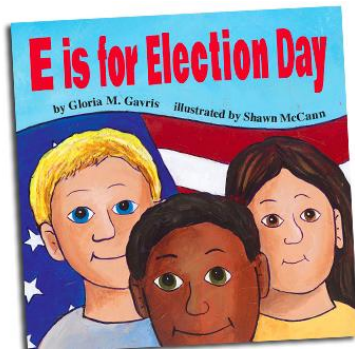




## DISCOVERING JUSTICE CHILDREN DISCOVERING JUSTICE

*E is for Election Day* by Gloria M. Gavis  
2016 Election Year Supplement  
Grades 3, 4, 5



**Note:** The pages of this book are not numbered. References to specific pages are made to the letter of the alphabet on the page.

- Read the *Aa* pages aloud. Ask students if any of them has gone with an adult to vote. Have a few students share details from the experience.
- Read the *Bb* page aloud and ask why students think the text begins with the direction, “Shhhh!” Be sure students understand the significance of a secret ballot.
- Read the *Cc* page aloud and give students the following information:
  - The Republican convention is scheduled for the week of July 18, 2016 in Cleveland, Ohio.
  - The Democratic convention is scheduled for the week of July 25, 2016 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

For more explanation on political conventions, you can show either or both of these Youtube videos:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=My\\_N1O6FwEY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=My_N1O6FwEY)  
(U.S. Elections: Conventions)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YfAcyBzyek4>  
(CNN Explains: Conventions)

- Read the *Dd* page aloud. After asking the question at the end of the text on this page, list student questions on chart paper.
- Read the *Ee* page aloud. Share with students the expected date for the 2016 presidential election, which is Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Read the *Ff* page aloud. You may want to discuss campaign spending limits. If so, the following information may be helpful:

The issue of limiting campaign spending is hotly contested.

- Those in support of it argue that excessive spending breeds corruption, discourages independent and grassroots candidates, and causes candidates to feel they owe something to wealthy special interest groups.
- Opponents of campaign spending limits claim that limits are a violation of free speech and believe that if a candidate can raise money, he or she should be allowed to spend it.
- In 1976, the Supreme Court ruled against limiting campaign spending in federal elections. The result of this decision was that candidates have no cap in spending as long as the money is raised from private donors.
- Many state and local elections do have voluntary spending limits and the result is usually a more “level playing field” for candidates.
- Disclosure, however, is required of candidates in elections. Candidates are now strictly required to identify the names, occupations, employers, and addresses of any individual who contributes more than \$200 in an election cycle.

Source: <http://money.howstuffworks.com/campaign-finance4.htm>

- Read pages *Gg* and *Hh* aloud. Explain that one way grass reproduces is by extending stems that grow sideways either below the ground or just above it. Grasses use these stems to reach out and establish new grass plants.
  - Ask a student to explain why the term “grassroots” is used to explain how campaign organizations grow.
  - Have students practice shaking hands with one another firmly and confidently.
- Read page *Ii* aloud and ask students how they think the Internet has changed the way campaigns are run. You may want students to turn and talk before responding.
- Read page *Jj* aloud.
  - **Project idea:** Have students research either current presidential candidates or ones from the past and create campaign posters or other promotional materials to support the candidate.
- Read pages *Kk* and *Ll* aloud and ask students to respond to the questions at the end of both pages.

- Read page *Mm* aloud. Share the names of some of the other U. S. parties with students: Green, Libertarian, Socialist, Natural Law, Constitution, and Reform parties are examples of other parties. While the Democratic and Republican parties are the most powerful, these other parties can promote candidates in a presidential election.
  - **Project idea:** Have students invent a political party. Have them choose a party name, an animal to represent it, and a party platform that gives the party's opinions on the issues of the day (possible issues: homeland security, immigration, education, race relations, healthcare, crime, public safety, climate change, gun control, international affairs, gay rights, states' rights, infrastructure)
- Read page *Nn* aloud and ask students why they think obtaining signatures is part of the election process.
- Read page *Oo* aloud. If you want to show any or all of the swearing-in ceremonies for presidents from Franklin Roosevelt through Barack Obama's first term, show this Youtube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYnYdT1CqTc> (Presidential oath of office; Franklin D. Roosevelt – Barack H. Obama)
- Read page *Pp* aloud. Share with students that the Massachusetts State Primary Day is scheduled for March 1, 2016.
  - You may also want to share that there are basically two kinds of primaries, open and closed, and the states get to decide which kind of primary to hold.
    1. In an open primary, voters cast their ballot in one primary of their choosing. Indiana Republicans can, if they want, vote in the Indiana Democratic primary instead of the Republican primary. A member of Oregon's Green Party, or its Libertarian Party, or its Reform Party, or any one of six other parties, can vote in whichever primary he or she likes best.
    2. In a 'closed' primary, only voters who are registered with a party may vote. Once at their polling place, 'closed' primary voters may only take a ballot for the party that they are registered for. A Democrat may not cross over and vote in a Republican primary or vice versa. Thus the term 'closed'.

After you describe the two basic types of primary, ask if students know which type of primary is held in Massachusetts. Massachusetts has what is called a *modified closed primary*. In a *modified closed primary*, Massachusetts has chosen to only allow those who meet the following criteria to vote:

- ✓ You must be registered to vote.
- ✓ You must be enrolled as a Democrat or Republican; OR
- ✓ Are listed as Unenrolled (formerly known as 'Independent') If you are unenrolled, which means you belong to no party whatsoever, you may show up at your polling place and choose a Democratic or Republican ballot.

- Before reading page *Qq* aloud, you may want to read it to yourself. If you have students who were not born in the United States, you may want to change the last sentence into a question: *Could it be you someday?*
- Read page *Rr* aloud. You may want to share instances in which important recounts took place, perhaps the most notable being the 2000 presidential election between George W. Bush and Al Gore, specifically the Florida results. The Florida vote was ultimately settled in favor of George W. Bush, by a margin of only 537 votes out of almost 6 million cast, when the U.S. Supreme Court, with its final ruling on *Bush v. Gore*, stopped a recount that had been proposed by the Florida Supreme Court. The outcome resulted in Bush gaining a majority of votes in the Electoral College, winning the overall presidential election.
- Read pages *Ss* and *Tt* aloud and discuss the question at the end of page *Tt*.
  - **Debate opportunity:** Have students research the pros and cons of term limits and set up debate teams in favor and against them. Students should be prepared to respectfully rebut the opinions of the opposing team. You can provide them with sentence starters to help shape their rebuttals:
    - “I disagree with team B, because...”
    - “I can see why team B feels that way, but I disagree because...”
    - “I’m not sure I understood you when you said...”

There should be no winners and losers. The point of the debate is to provide students with the opportunity to state an opinion and the reason for that opinion and to listen, consider, and respond to the opinions of classmates.

- Read page *Uu* aloud. If you can, display images where this term has been used. For example:



- Read page *Vv* aloud. Share the names of other countries that are considered full democracies: Norway, Sweden, Iceland, New Zealand, Denmark, Switzerland, Canada, Finland, Australia, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Ireland, Germany, Austria, Malta, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Mauritius, Japan, South Korea, Spain, France and Costa Rica.
- Read page *Ww* and share the fact that our nation’s capital was not always Washington D.C. Eight other cities have served as the meeting place for the U.S. Congress and are therefore considered to have once been the capital of the United States. They are: Philadelphia, Baltimore, Lancaster (PA), York (PA), Princeton, Annapolis, Trenton, and New York City.
- Read page *Xx* and explain that exit polls have been criticized and have been the source of some controversy. This stems from the fact that exit-poll results have appeared and/or have provided a basis for projecting winners before all real polls have closed, thereby influencing election results.
- Read page *Yy* and ask students to recall from the text ways that individuals “make democracy happen.” If students have difficulty, show the illustrations for the previous pages again.
- Read page *Zz* and ask students if anyone might like to run for office one day. Ask students to give reasons why they might like to do this.

For activities, projects, and more election lessons, try these resources:

<https://ethemes.missouri.edu/themes/709?locale=en-US>

[http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_special/election.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_special/election.shtml)

<https://www.teachervision.com/elections/teacher-resources/6615.html>

**For more information about Discovering Justice and for additional civic education resources, please contact:**

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