

App Developer: Overcoming Obstacles to Voting

Adventure Description:

In this adventure, you will think like an app developer and create an app to help cities increase voter turnout by helping people overcome obstacles to voting.

Activity

Step 1: Background on Obstacles to Voting (10 minutes)

- Show [Video: Overcome Obstacles to Voting](#).
- As a class, discuss how, in the past, not every U.S. citizen had the right to vote. Black people and women didn't originally have voting rights. Next, discuss how, currently, every U.S. citizen has the right to vote in America. But, not every citizen has equal access to voting. This means that there are barriers or obstacles to voting.
- Ask students to name some obstacles to voting. (e.g., Not having a license, not speaking English, not having transportation.)
- Explain to students that it is a problem that not every U.S. citizen is able to vote in the U.S. due to obstacles. For example, only 60% of Americans vote in U.S. presidential elections. This means 132 million people do not vote!
- Ask students why it could be a problem that so many people do not vote. (e.g., Millions of people's voices are not heard, leaders are only chosen by people who have the ability to vote.)

Step 2: Activity Set Up (5 minutes)

- Explain to students that they will create an app for city officials to use that gives citizens information on potential obstacles they could face and how to overcome them. This type of app is an educational app, rather than a game. Its goal is to increase voter turnout.
- Provide students with [Handout: Creating an App](#). As a class, review the steps to create their app.
- Explain to students that they will create a wireframe of an app. A wireframe is a series of pictures and words that show what an app will look like once it is built. Discuss why an app developer would design a wireframe before building an app (e.g., to get feedback from others, to plan what the app will look like and how users will get from one screen to the next).
- Next provide students with [Handout: Sources](#). Explain to students that they will use these images when they create their app. They can cut the images out to use for their app or use them as inspiration.
- Divide students into pairs to complete the activity. Students can also work independently or in small groups.

Please contact Allison Bischoff, Director of Customer Service, at allison@rozzylearningcompany.com or 314-272-2560 with questions.

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Step 3: Plan the App (15 minutes)

- Have students complete Step 1 and plan their app. Remind students to use their source sheets during this step.
- As students are working on this steps, discuss the following:
 - Are there obstacles to voting that occurred in the past that still exist today?
 - What types of obstacles might people encounter in your community?
 - Can you overcome obstacles to voting by using technology or other inventions?

Step 4: Create the Screens for the App (15+ minutes)

- After students plan their app, it is time for them to design their screens. Provide students with colored pens, pencils, or markers.
- Remind students that they must use the source sheet to back up their ideas about voting obstacles and how to overcome voting obstacles.

Step 4: Class Presentation and Discussion (10 minutes) (This step can occur on a different day)

- Have students present their apps to the class. Then, have a concluding class discussion about how not all U.S. citizens have equal access to voting. Even though laws are in place to ensure women and minorities have the right to vote, not everyone has the ability to vote.
- Ask students what they think the consequence of voter inequality is over time. Examples include:
 - Our country was created as a democracy, which means that people elect leaders who will represent them in government. If some people are unable to vote to elect their leaders, their interests are more likely to be ignored.
 - If wealthier Americans continue to turn out to vote at significantly higher rates compared to lower-income Americans, then the the interests of wealthier Americans are predominately listened to. This is a problem because wealthier Americans may have different interests with regards to taxes or government services compared to lower-income Americans.

Materials List

Provided online:

- Video: Understanding Voting Obstacles
- Handout: Creating an App
- Handout: Sources

Not provided online:

- Colored pencils, pens, or markers

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