



NORTH DAKOTA DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

A Civics Guide for Students

NORTH DAKOTA
SECRETARY  STATE

WHO IS THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

Hello from the State Capitol in Bismarck, ND! My name is Michael Howe, and I'm honored to serve as North Dakota's Secretary of State.

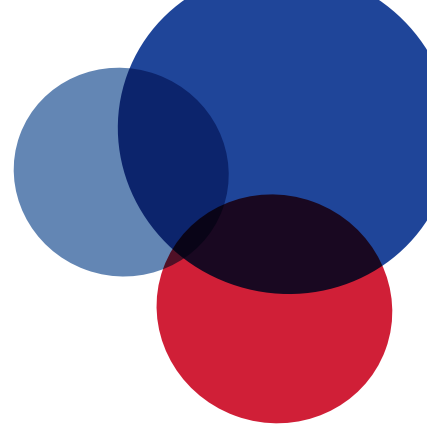
My job is to help make sure our state runs smoothly in some really important ways. One of my biggest jobs is making sure anyone 18 years or older, who is a citizen of the United States, and resident of North Dakota can vote safely and fairly. I also make sure the rules for elections are followed, so when people vote for those they want to represent them, everything is done the right way.



I also help people start new businesses in our state. If someone wants to open a store or start a company, I'm here to help them get everything set up properly. Another cool part of my job is keeping track of really important papers and documents for North Dakota, like new laws. I'm the state's official recordkeeper! Think of me as someone who helps keep parts of our state government organized and working well for everyone who lives here in North Dakota!

I hope this activity book helps you understand a little bit more about what being a citizen in North Dakota means, and I hope you have a lot of fun along the way!

Michael Howe



WHAT IS CIVICS?

Did you know that you're already a citizen with an important voice in our great state? All across North Dakota, citizens share something special, the power to make our state an even better place to live! This activity book will take you on an exciting journey to discover how our government works and why it matters to you. You'll learn about the rights and responsibilities that come with being a North Dakotan, explore how laws are made, and discover ways you can make your voice heard in your community. No matter where you live, whether it's a bustling city or a small town, you have the power to make a real difference. So grab your pencils, put on your thinking caps, and let's explore what it means to be an active, engaged citizen of North Dakota!



Where do you live? Can you label it on the map?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A GOOD CITIZEN?

A good citizen participates in their community by voting, volunteering, or simply being informed about local and national issues. They respect others, follow laws, and speak up for what's right. Good citizens strengthen their communities by helping neighbors and working to make life better for everyone.

Trace your hand on the paper and write or draw one way you can be a good citizen on each finger.

What's your Civic Superpower?

We all have strengths that help our community. What's yours?

Are you a great listener? A problem-solver? Do you speak up for others or bring people together?

Draw yourself using your superpower to help make the world better!



WHAT IS GOVERNMENT?

Government is a group of people who make rules and provide services that help everyone in a community, state, or country live together safely.

Government handles important jobs that are too big for families to do alone, like building roads, running public schools, keeping water clean, and helping during emergencies. It also makes laws (rules that everyone must follow) to keep people safe.

When adults vote in elections, they choose leaders to represent them in government. These leaders make important decisions that affect everyone in the community, state, or country. Elections happen every few years, so people can decide if their leaders are doing a good job or if they want to choose different ones.

Government workers have different jobs: some write laws, some make sure laws are fair, and some run everyday services like libraries, parks, and emergency response. This helps everyone live together safely and fairly.

WHY ARE THERE 3 BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT?

What if one person could make laws, enforce laws, AND decide who broke the laws? They'd have way too much power! That's why our government is split into three branches.

Each branch can stop the others from doing something wrong. This is called "checks and balances." Here's how it works at the Federal level:

- The legislative branch makes laws, but the executive branch can reject them
- The executive branch picks judges, but the legislative branch has to approve them
- The judicial branch can throw out unfair laws

No branch always wins because the others can push back. This system of checks and balances protects your freedom. When power is divided, no single person or group can control everything or take away people's rights. Each branch monitors the others to keep our government fair.





EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The President

The President is the leader of our country who lives and works in the White House. They make important decisions, lead the military, work with leaders from other countries, and make sure our laws are carried out. The President is the country's main decision-maker.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Congress

Congress is made up of elected representatives from every state who meet to create new laws. They debate ideas, vote on what should become law, and decide how to spend the country's money. Congress has two parts: the Senate and the House of Representatives.

JUDICIAL BRANCH

The Courts

The Supreme Court is the highest court in America, with nine judges called justices. They decide what laws mean and whether laws follow the Constitution (our country's rule book). When people disagree about a law, these judges make the final decision.

Draw a line to match the job to the correct branch of government.



Presidential Speech

*Pretend you're the President of the United States
and write a speech about something important.*

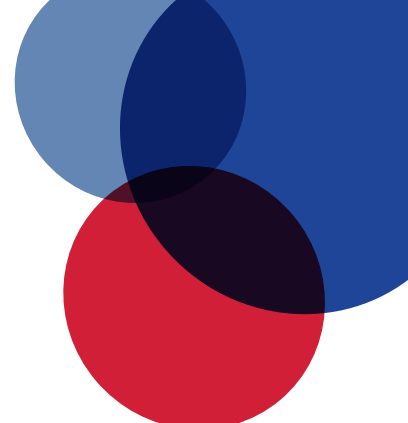
Introduce yourself as the President.

Choose a problem or topic that matters to you (like schools, nature, or fairness).

Explain why this problem is important and how it affects people.

What would you do to help fix this problem?

End your speech with a strong message or a call for everyone to help.



WORD SEARCH

E	W	T	C	W	L	L	S	W	D	F	P	O	N	I	Q	Y
Q	E	I	C	H	H	W	W	H	B	R	Q	N	J	L	W	O
D	G	F	P	K	I	B	M	I	O	F	N	P	W	L	Y	M
E	C	Y	D	S	E	N	A	T	O	R	N	A	W	P	Y	T
M	M	I	R	Q	B	A	B	E	I	A	T	E	A	J	X	U
O	F	K	S	L	X	S	Y	H	B	L	I	X	S	A	C	Z
C	V	R	B	X	A	B	P	O	W	E	R	K	H	A	O	S
R	U	U	S	P	O	T	E	U	N	G	M	C	I	G	N	A
A	I	X	P	E	U	J	L	S	B	I	M	G	N	O	S	V
C	L	A	W	S	M	I	E	E	J	S	X	E	G	W	T	D
Y	Q	N	B	W	W	E	G	B	N	L	B	E	T	M	I	B
T	C	J	C	Y	J	V	Q	J	F	A	O	T	O	X	T	L
R	L	U	Y	E	U	H	T	K	I	T	D	G	N	L	U	D
N	Z	D	T	E	S	V	G	U	S	I	N	O	K	Z	T	D
V	R	I	X	W	T	V	S	M	P	V	X	V	N	S	I	R
T	W	C	C	I	I	V	E	F	O	E	O	I	H	C	O	L
O	V	I	V	Y	C	O	N	G	R	E	S	S	A	P	N	I
O	G	A	J	Y	E	T	A	B	E	Z	G	A	Q	N	C	V
I	H	L	N	Q	S	A	T	C	A	S	X	R	G	U	D	W
J	N	Y	D	E	T	A	E	L	T	H	R	X	W	G	I	T

Justices
Constitution
Senator

Power
Washington
Legislative

Congress
Laws
White House

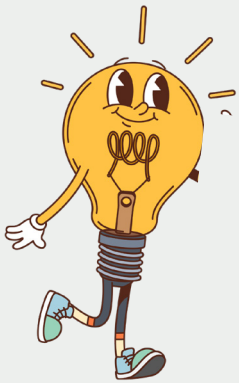
Senate
Judicial
Democracy

WHAT ARE LAWS

AND HOW ARE THEY MADE?

Laws are rules everyone must follow to help people live together safely and fairly. Without laws, people could steal, hurt others, or cause chaos. Laws prevent this and protect us.

In the United States, laws are made by legislators, people we elect to represent us in government. These include members of Congress (they make federal laws for the whole country) and state legislators (they make laws for individual states). Once enough legislators agree on a law, it gets signed and becomes official.



1. HAVE AN IDEA

The first step in making a new law is having an idea. A legislator (or even regular citizens) thinks of a new law that could help people.



2. WRITE A BILL

The idea is written down carefully as a “bill.” A bill is like a rough draft of the law. Small groups of experts called committees study the bill, talk about it, and sometimes make changes to improve it.

3. VOTE ON A BILL

Both the House of Representatives and the Senate must vote on the bill. If more than half of each group votes “yes,” the bill moves forward.



4. SIGN A NEW LAW

The bill goes to the President or the Governor, who can either sign it (which makes it a law) or veto it (reject it). Once signed, the bill officially becomes a law that everyone must follow.



CREATE A LAW

Brainstorm and create your own law. Write a few sentences about what your law is and why it would be good for the community. You could also draw a picture to show your law in action. Don't forget to sign it!

WHY ARE THERE 3 LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT?

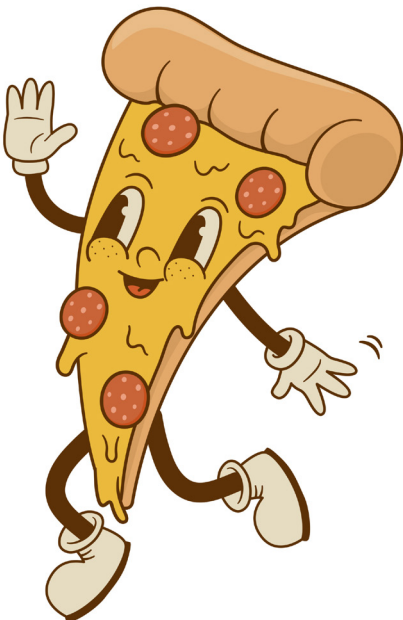
Imagine trying to fix every problem in America from one office in Washington, D.C. - impossible, right? That's why we have three levels of government, and each one tackles problems based on its size.

Local government handles your neighborhood stuff. They make sure stop signs go up at busy corners, maintain parks and playgrounds, send fire trucks when someone calls 911, pick up your trash every week, and run your local schools.

State government zooms out a bit. They take care of state parks where families go camping, make sure every driver passes a test before getting a license, and help decide what subjects to study in school.

Federal government handles the really big stuff that affects everyone across the whole country. They run the military to keep us safe, deliver mail to every address in America (even tiny towns in Alaska!), and print all the money in your piggy bank.

Think of it like a pizza: local government handles one slice, state government manages the whole pizza, and federal government runs the entire pizza chain across the country. Each level does what it does best!



PIZZA PROBLEMS

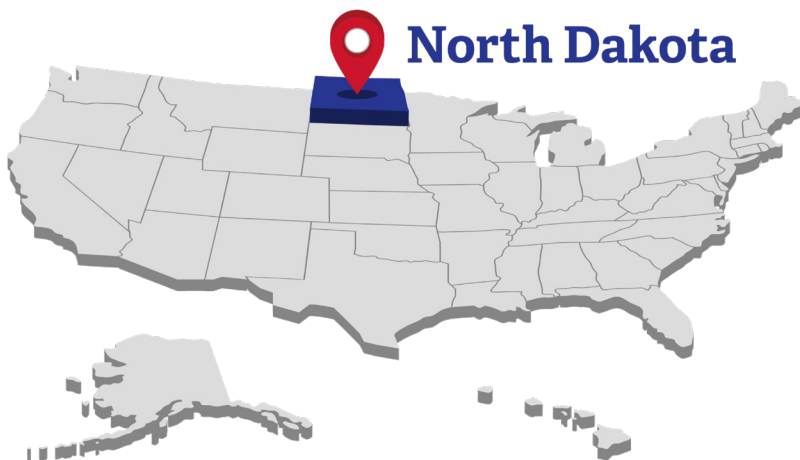
Decide which level of government should handle each problem. Fill in the blank with LOCAL, STATE, or FEDERAL.

1. States are using different rules for airplane safety. _____
2. The playground equipment is broken at the park. _____
3. State park trails are damaged after a storm. _____
4. There's a fire at someone's house. _____
5. A new medicine has to be tested before hospitals use it. _____

In North Dakota



the town or city where you live.



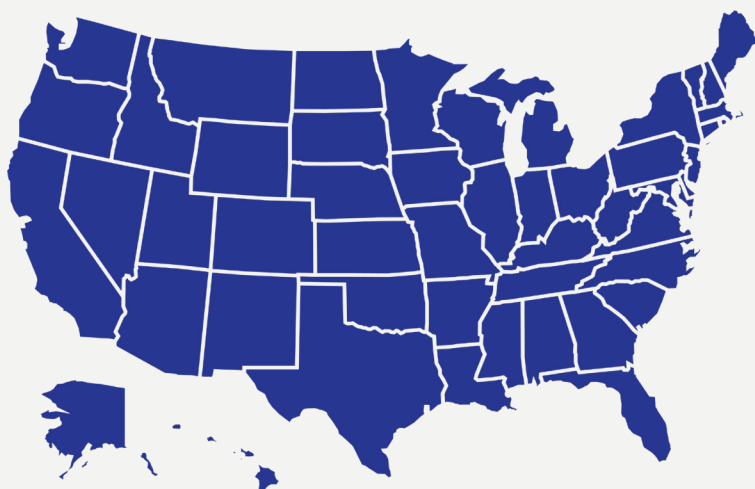
LOCAL



STATE



FEDERAL



United States of America

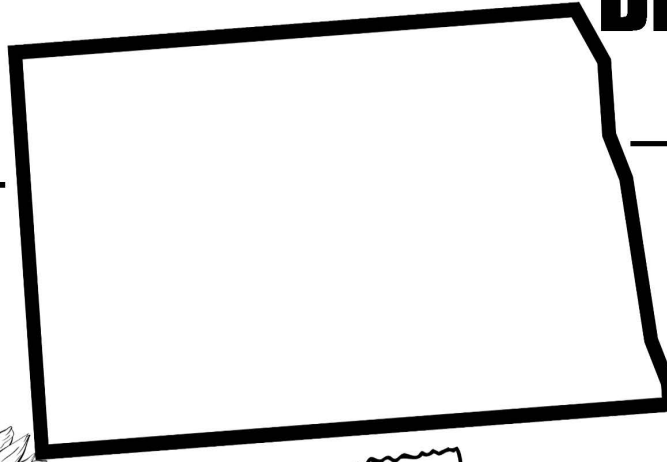
NORTH DAKOTA

"THE PEACE GARDEN STATE"

State # _____ of 50 Statehood year _____

Capital

Biggest city

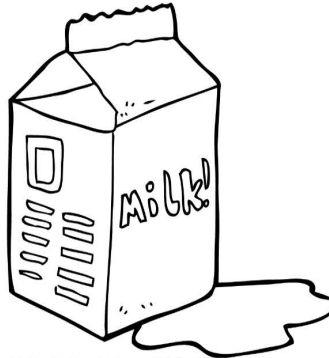


#1 PRODUCER
OF
HONEY
& SUNFLOWERS

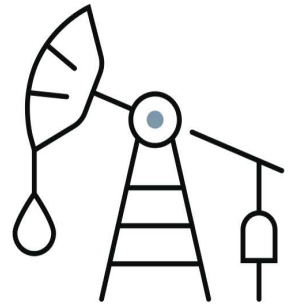


State Bird
western meadowlark

State Flower
wild prairie rose



MILK IS THE
STATE BEVERAGE



NORTH DAKOTA
IS RICH IN OIL



Find & Color North Dakota on the map!



North Dakota has 358 cities! Each of those communities, big and small, takes care of itself and its citizens.

- ***Design your perfect community.
What would it include?***

Some important places in a community are:

City Hall

Fire Department

Police Station

Library

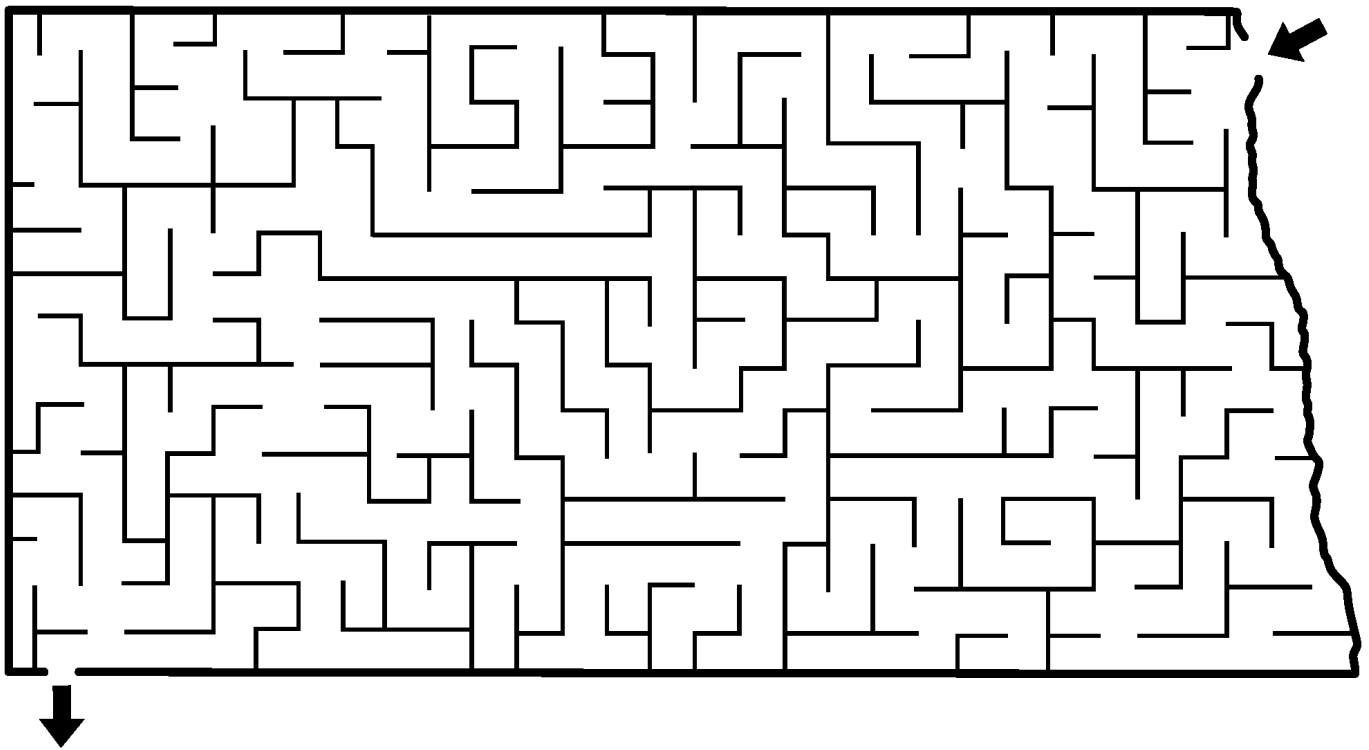
Park

Hospital

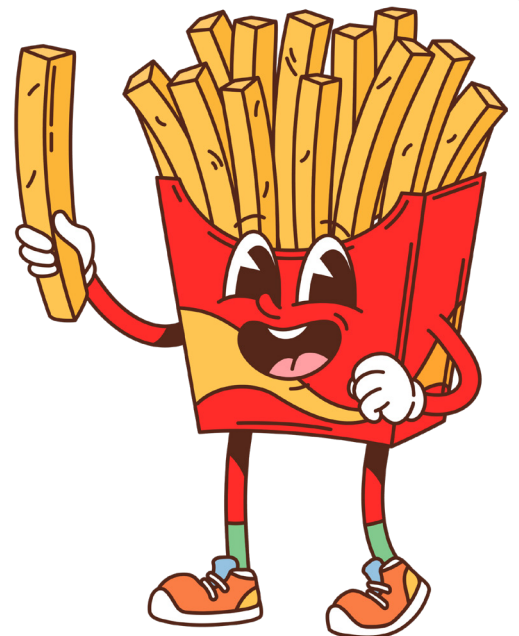
Post Office

School

A-maze-ing North Dakota



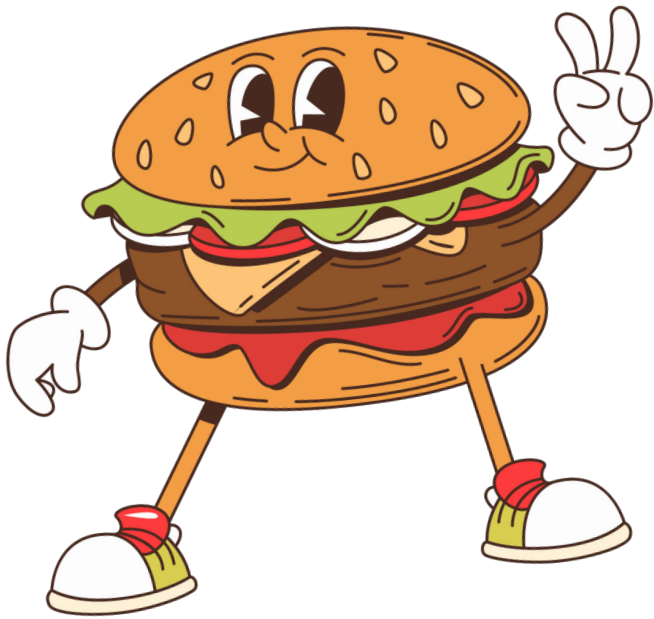
The world's largest french fry feed is held every year in Grand Forks. A new record was set in 2015, when 5,220 pounds of french fries were served!





90% of North Dakota's land is farms and ranches!

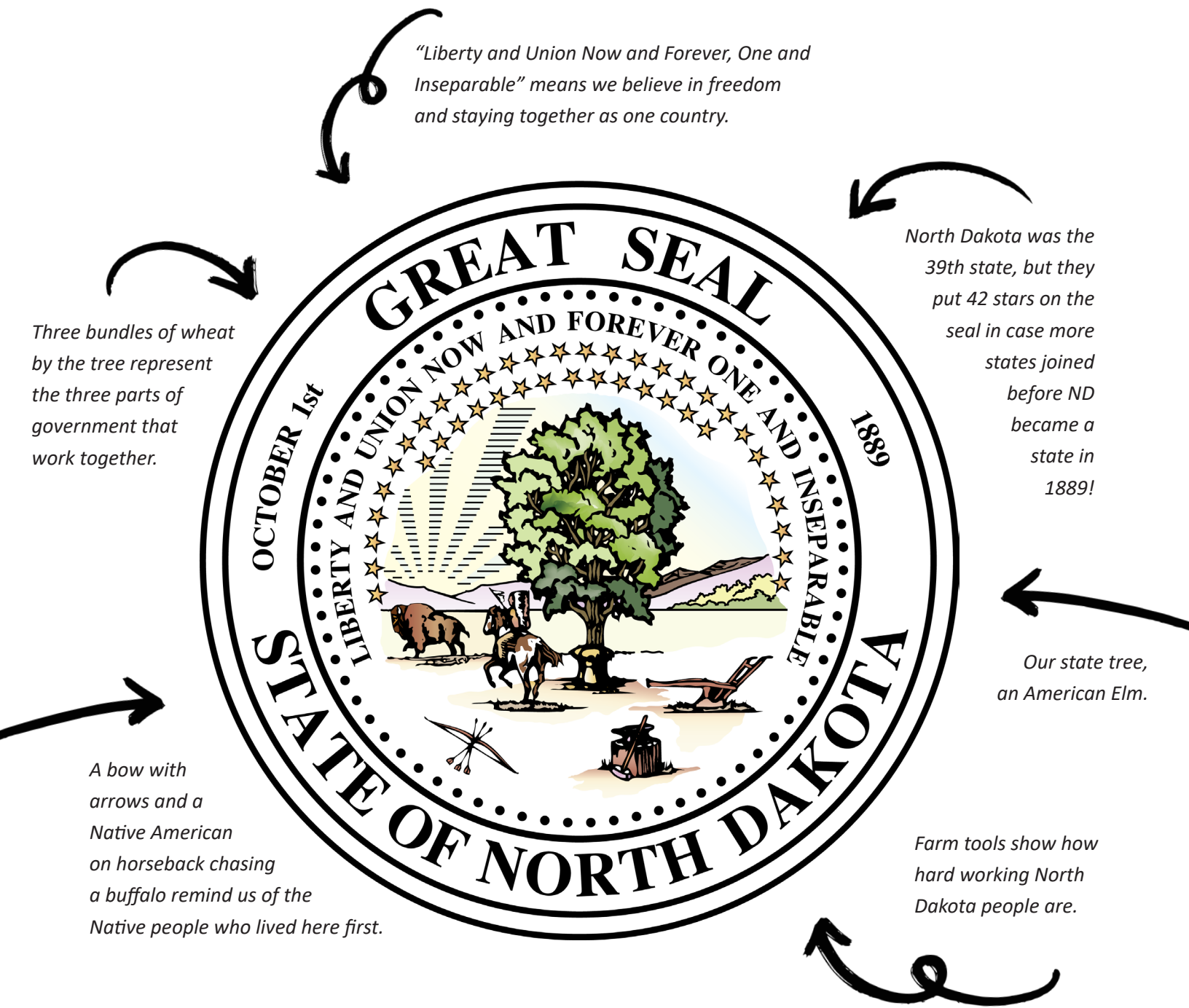
North Dakota holds the Guinness World Record for the most snow angels at the same time - 8,962 people!



The world's largest hamburger was eaten in Rutland, North Dakota, in 1982. It weighed 3,591 pounds and more than 8,000 people ate it!

Lake Sakakawea has more shoreline than the California Pacific Coast!





"Liberty and Union Now and Forever, One and Inseparable" means we believe in freedom and staying together as one country.

North Dakota was the 39th state, but they put 42 stars on the seal in case more states joined before ND became a state in 1889!

Our state tree, an American Elm.

Farm tools show how hard working North Dakota people are.

Three bundles of wheat by the tree represent the three parts of government that work together.

A bow with arrows and a Native American on horseback chasing a buffalo remind us of the Native people who lived here first.

WHAT IS A GREAT SEAL?

A great seal is like an important stamp that belongs to a state or country. Think of it like a special signature that makes papers really, really official! Just like you might have a special sticker or stamp that only you can use, states have great seals to put on their most important documents. The Secretary of State is the "guardian" of the seal - they make sure it's used properly and protect it. North Dakota's Great Seal is like a picture that tells the story of our state! It has lots of cool things on it.

Create Your Own Great Seal

Your seal should tell YOUR story, just like North Dakota's seal tells the state's story.

Step 1: Plan

Think about what makes you special. What do you care about? What are your dreams?

Step 2: Choose 3-4 symbols that represent you.

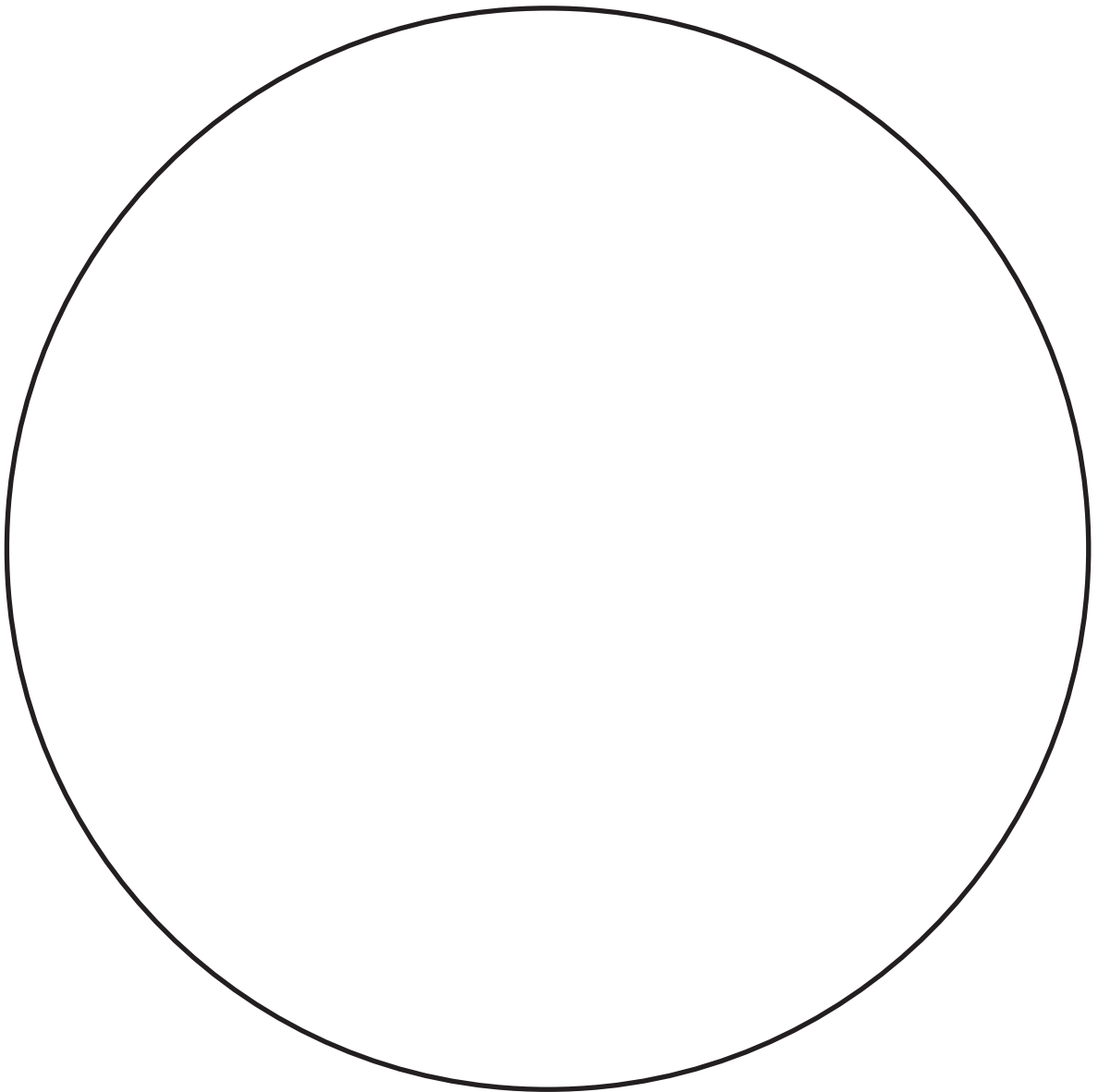
Ideas: sports, hobbies, family, favorite things, goals

Step 3: Draw your seal.

Put your most important symbol in the center, add your other symbols around that.

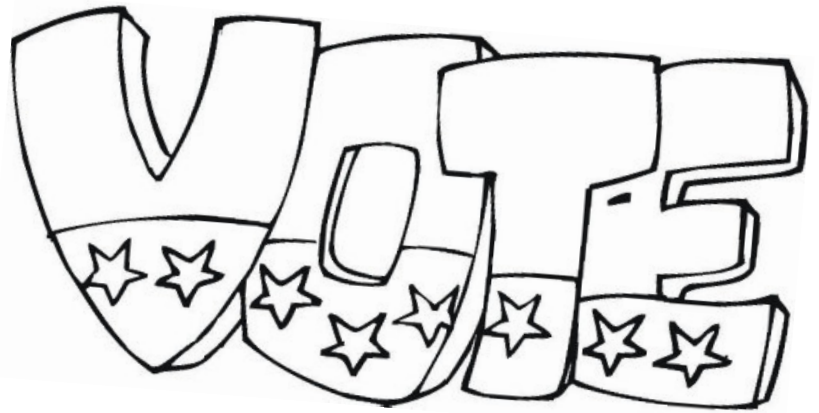
Draw a decorative border. Add your name and today's date or your birthday.

You can even write a motto that represents you.



WHAT IS A DEMOCRACY?

A democracy is a way of running a country where the people get to choose their leaders and help make important decisions. Think of it like this: imagine your class needs to decide what game to play. In a democracy, everyone gets to vote, and whichever game gets the most votes wins. That's fair because everyone had a say!

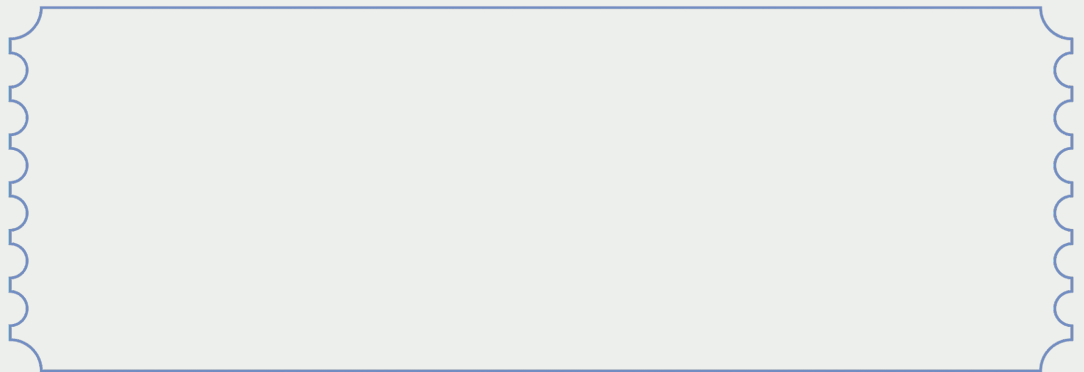


In a country that's a democracy, grown-ups get to vote for who they want to be their president, mayor, or other leaders. They also get to vote on important rules and laws. The leaders have to listen to what the people want because the people chose them.

**WEIRD
BUT
TRUE**



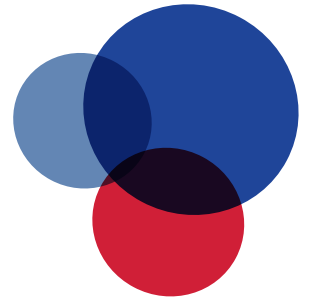
In ancient Athens (where democracy was invented), they sometimes chose leaders by LOTTERY, like drawing names from a hat! They thought it was more fair than elections because rich, popular people couldn't have an advantage.



Design what you think those lottery tickets looked like!

PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY

Write or draw about a time you saw these democratic principles in action in real life - at school, at home, or in your community. Explain why these principles matter.



Everyone's vote counts

Every adult citizen gets to vote, no matter who they are.

You can speak your mind

People can share their opinions about leaders and government, even if they disagree.

We pick our leaders

Instead of kings or queens who rule forever, we choose new leaders through elections.

Fair for everyone

What most people want usually happens, but rules protect smaller groups of people too.

Disagreement is okay

Democracy lets everyone share ideas and solve problems peacefully.

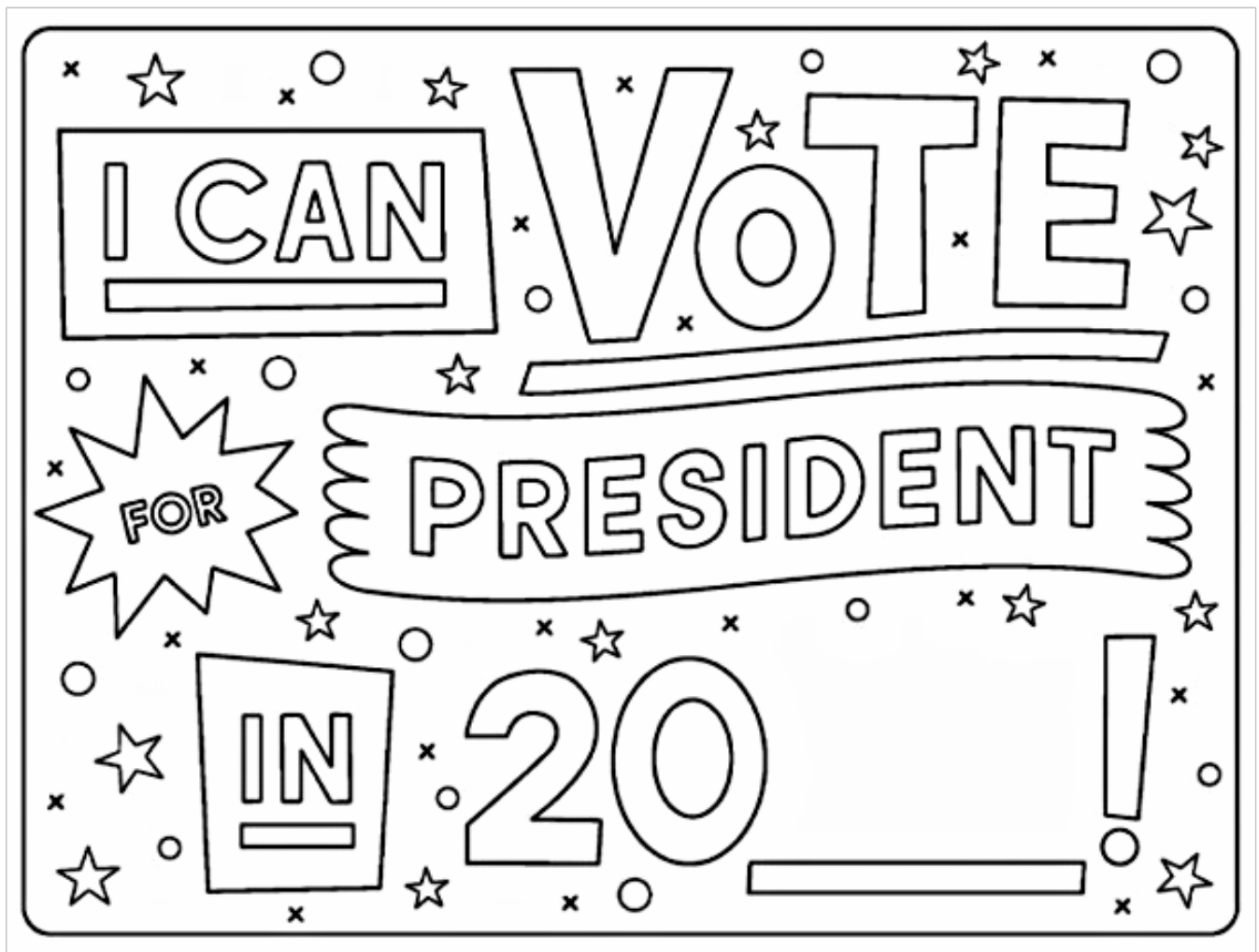
DEMOCRACY IN ACTION!

Create a comic strip about people making a decision together. Fill in the panels by drawing what happens from beginning to end. Add speech bubbles to show what characters are saying. Write a title at the top. At the bottom, write one sentence about which democratic principle your comic shows.



.....

.....



WHO GETS TO VOTE?

When you turn 18, you get to vote! Voting is like raising your hand to choose what you want, but for really important stuff that affects everyone. We vote to choose our leaders and we also vote on rules and laws that affect how everyone lives together.

Voting gives everyone an equal voice. Whether you're rich or poor, tall or short - once you turn 18, your vote counts exactly the same as everyone else's. That's what makes it fair.

Voting is both a right (something we get to do) and a responsibility (something we should do). People worked really hard throughout history to make sure everyone could vote, so it's important to use this power when we grow up.

WHO CAN RUN FOR OFFICE?

Did you know that someday YOU could be a leader in North Dakota? It's true! Regular people just like you grow up to run towns, make important decisions, and help their neighbors every single day!



Want to be Governor of North Dakota one day?

Here's your checklist:

- Be 30 years old
- Live in North Dakota for 5 years
- Be a U.S. citizen

Other cool jobs you could do:

- Make laws for North Dakota (State Legislature)
- Make laws for the country (U.S. Congress)
- Lead your town (Mayor, City Council)

Here's a secret...the best place to start is right in your own backyard! Local leaders make decisions about things you care about:

School Board → What happens at YOUR school

City Council → Your parks, streets, and swimming pools

Mayor → Leads your whole town



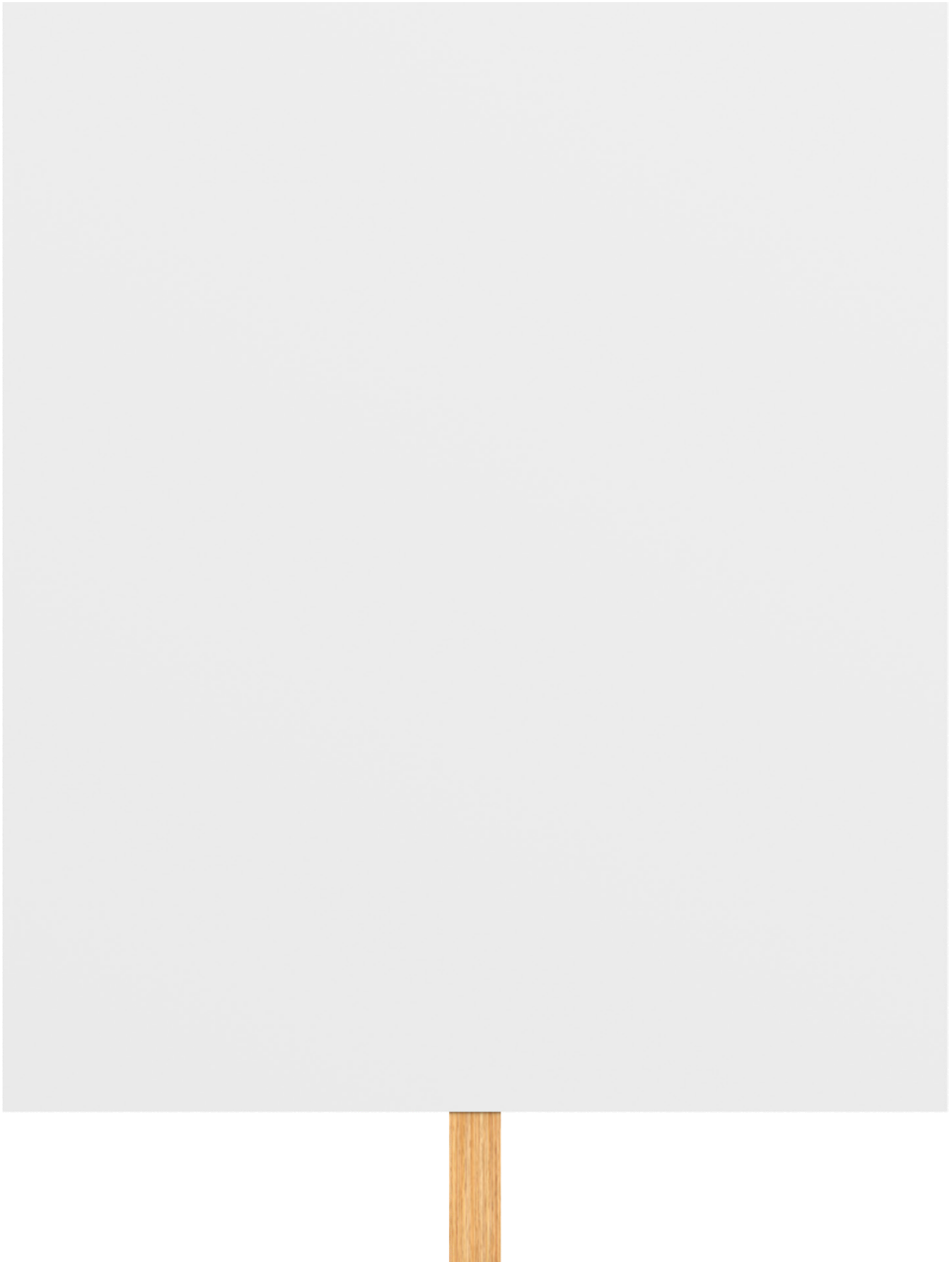
The Best Part? You don't need to be rich. You don't need to be famous. You don't even need to be the most popular kid in school. You just need to care.



Many of North Dakota's best leaders started by caring about ONE thing in their community, maybe fixing a playground, improving their school, or helping neighbors. Then they decided to run for a local office to make it happen. ***That Could Be YOU!***

What would you want to fix or improve in your community? That's where leaders start, by caring, by paying attention, by deciding to make things better.

Pretend you are running for office. You will need to campaign to try and convince people to vote for you. Design a campaign poster to display and share with voters. Your poster should include your name and a slogan or message that will persuade people to vote for you.



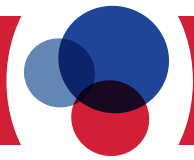
YOU KNOW CIVICS NOW WHAT?

You've learned that civics is about how we live and work together in our communities and country. You know that **government** works at local, state, and national levels to help people. You understand the three branches keep each other balanced so no one has too much power.

You know that in a democracy, citizens have a voice. They get to **vote**, share ideas, and help make decisions. **Laws**, made by representatives we choose, keep us safe and fair.

Being a good citizen starts NOW, not when you're grown up! You can be a good citizen by being kind, following rules, helping others, learning about your **community**, speaking up about what matters, and respecting people who think differently.

Every big change starts with people who care. And that includes you. What kind of **citizen** will you be?



*Unscramble these important civics words. Need a hint?
Find all the answers in the paragraph above!*

ZITENIC: _____
Someone who belongs to a community

TOVE: _____
Choosing leaders

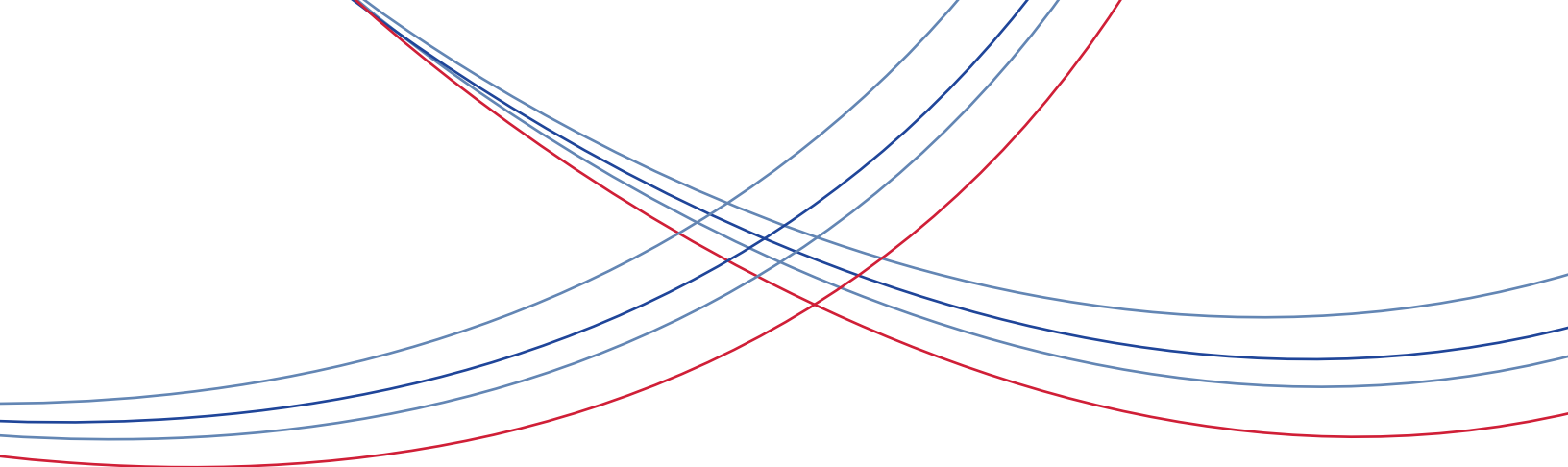
WLSA: _____
A rule everyone must follow

TGOMENVER: _____
A way to make decisions and solve problems for the people

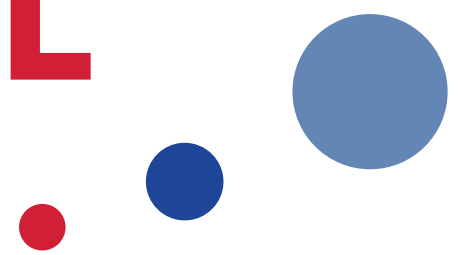
MUMINOCTY: _____
People living in the same area



Create a self-portrait or collage that shows the kind of citizen you are or want to become. Think about it. What does being a good citizen mean to you? How do you help others or your community? Create your portrait by drawing, painting, or using cut-out pictures and words.



YOUR VOICE MATTERS



NORTH DAKOTA
SECRETARY  OF STATE



WWW.SOS.ND.GOV

*Made possible through a federal grant provided by the U.S. Department
of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency.*

