

## *Voter Education 2016*

### **Five lessons on Elections and Voting For English Language Learners, Adult Basic Education and Citizenship Classes**

These five lessons are based on stories for students to read, using a ‘real-life’ approach to learning. Follow Hawa, Fatima, Carlos, William, Nhong, Mai and Tran as they register to vote, learn about the candidates and issues, make choices, and finally cast their vote in the 2016 election.

Students develop skills in reading, writing, speaking and critical thinking while they learn about a significant facet of life in the United States – voting and elections. All lessons include an original story, related vocabulary, a worksheet with questions for discussion, an activity, and relevant information for the instructor. Links are provided to websites for more information on the election process and candidate information. Registration forms and absentee ballots are included or may be downloaded; websites are included.

- Lesson 1      Registering to vote
- Lesson 2      Learning about levels of government
- Lesson 3      Learning about the candidates and the issues
- Lesson 4      Making a choice
- Lesson 5      Casting a vote

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**VOTE 2016**

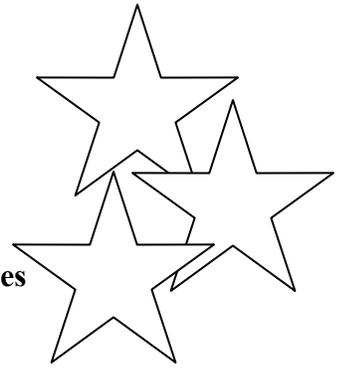
*This November, Minnesotans will go to the polls to elect the next President, U.S. Representatives, state House and Senate members, and many local and county offices. Have your say in shaping the future of Minnesota and the nation!*

August	September	October	November
<b>9</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Primary Election</b> Get out and vote!	<b>Vote Absentee</b> Vote by mail or in person from Sept. 23 through Nov. 7.	<b>Register to Vote</b> Register in advance by October 18 to save time on Election Day.	<b>Election Day!</b> Get out and vote!

Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State • [mnvotes.org](http://mnvotes.org)

## ***Voter Education***

### **Lessons on Elections and Voting in Minnesota For English Language Learners, ABE and Citizenship Classes**



Thousands of students who are taking English, Adult Basic Education or Citizenship classes are, or will be, eligible to vote in the upcoming elections. Even if students are not eligible to vote, they can encourage and coach others on the voting process. They also have values and opinions that they can express to friends or family who are eligible voters.

There are qualifications to be a voter in Minnesota:

- You are a citizen of the USA
- You are 18 years of age or older
- You have resided in Minnesota for a minimum of 20 days
- Any felony conviction record has been dismissed

To become a citizen, foreign residents study and pass a rigorous examination. Then they have the opportunity to vote in elections, and you, as a teacher, have the opportunity to help their participation by preparing them to vote. The basic message of these lessons is the importance of voting as one way to be involved in one's community and country. Voting is a right of all citizens, and it is the responsibility of all citizens and residents to be informed about the issues and candidates prior to voting.

**Voter Education for English Language, ABE and Citizenship Classes** is a primer on the basics of voting. It is written for students with intermediate through advanced English language proficiency. These lessons are relevant for all students, even if some students in the class are not citizens. They can still learn about the issues, have opinions about candidates, and talk to others about their views.

- **Lesson 1 *Registering to Vote*** is about eligibility and voter registration. A registration form in English is included in the lesson, with instructions for downloading the form in ten other languages. Teachers are encouraged to actually register eligible voters in class, up until 20 days before the election. Otherwise, students can fill out the registration form in class, and take it with them when they vote.
- **Lesson 2 *Learning about Levels of Government*** uses a map to teach about boundaries for federal, state, and local jurisdictions. Students explore what levels of government handle various issues, such as foreign policy and immigration.
- **Lesson 3 *Learning about Candidates and Issues*** is how to become informed about the candidates. The subject of political issues is introduced, to help students discern what

positions candidates support. In this case, the issue is obtaining a Minnesota Driver's License.

- **Lesson 4 *Making a Choice*** continues the quest for information in deciding how to vote. Students learn how to find information about candidates, the political parties and their platforms, so they can make their own decisions.
- **Lesson 5 *Election Day*** focuses on procedures for voting, both absentee and going to the polls. Included is a sample polling place diagram and an application for an absentee ballot. Students end the lesson series when they make a sticker to wear that says "I Will Vote!" or "I will encourage others to vote!"

Information for the five lessons is from the Minnesota Secretary of State's Office and the League of Women Voters. Recommended sources for you and your students:

- *Voter's Guide*, published by the StarTribune; available at public libraries and other locations, free of charge; StarTribune newspaper voter's guide: [www.startribune.org](http://www.startribune.org)
- Secretary of State's Office: [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us). Go to Elections and Voting. This official site has forms for voter registration and absentee voting, a guide to voting, links to candidates' websites, and a 15 minute, on-line video, "Voting in Minnesota: What You Can Expect".
- League of Women Voters of Minnesota *Voter Guide*: statewide nonpartisan publication that includes, in one issue, all the candidates for statewide offices for all the major and registered minor parties; photos and biographies of candidates; and responses to questions by candidates. [www.lwvmn.org](http://www.lwvmn.org)

Thanks to Minnesota Literacy Council for encouragement and distribution of this curriculum.



## Lesson 1 *Registering to Vote*

Any person can provide registration cards and assistance to help register new voters, and the ESL, ABE and Citizenship classrooms are ideal places to do voter registration. When new voters take this first step of filling out the registration form, they are more likely to actually cast their vote on the day of the election or vote absentee before election day. All teachers have a good opportunity to pre-register eligible voters. You can keep a list of names and phone numbers of the people you register to call and remind to vote the day before the election.

Eligibility requirements in Minnesota are:

- 18 years of age or older
- A citizen of the United States
- Have lived in Minnesota for at least 20 days before the election
- Have any felony conviction record dismissed

Pre-registration is accepted up to 20 days prior to an election. Voters who register by this deadline will receive a postcard in the mail with information about their polling location. Eligible voters who have not pre-registered can register at their polling place on the day of the election. In order to vote, residents need a Minnesota driver's license or a Minnesota ID.

*Note: U.S. citizens may not be deprived of the right to vote because they cannot read, write or speak English.*

**Teacher preparation:** Make copies of the following story, questions and voter registration form for all students. You also may get a supply of voter registration cards, available in English, Hmong, Spanish, Somali, Vietnamese, Lao, Khmer, Chinese, Oromo Amharic and Russian, at one of the following locations:

- County Government Center
- Local Library
- City Hall
- Secretary of State's Office on-line [www.sos.state.mn.us/election/register.html](http://www.sos.state.mn.us/election/register.html)

**Essential vocabulary:**

Voter registration, pre-registration  
Eligibility  
Polling place  
Secretary of State

**Lesson Preparation:** Write the Minnesota voter eligibility requirements on the board or Power Point for all students to see.

**Story:** Hand out a copy of the story and questions to each student.

1. Read story aloud while students follow along.
2. Ask if there are words or phrases students don't understand and then explain and clarify as you go along. Teachers may need to explain unfamiliar vocabulary or concepts before reading the story.
3. Give students time to go over the story silently and underline anything they don't understand or want explained. Work with the words or phrases students underlined, and help them understand the concepts in the story.
4. Read the story aloud again, asking students to take turns reading.

**Worksheet Questions:** Have students work in pairs to write answers to questions on the worksheet, using complete sentences. Ask for volunteers to write answers on the board. Use questions as a catalyst for discussion.

**Activity:** Read aloud the statement of eligibility on the Minnesota Voter Registration Card. Explain anything students don't understand. Give non-registered eligible students the option to complete the pre-registration form. Other students can use the form to interview a partner and fill in the card for the partner (without their signature). Mail in only those forms that have certified eligibility and a signature.

If computers are available to students, go to [sos.state.mn.us/elections](https://sos.state.mn.us/elections). Explore the information that is available.

## **Story: *Hawa Registers to Vote***

Hawa is 34 years old. She became a United States citizen in 2008 but she has never voted. She didn't register to vote when she became a citizen. Now, there is going to be an election, and Hawa wants to vote.

Hawa asks her teacher, John, "What do I need to do to vote?"

John says, "First you need to register. You can register to vote before the election. This is called pre-registration. That puts you on the list of voters so it will be easier when you vote. You can also register on election day at your polling place."

"What is a polling place?" asks Hawa.

"A polling place is the room where you vote. Polling places also are called 'polls,'" says John. "Polls may be in schools, apartment buildings, churches and community buildings. Your polling place is in your neighborhood. The Secretary of State's Office can give directions to your polling place. Their web site is [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us)."

"I want to register before the election. I want to pre-register," says Hawa.

"I will bring a registration card to the next class and you can pre-register," John answers. "Do you want the card in English or Somali? They also are available in Hmong, Spanish, Vietnamese, Lao, Khmer, Chinese, Oromo, Amharic and Russian."

"Please get me a card in English, so I can practice my English," says Hawa. "Will you help me if I don't understand the instructions?"

John gets a voter registration card in English at the public library. It is free. He could also get voter registration cards on-line at [sos.state.mn.us/elections](http://sos.state.mn.us/elections). He brings it to class the next day. He also gets a card in Somali for Hawa to give to her husband. They need to pre-register 20 days before the election.

Hawa completes the card in English, using a pen, not a pencil. It is very easy. Now she needs to find out where to mail the voter registration. It should be sent to the voter registration office in her county. She finds the address on-line at [sos.state.mn.us/elections](http://sos.state.mn.us/elections).

On her way home, Hawa gets a postage stamp and mails her voter registration. When she gets home, she gives the other registration card to her husband. Now she can help him fill it out. She can be his teacher.

### **Questions: *Hawa Registers to Vote***

1. What did Hawa need to do before she could vote?
2. What are the eligibility requirements for voting in Minnesota? Is Hawa eligible to vote? Are you eligible to vote?
3. Voter registration cards are available in English. What are the other languages used for voter registration cards?
4. How do you find out where to send your voter registration card?
5. How do you find out where to vote?
6. Where does John get registration cards? Where else can you get a voter registration card?
7. Can Hawa help her husband register? Can you help other people register?

# Minnesota Voter Registration Application

Complete lines 1 through 8. Please print clearly.

## Personal Information & Qualifications

<b>1.</b> Are you a U.S. citizen? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	IP _____ election office use only M _____ AB _____
<b>2.</b> Will you be at least 18 on or before the next election? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If you mark "NO" to either of these questions, DO NOT complete this form.	
<b>3.</b> last name or surname _____ first name _____ middle name _____ suffix _____ <small>(Jr., Sr., 3, III)</small>	
<b>4.</b> address where you live (residence) _____ apt. number _____ city _____ zip code _____	
<b>5.</b> if mail cannot be delivered to the address above, provide P.O. Box _____ city _____ zip code _____	
<b>6.</b> date of birth (not today's date) _____ - _____ - 19____	school district (if known) _____
county where you live _____	
phone number _____ - _____ - _____	email address _____
<b>7.</b> mark one box and provide the number that applies to you: <input type="checkbox"/> I have a MN-issued driver's license or MN ID card number. <input type="checkbox"/> I do not have a MN-issued driver's license or MN ID card. The last four digits of my Social Security Number are: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> I do not have a MN-issued driver's license, a MN-issued ID card, or a Social Security Number.	

## Registration Updates - Are you currently registered under a different name or address?

previous last name _____	previous first name _____	previous middle name _____
previous address where you were last registered _____ city _____ state _____ zip code _____		

## Read And Sign Only If All Parts Apply To You.

<b>8.</b>	I certify that I: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• will be at least 18 years old on election day;</li> <li>• am a citizen of the United States;</li> <li>• will have resided in Minnesota for 20 days immediately preceding election day;</li> <li>• maintain residence at the address given on the registration form;</li> <li>• am not under court-ordered guardianship in which the court order revokes my right to vote;</li> <li>• have not been found by a court to be legally incompetent to vote;</li> <li>• have the right to vote because, if I have been convicted of a felony, my felony sentence has expired (been completed) or I have been discharged from my sentence; and</li> <li>• have read and understand this statement, that giving false information is a felony punishable by not more than 5 years imprisonment or a fine of not more than \$10,000, or both.</li> </ul> sign here <b>X</b> _____ date: _____ - _____ - 20____
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### Election Judge Official Use Only

W _____ P _____ SD _____ Initials _____	<b>ID With Current Address</b> ID Number: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> MN Drivers License, Learners Permit, MN ID Card, or Receipt <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal ID	<b>Photo ID With Utility Bill or Fee Statement Student Fee Statement or Utility Bill</b> (type) _____ ID Number: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> MN Drivers License <input type="checkbox"/> MN ID Card <input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Passport <input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Military ID <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal ID <input type="checkbox"/> Student ID	<b>Other</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Vouched For <input type="checkbox"/> Late Notice <input type="checkbox"/> Previous Registration in Same Precinct <input type="checkbox"/> Student ID With College List ID Number: _____
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OFFICIAL ELECTION MAIL

RETURN TO:  
Secretary of State  
60 Empire Drive  
Suite 100  
St Paul, MN 55103

POST  
OFFICE  
WILL NOT  
DELIVER  
WITHOUT  
FIRST CLASS  
POSTAGE



For more information on voting, registering to vote, finding your polling place, state election results, campaign information, or conducting elections, go to the Minnesota Secretary of State web site at [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us) or call toll free 1-877-600-VOTE (1-877-600-8683). For a TTY/TTD (deaf and hard of hearing) communication, contact the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529 or 711

**Deadline Information**

You may pre-register to vote at any time at least 20 days before an election. If you are not able to pre-register prior to the 20 days before an election, you must register at your polling place to vote on Election Day.  
Voter registration applications must be turned in to the County Auditor or Secretary of State within 10 days of being signed.

**Assistance**

Large-type Minnesota Voter Registration Applications are available upon request from your County Auditor or the Office of the Secretary of State.  
Special assistance available to those who are elderly, have disabilities, or are in health care facilities. Contact the Secretary of State or your County Auditor for more information.  
Voter Registration Applications are available in other languages at [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us).

Your Social Security number is not public. Before providing the last 4 digits of your SSN in box 7, please read the privacy notice at [www.sos.state.mn.us/home/index.asp?page=207](http://www.sos.state.mn.us/home/index.asp?page=207).

## Lesson 2     *Learning about Levels of Government*

Students often are confused about the different levels of government, and what decisions are made at different levels. The vocabulary and concepts are difficult, and to help, you need a U.S. map to provide a visual image of political boundaries. Be prepared to talk about which level of government handles different issues. Many issues are handled at many levels.

### **Teacher preparation:**

1. Bring a map of the United States and pin it on the wall, or use a projected map.
2. Make copies of the following story and questions for all students.

**Review of previous lesson:** Write vocabulary words you learned in the previous lesson on the board for review. Ask students to reconstruct the story of the previous lesson, and then ask for questions or thoughts about this lesson, or if they need further help submitting pre-registration.

**Warm up:** Ask students to go to the U.S. map and identify where they live now, and other places they have lived. Explain that there is the same national government for all people living in the United States, called the federal government. Each state has its own government, as does every county and every city. Point out the geographical areas and corresponding levels of government.

**Story and Questions:** See instructions for Lesson 1.

**Activity:** When students read about the levels of government, copy the grid of levels of government from the story on the board and use the map to show the boundaries, or jurisdictions, of government. You may want to expand the information by including other responsibilities of government and other jurisdictions.

**Closure:** Review the vocabulary words you learned, and repeat the main themes of the lesson. Ask students to talk about one thing they learned today.

### **Essential vocabulary:**

Democracy

Debate

Elected official

Candidates

Jurisdiction

## Story: *Fatima Studies a Map*

Fatima moved from Afghanistan to Minnesota in 2009. She has lived in the United States more than five years, and soon she will become a citizen. Fatima is taking a Citizenship class because she wants to vote in the general election in November. She knows that voting is one of the rights and responsibilities in a democracy. She remembers that democracy is government “of the people, by the people and for the people.”

Last week her Citizenship class listened to some candidates who were having a debate. Fatima listened carefully to the candidates but she was confused. The candidates gave their opinions about schools, parks, and libraries. Fatima wanted to know their opinions about the fighting in Afghanistan, but they didn’t talk about war.

Fatima asked her teacher why the candidates didn’t talk about war. Her teacher, Amy, explained, “These candidates don’t make decisions about war. The candidates in this debate are running for the city government, and they make decisions about things in the city, like schools, parks, and libraries.

“The national government in Washington D.C. makes decisions about things that effect the entire country. Some of these things are war and national security, trade between countries, immigration, health care and Social Security.

The state elected officials and the governor make decisions about state roads and bridges, road safety and driver’s licenses, and many other things.

“There are other levels of government, too, and voters elect people to these governments, also. Here are some of the levels of government and the titles of the elected officials.”

Amy brought out a map of the United States, and wrote this on the board:

<b>United States of America</b>	<b>State of Minnesota</b>	<b>City or Town</b>
President & Vice President	Governor	Mayor
U.S Senators (2 per state)	State Senator	City Council
U.S. Representative	State Representative	Park Board
		School Board

“That helps me understand the levels of government, and what are some of the responsibilities,” said Fatima. “Now I need to write a letter to the President, my U.S. Senators and my U.S. Representative to tell them my opinion about the war in Afghanistan.”

“That’s a great plan!” said Amy. “You are a responsible citizen. And you know your rights.”

### **Questions: *Fatima Studies a Map***

1. What did Fatima want to learn from the candidate's debate? Did she get the information she wanted? Why not?
2. What are the elected officials called that voters choose in the national government? What are some of the responsibilities of the federal elected officials?
3. What are the elected officials called that voters choose in the state (Minnesota) government? What are some of the responsibilities of these officials?
4. What are some of the responsibilities of the elected officials in the city government?
5. Whom does Fatima need to write to tell her opinion about war?
6. What can people do in addition to voting, to be responsible citizens?

### **Lesson 3: *Learning about Candidates and Issues***

**Teacher preparation:** Bring to class any kind of information that is related to candidates in the upcoming election, such as articles in the newspaper, voters' guides, campaign literature, party platforms, web sites, etc. Make sure you have materials on all the major candidates running for the same office. You may want to choose to focus on the presidential, state or city elections. Make copies of the following story and questions for all students

**Review of previous lesson:** Write vocabulary words you learned in the previous lesson on the board for review. Ask students to reconstruct the story of the previous lesson, and then ask for questions or thoughts about that lesson.

**Warm up:** Introduce the lesson by asking students if they have ever voted, either in the U.S. or their country of origin. Ask how they decided upon a candidate. Explain there are many ways in the U.S. to learn about the candidates and the issues. Show the materials you have brought to class as an example of ways to learn about the candidates.

**Story and Questions:** See instructions for Lesson 1.

**Closure:** Show again the materials you brought to class about candidates. Review the vocabulary words you learned, and repeat the main themes of the lesson. Ask students to talk about one thing they learned today. Ask students to look for campaign literature or articles and bring them to the next class.

#### **Essential Vocabulary**

Campaign literature

Voter's Guide

Party platform

Issues

For more information on the political parties, go to their individual websites  
Also, go to [www.mnvotes.org](http://www.mnvotes.org) for information on candidates.

## **Story: *Carlos Studies the Issues***

On September 18, Carlos took the Citizenship test after he had lived in the U.S. six years. He passed the test, and now he can vote. The election is the coming up.

Carlos is excited to be a voter. He will help choose the future leaders of his city, state and country. But before he votes, he needs to learn about the candidates and some issues they support.

Some candidates have many ads on TV and the radio. Carlos sees the most signs, bumper stickers and billboards for one candidate everyday. He knows this doesn't mean the candidate is better than the other candidates. Maybe this candidate has more money.

On his way to class, Carlos sees a picture of a candidate for school board named Pedro Benavides. "I think I will vote for Pedro Benavides," Carlos tells his teacher, Sue. "He looks Latino, like me. He will understand what is best for the Latino people"

Sue says, "Just because candidates are the same ethnicity as you, it doesn't mean that they have the same values or opinions you have. It is better to make a decision about the candidate's values and past record. Look at what the candidate says on issues that are important to you."

Then Sue asks, "What are the most important issues for you, Carlos?"

Carlos replies, "An important issue for me is getting a driver's license. Before I was a citizen, it wasn't possible to get a driver's license and I drove without a license. Luckily, I was never in an accident. When I became a citizen, I was eligible to get a driver's license. Now I have a Minnesota driver's license. That is also the identification I used to register to vote."

Carlos continued, "My brother doesn't have a Minnesota identification card or a driver's license, but he needs to drive to work. He can't get one because of Minnesota law. I worry about him."

Sue says, "The law on Drivers' Licenses is made by elected officials in the state government. You can find state candidates' positions on this issue if you go to their web site, or to [www.mnvotes.org](http://www.mnvotes.org). Some candidates meet with groups of people or individuals. Or you can go to a town meeting where candidates speak and you can ask their opinions about this issue."

Carlos thinks that is a good idea. He will ask his brother to go to the town meeting with him, but Carlos will drive the car.

### **Questions: *Carlos Studies the Issues***

1. What did Carlos have to do to be eligible to vote?
2. What does Carlos know about the candidate who has the most TV ads, bumper stickers and billboards?
3. If a candidate is the same gender or ethnicity as you, do you think they will have similar values or opinions you have? Explain your opinion.
4. What do you do to find information about candidates and their opinions?
5. Becoming a legal citizen and getting a driver's license were important issues for Carlos. What are important issues for you?

## Lesson 4 *Making a Choice*

### Teacher preparation:

1. Get copies of the *Voter's Guide* for students. These are produced by the League of Women's Voters, [www.lwvnmn.org](http://www.lwvnmn.org). The Star Tribune and other newspapers also publish a Voter's Guide that is available at no charge in libraries and other public places.
2. Make copies of the following story and questions for all students.

**Review of previous lesson:** Write vocabulary words you learned in the previous lesson on the board for review. Ask students to reconstruct the story of the previous lesson, and then ask for questions or thoughts about that lesson.

**Warm up:** Write on the board this incomplete sentence and brainstorm with students what some of the things you can do before you make a choice, such as get information, talk to friends, etc.  
*Before I make a choice, I \_\_\_\_\_*

**Story and Questions:** See instructions for Lesson 1

**Activity:** Hand out sample voters' guides. Show students how the guide is organized and what information is available. Explain abbreviations that are used, such as DFL and GOP. Then have students work in pairs to get information about a candidate who is running for office in their city, state or nation. Have students report back, and when all have finished, have a mini-debate about the candidates. For homework, ask students to complete the sentence written above.

**Closure:** Review the vocabulary words you learned, and repeat the main themes of the lesson. Ask students to talk about one thing they learned today.

**Extension lesson:** Arrange for computers for students so they can go into websites of candidates by googling their names, and of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and Republican National Committee (RNC) to look up their positions and platforms on issues of interest. Encourage them to choose one issue to investigate so they can make a comparison.

### Essential vocabulary

Endorse

Liberal

Conservative

Democratic Party

Republican Party

Campaign literature

Party Platform

## Story: *William Makes a Choice*

William is concerned about immigration. He was born in Minnesota and his girlfriend is from Ecuador. They want to get married and live in the U.S. William knows the U.S. government makes the laws about immigration policy, so he wants to vote in the upcoming election. He went on-line to learn about the candidates for president, U.S. Senator and Representative, and their political parties.

In class, William told his classmates, “There are two major parties, and many other smaller parties. There is the Democratic party, also called the DFL in Minnesota, and the Republican party. Candidates usually belong to one of the parties, and follow the platform of the party.

“The Democratic Party is the liberal party. Their web site says the Democratic Party believes that it is the government’s role to protect the health and welfare of individuals in the country.

“The Republican Party is the conservative party. The Republican Party web site says that they believe individuals can and should be able to take care of themselves with less government regulation.”

“So,” asked William, “if I know the party the candidates are in and the party platform, do I need to learn about the individual candidates ?”

“Yes,” said Sue. “It is also important to go to the candidate’s web site. Some candidates have their own positions. You are interested in immigration. I suggest you go to the political party web sites and the candidates’ web sites, and find their platforms. It’s very easy to do.”

“I have another question, said William. “What should I do if I don’t know anything about some of the candidates?”

“You don’t have to vote for everyone on the ballot,” said Sue. “Vote for the candidates you know about and you trust. That is the best anyone can do. The most important thing is that you vote.”

Now William will make his decision. First, he will go on-line to the candidate’s web site and the web site of their political party. Second, he will read the Voter’s Guide he will get at the library. Third, he will listen to a debate. And, he will talk to some friends who have studied the candidates and issues. He will ask for their opinions. Then, he will make his own choice.

### **Questions: *William Makes a Choice***

1. How will William get more information before he votes?
2. What are the two major political parties? How are they different from one another?
3. Who are the major candidates for U.S. President? What party do they belong to?
4. What is William planning to do before he makes his choice?
5. What do you plan to do before you make your choice?

## Lesson 5 Casting a Vote

**Basic information about voting:** Citizens may choose how to vote, either absentee or at the polls. Absentee, or early voting, starts 46 days prior to the election. Go online for an application or copy the application included with this lesson. It is not necessary to be registered to apply. Return the application by mail, fax, email, or in person, to your county election office. Early voting ballots need to be received by the county office on or before election day.

Voting at the polling place on election day, citizens either need to be pre-registered, or they can register at the polling place. They must have proof of identity. One of four methods for identification may be used:

- Accepted identification with current name and address in precinct
  1. MN driver's license or permit or Minnesota ID card OR
  2. Student ID card or fee statement with current address
- Photo ID with current utility bill that is due within 30 days of election and has voter's name and current address
- School campus address list provided by school, used with student photo ID
- Vouching by a voter registered in the precinct, if the voter doesn't have one of the above authorized proof of identity

To find one's polling place or address of county office for absentee address, go to Secretary of State's website, [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us). Sample ballots and information on candidates also can be found there, under Elections and Voting.

### Teacher preparation:

1. Make copies of the following story, the sample polling place diagram and the flyer.
2. Get copies of absentee ballots from your county office. You can download from [www.co.mn.us](http://www.co.mn.us).
3. Write the four methods for identification on the board.
4. Bring blank stickers (2" x 3") and markers to make I WILL VOTE or I WILL TELL OTHERS TO VOTE badges

**Review of previous lesson:** Write vocabulary words you learned in the previous lesson on the board for review. Ask students to reconstruct the story of the previous lesson, and then ask for questions or thoughts about that lesson.

**Story and Questions:** See Lesson 1 for instructions.

**Activities:**

1. Using polling place diagram, have students take Mai and Tran through the voting procedure.
2. Hand out absentee ballot application for students to complete, or use absentee ballot application that is included, if there are students who wish to use them.

**Closure:** Review the vocabulary words you learned, and repeat the main themes of the lesson. Ask students to talk about one thing they learned today.

**Wrap-up:** Hand out blank stickers and markers to students. Ask them to decorate a sticker and write I WILL VOTE, or another phrase of their choosing on the sticker, then put it on their clothing.

**Essential vocabulary:**

Methods of identification

Polling place (poll)

Absentee or early voting

Application

Cast a vote

Sample ballot from a political party

General election

## 2016 Minnesota Absentee Ballot Application

Apply Online at <http://www.mnvotes.org> -OR-

Complete lines 1 through 7 below. Please print clearly.

Return this application as soon as possible. Ballots must be returned by election day to be counted.

**Important:** Active duty military and overseas voters should not use this application. See the other side for more information.

<b>1.</b>	absentee ballots requested for the following election(s) <i>(if no election is marked, a ballot will be mailed for the next election only)</i>				
	both primary and general election		special primary - specify date:		
	primary only		special election - specify date:		
	general election only				
<b>2.</b>	last name or surname	first name	middle name	suffix	
<b>3.</b>	date of birth (mm/dd/yyyy)	county where you live	phone number		
	email address				
<b>4.</b>	mark all boxes that apply: I have a MN-issued driver's license or MN ID card. The number is: I have a social security number. The last four digits are: <b>XXX-XX-</b> I do not have a MN-issued driver's license, MN-issued ID card or a social security number. Your identification number will be compared to the one on your absentee ballot envelope.				
<b>5.</b>	address where you live (residence)	apt.	city	<b>MN</b>	zip code
<b>6.</b>	address where your absentee ballot should be sent	apt.	city	state	zip code
<b>7.</b>	I certify that I: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• am completing this application on my own behalf;</li> <li>• will be at least 18 years old on election day;</li> <li>• am a citizen of the United States;</li> <li>• will have resided in Minnesota for 20 days immediately preceding election day;</li> <li>• maintain residence at the address given on this application form;</li> <li>• am not under court-ordered guardianship in which the court order revokes my right to vote;</li> <li>• have not been found by a court to be legally incompetent to vote;</li> <li>• have the right to vote because, if I have been convicted of a felony, my felony sentence has expired (been completed) or I have been discharged from my sentence; and</li> <li>• have read and understand this statement: The above information is accurate, and I sign this application form under penalty of perjury, a felony punishable by not more than 5 years imprisonment, a fine of not more than \$10,000, or both.</li> </ul> sign here: <b>X</b> _____ date ____/____/____				

**See other side for special instructions for voters with disabilities or power of attorney.**

official use only

Primary → <input type="checkbox"/> reg <input type="checkbox"/> non-reg	received date	ballot issued date	initials	type M C HCF	reason replaced <input type="checkbox"/> rejected <input type="checkbox"/> lost <input type="checkbox"/> spoiled <input type="checkbox"/> never received	repl. date:	precinct
General → <input type="checkbox"/> reg <input type="checkbox"/> non-reg	received date	ballot issued date	initials	type M C HCF	reason replaced <input type="checkbox"/> rejected <input type="checkbox"/> lost <input type="checkbox"/> spoiled <input type="checkbox"/> never received	repl. date:	school district

## **Story: *Nhong, Mai and Tran Cast their Votes***

### **Part 1**

Nhong has been a citizen for eight years. She has gone to her polling place to vote for every election, but this year she will not be able to go. She is going to Vietnam to visit her family.

Voting is very important to Nhung. She asks her cousin, Mai, to help her. “How can I vote if I won’t be here on election day?”

“You can vote absentee,” he says. “Anyone can vote absentee. Many people vote this way because they are in the military or it is difficult to get to their polling place. Some people prefer to vote before the election because they don’t want to wait in line to vote.”

Mai tells Nhung she can vote absentee a month before the election. Her vote is sent to her county’s election office and needs to get there by election day. She can go online to get an application and information about how to vote absentee. The web site is [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us).

The early votes are kept in a safe place in the county office, and they are counted on election day with all the other votes.

“Thanks for your help, Mai,” says Nhung.

## Part 2

It is general election day, the first Tuesday in November. It is 7:00 am. The polls just opened. Mai and Tran are the first ones at their polling place. They have until 8:00 pm to vote, but they want to do it early. Mai has already registered to vote, but his mother, Tran, has never voted before. She just became a citizen in September.

Their polling place is at the public school in their neighborhood. They learned this by going online to [www.sos.state.mn.us/pollfinder](http://www.sos.state.mn.us/pollfinder). They know which school door to enter because there is a United States flag outside. It is next to a sign that says VOTE HERE. Inside the school are signs telling them where to go.

When they go into the polling room, a man asks if they are registered. Mai says yes, he is registered, but his mother is not registered.

“Go over to that table, young man” the man says “the table with the sign that says Roster. Tell them your name so they can find it in the registration book. Then sign your name in the book. They will tell you what to do next.”

Then the man tells Tran to go to the Election Day Registration table. She doesn't understand what he says.

Mai says, “My mother doesn't speak English. Is there anyone here who speaks Hmong and can interpret for her?”

The man replies, “Yes, there are interpreters here but they are busy now. You can interpret for your mother after you have voted. She can wait here. Do you want to do that?”

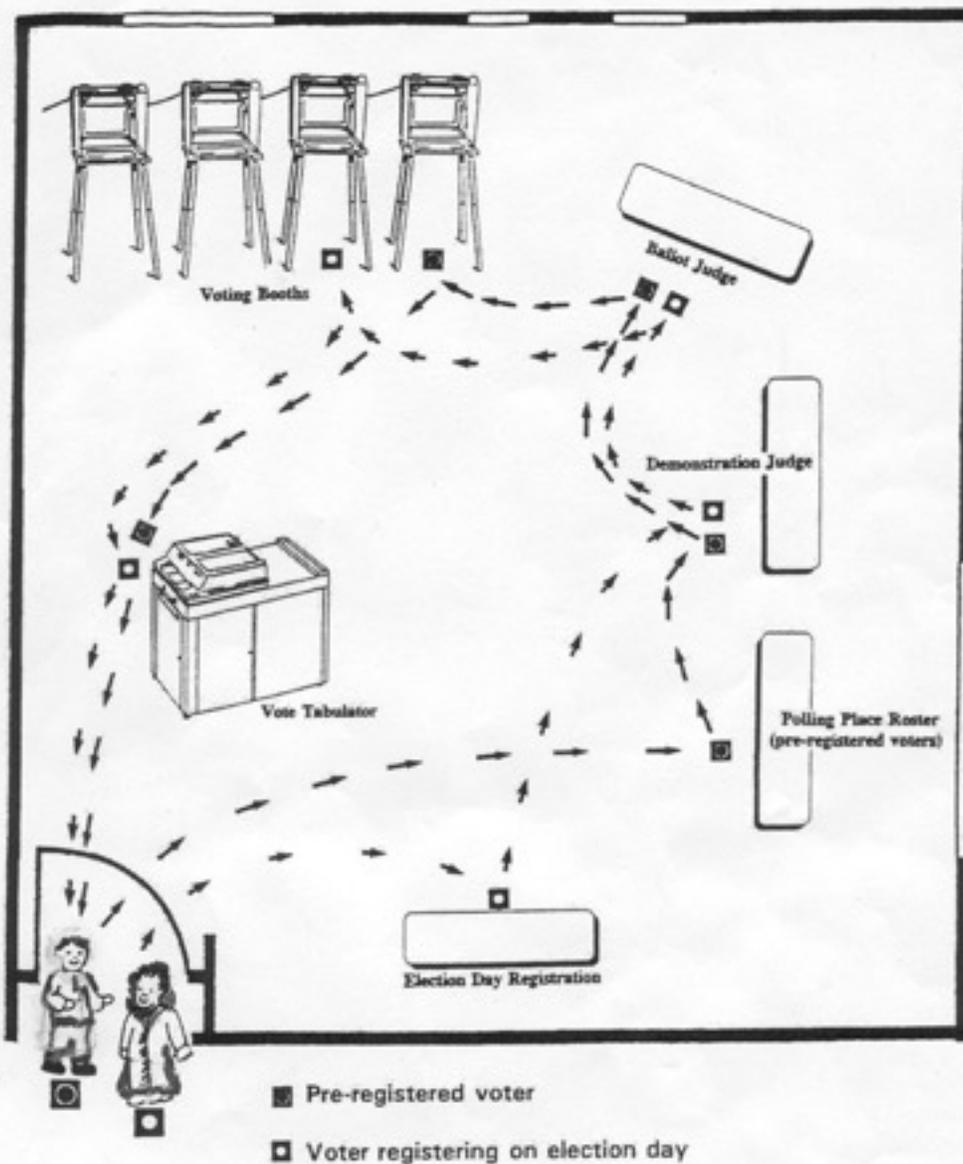
“OK,” says Mai. He goes to the Roster table to sign in and get his ballot. Then Mai goes to the Voting Booth. He brought a sample ballot from one of the political parties to help him remember the names of the candidates he will vote for. Mai makes marks with a pencil next to the names of the people he has decided to vote for.

When he has finished voting, Mai puts his ballot in the Vote Tabulator. A woman gives him a red sticker that says, I VOTED. He puts it on his jacket. He feels good that he voted.

Now Mai helps his mother register. She has a Minnesota identification card, so she can register easily. Then they go together to all the rest of the tables and to the Voting Booth. After that, she puts her vote in the voting machine.

After voting, Tran also gets a sticker and puts it on her hat. She also feels good that she voted. Mai is proud of his mother.

### SAMPLE POLLING PLACE



### **Questions: *Nhong, Mai and Tran Cast their Votes***

1. Why does Nhung vote absentee? What are reasons other people vote absentee?
2. Where do Mai and Tran go to vote? How did Mai find their polling place?
3. Use the map to follow the pre-registered voter. How is this different from the voter who is registering on election day?
4. What does Tran use for identification to register? What are other methods of identification? What method of identification do you use?
5. Are there interpreters at the polling place? Why doesn't Tran use an interpreter?
6. What did Mai and Tran get after they voted?

