Welcome to our series about electing our leaders and the presidential election. Running twice a week through mid-October, this series will help students in the classroom— as well as citizens of all ages—to understand the election process.

The presidential election is the biggest event in American politics. It’s an exciting and complicated process. In this series, you’ll learn how to become an informed voter, how to watch debates and how to understand some of the complex issues on the ballot in our state.

The presidential campaign is an elaborate production, with candidates crisscrossing the country and blanketing the airwaves with poll-tested political commercials. The goal during the fall is to appeal to as many different kinds of people in as many different ways as possible.

Before we delve into the upcoming election, we want to make sure everyone who is eligible has the opportunity to vote. It’s estimated that 1 million potentially eligible citizens are not registered in Washington. Today — September 25 — is National Voter Registration Day. Organizations from all over the United States are supporting this effort. Don’t be left out!

REGISTER SO YOU CAN ROCK THE VOTE

Do you care about: Keeping crime low in your neighborhood? Healthcare for your family and friends? Funding for sports, art and music programs? Financial aid for college or finding a job when you graduate?

The people who run your school board, work in city hall and represent you in Congress are making decisions every day that impact your life. Voting is your chance to choose the decision-makers and tell them what you want, but first you must register to vote.

To register to vote in Washington State, a person must be:
1. A citizen of the United States
2. A legal Washington State resident
3. 18 years old by Election Day
4. Not presently denied voting rights due to a felony conviction

If you have questions about your eligibility, contact your county elections office. In King County call 206-296-VOTE (8683). Look up election offices outside of King County at lwvwa.org.

To learn more or register for Newspapers In Education, please email us at nie@seattletimes.com or call 206/652-6290.

WHAT IS THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS?
The League’s primary mission is to engage all Americans in the election process — from defending voters’ rights, to helping voters learn what the candidates think about the issues that impact every American’s life. The League is a community-based nonpartisan political organization. The League does not support or oppose candidates or political parties. The League has fought since 1920 to improve our systems of government and public policies through education and advocacy.

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?
Join passionate men and women in the important work of keeping your community strong, safe, and vibrant. In King County, seattlelwv.org; outside of King County find your local League at lwvwa.org.

Prefer paper? Print the form in one of several languages at http://bit.ly/P13wXb, or request a form from your county elections office. If you mail the form back, make sure it is postmarked by October 8. You may register in person at the office through October 29.

If your signature has changed over time, you should update your registration using a paper form. Mail-in ballots are validated by comparing the signature on the back of the envelope to the registration signature on file.

NEXT: THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

In partnership with MyVote and MyVote App

MyVote is the official voter registration app of Washington State.

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