CARDINAL COMPASS - CIVICS NO. 3 - HANDS-ON LEARNING - WITH CARL THE CARDINAL

Voting and Elections with Carl

VOL. 3

How we choose together, fairly. Run a polling place, make a kind campaign poster, and recount a very close vote.

Real elections choose real leaders, and their results bind the real government. The elections in this book are practice at home, made for learning.



Cover illustration: a polling place with voting booths in a row and a flag by the door.

Read together	Choose together	Grown-up with you for every activity



Meet Carl - Poll Worker Carl

Carl the Cardinal is your guide. For this project, Carl is working at a polling place. He checks voters in on the voter list, hands out ballots, and helps count them out loud. Color your own Carl on the last page.

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What is an election?

An election is a fair way for a group of people to choose together. In a town, a state, or the whole country, an election chooses people for government jobs, like mayor, governor, or President.

Candidate: a candidate is a person who asks to be chosen for a job. Candidates share their ideas, so voters can think and choose.

Ballot: a ballot is where a voter marks a choice. A ballot can be a paper card or a screen. Each voter marks one ballot.

Secret ballot: Your choice stays private. Election workers count using rules, with authorized observers able to watch, and report the results publicly. In our practice election, we count aloud. You may ask for help if you need it.

Voter list: before voting, each voter signs in on the voter list. The list helps poll workers make sure each person votes one time.

Who may vote: U.S. citizens can generally vote from age 18 when they meet their state's eligibility and registration rules. A citizen is a member of a country, with rights and duties in it.

Representative: voters choose representatives, people who make many decisions for the town, the state, or the country. Choosing good representatives is one big job of an election.

Majority: A majority means more than half. In our two-choice practice election, a choice with more than half wins. Real elections follow their own rules; in many, the candidate with the most votes wins even without more than half. Our practice election uses a majority too.

Winning an election does not erase anyone's rights. The promises in the Bill of Rights (Book 2) still protect every person, even the people whose side lost.

Ballots are secret, but the count is open to checking. Authorized observers can watch the counting, and officials report the results publicly. In our practice election, we count aloud.

What you already know

In Book 1, your family wrote a constitution, and more than half of the family had to agree to change it. That "more than half" is a majority. That was your family's rule for changing its constitution. Real elections follow their own rules, and they do not all use that same rule.

For grown-ups

A secret ballot helps protect voters from threats, intimidation, and coercion because others cannot check their choice. Observers and careful records help people check the count.