How Voting Works

3rd Grade · Social Studies

Read about elections, then answer the questions

Name _____ Date _____

An **election** is a time when people make a choice together by voting. In the United States, people vote to choose leaders such as mayors, governors and members of Congress. Sometimes they also vote on rules for their town or state.

Who can vote? **Citizens** who are 18 or older can vote in national elections. In most states, they must sign up, or **register**, before Election Day. Kids cannot vote in these elections yet, but they can learn how it works and practice.

Election Day in the United States is the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. In 2026 it falls on **Tuesday, November 3**. Many voters go to a **polling place**, such as a school or library. Some states also let people vote early or mail in their votes.

Each voter marks a **ballot**, a paper or screen that lists the choices. A **candidate** is a person who wants to be chosen. Voting is **secret**, so no one has to tell how they voted. When the votes are counted, the choice with the most votes usually wins.

1. What is an election?

2. How old must a citizen be to vote in a national election?

3. When is Election Day in 2026?

4. Why do you think voting is kept secret?

5. Name one place that can be used as a polling place.

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Vocabulary Match and Safari Challenge

Name _____ Date _____

Write the letter of the meaning next to each word.

1. ballot	_____	A. a place where people go to vote
2. candidate	_____	B. a time when people choose by voting
3. citizen	_____	C. a paper or screen where a voter marks a choice
4. polling place	_____	D. to sign up so you are able to vote
5. register	_____	E. a person who wants to be chosen
6. election	_____	F. a member of a country

Safari Challenge · Family Mock Election

Hold a vote at home! The question: **Which fall treat should we make this week?** Cut out the ballots, have each voter mark one choice in secret, fold it, and drop it in a box. Then count the votes with tally marks and make a bar graph.

OFFICIAL FAMILY BALLOT

- ☐ Pumpkin muffins
- ☐ Apple crisp
- ☐ Popcorn balls

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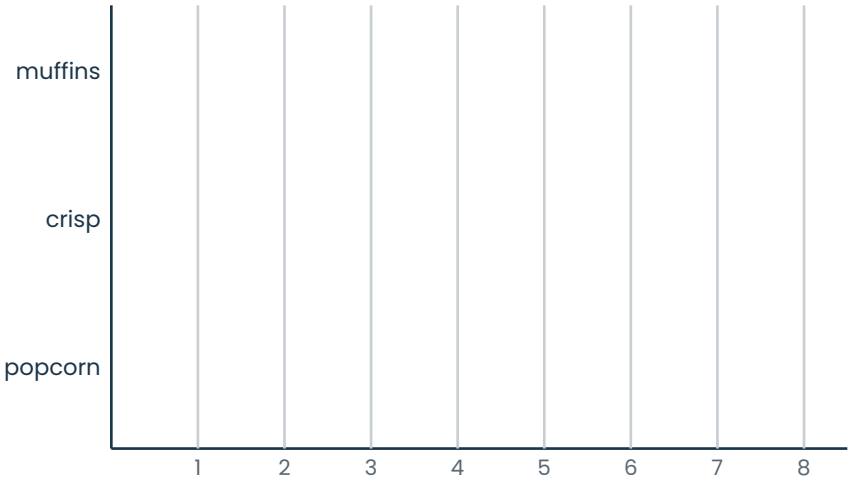
Tally and Graph

Pumpkin muffins _____

Apple crisp _____

Popcorn balls _____



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Answer Key

1. An election is a time when people make a choice together by voting.

2. A citizen must be 18 or older.

3. Tuesday, November 3, 2026 (the Tuesday after the first Monday in November).

4. Sample: so each person can choose freely without being pressured or teased.

5. A school or a library (other community buildings also count).

Vocabulary: 1-C, 2-E, 3-F, 4-A, 5-D, 6-B

Safari Challenge: Results will vary. Check that the tally marks match the number of ballots and that each bar reaches the right number.

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