



**CLASSROOM LAW PROJECT
PRESENTS**

**ELECTION 2020
WHY VOTING MATTERS**

UNIT 5

**Class Townhall Meeting on
Why Voting Matters**

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Objectives

Students will

- Culminate their understandings of the 2020 Election with an active simulation of a townhall
- Demonstrate what they've learned about election issues in 2020
- Argue for a position based on evidence and understanding

Included in this Unit:

- How to do a townhall meeting in the classroom and digitally
- Handout - An exercise in Persuasive Writing to practice how to write a persuasive testimony
- Handout - An outline for drafting testimony
- Handout - A participation form students can use to form questions and take notes
- Handout - Reflection on the Townhall
- Handout – Post-Election Reflection

Why a Townhall Meeting?

A townhall meeting is a meeting of a group of people around a topic that may provoke many different points of view. The townhall format allows all students to have a voice and to contribute to the conversation by demonstrating their understanding of the topic. Structured townhall meetings can give all participants the opportunity to express themselves respectfully, to learn from each other, and discuss their opinions in an open, civil environment. Even when done remotely via digital connection, a townhall can still be an engaging and dynamic way for students to show their mastery.

In this townhall format, students work together to craft testimony in response to questions provided below. They make an initial 1-2-minute statement using evidence they have gained through the lessons in these elections units. They may get one or two questions from the participants of the townhall. The goal is to inform and share with each other about what they have learned so everyone leaves understanding even more of the topic.

You can have students work as teams and testify as a group, or you can have individual students testify independently.

The questions for the hearing are the same as in the pre- and post- unit survey for this collection of lessons. This allows you to have continuity through the lessons and to combine your culminating activity with independent thinking and writing.

Hearing Questions:

1. What advice would you give presidential candidates this year?
2. What advice would you give Oregon voters this year?
3. Explain in your own words why voting in the November 2020 presidential election matters.
4. After learning about election season issues, I am still wondering (because):

The structure of this townhall includes persuasive writing techniques, how to ask quality questions, and follow up reflection on the process itself and final ideas and opinions on the topic.

Steps for the Townhall on Why Voting Matters – Classroom Version:

1. After students experience lessons from this collection of resources about the 2020 Election and Why Voting Matters, divide them into groups of 2-4 students (depending on the size of your class).
2. **Optional:** Rhetoric exercise in persuasive writing. This connects to preparing for their testimony because their testimony will be giving advice and they want to be persuasive.
3. **Handout:** Testimony Outline (you can give as long as you think helpful for this task). Ask each group to write a 1-2 minute testimony that responds to the following questions (you can use as many or few of the questions or use your own):
 - What advice would you give presidential candidates this year?
 - What advice would you give Oregon voters this year and why?
 - Explain in your own words why voting in the November 2020 presidential election matters.
 - After learning about election season issues, I am still wondering (because):
4. Set your classroom up as a circle and ask students to sit with their groups and have their testimony ready
5. Describe to students that a townhall meeting is when a community comes together to hear each other's perspectives and consider what is best for the community.
6. Ask the students to establish norms for their townhall meeting that everyone agrees upon. These might include "everyone listens to the speaker," "questions are not personal," "respect different viewpoints," etc.
7. **Handout:** Participation Form. Give each group a chance to give their testimony and ask the other students to use their response handout to take notes and write questions. Give about 2-3 minutes for questions to the group that engages in conversation around their testimony.
8. After all the groups have had a chance to give their testimony and answer question, give time for students to follow up, using their notes and citing what they learned in these lessons with comments or questions.
9. Debrief: Ask students to discuss how the townhall conversation went, what they thought of the process, and how they think it added to their understanding.
10. Conclusion: a way to conclude the conversation around these questions is to ask students to consider whether the adults in their lives might take their advice and/or how might they share their advice outside their classroom. This can open up a further inquiry action piece for students to demonstrate their mastery and share their understanding.
11. **Handout:** Reflection. When the townhall meeting and any follow up activities are concluded, ask students to reflect on the process of the townhall itself and to give some final thoughts on the election prior to Election day.

Steps for the Townhall on Why Voting Matters – Digital Version:

1. After students experience lessons from this collection of resources about the 2020 Election and Why Voting Matters, divide them into groups of 2-4 students (depending on the size of your class).
2. **Optional:** Rhetoric exercise in persuasive writing. This connects to preparing for their testimony because their testimony will be giving advice and they want to be persuasive.
3. **Handout / Digital Graphic Organizer:** Testimony Outline (you can give as long as you think helpful for this task). This step can be done in breakout rooms during synchronous time or the students can work together offline in asynchronous time. Ask each group to write a 1-2 minute testimony in a final paragraph format that responds to the following questions (you can use as many or few of the questions or use your own):
 - What advice would you give presidential candidates this year?
 - What advice would you give Oregon voters this year and why?
 - Explain in your own words why voting in the November 2020 presidential election matters.
 - After learning about election season issues, I am still wondering (because):
4. At the class you want to do the townhall, ask students to come to class (on whatever digital platform you use) ready to testify. Digital townhalls work really well if students use “speaker view” where applicable so that whomever is presenting testimony is visible to everyone.
5. Describe to students that a townhall meeting is when a community comes together to hear each other’s perspectives and consider what is best for the community.
6. Ask the students to establish norms for their townhall meeting that everyone agrees upon. These might include “everyone listens to the speaker,” “questions are not personal,” “respect different viewpoints,” etc. For digital norms you may want to designate someone to monitor the chat and use that venue for students to put their questions as a way to collect questions for conversation after testimonies are given.
7. **Handout / Digital Form:** Participation Form. Give each group a chance to give their testimony and ask the other students to use their response handout to take notes and write questions. Give about 2-3 minutes for questions to the group that engages in conversation around their testimony.
8. After all the groups have had a chance to give their testimony and answer question, give time for students to follow up, using their notes and citing what they learned in these lessons with comments or questions.
9. Debrief: Ask students to discuss how the townhall conversation went, what they thought of the process, and how they think it added to their understanding.
10. Conclusion: a way to conclude the conversation around these questions is to ask students to consider whether the adults in their lives might take their advice and/or how might they share their advice outside their classroom. This can open up a further inquiry action piece for students to demonstrate their mastery and share their understanding.
11. **Digital Form:** Reflection. When the townhall meeting and any follow up activities are concluded, ask students to reflect on the process of the townhall itself and to give some final thoughts on the election prior to Election day.

Post - Election Survey: Once the election occurs, you can use our Survey Handout or Digital Form to ask students to evaluate their thoughts about the election outcomes and connect them to what they learned.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Persuasive Speaking / Rhetoric

When giving testimony, using your best persuasive skills to present your ideas and answer questions from the participants is an important part of your role. Below are the 3 main parts of rhetoric you might use to persuade someone to your way of thinking on a topic. Consider each one, and then try them out in brief persuasive sentences.

Scenario: You must convince a person hesitant to vote this year that voting matters. How would you do that?

Logos: appealing to the *logic* of your listener. You might cite facts or statistics, or authorities to appeal to the *reason* of your listener to convince them of your view.

1. Write a **Logos** argument for the above scenario:

Ethos: making an *ethical* appeal to your listener based on your *good character* or reliability. You must convince the listener that you are fair, reliable, and understand what you are talking about.

2. Write an **Ethos** argument for the above scenario:

Pathos: appealing *emotionally* to your listener. You persuade by appealing to the emotions of your audience, calling on personal experiences, sympathetic stories, drawing compassion and empathy from your listener.

3. Write a **Pathos** argument for the above scenario:

Testimony Outline

Testimony Group Names:

Top 3 Qualities or Skills we believe a good president should have:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Our best advice for the candidates:

Oregonians have many issues on their ballot this year; our top 2-3 pieces of advice for Oregonians:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

3 Reasons why voting this year matters:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

We still wonder about:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Townhall Participation Review

Group Names	Notes on testimony	2-3 Questions for the Group
1 st Testimony		
2 nd Testimony		
3 rd Testimony		
4 th Testimony		
5 th Testimony		

6th Testimony		
7th Testimony		
8th Testimony		

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Townhall Meeting Reflection

How I assisted my team in preparing and presenting testimony and answering questions:

The top three (3) ideas that were persuasive to me during the townhall and why:

Circle one:

I think the townhall meeting
becauseT:

Was / was not

a good way to discuss the issues of the 2020 Election

How I think voter participation and the results of the election will turn out for 2020:

Next time I'd like to have a townhall discussion about:

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Post-Election Reflection

How I thought voter participation and the results of the election will turn out for 2020:

How the actual voter participation and results compared to my predictions:

The Oregon results were interesting because:

The most interesting or important story of Election Day for me was:

Now that Election Day is over, I think Americans will.....

Questions I still have now that Election Day is over: