

ELECTIONS 2022

# Show students why midterm elections matter.

Engaging with complex policy and social issues is key to [developing citizens in a democracy](#). But, how to do this most effectively can be challenging for many educators. This election season is the perfect time to make real-world connections in the classroom and help students develop the media literacy and historical thinking skills they need to be engaged citizens.

[Newsela Social Studies](#) is here to empower teachers to guide discussions leading up to the midterm elections with accessible, dynamic, lesson-ready videos and texts that demonstrate multiple sides of key policy issues. This premium content will be freely available to teachers through November. When paired with content and instructional resources from [iCivics](#), students can 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.

**The Newsela Social Studies Midterm Elections content schedule and Discussion Tips will help teachers plan lessons and foster engaging and informed dialogue in the classroom. Check them out >>**





45 min lessons • Free access through November [at this link](#)

Newsela Social Studies

iCivics extension\*

Available

Monday  
Sept. 26th  
2022

### Introduction to the Midterm Elections

Students will be introduced to the midterm elections to develop a deeper understanding of the significance of the events. Students will focus on the importance of practicing media literacy skills, so they're able to think critically about what they see, hear, and read.

### iCivics: NewsFeed Defenders

NewsFeed Defenders is a challenging game designed to sharpen students' news literacy skills. Students will join a fictional social media site focused on news and information, and spot dubious posts that sneak in through hidden ads, viral deception, and false reporting.

Monday  
Oct. 3rd  
2022

### 2022 Political Landscape: Races and Candidates to Watch

Students will explore key races and candidates in elections across the country. Students will take the opportunity to learn about the races in their state, and who represents them in government.

### iCivics: Students Power Elections

The Students Power Elections Guide provides thorough and engaging explanations of voting and participation in the election season. The resource is broken up by topic and guides students to research elections in their state and ways to get involved in movements and ideas they're passionate about.

Monday  
Oct. 10th  
2022

### Issue Spotlight: Economy

Students will examine a key policy issue that plays an important role in the midterm elections: the economy. Students will reflect on the impact of inflation and recession on the elections, and consider the role of economic policy in their own lives.

### iCivics: Banks, Credit, & The Economy

This lesson presents a crash course in the relationship between money, banks, and lending in our economy. Students first learn the basics about money and banks. They then learn about banks' role as lenders and find out why lending plays such a huge role in our economy.

Recommended for secondary social studies classrooms, these Newsela Social Studies premium curations will be available at no cost to all teachers until 11/30/22.

\* iCivics resources linked in each Lesson Spark on Newsela





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Monday  
Oct. 17th  
2022

### Issue Spotlight: Voting Rights

Students will focus on one of the most pressing issues in the country: voting rights. They'll learn about access and hurdles to voting, as well as the impact of redistricting on voting. Students will also research voting laws in their own states.

### iCivics: Voting Matters Activity

This activity is a great way to kick off the election season and promote voter registration in the larger community. Students will learn about how registration and voting works in their state, and create a flyer to share with someone in their life.

Monday  
Oct. 24th  
2022

### Issue Spotlight: Education

Students will explore the important issue of education. They'll examine the costs of a college education and discuss the potential effects of President Biden's student debt forgiveness plan.

### iCivics: Who Represents Me?

This WebQuest will help students find the people who represent them in government. They'll use the "Who Represents Me?" Contact Sheet to write down information about how to tell their government officials what's on their mind.

Monday  
Oct. 31st  
2022

### Issue Spotlight: Climate Policy

Students will dive into the impact of recent climate legislation on the midterm elections. They'll engage in the conversation about climate policy and evaluate various proposed solutions.

### iCivics: Can you BILL-ieve it?

Thousands of bills are introduced in Congress each year, but very few actually become law. So, how does a bill become a law? Students will use a printable infographic to follow a decision tree through the life and death of a bill in Congress.

Monday  
Nov. 7th  
2022

### Election Day Coverage / Election Takeaways

Students will prepare to follow election day coverage of midterm elections, as well as an analysis of the results after the election. They'll research election results in their states, and consider the impact of the midterm elections.

### iCivics: Cast Your Vote

Students will discover what it takes to become an informed voter — from knowing where they stand on important issues to uncovering what they need to know about candidates.

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The Students Power Elections Young Voter Guide provides thorough and engaging explanations of voting and participation in the election season. The resource is broken up by topic and guides students to research elections in their state and ways to get involved in movements and ideas they're passionate about.

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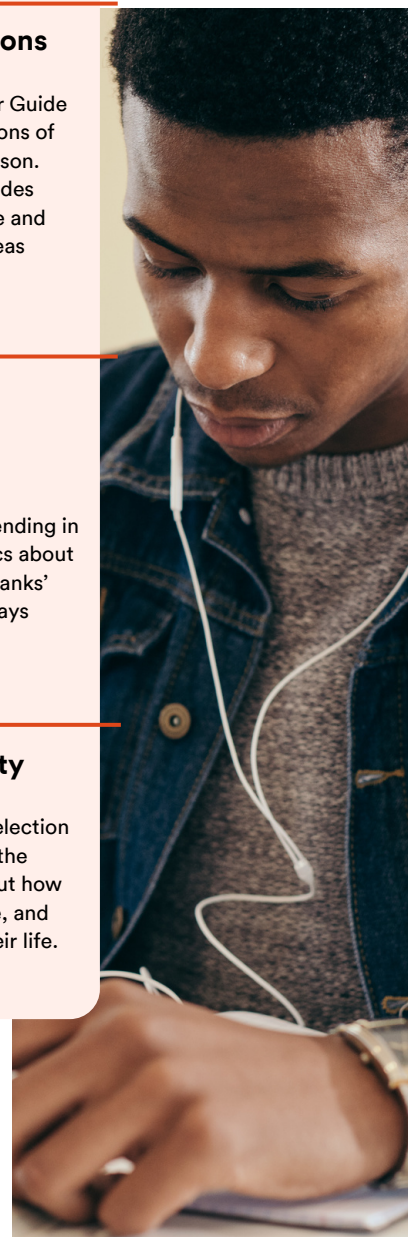
Students will focus on one of the most pressing issues in the country: voting rights. They'll learn about access and hurdles to voting, as well as the impact of redistricting on voting. Students will also research voting laws in their own states.

### iCivics: Voting Matters Activity

This activity is a great way to kick off the election season, and promote voter registration in the larger community. Students will learn about how registration and voting works in their state, and create a flyer to share with someone in their life.

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### iCivics extension

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#### Issue Spotlight: Education

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Monday  
Oct. 31st  
2022

#### Issue Spotlight: Reproductive Rights

Students will examine the role of reproductive rights in the midterm election. They'll consider the impact that the issue of reproductive rights may have on voter turnout rates.

#### Issue Spotlight: Climate Policy

Students will dive into the impact of recent climate legislation on the midterm elections. They'll engage in the conversation about climate policy and evaluate various proposed solutions.

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This WebQuest will help students find the people who represent them in government. They'll use the "Who Represents Me?" Contact Sheet to write down information about how to tell their government officials what's on their mind.

#### iCivics: State Lawmaking

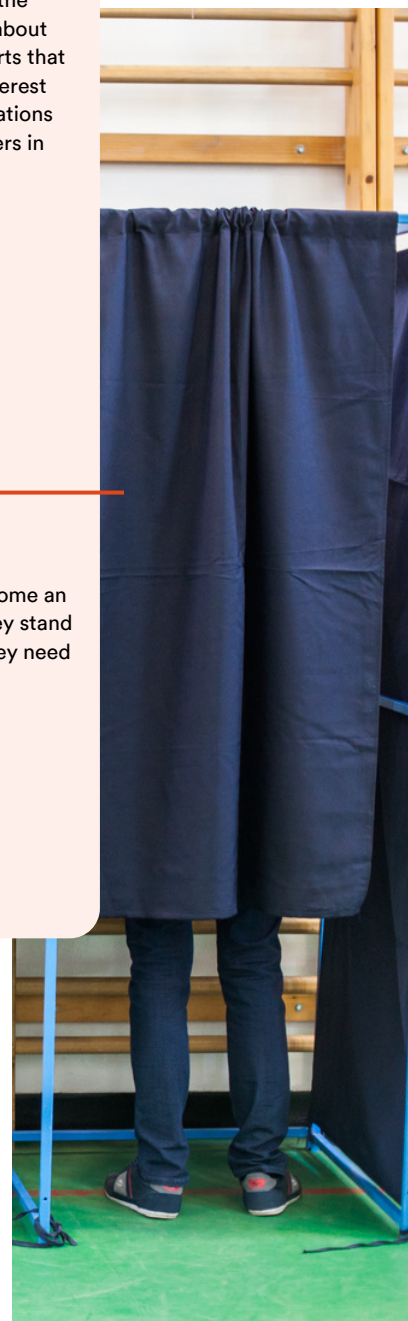
How do states make laws? Students track the state lawmaking process while they learn about the people, organizations, and official efforts that help a bill become a law. A spotlight on interest groups and lobbying explains how organizations work to promote the needs of their members in the process.

#### iCivics: Cast Your Vote

Students will discover what it takes to become an informed voter — from knowing where they stand on important issues to uncovering what they need to know about candidates.

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# 5 tips for facilitating healthy discussion this election season

## 1. Examine your own unconscious biases

Even the most well intentioned people can act in ways that produce inequitable outcomes. Oftentimes these implicit biases are activated unconsciously and affect our understanding, actions, and decisions.

Before facilitating dialogue and discussion on complex topics, teachers should first step back and recognize their own biases. Students should do the same. What does stepping back look like? Practices like mindfulness help reduce social biases by building moment-to-moment awareness of thoughts, feelings, and surroundings. Even when classroom discussions get heated, knowing personal biases in advance will better equip teachers with strategies for managing themselves and the class.

## 2. Establish classroom norms

Creating clear classroom norms around difficult conversations can help mitigate harm. Try out norms like assuming others' good intentions, challenging ideas rather than people, and evaluating knowledge sources. Using community circles can also help establish norms of talking, tolerance, and empathy– all beneficial to social and emotional learning.

Establishing classroom norms before a discussion, even in collaboration with students, can create a welcoming and safe environment. When teachers prioritize empathy and respect in the classroom, students are better prepared for civil discourse and navigating stressors.



### 3. Be an active facilitator

The term “active listening” is commonly used to demonstrate a structured way individuals can show true interest, undivided attention, withholding judgment, and being mindful of non-verbal communication.

As an active facilitator, teachers can reword questions, correct misinformation, and make reference to relevant materials. During more complex topics, being an active facilitator includes making space for quieter students, monitoring more talkative students from dominating the conversation, and elevating some of the uncommon opinions.



### 4. Care for emotions

Topics that provoke personal and emotional responses may be difficult for teachers to navigate. But when schools are safe and supportive, students are more responsive and open to learning.

So how do we cultivate that emotional care during midterm elections? Leveraging tools like the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) or the Social, Emotional, and Ethical (SEE) Learning framework may be helpful as your school/district navigates how to infuse SEL during challenging conversations. A common strategy derived from these frameworks is to have students name how they are feeling before and after conversations. Additionally, teachers can anticipate and acknowledge potential feelings of discomfort so they are better prepared for any emotions that may arise.



### 5. Provide opportunities to self-reflect following the discussion

As educators know all too well, discussions in the classroom carry into everyday life. Teachers can encourage students to evaluate their own progress and build in time at the close of discussion to trace their development of the ideas about the topic from beginning to end. Providing opportunities for students to share reflections with their peers can not only strengthen classroom relationships and give teachers insight into students’ lives, but also provide space for students to evaluate what went well and what they would like to improve in order to have impactful discussions beyond the midterm elections. But even amidst the busyness of facilitating, teachers should also take time to step back to reflect and address how they’re feeling.



# Resources

*Civil Discourse in the Classroom.* (n.d.). Learning for Justice. Retrieved September 26, 2022, from <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/publications/civil-discourse-in-the-classroom>

Home - SEE Learning. (n.d.). Retrieved September 26, 2022, from <http://seelearning.emory.edu/>

Pace, J. E. L. S. (2022, March 9). *Teaching controversial issues when democracy is under attack.* Brookings. Retrieved September 26, 2022, from <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2022/01/31/teaching-controversial-issues-when-democracy-is-under-attack/>

*Teaching the US 2018 midterm elections: a survey of secondary social studies teachers.* (n.d.). Taylor & Francis. Retrieved September 26, 2022, from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00220272.2021.1992674?journalCode=tcus20> (n.d.).

*Understanding Implicit Bias | Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity.* Retrieved September 26, 2022, from <https://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/article/understanding-implicit-bias>

*What Is the Framework?* (2022, August 3). CASEL. Retrieved September 26, 2022, from <https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/#:%7E:text=The%20CASEL%205%20addresses%20five,%2C%20and%20responsible%20decision%2Dmaking.>

