Turn Up the Turnout: Overcoming the Obstacles to Voting in Local Elections

Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about various local elected officials and explore the reasons for low turnout in local elections across North Carolina. Students begin by examining the various types of elections through a short reading. Next students examine the roles and responsibilities of local elected officials through a jigsaw activity. Students then explore voter turnout in North Carolina's local elections. This lesson culminates with an activity where students have to create an action plan to overcome obstacles to voting in local elections. (Ideally, this lesson will be utilized in tandem with First Vote's local election simulation. See Carolina K-12's Exploring the Importance of Your Local Vote & Voice with First Vote for implementation ideas.)

Materials

- Accompanying PowerPoint available in Carolina K-12's Database of K-12 Resources at https://k12database.unc.edu/files/2017/09/TurnUptheTurnoutPPT.pdf
    - To view this PDF as a projectable presentation, save the file, click "View" in the top menu bar of the file, and select "Full Screen Mode"
    - To request an editable PPT version of this presentation, send a request to CarolinaK12@unc.edu with the title of the PowerPoint in the subject line.
- Elections in North Carolina, handout (attached)
    - *Edited from http://www.ncsbe.gov/Elections#MunicipalElections*
- Local Elected Officials in North Carolina, strips (attached)
- Who Do We Elect in Our Counties & Cities?, handout (attached)
- WHY MILLENNIALS DON'T VOTE FOR MAYOR: Obstacles to Local Voting, strips (attached)
    - *Adapted from http://features.knightfoundation.org/local-vote/voter-dropoff.pdf*
- Turn Up the Turn Out, handout (attached)

Optional Resources

- For a lesson plan focusing on city government, see Carolina K-12's "City Government – Why Should I Care???" | LESSON | ACCOMPANYING POWERPOINT
- For a lesson plan focusing on county government, see Carolina K-12's "Choice, Conflict & Compromise at the County Level" | LESSON PLAN | ACCOMPMANYING POWER POINT
- In addition, numerous local government lesson plans and resources can be found in Carolina K-12's Database of K-12 Resources here.
- *Local Government in North Carolina* textbook (optional); available at https://www.sog.unc.edu/publications/books/local-government-north-carolina-fourth-edition-2012-0
- Invite a Local Government Official, such as a local councilmember, to class
    - Contact the local government official of your choice 2-4 weeks in advance of this lesson to explain the activity and to ask for assistance in providing students knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of local government officials. (It is important this person does not come to give a "speech," but rather is prepared to engage with the students as they present their solutions to low turnout in local elections and participate in dialogue with the class about his/her role in local government decision making.) After making an initial contact, follow up with an e-mail including the date, time, location, parking arrangements, school procedures for guests, etc.
    - Carolina K-12's Rotating Interviews with Local Government Officials is a fun format for allowing students to engage with multiple officials (think "speed-dating.) While it takes more coordination and scheduling on the teacher's part, it can be an excellent learning opportunity.

Duration
90+ minutes

Student Preparation
- Students should have a basic understanding of city and county government.
- Prior to this lesson, students should complete the "Elections in North Carolina" reading (attached) as homework.

Procedure
Warm Up: Elections in North Carolina
1. As a warm up, review the attached "Elections in North Carolina" with the class (this should be assigned as homework prior to this lesson), ensuring students retained the major points and allowing them to share their thoughts to the two questions posed:
   - Choose five elected offices in the list above that you think are most important. Explain why you feel these are the most important.
   - If you were starting a city, which type of election would you use and why?

   Additional discussion questions (optional):
   - What type of elections will be held this year?
   - Are you surprised by the number of elected officials in North Carolina? Why? Did you think it was more or less?
   - Why do you think we stagger federal, state, and local elections, rather than hold them all one day every four years?
   - Do you think voter turnout would be higher or lower if people only had to worry about voting every four years, rather than every year? Explain.
   - Aside from our leaders, what else do the citizens of North Carolina vote for? (Referendums, bonds, constitutional amendments)
   - Why do you think the nonpartisan plurality method is the most popular type of local elections?

Who's on the Ballot? County & Municipal Elections in North Carolina
2. Next, inform students that although the handout dealt with elections at the federal, state, and local level, they're going to focus on local (municipal & county) elections and elected officials. While federal elections often get the most attention, local municipal (city) and county elections are often overlooked, even though it is the local level of government that often impacts us the most. Divide students into groups of 5 and provide each student in the group with the attached "Who Do We Elect" notes sheet and one of the following elected offices: Sheriff, Register of Deeds, Board of Commissioners, Board of Education; Town/City Council, Board of Alderman, Board of City Commissioners.

3. Inform students that they will spend 5 minutes individually reading their assigned elected office. While they're quietly reading they should think about two questions:
   - What does my elected official do?
   - How does my elected official impact my life?

4. After 5 minutes, instruct students to present their answers to their group in the order listed on the provided notes sheet. Students who are listening should be taking notes on their handout while their groupmates present. (If some groups finish before others, instruct those groups to discuss which office they would like to run for and why.)

5. After the allotted time, briefly review the responsibilities of each office with the entire class by selecting students to share what they learned about each office.

Referendums (*Optional*)

6. Tell students that in addition to the elected officials they just learned about, people in municipalities and counties can often also vote on referendums. Review slide 2, which defines referendums and briefly explains the most common type, bond referendums. Discuss:
   - Why would a municipality issue bonds instead of raising taxes to pay for a project?
     - Bonds make capital projects more affordable and put less stress on the town's budget. By using bonds to finance these projects, we can pay for them in installments over time rather than needing all the money at the outset. (*Source: https://www.wakeforestnc.gov/bond-referendum-faqs.aspx*)

7. Inform students that unlike many other states, voters in North Carolina cannot vote on referendums that overturn laws passed by the General Assembly or local governments. Review slide 3, which shows the types of referendums that are allowed in North Carolina. For more information about referendums in North Carolina, visit https://canons.sog.unc.edu/limited-room-for-referendums-in-north-carolina/.

Turn Up the Turnout!

8. Next, move to slide 4 and share the definition of voter turnout in North Carolina. Ask students the following questions:
   - Which elections do you think have the highest voter turnout and why? The lowest and why?
   - What do you think the voter turnout was for the 2016 Presidential Election? The 2014 Midterm Elections? The 2015 municipal elections?

9. Move to slide 5 which shows the percentages of voter turnout for presidential and non-presidential (midterm) elections. Discuss:
   - Which presidential election had the highest voter turnout?
     - *2008. 69.83%*
   - Which non-presidential (midterm) election had the highest voter turnout?
     - *1990. 61.80%*
   - Are the percentages of voter turnout for presidential elections higher or lower than you expected? Are the percentages of voter turnout for non-presidential (midterm) elections higher or lower than you expected?
   - Why do you think presidential elections have a higher turnout than non-presidential elections?
   - What percentage of people do you think vote in municipal elections?

10. Move to slide 6 and share the slide about voter turnout in the 2015 municipal elections in North Carolina. Discuss.
    - Are you surprised that voter turnout in 2015 was so low? Why or why not?
    - What conclusions can you draw about voting in North Carolina from the turnout rate?
    - Do you think voter turnout for local elections in North Carolina is higher, lower, or average when compared to the rest of the United States?

11. Transition to slide 7 and ask students to complete the two prompts listed on the slide:
    a. Take a minute to brainstorm a list of reasons for why you think turnout is so low for local elections in North Carolina.
    b. Complete the blank: I feel _____ about voting in local elections, like those for mayor or county commissioners

12. Provide students with a few minutes to think about the prompts individually (or allow them to partner with the person next to them to discuss both prompts). After a few minutes, bring the class back together and discuss both prompts.

13. Inform students that the Knight Foundation (https://www.knightfoundation.org/) recently issued a report about low youth voter turnout in local elections. This report, titled "WHY MILLENNIALS DON'T VOTE FOR MAYOR: Barriers and Motivators for Local Voting." In that report, they asked a group of young people to complete the same sentence they just completed. Move to slide 8 and share the word cloud of the results.
    - How do the results from the Knight Foundation survey compare to our class results?
    - What are the similarities/differences?
    - Do you think young people would care more about local government if they knew how it affected their day-to-day lives?

14. The same report identified 5 obstacles that many young people face when voting in local elections. Distribute the attached "TURN UP THE TURNOUT" handout and review the instructions as a class. Answer any questions about the assignment and provide students with a due date before dividing students into 5 groups. (For larger classes, multiple groups may be assigned the same obstacle.) Once groups are assigned, provide each group with one of the attached obstacle strips:
    - Obstacle #1: IS IT THE MEDIA COVERAGE?
    - Obstacle #2: COULD PEOPLE HAVE A POOR UNDERSTANDING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT?
    - Obstacle #3: ARE PEOPLE SKEPTICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT?
    - Obstacle #4: ARE YOUNG PEOPLE NOT COMMITTED TO THEIR CITY?
    - Obstacle #5: COULD IT BE THE VOTING PROCESS?

15. On the day that the assignments are due, allow time for each group to present their action plan by sharing their social media campaign, radio ads, etc. Once all the groups have presented, debrief with the following questions:
    - Which of the five obstacles is the most difficult to overcome? Why?
    - Which of the action plans presented has the best chance of succeeding? Why?
    - Why should young people participate in local elections?
    - Do you think more people would vote if all elections were held during presidential elections? What are some pros to this approach? What are some cons?
    - In some countries people are fined if they don't vote. Do you think the United States should adopt this approach for local elections? Why or why not?

Sharing Your Solutions with Local Government Officials (optional)

16. Teachers may wish to invite a local government official, such as a county commissioner or town councilmember, to view students' presentations and discuss with them ways they can help boost turn out in local elections in their communities. Another option is to have students present to their local town council or board of county commissioners. See Carolina K-12's Exploring the Importance of Your Local Voice & Vote with First Vote for suggestions.

Additional Resources
- Municipal Elections–Odd Year and Odd Man Out: https://canons.sog.unc.edu/municipal-elections-odd-year-and-odd-man-out/
- In the U.S., Almost No One Votes in Local Elections: https://www.citylab.com/equity/2016/11/in-the-us-almost-no-one-votes-in-local-elections/505766/
- Local Voter Drop-off: https://www.knightfoundation.org/features/votelocal/#backstory
- Local Voter Turnout for Local Elections is Painfully Low: Here Is What's At Stake if You Don't Vote: http://www.businessinsider.com/voter-turnout-for-local-elections-is-painfully-low-here-is-whats-at-stake-if-you-dont-vote-2016-10

Name: _____

Elections in North Carolina

The North Carolina State Board of Elections aids counties in administering election events across the state every year. These elections can be broadly divided into two categories: **Statewide general elections** (often simply called "general elections") and **municipal elections**. As stipulated by law, statewide general elections occur in even-numbered years, are held on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November. Most municipal elections occur in odd-numbered years; however, some are conducted during even-numbered years. Municipalities are allowed some latitude in planning their elections; as such, North Carolina provides for four different methods of municipal election. Thus, the date of the election for these municipalities depends on the municipal election type and whether their election is held during an odd or even year.

Statewide General Elections

Statewide general elections take place every two years on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November. This means that they can occur as early as November 2 or as late as November 8, depending on when the first Monday falls. Statewide general elections always occur in even-numbered years. Notably, every other statewide general election has the office of President of the United States on the ballot.

Although the presidency is the most notable contest voted on during statewide general elections, the North Carolina General Statutes outline other national, state, and county offices to be voted on during a statewide general election. Those offices are:

Office	Term Length
United States Senator	6 years
United States Representative	2 years
Governor	4 years
Lieutenant Governor	4 years
Secretary of State	4 years
State Auditor	4 years
State Treasurer	4 years
Superintendent of Public Instruction	4 years
Attorney General	4 years
Commissioner of Agriculture	4 years
Commissioner of Labor	4 years
Commissioner of Insurance	4 years
All other state officers whose terms last four years.	4 years

All other state officers whose terms are not specified	2 years
North Carolina State Senator	2 years
North Carolina State Representative	2 years
Appellate Court Judge	8 years
Superior Court Judge	8 years
District Court Judge	4 years
District Attorney	4 years
County Commissioner	2 years
Clerk of Superior Court	4 years
Register of Deeds	4 years
Sheriff	4 years
Coroner	4 years
County Treasurer (Only elected in certain counties)	2 years
All other elected county officials	2 years

Choose five elected offices in the list above that you think are most important. Explain why you feel these are the most important:

During odd-numbered years (so as to alternate with statewide general elections) most municipal elections are held to elect the governing officials (mayor, city council, town council, etc.) of cities, villages and towns across North Carolina. Not all municipalities will have an election in a given odd-numbered year. A few municipalities elect their officials in even-numbered years. Although municipal elections are conducted by county boards of election, only residents of the municipality are qualified to vote in the election. These voters must have resided in the municipality for at least **30 days prior to the date of the election**.

North Carolina law allows for four different types of municipal election methods. These four methods have been outlined by the North Carolina Legislature. A municipality's chosen method of election is codified in their charter, but must be one of the four types outlined by the State in order to comply with state law.

Election Method	Description
1. Partisan primary and election method	This method is similar to the primary and statewide general election held in North Carolina during even-numbered years. If more candidates file for a party nomination than the number of seats for that contest, then these candidates must compete in a partisan primary election that is held in September. If there is no clear winner in a primary contest, there may need to be a second primary for the contest that will be held in October. The general election (with one candidate from each party on the ballot) is then held in November.
2. Nonpartisan primary and election method	These contests are non-partisan, which means that each candidate's party affiliation will not be printed on the ballot. If the number of candidates for the contest is greater than twice the number of seats to be elected, there will be a primary election. The primary will trim the number of candidates down to twice the number of seats. For example, if there are 7 candidates running for 2 seats, the top 4 vote-getters in the primary would advance to the general election. If needed, the primary would occur in October before the general election in November.
3. Nonpartisan plurality method	*This is the most common municipal election method.* All candidates for a position are listed on the ballot, without party affiliation. The top vote-getters are elected, regardless of whether or not they received a majority. If the contest is for more than one seat, the person or persons receiving the next-highest vote totals are also elected. For example, if there are 7 candidates running for 2 seats, the candidates that finish first and second are elected.
4. Nonpartistan election and runoff method	This method is largely the same as the nonpartisan plurality method, with one important distinction. If a winner in these elections does not receive a majority (50%+1) of the votes, the candidate who came in second is allowed to ask for a runoff. In these runoff elections, all candidates are eliminated except the plurality winner and the runner-up. Those two then run head-to-head in the runoff, with the winner being given the seat.

If you were starting a city, which type of election would you use and why?

Sheriff

With few exceptions, today's sheriffs are elected officials who serve as a chief law-enforcement officer for a county. Although the duties of the sheriff vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, the sheriff's office is generally active in all three branches of the criminal justice system: law enforcement, the courts and corrections.

Law Enforcement: Most sheriffs' offices have a responsibility for law enforcement, a function that dates all the way back to the origins of the office in feudal England. Although the authority of the sheriff varies from state to state, a sheriff always has the power to make arrests within his or her own county.

Many sheriffs' offices also perform routine patrol functions such as traffic control, accident investigations, and transportation of prisoners. Larger departments may perform criminal investigations or engage in other specialized law enforcement activities. Some unusually large sheriffs' offices may have an air patrol (including fixed-wing aircraft or helicopters), a mounted patrol or a marine patrol at their disposal.

Court Duties: In every state in which the office exists, sheriffs are responsible for maintaining the safety and security of the court. A sheriff or deputy may be required to attend all court sessions; to act as bailiff; to take charge of juries whenever they are outside the courtroom; to serve court papers such as subpoenas, summonses, warrants, writs, or civil process; to extradite prisoners; to enforce money decrees (such as those relating to the garnishment or sale of property); to collect taxes; or to perform other court-related functions.

Jail Administration: Most sheriffs' offices maintain and operate county jails, detention centers, detoxification centers and community corrections facilities such as work-release group homes and halfway houses. Sheriffs, and the jail officers under their authority, are responsible for supervising inmates and protecting their rights. They are also responsible for providing inmates with food, clothing, exercise, recreation and medical services.

Register of Deeds

The office of Register of Deeds originated in the 1600s – the earliest days of North Carolina. In an effort to attract more people to the region, Lords Proprietors offered individuals grants of land. Written rules were established to offer protection to the new landowners, and registers of deeds were appointed to record the land grants.

Today, North Carolina statues stipulate that voters in each county elect a Register of Deeds. As legal custodian of land transactions and other miscellaneous documents, the Register of Deeds office files and records deeds, deeds of trust, uniform commercial codes (UCCs), corporations, assumed names, military records, and other legal papers. The Register of Deeds also records and maintains birth & death certificates, issues marriage licenses, and administers the oath to notaries public. (A Notary's duty is to screen the signers of important documents for their true identity, their willingness to sign without duress or intimidation, and their awareness of the contents of the document or transaction.) The Register of Deeds has the responsibility and liability for canceling deeds of trust and mortgages, and indexing and cross indexing all documents filed.

Board of County Commissioners

Each county is governed by an elected board of county commissioners. These boards range in size from three to nine commissioners. In most counties, commissioners serve four-year terms, but a few counties use two-year terms or a combination of two- and four-year terms.

The board of commissioners sets the county property tax rate and adopts the budget each year.

The board also establishes county policies by adopting resolutions and local laws (ordinances). In North Carolina, all counties use the council-manager form of government. The commissioners hire a professional manager to oversee the day-to-day operations of the county government, while the commissioners focus on county policies.

Commissioners are not the sole policy makers in county government, however. Because the sheriff and register of deeds are also elected officials, they have independent authority to adopt specific policies for their departments. In addition, several independent or nearly independent local boards have responsibility for such areas as alcoholic beverage control, elections, mental health, public health and social services. These boards appoint directors and have the authority to make local policies. Counties were given authority to consolidate human services under the direct oversight of the county board of commissioners and the county manager. School boards are separately elected by the citizens and have responsibility for education policies and setting the school system's budget. None of these other local boards have the power to tax citizens, however. That authority rests solely in the purview of the board of county commissioners.

Board of Education

County and municipal Boards of Education (or School Boards) are the local governing body of the public school system. The school board sets policy for the school system implemented by the superintendent and administrative staff. These policies can include rules governing employee behavior, school reassignment, district lines, dress codes, personnel decisions, consolidation or closing of schools, and more. The board also adopts an annual budget proposal that includes its request for local funding from the county Board of Commissioners and/or Municipal Council/Board as well as its plan for using state and federal funds. The school board does not have taxing authority.

The North Carolina State Board of Education, as legislated by the North Carolina General Assembly, provides statewide public school governance. The state is responsible for the majority of the district's funding as well as oversight of core academic curricula.

Town/City Council, Board of Alderman, Board of City Commissioners

An elected board – called the city or town council, the board of commissioners or the board of aldermen – is the governing body in each N.C. municipality. The number of members on the board, method of election and whether they represent districts or hold at-large seats are determined by the municipal charter.

The form of government also is set forth in the municipal charter; there are two major forms and one variation. The first form is **mayor-council**, where there is not a manager. The mayor and the council, acting together, make decisions about services, revenues and expenditures. All personnel come under the board with this form of government.
A variation on this form is the mayor-council with an administrator. A board usually hires an administrator when the daily operations become too much for the elected officials to oversee.

With the other major form of government, the **council-manager form**, the mayor and council set policy and hire a manager to implement their policies. A manager has specified statutory authority, including hiring and firing of employees. Typically, the council also hires the attorney directly and sometimes the clerk.

North Carolina mayors do not have veto power over council actions (with the exception of one city where the mayor has limited veto power). The mayor may or may not vote on matters before the council, again depending on the charter.

Governing boards may organize themselves in various ways; most have committees that make recommendations to the full board.

Municipal budgets. One of the major responsibilities of every municipal governing board is to adopt the annual municipal budget, which determines what services will be provided and at what level. The board must set the municipal property tax rate when it adopts is annual budget. By law, all North Carolina budgets must be balanced, and there is a state agency that provides oversight over municipal finances.

Municipal revenues and expenditures. The major sources of municipal revenues are the ad valorem property tax and local option sales taxes. User fees for services, such as water and sewer, support the infrastructure, operational and maintenance costs of the systems themselves.

Name _____

Directions: Read about your assigned elected official. While you're reading, answer the following questions in 1-2 sentences:
- What does my elected official do?
- How does my elected official impact my life?

Sheriff:

Register of Deeds:

Board of County Commissioners:

Board of Education:

Town/City Council, Board of Alderman, Board of Commissioners:

WHY MILLENNIALS DON'T VOTE FOR MAYOR

Obstacles to Local Voting

Obstacle #1: IS IT THE MEDIA COVERAGE?
Our focus groups found that lack of information about the candidates and issues was the biggest barrier millennials experience to local voting. This contrasts with national elections where they are bombarded with information. Other studies suggest cutbacks to local media may lead to less civic engagement; voters have less information in local elections than in national ones, so they're less likely to vote.

WHY MILLENNIALS DON'T VOTE FOR MAYOR
Obstacles to Local Voting

Obstacle #2: COULD PEOPLE HAVE A POOR UNDERSTANDING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT?
Millennials don't see how local government affects their lives. Millennials in the focus groups asked whether things like schools and public transit "count" as local government. They have a genuine passion for local issues, but many don't make the connection between these things and local government, so don't see why voting for local government matters.

WHY MILLENNIALS DON'T VOTE FOR MAYOR
Obstacles to Local Voting

Obstacle #3: ARE PEOPLE SKEPTICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT?
Many participants viewed local government as an afterthought at best but corrupt at worst. The conversations echoed recent studies showing low levels of trust in government. These millennials engage in their community in many ways, like volunteering and supporting local charities, but are skeptical of government as a lever for change.

WHY MILLENNIALS DON'T VOTE FOR MAYOR
Obstacles to Local Voting

Obstacle #4: ARE YOUNG PEOPLE NOT COMMITTED TO THEIR CITY?
Millennials born and raised in the community were more eager to vote in future local elections. As we know, millennials move a lot more than older adults. Those who had recently moved to the city often said it was hard to get to know local civic life and feel connected to what's going on around them. Those planning to remain in the community for years to come were more likely to believe in the importance of civic engagement.


WHY MILLENNIALS DON'T VOTE FOR MAYOR
Obstacles to Local Voting

Obstacle #5: COULD IT BE THE VOTING PROCESS?
Much attention is given to making it easier to vote—and that's awesome. But millennials said they were pretty clear when it comes to knowing how to register and identify their voting location. This could be because we spoke to millennials who voted in the last national election, but for them it's not the process of voting keeping them away from the polls.

Directions: Leaders in your city and county are worried about the lack of turnout for local elections. A study by the Knight Foundation found that there are five obstacles to voting in local elections. Your group has been hired by your local government to help tackle one of the five obstacles. Using information learned in class and your own creative thinking, develop a media campaign to overcome this obstacle to TURN UP THE TURNOUT in local elections!

TURN UP THE TURNOUT
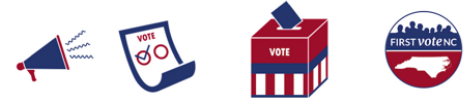
Your Assigned Obstacle: _____

1. **As a group, read the description provided of your assigned obstacle.**
   - How or why does your obstacle depress turnout in local elections?
   - Are there examples of this obstacle you've seen in your own community? Or, can you relate to why this is an obstacle? Explain.
   - What is most problematic about this obstacle and why is it important to try and "fix it?"

2. **Brainstorm and Plan:**
   - What are some possible ways to address, reduce and/or counteract your assigned obstacle to voting in local elections? What information or encouragement do young voters need?
   - How can you convey this information in a cool and relevant way that people your age will actually pay attention to and act on? What actually motivates people to listen and take action these days?
   - Are there local government officials or departments who you could collaborate with (e.g. Mayor, city council, School Board, Sheriff, etc.)? Who and what might you need from them? Are there other people or organizations who might be able to help?

3. **Create it**! Finalize what you want to share and how you want to share it. Create a catchy name for your campaign (i.e., MTV's "Rock to Vote") then get busy designing your product! Examples you might choose include:
   - **Social media campaign** – note which platforms you will target, and share at least 5 posts (texts and images) that you will circulate
   - **Podcast** – tell an informative and unique story by creating a Podcast at least 5 minutes long (you will turn in the text of your Podcast as well as play the recording for class); you might want to check out GovLove at http://elgl.org/govlove/ for local government Podcast examples!
   - **Art** (poster, bumper sticker, mural, billboard, etc.) – you will turn in at least one design that contains graphics and text
   - **Clothing/accessories** (t-shirts, hats, bracelets, buttons, etc.) These can be created digitally or on paper. You will turn in at least two item designs.
   - **Performance** (i.e., commercial, skit, flashmob, etc. that can be performed before public events or on local TV) – you will turn in the script and perform this for class
   - **Remix or Meme–** splice together snippets from your favorite videos, celebrities, images, text, etc. to create a new message that conveys what you want to get across
   - **Other idea?** Your creativity is encouraged, but share your idea with your teacher for approval first!

Questions/Brainstorming: