



Voting and Elections: SS.7.CG.2.6
**The Election and Voting
Process VIDEO SCRIPT**



1. Elections are vital to the success of our democratic constitutional republic. If you remember, colonial acts were passed by the English Parliament on behalf of King George III after Great Britain won the French and Indian War. Most of these acts were passed without allowing the colonists to participate in government or have representation since they were across an ocean, and ‘no taxation without representation’ was a rallying cry of the colonists who wanted independence.
2. You should also recall King George’s and Parliament’s response to the Boston Tea Party, specifically the Coercive Acts that suspended colonial legislatures and banned townhall meetings resulting in the colonists being under complete control of the crown.
3. We’re bringing up the past because these actions by Parliament and King George eventually were listed as grievances in the Declaration of Independence. Many of those grievances set the foundation for the processes we have today, such as elections for representatives.
4. After watching this video, you’ll be able to
 - explain how elections and voting impact citizens at the local, state and national levels.
 - explain how free and fair elections promote trust in democratic institutions and preserve the republic.

Let’s dive in!

5. The structure of government in the United States reflects the will of WE the people. Citizens are able to elect representatives at each level of government to represent their interests. These representatives are elected through a process called elections.
6. At the national level, Florida citizens are able to vote for the President, Vice President, and members of the U.S. Congress to include the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.
7. At the state level, Florida citizens are able to vote for Governor and Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Agriculture Commissioner, Chief Financial Officer, and members of the state legislature.
8. At the local level, Florida citizens are able to vote for mayor, members of city council, commissioners, school boards, county and circuit court judges, and other local officials.

9. Remember, before participating in an election, citizens need to officially register to vote. This is important to make sure that everyone who casts a vote is doing so legitimately, and the election is free and fair. Remember that states, not the federal government, establish voting and registration requirements.
10. When you register to vote, you will be asked to choose a party affiliation, or the political party of which you want to be a member although registering “No Party Affiliation”, or as an independent, are also options. How is this important, when George Washington himself said political parties were a bad thing? Let’s take a look.
11. During the election season, there are two types of elections in Florida and most other states: a primary election and a general election. There are two main types of primaries, we will discuss, but basically, a primary election is when a party decides on who their candidate will be to face the choice of the other parties in the general election, when everyone votes. For example, in 2016, Donald Trump defeated other Republicans, such as Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz, for the Republican nomination for president. In the general election, when the vote was open to everyone, he defeated the Democratic Party candidate, Senator Hillary Clinton. Clinton had previously beaten Vermont senator Bernie Sanders in the Democratic primary.
12. Keep in mind that smaller political parties, such as the Greens and the Libertarians, also have primary elections to determine their candidates who will run in the general election as well, though they don’t often get as much attention or as many votes as Republicans or Democrats.
13. So why does registering to vote as a member of a political party matter? Because in Florida, though not every other state, you cannot vote in a party’s primary election without being a member of that political party. This is known as a closed primary system. Someone who registers to vote as an independent, or No Party Affiliation (NPA), can only vote in the general election. Other states, though, have different ways to approach this and may let non-members vote in a party primary. This is known as an open primary. Remember that most voting laws and requirements are set by states because of federalism!
14. Now let’s move on to who can run for office during an election. A person running for office at the national, state, or local level is known as a candidate. Candidates belong to a political party, or a group of people who share similar political views and work together to achieve common political goals.
15. One of the most important jobs of political parties is to nominate candidates to run for office as the representatives of their party. In a primary election, parties choose a candidate who agrees with their beliefs and try to persuade voters to support their candidate in the general election.
16. Competing political parties give voters a choice among candidates and ideas. These ideas, expressed through the parties and elections at the local, state, and national level, will have a significant impact on citizens. Consider, for example, the election of 1932, an important time in our history as we were in the Great Depression, which you will learn about in American history. If Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the Democratic candidate for president, doesn’t defeat Republican President Herbert Hoover and help the Democrats win a majority in Congress, then there would likely have been no New Deal. Would we have things we take for granted today, like Social Security and protected bank deposits? Or look at the election of Republican Ronald

Reagan in 1980, who defeated Democratic President Jimmy Carter. Does the Berlin Wall in communist East Germany fall if Reagan doesn't win, build up the US military, and drive the Soviet Union to bankruptcy? You'll learn more about that in American history!

17. Elections at the state and local level can have the same impact. At the state level, for example, laws about education will be shaped by whoever won the election for governor and for the state legislature. At the local level, things like local taxes and district school policies can be shaped by elections.
18. Ultimately, as citizens, we must ensure that democratic elections in our constitutional republic are held regularly. For free and fair elections to occur, citizens need to understand how to register to vote and how elections work, and also why elections matter. A country cannot be truly democratic until its citizens have the opportunity to choose their representatives through elections that are free and fair. For an election to be free and fair, certain civil liberties, such as the freedoms of speech and peaceable assembly are required.
19. Our Founding Fathers knew that free and fair elections were important and that they mattered. For example, Sam Adams said “Let each citizen remember at the moment he is offering his vote that he is not making a present or a compliment to please an individual – or at least that he ought not so to do; but that he is executing one of the most solemn trusts in human society for which he is accountable to God and his country.” (The Boston Gazette on April 16, 1781.) In other words, every citizen should know that their vote is hugely impactful and important and should not be made lightly. And of course, we have learned about the importance of the consent of the governed, as discussed in the Declaration of Independence. Free and fair election are how we express or remove that consent.
20. Be sure to watch the other video in this module to learn about the origin of the two main political parties, the Democrats and the Republicans.