

# Turning Students On and Out to Vote

## Helpful Websites as Election Day Draws Near

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As Election Day comes closer, teachers will have no trouble finding election-related information on the sites of any of the major national news programs. Our readers may also be interested in some other sites with material that is specialized, timely, and appealing to students.

### Turnout

Both of the following sites are specifically oriented to programs that teach students the importance of turning out to vote. Each offers substantive election-related curriculum to teachers:

KidsVoting USA ([www.kidsvotingusa.org](http://www.kidsvotingusa.org)) promotes voting experiences for students that replicate adult voting. Some students accompany their parents to official polling sites and vote in special ballot boxes, while others vote at school or online.

[www.nationalmockelection.com](http://www.nationalmockelection.com) is the website of the National Student-Parent Mock Election, which will take place this year on October 30. More than 4 million students, teachers, and parents participated in the Mock Election of 2004.

The following two sites are youth-oriented and designed to engage young people.

[www.rockthevote.com](http://www.rockthevote.com) aims to turn out the youth vote; it provides information on how, where, and when to vote, and offers programs for voter turnout.

[www.declareyourself.com](http://www.declareyourself.com) is dedicated to encouraging every eligible 18-year-old to vote, and offers information on deadlines and election issues, as well as a Frequently Asked Questions section.

### The Campaigns

The Federal Election Commission website at

[www.fec.gov](http://www.fec.gov) has information on elections, voter turnout and campaign finance.

Project Vote Smart, at [www.votesmart.org](http://www.votesmart.org), is a nonpartisan resource that provides information on the voting records, positions, and interest group ratings of elected officials, state ballot measures in the upcoming elections, and links to information on campaign finances.

[www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org) is the website of the Center for Responsive Politics, a non-partisan, non-profit organization that tracks financial contributions to politicians. You can find out which companies and industries contribute most to your senator or representative, or compare the amounts that different industries give to Democrats and Republicans.

[www.presidentsusa.net/campaigns.html](http://www.presidentsusa.net/campaigns.html) has historical information on campaigns and results in past elections; its listing of campaign slogans from presidential elections from 1840 to 2004 will interest classes.

### Predictions

An up-to-date record of nationwide presidential election polls can be found at [www.pollingreport.com](http://www.pollingreport.com), which is also an excellent archive of opinion polls on all important issues.

University of Virginia professor Larry Sabato, a well-known commentator on politics and election campaigns, offers regular analyses of political contests and predictions of trends in the popular and electoral votes on his

Crystal Ball site at [www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/](http://www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/)

Some economists place their faith in predictions based on a market system in which participants “bid” on the chances of different candidates. The Rasmussen market predictions at [markets.rasmussenreports.com/](http://markets.rasmussenreports.com/) will interest those who want to explore that perspective.

As the election draws near, classes will want to evaluate the likely outcome in the Electoral College and not just review the nationwide opinion polls. Some sites offering regular Electoral College predictions are:

[www.pbs.org/newshour/vote2008/primaries/states/](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/vote2008/primaries/states/)  
<http://elections.nytimes.com/2008/president/whos-ahead/key-states/map.html>  
[www.fivethirtyeight.com](http://www.fivethirtyeight.com)  
[www.electoral-vote.com/](http://www.electoral-vote.com/)  
[www.livingroomcandidate.org/](http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/)

### History of the Presidency

As mentioned above, [www.presidentsusa.net](http://www.presidentsusa.net), offers a great deal of information about past presidents and their administrations.

Presidential portraits and photos and other information can be found at [www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents](http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents)

[www.ustreas.gov/education/faq/coins/portraits.html](http://www.ustreas.gov/education/faq/coins/portraits.html) has details on presidents whose portraits appear on coins. The Department of the Treasury website has the same information for presidents whose images appear on bills, at [www.ustreas.gov/education/faq/currency/portraits.html](http://www.ustreas.gov/education/faq/currency/portraits.html) 