

2024 ELECTION

# Show students why elections matter.

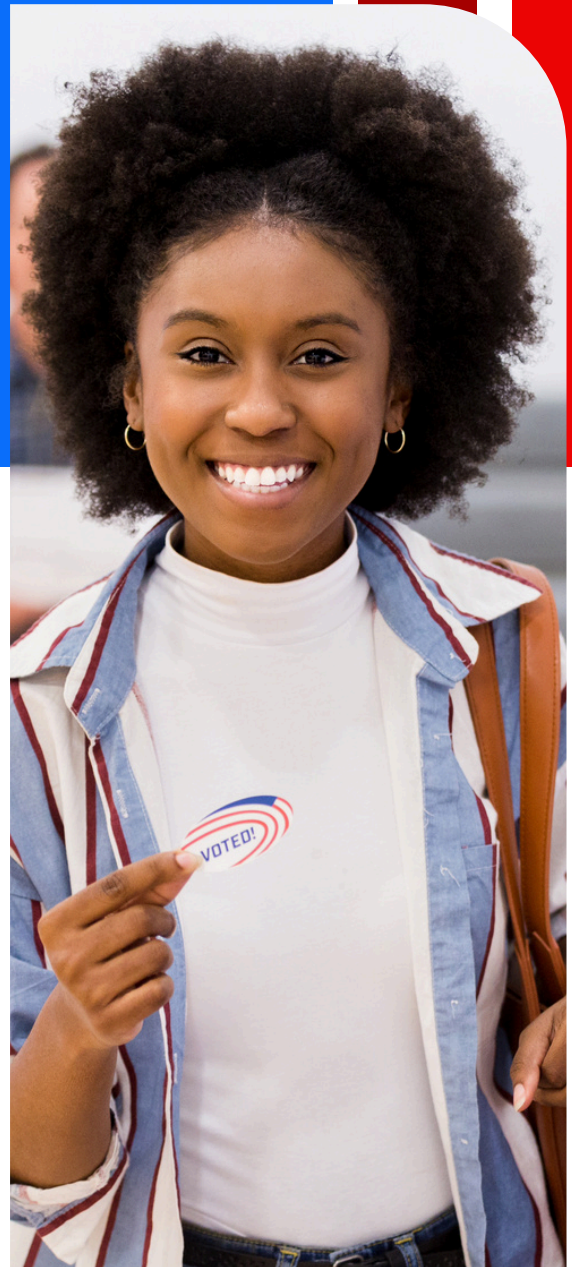
Engaging with complex policy and social issues is vital to developing citizens in a democracy. But, many educators find it challenging to figure out ways to do this most effectively. This election season is the perfect time to make real-world connections in the classroom and help students develop the critical thinking skills they need to be engaged citizens.

[Newsela Social Studies](#) has the resources educators need to teach about the 2024 election. Equip students with knowledge and skills to:

- Understand the electoral process and voting.
- Discuss key issues.
- Explore current events.

This election season, help students sharpen their media literacy skills and learn more about the democratic process—all while driving dialogue about challenging topics most important to them and their community.

Teachers can use our [2024 Election text sets](#) and [discussion tips](#) this election season to plan lessons and foster engaging and informed dialogue in the classroom.





Our team will continue to add content to the [2024 Election Resources collection](#) through November. Be sure to check the 2024 Election Resources row of your Newsela homepage and browse pages for the latest content! The text sets will cover a variety of topics including:

## Election Basics: Civics

### Introduction to Presidential Elections

Students will examine the process of selecting a president in the United States.

### Voting

Students will examine voting processes and voting rights in the United States.

### Electoral College

Students will analyze the origins of the Electoral College and evaluate its role in modern elections.

### Primaries and Caucuses

Students will read about how different states select nominees for the presidential race.

### Political Parties

Students will examine the two-party political system, tracing the origin and development of major political parties in the United States.

### Civic Engagement

Students will identify various ways to demonstrate civic engagement, including how those who cannot vote—such as students—can still participate in civic life.

## Elections and Media Literacy

### Introduction to Media Literacy

Students will consider why it is important to develop media literacy skills, particularly in the context of understanding elections.

### Media and Elections

Students will examine the role of media in the election process, including the evolution of media's role with the development of social media.

### Fact vs. Fiction

Students will practice identifying false information and bias in media sources.



## Understand the 2024 Election

### Issue Overviews

Students will examine fact-based overviews of key campaign issues in the 2024 election. They will also read some pro/con debates on election issues and practice identifying evidence to support their opinions on the issues.

### Races and Candidates to Watch

Students will examine races beyond the presidential race that are on the ballot in 2024.

### Candidate Profiles

Students will read about the presidential and vice presidential nominees in the 2024 election.

## Stay Informed

### Major 2024 Election News

Students will be able to stay up to date with major developments in the 2024 election.





# 5 tips to encourage healthy discussions this election season

## 1. Establish classroom norms

Establishing classroom norms before a discussion can create a welcoming and safe environment for exploring complex topics. These norms don't have to be teacher-mandated. Students can help set the norms that make them most comfortable when discussing complex topics. Try strategies like assuming others have good intentions, challenging ideas rather than people, and evaluating knowledge sources.

Using [community circles](#) can also help establish norms for talking, tolerance, and empathy—all beneficial to social and emotional learning. When teachers prioritize empathy and respect in the classroom, students are better prepared for civil discourse and navigating stressors.

## 2. Promote empathy and respect

It's challenging to lead discussions on topics that elicit personal and emotional responses. That's why establishing classroom norms that promote empathy and respect makes for healthier discussions and a more safe, supportive, and responsive learning environment.

Leveraging tools with whole child supports during election discussions may help you and your students navigate how to lead with empathy and respect during challenging conversations.

A common strategy for navigating these topics is to have students name their feelings before and after complex conversations. This exercise helps you anticipate and acknowledge potential feelings of discomfort so you're better prepared for any emotions that may arise.



### 3. Prepare for uncomfortable questions

Fostering student curiosity and connection is part of the joy of teaching. But that curiosity can also lead to questions that may be tricky to navigate regarding topics like politics. What happens when a student asks who you're voting for or what you think about a specific issue or policy?

Thinking ahead about how to respond to personal questions from students is an essential step in establishing an inclusive and respectful environment where they feel free to explore the topics. You can encourage curiosity by posing questions back to students and asking them to consider how they would come to their own conclusions about a topic or candidate.

For example, if asked where you stand on a particular issue, you can respond with something like, "That's a great question to ask ourselves and explore. I'm focused on encouraging everyone to vote and be informed. Let's work together on what it means to be civically engaged."

It's helpful to set boundaries with students and remind them of the goal of the classroom discussions: Exploring and learning about aspects of election issues and the civic process, and understanding the facts and context around those topics.

### 4. Model active listening

The term "active listening" is commonly used to describe a structured way individuals can show true interest and undivided attention, withhold judgment, and be mindful of non-verbal communication during a lecture, speech, or discussion.

By modeling healthy discussion practices, you can teach students to be active listeners in the classroom. During modeling, you can reword student questions for clarity, correct misinformation during discussions, and reference relevant materials students can use to stay engaged.

Amid more complex discussions, you can moderate the conversation to invite quieter students to participate and temper more talkative students to keep them from dominating the conversation. Modeling healthy discussions also allows you to elevate and discuss uncommon or unique opinions on complex topics so everyone's voice is heard.



## 5. Provide opportunities for self-reflection following the discussion

Classroom discussions rarely stay in the classroom. Students may think about them long after the class is over and even continue discussing the topics on their own with peers at lunch or with family at home. You can encourage students to evaluate their own progress at the end of a discussion to ensure any subsequent conversations they have on the topics stay rooted in the norms you set at the beginning.

Asking students to share peer reflections not only strengthens classroom relationships and provides insights into their lives but also provides space for students to evaluate what went well during their discussions and what they would like to improve the next time they talk about a complex topic.

As a teacher, you can do the same exercise to determine [how you want to handle future complex discussions](#) beyond the 2024 election. Make notes of what went well and where you could adjust your discussion norms to include all students' voices better and stick to the main topics.

### Ready to get started?

Check out the [Newsela Social Studies 2024 Election Resources collection](#) to start planning your lessons. If you don't have access to Newsela subject products, you can [sign up for a free trial here](#).

