

CIVICS EDUCATION CURRICULUM



A GUIDE TO
STUDENT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT





Dear Educators and Civics Education Participants,

Thank you for helping strengthen our democracy through education. Welcome to the *Civics Education* curriculum. We warmly welcome any comments for what works well (or doesn't) and suggestions or feedback, including additional lessons you would like to propose. Send us your thoughts at the email address below.

This teacher's guide includes five *Civics Education* units:

- **Unit 1: We Are the Government**
- **Unit 2: Who Can Vote?**
- **Unit 3: Your Vote Is Your Voice**
- **Unit 4: Registering to Vote**
- **Unit 5: Voting in Oregon**

Each unit includes activities, discussion topics, and prepared handouts. The Table of Contents on the next page is active. You can click on an item to go directly to that page of the curriculum. Then you can click on **Table of Contents** in the footer of any page to get back to the beginning and start another search.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the LWVOR Civics Education Curriculum, designed to support participation in our award-winning Oregon Student Mock Election (OSME). OSME is an exciting, experience-based educational program to introduce and involve students in the electoral process. It demonstrates the importance of voting and how we vote in Oregon. This curriculum and the accompanying OSME Lesson Plan can help you plan a successful mock election. Social studies standards cited with the lessons are at high school level. However, Oregon teachers report that the curriculum can be adapted for any grade. Links are on the next page to social science standards for all Oregon students, grades K-12.

EDUCATE: Unit Ideas for Teachers

This section provides lesson ideas with materials that teachers may use to help students understand Oregon's electoral process. Each unit may take multiple days, depending on how many activities the teacher decides to use.

All League of Women Voters information is careful to be unbiased and nonpartisan, never supporting or opposing candidates or political parties. Teachers using the curriculum need to ensure that any instruction concerning candidate races and issues is unbiased, nonpartisan, and presents all sides of an issue.

ACTIVATE: Extended Activity Suggestions for Students and Teachers

Research shows that the most effective curricula include supplemental student-centered activities. This section suggests extended activities to use in classrooms, in student government activities, in leadership and government classes, in speech and debate clubs, or with other student groups.

In this section, you will find a guide to help in planning debates and/or panel discussions, in addition to other ideas designed to help your students see *all* sides of pertinent issues through town meetings, legislative hearings, and other activities.

Our thanks to National Student/Parent Mock Election for allowing us to use materials from [*Guide to the Electoral Process and Election Activities*](#)

We would also like to recognize:

- [The Oregon Blue Book](#)
- [The Classroom Law Project](#)
- [The Oregon Elections Division](#)
- [The Federal Elections Commission](#)
- [Rock the Vote](#)

To improve future mock election programs, we strongly encourage teachers to complete our evaluation form, which will be emailed shortly after the election process.

In addition to preparing tomorrow's voters, the Civics Education and Mock Election materials offer several opportunities to help today's students meet state civics and government standards. You'll find a copy of the Oregon Social Studies Standards in the following pages. Benchmarks for each activity are identified in the units.

OREGON SOCIAL SCIENCES STANDARDS 2021

[Oregon Department of Education](#)

Relevant high school standards for civics and government and social studies analysis are listed with full text at the beginning of each unit. Elementary and middle school teachers report that these units are easily adaptable for younger students. You can download the ODE’s full list of K-12 standards, with the 2021 updates, [here](#). Standards that were revised or added in 2021 are identified with an *asterisk.

FIND MORE INFORMATION:

- [Amit Kobrowski](#), Oregon Department of Education Specialist, Social Sciences Curriculum
- [Oregon Social Science Analysis scoring guides](#) (Scroll down for Social Science guides.)
- [Oregon Educator Resources Standards](#) (For English/Language Arts and ELA in History/Social Studies)

The 2019 Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Literacy in History/Social Studies:

- [Grades 6-8](#)
- [Grades 9/10](#)
- [Grades 11/12](#)

UNIT 1: WE ARE THE GOVERNMENT

STANDARDS:

*HS.4 * Describe core elements of early governments that are evident in United States government structure.*

*HS.5 * Compare and contrast the United States' republican form of government to direct democracy, theocracy, oligarchy, authoritarianism, and monarchy.*

This unit allows many different types of learners to succeed because it relies heavily on kinesthetic learning and verbal interaction. Fewer modifications may be needed.

OBJECTIVE

Students should understand that, unlike other forms of government, the democratic government of the United States is composed "of the people" and is directed "by the people" through elections.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What is the government? Government is a system of social control under which the right to make laws, and the right to enforce them, is vested in a particular group in society.

There are many forms of government around the world. One major difference between governments is the degree of power given to its citizens. Under a democratic form of government, citizens enjoy the greatest powers of all to participate and select their representatives.

Other forms of government include:

Autocracy - a government in which one person possesses unlimited power

Dictatorship - a government in which one person or a small group possesses absolute power without effective constitutional limitations

Oligarchy - a government in which all power is vested in a few people or in a dominant class or clique

Theocracy - a government in which God or a deity is recognized as the supreme civil ruler, the God's or deity's laws being interpreted by the ecclesiastical authorities

Monarchy - a state or nation in which the supreme power is actually or nominally lodged in a monarch

Democracy - a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system

Examples of these types of government can be found in historic and modern-day societies. A dictatorship is a form of autocracy, pointing to one individual possessing unlimited power. Adolf Hitler (Nazi Germany, ruled 1933-1945), and Benito Mussolini (Italy, ruled 1922-1945) were dictators who came to power during World War II. A modern-day example of a dictator is Fidel Castro of Cuba, who stepped down from power in 2008 after 49 years of total and complete rule over Cuba.

The United Kingdom is an example of a monarchy that has been around for thousands of years. Today, however, their monarchy serves a very different purpose. Queen Elizabeth of the United Kingdom, and now her son King Charles, remains in place as a figurehead who shares power with elected officials. Like the United States, today, England functions as a democracy where the people vote for laws and officials.

Literally, "**democracy**" means "rule of the people." In ancient Greek democracies, where the idea of democracy was born more than 2,400 years ago, citizens gathered outdoors to make public policy decisions.

The United States is considered a **representative democracy** because voters elect legislators to represent their interests and enact most laws. Voters hold elected officials accountable on Election Day by either re- electing or replacing them.

The United States has **direct democracy** elements as well. Voters in some states, including Oregon, can directly pass laws and amend their state constitution through the initiative process.

Frequent and fair elections are the lynchpin of democracy. Elections are designed to:

- Express the popular will
- Select public officials
- Make those who govern accountable to those governed
- Are sanctions against the abuse of power
- Provide for peaceful transfer of power from one group to another

Participating in elections is a responsibility of citizens in a democracy. How else are citizens to protect their rights and improve their quality of life? Every citizen should:

- Take an interest in happenings at all levels of government - local, state, and national
- Understand the issues that need decisions
- Vote carefully on issues and choose people who will best represent the values and opinions the citizen holds.

In the United States, "We the People " control the government by electing representatives and voting on ballot measures, **but we don't control anything if we don't vote.**

ACTIVITY/ASSIGNMENT SUGGESTIONS

- **Have students create a skit** to demonstrate understanding of the various forms of government seen throughout history. Follow these steps:
- Review the 6 forms of government to ensure understanding.
Option: Print "*Government - Who Decides?*" student handout (see page 8) and have students match terms to definitions.
- Write each form of government on a slip of paper or develop another way to discreetly assign terms to small groups. Divide students into 6 groups and give each group a slip of paper labeled with a form of government to act out in a short skit.
- Make sure all groups know they are responsible for showing how their form of government would react if people started to complain about their leaders.
- Allow students 8-10 minutes to prepare.
- After all groups are ready, have each group present their skit and allow other groups to guess which form of government was demonstrated. Ask students to explain what skit elements exemplified the term.
- Close the activity by having a brief discussion on the biggest differences and similarities among the various forms of government.

- **Have students research voting procedures** used in other countries such as Australia, China, India, Great Britain, Canada, France, Japan, Poland, Costa Rica, Switzerland, Germany, Russia. Students should research the following about the country:
 - What is their form of government?
 - Who makes the laws?
 - When and how often are elections held?
 - Who can vote?
 - Are voters provided with a choice of candidates?
 - Is there a penalty for not voting?
- Compare and contrast these answers with those for the United States. Discuss findings with the class.
- A table, graph or other graphic organizer may be developed to display the information.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS / ESSAY TOPICS

1. How is democratic government different from other forms of government?
2. What is the role of government in a democracy? (*help people do things they can't do alone, protect lives and property*)
3. What is the role of citizens in a democracy? (*stay informed, be involved, vote*)
4. Is participation in government by voting a right or a responsibility?
5. In 1776, the words of the Declaration of Independence rang out declaring that the "just powers" of government are derived "from the consent of the governed." If elections are the primary expression of our consent to be governed, what responsibilities do you have if a candidate or an issue you support loses the election?
6. There are two sayings: "There ought to be a law..." and "Get government off our backs." What is meant by each of these phrases? How do they conflict?

Suggested Modifications

To help all students succeed in creating a skit, form cooperative groups where each student has a specific and clearly defined role in the group. Use this link to learn more about [Student Collaboration Strategies](#).

Handouts

Government: Who Decides? (page 8)

HANDOUT: Government - Who Decides?

Instructions: The definitions on the right are mixed up. Draw a line to match each form of government on the left with its correct description from the column on the right.

Autocracy

Government in which **God or a deity** is recognized as the supreme civil ruler, the God's or deity's laws being interpreted by the **ecclesiastical authorities**

Dictatorship

A state or nation in which the supreme power is actually or nominally lodged in a monarch

Oligarchy

Government in which **one person** possesses unlimited power, other types of government where one person rules can be a form of this

Theocracy

Government in which the supreme power is vested in **the people** and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system

Monarchy

Government in which all power is vested in **a few persons** or in a **dominant class or clique**

Democracy

Government in which **one person or a small group** possesses absolute power without effective constitutional limitation

UNIT 2: WHO CAN VOTE?

STANDARDS

*HS.2 * Identify and analyze the existence and perpetuation of discrimination and inequity in the local, state, national, or global context.*

*HS.3 * Identify, discuss, and explain the exclusionary language and intent of the Oregon and U.S. Constitution and the provisions and process for the expansion and protection of civil rights.*

*HS.8 * Examine the institutions, functions, and processes of Oregon's state, county, local and regional governments.*

*HS.53 * Analyze the complexity of the interaction of multiple perspectives to investigate causes and effects of significant events in the development of world, U.S., and Oregon history.*

*HS.60 * Analyze and explain the historic and contemporary examples of social and political conflicts and compromises including the actions of traditionally marginalized individuals and groups addressing inequities, inequality, power, and justice in the U.S. and the world.*

*HS.78 * Identify and critique how implicit bias, institutional racism, racial supremacy, privilege, intersectionality, and identity, influence perspectives in the understanding of history and contemporary events.*

OBJECTIVE

Students should understand and evaluate the Oregon eligibility requirements to vote. They should be able to describe the effect of constitutional amendments and court decisions in expanding suffrage in the United States.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

To be eligible to vote in Oregon, one must be:

- At least 18 years old by Election Day (but 16-year-olds are eligible to register)
- A U.S. citizen
- A resident of Oregon

Voting requirements in Oregon and the United States have changed over the years. In its early years, our democracy was not very democratic. In most parts of the country, only white, male, property owners, aged 21 or older, were eligible to vote.

When Oregon became a state in 1859, our state Constitution stated that "No Negro, Chinaman, or Mulatto shall have the right of suffrage." These restrictions were overridden by passage of the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1870. However, some states, even into the early 1960s, still limited access to the ballot based on race and ethnicity through literacy tests, poll taxes, and coercion.

After rejecting ballot measures proposing women's suffrage in 1906, 1908, and 1910, Oregon voters passed the Equal Suffrage Amendment in 1912 by a vote of 61,265 to 57,104. In 1920, women across the United States won the right to vote through ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The voting age was lowered from 21 to 18 in 1971 with passage of the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Today, we strive toward universal suffrage where every adult citizen has the right to vote. We deny voting rights to two special groups, however. Those in the custody of the Department of Corrections cannot vote. Those declared mentally incompetent can have their voting rights denied by the courts.

Throughout our nation's history, people fought, struggled, and sometimes died to protect and expand the right to vote.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS/ESSAY TOPICS

- Who has the legal right to vote in Oregon?
- Would you support lowering the voting age? What are the arguments for doing so? What are the arguments against such a proposal?
- “No taxation without representation” was a rallying cry that inspired the American Revolution. Today, many non-citizens pay taxes but cannot vote. Do you believe citizenship should be a requirement to vote? Why?

SUGGESTED MODIFICATIONS

To help students organize their writing into coherent paragraphs for the Discussion/Essay Questions, use the [Four-Square Graphic Organizer](#).

To help students who struggle with reading, strategically pair students as they review the *Sample Literacy Test* and the Oregon Blue Book website, or use a literacy classroom strategy.

HANDOUTS

These handouts can be used to prepare students for the lessons and activities in this unit. They are both ready to print and use in class.

LESSON: ROAD TO UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE

Road to Universal Suffrage (Pages 11-12)

Voter Identities (page 12)

LESSON: VOTER SUPPRESSION

Louisiana Literacy Test (Pages 16-18) You can see the sample answers [here](#).

Voter Suppression After the Civil War (page 19)

Historical Examples of Voter Suppression (page 20)

The Civil Rights Movement and Voting Rights (page 21) You can use this information, in addition to some of the resources below, to continue the discussion about voter suppression and civil rights in the United States.

Other suggested resources:

- [The 19th Amendment and the Road to Universal Suffrage](#)
- [Sample Alabama Literacy Test](#)
- *Official Voter Registration*, [MyVote](#)

NOTE: The official online registration form from the Secretary of State shouldn't be used unless students are legally able to vote. You can make an educational copy for younger students with VOID on the signature line.

LESSON: ROAD TO UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE

Classroom Activity Instructions

1. Print as many copies of the voter identity description page (page 12) as you need so that you have enough for each student to have an identity. (There are 18 different identities on the page so some students may have the same identity. Cut each page so there is one identity description for each slip of paper. Put the slips of paper in a container.)
2. Print one copy per student of the handout on pages 13-14, "The Road to Universal Suffrage." Have students read the handout. You might have students take turns reading the sections or paragraphs aloud and ask clarifying questions after each section to make sure they all understand the basic ideas.
3. Have each student draw an identity from the container, tape the identity to the front of their shirt, and stand on the left side of the room. (You could also have students copy their identity information onto a blank sticky name tag.)
4. Read the dated scenarios provided below and ask students to move to the right side of the room if, *given their identity*, they are able to vote for their district's U.S. Representative to Congress in the year described. (Students may refer to their copy handout, "The Road to Universal Suffrage," if necessary).
5. After each section is read, and immediately after students move, ask students on the right side of the room to describe the event (e.g. passage of the 19th Amendment) that gave them the right to vote.
6. Ask all students how it felt when they were on the left side of the room and not allowed to vote. If they had lived in the U.S. in the early 1800s, would they have worked to expand suffrage? What message and tactics would they have used?

The Year is...

1804: The U.S. Constitution, adopted in 1789, established a democratic form of government. Major issues before Congress include maintaining neutral relations with warring European countries, protecting U.S. commercial interests at sea, establishing a governing structure for the recently purchased Louisiana Territory, communicating and negotiating treaties with Native American tribes, and protecting westward migrating citizens from hostile forces.

1867: The Civil War is over. Slavery has been abolished. Major issues before Congress include implementing economic and political reconstruction in the South, implementing the emancipation of slaves, and impeaching President Andrew Johnson for "high crimes and misdemeanors."

1917: Major issues before Congress include entering and winning the war against the Central Powers, protecting the capitalist international order from Communism, expanding suffrage to include women, and submitting to the states the 18th Amendment establishing prohibition.

1969: Major issues before Congress include working to end U.S. military involvement in Vietnam, re-examining foreign policy regarding China, responding to anti-war protests at home, and prohibiting discrimination in the sale or rental of housing.

2008: Major issues before Congress include waging wars against Iraq and Afghanistan, regulating immigration policy, improving education, reducing crime, and dealing with global warmi

HANDOUT - Identities: Print 1-2 copies, cut them apart, and assign one identity to each student.

African American Journalist, Male, Citizen, 45 years old	Mother, Citizen, Female 18 years old
Chinese-American Laborer, Male, Non-Citizen, 25 years old	Restaurant Owner, Male, Non-Citizen, 55 years old
First Lady of the United States, Citizen, 55 years old	Incarcerated Felon, Male, 26 years old
College Student, Female, Citizen, 20 years old	Truck Driver, Female, Citizen, 36 years old
School Teacher, Female, Citizen, 30 years old	Native American Artist, Male, Citizen, 48 years old
African American Scientist, Female, Citizen, 49 years old	Farm Worker, Male, Non-Citizen, 34 years old
Caucasian Saloon Owner, Male, Citizen, 67 years old	Caucasian Doctor, Property Owner, Male, Citizen, 50 years old
Caucasian Laborer, No property, Male, Citizen, 28 years old	Department Store Salesperson, Female, Citizen, 26 years old
Farmer, Female, Citizen, 35 years old	Soldier, Male, Citizen, 19 years old

HANDOUT - NOTES FOR “THE ROAD TO UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE” LESSON

When the Constitution went into effect in 1789, the new nation had a representative government, but not every adult was represented. Women, slaves, and poor men were excluded, in general, up until the mid-1800s. Only white, male, property owners, aged 21 or older, could vote.

Democratic Expansion in the Early 1800s

Gradually the United States became more democratic. All white men aged 21 or older gained suffrage during the Jacksonian era of the 1830s. Also, during the 1800s, some new states and territories allowed women to vote. Slavery was banned in the North, and a few black Americans achieved suffrage.

Civil War Amendments

The U.S. Constitution Civil War Amendments granted citizenship to all former slaves and guaranteed them the vote.

- The 13th Amendment (1865) abolished (got rid of) slavery.
- The 14th Amendment (1868), among other things, granted national and state citizenship to all who were either naturalized or born in the U.S., and guaranteed all persons equal protection of the law.
- The 15th Amendment (1870) denied states the right to limit the vote along racial or ethnic lines.

After Reconstruction (1865-1877) however, Southern state governments found ways, embodied in the racially discriminatory Jim Crow laws, to deprive black Americans of their voting rights.

Devices to Deny the Vote to Black Americans

Even after passage of the Civil War Amendments, and up until the 1960s, representative democracy was not complete in the United States. Black Americans were unable to vote in large numbers in the South and the West. Several of the following devices were used in Southern states to keep black Americans from registering and voting:

- **Literacy tests** required black Americans to pass far more difficult tests than white Americans. One test section could involve reading a US Constitution section, with its legalese and antiquated use of English, and requiring an explanation of its meaning to the county registrar, to his satisfaction.
- **The "Grandfather Clause"** allowed voters who couldn't meet other legal tests to vote, if their grandfathers had voted. Black Americans were often excluded from voting under the "Grandfather Clause" because their grandfathers were slaves. This device was declared unconstitutional in 1915.

- **Denial of primary election vote** effectively deprived many black Americans from voting. Throughout the South, where most white voters were Democrats, the primary election was the "real" election in which the November general election was decided. *This device was declared unconstitutional in 1944.*
- **Poll taxes** were also a device to deter black Americans, most of whom were poor, from voting. The 24th Amendment (1964) prohibited states from making people pay to vote in national elections.
- **Terror and the Ku Klux Klan** discouraged many black Americans from attempting to participate in self-government because they were made to fear for their lives when trying to register to vote, hold meetings, go to the polls, or otherwise participate in government.

LESSON: VOTER SUPPRESSION

Classroom Activity Instructions:

Introduction – Announce to your class that they will have a “pop quiz.” Those who pass will receive a reward (a candy bar, free time, early lunch, a new car, etc.). The pop quiz is the *Louisiana Literacy Test* (see pages 16-18). Administer the *Louisiana Literacy Test* – The test is timed at 10 minutes. One wrong answer results in a failing grade. The passing of this test was used as a voting requirement in Louisiana until 1964. Following the test, consider showing the 3-minute video: [We took the Louisiana Literacy Test](#)

Objective and Purpose – The student will be able to identify examples of voter suppression and determine appropriate courses of action.

Materials – 3x5 cards, enough for one per student and another 18 cards

Preparation/Instructions –

1. Print one copy per student of *Voter Suppression Following the Civil War* (see page 19) and have students read it silently or aloud. If aloud, you might have different students read each paragraph.
2. Print one copy of the *Historical Examples of Voter Suppression* (see page 20), with examples of actual voter suppression laws. Cut the single sheet into rectangles with one law on each. Attach each rectangle to a 3x5 card. (Or you might copy the language of the voter suppression examples from page 20 onto 18 cards.) Put the 18 cards into a container.
3. Working with a partner, have students use this prompt: “You are a member of a political party that wants to stop people from a different party from voting against your ideas/issues. Devise two laws that you could put into place that would make it difficult for them to vote.”
4. Give two 3x5 cards to each pair of students to write their two “laws,” one law on each card. Put the students’ proposed laws into the container, which already has real examples of actual voter suppression laws in it.
5. Have students take out a piece of clean paper and draw a line down the middle making two columns. At the top of the first column have them write “REAL” and at the top of the other write “NOT REAL.”
6. Draw one card from the container, read the law and wonder aloud whether this may be (1) a REAL LAW or (2) a law that was devised by students (NOT REAL). Make sure the cards all look the same so the students can’t tell from the card itself which are real and which are not. As you read the card, keep them organized so that you can go back through them in the same order to discuss each item.
7. After you read a card, have the students decide whether it is REAL or NOT REAL and write the gist of the “law” (a few words to will help them remember which law it was) in the correct column. Continue to randomly draw and read laws from the container.

Guided Practice -

After drawing and reading all the cards, go back through them and have the class discuss each item and then share the true answers. Did students devise laws that were similar to actual state suppression laws?

Independent Practice -

Write a paragraph responding to the question presented in [Center for Civic Education: We the People Level 3 Unit 6](#). “What Challenges Might Face American Constitutional Democracy in the Twenty-first Century?”

OR

Write a paragraph explaining three things citizens could/should do if their government makes unfair laws. (This could be used as an evaluation of previous work or as a starting point for continuing lessons.)

HANDOUT - LITERACY TEST EXAMPLE

The State of Louisiana Literacy Test

(This test was to be given to anyone who could not prove a fifth grade education.)

Instructions: Do what you are told to do in each statement, nothing more, nothing less. Be careful as one wrong answer denotes failure of the test. You have 10 minutes to complete the test.

1. Draw a line around the number or letter of this sentence.
2. Draw a line under the last word in this line.
3. Cross out the longest word in this line.
4. Draw a line around the shortest word in this line.
5. Circle the first, first letter of the alphabet in this line.
6. In the space below draw three circles, one inside (engulfed by) the other.

7. Above the letter X make a small cross.

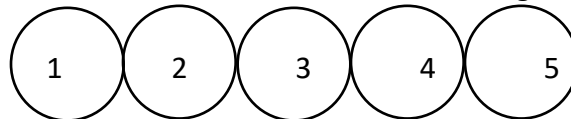
8. Draw a line through the letter below that comes earliest in the alphabet.

Z V S B D M K I T P H C

9. Draw a line through the two letters below that come last in the alphabet.

Z V B D M K T P H S Y C

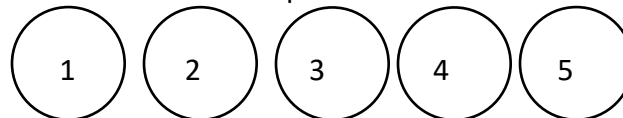
10. In the first circle below write the last letter of the first word beginning with "L".



11. Cross out the number necessary, when making the number below one million.

10000000000

12. Draw a line from circle 2 to circle 5 that will pass below circle 2 and above circle 4.



13. In the line below cross out each number that is more than 20 but less than 30.

31 16 48 29 53 47 22 37 98 26 20 25

14. Draw a line under the first letter after “b” and draw a line through the second letter after “j”.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q

15. In the space below, write the word “noise” backwards and place a dot over what would be its second letter should it have been written forward.

16. Draw a triangle with a blackened circle that overlaps only its left corner.

17. Look at the line of numbers below, and place on the blank, the number that should come next.

2 4 8 16 ____

18. Look at the line of numbers below, and place on the blank, the number that should come next.

3 6 9 ____ 15

19. Draw in the space below, a square with a triangle in it, and within that same triangle draw a circle with a black dot in it.

20. Spell backwards, forwards.

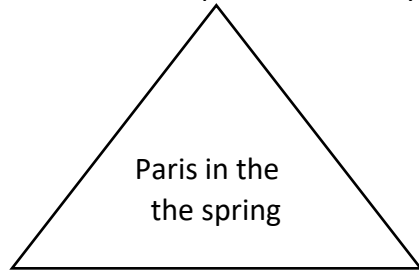
21. Print the word vote upside down, but in the correct order.

22. Place a cross over the tenth letter in this line, a line under the first space in this sentence, and circle around the last the in the second line of this sentence.

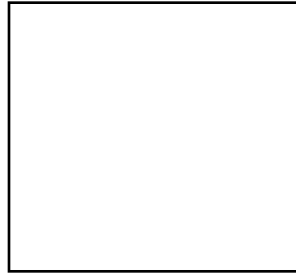
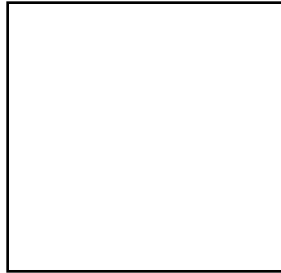
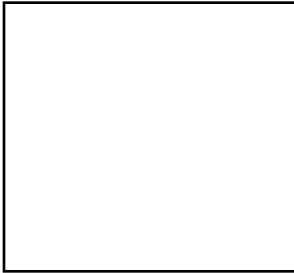
23. Draw a figure that is square in shape. Divide it in half by drawing a straight line from its northeast corner to its southwest corner, and then divide it once more by drawing a broken line from the middle of its western side to the middle of its eastern side.

24. Print a word that looks the same whether it is printed frontwards or backwards.

25. Write down on the line provided, what you read in the triangle below:



26. In the third square below, write the second letter of the fourth word.



27. Write right from the left to the right as you see it spelled here.
28. Divide a vertical line in two equal parts by bisecting it with a curved horizontal line that is only straight at its spot bisection of the vertical.
29. Write every other word in this first line and print every third word in the same line, (original type smaller and first line ended at comma) but capitalize the fifth word that you write.
30. Draw five circles that have one common interlocking part.

Voter Suppression Following the Civil War

The original version of the Constitution and Bill of Rights let the states decide which citizens had a right to vote. At first, only white men – and in just four states, freed African American slaves – who owned property were allowed to vote. Then, states slowly began to drop the property requirement, opening it up to all white males and some African American males by 1850. All women, non-African American minorities, and many non-Christian religious groups were denied the right to vote under these laws.

After the brief Reconstruction period following the Civil War, in which freed slaves earned the right to vote and hold office, there was a sharp political shift in the South. Even though the 15th Amendment (1870) extended the right to vote regardless of “race, color, or previous condition of servitude” (slaves), many states began to write laws that were designed to suppress the black vote.

Some of these laws included a requirement to pass a literacy test which was impossible for former slaves who were not allowed to learn to read. Other states used poll taxes which charged people a fee to vote. Many poor African American and poor whites were either unable or unwilling to pay. The “grandfather clause,” used in many states, allowed people to vote only if their grandfathers had also been eligible to vote.

Attempts to protest these laws were often deadly. Many forms of intimidation were used to prevent people from voting. The intimidation was so successful, that by 1940 only 3% of voting age African Americans were registered to vote.

While Oregon women earned the right to vote in the state’s 1912 General Election, all American women finally won the right to vote in 1920 through the passage of the 19th Amendment. But it wasn’t until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that any “test or device” was banned to qualify voters. The Voting Rights Act also required states with a history of discrimination to have any new voting laws approved by the Federal government before those laws could go into effect. In 2013, the Supreme Court, in *Shelby County v. Holder*, took away that oversight provided by the Voting Rights Act. That had an immediate impact for many voters across the country. Several counties and states started to pass laws that restrict and/or suppress voters.

HANDOUT - Historical Examples of Voter Suppression

Do not discourage voter fraud or intimidation (2012, Ohio & Wisconsin)	Slash tires of cars that are giving people a ride to the polls. (2006, Wisconsin)
Make robo-calls to voters with wrong information about voting times and places (2008, Nevada)	Tell people that their voting place has been changed (2018, Pennsylvania)
Tell voters they can vote by phone (2008, Nevada)	Make people wait in long lines to vote: 4-7 hours (2012, Florida)
Send out official looking mail that gives wrong information about voting (2008, Ohio)	Close polling places in neighborhoods where there are a lot of people from the other party (2011, Alabama)
If you have gone to prison for a felony, only the governor can decide if you can ever vote. (2007, Kentucky)	Don't provide enough voting machines (2018, Georgia)
Only certain state or federal ID can be used to vote (2013, Tennessee)	Print ballots in a language that voters can't read (2018, Texas)
Close DMV offices in certain neighborhoods, so that people can't easily get ID (2014, Alabama)	Allow voting only on days that people have to work, making it difficult to vote (2014, Ohio)
Jam phone lines of the other political party as they try to contact their voters (2002, New Hampshire)	Take names off of voting lists, but don't tell anyone (2017, Indiana)
Collect voter registration forms, but don't turn them in (2012, Virginia)	Take names off voting list if they miss voting in one election (2018, Ohio)
Forbid election workers/volunteers to offer food or water to voters waiting in long lines.	Deny voting rights to anyone who has unpaid fines or court fees.

All the above actions have been made easier by the Supreme Court's decision to delete key provisions of the Voting Rights Act in 2013. The 2016 election was the first presidential election in 50 years without full protection of the right to vote. Throughout the 2016 election cycle, the League of Women Voters worked to make sure voters impacted by new laws were aware of these restrictions. In Ohio, the League made thousands of phone calls to inform voters about that state's purge of voting lists. In Virginia, the League conducted outreach so voters knew how the state's new voter photo ID law might affect them.

In 2020 and 2021, nineteen states enacted 33 laws to make it harder to vote. Still despite the Covid pandemic, voter turnout in the 2020 general election was the highest in a century. The LWVUS stands with state leagues around the country to fight these laws that are designed to limit voting rights and to intimidate voters on Election Day. Across the country, thousands of League volunteers serve as non-partisan poll observers, staff voter protection hotlines, and make sure get-out-the-vote phone banks reached as many voters as possible. The League is gearing up to take a stand in Congress, statehouses, and courtrooms nationwide to ensure no voters are left behind.

The Civil Rights Movement & Voting Rights Act of 1965

Finally, because of the Civil Rights Movement and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, voter registration among Southern blacks jumped from **29%** in 1960 to **62%** in 1970. In Mississippi, registration skyrocketed from **5.2%** in 1960 to **71%** in 1970.

Achieving Women's Suffrage

The struggle for voting rights was not limited to African Americans. For over 70 years, women of all social classes fought for the right to vote. Largely inspired by gender segregation (separation) imposed at an anti-slavery convention in London, women in the United States began organizing for the right to publicly participate in elections. In 1848 a group of men and women gathered in New York State to hold the Seneca Falls Convention, marking the official beginning of the US Women's Suffrage movement. This demand was furthered by the creation of organizations like the League of Women Voters, headed by leaders such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902), Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906), and Alice Paul (1885-1977).

In the 1800s, women gained the vote in the United States in places such as the Wyoming Territory. The women's suffrage movement was also furthered by achievement in foreign countries such as in the new, egalitarian (equal) societies of New Zealand (1893) and Australia (1902).

In Oregon, after decades of work by tireless leaders like Abigail Scott Duniway, women gained the right to vote in 1912 through the initiative process, a process whereby registered voters sign a petition to have an issue placed on the ballot for all to vote on; in this case, whether women should be allowed to vote in elections. Years later, in 1920, women across the United States finally achieved suffrage with passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Lowering the Voting Age to 18

The last national extension of franchise (the right to vote) occurred in 1971, when the voting age was lowered to 18 with the passage of the 26th Amendment. This Amendment passed largely because many people saw an injustice when 18-20-year-olds were forced to fight in the Vietnam War yet were not allowed to vote.

UNIT 3: YOUR VOTE IS YOUR VOICE

STANDARDS:

*HS.4 * Describe core elements of early governments that are evident in United States government structure.*

*HS.8 * Examine the institutions, functions, and processes of Oregon's state, county, local and regional governments.*

OBJECTIVE

Students will understand:

- Those who don't vote allow others to make important decisions for them.
- Low voter turnout may lead to a different election outcome than if voter turnout is high.
- One vote can make a difference.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Each election, important decisions are made that affect everyone, yet each election, hundreds of thousands of Oregonians choose to *not* vote. It is especially concerning when young people aren't taking time to study issues and cast their ballots. Statistics show, many Oregonians of any eligible age are not voting. And, by not voting, they are allowing others to make important decisions for them. Please compare voting turnout figures carefully. Find out if percentages are based on registered or eligible voters, for example.

During the 2016 general election over a million eligible Oregonians did not vote. Some of these non-voters were eligible but not registered to vote. Elections are won or lost by far fewer votes.

That trend continues. Over a million REGISTERED voters did NOT vote in the May 2016 primary election.

Despite our need for improvement, Oregon has historically had high voter participation compared with other states. In 2016, with the implementation of the Oregon Motor Voter Law, 270,000 new voters were automatically registered at Oregon DMVs. Of these newly registered voters, 44% did not follow through by voting. Overall, 80.3% of our voting age population voted, a record high. Each of our ballots cost about \$3.50 to produce and process. We urge each voter to make our shared expenditures count.

Voting patterns across the United States seem to differ between cities and rural areas, industrial and farming regions, and general locations. Some areas of the country tend to vote Democrat on a regular basis, while other regions tend to vote Republican on a regular basis. Still, there are millions of eligible voters across the United States who fail to come out to the polls every two years.

Factors influencing an individual's propensity to vote include age, election type, and whether one's parents have been regular voters. Other considerations include the voter's interest in issues, choices on the ballot, how they feel about politics and government in general, and the health of the economy.

VOTER PARTICIPATION

Overall Voter Turnout

As a rule, more voters participate in general elections than in primary elections.

See [Voter Participation 1990–2020](#)

OREGON Primary Election VOTER Turnout

Year	Registered	Voted	Turnout
2022	2,943,071	1,111,233	37.8%
2020	2,845,634	1,310,919	46.10%
2018	2,660,183	908,166	34.1%
2016	2,281,555	1,231,843	54%
2014	2,113,430	758,604	35.90%
2012	2,021,263	787,847	38.98%
2010	2,033,951	846,515	41.62%
2008	2,008,957	1,170,526	58.26%
2006	1,965,939	758,393	38.58%
2004	1,862,919	864,833	46.42%
2002	1,839,070	858,524	46.68%
2000	1,808,080	927,351	51.29%
1998	1,906,677	665,340	34.90%
1996	1,851,499	698,990	37.75%

OREGON General Election VOTER Turnout

Year	Registered	Voted	Turnout
2020	2,951,428	2,317,965	78.50%
2018	2,763,105	1,873,891	67.80%
2016	2,553,806	2,051,448	80.30%
2014	2,174,763	1,541,782	70.09%
2012	2,199,360	1,820,507	82.77%
2010	2,068,798	1,487,210	71.89%
2008	2,153,914	1,845,251	85.67%
2006	1,976,669	1,399,650	70.81%
2004	2,141,249	1,851,671	86.48%
2002	1,872,615	1,293,756	69.09%
2000	1,954,006	1,559,215	79.80%
1998	1,965,981	1,160,400	59.02%

1996	1,962,155	1,399,180	71.31%
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Source for more information: [Oregon Election History](#)

By Party Affiliation

Those registered with a major party also tend to participate at higher rates than those registered with a minor party or non-affiliated voters (NAV). This is true for general and primary elections.

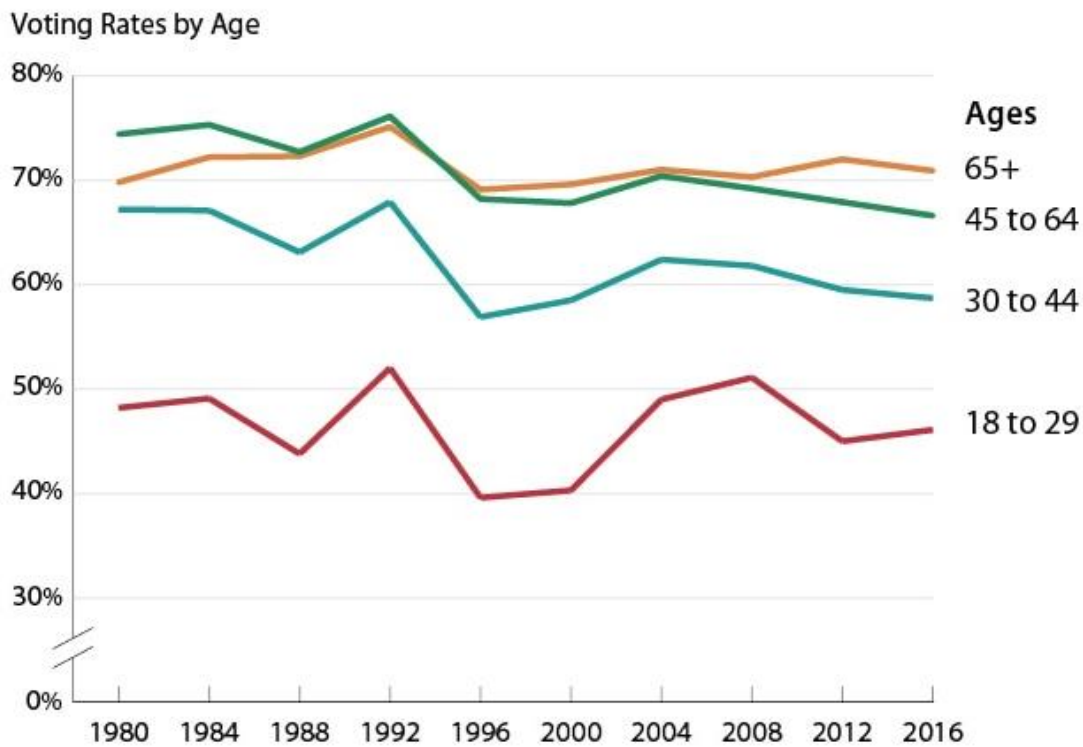
<i>Percentage Voting in Oregon Primary Elections</i>				
Year	Dem	Rep	NAV	Other
2022	50.6%	54.0%	15.2%	27.8%
2020	60.8%	64.3%	21.1%	35.3%
2016	69.4%	60.8%	20.7%	27.8%
2014	40.3%	45%	20.3%	23.3%
2012	44.5%	46.9%	19.8%	24.7%
2010	45.4%	50.5%	23.3%	26.6%
2008	75.8%	55.9%	29.4%	32.6%
2006	43.7%	44.7%	21.5%	23.3%
2004	54.1%	51.6%	26.5%	27.3%
2002	54%	51%	26%	27%
2000	56%	58%	32%	29%
1998	40%	40%	17%	15%
1996	43%	45%	17%	13%

<i>Percentage Voting in Oregon General Elections</i>				
Year	Dem	Rep	NAV	Other
2020	90.9%	91.35	64.8%	82.3%
2016	87.9%	89.3%	61.1%	69.8%
2014	75.9%	77.2%	57.6%	59.7%
2012	86.3%	87.9%	71.7%	75.1%
2010	75.1%	79.5%	56.8%	59.9%
2008	89.1%	88.3%	76%	77.1%
2006	75.4%	75.6%	57%	57.1%
2004	88.8%	89.7%	78.9%	76.1%
2002	72%	76%	53%	51%
2000	83%	86%	67%	61%
1998	63%	66%	41%	36%
1996	75%	79%	54%	45%

Source: [Oregon Secretary of State](#)

By Age

There is a very strong connection between age and voter participation. Young people are consistently underrepresented at elections; this is particularly true for primary elections and for local and special elections. From US Census data, “The 2020 presidential election had the highest voter turnout of the 21st century, with 66.8% of citizens 18 years and older voting in the election. Voter turnout also increased as age, educational attainment and income increased. Voter turnout was highest among those ages 65 to 74 at 76.0%, while the percentage was lowest among those ages 18 to 24 at 51.4%. Overall, voter turnout increased as age increased, with the exception of 75-plus which had a turnout rate that was below 65-74 year-olds and not significantly different than the turnout for 55 to 64 year-olds.”



Source: [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov)

ACTIVITY/ASSIGNMENT SUGGESTION

Who's Making the Rules in Oregon?

The purpose of this classroom exercise is for students to experience the effect of not having their vote count.

1. Cut enough small pieces of paper for each student to have one as their "ballot." Mark an "X" on the back of fewer than 50% of the "ballots." Give each student a "ballot." Write a controversial question on the board and ask the students to write "yes" or "no" on their paper in answer. Make sure to select a question that would actually be controversial. If the question is one that almost all will vote the same way, the lesson will be lost.

Here are some examples from which you might choose:

- Should all voting-age citizens automatically be registered and be fined if they don't vote (mandatory voting)?
- Should the voting age be changed to 16?
- Should student loans be forgiven?
- Should national service be required for every American citizen between 18 and 25?
- Should it be required that those under 18 be in school or working toward their G.E.D. to obtain and maintain a drivers' license?"

Tabulate all the votes and announce results by writing them on the board next to the question. Then tabulate the marked ballots only and write the new results on the board.

Are the results any different? Can students see any problems in letting 50% of the class decide the issue for the entire class? Remind students that only about 71% of eligible voters (of voting age) were registered and only 37.8% of registered voters participated in the 2022 Oregon Primary Election.

2. Have students discuss what a popular political catchphrase means (e.g., "Democracy is not a spectator sport" - Lotte Scharfman or "Democracy belongs to those who exercise it." - Bill Moyers) Have them design their own bumper sticker or political slogan to express their feelings about a citizen's responsibility in terms of political participation.
3. Have students conduct a poll of friends, family, and neighbors over 18 years old. Students should ask:
Are you registered to vote?
Did you vote in the last election?
Do you plan to vote in the November 8, 2022, General Election?

If the answer to any question is no, students should ask for the reason why.

Poll results should be tallied and reasons discussed in the classroom.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS / ESSAY TOPICS

1. List some plausible reasons people don't vote. Write a short explanation for each of why you agree or not.
2. Imagine that one of your friends told you that they don't plan to vote as a "personal protest against bad government." How effective do you think their "personal protest" will be? What other methods of protest might your friend use to express their dissatisfaction with government?
3. What do you think about the mindset that, "People don't have a right to complain if they don't vote." Explain your answer and give examples.
4. List five reasons why low voter participation might be a problem in a democratic society.
5. Why should citizens spend time informing themselves about public issues, participating in elections and monitoring performance of public officials? Why not leave it up to others? Support your answer with examples.
6. Can you name some political groups?
Identify some of the issues being discussed.
Who are the groups supporting these issues?
Does low voter turnout allow groups with narrow interests to have too much power? Why or Why not?
Give specific examples.
7. How do you think the following historical figures who struggled and fought for the right to vote would view today's low voter turnout?
Martin Luther King, Jr. Susan B. Anthony Patrick Henry
8. Identify five reasons so many young people don't vote. What could be done to improve turnout among young people?
9. How many students have parents that vote regularly? Do you think you will model your parents' participation or lack thereof? (Statistics show that non-voting parents produce non-voting children.)
10. Students claim that 18-24-year-olds don't vote in part because candidates do not come to them or address issues important to them. With a limited campaign budget, why would a candidate spend time and money on young voters – or address issues important to them – when the candidates know that a large percentage of that group won't bother to vote?
11. What motivates citizens to participate in local, state, and national elections?
12. Should there be incentives (for example, tax deductions) to vote in a democratic society? (Currently, it is illegal to offer tangible incentives for people to vote such as a free lunch, movie passes or money.) Why or why not? Would incentives lead to discrimination? Why or why not?

Suggested Modifications

To help students organize their writing into coherent paragraphs for the Discussion/Essay Questions, have them use a [Four-Square Graphic Organizer](#).

This unit allows many different types of learners to succeed because it relies heavily on kinesthetic learning and verbal interaction, so fewer modifications may be needed for students.

ACTIVITY/ASSIGNMENT SUGGESTION

Who's Making the Rules?

The following exercise features issues of interest to students. These “ballot measures” do not reflect the actual ballot measures on which students will be voting during the Oregon Student Mock Election. These issues have been chosen solely for this exercise and for educational purposes.

Introductory Teacher Script:

"Each election, important decisions are made that affect everyone. Yet each election, hundreds of thousands of Oregonians choose to *not* vote. What is especially concerning is that young people, in particular, aren't taking the time to study issues and cast their ballots.

Instead of telling you about voter participation in Oregon, I want to **show** you, by holding a mock election. Imagine that this class represents the state of Oregon. I have four important ballot measures that you, as a state, must vote on. But before we decide on these measures, we need to identify our voters."

Step I: Identify the Voters

If you have a class of 25, 30, or 35 students simply use the calculations below to determine your “voters.” You might make sticky name tags before this activity for the students as they are identified as “Eligible Voter,” “Registered Voter,” and “Actual Voter.” We used the real data but have estimated/rounded for this activity. If your actual class size is not 25, 30, or 35, you can use the percentages provided to make your estimated counts accurate.

Oregon Voters		Your Class			
Population (in July, 2021)	4.3 million	Population	25	30	35
Eligible Voters (in July, 2021)	3.4 million 79.8% of total population	Est. Eligible Voters	20	24	28
Registered Voters (in July, 2021)	2.9 million 92.2% of eligible voters	Registered Voters	18	22	26
Actual Voters (in May, 2022)	1.1 million 37.8% of registered voters	Actual Voters	7	8	10

Sources and other data resources:

[SoS Statistical Summary July 2021](#), [US Census QuickFacts - Oregon](#), [Oregon Elections Data - July 2021](#)

Identify the students who are in each of the groups:

1. **Eligible voters** - In a class of 30 this would be 24 students. Have the 6 non-eligible students move to one side of the room. You might take a minute to discuss why these members of the population would not be eligible to vote (e.g., underage, actively incarcerated, noncitizen, not registered, etc.).
2. **Registered voters** - In a class of 30, for this data period, this would be 22 students of the 24 who are eligible. Have the 2 non-registered students stand with the non-eligible voters. There are now 8 students on that side of the room.
3. **Actual voters** - In the same class of 30, for this data period, there will be 8 students who will be actual voters. Have the 14 non-voting students move to stand with the non-eligible and non-registered voters. Now there are 22 students in the nonvoting population.

Hand out four 3x5 cards or small pieces of paper (ballots) to the 8 actual voters.

Step II: Make Voter Demographics Real

Explain that the median age of all the eligible voters in the total population voting age is 43, but the median age of those who vote is between 50-60, depending on the election (general, primary, or special elections). That means that half of all those who actually vote are younger than the median age and half are older.

Ask the “actual voters” in the class, “Imagine that you are 67, retired, and living on a modest, fixed income from savings and social security. You own your home and don't have any children or grandchildren in the local school system. Your major election considerations are crime prevention and asset preservation.”

Ask the class what effect, if any, age might have on people who vote? Have them list examples of differences between young and old voters. What effect this over-representation of older people may have on election outcomes? What would happen if younger people voted at higher rates?

Step III: Announce, Discuss, Vote on Ballot Measures

1. Explain that voters and non-voters are allowed to offer short pro or con ballot measure arguments. After all, even non-voters have opinions about the issues on the ballot.
2. Read the first ballot measure (below) aloud and write the ballot title on the blackboard (e.g., Military/National Service)
3. Call on student volunteers to present their arguments, making sure they clearly state whether they support or oppose the measure.
4. Allow about 5 minutes for arguments and then say "OK, let's vote!" Have student voters write “yes” or “no” on one of their slips of paper.
5. Ask a non-voting student to quickly gather the ballots.
6. Have the student call out the "yes" and "no" votes.
7. Tally results on the blackboard and write the vote result (e.g., Pass or Fail) at the end of the question on the blackboard.
8. Quickly move on to the next measure.

Note:

Students may have questions about the measures. Teachers may clarify and model how to consider the many sides of ballot measures. Students should understand that, like the electorate, they must make a decision based on the wording of the ballot question.

Students may want to make suggestions to improve the proposal. This is an opportunity for teachers to explain that a major difference between the legislative and initiative processes is that initiative proposals do not undergo a hearing process. The public does not usually have an opportunity to suggest ideas to improve initiative proposals.

The following mock measures are suggested for this exercise:

Measure 1: Military/National Service

Should Oregon's high school graduates be required to serve either one year in the military or in a national service program like Americorps, to give back to their communities, expose them to new environments, and earn money for college?

Measure 2: School Weapons Search

Should all Oregon middle and high schools use metal detectors and random locker checks to protect students from guns and other violent weapons?

Measure 3: Minimum Wage

Should Oregon's minimum wage be raised to \$15.00 per hour (currently \$13.50).

[State Minimum Wages](#)

[Oregon Minimum Wage 2022](#)

Measure 4: College Funding

Should state income tax dollars be used to pay for a scholarship to any college or university -- equivalent to average Oregon public university tuition -- for students who graduate from high school with at least a 3.5 GPA and who qualify for the scholarship based on financial need?

Step IV: Discuss the Exercise

To non-voting students:

How did the voters do? Do you agree with all the decisions made for you?

How did it feel to have others make all the decisions for you?

To all students:

Why do you think so many people, especially young people, don't vote?

If you wanted to convince a friend of yours to vote, what would you say

HANDOUTS

The Power of One Vote (page 31)

Use the handout on the next to demonstrate the importance of every single vote

THE POWER OF ONE VOTE



1645: ONE VOTE
gave Oliver Cromwell
control of England

1649: ONE VOTE
Caused Charles I of
England to be executed



1776: ONE VOTE made English our
official language, instead of German



1876: ONE VOTE saved
President Andrew Johnson
from removal from office

1876: ONE VOTE changed
France from a monarchy
to a republic



1923: ONE VOTE
gave Adolph Hitler
leadership of the Nazi
Party

1876: ONE VOTE in the
Electoral College gave
Rutherford B. Hayes the
Presidency.



In **1960:** John F. Kennedy won
(and Richard Nixon lost) the
presidential election by a
margin of less than ONE VOTE
per precinct nationwide.



UNIT 4: REGISTERING TO VOTE

STANDARDS

*HS.9 * Analyze political parties, interest and community groups, and mass media and how they influence the beliefs and behaviors of individuals, and local, state, and national constituencies.*

HS.71 Construct arguments using precise claims, integrating and evaluating information provided by multiple sources, diverse media, and formats, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary strengths and weaknesses.

OBJECTIVE

Students will understand Oregon's voter registration process and know how to access a registration form and be familiar with the questions on the form.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

New voters must register. Voters who move, change their name or want to change party affiliation must update their registration. All voters, but particularly those who are young or older) also need to make sure the signature on file at the elections office is accurate. We've made that easier in recent years, following federal and state law changes.

National Voter Registration Act

The [National Voter Registration Act](#), often referred to as the “Motor Voter Act”, was signed by President George Bush in 1993 and took effect in 1995. It contains the following provisions designed to make it easier to register to vote:

- Citizens must be given the chance to register to vote when applying for, renewing, or changing the address on their driver's license or non-driver ID card.
- Voter registration forms must also be available at libraries, schools, banks, and other institutions, to serve people without drivers' licenses.
- All states must have a system of mail registration.

To register to vote in Oregon, you must be:

- At least 16 years old
- A United States citizen
- An Oregon resident

If you are 16 years of age, you are pre-registered to vote and will not receive a ballot until an election occurs on or after your 18th birthday.

Oregonians can register to vote at [MyVote](#). Check your registration for accuracy to be sure your ballot will reach you.

You may register in person at a county election office, the DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles), or certain public assistance agencies. Voter registration can also be done by mail. Registration forms are available at county election offices, DMV offices, and many schools, banks, libraries, post offices, and other public buildings. Voter registration cards must be postmarked no later the 21st day before the election at which you intend to vote.

Recent Legislative Work

Voting Age (2021)

Legislative advocacy recently has included proposals to change the voting age to 16 ([SB 776](#) would have permitted 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in school district elections. This can be accomplished through a statutory change. It does not require a state constitutional amendment. This bill was introduced with 12 cosponsors.

[SJR 25](#), introduced with 9 cosponsors, proposed a state constitutional amendment to lower the voting age to 16 for all elections in the state. Read the [League testimony](#) for current status in other states. SJR 25 did not pass.

Sources: [Vote16USA.org](#), [Next Up Oregon](#).

Redistricting (2021)

The 2020 federal census showed Oregon population changes that initiated revisions in Oregon's legislative and special districts. In response, as required, the Oregon [legislature][General Assembly] held hearings, and then redrew the state legislative district lines created in 2011, in order to ensure that the districts' populations were approximately equal in size. The Governor signed the bills creating the new districts in September 2021. [Legal challenges to the fairness of the districts were unsuccessful.] [An initiative effort was commenced to take the responsibility for redistricting from the [legislature][General Assembly][because of its conflict of interest in this task][and claims of gerrymandering], and give it to an independent citizens' redistricting commission.]

Oregon Postage Prepaid Ballots [SB 861 Enrolled](#) (2019)

Effective September 29, 2019, ballot return envelopes can be returned by (prepaid) business reply mail, or other mailing service determined by the Secretary of State to be more cost effective or efficient, for each election held in this state. Applies to elections held on or after January 1, 2020. This especially helps:

- **Young voters.** Many are unaccustomed to using stamps.
- **Low-income voters.** The cost of stamps may be left out of family budgets.
- **Rural voters.** Ballot drop boxes may be hours away, compared to urban areas.

If ballot drop boxes are used, the postage cost is not charged to Oregon. We encourage drop box use, where it is possible.

The [Official Oregon Drop Box Locator Map](#) goes live 20 days before an election. For more information about local elections, including drop box locations for your county, contact your [County Elections Official](#).

Oregon Motor Voter Act (2016)

On Jan. 1, 2016, Oregon's voter registration law, Oregon Motor Voter, took effect. This new law made voter registration automatic, shifting from an opt-in process to an opt-out process. The new law eliminated the need to fill out the voter registration card at the DMV. Instead, eligible Oregonians will receive a mailing from the Oregon Elections Division explaining their options for registering to vote.

You will qualify under the Oregon Motor Voter Act if an eligible unregistered voter (over 16 years old, an Oregon resident, and a US citizen) visits the DMV to apply for, renew, or replace an Oregon drivers' license, ID card, or permit. With the Oregon Motor Voter card, **you have three options:**

- 1) **Do nothing.** You will be registered to vote as a non-affiliated voter (not a member of a political party). If you do not return the card, this is the default option. You have 21 days from the date the OMV Card is sent to respond; otherwise you will be automatically registered to vote. However, you can unregister at any time after that by contacting your county clerk's office in writing or in person.
- 2) **Choose a political party by returning the card.** Joining a political party will allow you to vote in its primary

elections. You are not required to affiliate with a political party.

- 3) **Use the card to opt-out** and decline to register to vote. If you don't want to be registered, just check the box on the OMV Card to opt out, sign it, and drop it in the mail. A pre-paid postage envelope is included with your OMV letter. You will remain an unregistered voter unless you choose to register. If you choose to register, you may be able to do so online. You can always register to vote by completing a paper registration form.

Registered voters may update their address until Election Day. However, those who update during the final seven days may vote only on federal candidates and statewide measures and candidates.

Oregon's Statewide Political Parties (see student handout, page 37)

If you wish to vote for partisan candidates (those running for one of the two major parties) in primary elections, held in May of even-numbered years, you must register to vote as a member of that party. To register to vote in Oregon, you are required to furnish your full name, residence address, date of birth, and signature. You will also be asked to provide your political party preference and your Oregon Driver's license number, or social security number. Once your signature is on file with the county elections office, you can update other information [online](#).

If you do not want to be affiliated with a political party, you may check the box: *Not a member of a party*. You may not designate or change a party affiliation after the 21st day before the primary election.

The major statewide Oregon political parties are Democratic and Republican. Currently registered minor statewide political parties are Constitution Party, Independent Party, Libertarian Party, Pacific Green Party, Progressive Party, and Working Families Party.

Members of minor parties hold conventions to determine which of their candidates will stand at the general election.

Members of major political parties nominate their candidates at a primary election. Only a voter who is registered as a member of a major political party may vote for that party's candidates at the primary election unless the party opens its primary to non-affiliated voters. If this is the case, voters who are "non-affiliated" must request a major party ballot from their county election office.

*NOTE: Non-affiliated (NAV) is not the same as Independent, which is a registered political party in Oregon.

All nonpartisan (not associated with a party) offices (e.g., judges, district attorneys, most local positions) are also on the primary election ballot. Any registered voter may vote on these candidate races, regardless of the voter's political party affiliation.

Counties Manage Elections

A County Clerk or Election Officer is responsible for conducting elections within each of Oregon's 36 counties. They manage registration records, prepare the ballots, hire election workers, and receive and count the votes.

ACTIVITY/ASSIGNMENT IDEAS

Have eligible students access voter registration from the [Secretary of State's website](#) and review as a class activity.

Students are eligible to pre-register to vote at age 16. Students who are 16 but will not be 18 on or before Election Day may still register but won't be sent a ballot until the next election when they are of voting age. Do not have ineligible students register to vote. You can make a mock form by making copies of the registration form and marking VOID over the signature line.

*Direct online registration can be found at [Welcome to ORESTAR !](#)

You can print the voter registration form: [SEL500 Oregon Voter Registration Card English](#)

Register voters in your school and community:

[National Voter Registration Day](#) is held each September!

Remember: Registration cards must be dated when they are signed and returned to county elections offices within 5 days.

For voter registration drive tips, check out [Next Up](#):

Establish a school-wide program for students who turn 16, to get a birthday card with a voter registration card enclosed. Encourage them to fill it out quickly and mail it to the county elections office.

Develop public policy questions. Divide the class into small groups. Ask each group to create a list of 5 public policy questions. Have students contact Oregon's political parties (included below) to learn if your questions are addressed by state parties' political platforms. Or compare and contrast the position of Oregon's political parties on 5 issues.

Ask students to create a new political party. Have them write a party platform focusing on issues they believe to be important. Encourage them to design a logo and slogan for their party. What strategies would their party adopt to encourage young people to register with their party?

Host a debate. Whether you're debating party platforms you've created, or discussing Oregon ballot measures, hosting an official debate is a way for students to really become experts on the topics they're discussing. Check with your local City Club to see if they are interested in getting involved and moderating student debates as well!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS / ESSAY TOPICS

During the last decade, despite Congress, the President, and some states making the voter registration process more convenient, in the 2020 presidential election, only 66.8% of those who *could* vote, actually did.

Why do you think this is the case?

What could be done to encourage more citizens to register and to vote?

Sources: [2020 Presidential Election](#), [Census.gov/data/Tables](#), [Statista.com](#)

Nationwide, voter registration is lowest among young people. In the 18-24 age group. In 2020, only 59.8% of these eligible voters were registered.

Why do you think this is the case?

How might low voter registration levels lead to under-representation at the ballot box?

What state and national effects do you think that could have?

What could be done to encourage more young citizens to register to vote?

Source: [Statista.com](#)

As of September 2022, Oregon had 2,971,604 registered voters. They included:

1,011,945	Democratic Party (34%)
729,316	Republican Party (25%)
138,703	Independent Party (5%)
20,884	Libertarian Party (0.7%)
7,842	Pacific Green Party (0.3%)
8,382	Working Families Party (0.3%)
3,934	Constitution Party (0.1%)
3,303	Progressive Party (0.1%)
1,031,569	Non-Affiliated (35%)
15,826	Other (0.5%)

Source: [Oregon Secretary of State Elections](#)

The number of non-affiliated voters has grown rapidly in recent years, from 13% registered to vote in 1990, to 35% in 2022.

Why do you think the number of non-affiliated voters has grown?

What are the benefits of registering:

with a major political party?

with a minor political party?

with no party?

Who is your county clerk? Where is your county election office located? (Hint: [County Elections Officials](#))

Suggested Modifications

To help students who struggle with reading, complete the political survey as a whole class, which will allow all students to hear the statements and allow clarification of specific ideas. This will help all students fully comprehend the statements so they can make the best decision regarding their political beliefs.

Handouts

Oregon's Statewide Political Parties (page 37)

Party Contact Information (page 38)

[Voter Registration form](#) (download from the Secretary of State's website):

HANDOUT - OREGON'S STATEWIDE POLITICAL PARTIES

Oregon has eight registered political parties, two major and six minor.

Major Statewide Political Parties: Democrat and Republican

A group of voters can file to become a major statewide political party when they have at least 5% (of the voters eligible to vote at the last general election) registered as members of the party. After becoming a major statewide political party, a number of electors equal to at least 3% of the number of electors registered in Oregon must have registered as party members.

Major political party candidates may file to be listed on the primary election ballot by paying a fee or by submitting signatures on petitions.

Minor Statewide Political Parties: Constitution, Independent Party of Oregon, Libertarian Party, Pacific Green Party, Progressive Party, and Working Families Party of Oregon.

To establish a minor statewide political party, a group of voters must file a petition containing signatures of a number of registered voters equal to 1.5% of the total number of votes cast for all candidates for Governor at the most recent election where a Governor was elected to a full term.

Minor political parties may nominate candidates to appear on the general election ballot, but not for the primary election.

Use of Party Name

Each major and minor political party has the exclusive right to use the whole party name or any part of it.

For more information, see [SoS Political Party Manual](#) or [SoS - Form a Political Party](#).

HANDOUT - PARTY CONTACT INFORMATION

Democratic Party of Oregon

232 NE 9th Ave
Portland, OR 97232
Phone: 503-
224-8200
Email: director@dpo.org

Oregon Republican Party

PO Box 1586
Lake Oswego, OR 97035
Phone: 503-595-8881
Email: info@orgop.org

Constitution Party of Oregon

1252 Redwood Ave
Phone: 541-659-4313
Grants Pass, OR 97526
Email: jackbrown@jackbrown.org

Independent Party

9220 SW Barbur Blvd
Portland, OR 97219
Email: info@indparty.com

Libertarian Party of Oregon

7100 SW Hampton, Suite 201
Tigard, OR 97223
Email: johannstein@gmail.com

Pacific Green Party

Eugene Growers Market Office
454 Willamette St, Ste. 219
Eugene, OR 97401-2643
Email: info@pacificgreens.org

Progressive Party

411 SW 2nd Ave, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97204
Phone: 503/548-2797
Email: jimhanna@quest.net

Working Families Party

333 SE 2nd Ave
Portland, OR 97214
Phone: 503-841-7161
Alejandro Juarez
Communications Director
Email: ajuarez@workingfamilies.org

UNIT 5: VOTING IN OREGON

STANDARDS

*HS.8 * Examine the institutions, functions, and processes of Oregon's state, county, local and regional governments.*

*HS.11. * Analyze and evaluate the methods for challenging, resisting, and changing society in the promotion of equity, justice and equality.*

HS.71 Construct arguments using precise claims, integrating and evaluating information provided by multiple sources, diverse media, and formats, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary strengths and weaknesses.

OBJECTIVE

Students should understand how and when we vote and what we vote on. They should be familiar with Oregon's vote-by-mail process, our campaign finance system, our term limit laws, and the difference between an initiative, referendum and referral.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

When Do We Vote on What?

There are three basic election levels in the American political system: national, state & local.

(See student handout, *Elected Offices* page 43).

Oregon law provides for two major statewide elections each even-numbered year: a primary election in May and a general election in November. In addition, special or local elections may be held in March, May, September, or November.

Elections may be held on the:

- Second Tuesday in March

- Third Tuesday in May

- Third Tuesday in September

- First Tuesday after the first Monday in November

Oregon is one of nine states which uses a closed primary system. In Oregon's system, voters registered with one of the two major political parties -- currently Democratic or Republican -- select (nominate) the candidates from each party who will run in the general election. Citizens registered as non-affiliated or with a minor party cannot vote for partisan candidates in the primary election.

All voters may vote on nonpartisan contests (e.g., judges, district attorneys, Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries, most local offices, and ballot measures) that are also held at the primary election. If one nonpartisan candidate wins more than half of the primary votes, that candidate will either be elected or stand alone on the general election ballot. This varies by county policy.

Ballot measures that began as citizen initiatives may only appear on general election ballots. Referrals and referenda may appear as ballot measures on primary, general, or special election ballots.

Vote-by-Mail (VBM)

Oregon experimented with mail-in ballots in special and local elections beginning in 1981. Oregon conducted the nation's first statewide vote-by-mail election in 1993. The 1995 special election to fill a vacancy in the U.S. Senate was the nation's first congressional election conducted by mail.

In 2022, Oregon was ranked as the [easiest place to vote](#) in the United States. Vote-by-mail elections cost about one-third less than traditional polling place elections. Interested in election costs per ballot? See this: [Oregon 2020 elections cost data](#).

Following the Oregon 1995 and 1997 Legislature's partisan battles, voters approved a measure allowing mail balloting for primary and general elections. The measure began as a citizen's initiative, passing with 69% in favor to 31% opposed. These 8 states conduct all elections with VBM: CA, CO, HI, NV, OR, UT, VT, and WA. Other states allow VBM for some elections. See: [National State Legislatures page](#) for details. (See student handout, *Vote-by-Mail page 45*).

Campaign Finance

Although Oregon law requires campaign finance disclosure, there are no limits on how much an individual can contribute to a political campaign. See [Campaign Contribution Limits Overview](#). The 2020 [Ballot Measure 107](#) passed with 78% public support, but it has yet to see implementation by the Oregon legislature ([Ballotpedia info](#)). (See student handout, *Campaign Finance in Oregon*). Initiatives are underway for placement on Oregon 2024 ballots.

Initiatives, Referenda & Referrals

In Oregon, citizens have the right to enact laws by the initiative petition process which can subtract or add constitutional amendments and statutes. Although there are other states allowing such citizen action, Oregonians are especially active in their right to act as do-it-ourselves lawmakers. Since 1904, Oregonians have voted on nearly 300 statewide initiatives. (See student handout, *Initiatives, Referenda & Referrals*).

Counties Manage Elections

A County Clerk or Election Officer is responsible for conducting elections within each of Oregon's 36 counties, contacts available through the [Oregon Elections Division](#). They manage registration records, prepare ballots, hire election workers, and receive and tally votes.

ACTIVITY / ASSIGNMENT IDEAS

1. Do a Jigsaw Activity. This activity is designed to help students understand the information presented in the student handouts.

First, divide the class into 4 groups (or more if necessary to accommodate class size).

Label Elected Offices "expert groups" on ; Vote-by-Mail; Campaign Finance; or Initiatives, Referenda, & Referrals.

Distribute the appropriate handout to each group. If you need to use more than 4 groups, allow more than one group to work on Initiatives, Referenda, & Referrals due to the length.

Before moving students into groups, explain that they will become "experts" in their area, learning everything they need to know about a particular topic, which they will then be responsible for sharing with members of other groups. Make sure everyone understands their responsibilities

Move students into their expert groups and give them 10-15 minutes to make sure all members are “experts” on their given topic. Notify students when it is time to move into new groups in which there will be one of each expert. In their new groups, they will teach each other about their topic and take notes on what they learn.

Move into their new groups to teach each other. When all members have shared their “expert” information, bring the class back to a large group and have a few individuals summarize the key points of each topic.

2. Allow students to propose ballot measure ideas. Have students divide into small groups to brainstorm proposals for state ballot measures. After selecting one idea, students should write a **ballot title** for their measure including:

- A caption (not more than 10 words) identifying the measure’s subject. (A constitutional amendment caption should begin with the phrase, “Amends Constitution:” which does not count for purposes of the 10-word limit.)
- A statement of not more than 15 words describing the effect of a "yes" vote.
- A statement of not more than 15 words describing the effect of a "no" vote.
- A concise and impartial summary statement of not more than 85 words, describing the measure and its major effect.
- Each group should present their ballot measure to the class. Also, they should explain the purpose of their measure, and what they would say to convince people to vote for their measure.

3. Encourage students to volunteer or to observe their county elections office ballot processing when ballots are being processed. (See student handout, Oregon’s County Election Offices)

4. Help students understand how to use government resources by displaying and navigating [the Oregon Blue Book](#) to find the information presented on the student handout (page 50-53). Go through the first few questions together and then either assign the rest of the research worksheet as class work, homework, or extra credit.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS / ESSAY TOPICS

1. What suggestions, if any, do you have for improving elections in our community?
2. In 1992, Oregon voters passed an initiative limiting statewide officials to two 4-year terms in office and legislators to three 2-year terms in the House and two 4-year terms in the Senate. The law was overturned in 2000. In 2006, an initiative was voted down by voters that would have limited terms of service for both state houses. Do you agree with the term limits law? Do you believe voters should decide through elections when it is time for an incumbent to leave office? Consider the benefits and drawbacks of each scenario. Explain your answer.

Sources: [Oregon Legislature: Term Limits](#), [NCSL: Oregon Term Limits](#)

3. Do you agree with court decisions ruling that restricting campaign contributions and spending would violate free speech rights? Explain in detail why or why not.

Sources: [Bill of Rights Institute: Bill of Rights Institute](#), [Freedom of Speech in Campaign Finance](#).

4. Do you believe it is a good idea to permit voters to initiate (start the process to enact) new laws? To initiate constitutional amendments? To reject new laws? Explain in detail why and / or why not.

Sources: [OR Secretary of State: Make or Change State Law](#), [OR SoS: Initiative, Referral, and Referendum](#)

5. Do you believe we should make it more difficult to amend the Oregon Constitution?

Should more signatures be required?

Should we require a 2/3-majority vote?

Should we require an amendment to pass in two consecutive elections?

Explain in detail why or why not.

Sources: [The Oregon Constitution](#), [Oregon Legislative Counsel](#)

6. Do you agree with the U.S. Supreme Court decision preventing states from banning payments to those who solicit (ask for) signatures for a petition? Explain in detail why or why not.

Sources: [NCSL Laws Governing Petitions](#)

7. Why do you think there have been so many more initiatives in recent years? Explain your answer.

Source: [Oregon Blue Book](#)

Modifications

Create cooperative groups for students to create their own ballot measures (Activity 2). Use the *Choose your Role* handout to assign roles to each group member.

This unit allows many different types of learners to succeed because it allows for cooperative group work and relies heavily on verbal interaction therefore few Modifications may be needed for students.

Handouts

Elected Offices (page 43)

Vote-by-Mail (page 44)

Campaign Finance in Oregon (pages 45-46)

Initiatives, Referenda and Referrals (page 47-49)

It's in the Online Oregon Blue Book! (pages 50-53)

[Oregon's County Election Offices](#)

HANDOUT - ELECTED OFFICES

NATIONAL

The Electoral College elects the **U.S. President** every 4 years. Voters elect members of the Electoral College.

Voters directly elect **U.S. Senators** every 6 years.

Voters directly elect **U.S. Representatives** every 2 years.

STATE

EXECUTIVE

In Oregon, voters elect five statewide officials for 4-year terms to manage the executive branch of government.

These officials are the **Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Attorney General, and Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries**. Half of these offices are up for election every two years.

LEGISLATIVE

Oregon's Legislative Assembly is "bicameral", meaning it has two chambers, the **Senate** and the **House of Representatives**. The Senate has 30 members elected for 4-year terms. Half of the seats are up for election every two years. The House has 60 members elected for 2-year terms.

To qualify for a seat in the Legislature, one must be 21 years of age, a U.S. citizen and reside in the legislative district at least one year prior to the election.

The primary functions of the Legislature are to enact laws, finance state government, and furnish an arena for public issue discussions. The Legislature convenes annually in February at the State Capitol in Salem for approximately 160 days in odd-numbered years and approximately 35 days in even-numbered years.

JUDICIAL

The judicial branch of state government consists of several types of courts and many elected judges. The **Supreme Court** of Oregon is composed of seven justices elected by nonpartisan statewide ballot to serve 6-year terms. To be elected, justices must be U.S. citizens, members of the Oregon State Bar, and have resided in the state for three years. It is the highest court in the state and reviews selected appeals court cases.

The Oregon **Court of Appeals** has 10 judges who are elected to 6-year terms in nonpartisan statewide elections. They must be U.S. citizens, members of the Oregon State Bar, and registered to vote in the counties where they reside. The Court of Appeals has jurisdiction over all civil and criminal appeals except death-penalty cases and Tax Court appeals.

Circuit Court judges have the same requirements for election as Supreme Court judges. They also serve 6-year terms and are elected on nonpartisan ballots in the judicial districts. There are 26 of these districts and 163 circuit judges in Oregon. Circuit courts are the state trial courts of general jurisdiction.

LOCAL

Local elections may include candidate races for offices such as Mayor, City Council, County Commissioner, School Board, and special district positions. They can also include local ballot measures.

RUNNING FOR OFFICE

Candidates for public office must file candidacy applications with the state or county at least 70 days before the primary election. They must pay a modest fee unless they prefer to file with candidacy petition signatures.

Each candidate must form a political action committee (PAC) and appoint a campaign treasurer. Both candidate and treasurer are responsible for reporting all campaign contributions and expenditures (C&Es). This includes the name, address, and occupation of anyone who gives more than \$100. Reports are filed with the state (or county) on designated dates before and after each election. C&Es for candidates or PACs filed in Oregon are publicly available through [ORESTAR](#).

Candidates for federal office must file campaign finance information with the [Federal Elections Commission](#).

HANDOUT - VOTE-BY-MAIL

Oregon has experimented with mail voting in special and local elections since 1981. Oregon conducted the nation's first statewide mail election in 1993. The 1995 special election to fill a vacancy in the U.S. Senate was the nation's first congressional election conducted by mail. Vote-by-mail elections cost about one-third less than traditional polling place elections. There is also some evidence that more people participate in mail elections than in polling place elections.

Following partisan battles in the 1995 and 1997 Legislatures, voters approved a ballot measure allowing mail balloting for primary and general elections. The measure, which began as a citizen's initiative, passed by 69% to 31%. In 2022, 8 states conduct all elections with Vote-by-Mail: CA, CO, HI, NV, OR, UT, VT, and WA. Other states allow VBM for some elections.

How it Works

If you are registered as of the 21st day before an election, your county election office will mail a ballot packet to you 14-18 days before Election Day. The packet may contain a secrecy sleeve, and will contain a postage paid, pre-addressed ballot return envelope, and ballot. (**Note: Some counties have combined the secrecy and pre-addressed return envelope by adding a flap for voters to sign that is separated from the envelope once the signature is verified.)

Once you vote, you may place the ballot in the optional secrecy envelope, seal it, and place it in the return envelope. Sign the return envelope (no additional postage is needed, and either mail it, drop it off at your county election office or drop it in an official election drop site (often in libraries). [Oregon's Drop Box Locator map](#) is activated every election cycle, 20 days before Election Day. Ballots must be postmarked by Election Day received by a county election officer or deposited in an official election drop site by 8:00 pm on Election Day. Dropping a ballot in a US Postal Service collection box or post office slot by 8:00 pm Election Day does NOT guarantee that the envelope will be postmarked that day.

To ensure ballot confidentiality, all ballots are separated from the signed return envelope before ballots are counted. No ballot counting results are announced before the close of business on Election Day. Initial results are released at 8 p.m. on Election Day and are updated until all ballots are tabulated, which will be several days after Election Day. Final canvassing by the Secretary of State must be completed within 30 days of Election Day ([Election Calendar](#)).

If you make a mistake on your ballot, you can get a replacement ballot from your county election official unless you have already mailed the ballot or turned it into a drop site. At that point, a new ballot will not be issued.

HANDOUT - CAMPAIGN FINANCE IN OREGON

Oregon Does Not Limit Campaign Contributions or Expenditures

Oregon law requires campaign finance disclosure, but there are no limits on the amount anyone can contribute to a political campaign, or the amount that can be spent by any candidate or anyone supporting or opposing a ballot measure. See the [Campaign Contribution Limits Overview](#), National Conference of State Legislatures.

The Oregon Legislature tried to limit campaign spending with a 1975 law. But the Oregon Supreme Court ruled that such limits violated the Oregon Constitution's free speech guarantee. Subsequently, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states cannot limit spending without violating the U.S. Constitution's free speech provision.

Campaign spending has increased rapidly in recent decades, despite various efforts to create contribution limits. Expenditures for the 2022 Governor's race are predicted to be between \$40-\$100 million.

Ballot measure spending fluctuates depending on how many measures are on ballots but per measure spending has also increased. In 1994 spending on 19 measures amounted to \$17.1 million. In 2020, just four measures attracted \$25.5 million in donations.

Most States Limit Contributions – But Not Oregon (so far)

While courts have rejected campaign spending limits as violations of free speech, federal courts have allowed some limits on the amount any person or organization may contribute. Most states have enacted donation restrictions. As of 2021, Oregon is one of a handful of states with [no limits](#) on campaign contributions or spending.

In 1994, voters approved **Ballot Measure 9** by a 72%-28% margin. It said that no person or political action committee (PAC) could contribute more than \$100 per election to a legislative candidate or \$500 to a statewide candidate. Contributions to candidates by corporations and labor unions were banned. The law also imposed limits on gifts to PACs and parties, and on party gifts to candidates. As a result of the new law, campaign contributions and spending for candidates dropped sharply in 1996. But in 1997, the Oregon Supreme Court ruled that most of the law violated the Oregon Constitution's free speech guarantees. Their ruling meant the Oregon Constitution must first be amended to allow campaign contributions and/or expenditure limitations before laws can take effect specifying such limitations. The court's unanimous 1997 ruling invalidated the various campaign contributions limits, effectively returning Oregon to a "no limits" position.

More recently, the 2006 **Ballot Measures 46 and 47** again called for strict spending limits (47) and the constitutional authority to impose such limits (46). Oregon voters passed the statute and declined to pass the constitutional amendment. The Secretary of State and the Attorney General determined shortly after the election that since Measure 46 didn't pass, they did not have sufficient legal basis for enforcing the provisions of Measure 47. But the drafters of 47 argue that it's still the law, duly passed by voters, and so it should be enforced unless and until a court strikes it down as unconstitutional.

At the time of the 2020 election, Oregon was one of five states allowing unlimited spending and contributions for political races. In that election, **Measure 107** passed 78%-22%. This law limited political campaign contributions, required disclosure of contributions and expenditures, and required that political advertisements identify the people or entities that paid for them. By 2022, Oregonians are still waiting to see action for the campaign finance law passed by voters.

Sources: [OPB: Oregon Voters Open the Door for Campaign Finance Limits](#)
[Campaign Fundraising in OR 2022](#), [NCSL: Campaign Finance Regulation](#)

HANDOUT - INITIATIVES, REFERENDA, & REFERRALS

State Officials- We elect state legislators and local officials and expect them to enact most of our laws. But Oregon also guarantees citizens the right to become do-it-ourselves lawmakers.

Initiative and Referendum amendment- Oregonians added a Constitutional amendment for Initiatives and Referenda in 1902. Ordinary citizens have used it to add and subtract amendments and statutes ever since.

Oregon Constitution- The original 1857 Oregon Constitution wasn't designed to allow easy amending. Amendments required majority approval of both legislative houses for two consecutive sessions, followed by a majority vote of the people. That didn't happen for more than 40 years.

Meanwhile, many citizens wanted changes their legislators were unwilling to make. The Direct Legislation League (led in Oregon by Milwaukie attorney William S. U'Ren) and the Populist Party demanded that states permit voters to initiate laws. North Dakota approved this reform in 1898 and Utah followed in 1900. Many Oregonians were pressing legislators for similar legislation. Oregonians adopted the amendment creating the rights to initiatives and referendums in 1902 by a resounding vote of 62,024 to 5,668.

The Oregon System

Oregon voters wasted no time in using their new initiative power. They replaced party nominating conventions with a direct primary in 1904. They extended the Initiative and Referendum to local governments in 1906 and added direct election of U.S. Senators and the Recall in 1908. The resulting direct citizen democracy was called the Oregon System.

Today, 26 states and the District of Columbia grant citizens' initiative powers. Of those 24 states, 18 allow initiatives to propose constitutional amendments and 21 states allow initiatives to propose statutes. As of 2000, Oregon holds the record for the most statewide initiatives (there were 318 between 1904 and 2000), the highest average initiative use (6.6 per general election), and the most statewide initiatives on the ballot in a single year (27 in 1912). Voters placed an average of 16 initiatives on general election ballots from 1904-14, including a record 28 in 1912. The average dropped to about 6 per election for about 25 years, then to less than 3 per election from 1940-1976. Since 1978, however, we've averaged about 8 initiatives each general election.

Source: [NCSL-Initiative and Referendum Process](#)

The Initiative: A Powerful Tool

The initiative can be a powerful tool for change. Sometimes it has been used for rather technical or even obscure matters, but it also has been used to make sweeping changes. For example,

- **An Equal Suffrage amendment in 1912** Ballot Measure 1 gave Oregon women the right to vote in state and local elections.
- **Oregon Property Tax Measure 5 in 1990** sharply limited property taxes and shifted most of the responsibility for funding schools from local voters and property to the state. In 1996 voters further restricted property taxes.
- **Legalize physician-assisted suicide in 1994** Voters approved this measure. **Medical use of marijuana in 1998**, approved.
- **Adequate School Funding In 2000**, faced with 18 initiatives, voters passed a measure, among others, requiring the state to adequately fund school quality goals set by the Legislature.
- **In 2010**, voters approved 2 of the 4 initiatives on the ballot. Measure 73 **mandated prison terms** for repeat felony sex offenders (25 years) and jail time for repeat drunk drivers. Measure 76 continued **lottery funding** for parks, beaches, wildlife habitats, and watershed protection that were set to expire, or “sunset” in 2014.
- **In 2020** four state ballot measures were passed by the voters: Measure 107 limited **campaign finance** contributions and expenditures, Measure 108 increased **tax on tobacco** products, Measure 109 legalized the supervised use of **psilocybin**, and Measure 110 **decriminalized possession of certain drugs**.

The Oregon Constitution requires that petitions for a proposed law be signed by a number of registered voters equal to 6% of those who voted for Governor at the last election. To propose a constitutional amendment requires the signatures of 8% of those who voted for Governor.

Oregon law prohibited paying people to circulate petitions until 1988, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that banning payment violates free speech rights. Most successful chief petitioners now pay firms to gather signatures.

The Referendum

The Oregon Constitution also grants voters referendum power: the right to petition for an election to reject a law recently passed by the Legislature. It requires petitions signed by 4% of those who last voted for Governor. They must be submitted within 90 days after the Legislature adjourns.

The Referral

Legislators have referred measures to the voters since 1980 more than 130 times.

A Good Thing?

Political scientists argue whether granting citizens’ initiative power improves or harms democratic government. Some critics believe we should rely totally on “representative” democracy, in which voters elect the lawmakers and leave the job to them. Others support the initiative process but have concerns about its misuse and limitations. Some reformers believe initiatives need to be drafted more carefully to avoid errors and unintended consequences. Others feel that some initiatives may not be in the interest of the state, but may pass due to slick, well-funded ad campaigns. Those who defend the current system argue that the popular will is too often thwarted by legislative politics, where special interests and powerful individuals have often frustrated what clear majorities of the electorate want.

Various Reforms Proposed

Legislators have considered many bills designed to change Oregon's initiative process. Some proposals intended to make it more difficult to amend the Oregon Constitution by increasing the number of required petition signatures, from 8% of the vote for Governor to 10%, 12% or 16%. Other bills called for super-majority votes (60% or two-thirds) to pass constitutional amendments.

Legislators have also considered more sweeping changes to the process. Some bills would have required sponsors of initiative petitions to get legal advice from the state's Legislative Counsel Office or go through a public hearing process before gathering signatures. One bill proposed establishing a state commission to review initiatives for unclear language, cost impact, legal and technical problems. Such a commission could have suggested changes to initiative sponsors (but could not require them) and would have issued a report to voters.

Signature Gathering: Paid or Unpaid?

Oregon law currently specifies that petition signature gatherers may be volunteers or individuals paid by the hour or some other payment plan. Payment may not be made by the signature. In addition, paid signature gatherers are required to register with the state and carry "evidence of registration" with them as they gather. By law, this evidence must include a photo of the circulator and his or her registration number. As part of this registration, petition circulators must also complete a training course and use signature sheets prepared by the Secretary of State.

Paid signature gatherers were able to get more than 100,000 signatures for the 2020 Measure 114, which would put restrictions on gun purchases and ban magazines that hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition.

HANDOUT: IT'S IN THE [ONLINE OREGON BLUE BOOK!](#)

NATIONAL

1. How many federally recognized Native American tribes are there in Oregon? _____
2. Was U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley ever Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives? _____
3. Where was US Representative, Cliff Bentz (District 2), born? _____
4. How many of Oregon's six U.S. Representatives are women? _____
5. What is the web site address for the White House? _____
6. Which of the following countries does not have a consulate in Oregon: Italy, Japan, Mexico, Thailand, Peru, Czech Republic? _____

STATE

1. What is the age requirement for being Governor of Oregon? _____
2. What are 3 duties of the Secretary of State? _____
3. The Attorney General is in charge of the Department of _____
4. The Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries enforces state laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, _____, public accommodation, and vocational, professional and trade schools.
5. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is head of the Department of Education. Is the Superintendent responsible for the quality of education in high schools only? _____
6. Name 3 state commissions: _____

LOCAL

1. In the 242 cities in Oregon, what body serves as the highest authority within city governments in deciding issues of public policy: _____

2. In which counties do you find the following Oregon cities:

Antelope _____

Bonanza _____

Drain _____

Echo _____

Fossil _____

Green Horn _____

Island City _____

King City _____

Mt. Angel _____

Sodaville _____

Sweet Home _____

Talent _____

Wood Village _____

3. How many counties are there in Oregon? _____

FACTS

1. What is the name of Oregon's official state song? _____

2. What did the 1989 Legislature designate as Oregon's official state nut? _____

3. Which state agency publishes the Oregon Blue Book every 2 years? _____

ANSWER SHEET: IT'S IN THE [ONLINE OREGON BLUE BOOK!](#)

NATIONAL

1. How many federally recognized Native American tribes are there in Oregon? **(9)**
2. Was U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley ever Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives? **(yes)**
3. Where was US Representative, Cliff Bentz (District 2), born? **(Salem)**
4. How many of Oregon's six U.S. Representatives are women? **(1 - before the 2022 election)**
5. What is the website address for the White House? **(www.whitehouse.gov)**
6. Which of the following countries does not have a consulate in Oregon: Italy, Japan, Mexico, Thailand, Peru, Czech Republic? **(Peru)**

STATE

1. What is the age requirement for being Governor of Oregon? **(30)**
2. What are 3 primary duties of the Secretary of State? **(auditor of public accounts, chief elections officer, chief records officer of the state)**
3. The Attorney General is in charge of the Department of **(Justice)**.
4. The Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries enforces state laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, **(housing)**, public accommodation, and vocational, professional and trade schools and has authority to initiate a "commissioner's complaint" on behalf of victims of discrimination.
5. The Superintendent of Public Instruction is head of the Department of Education. Is the Superintendent responsible for the quality of education in high schools only? **(no)**
6. Name 3 state commissions: **(answers will vary)**

LOCAL

1. In the 242 cities in Oregon, (city councils) serve as the highest authority within city governments in deciding issues of public policy.

2. In which counties would you find the following Oregon cities:

Antelope _____ (Wasco)

Bonanza _____ (Klamath)

Drain _____ (Douglas)

Echo _____ (Umatilla)

Fossil _____ (Wheeler)

Green Horn _____ (Baker)

Island City _____ (Union)

King City _____ (Washington)

Mt. Angel _____ (Marion)

Sodaville _____ (Linn)

Sweet Home _____ (Linn)

Talent _____ (Jackson)

Wood Village _____ (Multnomah)

3. How many counties are there in Oregon? (36)

FACTS

1. What is the name of Oregon's official state song? (Oregon, My Oregon)

2. What did the 1989 Legislature designate as Oregon's official state nut? (Hazelnut)

3. Which state agency publishes the Oregon Blue Book every 2 years? (Secretary of State)

CIVICS EDUCATION RESOURCES

The following site provides contact information and a description of well-known civics education resources for teachers: [Annenberg Best Civics Sites for Teachers](#)

Additional Resource – [OR SoS page for all manuals](#)

Alliance for Better Campaigns
www.campaignlegalcenter.org/

Classroom Law Project
www.classroomlaw.org

Center for Civic Education
<https://www.civiced.org/>

Federal Elections Commission
www.fec.gov

iCivics
<https://www.icivics.org/>

LWVOR
<http://lwvor.org/civics-education-resources/>

National Institute for Civil Discourse
<https://nicd.arizona.edu/>

National Student/Parent Mock Election
www.nationalmockelection.org/

National Voter Registration Day
<https://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/>

Annenberg Classroom: Civics Education
<https://www.annenbergclassroom.org/>

Oregon Blue Book
www.bluebook.state.or.us

Oregon Legislature
<https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/>

Oregon Student Mock Election
<https://www.lwvor.org/mock-election>

Project Vote Smart - Education
<https://votesmart.org/education/government#.YzZqPuzMIQw>

Rock the Vote
www.rockthevote.org

Secretary of State - Voting in Oregon
<https://sos.oregon.gov/elections/Pages/election-information.aspx>

Teaching American History
<https://teachingamericanhistory.org/>

The Center for Voting & Democracy
www.fairvote.org

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
<https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship-resource-center/civic-integration/the-families-learning-civics-together-toolkit>

We the Civics Kids
<https://constitutioncenter.org/learn/educational-resources/we-the-civics-kids>

LWVOR Voter Information
<https://www.lwvor.org/vote>

Standards Alignment Chart by standard:

Standard	Unit
HS.2 * Civics and Government	2
HS.3 * Civics and Government	2
HS.4* Civics and Government	1, 3
HS.5 * Civics and Government	1
HS.8 * Civics and Government	2, 3, 5
HS.9 * Civics and Government	4
HS.11* Civics and Government	5
HS.71 Social Science Analysis	4, 5
HS.78* Social Science Analysis	2
HS.53* Historical Knowledge	2
HS.60* Historical Knowledge	2

Standards Alignment Chart by unit:

Unit	Standard
1	HS.4*, HS.5*,
2	HS.2*, HS.3*, HS.8*, HS.78*, HS.53*, HS.60*
3	HS.4*, HS.8*
4	HS.9*
5	HS.8*, HS.71