

How to Conduct a Mock Election

Mock Election simulations take time to organize and execute but can make a lasting impression on students. Some or all of the following suggestions can be used to conduct a campaign and election.

STEP I: ORGANIZE POLITICAL PARTIES

- A. Survey student opinion about specific issues to determine orientation toward Republican or Democratic parties.
- B. Place on chalkboard or distribute copies of survey questions, such as:

Do you support...	Yes	No
1. a subminimum wage for teenagers?	_____	_____
2. a national drinking age?	_____	_____
3. a national draft?	_____	_____
4. school search of student lockers for reasonable cause?	_____	_____
5. cuts in federal student loans to help balance the budget?	_____	_____
6. strong gun control?	_____	_____
7. affirmative action programs?	_____	_____
8. capital punishment?	_____	_____
9. increased personal income taxes?	_____	_____
10. increased corporate income taxes?	_____	_____
11. increased defense spending?	_____	_____
12. reduced social services spending?	_____	_____
13. reduced foreign imports?	_____	_____
14. subsidies on agricultural production?	_____	_____
15. protective tariffs?	_____	_____
16. sanctions against Iraq?	_____	_____

- C. Count the number of **yes** and **no** responses to opinion questions. If you use those above, students with seven or more **yes** responses would tend to be Republican. Give these students a red sticker (or other symbol) to designate them as members of the Republican party. Using the above questions, students with seven or more **no** responses would tend to be Democratic. Give these students a blue sticker (or other symbol) for their designation in the Democratic party.

STEP II: ORGANIZE PARTY CONVENTIONS TO NOMINATE CANDIDATES

- A. Ask each party to select two or more candidates to run for President. Candidates can volunteer to be drafted by the party or can be assigned by the teacher.
- B. Candidates must prepare and give a five-minute speech to identify their stands on the issues and to persuade their party to nominate them to run for President.
- C. Each national convention nominates its candidate by roll call vote. A winner is declared when one candidate receives over 50 percent of the party vote. If no candidate receives 50 percent on the first ballot, additional speeches, roll calls, or special caucuses may take place. Roll calls for each national convention can be done simultaneously or consecutively.

STEP III: ORGANIZE A CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

- A. Each political party should select a Vice-Presidential running mate and a campaign manager.
- B. To formulate a campaign strategy, have the President, Vice-President, and campaign manager for both parties determine where and how they will campaign after considering the following questions:
 1. Which five states are most important to your campaign?
 2. What three issues will you emphasize in your campaign?
 3. How do you rank the effectiveness of television, radio, print advertising, and personal appearances?
 4. How will you allocate your resources of time, money, and people in this campaign?
- C. The campaign team should decide which states represented by students should receive the greatest emphasis and campaign materials.
- D. Assign each student to represent a specific number of votes in a specific state by dividing the voting population of that state (use 100,000,000 voters) by the number of students assigned to the state.
- E. Each political party and/or campaign team should prepare a thirty-second television or radio advertisement for its candidate.
- F. Others could create a political cartoon or write a newspaper ad or editorial to support their candidates or attack the opponents.

STEP IV: ORGANIZE A POLITICAL DEBATE OR PRESS CONFERENCE

- A. Candidates should prepare brief statements identifying their views on foreign, economic, and social issues.
- B. Other students should prepare questions about foreign, economic, and social issues to ask either candidate.
- C. Sponsor a debate or press conference between Presidential candidates. Candidates could begin or conclude the debate with the position statements they have prepared. Students could question the candidates. Questions and responses should be timed.
- D. After the debate, or press conference, students should evaluate the performance of each candidate and write an editorial endorsement of their preferred candidate.

STEP V: ORGANIZE A POPULAR ELECTION

- A. Designate a panel of four election judges who have the responsibility of voter registration and vote tallying.
- B. Give the class a limited time (one day to one week) to register with an election judge to vote. Voter registration should include a specified state designation.
- C. On election day, the election judges distribute ballots to each registered voter. Voters should cast secret ballots.
- D. Election judges count the votes and announce the results of the popular vote.
- E. The winning candidate delivers an acceptance speech; the loser gives a concession speech.