

The Great Electoral Race Kickoff Lesson

Overview: There are many ways to engage students in The Great Electoral Race – in and out of the classroom; required or for extra credit. This lesson is meant to be used to kickoff The Great Electoral Race with your class if you are making participation a part of their classroom instruction. After this kickoff lesson, if you choose to integrate Challenges into classroom instruction, you can refer to the Annotated Table of Contents of the Elections in Action lessons (see attached) and which Challenges they support.

Objectives: SWBAT

- Engage in civic discourse around the role of young people in elections
- Discover ways in which young people can get involved in elections
- Contemplate the impact of young people and create a video
- Register team as part of the Great Electoral Race and join the competition!

Materials:

- Stand and Declare signs
- Welcome to The Great Electoral Race handout
- List of Challenges handout
- Student cell phones (if permitted) or computers
- Great Electoral Race kickoff powerpoint and projector (with speakers)

CCSS

- *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1c Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.*
- *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1d Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.*

Before students enter the room:

- Create four signs labeled Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Hang one sign in each corner of the room so as to create a spectrum from strongly agree to strongly disagree.
- Have PowerPoint ready with speakers
- Ensure that students will have access to internet either on their phones or computers

BELL RINGER: *Reflective Writing*

Have students respond in writing to each of the prompts below.

- Youth don't know enough to get involved in elections
- Youth are not apathetic – they care about stuff
- Elections are stupid. They don't matter and I don't care
- Even if you aren't old enough to vote, you can have your voice in the election

BEFORE: *Stand and Declare*

Explain how Stand and Declare works:

1. I'll read a statement.
2. After the statement is read, you should decide whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement.
3. You should then go stand in the corner that represents your opinion.
4. After everyone has chosen a corner, you will have one minute to discuss why you selected that corner. You should also choose a representative.
5. Each corner's representative will then have one minute to explain their position to the class.
6. Be sure to listen carefully to the representatives. If you feel persuaded at any point and change your opinion, you may move to a different corner.

Use the prompts from the Bell Ringer to lead students through Stand and Declare:

- Youth don't know enough to get involved in elections
- Youth are not apathetic – they care about stuff
- Elections are stupid. They don't matter and I don't care
- Even if you aren't old enough to vote, you can have your voice in the election

Have students engage in discussion, using evidence whenever possible to support their point of view.

DURING: *Elections: Impact of Youth Involvement*

Use the Great Electoral Race Kickoff PowerPoint (included) to share examples of ways that youth, regardless of age or citizenship status, have gotten involved in elections. Each slide has talking points in the notes section.

Have students form groups of 3-5. These will be their Great Electoral Race teams so consider a few things:

- How will you ensure that at least one person in each group has a smart phone?

- How will you ensure that at least one person in each group is familiar with Instagram or Twitter?
- How will you ensure that no one feels excluded or left out?

In light of these considerations, you may want to pre-select groups ahead of time (you can ask them a few days prior to this lesson to find out who is familiar with Twitter and Instagram and who has access to a smart phone).

Once teams are formed, give teams 5 minutes to brainstorm responses to the question:

*“How would the United States be different if more **young people** participated in elections?”*

If cell phone usage is permitted in class, have groups film a short video of one or more students answering that question. If cell phones are NOT permitted in class, they should film the answer for homework.

AFTER: *Registering for the Great Electoral Race*

Explain to students that filming that video and posting it on Twitter or Instagram can earn them 3 points in the Great Electoral Race. (They have completed the Vermont Challenge!)

Distribute and read Welcome to the Great Electoral Race handout and How to Play handouts (see attached). Then give students time to:

1. Decide on a Team Hashtag
2. Register their team (tinyurl.com/greatelectoralrace and then click on the red button that says STUDENT HOME)
3. Look at the list of Challenges (either online or you download/print pdf ahead of time from here: <https://greatelectoral.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/alphabetical.pdf>) and label each one as Safe (easy to accomplish), Solid (more difficult but doable) or Reach (may need help from others to accomplish).
4. Remind students as they choose to look for connections and overlap between various Challenges that would help them work to complete multiple states simultaneously

You can also strategize how to complete the most Challenges as a class. Options to consider:

- Use students' plans for which Challenges they are most interested in completing to drive which Elections in Action lessons you plan to use in class in the coming weeks
- Choose some Challenges that all teams will work to complete individually and/or divide others up among different teams to make sure that you're collectively completing as many as possible
- Have students vote on 1-2 of the six extra-large Challenges (CA, TX, NY, FL, IL, PA) to work on as a class project
- Set up a Leader Board/competition within your own school and offer prizes/incentives for the team (or class!) that earns the most points by Election Day.
- Have students vote on a Coalition hashtag that the class will share and have one student register the class in our Coalition competition here: <http://www.mikvachallenge.org/great-electoral-race/students/form-a-coalition/>

HOMEWORK (OR EXTRA CREDIT): *Post Your Challenges*

Have students post the videos of themselves answering the question “How would the United States be different if more **young people** participated in elections?” on Twitter or Instagram to complete the Vermont Challenge. Remind them to be sure to use all the necessary hashtags and to email or print out a copy to turn in to you for credit (if that is how you will be keeping track – see below).

KEEPING TRACK OF STUDENTS’ ENTRIES: Consider how you will be keeping track of student participation for credit. Some ideas include:

- Use students’ team hashtags to search Twitter/Instagram for various assignments as they complete and post them
- Have students email you the link every time they post a Challenge or print out and turn in a copy of their completed Challenge
- Create an additional hashtag for your class/school to filter entries such as #WashingtonHS or #WHS or #MsB2ndperiod so you can search all your students’ entries at once

Enrichment/Extension: Depending on your learning objectives, you can also use the Great Electoral Race to teach students about the Electoral College. Each Challenge provides the exact number of electoral votes as that in the Electoral College. You can have students strategize thinking about the pros and cons of working to win/earn points for large states versus smaller states etc. We also recommend using the documentary *Electoral Dysfunction* as a companion to teaching about the Electoral College.

The Classroom Edition of ELECTORAL DYSFUNCTION — available at no charge to middle school and high school teachers and officially endorsed by The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) — consists of a 36-minute version of an award-winning PBS documentary on voting in America, along with an extensive curriculum guide and an interactive timeline. The documentary is hosted by Emmy-winning political humorist Mo Rocca, who takes a road trip to see how voting works in America. Topics addressed include Constitutional provisions on voting rights; the origins and present-day impact of the Electoral College; voter ID laws; ballot design; inconsistencies among America’s 13,000 voting jurisdictions; and reforms that would make elections fairer and more uniform. To watch online or to order a free DVD, visit www.electoraldysfunction.org/classroom

The
GREAT
Electoral

RACE

www.mikvachallenge.org
<http://tinyurl.com/GreatElectoralRace>

Welcome to the Great Electoral Race!

The Great Electoral Race is an election-themed digital scavenger hunt for students in grades 6-12. After signing up at tinyurl.com/GreatElectoralRace in teams of 3-5, you and your friends use Twitter, Instagram, and other social media platforms to complete any of **51** Challenges to earn points, win prizes AND make your voices heard in this election.

All too often adults think young people have little to contribute and/or don't care about important issues. We know this is not true. In addition to being a fun way to get involved in the 2016 election, the Great Electoral Race gives you the opportunity to show that young people have ideas, care deeply and can make a difference. All posts will use the common hashtag **#changethestory** so you can see what other young people across the country are talking about. Together we can create a powerful movement of youth voices to help change the story in America.

For more information about how The Great Electoral Race works, visit tinyurl.com/GreatElectoralRace and click on HOW TO PLAY

HOW TO PLAY

Step 1: [Create a Team](#) Teams can be made up of 3-5 students. All team members must be in grades 6-12.

Step 2: [Read the Challenges](#) This race includes 51 Challenges — one named after each US state + DC. Each Challenge is worth as many points as that state has votes in the Electoral College. Your team can complete as few or as many Challenges as you like, but you can only receive points for each Challenge once. (*ProTip: Challenges for states with fewer people (like MT) are easier and worth fewer points; Challenges for states with more people (like TX) are harder but worth more points!*)

Step 3: [Begin Earning Points](#) The competition begins on Labor Day (Mon. 9/5) and ends the day after Election Day (Wed. 11/9) at 11:59PM CST. In order to earn points for a Challenge, you must both finish the assigned tasks for that Challenge AND share the evidence required on Twitter and/or Instagram. (*ProTip: Make sure your accounts are open to the public so everyone can see your posts!*)

IN ORDER TO RECEIVE POINTS, EACH TWEET/POST MUST INCLUDE:

- * **#changethestory**
- * **your team hashtag**
- * **the hashtag for that particular Challenge**

Step 4: [Enter to Win Prizes](#) Prize drawings will take place 3 times throughout the Race: 9/26, 10/17 & 11/9

- In order to be eligible for each drawing, Teams must complete an official [Tracking Form](#) by midnight (CST) the night before to self-report how many challenges they have completed.
- Your team will be entered into each drawing as many times as you have points at that time. (i.e. If you have earned 84 points by that date, your team name goes into the drawing 84 times. If you have earned 4, your team name goes in 4 times.)
- Once a winner is drawn, Mikva staff will verify that team's points by searching for their hashtag on Twitter/ Instagram to confirm they have completed the tasks they claim.

IMPORTANT! Remember: Your posts and comments represent you, your school, and your community. Points will be deducted for tweets/posts that are disrespectful and/or uncivil. This race aims to bring together young people from across the country in order to unite a wide range of experiences, backgrounds, and points of view to discuss pressing issues in our communities. We welcome (and encourage!) debate, discussion, and disagreement about issues, candidates, and ideas, but insults and bullying are not acceptable. **The Mikva social media team has full discretion to subtract points from teams not following the rules.**

Step 5: [Follow @MikvaChallenge](#) Besides giving shoutouts to teams throughout the hunt, Mikva will tweet out additional pop-up Bonus Challenges each Friday throughout the contest. Follow us on Twitter and Instagram to make sure you don't miss these extra opportunities to earn additional points for your team!

That's the basics. Got questions?

Visit mikvachallenge.org/great-electoral-race/students/student-FAQs

Elections in Action: Annotated Table of Contents

This page provides a list of which Challenges correspond to each lesson in **Mikva Challenge's Elections in Action curriculum**. This means the content of that lesson and/or the resources it includes would be useful to students working on that particular Challenge and/or that said lesson could be fairly easily modified to include assigning completion of the related Challenges.

LESSON TITLE	PAGE	RELATED CHALLENGES
The Power of Voting	2	AR, VA
Voter Values	9	ID, LA
Where Do I Stand on the Issues?	12	AK, OK, IL
Current Events	16	NH, NJ
Who Votes?	18	MD
Community Voting Analysis	28	NE
Voter Registration and Turnout	32	AZ, IN, MD
Candidate Blind Match	39	GA, WA
Qualities of a Good Elected Official	42	GA, WA
Candidate Profiles	46	GA, KY, MA, OR
Viewing Candidate Debates	51	NM, NV, PA, TN, UT, WV
Elections 411	58	AL, WI
Primaries, Caucuses, Conventions, Oh My!	64	AL
Money and Politics	72	OH, MS
Campaign Game	77	CT
Deconstructing Campaign Messages and Perceptions	81	RI, WA, WI
Understanding the Electoral College	87	ME, NC, CO
Redistricting 101	102	--
Taking Action: Campaigning	112	HI, MI, SC, SD
Taking Action: Creating and Distributing a Voter Education Guide	117	GA, WI
Taking Action: Registering Voters	117	CO, FL, MD
Taking Action: Getting Out the Vote	118	NY
Taking Action: Being an Election Judge	118	IA