



The Seattle Times Newspapers In Education presents

# Electing the President: *A Guide to the Election Process*

Produced in partnership with the League of Women Voters

Thank you for joining our continuing Wednesday series about how we elect our leaders and the presidential election, produced in partnership with the League of Women Voters through November 5. Last spring's chapters are posted online at [lwvwa.org](http://lwvwa.org) and will help students of all ages to understand the people, parties and issues regarding our election process.

## Week One: Getting Started

The United States (U.S.) presidential election is the biggest event in American politics. It's an exciting and complicated process that begins immediately after the preceding election and doesn't end until the voters have their say. It's easy to be overwhelmed, which is why the League of Women Voters produced this series based largely on the league's publication, *Choosing the President 2008: A Citizen's Guide to the Electoral Process* (The Lyons Press, 2008).

Last spring we focused on the people and the roles they play in an election. We discussed how to be critical consumers of the information you receive during an election and included a history of voting rights, the political parties and campaign financing.

This fall, we will cover the *process* — the steps and events that take place in order to ensure a fair and honest election, where each person's vote counts. We'll talk about how to become an informed voter, how to watch a debate and how to understand some of the complex issues on the ballot in our own state

as well as on the national stage. The election process should not be confusing to anyone — it is our hope that this series will not only clarify some of the questions that many people have about our process, but that it will propel you to share that knowledge with anyone you meet who is looking to learn more.

## Learn More:

- 📖 Visit [lwvwa.org](http://lwvwa.org) to review the past articles on Electing the President. Create a KWL chart, showing what you Know and what you still Want to know about electing the president in the U.S. Create a column for what you have Learned, and fill this in as you read this series over the next 10 weeks.
- 📖 With your classmates, make a list of all of the words that come to mind when you think about a presidential election. With a partner, create a collage using some of these words and cut out any images from The Seattle Times that help to visually show what you believe in and know about the election process. Discuss these collages as a class.
- 📖 Search the online archives at [seattletimes.com](http://seattletimes.com) for articles about elections in other countries in the world. Create a visual aid showing the similarities and differences between the U.S. and a country of your choosing. Make a list of questions you still have about the people and the processes involved in each case.

## The League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters is an organization that does hands-on work to safeguard democracy. The league helps people learn how to participate in the political process. It also helps them learn about public policy issues that affect their lives.

The league is nonpartisan. This means it does not support or oppose candidates or political parties. Sometimes it does support or oppose governmental policies or ballot issues.

The league was started in 1920, when women first got the right to vote. Today's league includes men as well as women; any citizen aged 18 or older can join. The league works at all levels of government: local, state and national.

How does the League of Women Voters help during the election season? Many of its members register voters and answer voters' questions. Others work on guides to the ballot issues and candidates. Speakers address groups on a variety of topics ranging from the mechanics of American elections at the federal, state and local levels to voting trends among young people. The league also holds public forums on the ballot issues and sponsors or moderates debates among candidates. Visit the league's Web sites at [washingtonvoter.org/](http://washingtonvoter.org/) (state) and [vote411.org/](http://vote411.org/) (national) for helpful information about the elections and voting.



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