



Lesson Plan: What Matters Most?

OVERVIEW:

This lesson plan is designed to be used with the P.O.V. Why Vote? Web site.

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- Share their beliefs, experiences and ideas on key issues for the 2008 election.

While students are typically too young to vote, they can participate in the election process by sharing their views on the issues with an online community of engaged citizens and perhaps influence public opinion.

GRADE LEVELS: 6-12

SUBJECTS: Current Events, Civics, Language Arts

ACTIVITY:

To get them started, have students watch a few of the approximately two-minute video clips from the What's Your P.O.V.? (<http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2008/election/pov/>) section. Ask them to identify the main idea that was expressed in each clip. Do they agree with each idea? Why or why not? Consider using the 'Comment' feature under each video clip to share student reactions.

Then, challenge students to put together their own commentary to share online. Have each student select an issue (<http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2008/election/issues/>) to explore (e.g., the environment) and either write a 300-400 word commentary or personal experience narrative that conveys his or her personal viewpoint on the subject. As students organize their ideas, refer them to the Commentary Tips (<http://www.npr.org/getmyvote/sharestory.html>) at the Get My Vote Web site from our partner NPR.

Student commentaries should then be submitted (<http://www.npr.org/getmyvote/sharestory.html>) at the Get My Vote Web site as text, audio or video. Be sure to tag student submissions with "P.O.V." so we can more easily showcase their work on our Why Vote? site!

RESOURCES:

P.O.V. Borders: American ID: Border Talk

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/borders/2006/talk.html>

Read what a diverse group of bloggers thinks it means to be an "American." Discuss the issues they raise and any related experiences your students have had. Use the discussion as a springboard to creating content to upload (<http://www.npr.org/getmyvote/sharestory.html>) to the Get My Vote Web site.

AmDoc Community Events Planner

<http://www.amdoc.org/outreach/events/register.php>

Organize a documentary screening and discussion event in your community around an issue that is important to your students. AmDoc, the producers of P.O.V., can help with all the details.

STANDARDS:

These standards are drawn from "Content Knowledge," a compilation of content standards and benchmarks for K-12 curriculum by McRel (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning) at <http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>.

Civics

Standard 14: Understands issues concerning the disparities between ideals and reality in American political and social life.

Language Arts

Standard 2: Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing.

Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.

Standard 10: Understands the characteristics and components of the media.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Cari Ladd, M.Ed., is an educational writer with a background in broadcast journalism, secondary education, and media development. Previously, she served as PBS Interactive's Director of Education, overseeing the development of curricular resources tied to PBS programs, the PBS TeacherSource Web site (now PBS Teachers), and online teacher professional development services. She has also taught in Maryland and Northern Virginia.