



# Mock Election

Bring civic education and current events into your classroom by participating in the Secretary of State's Mock Election Program! This guide offers ideas for how to customize your Mock Election events to best suit your school and students.

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## A Statement on Nonpartisanship

The Maine Student Mock Election is an opportunity for students to learn about government and civic participation in a supportive and educational setting. Lessons on voting rights and civic engagement are nonpartisan topics critical to the education of young Americans, even when students have questions or opinions about candidates and policies that may be partisan. The Maine Student Mock Election is a tool for students to think critically about their personal opinions, engage respectfully with their peers, and build their confidence and acumen around civic participation. Preparing students to civically engage by enacting their right to vote prepares a successful future for our democracy.

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## Pre-Mock Election Ideas

### Activities Outside of the Classroom

- Have students conduct a poll or survey in the community. Ask them to incorporate math skills such as tallying responses and graphing results. Practice data literacy by interpreting the results as a class.
- Place student-drafted announcements and press releases about your mock election in local publications.

- Have students write letters to the editor of local newspapers encouraging people to vote on Election Day.
- Take a field trip to your town office or municipal voting place to learn about voting booths and the ballot box or voting machines.

## Activities for All Ages

- Organize a student contest to design a “get-out-the-vote” flyer.
- Contact your local historians or historical society to visit your classroom and relate stories about meaningful political events, including those that happened at the local level. If you don’t have access to local historians, a panel of teachers from your school could be organized to discuss elections throughout their lives.
- Prepare skits or dramatizations about voting or famous political speeches. Students can practice relaying information to audiences of different ages or knowledge levels. Older students can prepare a presentation on various issues for younger students.
- Review newspaper articles and news reports on candidates or referendum questions. Practice fact checking information and analyze the media's coverage of the candidates and issues. As the election draws nearer, analyze how coverage changes.
- As a class, create a classroom constitution which includes students’ and teachers’ rights and responsibilities. Contextualize the right to vote as a fundamental American right after discussing the function of the rights agreed upon in the classroom constitution.

## Activities for Younger Students

- Introduce concepts such as community choice and group decision making.
- Discuss with students the things that they may already be voting on, like what to have for dinner or what game to play in gym class. Ask students to reflect on these informal voting processes and what happens when their position is out voted.
- Instead of asking students to vote on candidates for election, have them vote on a few tangible classroom decisions and create “referendum questions” for them to discuss and make choices on.
- Assign students to tally votes and present winning decisions. How did being involved in community decision making make them feel overall? What do they see as the pros and cons of community decision making?

## Activities for Older Students

- Ask students to brainstorm the major categories of political issues for this election cycle. For example: social policy, environmental policy, foreign policy. Students can discuss which issues are the most salient to them and why.
- Have students write position papers pretending they are candidates or write editorials about why they would vote for a candidate.
- Create a bulletin board on which students can post political cartoons and political advertisements collected from newspapers and magazines. Plan a "Who's Who" game to learn faces, names, and backgrounds of candidates.
- Have students discuss the Maine Clean Election Act (MCEA). Research how much money is spent on candidate and initiative campaigns and discuss what impact, if any, this has on democracy.
- Organize a mock press conference or analyze a real press conference. Focus on famous politicians or historical figures.

## Mock Election Day

Mock election can be administered at any scale from small club to classroom level to school-wide participation.

### Scale of the Event

- A classroom-wide event may be a good option if bandwidth or resources are low. Classrooms can be divided into small groups that each have a role in the election process. For example, one group can hand out ballots and give voting instructions, while another collects ballots and tallies totals. A final group can verify the totals and present the election results.
- Similarly, a civics club or student government may choose to host a Mock Election in their small group if they are unable to administer a larger event.
- School-wide events are a great way to get the entire student body buzzing about election season! Educators and administrators can come together to create student groups that can focus on promoting the event, day-of set up and break-down, poll area monitoring, tallying the votes, and publication of results. High schools may want to engage AP Government, AP US History, or other Social Studies students for Mock Election leadership roles.

## Administrative Considerations

- Thinking of hosting a classroom level event? Ask colleagues if they would like to be involved in collaborating on Mock Election to make the event a lighter lift for everyone. Several classrooms can come together to make a larger event, even if the entire school is not going to participate.
- School-wide events should be set up in a busy, central location like near the cafeteria or another popular gathering place. Events held in libraries or quieter spaces will not see the same foot traffic.

## Engaging External Support

- Invite local candidates to speak to your class or school assembly. In addition to candidates for US Congress, candidates for the Maine Senate, Maine House of Representatives, and other local offices can be contacted to participate. Have students research the candidates' positions on issues of their choice and prepare questions for the speakers after watching the 2024 candidate video posted to the Mock Election webpage.
- Partner with your local municipal clerk or registrar. Invite them to visit your class to explain the voting process and talk about polling places and poll working for students ages 16+. Inquire about having a voting booth set up for students to use during the Mock Election.
- Establish a mock election committee in your town or school district. Involve the town clerk, other educators, senior citizen groups, the League of Women Voters, etc. Use this committee to plan events for your school that involve the broader community.
- Invite the Office of the Secretary of State to visit your event! Please email [Vanessa.Diaz.Gaumond@Maine.Gov](mailto:Vanessa.Diaz.Gaumond@Maine.Gov) to schedule.



**Questions or comments about this guide? Please email [Vanessa.Diaz.Gaumond@Maine.Gov](mailto:Vanessa.Diaz.Gaumond@Maine.Gov)**