GETTING READY TO VOTE

Teacher's Guide

NORTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE

GRADE LEVEL

9 - 12

DURATION

1 class period (50 minutes)

SUMMARY

In this lesson, students explore how voting rights have expanded throughout U.S. history and learn how election laws are created and carried out. Students examine North Dakota's unique election system, including voter qualifications, identification requirements, and its distinction as the only state without voter registration.

By the end of the lesson, students will understand their future voting rights and how to prepare to participate as informed voters.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Explain how voting rights have expanded in the United States
- Describe how election laws are created
- Identify North Dakota voting requirements
- Explain the steps eligible voters should take before Election Day

MATERIALS

- Getting Ready to Vote PowerPoint
- Who Makes the Rules Worksheet
- Make Your Plan to Vote Worksheet
- Exit Ticket
- At Home Reflection Activities

NORTH DAKOTA STATE STANDARDS

This lesson is aligned with the following 6-12 Civics and Government standards:

C.6_12.4 Investigate the role and responsibilities of citizenship in society.

Students examine the responsibilities of voting and steps eligible voters should take to prepare for Election Day.

C.6_12.4.1 Explain how citizens can influence government.

Students explore how voting rights have expanded in the United States and how eligible citizens can influence government through voting.

C.6_12.4.3 Explain how citizens' personal and civic responsibilities are important to the preservation and improvement of United States constitutional republic.

Students consider voting as a civic responsibility and the steps eligible voters should take to prepare for Election Day.

C.6_12.4.5 Demonstrate active participation in civic life.

Students apply what they have learned about voter eligibility, ID requirements, voting options, and preparation to develop a plan for participating in an election.

C.6_12.2 Analyze the structures and functions of governments.

Students examine how election laws are created and how those laws shape the requirements and steps voters follow to prepare for an election.

C.6_12.2.2 Examine the role and purpose of government.

Students examine government's role in elections by learning how election laws are created and identifying North Dakota voting requirements.

STEP-BY STEP INSTRUCTION

Opening
0-1 minutes

Tell the class: "*Think about the last major decision you made. Maybe it was choosing classes, applying for a job, or deciding where to spend your money. Chances are, you prepared before making that decision."*

"Voting is no different. Casting a ballot is one of the most important ways citizens participate in government. Being prepared helps ensure every eligible voter can cast their ballot confidently."

Slide 1
1-2 minutes

Display slide one and introduce the lesson, **Getting Ready to Vote.**

Slide 2
2-3 minutes

Read the four "I can" statements out loud and tell students they will revisit these at the end of class.

Slides 3
3-7 minutes

Tell the class, *"Today we will learn what it takes to be ready to vote in North Dakota. But before we talk about that, let's see what you already know. Look at these four people. Who do you think can vote in ND?"*

Gives students instructions, *"Without talking give a thumbs up if you think they can vote, and a thumbs down if you don't think they can."* **Reveal the answers by clicking on icons**. *"A person with a disability can vote. A convicted felon that has completed their sentence can vote. Someone serving overseas in the military can vote. A resident who has lived in North Dakota for 5 years but isn't a United States citizen cannot vote because they are not a U.S. citizen."*

Ask students, *"What made some of these difficult?"* Allow a few responses. *"Knowing who can vote, and why, is something Americans have spent generations working on."*

Slide 4
7-9 minutes

Ask the class, *"What do you notice about this picture?"* Allow a few responses.

"*When our country began, voting looked different than it does today. Over time Americans began asking an important question. Who should have a voice in our democracy?"* Allow some discussion.

Slide 5
9-13 minutes

"Throughout American history, the right to vote has gradually expanded. This timeline highlights some of the major milestones."

1789 Constitution was adopted, voting was generally limited to white men who owned property.

1870 15th Amendment prohibited denying the right to vote based on race, color, or previous servitude.

1920 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote nationwide.

1924 Indian Citizenship Act granted U.S. citizenship to Native Americans, though many still faced voting challenges.

1964 24th Amendment ended poll taxes in federal elections.

1965 Voting Rights Act strengthened protections against discriminatory voting practices.

1971 26th Amendment lowered the voting age from 21 to 18.

Wrap up, *"These milestones represent times when voting rights expanded to include more Americans. But how do changes like these happen? Who has the power to create or change election law?"*

Slide 6
13-15 minutes

"Election laws aren't made by just one group. They are a shared responsibility among different levels of government.

Congress *establishes protections and requirements that apply across the country.* **State** *legislatures determine how elections work within their states.* **Local** *governments make certain local election decisions, but must operate within state and federal law."*

Slide 7
15-23 minutes

"Once election laws are created, election officials are responsible for putting those laws into practice.

In North Dakota the Secretary of State is the state's chief election official. At the local level, county election officials administer elections. On Election Day poll workers are who voters see at polling locations."

Hand out the ***Who Makes the Rules breakout activity.*** Give students a few minutes to complete and then discuss.

Wrap up, *"Lawmakers create the laws and election officials carry them out."*

Slide 8
23-26 minutes

Explain: *"Although federal laws protect voting rights for all Americans, each state is responsible for running its own elections. That means every state creates many of its own election laws. Because states have this authority, election laws can look different depending on where you live in the United States."*

Ask, *"Can you guess why North Dakota is unique?"* Let a few students guess.

Reveal the answer by clicking and explain, *"North Dakota is the only state that does not require voter registration. This means we don't require people to enroll to vote in an election. Eligible voters must simply show valid identification to vote."*

Slide 9
26-29 minutes

Read through the voter qualifications. Ask students, *"Can a 17 year old whose birthday is the day after Election Day vote?"* No. *"A college student living in North Dakota who meets residency requirements?"* Yes. *"Someone who moved to ND two weeks ago?"* No.

Slide 10
29-31 minutes

"Along with meeting voter qualifications. Voters must also have a valid form of identification to vote in ND." Read through valid forms of ID. Ask, *"Do any of these surprise you?"*

Slide 11
31-36 minutes

"Now that we've looked at the types of ID that can be used to vote in North Dakota, let's see how well you know the rules. Look at these and decide if you think they would be accepted. Thumbs up for yes. Thumbs down for no."

After discussing each example, explain why it is accepted or not accepted.

Click to reveal: *"A Tribal ID is accepted. A non-driver ID card is accepted. An ID that says 'permanent' is not accepted. That means that person is a permanent resident - not a United States citizen."*

"One of the easiest ways to avoid problems on Election Day is to check your ID ahead of time."

Slide 12
36-43 minutes

"Voting does not start on Election Day It starts beforehand." Read through Plan, Prepare, Participate.

Make Your Plan to Vote breakout activity. Have each student create a simple voting plan. Ask a few to share.

Wrap up, *"There isn't one 'right' voting plan. The important thing is to think ahead. When you have a plan and prepare you're more likely to participate."*

Slide 13
43-50 minutes

Recap and read the questions on the slide without answering them. Hand out ***Exit Tickets.*** Have students fill out their exit ticket and hand it in on the way out of class.

Let students choose an at home reflection activity to complete:
-Interview a Voter
-Voting Explained Visually
-Dig Deeper, Voting Rights History

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This guide is designed to support educators in facilitating the ***Getting Ready to Vote*** lesson. It includes suggested talking points, low-prep interactive activities, discussion questions, and reflection prompts that align with each slide in the presentation.

Additional resources, including official North Dakota Secretary of State materials and other reputable civic education organizations, are provided to further explore the themes of democracy, civic participation, elections, and informed voting.

Suggested Websites

www.vote.nd.gov
- Official source for North Dakota election information.

www.constitutioncenter.org
- Student-friendly explanations of the 15th, 19th, 24th, and 26th Amendments including how voting rights expanded over time.

www.eagleeyecitizen.org
- Interactive activities using Library of Congress primary sources to explore civic participation.

Suggested Videos

North Dakota Secretary of State - Elections 101
Series of videos for North Dakota voters.
All videos under 2 minutes.

WHO MAKES ELECTION LAWS?

Election laws and responsibilities are shared among federal, state, and local governments.

Read each responsibility. Decide which level of government has the primary role.

Write: Federal, State, or Local

1. Operates polling places in your community.
2. Passes laws protecting voters from discrimination.
3. Establishes voter qualifications and requirements.
4. Count ballots in your community.
5. Establishes constitutional protections for voting.

WHO CARRIES THEM OUT?

Once laws have been established, election officials help put them into action.

Read each responsibility. Decide who is responsible for enforcing the law or procedures.

Write: Secretary of State, County Official, Poll Worker

1. Provides statewide guidance and oversight.
2. Checks in voters at a polling location.
3. Coordinates election workers.
4. Provides ballots and voting procedure guidance.
5. Serves as North Dakota's chief election official.

Put it together

A new North Dakota election law changes a voting requirement. What happens next? Put these steps in order by writing 1, 2, 3, and 4 in the blank.

___ The North Dakota Legislature passes an election law.

___ Poll workers follow the law when helping voters.

___ The Secretary of State provides statewide election guidance and oversight.

___ County election officials prepare to administer the election according to the law.

Now Answer :

Who made the law?

Who carried it out?

ANSWER KEY

Election laws and responsibilities are shared among the federal, state, and local governments.

1. Operates polling places in your community.
   Local

2. Passes laws protecting voters from discrimination.
   Federal

3. Establishes voter qualifications and requirements.
   State

4. Count ballots in your community.
   Local

5. Establishes constitutional protections for voting.
   Federal

Once laws have been established, election officials help put them into action.

1. Provides statewide guidance and oversight.
   Secretary of State

2. Checks in voters at a polling location.
   Poll Worker

3. Coordinates election workers.
   County Election Officials

4. Provides ballots and voting procedure guidance.
   Secretary of State

5. Serves as North Dakota's chief election official.
   Secretary of State

Put it together

1 The North Dakota Legislature passes an election law.

4 Poll workers follow the law when helping voters.

2 The Secretary of State provides statewide election guidance and oversight.

3 County election officials prepare to administer the election according to the law.

Now Answer :

Who made the law? The North Dakota Legislature passed the law.

Who carried it out? The Secretary of State, county election officials, and poll workers helped carry it out.

MAKE YOUR PLAN TO VOTE

01. Prepare. *What do you need to do before voting?*

02. Plan. *When and how will you vote?*

03. Participate. *What do you need to have before you vote?*

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NAME DATE

EXIT ticket | *Getting Ready to Vote*

Reflection

01. **Why can voting laws be different from one state to another?**

02. **What are the 3 qualifications a person must meet to vote in North Dakota?**

03. **What is 1 question you still have about voting or elections in North Dakota?**

Rate Your Understanding

1 Not Yet 2 Somewhat 3 Confident

- ○ I can explain how voting rights have expanded over time.
- ○ I know who makes and carries out election laws.
- ○ I understand North Dakota voter qualifications and ID requirements.
- ○ I can explain what makes voting in North Dakota unique.

Look Ahead

What is one thing you can do to be prepared to vote in a future election?

REFLECTION | *Getting Ready to Vote*

Today's lesson explored how citizens can prepare and get ready to vote.

Choose ONE of the three options below. Your work should demonstrate thoughtful reflection and include ideas or examples from today's lesson.

Interview a Voter

Interview a parent, grandparent, family member, or another trusted adult who has voted. Ask:

- What do you remember about voting for the first time?
- How do you prepare to vote?
- What is one thing you wish you had known before your first election?

Requirements: Write a reflection about your conversation. Introduce the person you interviewed, summarize their answers, identify one piece of advice, make one connection to something you learned in class. Your reflection must be at least 8 complete sentences.

Voting Explained Visually

Create a one-page visual (comic strip, infographic, mini-poster, illustrated checklist, etc.) that teaches a future first-time voter something important from today's lesson. Choose one topic:

- How voting rights have changed over time
- Who makes election laws vs. who carries them out
- How to make your plan to vote - *Plan, Prepare, and Participate*

Requirements: Your visual should include a clear title, at least 3 accurate facts from the lesson, and communicate your ideas through images, symbols, or illustrations. Include at least 2 complete sentences, explaining why you chose this topic.

Dig Deeper, Voting Rights History

Choose one milestone from the Voting Rights Through History timeline.
Do additional research and answer the following questions:

- **What changed?** *What right or protection did this amendment or law establish?*
- **Who was affected?** *Who gained new rights or protections?*
- **Why did it matter?** *How did it change participation in American elections?*
- **One thing you learned?** *What is one fact you found that wasn't discussed in class?*
- **Bonus!** *Add an image, historical photograph, quote, or symbol connected to the milestone.*

Requirements: Use at least two reliable sources and list them at the bottom of your assignment, write at least 2 complete sentences for each question, explain the information in your own words.