Voting on a Class Project or Issue
Lesson Plan

Subject Areas: Social Studies and Math

Grade Levels: The lesson can be adapted for grades 4–12 (ages 9–18).

Time: At least one 50-minute class period; time outside of class as necessary

Lesson Objectives:
Students will:
• Develop a better understanding of the individual responsibilities in a democracy.
• Develop a better understanding of civic life and the importance of voting.
• Analyze data and make conclusions based on dynamic, visual plots (graphs).
• Explain their findings in writing and visual slide shows.

Standards:
National Council for the Social Studies Standards1:
The Ten Themes of Social Studies
Theme 10: Civic Ideals and Practices
• Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ideals, principles, and practices of citizenship in a democratic republic.

Theme 6: Power, Authority, and Governance
• Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create, interact with, and change structures of power, authority, and governance.

Common Core State Standards2:
Common Core State Standards for Mathematics:
Mathematical Practices
• Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
• Use appropriate tools strategically.

Measurement and Data
• Represent and interpret data.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing:
Standard 6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
Overview:
Participation in local, state, and national elections is at the core of a democratic system. When students are introduced to the democratic process and take part in decisions that affect them, they are more likely to vote in local, state, and national elections when they become eligible. In the same way, students who participate in community service gain an appreciation of how their actions can have a positive impact on civic life and are more likely to become involved as adults.

In this lesson, students will use the e-Survey tool in InspireData to vote for a school service project. After students have voted, they will use InspireData to analyze and write about the results. The same process can be used to conduct any type of voting, such as voting on class issues or in school or mock elections, as discussed in the Adaptations/Extensions section at the end of this lesson.

Preparation:
- This lesson requires the InspireData® software application published by Inspiration Software, Inc. You can download a 30-day trial at http://www.inspiration.com/InspireData.
Lesson:

1. Explain to students that voting ensures that citizens have a voice in government decisions and policies. Tell students that they will use the democratic process to select and plan a school service project, employing InspireData to vote and analyze the results.

2. Divide the class into pairs or as many small groups as there are computers available. Tell students they will begin by reviewing an example of a simple database used to plan and vote on a school service project.


4. If the classroom or computer lab setup allows, project the database with a data projector and/or interactive whiteboard and have the students open it on their computers. Ask students to look at the fields in the sample database and explain what they mean. Point out that when students click on a vote, a down arrow appears. Clicking on the arrow reveals the list of choices for each field.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Fundraising</th>
<th>How Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>animal shelter</td>
<td>car wash</td>
<td>once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>park cleanup</td>
<td>car wash</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>food drive</td>
<td>candy sale</td>
<td>weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>food drive</td>
<td>pledges</td>
<td>once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>recycling</td>
<td>dance</td>
<td>once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>animal shelter</td>
<td>candy sale</td>
<td>weekly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Demonstrate how to switch to **Plot View** and direct students to use the **Stack plot** tool. Click **X Axis** to select a category of data such as Service Type. Which type of project received the most votes? Students may also use the **Pie plot** tool to analyze the results. Students can get an exact vote count by clicking the **Operation** button on the **Toolbar** and choosing **Count**.

![Diagram of a pie chart showing votes for different service types.](image)

6. Repeat the process for one or two of the other variables, and demonstrate how students can analyze the results in the **Notes** area and then capture slides (open the **Slide Sorter** and use the **Capture Slide** button). Plots that show more than one variable, such as one that shows the preferred service type with the number of times students would volunteer, can also be created. Be sure to point out where the voting was close because a key objective of the lesson is to help students understand the importance of voting.

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7. Have students click on the Database Template tab and edit the database to reflect the students’ different service project ideas other than those listed. This can be done by selecting a field and modifying the Validation settings to create a custom list. Students can also add other fields to the database, such as one to select the day of the week that would be most convenient to volunteer, or one for the day that would be least convenient.

8. To create an e-Survey, direct students to go to the Table menu and select Edit Survey. Explain that students can use the e-Survey tool to create custom questions for their ballot if desired. Consider creating the ballot as a whole-class activity, perhaps rotating tasks among students, so they will have one common ballot with which to vote.

9. Direct students to select the Table menu > Publish e-Survey... to conduct the voting. Explain that with this method students on any computer connected to the Internet can vote.
10. When everyone has had the opportunity to vote, the database can be downloaded and opened from the **InspireData Starter** screen by clicking the **e-Survey** button.

![InspireData Starter](image)

11. Direct students to analyze the data and create slide shows with plots that explain the results. They should explore questions such as:

- What percentage of the class preferred the individual project ideas?
- What day was the most convenient for class members to volunteer?
- Were there any unexpected results?
- Was the vote close for any of the variables?
- How many votes would have changed the result?
- How might the results have been affected if some students chose not to vote?
- When people choose not to vote in national, state, and local elections, how might it impact the outcome?

12. Have students create at least six slides that include their written analyses. For each plot, direct students to do the following:

- Add a title (**Plot** menu>**Plot Title**...).
- Add statistics such as count and percent as appropriate.
- Record an analysis that includes their answers to the questions and reflections in the **Notes** area.
- Capture a slide.
13. If time allows, have students volunteer to present their slide shows to the class. If only one or a small number of students had voting differently, would it have changed the results? Why is it important to participate in the democratic process and vote?

14. Finish planning your class project and try to choose a date to start it right away while the students are most enthusiastic about it.
Adaptations/Extensions:

- Students may use InspireData to develop surveys that allow them to vote in other types of elections, such as for a school or class mascot, a desired field trip location, or their favorite historical figure(s).
- Refer students to the “Learn to Use” handouts for help with plotting and analysis (Help>Documentation>Handouts). You may want to print one or more sets of handouts to make them available for students.
- For younger students, consider analyzing more of the data as a whole class, at least until students understand the process. The entire lesson could also be conducted as a class.
- Additional fields, such as numerical fields, could be added to the database to create many more options for plotting and analysis, for example, a field to track number of hours willing to volunteer each week, or interest in service work on a scale from 1–10.
- Students may use Inspiration® or Kidspiration® to diagram the history of voting rights to help them develop a greater appreciation of the right to vote.