

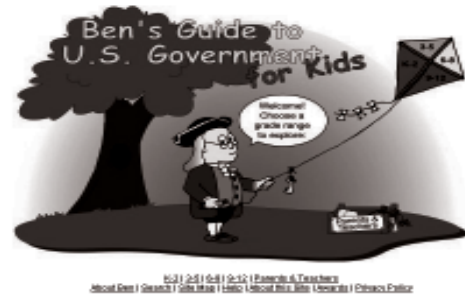
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## Authentic Lessons in Citizenship

The advent of our Presidential Election this November presents many quality opportunities for our students to participate in authentic learning experiences that engage youth in political awareness exercises and simulated voting experiences. In the last issue, the Election Connection's two projects, Be a Candidate WebQuest and Vote for President, were highlighted (<http://exchange.co-nect.net/Teleprojects/>). Each offers wonderful online learning to immerse your students in the political process. The opportunities don't end there, however. This issue highlights additional projects that will engage your students in the election process.

### Introductions to Government

As basic political primers for students, Ben's Guide to the U.S. Government for Kids at <http://bensguide.gpo.gov> or the PBS Kids Democracy Project at <http://www.pbs.org/democracy/kids> each provide introductory study of government through engaging graphics and interactive tours. Ben's Guide greets students with a cartoon image of Benjamin Franklin, who prompts them to choose a grade level segment: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, or 9-12. Each segment provides links and materials appropriate for the age group. Curricular materials are also provided for parents and teachers. The PBS Democracy Project



invites students to choose on of three categories: 1. How does government affect me? 2. Inside the voting booth. 3. President for a day. Each learning segment provides students and teachers with interactive lessons and curricular support. BrainPOP (<http://www.brainpop.com/specials/election/>) may also be worth a visit. A succinct and fun animated movie answers the question: "How

do people get elected to the President of the United States?" There is also an interactive quiz assessing student comprehension of the movie and a slide show that explains the Electoral College. Although not formal telecollaborative projects, each site mentioned above can be integrated as a high interest learning tool embedded within a unit on the 2004 election or American Government.



## Project Vote Smart <http://www.vote-smart.org>

This nonpartisan project, created in 1988 with founding members including Barry Goldwater, George McGovern, Mark Hatfield, Bill Bradley, Geraldine Ferraro, Newt Gingrich, and forty other political leaders, is fueled by the question, "If citizens had free, instant access to factual, relevant information on candidates, independent of their campaigns and parties, would these citizens use that information to defend themselves against often manipulative campaign tactics?"

Students can research the performance of thousands of candidates and elected officials through the basic categories: biographical information, campaign finances, issue positions, voting records, public statements and interest group ratings. The library of information is accessible through drop down menus for each category, basic links, the last name of a candidate or official, or a postal zip code. Project Vote Smart is an excellent instructional tool that will enable your students to reveal what issues speak to them, the political candidates whose ideals and politics align with their own, and the significance of "voting smart" despite partisan lines.

## Kids Voting USA <http://www.kidsvotingusa.org/>

In 1988, three Arizona businessmen traveled to Costa Rica on a fishing trip and made an unexpected discovery – about 90% of the country's population votes. This high turnout was attributed to a tradition of children accompanying their parents to the polls. This sparked their idea to begin a school-based pilot project in a Phoenix suburb that has grown into a national movement, Kids Voting USA.

Kids Voting USA (KVUSA) is a national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that teaches students about the concepts of citizenship, civic responsibility, democracy, and the importance of political participation. Its mission is to foster "an informed, participating electorate by education and actively engaging students and their families in voting and other elements of effective civic engagement." The project marries classroom lessons with an authentic voting experience that promote active citizenship. Participants actually cast a Kids Voting ballot on Election Day, voting on the same presidential candidates and issues as the adults.

There are two main components to the project: *Civics Alive!* and

*Destination Democracy. Civics Alive!* offers hands-on K-12 activities that facilitate critical thinking and self-reflection on one's responsibilities as a citizen. *Civics Alive!*'s goals are to:

- Make learning about politics and voting relevant and fun for students
- Work with the social studies curriculum currently in place in your school
- Enable you to pick and choose activities appropriate for your lesson plans and time requirements
- Adapt to best fit your need and is easy to use
- Meet the standards outlined in the National Curriculum

Standards for Social Studies as well as state standards.

*Destination Democracy* was designed as a complement to *Civics Alive!* for high school students who are approaching adulthood and legal voter status. The activities focus on civic participation through mentoring younger students, registering voters, working for political candidates, and researching and debating issues.

Destination Democracy lessons:

- Consist of service-learning activities
- Reach teens who are approaching adulthood
- Teach skills for democratic living through classroom activities related to voting, voter registration, educating younger students about the political process, and addressing community issues.

The “Real Life” voting experience that Kids Voting USA provides includes a trip to the official polls to vote on a Kids Voting USA ballot that replicates the adult ballot with the same races and issues. The ballot is divided into age-appropriate sections, with younger students voting on the top and the high school students using the entire ballot. Some students use mail-in ballots while a small number of students vote online as part of pilot projects.

Research indicates the positive impact of the Kids Voting USA program on voting patterns and civic participation. The research results are posted on the project Web site, as are the project registration instructions. This project is a highly organized initiative that will engage your students in a positive and enriching learning experience.

### The Headbone Derby – Iz and Auggie Go the the Polls <http://www.headbone.com/derby/polls/?inner=true&scooterize=1>

Iz and Auggie, two colorful characters, are sent to “Kohlrabi”, a conflicted land of Cabbageheads. Their goal is to help establish a peaceful and fair government. Kohlrabi has been torn between two factions, the Roundheads and Flatheads, who both believe they are the rightful rulers. Iz and Auggie must work with the wise Big Judge El Guapo, to decode seven questions/time capsules to uncover information that will bring political order to Kohlrabi. To do this, they must explore the United

States’ system of government. The seven questions/time capsules address the following topics:

1. The Constitution
2. The Presidency
3. Suffrage: Who can vote?
4. The Campaign Trail and Representation
5. The Role of the Press/Polling
6. Election Results
7. Epilogue: Democracy in Action.

Through the “derby”, students learn the fundamentals of Internet research and apply their knowledge of American

government to aid in Iz and Auggie's quest. The project's design is grounded in the National Content Standards for Social Studies. To solve each question, students navigate the Web, submit the answers online, and earn points as they complete the puzzles. They move to the subsequent question after completing each step. Scores are computed automatically online and student feedback is immediate. Each puzzle is designed to take approximately 45 to 50 minutes to solve.

There is a comprehensive Teacher's Guide available online, which includes integration strategies, classroom extensions, and related offline activities for each grade level, 4 through 8. A quick and easy online registration is required for your students to join this free and fun project.

## Rock the Vote

<http://www.rockthevote.org>

Rock the Vote is a longstanding, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization founded in 1990 as a counter to attacks on freedom of speech and expression. The cause "empowers young people to create change in their communities and take action on issues they care about." Although not a telecollaborative project, the site does appeal to youth and makes political dialog "cool" through the incorporation of popular culture icons, including athletes, actors, and musicians. The project engages young people to increase voter turnout by coordinating registration drives and voter education events. Students can register to vote via the site and join the blog for daily political news and updates.

<b>SECTION 1</b> <u>The Headbone Derby Overview</u>
<b>SECTION 2</b> <b>Using the Derby Series in your Classroom</b> <u>The Current Contest: Iz and Auggie and the Invention Snatchers</u> <u>Iz and Auggie in Ecology Strikes Back!</u> <u>Iz and Auggie Go To The Polls</u> <u>Iz and Auggie in Mystery on Mars</u> <u>Iz and Auggie in Revenge of the Lunar Fringe</u> <u>Elroy in The Crazy Couch Caper =&gt;+&gt;</u>
<b>SECTION 3</b> <u>Frequently Asked Questions</u>
<b>SECTION 4</b> <u>An Internet Primer for Teachers</u>

## Online NewsHour Extra: Vote 2004

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/vote2004/index.html>

NewsHour Extra is the student section of Online NewsHour, the Web site for PBS's daily news broadcast with Jim Lehrer. Vote 2004 offers a comprehensive Web site designed to engage students in political education specific to the November election.

The site offers the following components:

- **Politics 101:** The basics of our political system.
- **Issues:** Dialog that explains the most pertinent issues affecting our country.
- **Candidates:** Comprehensive information on each presidential candidate.
- **Campaign Coverage:** The most up to date information on the campaign trails.
- **Student Voices:** An interactive online dialog that posts student's opinions on the issues.
- **Story Archive:** Past political features.
- **Lesson Plans:** Well designed lessons on the following topics:
  - Analyzing Political Cartoons
  - BE the Press: Local Interviews, National Issues
  - Immigration 2004: Issues for the Presidential Election
  - Political Commercials: Leading or Misleading Voters
  - Bringing Out the Vote.

The Vote 2004 site also provides a link to the Newz Crew, an “innovative online program by and for youth using the Internet and news media to develop and promote media literacy and youth engagement in the democratic process.” The project, run by Global Kids (a New York City-based educational organization) and NewsHour Extra, introduces visitors to young people around the world. High school students are invited to join their own Newz Crews and contribute to the online dialog.

Global Kids Leaders, high school students in the NYC program who attended a leadership program, monitor and advise all Newz Crews as well as online Youth Circles. The youth circles are online discussions based on a variety of world issues. A featured discussion specific to the election is “If you could be president, or prime minister or whatever what would you do?”

There are five main components to the success of these circles:

- **Restricted membership** – only a small number of active participants per group
- **Short, shared timeframe** – participants begin and end at the same time
- **Agreement to civil behavior** – participants adhere to a set of expectations
- **Indirect facilitation** – the dialogues are guided with a soft touch
- **Youth monitors** – teenagers develop the project and monitor individual groups.

The Online NewsHour Election 2004 site provides the quality and depth of information and dialog one expects from the NewsHour organization and is well worth a visit.

## Scholastic: Election 2004

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/election2004/>

Scholastic's Election 2004 site is true to the quality of Scholastic.com. Student reporters greet site visitors and invite your students to explore the political process via five special reports. These reports, outlined below, allow students to follow a "road map" from a presidential candidate's decision to run to life in the White House.

### How to Run for President

- First Steps
- Campaign Team
- The Primaries
- What's Next

### Kid Reporters Cover the Primaries

- What's a Primary
- The Fight for Iowa
- New Hampshire's Power
- South Carolina Newcomer
- Around the Nation
- The Right to Vote
- Tips from the Pros
- Meet the Candidates
- Candidate's Kids

### Live from the Conventions

- Latest News
- About the Conventions
- Meet the Delegates
- Media Watchers
- Voters React
- Student Essays

### Countdown to Election Day

- Countdown to Election Day
- Latest News
- Meet the Candidates
- The Right to Vote
- Cast Your Vote

### Life As the President

- More to come after the election .

Each component includes interactive polls and online activities like scavenger hunts, speechwriting, and fun quizzes, as well as step-by-step lesson plans, online support resources, and related links on every aspect of the presidency and American politics, now and in the past. Scholastic's Election 2004 site will provide your students with high quality and engaging election-focused learning opportunities.

## 2004 National CyberConvention

<http://surfaquarium.com/NCC/>


“Calling classes from all 50 U.S. states to participate in the 2004 National CyberConvention!”

Sponsored by Surfaquarium under the direction of Walter McKenzie of the Salem, Massachusetts Public Schools, this project invites your students to study the candidates, issues and polling trends in their state for the 2004 presidential and congressional races.


Each week of the project, participating classes will be e-mailed a research topic and a question to answer, for example:

- Which candidate is leading in your state's or school's polling?
- How many electoral votes would each candidate for President receive from your state if the election were held today?
- Which candidates for Congress are favored to win your state elections? Do you feel that these projected winners can help their party's presidential candidate win your state?
- Which candidate do you feel has the most fair and honest campaign advertising? Which candidate's advertising is more effective?
- Which candidate do you feel can best provide for our national defense?
- Which candidate do you feel can best provide for our economy?
- Who is best qualified to be our next President?
- The students' research results are submitted to the National CyberConvention web site for data sharing and analysis. As a culminating event, each participating class casts their delegate votes online to predict Election Day results.

# 2004 NATIONAL CYBERCONVENTION



**Still Needed:  
Utah,  
Hawaii &  
South Dakota**



500+ Classes from Across the Nation

Participating in the Democratic Process

Tracking Candidates, Issues & Voting Trends

Becoming Informed CyberCitizens!

**ROLL CALL!**

**OVERVIEW**


**TEACHER PAGES**

**TIMELINE**

**DELEGATE MAP**

**REGISTER**

# 2004 NATIONAL CYBERCONVENTION



**Still Needed:  
Utah,  
Hawaii &  
South Dakota**

Calling classes from all 50 U.S. states to participate in the 2004 National CyberConvention!


Each participating class will study the candidates, issues and polling trends in their state for the 2004 presidential and congressional races, using print, broadcast and Web-based media.

The project has built-in flexibility: plan to participate for just 30 minutes a week or scale the project to meet your needs, all the way up to a comprehensive nine week unit study of the electoral process!

Each week your class will be emailed a topic to research and a question to answer, such as:

- Which candidate is leading in your state's or school's polling?
- How many electoral votes would each candidate for President receive from your state if the election were held today?
- Which candidates for congress are favored to win your state elections? Do you feel that these projected winners can help their party's presidential candidate win your state?
- Which candidate do you feel has the most fair and honest campaign advertising? Which candidate's advertising is more effective?
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- Who is best qualified to be our next President?

# 2004 NATIONAL CYBERCONVENTION



**Still Needed:  
Utah,  
Hawaii &  
South Dakota**

**Project Objectives:**

- To study the democratic electoral process in action
- To use regional media to follow current events
- To develop media literacy skills in evaluating information
- To analyze polling numbers to determine patterns and predict trends in voting
- To participate in a real-time event both online and off

**RETURN**

## National Student/Parent Mock Election

[http://www.nationalmock  
election.org](http://www.nationalmock<br/>election.org)

“No question, there is something mystic about elections for Americans . . . the fires of interest are very much alive and burst into flame when they are stirred . . . The National Student/Parent Mock Election offers a lively prospect, a great introduction to a national celebration, and a way to light, again, for a new generation, the torch of liberty.” – Edward Stanley, Co-Founder of the National Student/Parent Mock Election

The National Student/Parent Mock Election invites students and their parents to become involved in the election process. In the last two presidential election years, over 10 million students, parents, and teachers participated in all 50 states, Washington D.C., and 14 countries/territories around the world where Americans live.

Mock Election Day is October 28, 2004, and participation is free. Lesson plans and activities for all grades will aid educators with classroom integration techniques. Through its partnerships with McGraw-Hill, The New York Times, and Time Magazine, and its collaboration with CNN studios as election headquarters and host to a live webcast, this Mock Election is sure to facilitate parent and student awareness of the power of their ballots.

This election year, the Web continues to present high quality projects that will enhance your instruction and help students to develop enduring understandings of American Government. By connecting to the issues via the Internet, students not only learn about the power of their individual citizenship and the right to vote, but also experience the political process as members of a larger, global community whose voices combined yield results that affect us all.