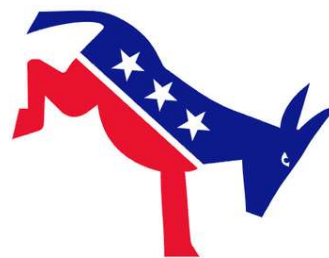


# Homework Menu #2

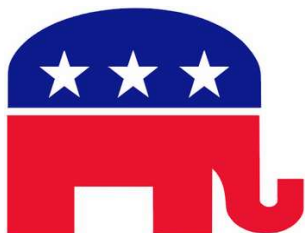
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**Directions:** For homework this month you will be working on and completing projects of your choice. Below is a list of projects that you may choose from. If you have an idea of your own which is not listed, check with Russ for permission

to try it. As you complete each project you will have a chance to share it with your classmates. Some projects may take more time than others to finish. To keep track of the time you spend on your homework projects, you and your parents will complete a homework time sheet that is to be turned in each Friday. When you finish one project, begin working on your next project as soon as you can. All projects will be due no later than the nearest Friday to the end of the month. At that time a new menu will be given out.



**Focus of the Month:** Political Science, Civics, and Elections

**Skills included:** Observation, research, analysis, note taking, interpreting/infering, written and oral communication, reading comprehension, synthesis, creativity, and artistic representation.



**Project Menu:**

- Watching the news and listening to people talk about elections might make you think that America has just two political parties, the Democrats and the Republicans. They are the two major parties and our system of government does favor them. However, you may be surprised to find that there are many more parties than these two. What's more, some of these parties have been around for a very long time. Borrow your parent's voter's pamphlet or get on the Internet and find out just how many parties there are that have candidates running for President. A resource that may help you is the Directory of US Political Parties Website at <http://www.politics1.com/parties.htm> Make a poster that lists the names of many of the political parties, their candidates' names, and at least one reason they are trying to become President. Bonus idea: include pictures of as many of the candidates as possible.



- Politics has its own set of words that can sometimes sound funny, have interesting meanings, and are often used only when someone is talking about elections. Read some articles about elections, some political advertisements, and watch some news stories about the elections on TV. Write down as many words as you can that have to do with politics and elections. Next, with the help of your parents, use a dictionary to find out what each of the words mean. Use what you've learned to author your own "Political Dictionary." Try and include at least 15 words that are unique to politics and elections. One online source that may help is *Enchanted Learning's "US Election Glossary."* It can be found on the Internet at: <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/election/glossary.shtml>
- Elections aren't always just about people and candidates. Sometimes they are also about ideas. In the state of Washington, people can create an initiative if they have an idea that they think would make a good law or change an existing one to make it even better. They do this by writing their idea in a way that everyone can understand. Next they get a "ton" of signatures on a petition from other people that also think it is a good idea. When they get enough signatures, their idea can be placed on a ballot for everyone in the state to vote on. If it passes then it becomes a law. Think about something you would like to make better at our school. Check with a few of your friends, with your teacher, and with your parents to "test the waters," to see if it is a good idea. Then create a petition for other students to sign. Get signatures from 8% of the class (the same number as is

required by the Washington State Constitution) then present it to the teacher. If all of the signatures are validated you can create a ballot and have the class vote on your initiative. Bonus idea: create some posters that you can place around the room to try and convince students to vote for your initiative.

- Go to *The Democracy Project* website at <http://pbskids.org/democracy/> Choose two of the activity areas to complete. Be sure you read everything on the webpages. When you are done create a presentation to share with the rest of the class that shows what you have learned. Bonus idea: complete all of the activities including the E-Cards. Note: *This website was created for the 2012 election and some of the information is based on campaigns for that election year.*
- Find out what the educational policies are of the presidential candidates from the two major political parties. Decide which candidate you like best based upon what you find out. Practice trying to persuade your family members to “endorse” your selected candidate. When you feel good about your arguments and presentation, come to class and try to convince your fellow classmates to endorse the candidate you think has the best educational policies. One webpage that may help can be found at <http://2016.candidate-comparison.org/?compare=Clinton&vs=Trump&on=education> Bonus idea: write a persuasive letter to the editor of the newspaper that tells all of the good points about the educational policy of the candidate you would like to see elected; include our class’ endorsement if you can. Bonus idea 2: find out and compare the educational policies of some of the third party candidates with those of the two major political party candidates.
- Don’t like what you see on TV? Think you have a better idea on how to run our country? Well, give it a try! Create a political party that includes a platform that tells all of the things your party stands for. Be sure to include policies for categories such as education, families and children, pets, playgrounds, etc. After you have written your party’s platform, create some posters and perhaps a flyer to “get the word out.” Let people know that you and your political party “have a better idea!” Bonus idea: use a video camera to create a television ad promoting your party and its candidate for President (is it you?).

Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



**Expectations:** It is expected that chosen projects will be finished completely, neatly, and in a timely manner. It is also expected that students will gain a depth of understanding about their project’s topic upon completion. Further, while students are encouraged to work on one project at a time, it is entirely possible for students to complete any number of projects in the timeframe given. Students should also remember to keep homework interesting by challenging themselves to learn as much as possible and to do the best work they can.

**Important:** These projects will likely require mutual involvement of students and their parents. To ensure the quality and depth of understanding expected, they likely cannot be completed in one evening prior to the due date. Each student will have to use their time wisely, doing a little bit at a time until a project is complete. Use the Project Planning Form to help you successfully complete your project on time.

