Matching Voting Steps Activity

Cut the below steps into individual strips and place each strip in an envelope. Groups of teens will look at each step to place them in the “correct” order. Below is the suggested order of each voting step.

Register to Vote

Research Political Parties, Candidates

Know the Issues

Check State Rules & Regulations

Find Your Polling Place

Cast Your Ballot

Definition and more detail of each step:

Register to Vote

Voter registration is not federally managed, meaning states and territories have unique requirements. Most states allow residents to register online, in person, or via a paper form, provided they are qualified to vote and meet the registration deadline. If a voter knows they won’t be in their state at the time of an election, they can fill out the Federal Postcard Application for absentee voting.

Research Political Parties, Candidates

Being an informed voter allows individuals to select candidates based on their stated platforms without relying on party propaganda or media coverage. By researching parties and candidates, informed voters are able to make knowledgeable decisions about who their votes support. [The American Association of State Colleges and Universities](http://www.aascu.org/programs/ADP/VotingResources/InformedVoting.pdf) offers a comprehensive guide to becoming an informed voter.

Know the Issues

Once a new voter is familiar with the basic tenets of political parties, they are able to learn about the issues at stake during the election. Be it a presidential or city council election, candidates almost always share the vision for their time in office on their website. Voters should review this information and consider how it aligns with their personal beliefs about how government should function.

Check State Rules & Regulations

Most voting stations are open at least 12 hours on election day, allowing students or those with busy workdays ample time to vote. Although only 35 states currently require voters to show a photo ID, first-time voters who registered by mail have other requirements. According to federal law, individuals who have not voted previously must bring a valid photo ID or a bill, pay stub, or government document showing their name and current address.

Find Your Polling Place

State election offices assign polling locations based on a voter’s address, so students and others who aren’t sure where to go to vote can either contact their election office or use Get to the Polls to find out where they should be. Information about state and local election offices can be found via the search tool on USA.gov.

Cast Your Ballot

Gone are the days of hanging chads and delayed results, as states now use electronic voting systems, either optical scanning or touch screens on election day. Gizmodo provides a list of states and the type of machines used by each so students and other first-time voters feel confident and knowledgeable. Voters may not have to vote for every office on the ballot, and are also allowed a write-in if the candidate of their choosing is not on the official ballot.

Information sourced from: <https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/resources/students-and-first-time-voters/>

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