

LESSON 4: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

Overview

The final component of this TCTH voting rights unit is the design, development, and evaluation of a student civic engagement project building on the historical knowledge, document and article analysis, and critical thinking skills they gained in the previous lessons. Students will select one voting rights–related issue of interest to investigate more deeply. The research conducted on AllSides.com from Lesson 3 may assist students in choosing a topic for the final project. The culminating civic engagement project requires each student or student group to develop a plan for addressing an issue, formulate steps for implementation, and present on the effectiveness of their projects. Because the students worked on a podcast in the culminating exercise for Lesson 2, you may choose to use that format for this civic engagement project.

Objectives

Students will be able to

- evaluate current issues related to voting rights
- develop, execute, and evaluate a civic engagement project

Materials

- Civic Engagement Project Proposal activity sheet

Essential Questions

- To what extent do individual states determine who has the right to vote?
- How did individuals and groups from different states take a stand for voting rights?
- To what extent do you believe actions taken at the state level impact voting rights at the national level?

Procedure: Civic Engagement Project Development

1. Based on knowledge and understanding of the historical roots of voting rights issues facing their communities and the nation; their literacy, research, and critical thinking skills; and their experience discussing, analyzing, and assessing current news articles written from different perspectives, the students will design and develop civic engagement projects with steps for implementation.
 2. Based on the time available and your students' experience, establish a schedule of due dates for preparation, implementation, and presentation of the projects. This project may require additional time outside of class.
 3. The students may work collaboratively or independently to plan, implement, and present civic engagement projects that relate to a current issue in regard to voting rights. You may work with the students to develop a list of podcast topics that have an impact in the school or community.
- For example,
- Increasing student participation in voter registration drives
 - Poll-watching and assistance at election sites
 - Lowering the voting age to sixteen
 - Establishing a more equitable redrawing of district boundaries to counter gerrymandering
 - Expanding voter accessibility
 - Permitting online voting
4. Distribute the “Civic Engagement Project Proposal” activity sheet to each student or student group. The student or group will complete the Project Proposal and submit it to you for evaluation and approval. You may return it to them with suggestions and request revisions before signing off.

5. Guidelines for student civic engagement projects:

- Identify issues related voting rights that are important to the students' lives or community.
- Select an issue to address.
- Research the chosen issue and discuss what specific actions would improve the situation.
- Plan an action that could effect change, keeping in mind what the specific goal is, who or what body has power to make the change, and how that person or body can be approached, developing action steps to accomplish the goal. If you choose to have all or some of the students develop podcasts, see the technical considerations in the sidebar.
- Carry out the action (create a podcast, write letters, convene meetings with community members or officials, create flyers/exhibitions/websites, etc.) depending on the specific goals of the project.
- Assess the effort when it is completed to understand student successes, challenges, and ways to continue learning in the future.

6. Discuss what the challenges were and how the students addressed those challenges; how successful their civic engagement projects were; and what they could do to be more effective in the future.

Technical Considerations for Podcasts

- Recording devices for creation of the podcast
- Podcasting apps for cellular phones and computers
 - i. There are many free podcasting applications. Choosing one that you and your students are comfortable with is an important consideration.
 - ii. The selection and use of appropriate recording and other audio-visual equipment used in this activity, is a decision of the classroom teacher and their administration.
- Wired and wireless microphones are not required but may be considered.
- Headphones or earbuds are not required but may be considered.
- Podcast script (for students to organize their podcast) and an activity solution (if recording is not possible).

NAME

DATE

PERIOD

Civic Engagement Project Proposal

Project Title

Project
Participant(s)

Project Goal

Steps

TEACHER'S COMMENTS

Questions
to Consider

Revisions Needed

Approved