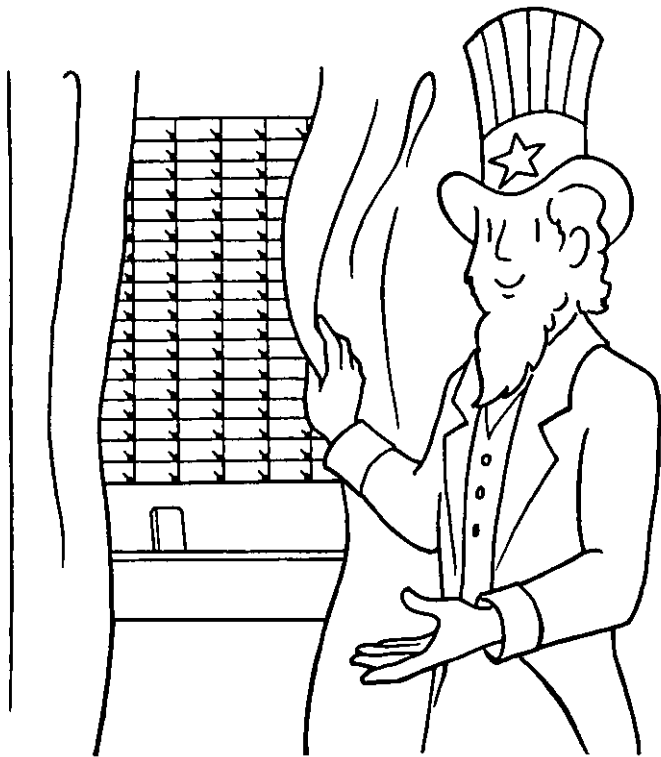


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ABOUT
YOUR RIGHT
TO VOTE



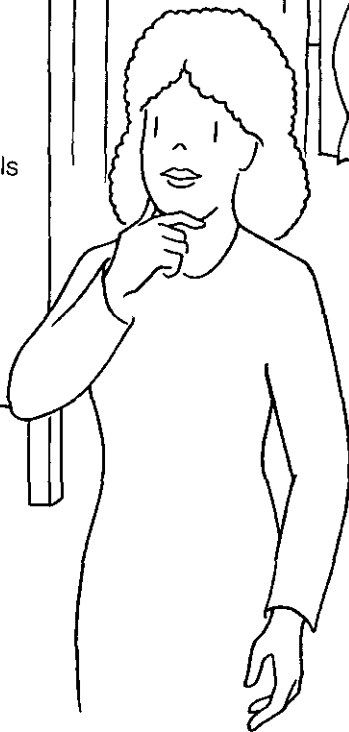
YOUR VOTE MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

**You can help choose the people who
make decisions that affect your life.**

YOUR VOTE MAY LEAD TO IMPORTANT CHANGES

-- for example, in:

- taxes
- health care programs
- the environment
- services for the elderly and the poor
- funding for roads, parks and dams
- education in local schools and state colleges and universities
- job programs
- police and fire services
- other important areas.

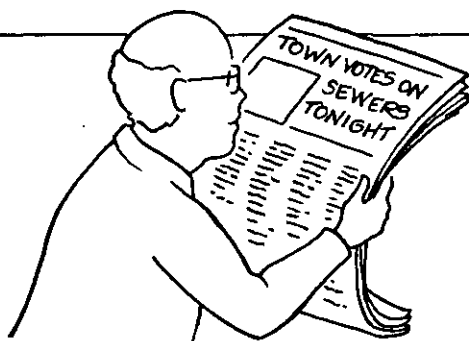
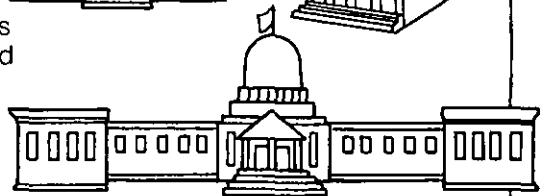
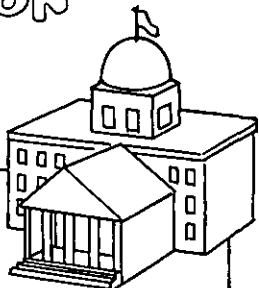


CITIZENS GIVE OUR GOVERNMENT DIRECTION

In our free society, it's up to you
-- and every citizen -- to:

TAKE AN INTEREST

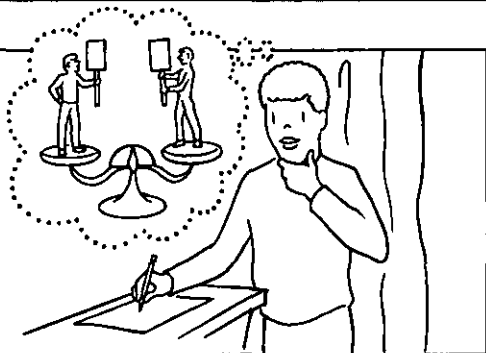
in what's happening at all levels
of government -- local, state and
national.



**UNDERSTAND
THE ISSUES**
that need to be decided.

VOTE CAREFULLY,

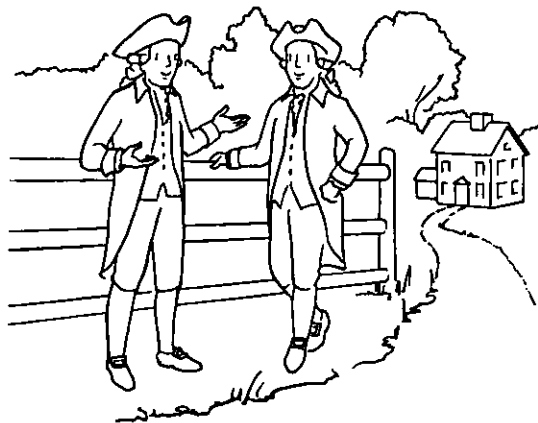
choosing people you think will
best represent your values and
opinions.



Use your vote to help guide our government!
Learn more...

AMERICANS FOUGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO VOTE

Over the years, U.S. citizens have worked hard to extend voting rights to everyone.



1787

When the Constitution was written, only white men age 21 or older who owned property could vote.

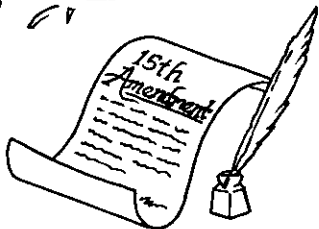
1807-1843

During these years, the states changed their rules so that all white men age 21 and older could vote -- not just those who owned property.



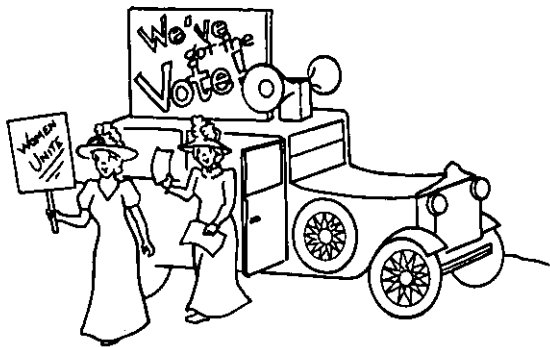
1870

The Civil War led to the 15th Amendment to the Constitution. This amendment guaranteed the right to vote to all men age 21 and older, regardless of race or ethnic background.



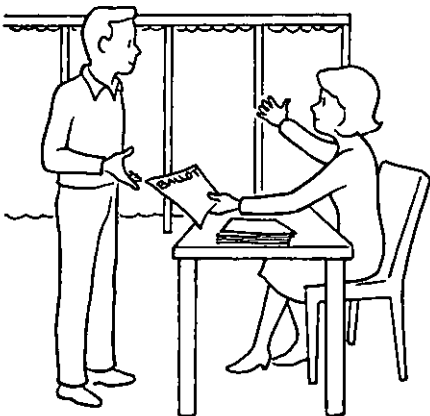
1920

The 19th Amendment gave women age 21 and older the right to vote.



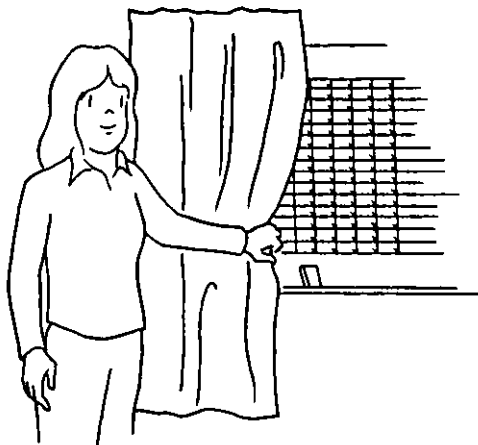
1964

With the 24th Amendment, states could no longer make people pay to vote in national elections.



1971

The 26th Amendment lowered the voting age to 18.



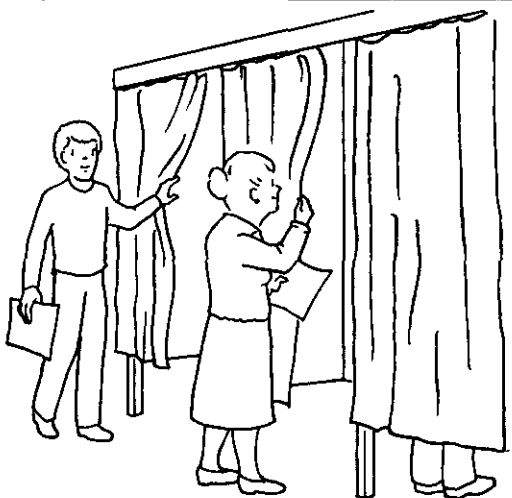
Congress and the courts have also ensured that no literacy, language or other tests can keep citizens from voting. The right to vote is precious -- and it deserves to be used!

TODAY, EVERY CITIZEN* HAS THE RIGHT TO VOTE

The only requirements are:

AGE

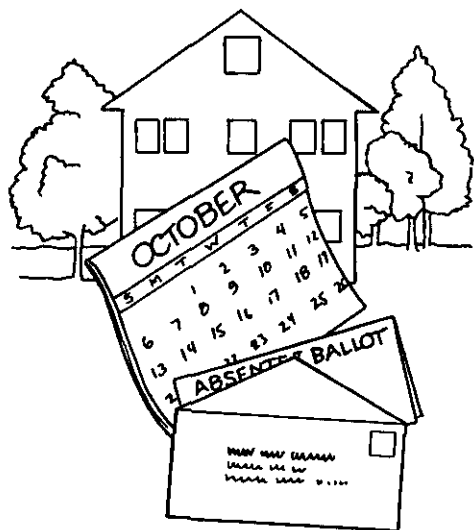
You need to be 18 years old by election day. (In some states, you can vote in primary elections at age 17 if you will be 18 by the day of the main election.) You can continue to vote throughout your life.



RESIDENCE

States have different rules for how long you must be a resident before you can vote. For presidential elections, you must live in the state for 30 days before election day.

(If you move to a new state less than 30 days before a presidential election, you may vote in your old state by absentee ballot - see page 14.)



* Except those convicted of serious crimes (felonies) or found mentally unfit.

REGISTRATION

You need to sign up, or "register," before you can vote (except in North Dakota).

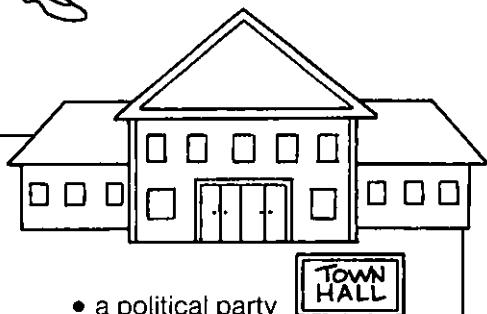
- Registration times and places vary from state to state. (In many states, the deadline is 30 days before an election.)
- Some states allow registration by mail.
- To register in most states, you need to show proof of your address and birth date.
- In most states, you must re-register if you move or fail to vote for a certain period of time.



REGISTER TODAY!

Find out about registration through:

- your local courthouse, town hall or other government building
- a political party
- a special voter registration group.



DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE
to make a difference where you live. The sooner
you register, the sooner you can vote!

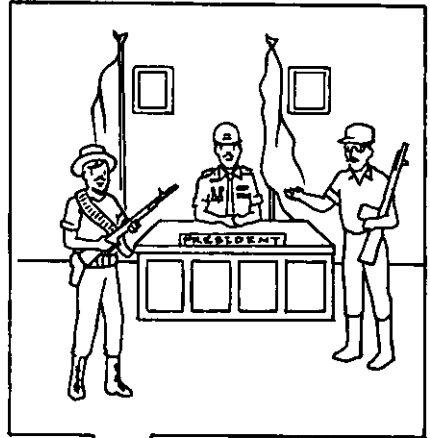
WHY IS VOTING SO IMPORTANT?

**Because it's the heart of a strong democracy!
Voting is a way to:**

EXPRESS YOUR OPINION

Voting lets you register your choices about issues and people who will represent you in government.

You can state your beliefs through a ballot. And everyone's vote counts the same!



SUPPORT DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT

In many countries, people have no say in decisions made by their government.

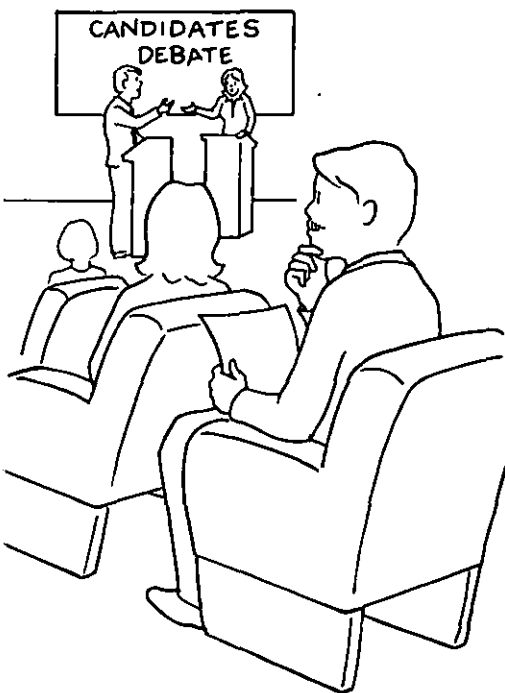
Voting is a central part of democracy (rule by the people). It ensures that your voice is heard!

MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS

Our society depends on people who understand the world they live in.

You can use your knowledge to help make important decisions by voting for:

- people who will make the choices you want
- proposals you support.



CONTINUE A PROUD TRADITION

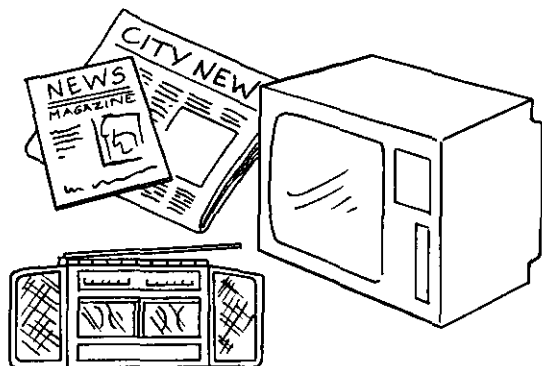
Our country has defended our rights as a free people many times over -- at the cost of many lives.

Voting ensures our freedom -- and means the struggle has been worthwhile.

HOW TO BE AN INFORMED VOTER

GET INFORMATION FROM SEVERAL SOURCES

-- newspapers, magazines, TV and radio stations, political parties and the candidates themselves. If you rely on only one source of information, you'll only hear part of the story.

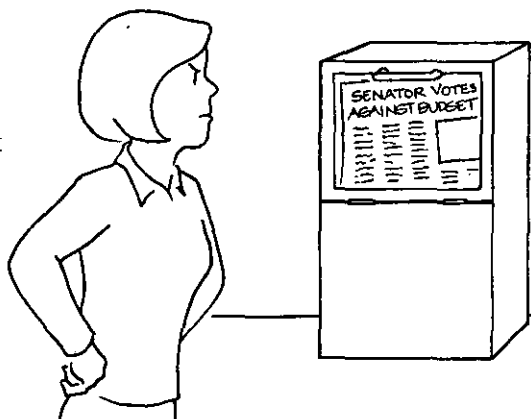


ASK QUESTIONS

of the candidates or their representatives in person, through the mail, or by phone. If you can't get an answer, consider what that says about the candidate.

FOLLOW THE ISSUES

throughout the year. Don't forget them once the election is over. And, see if your representatives follow through on what they said they would do.



MEET THE CANDIDATES

or their representatives in person, if possible. They usually travel throughout the voting area before election day. Talking with candidates can help you form your own opinion of them.



TALK WITH OTHERS

about the issues. Exchanging ideas and opinions adds to the strength of a democracy.



IT TAKES TIME

to learn about candidates and issues -- but it's well worth the effort! The time you spend helps ensure that your vote reflects your beliefs.



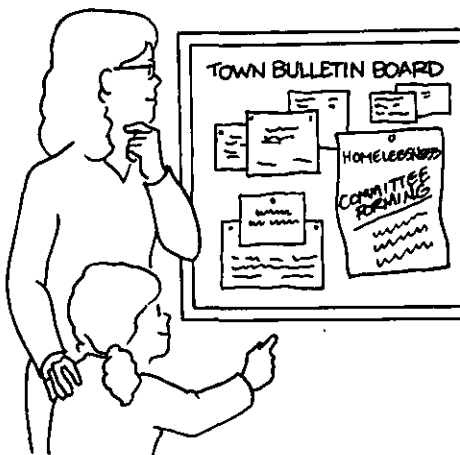
GET INVOLVED IN YOUR GOVERNMENT

There are many ways to add your energy and views to the democratic process. You might:

JOIN A GROUP

that deals with one issue or a group of related issues. For example, you might join a group that:

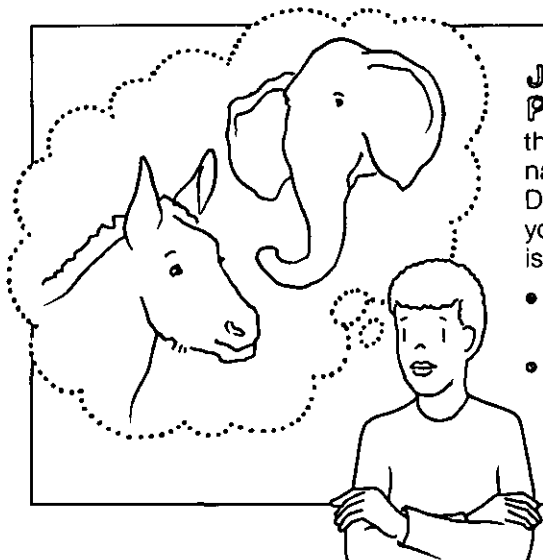
- wants to build low-income housing in your neighborhood
- is concerned about homeless families across the state or country.



JOIN A POLITICAL PARTY

that deals with issues on national, state or local levels. Depending on your interests, you might work with others on issues such as:

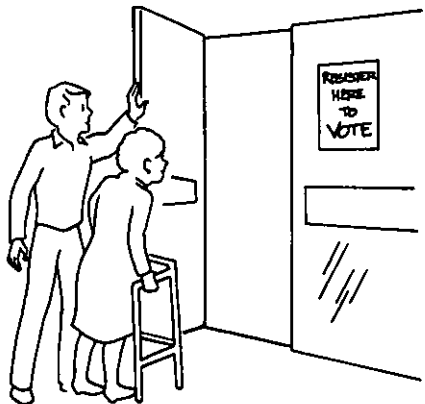
- the local tax rate or school services
- state and national programs to create jobs and equal opportunities.



VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME AND SKILLS

in government activities. There's always a need for people to help. For example, you can:

- help people register to vote
- work with the homeless
- assist in job training
- serve on local government boards.



TOWN COUNCIL



ATTEND MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

to voice your opinion. Most government decisions must be brought before the public. Take the opportunity to express your views and hear what others have to say.

COMMUNICATE WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS

to make your views known. To represent you, officials need to know what you think! Write letters to the editor of your local paper, too.



SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Do voters
have to be able to
read or speak
English?**

No. Special ballots are available in some areas. Ask people who register voters about the rules in your area.

**What's
an absentee
ballot?**

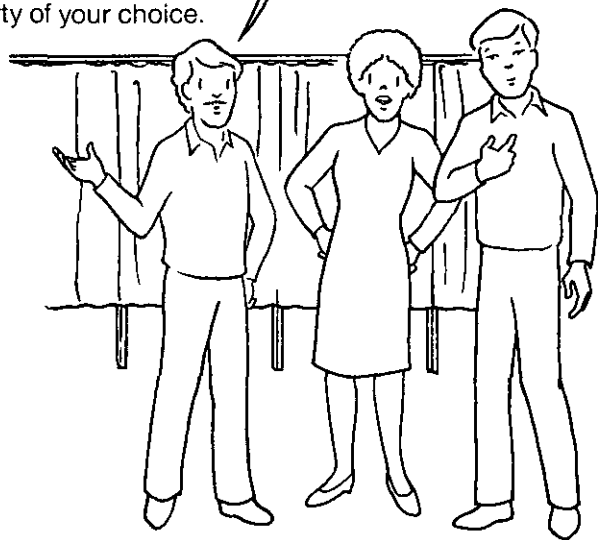
It's a ballot that allows you to vote before election day in some cases. For example, you may request an absentee ballot if you know you'll be out of state on election day.

**Where can I get
more information
about voting?**

Contact your town or city hall, local courthouse or library, or the political party of your choice.

**What if
I'm not a U.S.
citizen?**

Contact a local courthouse to find out about becoming a citizen. Once you're a citizen, be sure to exercise your right to vote.



So--

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE!

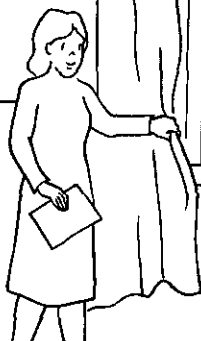
It's the only way to be sure your voice is heard.

✓ **REGISTER
TO VOTE**
-- today!

✓ **LEARN ABOUT
CANDIDATES**
and issues.

✓ **VOTE**
on election day.

✓ **GET INVOLVED**
in your government.



**Informed voters
are the backbone
of a free and fair
society!**

