

Reinforcing Citizenship Skills

Find out where you can obtain a voter registration card. Make a list of the information you will need for the card. Share your information with the class.

Cooperative Learning

Work with a partner to collect print ads that advertise a political candidate. Find out what office the candidate is running for, what political party is sponsoring the candidate, and what the candidate's views are. Share your findings with the class.

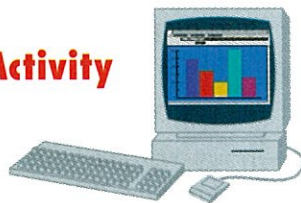
Focusing on Your Community

Investigate the political preferences of your community. Are most voters registered as Democrats or Republicans? Over the last three presidential elections, how did the majority of your community vote—Democratic or Republican? At the local level of government, which party does your community vote for most consistently? Report your findings to the class.

Technology Activity

Using E-Mail

Search the Internet for the e-mail addresses of the Democratic or Republican National Committees. You may use the following key words to focus your search: **Democratic Party; Republican Party; e-mail address, Congress.** Write

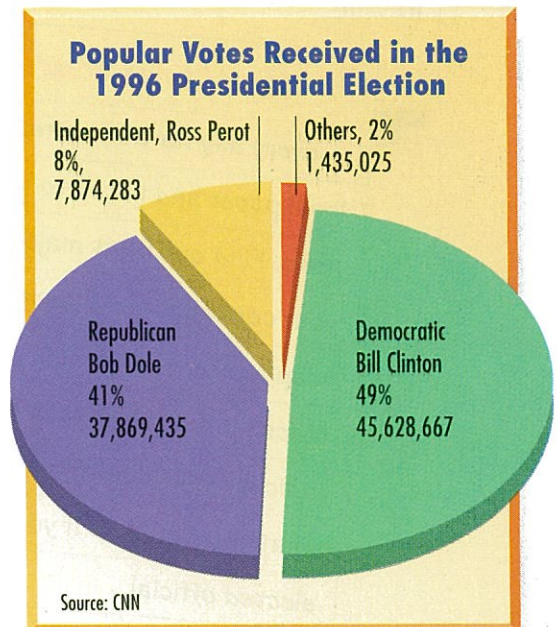


and send electronic mail to the party of your choice asking the party's position on issues that concern you and your classmates.

Analyzing Visuals

The following circle graph shows the popular votes in the 1996 presidential election. Study the graph, then answer the questions below.

1. By what margin in both the number and percentage of votes did Democratic party candidate Bill Clinton defeat Republican candidate Bob Dole?
2. What percentage of the popular vote did the third-party candidate receive?
3. How might the results have been different if there had been only two candidates?



Voting and Elections

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

The right to vote is one of the fundamental rights of citizens in a democratic society. Yet many Americans do not exercise this right. Contact the local chapter of the League of Women Voters or the county board of election commissioners to learn about the voting requirements in your state. Find out when and where a citizen can register to vote.

Find out also what forms a citizen needs to complete.

Working in Your Community

After you have obtained the information, conduct a poll in your neighborhood to learn who is registered to vote. If you have neighbors who are not registered, you might encourage them to do so and tell them the exact procedure they need to follow to register. ■

Your Civics Journal

Every day for a week, read the local paper and listen to local TV news. Find out what major issues your community is facing, and keep a record of them in your civics journal. Next to each issue, indicate your position and tell what you would do if you were an elected official.



Celebrate
being 18!

with your

first **VOTE**

REGISTER TO VOTE

in class

REGISTER

TO

VOTE

HERE

I REGISTERED TO VOTE TODAY



Voting

FOCUS

TERMS TO KNOW

electorate, literacy test, apathy

OBJECTIVES

- Discuss citizens' responsibilities in **preparing to vote**.
- Identify **who votes** in a typical presidential election, and list three reasons why some people do not vote.

Voting is one of the major responsibilities of citizenship. It is the only time that citizens can directly bring about change in their government. Almost all Americans 18 years old or older have the right to vote. Like other rights, however, the right to vote is not absolute. It is subject to certain regulations and restrictions. The most significant regulation concerns who is actually eligible to vote on Election Day.

To be eligible to vote in most states, a person must be at least 18 years old, a resident of the state for a specified period of time, and a citizen of the United States. In most states, a person must be registered in order to vote. Registration usually takes place sometime before Election Day. (See Citizenship Skills, How to Register to Vote, on page 158.) The person's name is then added to a list of registered voters. On Election Day, election officials

use this list to verify that the people who vote are eligible and to prevent people from voting more than once.

Preparing to Vote

Registering is only one part of getting ready to vote. It is equally important to learn about the candidates and the issues involved in the election. Voters can get this information from newspaper and magazine articles and from radio and television news programs or talk shows. Political parties also provide information about their candidates and their party's programs. Responsible voters use these different sources of information to prepare themselves for voting.

Most voters look for candidates whose opinions on particular issues are similar to their own. Voters who are concerned about protecting the environment, for example, would probably favor a candidate who advocates strong controls on pollution. Every election focuses on one or more issues. Responsible voters learn about those issues and about the candidates' stands on them.

Television News Television is one good source of information about candidates and issues. *From what other sources can voters get information?*



In a presidential election, a great deal of information about the candidates and the issues is usually available. On Election Day, however, voters also select candidates for local, state, and congressional offices. Although it is more difficult to learn about local candidates and issues than presidential ones, responsible voters try to get as much information as possible before casting their ballots.

Who Votes?

Collectively, the people who are eligible to vote in an election are called the **electorate**. Not everyone in the electorate votes, however. Between 1924 and 1992 turnout in presidential elections ranged from 48.9 to 63 percent. In the 1996 presidential election, only about 48.8 percent of the voting age population actually voted.

Factors That Limit Voting

Why don't more people vote? Some are not allowed to, for one reason or another. For example, inmates of mental hospitals are not allowed to vote in any state. In most cases people who have been convicted of serious crimes are denied the right to vote. In addition, thousands of people cannot vote in state and local elections because they moved recently and do not yet meet their new state's residency requirements. Others fail to vote because they are ill or away from home on Election Day.

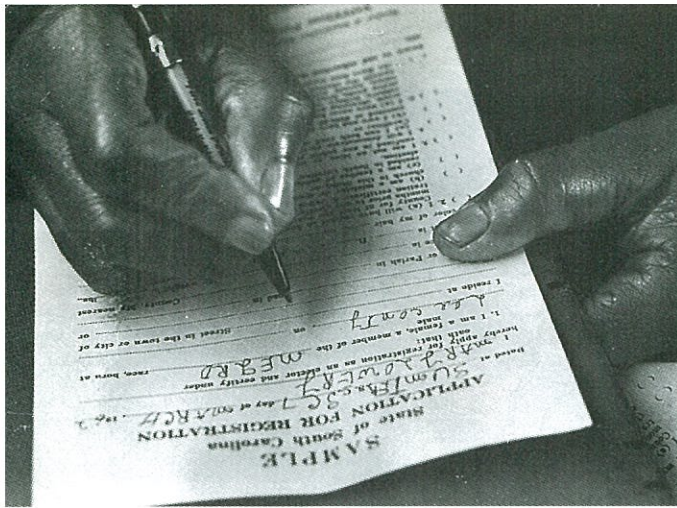
Voter registration appears to be a major obstacle to voting. Some people find the registration requirements too complicated. Others say it is too difficult to get to a voter registration office during the working day. (Some states, however, now have mail-in registration.) Still others forget to reregister when they move.



Voter Registration Citizens must register in order to vote. *What is the purpose of registration?*

People without permanent addresses often cannot register because they do not meet state residency requirements. A new law now allows people to register to vote when they renew their driver's licenses. It is hoped that this will encourage more people to vote.

In the past, racial discrimination often prevented African Americans from registering to vote. Several southern states discriminated against their African American citizens by imposing poll taxes or by requiring people to pass a literacy test in order to register. The **literacy test** was a test given to prove that the voter could read and write and understand public issues. In some cases, whites were not required to take the test. In others, whites and African Americans were



Racial Discrimination Some southern states required African Americans to pass difficult tests to prevent them from voting. *How did Congress deal with this?*

given different tests: Whites only had to sign their names, whereas African Americans had to explain complicated sections of the United States Constitution or the state constitution. Congress outlawed literacy tests in 1965. Since then, African American voter registration has risen sharply due, in part, to well-organized registration drives. The number of elected African American officials around the country has also increased in recent years.

Even among those people who are properly registered to vote, millions fail to do so. One reason for this is **apathy**, or lack of interest. Many people are not familiar with the candidates or the issues and do not care which candidate running in a particular election wins. Some people decide not to vote because they do not believe their vote will make any difference. That is not true, of course, but it is easy to see why some people feel that way, especially during presidential elections. Why bother to vote, some people ask, when public opinion polls predict the probable winner weeks before Election Day?

Reasons for Voting

People should exercise their right to vote for several reasons. Voting gives citizens a chance to choose their government leaders. It also gives them an opportunity to voice their opinion on the past performance of public officials. If the voters are dissatisfied, they can elect new leaders. Voting also allows citizens to express their opinions on public issues.

Taking an Interest

Some people find it difficult to take an active interest in politics. All concerned citizens should try to do so, however, because every level of government affects their lives. Perhaps the school board needs to raise money to build a new school. The local government might want to pass new regulations to allow industrial development in the community. State and federal governments might want to increase taxes. By participating in the political process and by using their right to vote, citizens determine who will make these decisions and influence how the decisions are made.

★ SECTION 1 REVIEW ★

UNDERSTANDING VOCABULARY

Define electorate, literacy test, apathy.

REVIEWING OBJECTIVES

- 1 What responsibilities do citizens have in preparing to vote?
- 2 Who votes in a typical presidential election, and what are three reasons why some people do not vote?

Great American Documents

The Twenty-sixth Amendment

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, thousands of young people were sent to Vietnam to fight for their country. Many were only 18, 19, or 20 years old, old enough to die in a foreign war but not to vote for—

or against—the leaders who sent them there to fight.

Think About It

As you read the following excerpt, think about why the right to vote is so important in a democracy.

Looking to the Past

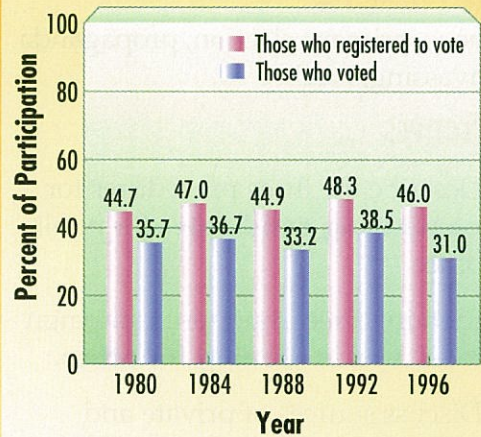
The voting age in this country has been 21 since colonial times. Although the Constitution left the determination of voting rules for congressional elections to the states, the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution refers specifically to 21 in a discussion of voting rights.

Amending the Constitution

When the young soldiers in Vietnam took up the slogan “Old enough to fight; old enough to vote,” the nation’s leaders finally listened. On March 23, 1971, Congress passed the Twenty-sixth Amendment to the Constitution, which says:

The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.

Participation of Young Voters (18–20) in Presidential Elections



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 453, No. 466; *USA Today*, November 11, 1996.

By June 30, the required three-fourths of the states had ratified the amendment. On July 1, 18-year-olds were officially given the right to vote.

INTERPRETING SOURCES

- 1 Why did the young soldiers in Vietnam feel they deserved the right to vote?
- 2 Why did Congress have to pass a constitutional amendment instead of a law to lower the voting age?
- 3 Do you think the voting age should be lowered further, to 16? Why or why not?



Election Campaigns

FOCUS

TERMS TO KNOW

caucus, primary election, propaganda, canvassing, PAC

OBJECTIVES

- Describe the three procedures for **nominating candidates** for public office.
- Identify three important campaign tools used in **running for office**.
- Discuss sources of private and public funds for **financing election campaigns**.

In the United States political system, every election is a two-part process. First, each party nominates its candidates for public office, and then the candidates run against each other for election. The first part of this process, the nomination of candidates, varies widely from state to state.

Nominating Candidates

In state, local, and congressional elections, a candidate can be nominated to run for a public office in one of three ways—in a caucus, a nominating convention, or a primary election. Each state decides which method it will use.

In presidential elections, the candidates are chosen by a combination of these methods.

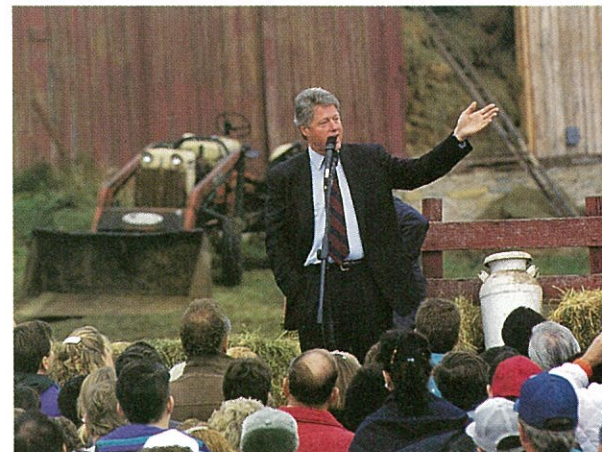
Caucuses

A **caucus** is a meeting of political party members to conduct party business. Originally, the caucus was a private meeting of important people in the community. Sometime in the mid-1700s, it was used to nominate people for public office. Later, as political parties developed, they used caucuses as well. Today caucuses are used primarily for nominating candidates for local office. Some states also hold caucuses for nominating presidential candidates.

Nominating Conventions

By the 1830s, caucuses were considered undemocratic and became very unpopular. People criticized them because only party leaders were involved in nominating candidates. Nominating conventions, which were considered more democratic, replaced caucuses. The party members in a particular area elected

Caucuses The voters in Iowa select their candidates in party caucuses. *How does a caucus differ from a primary election?*



delegates to attend the nominating convention. These delegates would then choose the party's candidates. Nominating conventions are used today in only a few places to choose candidates for state and local offices. Presidential nominating conventions are discussed later in this section.

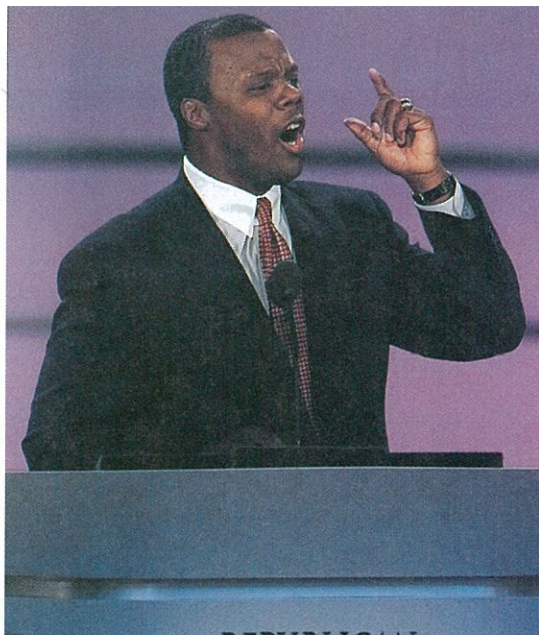
Primary Elections

A **primary election** is held among party members to nominate candidates to run for office. Primaries may be either closed or open. Closed primaries are more common. In a closed primary, only declared party members may vote. Voters can add their names to the list of one party or the other either when they register to vote or when they go to the polling place. Then, in the primary election, registered Democrats and Republicans are directed to voting machines or are given ballots that list only their party's candidates.

In an open primary, voters do not have to register with one of the parties. They choose the party to vote for after entering the voting booth. The major advantage of an open primary is that the privacy of voters is preserved. Critics of open primaries, however, say that they undermine party loyalty because a voter can switch from party to party. They also point out that open primaries enable the voters of one party to cross over and vote in the opposing party's primary. In this way, party members can choose weak opponents to run against their own party's candidates.

Getting on the Primary Ballot

How do candidates get their names on a primary ballot to begin with? In most primary elections, party members

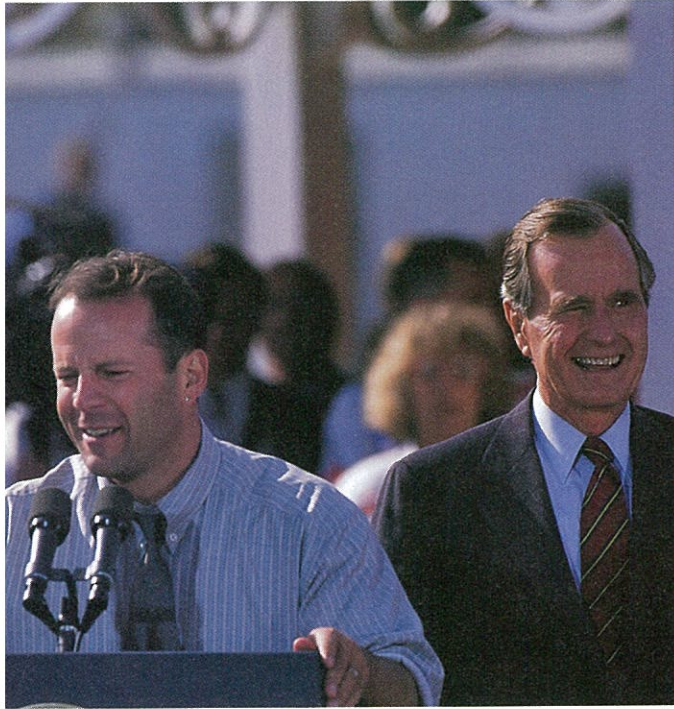


Candidate Selection Congressional candidate J.C. Watts addressed the Republican convention in 1996. *What happens at national conventions?*

meet and select a candidate for each office. This list of candidates, called a slate, is then placed on the party's ballot. Usually, each candidate also circulates a nominating petition that a certain number of party members must sign. If no one challenges these candidates, they run unopposed in the primary election. Party members who wish to challenge the party's nominees, however, may also circulate nominating petitions for other candidates. If these petitions receive enough signatures, these candidates are also placed on the primary ballot.

Nominating Presidential Candidates

The Democratic and Republican parties each choose their presidential and vice-presidential nominees at a national convention held during the summer of election year. Party delegates from all the states meet at this convention to vote for the candidate of their choice.



Campaign Techniques Film star Bruce Willis appeared at a rally with President George Bush during the 1992 election campaign. What is the technique of using celebrities called?

The nominating process actually begins in February of that year, when candidates seeking the parties' nomination run in the New Hampshire primary. From then until June, potential candidates run in other primaries or state caucuses throughout the country.

In some states with primary elections, voters vote directly for the candidates they prefer. In others, they vote for delegates to the national convention who support a particular candidate.

Although most states hold primaries, several, including Iowa, Minnesota, Maine, and Michigan, hold caucuses where party delegates meet and vote on presidential candidates.

Each state sends a certain number of delegates to attend each party's national

convention. The state's population determines the number of delegates. At the convention the candidate who receives a majority of the delegates' votes wins the presidential nomination. This candidate then chooses a vice-presidential running mate. Together these candidates are called "the ticket."

Running for Office

Nominating candidates is only the first part of the election process. Once candidates are chosen, they spend several weeks or months in an election campaign, trying to convince the public to vote for them. Each candidate has a campaign organization to help run the campaign. In some races, such as for the city council or the school board, a candidate's campaign organization may have only a few workers. A presidential campaign, on the other hand, can involve thousands of people.

A campaign organization is responsible for acquainting voters with the candidate's name, face, and position on the issues. It must also convince voters to like and trust the candidate. Each party uses several different techniques, or campaign tools, to accomplish this.

Endorsements

One common campaign tool is the endorsement. When a famous and popular person supports or campaigns for a candidate, it is an endorsement. The endorser may be a movie star, a famous athlete, a popular politician, or some other well-known individual. In 1996, for example, the well-known singer and actress Barbra Streisand often campaigned for the Democratic candidate, Bill Clinton. The idea behind endorsements is

that if voters like the person making the endorsement, they may decide to vote for the candidate.

Endorsements are a kind of propaganda technique. **Propaganda** is an attempt to promote a particular person or idea. Propaganda techniques are a means of trying to persuade or influence voters to choose one candidate over another.

Endorsements are only one type of propaganda technique used in political campaigns. You will read about others in Chapter 8.

Advertising and Image Molding

How the voters perceive a candidate is often more important than whether a candidate is qualified. Political campaigns therefore try to create an image of the candidate that will appeal to voters.

Political campaigns spend much time and money in an effort to create the right image for a candidate. Much of that money goes for advertising. Political advertisements are a very effective campaign tool that allow a party to present only its candidate's position or point of view. They also enable a candidate to attack an opponent without offering an opportunity to respond.

For local campaigns, a party may do little more than buy newspaper advertisements and hang up posters. In state and national campaigns, however, a great deal of campaign advertising is done on television. Television ads can present quick and dramatic images of a candidate and his or her ideas. For example, the image of a candidate talking with unemployed steelworkers conveys a concern for industry and employment as well as a concern for people and their problems. Such television images tend to stay in the viewer's mind.

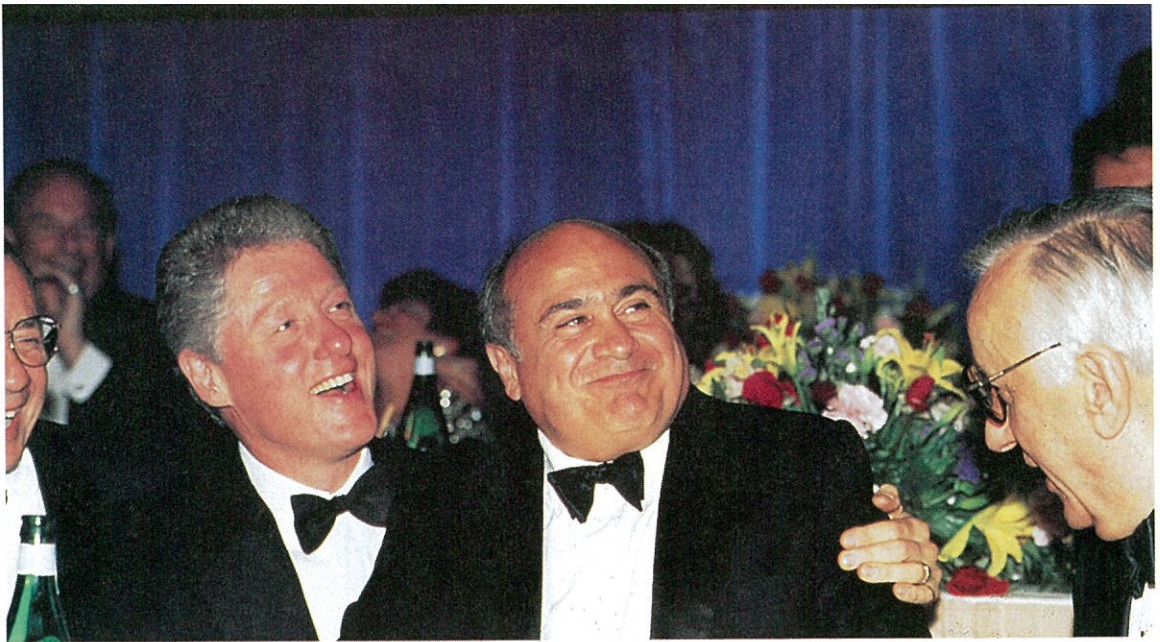


Congresswoman Maxine Waters of California Politicians use symbols such as the American flag to suggest that they represent the nation's best interests. *What other tools are used to build a candidate's image?*

Using Television

Television advertising has come under increasing criticism. Because most ads are only 30 seconds long, they do not allow candidates to discuss issues and ideas in detail. In addition, some candidates use TV ads to create negative images of their opponents. Although this "negative campaigning" is often viewed as unfair, it can also be very effective.

In addition to campaign advertisements, television is useful to candidates in other ways. In presidential or state-wide campaigns, candidates often appear in TV news broadcasts or on talk shows answering reporters' questions, making speeches, or talking to voters. Such appearances help them keep their names and faces in front of the voters.



Campaign Funds Actor Danny DeVito joined President Clinton at a fund-raising dinner. *Where else do politicians get funds?*

Canvassing

Another important campaign tool is **canvassing**, or going through neighborhoods asking for votes or taking public opinion polls. At the local level, candidates and campaign workers often “knock on doors” to solicit votes and hand out campaign literature.

At the national level, campaign organizations conduct frequent polls to find out how their candidates are doing. News organizations and public opinion research companies also take polls to see which candidate is leading in a particular election.

Financing Election Campaigns

It takes money to buy the television ads, buttons, bumper stickers, posters, and literature that a candidate needs to run an effective campaign. How much is needed depends on the race.

A small-town mayoral race may require only a few hundred or few thousand dollars. A state legislative or congressional race can cost several hundred thousand dollars. A presidential race can cost hundreds of millions. The 1996 presidential race, for example, is estimated to have cost \$390 million.

Private Funding

Where does all of this money come from? A small portion, probably less than 10 percent, comes from individual donors who feel strongly enough about a candidate to contribute money to his or her campaign. The political parties also work hard all year to raise money for the party’s campaign treasury. They hold \$1,000-a-plate dinners or other fund-raising events such as concerts, rallies, and parties. Often, they also write to party members and ask them for donations.

In addition to money from individuals and fund-raising events, about

Presidential Election Campaign Fund

Do you want \$3 to go to this fund?

If a joint return, does your spouse want \$3 to go to this fund?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note: Checking “Yes” will not change your tax or reduce your refund.

Public Money When taxpayers fill out their income tax forms, they can check off a box to contribute \$3 to the Presidential Election Campaign Fund. *Why was this fund created?*

one-fourth of each party’s funds come from political action committees, better known as PACs. (See Exploring Issues, The High Cost of Running for Office, on page 152.) PACs are political fundraising organizations established by corporations, labor unions, and other special-interest groups. PAC funds come from voluntary contributions of company employees, stockholders, and union members. A PAC uses its funds to support presidential, congressional, and state and local candidates who favor the PAC’s position on issues.

Public Funding

The largest share of the money spent in presidential campaigns comes from the public. Public funding of presidential elections began in the 1970s. At that time, Congress created the Presidential Election Campaign Fund to prevent wealthy candidates from buying their way into office by outspending their opponents. Taxpayers can contribute \$3 to the fund each year by checking off a box on their federal income tax form.

The Presidential Election Campaign Fund allots money for both the primary and general elections. In general, major party candidates can qualify for funds to campaign in the primary elections if they can raise \$100,000 on their own. After the national convention, the two major party candidates receive equal shares of money

from the fund, so long as they agree not to accept any other direct contributions. In 1996 Bill Clinton and Bob Dole each received \$61.8 million. Because Ross Perot captured more than 5 percent of the vote in the 1992 election, he received \$29 million in 1996.

Congress also passed the Federal Election Campaign Act in 1971, which limits individual and PAC contributions to presidential candidates to \$1,000 and \$5,000, respectively. This law was intended to prevent large contributors from buying special favors—such as appointment to public office or changes in the laws—from winning candidates.

★ SECTION 2 REVIEW ★

UNDERSTANDING VOCABULARY

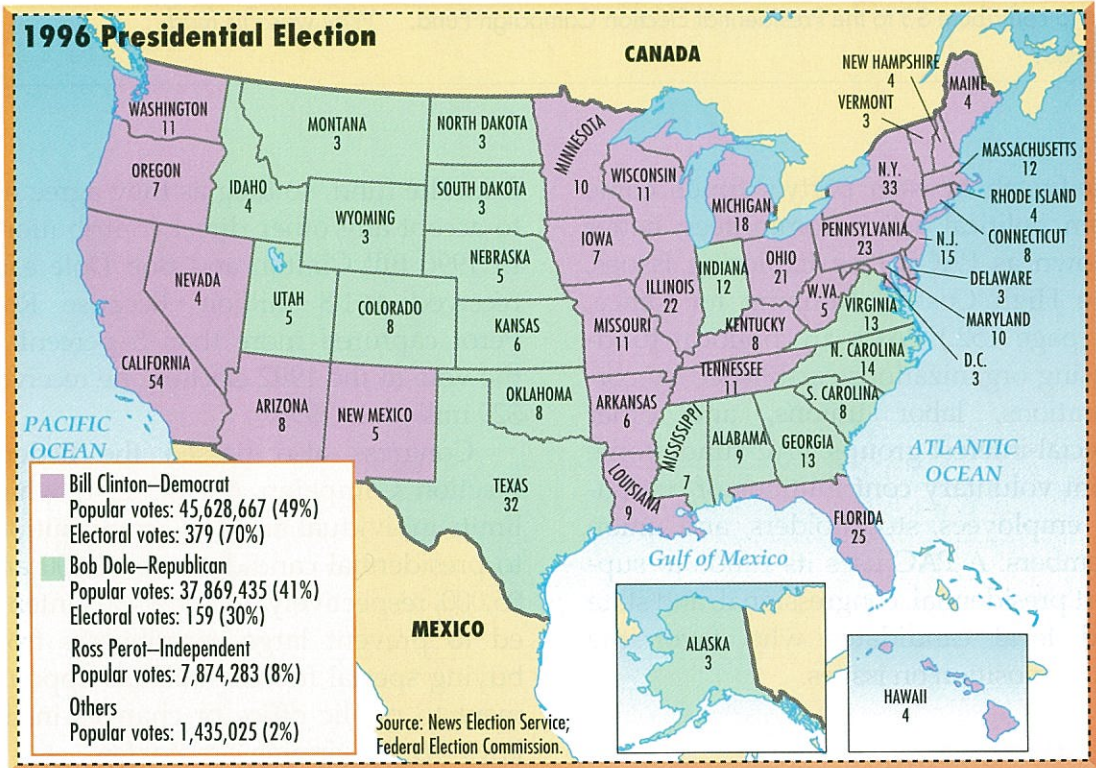
Define caucus, primary election, propaganda, canvassing, PAC.

REVIEWING OBJECTIVES

- 1 What are the three procedures for nominating candidates for public office?
- 2 What are three important campaign tools used in running for office?
- 3 What are some sources of private and public funds for financing election campaigns?



How to Read an Election Map



Some special-purpose maps relate political information to geography. The information includes political boundaries and place-names. Boundaries show the location and size of regions, populations, nations, states, districts, counties, or any other political divisions. Place-names identify the divisions and other features, such as cities and ports.

What This Map Shows

The election map above is an example of a special-purpose map. It shows the results of the presidential election of 1996. The map identifies each state and the number of its electoral votes. The map key explains the meaning of the colors and includes the totals of each candidate's electoral and popular votes.

Use the map and key to answer these questions.

CITIZENSHIP IN ACTION

- 1 Which state has the most electoral votes? Which candidate won this state?
- 2 In which geographic region did Clinton get the most electoral votes?
- 3 Which vote was closer—the electoral or the popular vote?
- 4 A candidate needs a majority of electoral votes to win. If Dole had won California, Illinois, and Ohio, would he have been elected?



Elections

FOCUS

TERMS TO KNOW

polling place, straight ticket, split ticket, exit poll, popular vote, electoral vote, initiative, proposition, referendum, recall

OBJECTIVES

- Identify three methods of casting votes **at the polls**.
- Describe the difference between the election of presidential candidates and the election of all other public officials in **general elections**.
- Identify and describe two types of **special elections**.

Once the campaign hoopla is over and Election Day arrives, it is up to the voters to decide who will win or lose. These important decisions are made at the nation's **polling places**, or polls—the locations where votes are cast. Polling places are usually set up in town halls, schools, firehouses, and other public buildings. Each voter must vote at an assigned polling place, determined by his or her place of residence.

At the Polls

Exact hours vary, but polling places are generally open from early morning until 7 or 8 P.M. to give people time to

vote before or after work. Election board workers who make sure that voters are properly registered and do not vote more than once staff each polling place. Typically, each party also stations a poll watcher at each polling place. The poll watchers make sure that the election is conducted fairly and that only qualified voters are allowed to vote.

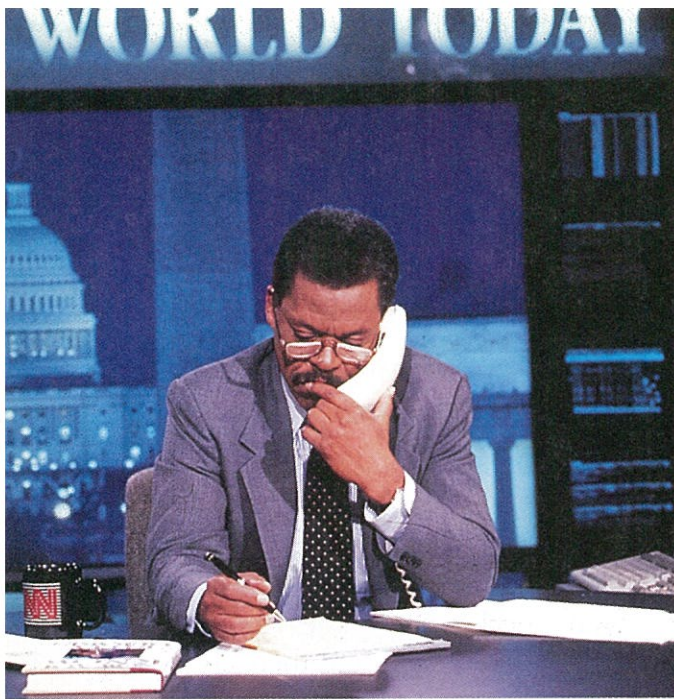
Casting Votes

Upon entering the polling place, voters give their names to an election worker, who checks the names against a master list. The voters are then given a ballot and directed to a voting booth.

Voters cast their ballots in one of three ways—by computerized machine, by mechanical machine, or by paper ballot. In all three, the candidates are usually listed according to their party and the office they are seeking. With a computerized voting machine, votes are cast by

Casting Ballots These voters are casting their votes by paper ballot. *Why must each voter check in with an election board worker?*





Election Returns At election time, television networks monitor voting results and pass them on to viewers. *How are election predictions made?*

touching certain spots on the screen, by pushing certain buttons, or by marking a ballot. The machine then “reads” the ballot electronically and records the votes. With a mechanical voting machine, votes are cast by pulling small levers next to the names of the candidates chosen. With a paper ballot, a square is marked or a hole punched next to the names of the candidates chosen. All three systems enable voters to vote a **straight ticket**, for all the candidates of a single party. In some states, people who want to vote a straight ticket must vote for each of the party’s candidates individually. In other states, voters can indicate their preference by voting for the party rather than the individual candidates. Voting for candidates of different parties is called voting a **split ticket**. It is also possible to vote for someone not on the ballot. This is called a write-in vote.

Absentee Ballots

Voters who cannot get to the polls on Election Day can use an absentee ballot to vote. People who know they will be away on Election Day and people who are too sick to get to the polls commonly use absentee ballots. A voter must request an absentee ballot from the local election board sometime before Election Day. On Election Day, these ballots are opened and counted either at the polling place or at the election board.

Counting the Votes

In a major election, the news media and the party workers attempt to predict the winners as soon as possible. To do this, they ask voters leaving polling places how they voted. This is known as an **exit poll**. By taking a sample of voters at key polling places, specialists can often predict the winners.

When the polls close, the election workers count the votes at the polling place and take the ballots and the results—called returns—to the election board. The election board then counts the returns for the entire city or county. Gathering all the returns and tallying the results can take several hours.

In national and state elections, the news media often use early returns, as well as the results of their own exit polls, to make a projection of the winners. That is why the television networks can project winners while people are still voting.

General Elections

In a general election, the voters cast ballots for candidates for various national, state, and local offices. The general

election is always held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. The ballot may include the names of candidates for governor, the state legislature, the county government, and local offices. In certain years, the ballot will also list presidential and congressional candidates.

For all races except the presidential race, the candidate who wins a majority of the **popular vote**—votes cast directly by the people—is elected to office. In a presidential race, the voters are actually electing people called electors, who hold **electoral votes** and are part of the Electoral College system. You read about the creation of the Electoral College in Chapter 3.

Presidential Elections in the Electoral College

When a person votes for a Republican or Democratic presidential candidate, he or she is really voting for a Republican or Democratic elector. About a month after the November general election, these electors assemble in each state to cast their votes for President. If the Republican presidential candidate has won the popular vote in the state, then the Republican electors get to cast all the state's electoral votes. The Democratic electors do not cast any votes. This procedure is known as the "winner-take-all" system.

The number of electoral votes for each state is determined by its representation in Congress. For example, Michigan, which has 16 United States representatives and 2 United States senators, has 18 electors. There is a total of 538 electoral votes, and the presidential

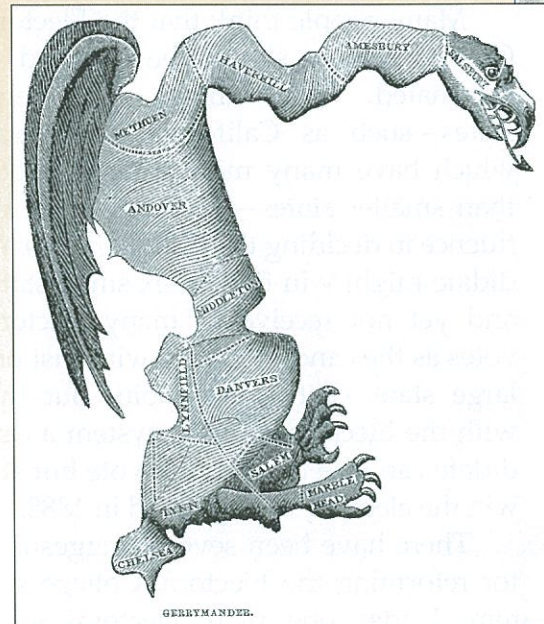
candidate who receives 270 or more of these votes wins the electoral vote and the election.

DID YOU KNOW?

Gerrymandering

Gerrymandering is the practice of creating an election district to favor a particular political party. The term dates back to 1812 when the Massachusetts legislature created a long, curving district. Most voters in the "district" were loyal to the party of Governor Elbridge Gerry. A critic thought the district resembled a salamander, and someone called it a "Gerrymander" after the governor.

Congress and the courts have ruled that a district should be compact, made up of adjoining areas, and nearly equal in population to other districts. In a 1996 North Carolina case, the Supreme Court ruled that states could not draw odd-shaped districts along racial lines. These laws have reduced but not eliminated gerrymandering.

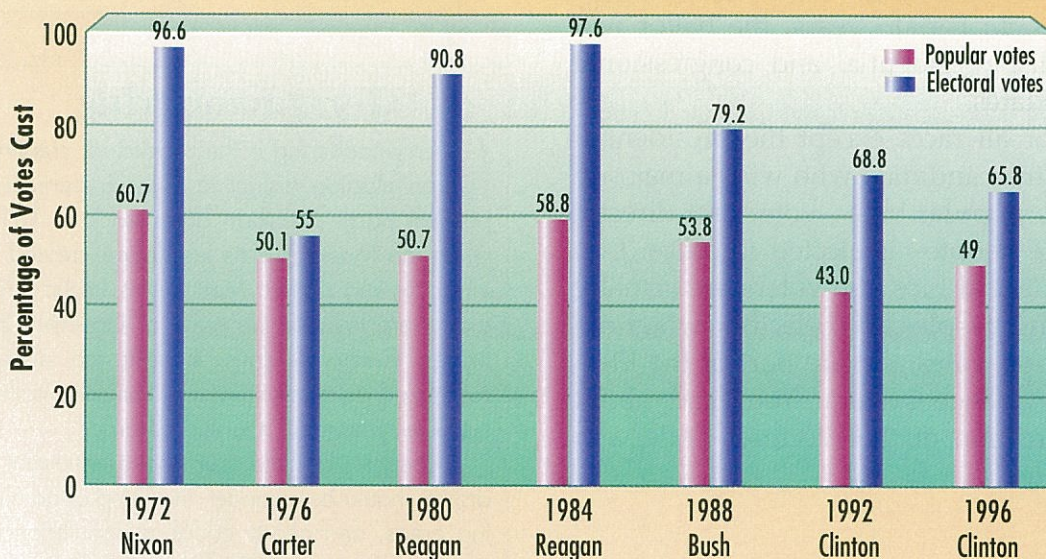


The Gerrymander



GRAPH STUDY

Popular and Electoral Votes: Presidential Elections, 1972–1996 Between 1972 and 1996 Democratic candidates won three presidential elections. *In which election were the electoral and popular votes percentages closest?*



Source: Federal Election Commission; CNN.

Critics of the Electoral College

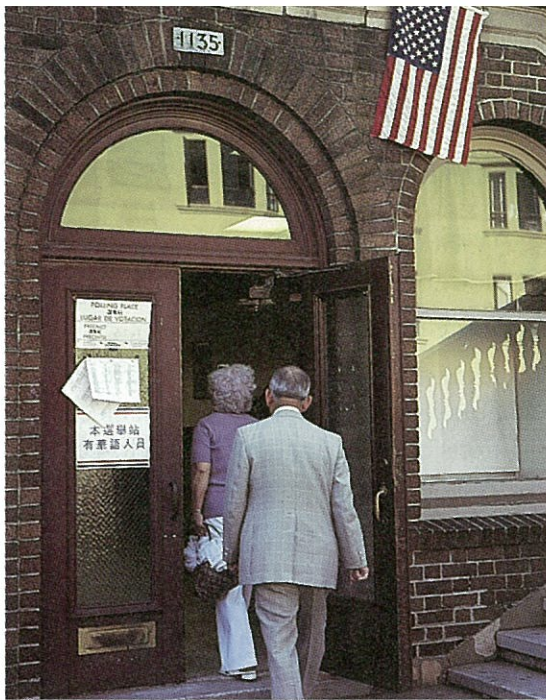
Many people think that the Electoral College system should be changed or eliminated. They charge that large states—such as California and Texas, which have many more electoral votes than smaller states—have too much influence in deciding the election. One candidate might win five or six small states and yet not receive as many electoral votes as the candidate who wins just one large state. Critics also point out that with the Electoral College system a candidate can lose the popular vote but still win the election, as happened in 1888.

There have been several suggestions for reforming the Electoral College system. Under one plan, electoral votes would be based on the percentage of the popular vote. If a candidate won 55 percent of a state's popular vote, for exam-

ple, he or she would also get 55 percent of the electoral votes. Any change in the Electoral College system would take time because it would require a constitutional amendment.

Voting on Issues

In some elections at the state or local level, voters may be asked to vote on issues as well as on candidates. This allows voters to participate more directly in the lawmaking process. Twenty-four states provide for lawmaking through the initiative. An **initiative** is a method by which citizens propose laws or state constitutional amendments. They do this by circulating a petition asking for the proposed new law, or **proposition**. If the petition receives a certain number of signatures, the proposition is put on the ballot. For example, California voters



Fair Elections No campaigning is allowed beyond a certain point at a polling place. *What is a recall election?*

petitioned to put a proposition on the ballot in 1994 that dealt with rights of illegal immigrants.

A **referendum** is a method by which voters can approve or reject a measure passed by the state legislature or by the local government. All the states except Delaware use the referendum to vote on state constitutional amendments.

Special Elections

From time to time, state or local governments also hold certain kinds of special elections. Runoff elections may be held when none of the candidates for a particular office wins a majority of votes in the general election. The runoff is held to determine the winner.

Another kind of special election is the recall election. In a **recall**, voters can vote to remove a public official from office. Like the initiative, the recall begins with

a petition. Voters may recall an official because of wrongdoing or because they do not like his or her position on issues. In many states voters can recall only local officials, but in 16 states they can recall state officials as well.

Sometimes, if an election is very close, the loser may contest, or challenge, the results. The loser then has the right to demand a recount of the votes. In very close races, a small mistake such as failing to include the votes from a single voting machine can change the election results. Occasionally, a disputed election cannot be resolved by a recount and requires another election. In the case of a national election, a dispute may be referred to Congress for settlement. In presidential elections, if neither candidate wins a majority of the electoral votes, the House of Representatives elects the President. This happened in the elections of 1800 and 1824.

★ SECTION 3 REVIEW ★

UNDERSTANDING VOCABULARY

Define polling place, straight ticket, split ticket, exit poll, popular vote, electoral vote, initiative, proposition, referendum, recall.

REVIEWING OBJECTIVES

- 1 What are three methods of casting votes at the polls?
- 2 In general elections, how does the election of presidential candidates differ from the election of all other public officials?
- 3 What are two types of special elections?

Identifying Key Terms

Choose the vocabulary term that best completes each of the sentences below. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

primary election canvassing recall
electoral vote initiative referendum

1. In most states, each party's candidate for governor is chosen in a(n) _____.
2. The new law proposed by the state legislature was submitted to the voters for their approval in a(n) _____.
3. The voters proposed a new tax law through a(n) _____.
4. The _____ election was held to remove a corrupt official from public office.
5. The Republican presidential candidate won the election by winning both the popular vote and the _____.
6. The party workers spent many hours _____ the neighborhood to get support for their candidate.

Reviewing the Main Ideas

SECTION 1

1. Name three groups of people who are not allowed to vote.
2. What methods did southern states once use to prevent African Americans from voting?

SECTION 2

3. Identify three methods that have been used to nominate candidates for public office.
4. What is the purpose of endorsements?

5. What is the purpose of political action committees, or PACS?

SECTION 3

6. How are television news programs able to predict the winners of elections before all the polls are closed?
7. What is the "winner-take-all" system?

Critical Thinking

SECTION 1

1. **Analyzing Information** What do you think political parties could do about the problem of voter apathy?

SECTION 2

2. **Identifying Alternatives** Do you think it is better to have the government pay for election campaigns or to let each candidate raise funds privately?

SECTION 3

3. **Assessing Information** Do you think the Electoral College system should be abolished? Explain why or why not.

Cooperative Learning

In groups of four, research the results of the last major election in your state. (You might look in back issues of newspapers or contact groups such as local or state election boards or the League of Women Voters.) Try to find out how many people in your state voted in the election and the percentages of different groups who voted (for example, people of different ages, ethnic or racial groups, gender, and education-

al background.) Write a brief report summarizing the voting trends you discover. Discuss your findings with the class.

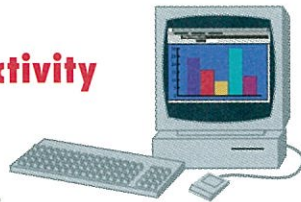
Reinforcing Citizenship Skills

Find out about the last national election for President and/or Congress and state governors. Look for an election map that shows national results in a newspaper or newsmagazine from that time. Determine from the map how many states the two major political parties dominated, depending on who was elected. Look for information on which states, if any, may have switched. Report your findings to the class.

Technology Activity

Using a Spreadsheet

The United States has one of the lowest voter participation rates of any democratic nation. Some experts believe other nations have more participation because they assess penalties on citizens who do not vote. Find information about voter participation rates in other nations and create a spreadsheet with the following headings: Country, Voting Age, Voter Participation Rate, Penalties for Not Voting.



Focusing on Your Community

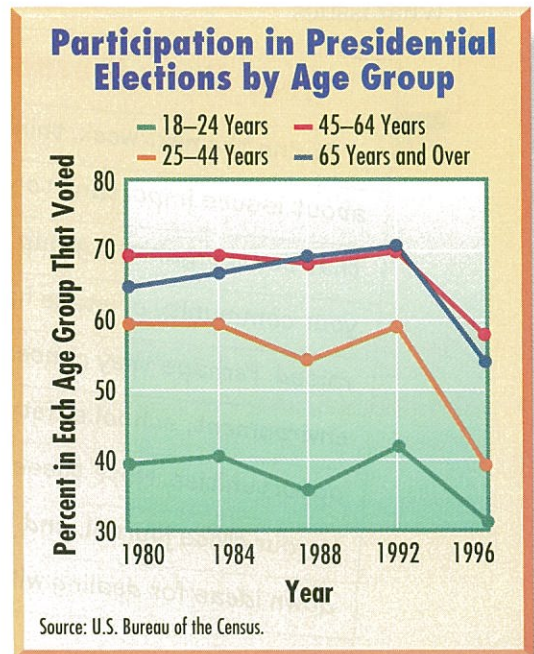
Laws about voter registration vary from place to place. Contact the local election board to find out what the requirements for registration are in your

community. Then design a brochure encouraging people to register. It should include the following information: local residency requirements, when and where people can register for an election, the procedure for registering, and the types of identification needed.

Analyzing Visuals

The graph below shows the percentage of eligible voters of different age groups that voted in recent elections. Study the graph and answer the questions.

1. Which age group remained the most stable in voting participation during this period?
2. Which age group showed the smallest decrease in participation between 1980 and 1996? What factors might explain this decrease?
3. Describe the general trend in voter participation since 1980.



Public Opinion and Interest Groups

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

America is a diverse nation in which many different groups of people hold many different viewpoints. The members of some groups form organizations to try to persuade government officials to support their views. Contact an organization involved in local issues in your area, such as the Sierra Club or the local parent-teacher organization. Find out what issues

are most important to this group and how it tries to influence government officials.

Working in Your Community

Interview people in your neighborhood to find out their opinions on the issues that were raised. If their opinions are similar to those of the group you contacted, encourage them to learn more about the group and perhaps become active in it. ■

Your Civics Journal

During the next week, think about issues important to you that some organized group in your community or state has raised. Perhaps they concern the environment, school safety, or job opportunities. Note these issues in your civics journal, and jot down ideas for dealing with them.

