My First Presidential Election

Fun and games to help elementary school kids learn about the 2012 election
Do you want to vote for our next president? You have to register before you can vote!

Start by filling out your voter registration card.

First name: __________________________

Middle name: ________________________

Last name: __________________________

Street address: _______________________

City: ________________________________

State: _______ Zip code: ______________

Date of birth

Month: _______ Day: _______

Year: _______

Telephone number: (______) _______ - _______

Signature: X ___________________________
It's finally here! Today is the day the American people choose the next leader of the United States: the ____________________. That's what I want to be when I grow up! Lots of adults (including my mom and dad!) line up at the polls to ______________.

The election season starts with candidates holding events, like speeches and fundraisers, as part of their ____________________. When Dad drives me to school, I see volunteers holding signs that say, “Be the best with West,” in support of Wendy West, one of the candidates for president. Catchy phrases like this are called ____________________.

To learn more about the people running for president, my parents and I watch a ________________ on TV, where the candidates answer questions about their ideas to improve our country. Wendy West says her opponent created TV commercials, or ________________, that make fun of her. Who knew politics could be so mean?

At the polling place, my parents get the official paper they use to vote, called a ________________. After voting, my parents get colorful “I voted” stickers.
The presidential election, continued

A man outside the polling station asks my mom who she voted for and why. My dad tells me the man is doing an_________________________ to try to predict the winner.

My dad says just because a candidate wins the most individual votes in a presidential election, it doesn't mean that person automatically wins. What guarantees a victory? Getting at least 270 electoral votes. “Remember,” he says, “the ___________________________ determines who wins, not the ____________________________.”

Once the votes are counted and the winner identified (we stay up way past my bedtime!), candidates make ___________________________ to celebrate their victory or concede to the winner. My family listens to both sides. Does yours?

See you on January 20, 2013, when I visit Washington, DC to see the president officially sworn in on _____________________________. Maybe I’ll get a picture of the president’s kids entering their home – you know, the ____________________________!
If I were your next president, the first thing I would do is solve _________________.

Next, I would celebrate by ________________. ________________ would drive me around in my ________________ to a ________________ where ________________ would gather to ________________. I would tell everyone to call me ________________.

For my first presidential party, I’d invite ________________ to come to the White House for ________________. We would eat ________________, ________________, and ________________, and then we would ________________. We would end the evening by ________________.

But my presidency isn’t all about ________________. No, I believe in ________________. I will always stand up for ________________ people. And no matter what, when others give up, I will continue to ________________. I promise that after being president for ________________, I will ________________ again. I will be an extremely ________________ leader. At least, I will try to be. And that’s why you should vote for me! Thank you!
My campaign poster

How can you convince people to vote for you? Draw a poster for your campaign! Remember to include:

- Your name
- The office you’re running for
- The year you’re running (Hint: You have to be at least 35 years old to run for president!)
Mapping the election

It’s an election scavenger hunt! Answer the questions and follow the directions on this page to color, label, and decorate the map of the U.S. on the next page.

Scavenger hunt items:

• Cut out the picture of the White House below, then glue it onto the map near where it belongs.

• What state is President Obama from? Find that state on the map, write the state’s name, and color that state green. Cut out the picture of President Obama below, then paste it by the state he’s from.

• What state is presidential candidate Mitt Romney from? Find that state on the map, write the state’s name, and color that state yellow. Cut out the picture of Mitt Romney below, then paste it by the state he’s from.

• What state is vice presidential candidate Paul Ryan from? Find that state on the map, write the state’s name, and color that state purple. Cut out the picture of Paul Ryan below, then paste it by the state he’s from.

• What state is Vice President Joe Biden from? Find that state on the map, write the state’s name, and color that state orange. Cut out the picture of Vice President Joe Biden below, then paste it by the state he’s from.

BONUS: Look up when and where the 2012 Republican National Convention was held. Find that state on the map, write the state’s name, and color that state brown.

BONUS: Look up when and where the 2012 Democratic National Convention was held. Find that state on the map, write the state’s name, and color that state tan.
Mapping the election, continued
Election word find

Can you find the following words?
ballet, campaign, campaign slogan, candidate, debate, Election Day, electoral college, exit poll, First Family, Inauguration Day, incumbent, political ads, political party, popular vote, president, speeches, vice president, vote, White House
Political ads

In political ads, candidates want to influence you and get your vote - so you have to pay close attention. Can you spot the positive, negative, and exaggerated political ads about ice cream? (Yum!)

- A positive ad says nice things about the candidate.
- A negative ad says bad things about the opposing candidate.
- An exaggeration bends or stretches the truth.

Circle the positive ad  Draw a ? over the exaggerated ad  Cross out the negative ad

“My opponent secretly hates ice cream.”

“I like ice cream and I support people eating it.”

“ICE CREAM HAS CALCIUM, JUST LIKE MILK. THAT’S WHY WE SHOULD ALL EAT ICE CREAM MORE OFTEN, MAYBE EVEN EVERY DAY! MOST DOCTORS AGREE WITH ME.”
The White House is where the president lives and works. Below are some important and interesting areas in the house at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Oval Office – This is the president’s office. It’s shaped like an oval.

West Wing - This is where the president’s cabinet meets and works.

Executive residence – This is where the president’s family lives.

White House bowling alley – The White House has a bowling alley in the basement!

White House family theater – The White House has a theater in the East Wing that seats 40 where the president can practice speeches and watch movies!

As president, what would you add to the White House - a chocolate river, a skating rink, a giant play structure? Draw your two dream additions below.
My turn to vote!

Election Day ballot: Cast your vote for president below! To vote, draw a line connecting the arrow’s head to its tail next to your selection. Remember, you can only vote for one candidate.

EXAMPLE: JOHN DOE Independent

STEWART ALEXANDER
Socialist

GARY JOHNSON
Libertarian

BARACK OBAMA
Democrat

STEPHEN ROLLINS
Independent

MITT ROMNEY
Republican

Did you cast your vote? Now it's time to let everyone know you participated in the democratic process. Cut out this badge that says, “I voted!”
# Election glossary

These terms will help you understand the presidential election—and they’ll help you complete the activities in this booklet!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballot</td>
<td>What a voter uses to vote in an election. In some places, it’s a piece of paper; in others, it’s a touch screen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign</td>
<td>All the activities designed to get a candidate elected, including speeches, debates, and political ads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign slogan</td>
<td>Catchy phrases that help voters remember a candidate’s name and ideas, like <em>Be the best with West</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td>A person running for elected office (like the presidency)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate</td>
<td>An event where opposing candidates answer questions about their ideas and accomplishments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election Day</td>
<td>The first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral college</td>
<td>To win the presidential election, a candidate must get at least 270 electoral votes. Each state gets a certain number of electoral votes based on the number of senators and congressmen/congresswomen it has. For example, California has two senators and 53 congressmen/congresswomen, so California gets 55 electoral votes. On Election Day, the candidate who gets the most popular votes in each state (except Maine and Nebraska) gets all of that state’s electoral votes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exit poll</td>
<td>After you vote, a survey worker right outside the polling place may ask how you voted and what issues influenced your vote. These answers are used to predict who won and why.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Family</td>
<td>The family of the president of the United States.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Election glossary, continued

**Inauguration Day**  
The day when the president is sworn into office, typically on January 20.

**Incumbent**  
The person who already holds a political office and who is running for the same job again.

**Political ads**  
These commercials aren’t much different from the ones you see for cereal, shoes, and toys: the creators want to influence you and get your support. In this case, your support means voting for a certain candidate or law.

**Political party**  
A political party doesn’t require an invitation. It’s a group of people who have similar visions for the country. They nominate candidates and work to get them elected. The two major parties in the U.S. are Democrats and Republicans. There are other parties often called third parties, such as the Independent Party, Progressive Party, Green Party, Libertarian Party, and Constitution Party.

**Popular vote**  
The votes by individual people for each candidate in an election. In a presidential race, the person with the most popular votes does not necessarily win! (see electoral college)

**President**  
The president is the leader of our country. Some of the president’s responsibilities include signing or vetoing laws, keeping the American people informed, and command the military. Presidents must be born in the U.S. or the child of parents born in the U.S., at least 35 years old, and a resident in the U.S. for at least 14 years.

**Speeches**  
During a campaign, candidates speak to many people about their vision for the country and make promises about what they’ll do if they win. When the election is over, the losing candidate makes a concession speech thanking supporters but admitting they lost the election. The winning candidate makes a victory speech thanking voters and outlining plans for office.
### Election glossary, continued

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<tr>
<td><strong>Vice president</strong></td>
<td>The vice president is the president of the U.S. Senate and is first in line to replace the president in case of an emergency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vote</strong></td>
<td>To officially express your opinion by choosing a candidate or supporting or not supporting a proposed law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White House</strong></td>
<td>The house where the president of the United States lives and works. Also, the president’s family lives here and the president’s staff works here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>