The Results are In!
Examining Our First Vote Election

Overview
The election is over, so what now? Besides celebrating your win, or sobbing about your loss, analyzing the First Vote election results and voter demographics, and comparing them with other schools throughout the state, as well as the actual national results, offers fertile ground for critical thinking and discussion. This lesson provides various activities for such analyzation, as well as ways for students to share and offer their own commentary on the election process and results post-election throughout the school and community.

Grade
10

Materials
• A website that clearly displays North Carolina’s local and state election results. Possible options:
  o www.wral.com
  o www.newsobserver.com
  o www.charlotteobserver.com
  o http://er.ncsbe.gov/
• A website that clearly displays national election results. Possible options:
  o www.politico.com
  o www.nytimes.com
  o www.washingtonpost.com
  o www.fivethirtyeight.com
  o www.vox.com
• Analyzing the First Vote Election Results, handout attached
  o Teachers are encouraged to edit this handout to focus on particular races or result aspects that best meet their curricular goals. Teachers should also choose one or two of the results websites noted above and have students write these in on the form.
  o Request an editable Word version of this file by e-mailing CarolinaK12.unc.edu
• Examining Our First Vote Election: Press Release, Blog Post, & Infographic assignment sheets, attached
• Additional resources for student final products:
  o 8 Tips to Writing Engaging Blog Posts, http://www.hongkiat.com/blog/writing-engaging-blog-posts/
  o How to Write an Op Ed Article, http://newsoffice.duke.edu/duke_resources/oped.html
  o Argumentative Essays, https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/05/
  o Persuasive Essays – the Basics, https://www.hamilton.edu/writing/writing-resources/persuasive-essays
• OPTIONAL: HAVE STUDENT WORK FEATURED ON EdNC! If you would like to have some of your students’ work published on EdNC, contact Hunter Buxton, Executive Director of First Vote NC at hunterbuxton@gmail.com for more information. This can be a great way to feature great work by great students, great teaching and great schools!
Student Preparation
• Optional: Prior to this lesson on results, provide students with a copy of an Electoral College Map from CSPAN and have them follow the Presidential Election results at home: http://www.c-spanclassroom.org/pdf/2016_C-SPAN_Electoral_College_Map_Poster_Handout.pdf

Teacher Preparation
• Discussing the First Vote NC election results can involve discussion of issues of gender, race, geographical diversity, etc. Teachers should thus ensure there is a foundation for respectful conversation prior to implementing this lesson. See “Civil Discourse in the Classroom” by Teaching Tolerance for ideas and tips: http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/TT_Civil%20Discourse_whtppr_0.pdf
• If smartphones, tablets, computers, etc. are readily available at your school, students should be provided with a device and placed in small groups to review and examine the election results and exit polling data. If devices aren’t readily available or don’t comply with school policies, analysis can be done as a whole class with results projected up front.

Duration
60 minutes to analyze results; lesson will take longer depending on which culminating activities teachers decide to use.

Procedure
Reflecting on the First Vote Process
1. As a warm up, ask students to reflect on the First Vote process by discussing the following questions in small groups:
   • Did you vote? Why or why not?
   • If you did vote, which contests did you vote in? How did you decide for whom to vote? Were some races more important to you than others? Explain.
   • Do you feel like most of the school’s attention was on national, state, or local races? Why do you think this is the case?

2. If student’s completed the “Making First Vote Your Vote: Designing a Schoolwide Election” activity, further debrief:
   • Do you feel like the school’s election design that you all worked on was effective? If so, why? If not, what complications did you experience or notice?
   • Do you think our school overall was excited about and/or interested in the First Vote election simulation? Why or why not? Were students excited about the actual elections? Why or why not?
   • What percentage of our school would you guess voted in the First Vote simulation?
   • What were the most difficult parts of organizing/facilitating the First Vote election? What were the easiest?
   • Based on your sense of how things went at this point, is there anything you would have done differently?

Analyzing the Election Results – Who Won?
3. Next, provide each student with the attached Election Results handout and pull up the First Vote election results, actual election results for the national election, any relevant North Carolina elections, and any relevant local races (see the links above for suggestions). Ask students to set aside the First Vote exit polling results for now and just to focus on the results of the various elections.
   • Since this can be an overwhelming amount of data, teachers may want to consider having students get into pairs or small groups and assign a specific race or category of races (e.g. presidential race, US House and Senate races, North Carolina Council of State, North Carolina General Assembly, local races, ballot initiatives, bond referendums, etc.) for analysis. Students will note the First Vote simulation results, as well as the actual results, then share their findings with the class.
4. After allowing students to examine the First Vote results and the actual results, have each pair or group report back:
   - Who won our First Vote election for President? Who actually won this election?
   - Who won our First Vote election for Senate? Who actually won this election?
   - Who won our First Vote election for House of Representatives? Who actually won this election?
   - Who won our First Vote election for NC State Representative? Who actually won this election?
   - Who won our First Vote election for NC Senate? Who actually won this election?
   - Who won our First Vote local elections? Who actually won this election?
   - What were the First Vote results of any state or local bond referendums, initiatives, etc.? What were the actual results?

5. Once students have filled in the results comparison, have them further analyze and discuss:
   - How did our school’s First Vote results compare to the actual election results? What various factors might account for the similarities/divergence between the results?
   - How did our school’s results compare to other schools in North Carolina? What various factors might account for the similarities/divergence between the results?
     - Remember to ensure that any projections students make regarding differences in results are done so with evidence and respect. (See the Preparation section of this lesson for suggested resources to promote civil discussions.)
   - Do the results overall lean towards one party in the First Vote results? What about the national results? Why do you think this is the case?
   - Do you see any outliers in the results – meaning, did students tend to vote for one party in one race but another party in another particular race?

   **Analyzing the Exit Polls – Who Voted and Why?**

6. After comparing and discussing the election results, turn students’ attention toward the First Vote exit poll results and voter demographics. The First Vote simulation asked each voter for information about the following:
   - Grade
   - Gender
   - Race
   - Do the adults in your household vote?
   - Do you plan on registering to vote when you are eligible?
   - If you were to register today, what would be your party affiliation?
   - What is your primary source of political news?
   - How often do you attend a religious service?
   - Customized issue based question.
   - What do you think is the most important issue facing the country today?
   - Do you feel optimistic about the future?

7. Provide students with time to look at the First Vote exit poll results at their school in small groups. After students have examined their own school’s data, encourage them to look at other schools both in their region of the state and across the state. Sample questions to discuss:
   - How would you characterize the overall voter turnout for the First Vote simulation at our school? How does our school compare to other schools in our area? Across North Carolina?
     - Based on whether there are similarities or differences that are evident, allow students to project why this might be the case. For instance, if one particular school’s turnout skyrocketed over all others, is it possible they instated compulsory voting?
     - Again, ensure that any projections students make regarding differences in results are done so with evidence and respect. (See the Preparation section of this lesson for suggested resources to promote civil discussions.)
• Which grade level in our school had the highest turnout? Classes that implemented the “Get Out the Vote” lesson should further analyze what impact their strategies may have had:
  o Why do you think more ___ graders voted?
  o What effect did your Get Out the Vote (GOTV) campaigns have on grade turnout? Do you think turnout would have been the same, higher, or lower with or without a GOTV campaign? Explain.
• Did students in certain demographic groups (sex, race, grade level) vote at higher rates than other groups? What do you think accounts for these results?
• Did one grade/gender/race vote overwhelmingly for one party/candidate or the other? Why do you think this is the case?
• According to the data, were people who had parents who voted at home more likely to vote? Why do you think this is the case?
  o Discuss with students that many studies have shown that youth whose parents/guardians vote typically also vote and get involved in politics: “…Young people are more likely to vote and otherwise get involved in politics if they have seen their parents do so. Any public campaign designed to promote the political engagement of young people must not neglect the home as an institution in which youth learn to be engaged.” (Source: “Democracy at Risk: How Political Choices Undermine Citizen Participation, and What We Can Do About It” by Stephen Macedo)
• What party would most students in your school be registered as? Why do you think this is the case?
  o Share with students that a 2005 Gallup survey found that parents are the most determining factor in a young person’s political views: “Are the great generation-splitting debates that were characteristic of the 1960s and 1970s -- about everything from politics and religion to drugs and hair -- splitting today's generations? Not if the results of a new Gallup Youth Survey*, which asked teens to compare their social and political views with those of their parents, are any indication. While a fifth of U.S. teens (21%) say they are "more liberal" than their parents and 7% say "more conservative," 7 in 10 teens (71%) say their social and political ideology is about the same as mom and dad's. (Source: http://www.gallup.com/poll/14515/teens-stay-true-parents-political-perspectives.aspx.)
  o In your opinion, is this idea correct, that many teens are actually influenced by their parent’s ideology? Why or why not?
• The polling asked about attending religious services. Do you think attending religious services affects voter turnout and/or how you vote? Explain.
• According to our First Vote exit poll data, what is the most important issue facing our country according to our school? Does this issue match with other schools in our area? Across the state? Why do you think responses were similar (or different?)
• Do the majority of voters in our school feel optimistic about the future? Why do you think this is the case? Again, how did our school’s response compare to others near us? Statewide? Again, why do you think the responses were similar/different?
  o Teachers should encourage students to think critically. For example, does it seem that rural areas are less hopeful, while urban area are more hopeful? Why might this be the case? Allow students to pose thoughts and questions, but also address any stereotypical responses.

Suggested Activities for Analyzing and Sharing First Vote Results
8. Now that students have had a chance to examine the election results, they should start to think about how to share the results of their First Vote election simulation with their fellow students (and possibly the community at large). Attached are three potential assignments for how to have students analyze, interpret and share the results, including writing a press release, a blog post, or creating an infographic. The press release is intended to have students summarize the First Vote process and to share the election results with the student body and wider community. The blog post is intended for students to analyze the election and to offer their opinions about the results. The infographic is intended to share exit poll data in a visually engaging way. These culminating activities can be done individually, in groups, or combined to create more
comprehensive group projects (e.g. have a group create a website that contains some combination of the activities provided.)

9. Alternatively, teachers can also have students write a culminating Op Ed, blog, or essay based on the results of the issue-based questions, or a thematic or overarching question connected to the election and various subjects covered in class. (Links are provided in the Materials section of this lesson.) For example:

- Why is it important for young people to vote (or to be engaged in government and/or the political process?)
- Is our political system working?
- Is our two-party system effective?
- Is our democracy broken?
- What advice do you have for the candidates elected in 2016?
- Why does local government matter?
- What do you wish you could change regarding... politics/government/voting/etc.?

➢ **Teacher note:** To ensure that all levels of the election and all thematic aspects of the elections (i.e., voter turnout, youth engagement, etc.) are being covered, teachers can assign each student, pair, or group a particular category of race (local, state, national), a particular topic, or some component of the exit poll results. Likewise, teachers should determine whether students can choose the type of assignment they complete (press release, blog, infographic, Op Ed, etc.), or whether they will also assign one or multiple assignment types.

10. Teachers should decide how students will share or present their final work. This can be as simple as sharing in groups during class, or as elaborate as compiling top pieces to be shared via a school newspaper or read aloud at a school assembly.

11. Culminate the First Vote election simulation and elections 2016 unit of study by discussing:

- Do you think you’re more likely to vote in a real election now that you’ve completed the First Vote election simulation and activities? Why or why not?
- After designing your own election, do you think we should make changes to real elections? If so, what changes and why?
- Do you think voting is important? Why or why not?
- Do you feel that you’re better prepared to be engaged in the political process? Why or why not?
- Should we make it easier or harder for people to vote? Why?
- What was your favorite part of the First Vote NC process (i.e. designing the election, designing a Get Out the Vote campaign, actually voting, a particular lesson/activity on a particular topic, etc.?)

**OPTIONAL: HAVE STUDENT WORK FEATURED ON Ed NC!**

If you would like to have some of your students’ work published on EdNC, contact Hunter Buxton, Executive Director of First Vote NC at hunterbuxton@gmail.com for more information. This can be a great way to feature great work by great students, great teaching and great schools!
Name _____________________________ Analyzing the First Vote Election Results

**Directions:** Complete the handout as you examine the First Vote results at your school and compare them to the actual election results. Skip any elections that do not apply to your school or election district. Use the following websites for researching the actual results:

North Carolina State & Local Elections: _________________________________________________________

National Elections: _______________________________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election Type</th>
<th>First Vote Winner</th>
<th>Actual Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presidential Election</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senate Election</td>
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<tr>
<td>House Election</td>
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<tr>
<td>NC State Senate Election</td>
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<tr>
<td>NC House Election</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use the blank spaces below to list any Local Government races:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use the blank spaces below to list any state or local bond approvals, special initiatives, etc.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

After reviewing this data, what is your first impression? Does anything about any particular election stick out to you, surprise you, leave you with questions, etc.? Explain.
### First Vote Exit Polls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exit Poll Question</th>
<th>First Vote Exit Poll Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Our school:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statewide:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Our school:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Statewide:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Our school:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Statewide:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do the adults in your household vote?</td>
<td>Our school:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Statewide:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you plan on registering to vote when you are eligible?</td>
<td>Our school:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statewide:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you were to register today, what would be your party affiliation?</td>
<td>Our school:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statewide:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your primary source of political news?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statewide:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you attend a religious service?</td>
<td>Our school:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statewide:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think is the most important issue facing the country today?</td>
<td>Our school:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statewide:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you feel optimistic about the future?</td>
<td>Our school:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Statewide:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Issue Based Question</td>
<td>Our school:</td>
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<td>Statewide:</td>
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<td>Statewide:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Congratulations! You’ve successfully ran and/or participated in an election, but your work isn’t done yet. You need to let people know about the election results and provide some analysis of those results to help the public understand what happened. You will do this by writing a **press release** that can be distributed throughout your school and/or your community.

A **press release** is an official statement issued to news outlets giving information on a particular news worthy event. Press releases should avoid first person (I, me, we) or second person (you, you’re, your) writing. Rather, a press release should stick to the more professional third person voice (he, she, it, they).

Some questions to consider:
- Who is your audience? What do they need to know about your school’s First Vote election?
- How did your school’s First Vote election differ from the actual election?
- How did your class make decisions regarding the election design, procedures and implementation?
- What were the First Vote results of your local, state, and/or national elections? How did those results compare to the actual results?
- What were some demographic trends (voter turnout/votes cast by race, gender, grade, etc.) you noticed in your First Vote election? How did this compare to other First Vote results around the state?
- How would you characterize voter turnout in the First Vote election? In the actual election (young voters?) Why do you thing young people voted/or didn’t vote?

Your press release should be approximately 1 – 2 pages and it should include:
- A catchy headline
- At least two quote about the First Vote election from a fellow student, teacher, or administrator.
- Information about First Vote exit polling data
- Your school’s name, address, and logo
- Correct information, grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. Remember you want this to look professional!

Suggested Sources for writing a press release:

Due date: __________________________
Examining Our First Vote Election:
Blog Post

Congratulations! You’ve successfully ran and/or participated in an election, but your work isn’t done yet. You need to let people know about the election results and provide some analysis of those results to help the public understand what happened. You will do this by writing a blog post that can be posted online and shared throughout your school and your community.

A blog is a regularly updated website or web page, typically one run by an individual or small group, that is written in an informal or conversational style. Your blog post is meant to serve as a personal reflection on your First Vote experience and as a place to share your opinions about the election outcomes.

Some questions to consider:
- What do you want people to know about the First Vote election?
- How did your school’s First Vote election differ from the real election?
- How did your class make decisions regarding the First Vote election design, procedures and implementation?
- Knowing what you know now, would you change the way you ran the election? Why or why not?
- If you had to run the election again, what aspects would you change? What would you do again?
- What were the First Vote results of your local, state, or national election? How did those results compare to the actual results?
- What were some demographic trends (voter turnout/votes cast by race, gender, grade, geographic region, etc.) you noticed in your First Vote election? How did this compare to other First Vote results around the state?
- Did you vote? Why or why not?
- Why do you think people voted the way they did? What evidence do you have to support this belief?
- What are professional reporters and pundits saying about the election? Do you agree with them? Why or why not?
- What is your “take away” from this election season? What does the world need to know about voting, our political system, and the youth role in all of the aforementioned topics?

Your blog post should include:
- A catchy title
- At least two quotes about the First Vote election from a student, teacher or administrator.
- Your reaction to categories of First Vote exit polling data. (For example, if 80% of women at your school voted for a specific candidate, offer your explanation for why that happened.)
- If you use any outside sources, include links to them.
- Correct information, grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.

Examples of political blogs:
- Political Animal Blog: http://washingtonmonthly.com/political-animal/
- Red State: http://www.redstate.com/

Suggested free blog hosting sites:
- www.blog.com
- www.blogger.com
- www.medium.com

Due date: __________________________
Congratulations! You’ve successfully ran an election, but your work isn’t done yet. You need to let people know about the election results and provide analysis of those results to help them understand what happened. You will do this by creating an **infographic** that shows the exit polling data for your school in a clear and concise manner.

An **infographic** is a visual representation of information, data or knowledge. Infographics are used where complex information needs to be explained quickly and clearly, such as in signs, maps, journalism, technical writing, and education. You can create your infographic digitally, or using paper, poster board, etc.

**Some questions to consider:**
- What do you want people to know about the First Vote election?
- What were the First Vote results of your local, state, or national election? How did those results compare to the actual results?
- What were some demographic trends (voter turnout/votes cast by race, gender, grade, geographic region, etc.) you noticed in your First Vote election? How did this compare to other school’s First Vote results?
- What do you want your infographic to stress regarding the First Vote election results?

**Your infographic post should include:**
- A catchy title
- A visual comparison of the First Vote election results and the actual election results
- A visual representation of 5 exit polling questions from your school
- A visual representation of those same 5 exit polling questions from another school or statewide
- Correct information, grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.

**Examples of infographics:**
- Timeline of the Earth’s Average Temperature: [http://xkcd.com/1732/](http://xkcd.com/1732/)

**Suggested sites for creating a digital infographic**
- [Venngage: https://venngage.com/](https://venngage.com/)
- [Piktochart: https://piktochart.com/](https://piktochart.com/)
- [Canva: www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com)

**Due date: __________________________**