Lesson 4 Student Handout

Do Now: In your opinion, what makes a candidate qualified for office?

Considering Your Candidates:

1. **Stances:** Now that your teacher has shown you how to think about similarities and differences between candidates on one issue, find one more similarity or difference between the candidates' stances on that same issue, and record that similarity or difference below.

2. **Endorsements:** Now that your teacher has shown you how to think about endorsements, complete the following:
 - a. Pick a candidate, and write down an organization that endorses that candidate, other than the organization your teacher showed you:

 - b. Write down what you think that organization does (if you're not sure, click on the link next to the name of that organization)

 - c. Make an inference: What does the endorsement you chose tell you about candidate?



Closing/Exit Slip: After using the BallotReady website, reflect on what characteristics were the most important for you as you chose candidates. Below, explain 3 of those characteristics. Additionally, write down the names of 4 political offices (listed on the left-hand side of the BallotReady website) that you chose candidates for.

Characteristics of a Candidate:

1. _____ was important to me when choosing candidates because
_____.
2. _____ was important to me when choosing candidates because
_____.
3. _____ was important to me when choosing candidates because
_____.

I was able to choose candidates for the following offices:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



About the Authors

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