



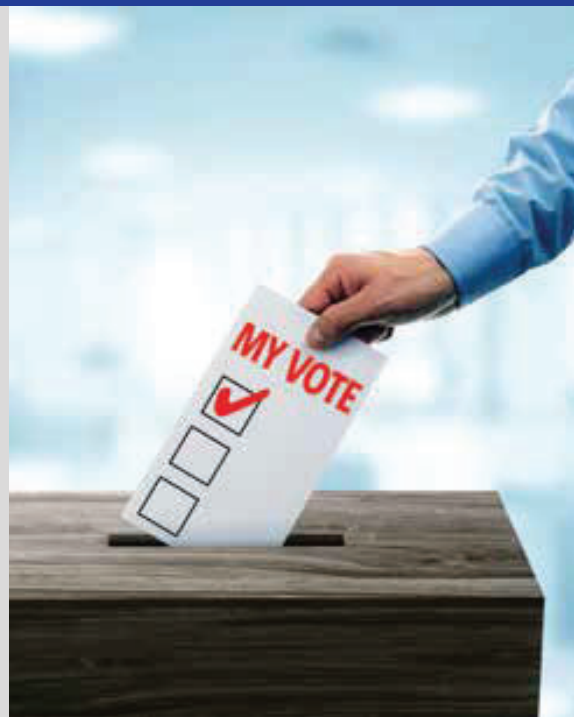
How do elections impact our democratic republic?

Themes: Elections, Civic Virtue, Freedom of Speech, the Media, Patriotism, Rights and Responsibilities

Possible locations to reference: U.S. Supreme Court, Museum of American History

Fair and frequent elections are the foundation of democratic republics where the people have the ultimate say over who represents them in government. James Madison wrote in Federalist No. 51, “A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions.” There are around 500,000 elected officials in the U.S. serving in state legislatures, municipal, town, and county governments, and school districts and special districts.

- Are government elections always fair? Why or why not?
 - Read about the history of elections using the QR code to the right
- Should the Constitution be changed to place term limits on members of Congress? Why or why not?
- Is holding elections for members of the House of Representatives every two years too frequent? Why or why not?
- What influence, if any, does money have in elections?
- Are voter I.D. laws constitutional? Why or why not?
 - Read more about voter ID laws from the NCSL using the QR code to the right
- Why is your vote important?
- Want to contact your elected officials?
 - Use the QR code to the right to find out how



History of Elections, Encyclopedia Britannica



Voter ID Laws, National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL)



How to Contact Your Elected Officials, USA.gov

We The People Course Leader Journal

How should we serve our country?

Themes: Citizenship, Civic Duty, Foreign Relations. Freedom, Patriotism, Sacrifice

Possible locations to reference: Arlington National Cemetery, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, Korean War Memorial, WWII Memorial

In an editorial published in February 2019, the New York Times called for an end to the war in Afghanistan. Quoted in the article was Barbara Lee, a Democratic representative from California who was the only representative to vote against the war and said at the time, “We must be careful not to embark on an open-ended war with neither an exit strategy nor a focused target. We cannot repeat past mistakes.”

As of 2019, the United States military is engaged in counterterrorism missions in 80 nations on six continents. According to the NYT, “the price tag, which includes the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and increased spending on veterans’ care, will reach \$5.9 trillion by the end of fiscal year 2019. Since nearly all of that money has been borrowed, the total cost with interest will be substantially higher...It has claimed an estimated half a million lives around the globe. It is long past time for a reappraisal.



"End the War in Afghanistan"
NYT Editorial



War Powers Act

- Do you agree or disagree with the editorial? Why or why not?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of our current policy in Afghanistan?
- In times of war, do you believe it is your civic duty to join the military?
- At present, only young men can be drafted. Should young women be required to sign up for the selective service? Why or why not?
- Should all citizens provide one-year of service to our country by the age of 21? Why or why not? If yes, what examples of service should count?
- What is the role of Congress in declaring war? What is the role of the president in declaring war?
- What has been the impact, if any, of the War Powers Resolution of 1973?
 - Read more about the War Powers Resolution (also called the War Powers Act) above

We The People Course Leader Journal

Is preservation a political act?

Themes: History, Preservation, Media

Possible locations to reference: Mount Vernon, National Archives, Library of Congress, Smithsonian Museums



In January 2019, the United States officially withdrew from UNESCO. This is the second time the US has quit the organization, after it did so in 1984 under Ronald Reagan, who wanted to prevent it from recognizing historical sites in the Soviet Union. The US rejoined in 2003. Read the full article about this using the QR code below.

This time, the US and Israel (who also withdrew) criticized UNESCO for admitting Palestine as a member state, which it did in 2011, and for recognizing a number of ancient Jewish sites as Palestinian heritage sites.

The UNESCO label has also been met with some controversy here in the US. Mount Vernon was famously denied in its application because the site is too closely tied to George Washington and according to an advisor, “UNESCO as a general rule doesn't commemorate presidents or chiefs of state because then you get into discussions of whose president is better than someone else's president.”

In the 1990s, President Clinton used Yellowstone National Park's classification as a UNESCO World Heritage in Danger status to shut down nearby mines that environmentalists said would damage the park. This move infuriated conservatives who saw the UN as having too much influence on domestic affairs.

- How would you present Mount Vernon as a World Heritage Site that is representative of all periods, all times and all cultures of humanity?
 - Read more about Mount Vernon's UNESCO bid using the QR code below.
- Should governments use UNESCO status to protect historical sites from damage caused by economic development, war, climate change, neglect, or other threats?
- UNESCO strives to be as politically neutral as possible. Do you think this is possible? Why or why not?
- How do governments, both local and national, decide what history gets preserved? Can you think of local or national examples that have caused controversy or discussion?



Article about the US withdrawal from UNESCO (2019)



Mount Vernon article from the Washington Post (2009)