

Student Handout 1: Polling Site: Who Does What and Where?

Not all poll positions described below are required for an in-class simulated election. However, your teacher will point out the poll worker positions in conjunction with the diagram he/she will show you

Many of you will be assigned a poll worker position. (There are a variety of positions that can accommodate more than one student as a poll worker.) All students must know the responsibilities of at least one other position so substitutions can be readily made. The website for the U.S. Elections Assistance Commission (<http://www.eac.gov>) provides useful information about polling places and poll workers. In addition, the website provides links to contact your secretary of state for further information, ways to accommodate disabled voters, and how to account for military and absentee ballots, among other information.

1. Polling Area Basic Setup: What Is Required and Why?

- Privacy voting booths or voting machines
- Ballot box or computerized ballot scanner area
- The demonstration area serves two purposes: orderly entry into the polling area, and a reference area where voters can review the ballot and ask any questions about the voting procedure.
- Create and monitor a roped- or taped-off line to the registration table to assure that voters sign in. It also lessens the likelihood of voter fraud. Although few states restrict these areas, this is a simulated election with the entire class or classes entering the polling area. Students who are voting might become impatient and try to bypass the registration table.
- The registration table should have class lists and alphabetically designated signs. Another monitored line from the registration table will assure privacy at the actual voting site.

The entire polling set-up area must remain apolitical. Remember that poll workers themselves must remain apolitical. Offices up for election can be identified but no candidate or party names should be mentioned.

2. Poll Workers and Their Responsibilities: Who Does What?

You are assigned a poll position that must be filled at all times. When a poll worker is ready to vote, another student will temporarily fill in the position. Your teacher will point out the following positions on the polling place diagram and explain each position's duties.

- **Monitors for demonstration area**

This is an area set aside from the polling area. One or two students will monitor the voting apparatus and ballot. Voters have the opportunity to examine the ballot prior to voting. Students assigned to this position can also explain the voting process being used in the simulated election. Monitors may not mention candidate names, political parties, or explain ballot questions.

- **Monitors for roped- or taped-off waiting areas**

One or two students will monitor the line of students waiting to sign in at the registration table.

- A group of students will monitor this area to assure that all voters are signed in at the registration table. Only one voter per registration check-in poll worker should be standing at the registration table.
- A second set of students will monitor registered voters to let them know when a privacy booth or voting machine is available. (This ensures privacy when voting.)

- **Registration table**

Depending on the plan for the simulated election, three to six students can work with the class lists to sign in registered voters. Break down the class list(s) alphabetically into three sections so several students can check a class of voters in at the same time and keep a steady flow for registration. In addition one student will work with each sign-in sheet for students.

- **Ballot distribution**

When privacy booths are used, one or two students will hand out the ballot to those who have been registered at the registration table.

- **Computerized mechanisms**

One or two students will monitor the ballot entries.

- **First vote**

In some elections, the first voter to complete a ballot is asked to check the ballot box to make certain that it is empty. A rather limited position, you or the registrar (or the teacher) will then seal the ballot box.

- **Voting apparatus**

If privacy booths are used, voters will go directly to the privacy booth with no assistance from poll workers.

If older voting machines are used, a student will be assigned to each machine. The machine monitor will push the button that closes the curtains and clears the mechanism for a new vote. This poll worker must also keep the area around the voting machines clear. No voter should be waiting at the machine to vote.

- **Ballot finalization**

States use a variety of mechanisms for the completed ballot votes. Regardless of the procedure, at least 2 monitors are needed at the site of a finalized ballot.

- **Machine tally**

If older voting machines are used, the voter's choices are entered on the machine. The registrar of voters has the key to open the back of the machine. With the help of two students, the registrar will read aloud the numbers for each position on the ballot and the students will record the tally. The students' tally counts must match.

(Counting by hand is also an option. Your teacher will decide how many of you are needed to do so.)

- **"I Voted" sticker distribution**

When voters have completed the voting process, one or two students may be the ones handing out the stickers.