What Kind of Voter Am I? (All Age Activity)
Group Leader Notes and Guide

KVD MISSION

Kids Voting Durham (KVD) helps youth under 18 understand and believe in the power they have as engaged civic participants and informed voters. Through a combination of classroom supports, youth voice activities, family engagement, and an authentic voting experience, Kids Voting Durham is helping to grow a generation rich in civic knowledge, skills, and agency.

NONPARTISAN APPROACH

These activities and discussions should be led from a nonpartisan approach. Below are some reminders and tips. For further information on leading from a nonpartisan approach, visit our Guide to Remaining Nonpartisan.

Why?
- KVD is a nonpartisan group committed to empowering youth through civic action.
- We're trying to get kids to discover their own beliefs through conversation and exploration.
- We want kids to learn to think critically, not debate with peers.
- Above all, this should be fun for them!

How?
- Refrain from sharing your own political beliefs. Set expectations and norms at the beginning. Give youth buy-in by having them give input on how they can engage in meaningful and respectful conversations with one another.
- Encourage scenarios where youth get to interact with one another in smaller group settings and/or where youth can participate anonymously and non-verbally. If you have a few youth who routinely dominate the conversation, you can set timers for discussions to give others a chance to speak as well.
- Gently guide youth back on track if they begin to debate or convince others.
  - Example: "I'm encouraged that you are excited to share your beliefs, but remember that today's goal is about each of us exploring who we are as individual voters. We don't want to work on convincing others right now."

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW + PURPOSE

In this activity, youth will explore how to go about selecting someone to vote for. Upon completion of this activity, youth should be able to:
- State a few things that matter to them in the community/country (issues)
- State a few characteristics/traits that matter to them when deciding who to vote for.

TIME

There are three versions of this activity available to you depending on the amount of time you have (15 minutes, 30 minutes, and 45 minutes).

MATERIALS

Listed below are provided resources that can be printed and used in these activities. *Note: Not all materials will be used in every version of the lesson due to time constraints. Please look at the details for the activity length you chose.*

IF YOU HAVE 15 MINUTES

Part One (5 minutes)
- **Explain to youth that part of being an informed voter is knowing who the candidate are and where they stand on the issues. Today we are each going to develop our own "Voter Profile" by identifying what issues and candidate characteristics are most important to us.**
- Explain to youth that "issues" are problems, ideas, and beliefs that people vote on. Ask youth to think about "issues" as: "What do you wish to see improve or change in your community, city, state, or country?"
- Have youth work together and brainstorm some issues they care about.
  - Younger youth (ages 5-11) can use this Things I Care About handout to understand issues better. If you print and cut these half sheets, youth can simply circle the words and pictures they care about.
  - Older youth (ages 12-18) can create a "wish tree" or "graffiti wall" on large sheets of butcher paper if available, blank computer paper, or using chalk on the sidewalk to showcase issues they value. Instruct youth to take turns writing down or illustrate issues they value on the same "graffiti wall". The finished product will display a diverse set of issues and ensure all student voices were heard!

Part Two (5 minutes)
- Explain to youth that every person is made up of characteristics or traits. For example, a person can be kind, happy, helpful, smart, hardworking, patient, etc.
- Have youth work together and brainstorm some characteristics they would like to see in the people they vote for.
  - Younger youth (ages 5-11) can use the Who I Want to Vote For - Coloring Page to draw their ideal candidate. They can draw pictures or write words in/around their person. Younger youth might need more guidance and examples of characteristics.
  - Older youth (ages 12-15 and 16-18) can work together to complete the Characteristics of Candidates Sort (an activity where students rank the importance of characteristics). Time permitting, youth should brainstorm their own sets of characteristics to be used in the sort rather than relying on the pre-printed version.

Part Three (5 minutes)
- Allow youth 5 minutes of discussion time. Have youth share their completed work with one another. This time is valuable as it helps youth learn to view one another as political equals who respect differing ideas, beliefs, and values. Make sure youth remember to share their work, but not to try to convince others to agree with them.
  - If youth are quiet or slow to engage, make it into a speed-dating-like game and have youth stand in two circles. The inner circle should face the outer circle so that each student is paired up. Set a timer for 30 seconds and have inner circle youth share one thing they learned about who they are as a voter and then allow 30 seconds for the outer circle member to share. Have the inner circle youth rotate clockwise until the 5 minutes is up.

IF YOU HAVE 30 MINUTES

Part One (10 minutes)
- **Explain to youth that part of being an informed voter is knowing who the candidate are and where they stand on the issues. Today we are each going to develop our own "Voter Profile" by identifying what issues and candidate characteristics are most important to us.**
- Explain to youth that "issues" are problems, ideas, and beliefs that people vote on. Ask youth to think about "issues" as: "What do you wish to see improve or change in your community, city, state, or country?"
- Have youth work together and brainstorm some issues they care about.
  - Younger youth (ages 5-11) can use this Things I Care About handout to understand issues better. If you print and cut these half sheets, youth can simply circle the words and pictures they care about.
  - Older youth (ages 12-18) can create a "graffiti wall" on large sheets of butcher paper if available, blank computer paper, or using chalk on the sidewalk to showcase issues they value. Instruct youth to take turns writing down or illustrate issues they value on the same "graffiti wall". The finished product will display a diverse set of issues and ensure all student voices were heard!
- Finish this portion of the lesson by having younger youth share a few things they came up with to the whole group and then have the older youth share a few things they came up with to the whole group.

Part Two (10 minutes)
- Explain to youth that every person is made up of characteristics or traits. For example, a person can be kind, happy, helpful, smart, hardworking, patient, etc.
- As a group, pick a popular character and name traits aloud (if possible, list them on a board). This will help (especially young) youth get the idea of characteristics. For example, as a group, name characteristics for Woody from Toy Story or Elsa from Frozen or Harry from Harry Potter.
- Then, have youth work together and brainstorm some characteristics they would like to see in the people they vote for.
  - Younger youth (ages 5-11) can use the Who I Want to Vote For handout to draw their ideal candidate. They can draw pictures or write words in/around their person. Younger youth might need more guidance and examples of characteristics.
  - Older youth (ages 12-15 and 16-18) can work together to complete the Characteristics of Candidates Sor (an activity where students rank the importance of characteristics). Time permitting, these traits can be cut out and sorted by hand. If prep time is limited before the lesson, youth can simply print this sheet or view it digitally and create three symbols to help them categorize.
- Again, time permitting, have both young and older youth share a few characteristics they value.

Part Three (10 minutes)
- Tell youth to combine what they talked about and learned today and to complete their Voter Profile handouts.
  - Younger youth (age 5-11) can complete My Voter Profile that is more basic and allows them to color pictures.
  - Older youth (12-18) can complete My Voter Profilee that is more advanced and allows them to think deeper about who they are as voters.
- Time permitting, youth can share their Voter Profile with a partner or two. Remind youth to simply share- not debate.

IF YOU HAVE 45 MINUTES

Part One (5 minutes)

- **Explain to youth that part of being an informed voter is knowing who the candidate are and where they stand on the issues. Today we are each going to develop our own "Voter Profile" by identifying what issues and candidate characteristics are most important to us.**
- Tell youth to quietly think about a time when they had to make a decision without having all the facts or being prepared. Ask them "How did this make you feel?"
- Then, instruct youth to get into pairs or trios and share with one another what they were thinking about.
- Finally, as a whole group, share some of those feelings or experiences. Then, ask youth, "How do you think you would feel if you showed up to vote for someone and you were unprepared or did not know anything about the people running?" Allow them time to think and discuss this question and then introduce that today they will get to learn about how they can become prepared for that important step of voting!

Part Two (15 minutes)
- Explain to youth that "issues" are problems, ideas, and beliefs that people vote on. Ask youth to think about "issues" as: "What do you wish to see improve or change in your community, city, state, or country?"
- Have youth work together and brainstorm some issues they care about.
  - Younger youth (ages 5-11) can use this Things I Care About handoutt to understand issues better. If you print and cut these half sheets, youth can simply circle the words and pictures they care about.
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- Finish this portion of the lesson by having younger youth share a few things they came up with to the whole group and then have the older youth share a few things they came up with to the whole group.

Part Three (15 minutes)
- Explain to youth that every person is made up of characteristics or traits. For example, a person can be kind, happy, helpful, smart, hardworking, patient, etc.
- As a group, pick a popular character and name traits aloud (if possible, list them on a board). This will help (especially young) youth get the idea of characteristics. For example, as a group, name characteristics for Woody from Toy Story or Elsa from Frozen or Harry from Harry Potter.
- Then, have youth work together and brainstorm some characteristics they would like to see in the people they vote for.
  - Younger youth (ages 5-11) can use the Who I Want to Vote For handout to draw their ideal candidate. They can draw pictures or write words in/around their person. Younger youth might need more guidance and examples of characteristics.
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- Again, time permitting, have both young and older youth share a few characteristics they value.

Part Four (10 minutes)
- Tell youth to combine what they talked about and learned today and to complete their Voter Profile handouts.

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- ○ Younger youth (age 5-11) can complete [My Voter Profile](#) that is more basic and allows them to color pictures.
  - ○ Older youth (12-18) can complete [My Voter Profile](#) that is more advanced and allows them to think deeper about who they are as voters.
- ● Time permitting, youth can share their Voter Profile with a partner or two. Remind youth to simply share- not debate.

ADDITIONAL NONPARTISAN MATERIALS + RESOURCES:
1. [Kids Voting Durham YouTube Playlist - Evaluating Candidates](#)
1. [ICivics – Candidate Evaluation](#) group leaders will need to make a free account first)
2. [Vote By Design workbook](#)(Presidential Elections but can be used with others
3. https://www.kidsvotingusa.org/ (additional activities found outside of website by a Google Search of "Kids Voting USA activities")
4. [How Voters Decide Video - Crash Course on Government & Politics](#)(ages 12-18)
5. [Kid President Making Decisions Video](#) (ages 5-11)