

Zoom **out the** **vote**™

**Kids can make
a difference.
Get your parents
to register
and vote!**

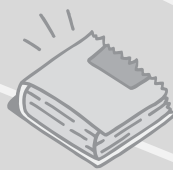


pbskids.org/zoom

Don't Waste a Vote!

Only **54.7%** of all grownups (that's people over 18) voted in the last presidential election. That means that about half of all adults in the United States **threw away** their vote. What a waste! What would the world be like if you...

tossed away half your book?



trashed one of your sneakers?



threw away half your money?



You might be saying “Hey, I’m only a kid, **what can I do** about all of those grownups not voting?” You can **ZOOMout the Vote!** Get your parents and the other grownups in your life—aunts, uncles, grandparents, teachers, babysitters, and neighbors—**to register and vote!** ZOOM can help! Read this guide and visit pbskids.org/zoom for lots of ideas. And remember: **Kids can make a difference!**



Tuesday, November 2, 2004, is Election Day.

This is the day that people vote for President. We also vote for governors, congresspeople, judges, mayors, school committee representatives, and other offices. Here's something you may not know: Before adults can vote, they have to register with the local election commission. You can help **ZOOMout the vote!**

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What Is ZOOM?

ZOOM is a daily TV show on PBS that challenges kids to “turn off the TV and do it!” Check local listings to find out when ZOOM is on in your area, and visit the Web site at pbskids.org/zoom.



Why Vote?

If millions of people live and vote in this country, does one vote really matter?

Yes! A surprising number of elections have been decided by one vote. For example, in 1997, Vermont state representative Sydney Nixon won the election by one vote, **570 to 569** ... until a recount found that he'd actually lost to his opponent Robert Edmond, **572 to 571!**

But don't just take our word for it. Here's what some of the ZOOMers said when we asked them if it's important to vote.



Maya

Every vote counts. Your vote could be the difference between a president who does things you like or a president who does things you disagree with.



Cara

Yes. Voting is one of our freedoms, and that is a privilege that makes our country great.



Kyle

It's important to vote because the person who is picked decides stuff that affects our future.

Is voting important?



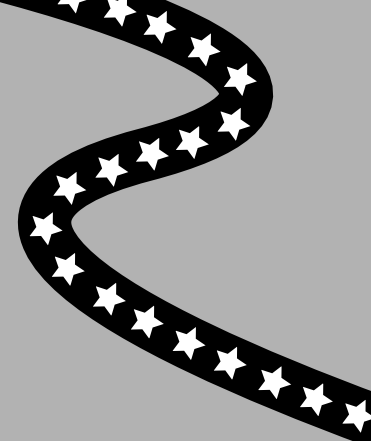
Kortney

It is important to vote because it's our country and it's our responsibility to decide who leads it.



Mike

Yes. When you vote, you help decide who will run the country.




The government—whether it’s in Washington, D.C., in your state, or in your hometown—**affects your life**, sometimes in ways you like, sometimes in ways you aren’t too thrilled about (to find out more, see page 4). But by voting, you get to **say what’s important** to you, and you say it straight to the politicians. Every one of them cares what you think because they **need your vote** to help them win!

Three Things to Think About

- 1** Because each of us (when we’re old enough) has one vote and **only one vote**, voting is one of the few times when all Americans are really **equal**. No matter how much money you have or who your friends are, you only get one vote.
- 2** Even if the person you vote for loses, **your vote matters** because it lets the person who wins know how much support there is for **another point of view**. Politicians love to get elected, but they want to get **re-elected** too!
- 3** *Most importantly*, politicians really notice **who votes** and **who doesn’t**. In the United States, the highest voter turnout is among 65- to 74-year olds. You better believe politicians are going to be careful about issues that older people care about, like Social Security and Medicare. But young people, ages 18 to 24, haven’t voted in high numbers recently, so some politicians feel they don’t have to worry about their needs as much.

It’s a No-Brainer . . . or Is It?

The importance of voting seems obvious. Surprisingly, voter turnout is one of the **biggest political problems** in the United States today. In the last presidential election only **54.7 percent** of the people who could vote voted. That means about half of the country **threw away** their chance to make their voices heard and have a say in their future.



How come we’re telling you this when you aren’t old enough to vote? Because you have the power to make a difference! Read on.





What's the Government Done for Me Lately?

The government—whether it's local, state, or national (also called federal)—makes laws and policies that are connected with your daily life. For example:

The local government or school district makes lots of decisions that affect how good your **public school** is—what gets taught or how many kids are in your class.

Local, state, and federal governments make rules that have a big impact on environmental issues like **global warming** and making sure the **air** you breathe and the **water** you drink is clean.

The federal government decides what food goes on your **school lunch** tray, and it helps pay for lunch for families who can't afford it.



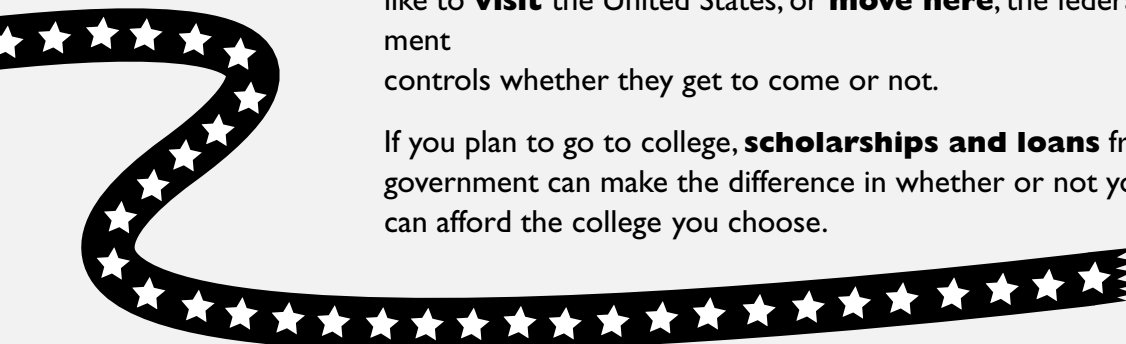
Local government pays for and controls your local **police and fire departments**. It also maintains the **roads** you drive along, the **sidewalks** you walk on, and the **public parks** you play in.



If some members of your family live in another country and would like to **visit** the United States, or **move here**, the federal government controls whether they get to come or not.



If you plan to go to college, **scholarships and loans** from the government can make the difference in whether or not your family can afford the college you choose.





**Still wondering what
this has to do with you?
Don't understand how
you can get involved?
ZOOMout the Vote!**

**ZOOM is calling on all of
you to do two small things
that will have a big impact:**

- 1** Make sure your parents and other adults you know are **registered voters** (that is, signed up to vote before election day), and
- 2** Make sure they **get to the polls** on **Tuesday, November 2** and **vote!**



Make Your Mark!

Here are some ways you can **ZOOM** out the Vote!

Take a Voting Poll

Ask the adults in your life if they voted in the last election. If they didn't, let them know how important their vote is this November. If they did, thank them for caring enough to make their voices heard—and make sure they **cast their votes** again this year.

Get Your Parents to Register

Remember, they can't vote if they aren't registered. Here are the steps a voter takes to register: Get a **voter registration form**, fill it out, and sign it. Photocopy your **driver's license** or **utility bill** (to prove where you live), and **mail the form** and photocopy to your local registration office. It's that easy! Voter registration forms are available at your local post office and city hall, or you can download the National Registration Form at **fec.gov/votregis/vr.htm**. Just print the first five pages—the form and instructions for filling it out. Scroll and print any special instructions for your state.

Voter Registration Application
Before completing this form, check for federal, state, and local special requirements.

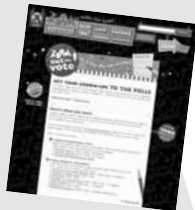
Please fill out the sections below if they apply to you.

Mail this application to the address provided for your State.

Remind your parents that their vote will affect *your* future. Make a **count-down calendar** and post it on the fridge, stick **reminders** on the bathroom mirror, and think of other ways to keep the pressure on (check out the ZOOM Web site at pbskids.org/zoom for other fun ideas). If your parents say they are too busy on election day, offer to **make dinner** or **clean the kitchen** or **take care of your baby sister**. No excuses!

Stand Up and Be Counted!

At the ZOOM Web site, you'll find everything you need to get your parents registered and take them to the polls. There is even a link to the National Registration Form. Check out the **"Get Your Grownups to the Polls"** feature on the Web site. And after you get your parents registered, make sure to enter them in our online tally. We want to show the world how kidpower can fuel the election!





Start a Voter Registration Drive

Keep the momentum going! While you're pestering your parents to register, **make sure** older siblings, relatives, neighbors, and **other adults** you know **are registered too**. Or start a **voter registration drive** in your neighborhood or at your school. See page 8 to learn how.

Volunteer for Your Candidate


Think about what **issues** really matter to you and then find out whether any **local candidates** share your beliefs. You can support them by **volunteering** at their campaign headquarters (depending on how old you are, you may need to volunteer with an older sibling, friend, or parent). The work may not be glamorous—mostly things like **stuffing envelopes, making signs, and blowing up balloons**—but it's important. You may not be able to vote for your candidate yourself yet, but you can still **help them get elected** and be part of their campaign team.

Speak Up

Let your voice be heard. **Write candidates** and **tell them what you think** about key issues. Let them know that you are an informed citizen and plan to vote as soon as you are 18. You can get the addresses of many local, state, and national politicians from the Project Vote Smart Web site at **vote-smart.org**.



Cast Your Vote!



The ZOOMers are holding an election, and you're invited! On Election Day, November 2, 2004, you can let the country know who you want to become president at **pbskids.org/zoom**! Make sure to cast your vote and be heard!

Voter Registration Drive

Before you can vote (if you're 18 or older), you have to register, or sign up, with the local election office. When you go to the polls on Election Day, the poll workers have a list of all registered voters that they check before they let anyone vote. You can help make sure everyone in your community has an opportunity to vote by starting a voter registration drive. **Here's what to do.**



1 Form a Voter Registration Team

Find **an adult** to work with you on your team and get **lots of friends** to join.

2 Pick a Date

Find out the **deadline for voter registration** in your state (see page 10). Then make sure you have plenty of time for your registration drive before registration closes.

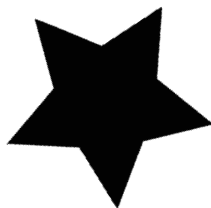
3 Get Voter Registration Forms

You can get registration applications at lots of places in your community, such as the **post office, public library, city hall, or department of motor vehicles**. You can also **download** and make copies of the National Registration Form at **fec.gov/votregis/vr.htm**. Just print the first five pages—the form and instructions for filling it out. Scroll and print any special instructions for your state. This form is accepted everywhere except New Hampshire (which accepts the National Form only as a request for their own absentee voter mail-in registration form), North Dakota (which does not have voter registration), and Wyoming (which can't accept the National Form).

Voter Registration Application
Before completing this form, check the general application and state specific instructions.

Please fill out the sections below if they apply to you.

Mail this application to the address provided for your state.





4 Review the Rules

Every state has rules about **who is eligible** to vote, what **documents** people need to show to register (generally a copy of a driver's license or utility bill), and **registration deadlines**. You can find the rules for your state and the address of where to send completed registration forms at fec.gov/votregis/vr.htm.

5 Pick a Location

Pick a **busy location** for your voter registration table. Think about where adults go: grocery stores, movies, malls, schools and afterschools to pick up kids. With your adult team member, talk to an adult in charge of these places and ask if it is okay to set up a Voter Registration Table.

6 Make Signs, Posters, Stickers, and Buttons

Visit the ZOOM Web site for all kinds of ideas and printables that you can make to **decorate your table** and **draw attention** to your registration drive. And be sure to **make a sign** that steps out the registration process and deadline.

7 Hold Your Registration Drive

Have **pens** available so people can fill out their registration forms right away. Have **envelopes** filled out with the address of your state's election office (you can find the address on the National Registration Form). Sell **stamps** to people who want them. And remind people to **mail** their completed forms when they get home.

Register to Vote!

1. Fill out a registration form.
2. Photocopy your driver's license or utility bill.
3. Mail the form and photocopy.

Deadline: (fill in here) _____

Did You Know?

Your address is connected to where you vote. If you move, you must register again.

Tell us...

Don't forget to enter how many hours you volunteered and how many adults you registered on the ZOOM Web site!





State Voter Registration Deadlines



Every state decides when to close voter registration, so it's important to find out the deadline for the general election in your state.

(Note: Election Day is Tuesday, November 2, 2004.)

State	Deadline	State	Deadline
Alabama.....	Friday, October 22	Nebraska.....	Friday, October 15
Alaska.....	Sunday, October 3	Nevada.....	Saturday, October 2 by mail or by Tuesday, October 12 in-person
Arizona.....	Monday, October 4	New Hampshire ...	Saturday, October 23
Arkansas.....	Monday, October 4	New Jersey	Monday, October 4
California.....	Monday, October 18	New Mexico.....	Tuesday, October 5
Colorado.....	Monday, October 4	New York	Friday, October 8
Connecticut.....	Tuesday, October 19	North Carolina.....	Friday, October 8
Delaware.....	Wednesday, October 13	North Dakota	North Dakota does not have voter registration.
D.C.....	Monday, October 4	Ohio.....	Monday, October 4
Florida.....	Monday, October 4	Oklahoma	Friday, October 8
Georgia.....	Monday, October 4	Oregon	Tuesday, October 12
Hawaii	Monday, October 4	Pennsylvania.....	Monday, October 4
Idaho	Friday, October 8	Rhode Island.....	Saturday, October 2
Illinois.....	Tuesday, October 5	South Carolina	Saturday, October 2
Indiana.....	Monday, October 4	South Dakota	Monday, October 18
Iowa.....	Saturday, October 23	Tennessee.....	Friday, October 1
Kansas.....	Monday, October 18	Texas	Monday, October 4
Kentucky	Monday, October 4	Utah.....	Wednesday, October 13
Louisiana.....	Monday, October 4	Vermont	Monday, October 25
Maine.....	Monday, October 18 by mail (or a voter may register in-person up to and including election day)	Virginia.....	Monday, October 4
Maryland	Tuesday, October 12	Washington	Saturday, October 2 (or delivered in-person to the local voter registration office by Monday, October 18)
Massachusetts	Wednesday, October 13	West Virginia	Wednesday, October 13
Michigan	Monday, October 4	Wisconsin	Wednesday, October 20 for towns where voter registration is required (or completed at the polling place on election day)
Minnesota	Tuesday, October 12 by mail (or a voter may register in-person on election day at polling places)	Wyoming.....	Monday, October 4
Mississippi	Friday, October 1		
Missouri.....	Wednesday, October 6		
Montana	Monday, October 4		



Elect to Learn More



Here are some Web sites and books about elections.



Web Sites

ZOOMout the Vote!

pbs.org/zoom

Find everything you need to ZOOMout the Vote!, including elections factoids, ideas for things you can do, and printables, like signs, bookmarks, and stickers. After you get your grown-ups to the polls, cast YOUR vote for president in ZOOM's online election.

The PBS Kids Democracy Project

pbs.org/democracy/kids

Visit an interactive town to learn how the government plays a role in your daily life. Step inside the voting booth and cast your vote about a campaign issue. Read a job description about the presidency and become President for the day!

Kids Voting USA

kidsvotingusa.org

Check out the Kids Voting USA program for an online "Constitution Test" and a printable guide of election activities.

Project Vote Smart

vote-smart.org

Find information about your local, state, and federal elections with candidate profiles and explanations of voting processes including Electoral College and primary elections.

Ben's Guide to U.S. Government

bensguide.gpo.gov

Learn about government branches, citizenship, and how laws are made through informative articles and games.

The Election Co-nection

exchange.co-nect.net/

Teleprojects/project/?pid=5

Take part in The Election Co-nection by creating your own candidate and by voting online in a mock presidential election.

Take Your Kids to Vote

takeyourkidstovote.org

Get your whole family involved in the election process. Ideas include playing "Debate Bingo" and escorting your parents to the polls.

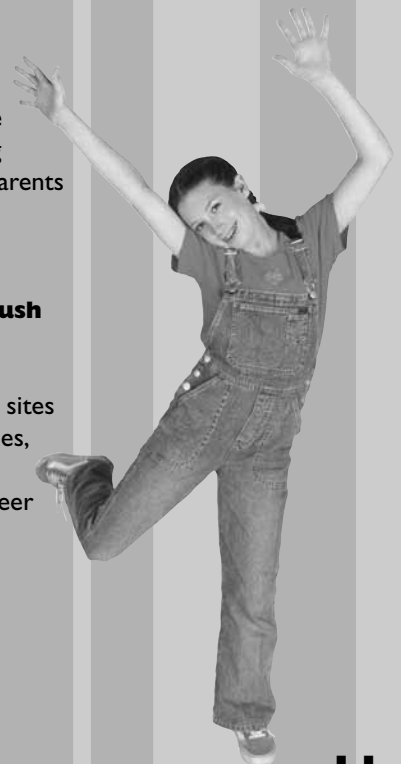
Presidential Candidate Sites

georgewbush.com - George W. Bush

johnkerry.com - John Kerry

votenader.org - Ralph Nader

Visit the presidential candidates' Web sites to learn where they stand on the issues, how they are reacting to the other candidates' claims, and how to volunteer for their campaigns.



Books Grades K-2



NONFICTION

If I Were President

Stier, Catherine. *Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman & Company, 1999.*

Spend the day as President of the United States, but beware! As fun as it all may look and sound, the President is responsible for making many complicated decisions. But that's no reason why you can't dream of becoming the President...someday!

Voting and Elections

Murphy, Patricia J. *Minneapolis, MN: Compass Point Books, 2002.*

Learn key terms that are used often during presidential elections, like *candidate* and *political party*.

FICTION

Duck for President

Cronin, Doreen. *New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2004.*

When Farmer Brown makes some unpopular decisions, Duck calls for an election and runs for office—first for farm leader, then governor, and finally president—only to find out that being in charge is harder than it looks.

Grades 3-6

NONFICTION

America Votes: How Our President Is Elected

Granfield, Linda. *Tonawanda, NY: Kids Can Press Ltd., 2003.*

In quick, fun-to-read chapters, you can read and learn everything there is to know about elections—from the history of the political button to the problem with certain types of ballots. Fun facts are sprinkled throughout.

Presidential Elections and Other Cool Facts (2nd edition)

Sobel, Syl. *Hauppauge, NY: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 2001.*

Presidential elections have rules all their own. This book explains the Electoral College and answers the question, "What if something happens to the President?" Lots of interesting presidential election rules, trivia, and facts are included.

Vote!

Christelow, Eileen. *New York: Clarion Books, 2003.*

Elmer and Sparky, the dogs of the candidate running for mayor, explain why voting is important, the history of voting rights, and about the election process.

FICTION

Class President

Hurwitz, Johanna. *New York: Morrow Junior Books, 1990.*

Fifth graders need to select their class president, and things don't turn out as they expect. The best leader is not the most popular classmate or the classmate who is most eager to win the election.

Robert Takes a Stand

Seuling, Barbara. *Chicago: Cricket Books, 2004.*

Committed to the cause of saving endangered animals, Robert learns that taking a stand can be difficult. Meanwhile, he agrees to help his friend, Paul, run for class president. Although they have some misunderstandings about the campaign process, they learn the ropes quickly enough. You will, too!



Credits

The **ZOOMout the Vote!** guide was produced by the WGBH Educational Outreach department.

Director of Educational Outreach

Karen Barss

Editorial Content Manager

Sonja Latimore

Editorial Project Director

Jennifer Lisle

Manager, Special Initiatives

Thea Sahr

Outreach Coordinator

Susan Buckey

Special Projects Assistant

Ellen Robinson

Designers

Elles Gianocostas

Tyler Kemp

Peter Lyons

Print Production

Mark Hoffman

Illustrator

Stephen Schudlich



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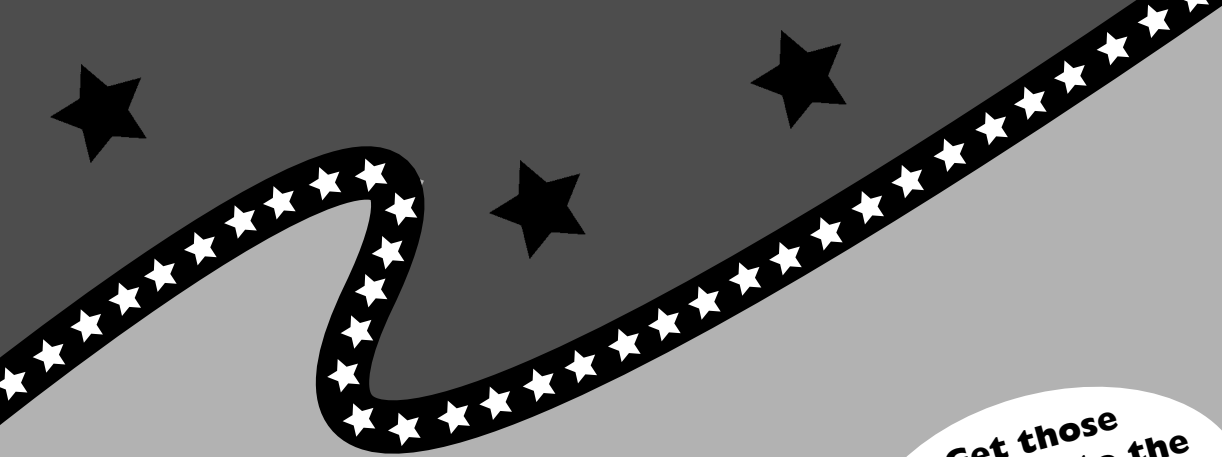
All submissions become the property of ZOOM and will be eligible for inclusion in all ZOOMmedia. This means that we can share your ideas with other ZOOMers on TV, on the Web, in print materials, and in other media and ZOOMways. So, send it to ZOOM. Thanks!



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**Get those
grownups to the
polls. Go to
pbskids.org/zoom
for ideas.**

