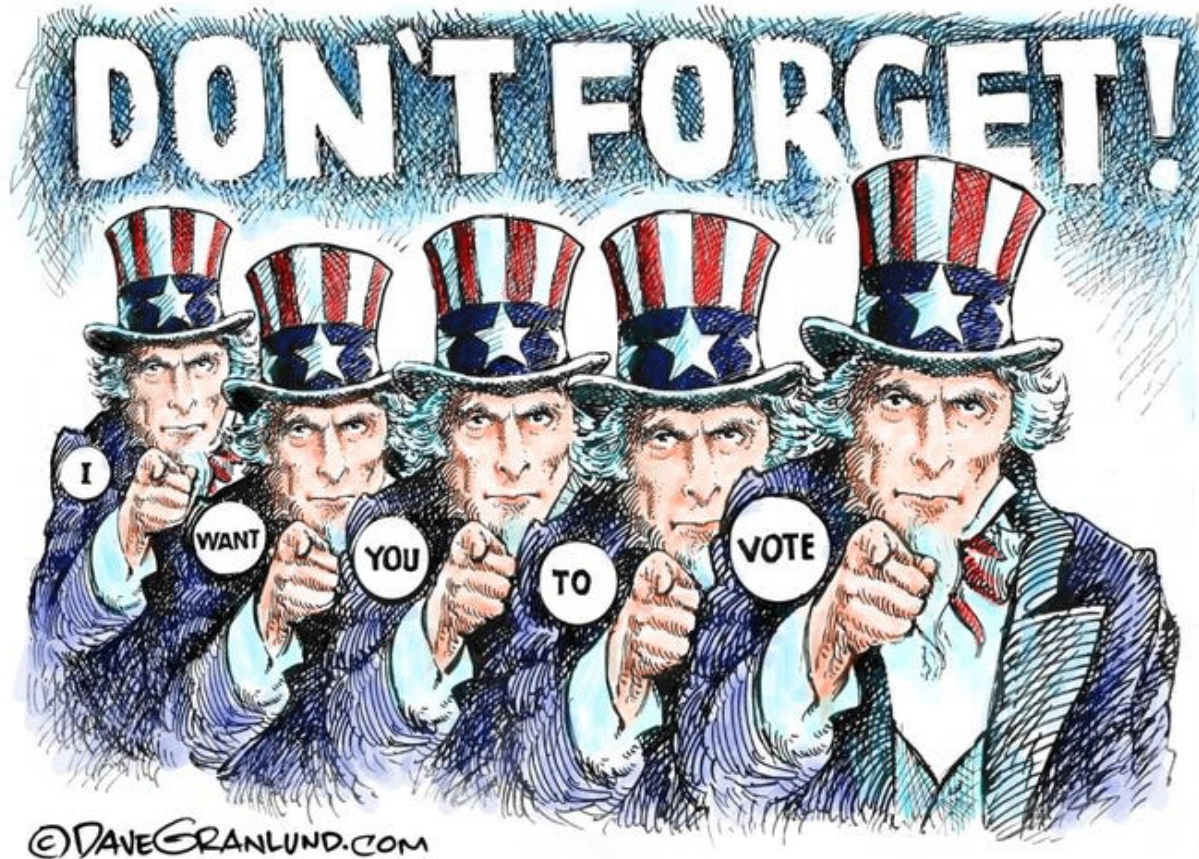


Should voting be mandatory in the United States?

Virginia and United States Government



Political Cartoon from the USA TODAY Network by Dave Gralund, retried from <https://www.usatoday.com/picture-gallery/opinion/2020/11/03/voting-election-2020-vote-presidential-election/6136752002/>

Should voting be mandatory in the United States?

Standard(s)

GOVT.5: The student will apply history and social science skills to explain the rights and responsibilities of United States citizenship by
d. participating in the political process and voting in local, state, and national elections.

Voting is a fundamental American civic right and responsibility. However, it is fully voluntary. In many United States elections, less than 50% of eligible citizens turn out to cast their votes. In this inquiry, students will consider if mandatory voting would strengthen our democracy in a meaningful way.

Featured Sources

Source A: [Voting Poster 1](#)

Source B: [Voting Poster 2](#)

Source C: [Voting Poster 3](#)

Formative Performance Tasks

1. COLLABORATE: Students work together to annotate source A, B and C to determine the reasoning that each gives for voting to be mandatory using the [Voting Poster Analysis Sheet](#).
2. DELIBERATE: Students will then work together to sort [Argument Cards](#) into “Mandatory” and “Voluntary” piles, depending on which side the argument on the card supports. Then they will rank each pile from best reason to worst.

Instructional Snapshot

To begin this task, you may decide to show publicly available data on local voter turnout in the last election. This will frame the purpose of learning and introduce the compelling question.

Students will be placed in small groups or partnered up and spend time analyzing three posters related to voter turnout. With each poster they will determine the reason the poster gives for voting to be mandatory in the United States. (COLLABORATION)

*Teacher note: none of the posters are purposefully designed to push for mandatory voting but rather act as a vessel to increase voter turnout. For this inquiry though, the framing will help with learning.

Then students will be given a set of Argument Cards. Each card has a reason either for mandatory voting, or against it. Students should work together to organize the cards into the “Mandatory” and “Voluntary” piles. Once they are done, they will rank each card in each stack from best reason to worse. (DELIBERATION)

3. PRODUCE: Students will write a claim and counterclaim to the compelling question using the information from the source analysis and their Argument Cards.

With the notes from the posters and argument cards for and against mandatory voting, students will then write a claim and counterclaim to the compelling question showing their understanding of both sides of the issue around mandatory voting. (PRODUCE)



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Featured Source:
Voting Poster 1

Source A: Miller, C. R. (ca. 1943). *Your right to vote is your opportunity to protect, over here the freedoms for which Americans fight over there* / L. R. Miller [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.19168/>



Should voting be mandatory in the United States?

Featured Source:
Voting Poster 2

Source B: Frontlash Foundation & United Federation of Teachers. (1971). *Beautify America — register and vote* [Photograph]. Library of Congress.
<https://www.loc.gov/resource/ds.13013/>

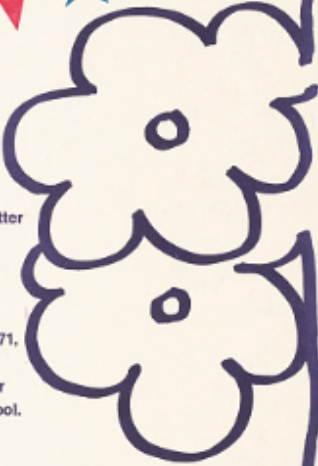


Beautify America:

**REGISTER
AND VOTE**

Your vote is needed to elect public officials who will respond to New York's needs: more jobs, better housing, better schools, and a cleaner city.

If you will be eighteen years old by November 3, 1971, a new law says you can now register to vote. Watch for an announcement of time and place for registration in your community, work place, or school.



The Youth Vote Project

(sponsored by Frontlash-'72, and the United Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO)



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Featured Source:
Voting Poster 3

Source C: A. Philip Randolph Educational Fund (Sponsor/Advertiser). (between 1965–1980). *Somebody paid the price for your right: Register/vote* [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2016648128/>



Voting Poster Analysis

Poster 1:

What reason for mandatory voting is this poster presenting?

What was the context of the world and events when this poster was created?

Does this reason for mandatory voting still stand today?

Poster 2:

What reason for mandatory voting is this poster presenting?

What was the context of the world and events when this poster was created?

Does this reason for mandatory voting still stand today?

Poster 3:

What reason for mandatory voting is this poster presenting?

What was the context of the world and events when this poster was created?

Does this reason for mandatory voting still stand today?

Argument Cards

Mandatory voting makes election results more representative because everyone’s voice is counted.	When voting is required, candidates have to speak to all voters, not just the most motivated or extreme ones.
Forcing people to vote violates individual freedoms and turns a right into an obligation.	Mandatory voting treats participation like jury duty, a basic responsibility that keeps democracy functioning.
Mandatory voting can lead to random or uninformed choices that do not improve the quality of decisions.	Improving civic education and access to the polls is better than forcing people to participate against their will.
Countries with mandatory voting often have higher turnouts, which can increase public trust in the results.	In a free society, citizens should be able to protest or express dissatisfaction by choosing not to vote.
Fining or punishing people for not voting unfairly harms those that are busy or face other barriers on Election Day.	If more people vote, it becomes harder for small, organized groups to dominate election outcomes.

Argument stems created from:

Kuba, O., & Stejskal, J. (2021). *Economic and political consequences of the compulsory voting in public parliamentary elections: Czech case study*. *Economies*, 9(2), 63.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/economies9020063>

Singh, S. P. (2024, February 20). *Compulsory voting* [Primer]. Center for Effective Government, University of Chicago. <https://effectivegov.uchicago.edu/primers/compulsory-voting>

Source List

A. Philip Randolph Educational Fund (Sponsor/Advertiser). (between 1965–1980). *Somebody paid the price for your right: Register/vote* [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2016648128/>

Frontlash Foundation & United Federation of Teachers. (1971). *Beautify America — register and vote* [Photograph]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/ds.13013/>

Kuba, O., & Stejskal, J. (2021). *Economic and political consequences of the compulsory voting in public parliamentary elections: Czech case study*. *Economies*, 9(2), 63. <https://doi.org/10.3390/economies9020063>

Miller, C. R. (ca. 1943). *Your right to vote is your opportunity to protect, over here the freedoms for which Americans fight over there* / L. R. Miller [Photograph]. Library of Congress.

Singh, S. P. (2024, February 20). *Compulsory voting* [Primer]. Center for Effective Government, University of Chicago. <https://effectivegov.uchicago.edu/primers/compulsory-voting>

USA Today. (2020, November 3). *Voting election 2020: Vote presidential election* [Photo gallery]. *USA Today*. <https://www.usatoday.com/picture-gallery/opinion/2020/11/03/voting-election-2020-vote-presidential-election/6136752002/>