

**PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT
HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS
DUE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2008**

REMEMBER –
You have a quiz on page 2
of this sheet on **Friday!**

I. Responsible Citizenship

The people, or citizens, are a powerful force in a representative democracy like the United States. In order for democracy to work, the citizens must participate. Voting is the one of the most important ways for a citizen to take part in the democratic process.

Get Sharp Tip
A president can win the election without getting the majority of the popular vote.
This happened in 1876 (Hayes), 1888 (Harrison), and 2000 (Bush).

Some things for good citizens to do:

Be informed! Learn about political issues, both in Washington, D.C., and in your own backyard. Pay attention to the news, ask questions, and read about things that affect your life. Find out what's going on in the world, the nation, your state, and your community. Think about your own views on the issues. Discuss them with friends and family members. Get to know about the elected officials who represent you in your city, county, state, and country.

Vote! It is the primary right of a citizen. A person cannot have a voice in the choices or operations of the city, state, or nation if he or she does not vote. Even if you are too young to vote, you can think about how you would vote on an issue or which candidates you would support.

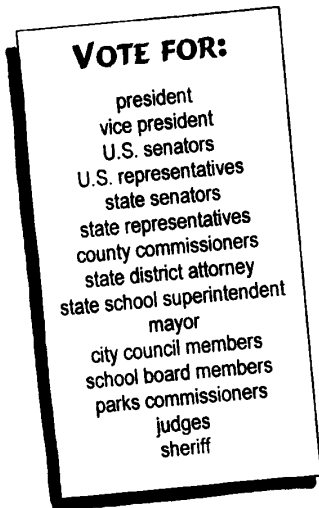
Get involved! Volunteer for a community service or other organization that you think deserves help and attention. A good citizen gives something of herself or himself to make the country or local area a better place. When you become an adult, think about running for a public office. You can run for president, mayor, or a position in the U.S. Congress, state government, city council, school board, or many other government offices.

How a President is Elected

Every four years, American voters elect a president and vice president. This election is somewhat different from elections for other officials, in that the president and vice president are not chosen directly by the people. In the presidential election, the votes people cast actually choose electors. The president is then chosen by these electors (the Electoral College).

The **Electoral College** is a group of 538 members (called **electors**) that have been chosen by the states. Each state has a number of electors equal to its total number of U.S. senators and representatives. In December, after the election, the Electoral College members meet to cast their votes for the president. Usually, the party that got the most votes in the November election wins all the electoral votes for the state. In January, the votes are presented during a session of Congress. To win the presidential election, a candidate must get a majority (270) of the electoral votes. If no candidate wins a majority, the House of Representatives chooses the president. This happened in 1800 (with the election of Thomas Jefferson) and 1824 (with the election of John Quincy Adams).

II. Vocabulary Review



Some things for good citizens to know:

- A **democracy** is a government that is governed by its people, all of whom have the same basic rights and freedoms.
- A **representative democracy** is a democracy in which the people vote for officials to represent them in certain government positions.
- **The Constitution** is the document that describes the structure of the government. It also assures and protects citizens' rights, including the right to vote.
- **Political parties** are organizations that put candidates forward for political offices.
- **The platform** of a political party is a statement of the party's policies and principles for voters to consider.
- An **election** is the process of voting to choose public officials.
- A **primary election** is an election held to choose candidates for the main election.
- **Candidates** are people who are running for political offices.
- To **register** is to officially sign up to vote. (Citizens must register before they can vote.)
- A **residency requirement** is a length of time that someone must live in a state before being able to vote there.
- A **ballot** is a list of candidates used by the voter to place his or her vote.
- A **voting district** is the place where a citizen lives and is registered to vote.
- A **polling place** is the location people go to vote in their district.
- **Absentee ballots** are votes mailed in by people who cannot be present at the polls on the election date.
- **The popular vote** is the number of votes cast by individual voters in a presidential election.
- **Electoral College votes** are votes cast in a presidential election by electors chosen by each state (See page 1).
- **The turnout** is the number or percentage of eligible voters who actually vote in an election.
- An **initiative** is an issue placed on the ballot for citizens to decide by vote.
- A **recall election** can be held to decide whether to remove an elected public official from office before the end of his or her term.
- A **recount** is a second counting of the ballots when the outcome of an election is very close.
- A **referendum** is a vote on a specific issue, such as a city's budget or a building project.

III. Questions and STUDY FOR A QUIZ

Use the readings to answer the following questions in complete sentences on a separate sheet of loose-leaf paper. Make sure you read all of the parts and study the vocabulary on page 2. There will be a quiz on Friday. **COME TO CLASS ON TIME!**

1. What is one of the most important ways in which a citizen can participate in democracy?
2. How many electors are in the Electoral College, total?
3. Who chooses the president if there is a tie in the Electoral College?
4. Compare and contrast an election and a recall election.