

“FIGHTING FOR THE VOTE” FOR EARLIER GRADES

DESIGN AND OBJECTIVES

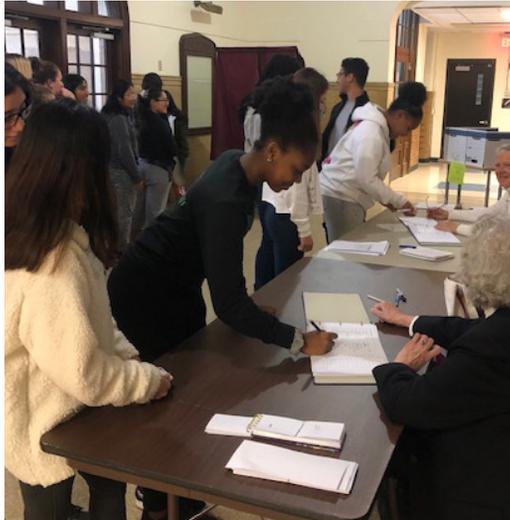
A pared-down version of *Fighting for the Vote* is available for grades 5 to 8. It shares the same interactive design as the high school and college version, but works with a simplified timeline of suffrage milestones. The voter-turnout and how-to-vote modules of the version for older students are gone. The young students are given pin-on buttons that read: “*I can’t vote, but you can*” and they role-play how they will respond to questions from adults about their buttons. The long-range goal is to build in the young students a personal commitment to vote when they are eligible. Short-term, the idea is to develop young ambassadors who will become compelling voting advocates in their families, neighborhoods, and communities.



LOGISTICS

Like the version for older students, the *Fighting for the Vote* session for earlier grades works best in groups of 30 or fewer. On average, it takes about 45 minutes, but can be adapted to fit longer or shorter periods.

The program can be delivered without slides, if a computer and projector are unavailable. Access to a white board and easels is desirable.



Students sign in at their simulated polling place in registration books where their signatures are validated—and some are challenged..

INTERESTED?

To bring *Fighting for the Vote* to your school, contact the League:

fightingforthevote@gmail.com

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization formed in 1920 as an outgrowth of the women’s suffrage movement. Now open to men and women, the League continues to defend voting rights and works year round to register, inform, and motivate voters to turn out on Election Day. Based on grassroots study and input, the League takes stands on key issues of the day including Voter Suppression, Money in Politics, Fair Redistricting, and much more.



Developed by the League of Women Voters of Southern Monmouth County

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“Someone struggled for your right to vote. Use it.”

Susan B. Anthony

Fighting for the Vote

A non-partisan program of the League of Women Voters, offered without charge to schools throughout New Jersey, aimed at developing a generation of informed and committed voters.

WHAT IT IS

Arguably, our schools have no more critical mission than preparing each generation to play an active and informed role in our democracy. Yet our record of voter turnout, especially among the young, is dismal. *Fighting for the Vote* is an interactive program, delivered in the classroom by skilled League of Women Voters facilitators, designed to help change that record.

Targeted for high school and college students, *Fighting for the Vote* has substantive content, interactive design, relevance to age and ethnicity, and simulated real-life experiences.



1964. Associated Press

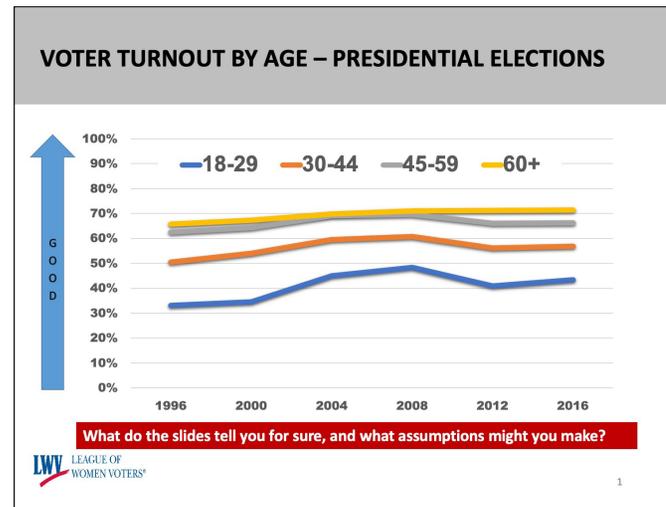
HOW IT WORKS

Fighting for the Vote is adaptable to the needs of students and schools. In general, it consists of three modules:

1. Suffrage Timeline. In Module One, students become personally involved in the history of suffrage—from the American Revolution to the 1965 Voting Rights Act and beyond. They take on the persona of an avatar whose attributes map to voter eligibility requirements through time. As they learn about each suffrage milestone and their avatars become eligible to vote, students stand and join a human timeline. At the start, they notice how few voters (white, property-owning males) represent the whole, and how the representation grows with each hard-won, voting-rights victory. The experience builds an emotional connection to the sacrifices made in the fight for the vote—including the casualties in the ongoing battle to end voter suppression.

2. Voter Turnout. In Module Two, students analyze voter turnout data, comparing their own age, ethnicity, and education level to other groups. The contrasts generate insightful discussion of why people don't vote. Students practice giving and responding to excuses for not voting. They are challenged to examine their own power to effect change and their willingness to do so.

3. Voting Experience. Module Three demystifies the actual process of voting—from registration to casting a ballot. The language of elections (*polling place, voting district, primary, unaffiliated* etc.) is explained. Where possible, the League re-creates the voting experience on site, complete with registration books, poll workers, and an actual voting machine with a customized ballot.



Graphic from Module Two. Students analyze voter turnout, comparing their own age group (as shown here), ethnicity, and education level to other groups.

RESULTS

We gauge the impact of *Fighting for the Vote* by its effect on students' intention to vote and we administer pre- and post-questionnaires to measure that impact. The data shows increases in students' intention to vote in elections at all levels and consistent double-digit increases for mid-term, off-year, and local races. These verbatim student statements on the questionnaire are typical:

"My age group doesn't really vote, that made me want to go out, use my voice."

"I want to vote now, more, because it's a right that was gained through a long fight."

"It inspired me to fight for what I believe in no matter the cost."

LOGISTICS

Fighting for the Vote works best in groups of 30 or fewer. Typically, Modules One and Two are delivered in one 50-to-90 minute session. Module Three and the simulated voting experience are offered separately, on later dates.



Students take part in a simulated voting experience. Here they line up to cast their votes in a real-life voting machine.