

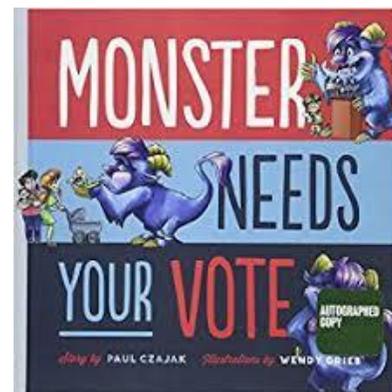
Monster Needs Your Vote!

OBJECTIVE

Students learn about elections, campaigns, voting and the value of being a good citizen.

MATERIALS

Monster Needs Your Vote book. Free copies to leave with the class are available by contacting Amy Anderson at amy@mncivicyouth.org or 651-955-1679.



BACKGROUND

The original intent of public education was to prepare students to participate in our democratic society. In the past few decades, the focus of public education has turned sharply toward science, math and literacy as we seek to help students develop employable skills. The fact is, students need both: preparation to participate in the workforce and preparation to participate in society. Students need to know how our government and communities function, understand key issues and different perspectives, and be able to articulate their opinions with competence, respect and civility.

Research has shown that listening to civic leaders share their stories and viewpoints is an exceptional way to bring civics alive for students. According to a report commissioned by the American Bar Association Division for Public Education: "Civic education, especially when it is interactive and involves discussion of current issues, is an important way to develop the skills that young Americans need to succeed in the 21st Century workforce. Students who experience interactive discussion-based civic education (either by itself or in combination with lecture-based civic education) score the highest on '21st Century Competencies,' including working with others (especially in diverse groups) and knowledge of economic and political processes."

LESSON PLAN

Introduction (5 minutes)

Start your classroom presentation by introducing yourself so the students know more about you and what you do. Most importantly, we encourage you to share something personal, meaningful or important to you that illustrates why you choose to do the work you do. If students know the 'why' behind your job, it will impact them more than if you just share your job title.

You can also share why you chose to volunteer to come to their classroom. Why do you think it's important for students to hear from civic leaders? What are the outcomes you are hoping for as a result of your visit? Were you nervous to come? Excited? What do you remember about your experience in school that might affect how to approach your classroom visit?

Activity: Read the book *Monster Needs Your Vote* (10 minutes)

When you are done reading, say something like: “A lot of times, people think of citizenship as involving only such activities as holding public office, voting, or serving on a jury. While these activities are important, good citizens also contribute to the common good in a wide variety of other ways.”

Write the following question on the chalkboard: **What qualities make a good citizen?**

Then brainstorm with students the characteristics of a good citizen, as well as actions that they think a good citizen would take. Write their answers on the chalkboard or on posting paper. **(5 minutes)**

Following the brainstorm, share with students this definition of a good citizen: “A good citizen works for the good of all. A good citizen tries to protect our country and make it better.” Invite students to ask questions about this definition and spend a few minutes discussing, if necessary.

Lead the students through the following questions **(10 minutes)**:

1. **Who was a good citizen in the book?** (Ask students to give examples of how Monster was a good citizen).
2. **What did this person do for the good of all?** (Got excited about the library and education)
3. **What did this person do to protect our country and make it better?** (He tried to run for office; even when he didn't win, he didn't just say, “I didn't win so I'm done?” No, he continued to speak out for the library. Good citizens do what they say they will do. They know what's important; they stand up for others, for causes and work to make the world a better place. They don't just go with what's popular or makes them look or sound good).
4. **Did the person do anything that a good citizen would not do?** If so, list those things here.

To conclude, give each student a piece of paper and ask them to choose one characteristic of a good citizen from the list on the board or an example of something that citizens do (such as voting or helping others). Distribute markers or crayons and large sheets of papers to the groups and allow time for them to create their pages **(10 minutes)**.

Ask the teacher to display the pages around the room. Tell the students that you will be leaving *Monster Needs Your Vote* for their class so they can read it again and talk about additional ways people (and monsters) of all ages can be good citizens.