

Station 1: Voting

Directions: For each station, read the handout with your partner and then complete each of the steps below:

- DISCUSS: Is your station about something you SHOULD do or something you HAVE to do?
- DISCUSS: What *level of community* does your station involve? Are there several levels?
- WRITE: Summarize the most important parts of your station with a few sentences or a political cartoon/drawing.
- WRITE: Briefly describe how the sources after the reading connect to the information you read. What is the message of these sources?

22 nations around the world make voting mandatory (required) for its citizens, often starting at age 18. Several of these countries are in Latin America. In Australia, failure to vote can result in a \$20 fine. Altogether, an estimated 744 million people live in nations with compulsory (required) voting laws.

In the United States you must be a citizen in order to have the right to vote, BUT VOTING is NOT required. However, voting is one of the most important ways to express yourself in a **democracy** with **self-government**. It's such an important right that our **Congress** and **State Legislatures** have had to **AMEND** (change) the **U.S. Constitution** several times to guarantee voting rights for people who couldn't vote because of the law in different states. Because of **states' rights** in the U.S. Constitution every state still has many different rules on voting. For example, in Maine and Vermont a citizen doesn't lose the right to vote even if they're in jail! However, in 12 U.S. states, people who commit **felonies** (serious crimes), have their right to vote taken away and may never get the right back again.



"We in America do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who **participate**." - *Thomas Jefferson, one of the founding fathers and signers of the Declaration of Independence.*

"Let each citizen remember at the moment he is offering his vote...that he is executing one of the most solemn trusts in human society for which he is accountable to God and his country." - *Samuel Adams, one of the founding fathers and signers of the Declaration of Independence.*