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LET'S TALK ABOUT

VOTING



An Information & Activities Book

MAKING A DIFFERENCE!



Andy



Carla



Dean



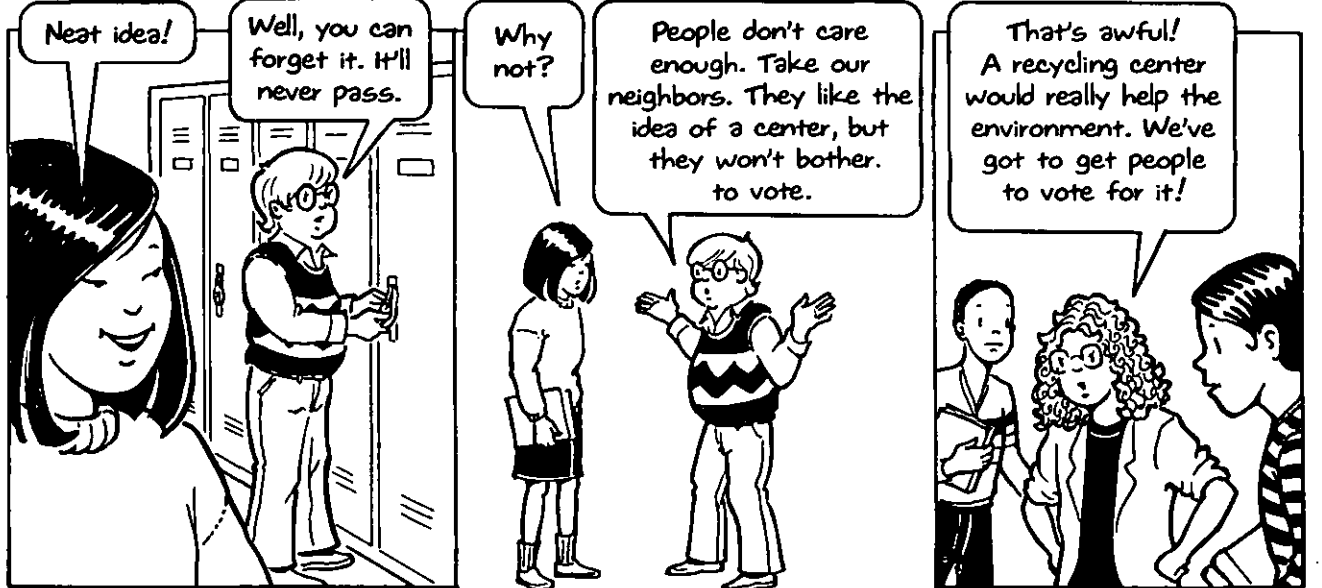
Eddie



Sally



Trudy



WHY IS VOTING SO IMPORTANT?

Because in a democracy, voting lets people tell their local, state and national governments what to do.

THE GOVERNMENT'S JOB IS to:

KEEP THE COUNTRY SAFE,
by making peace treaties with other nations, and by defending the country from attack.

HELP PEOPLE
do things they can't do alone, such as run schools and build roads.

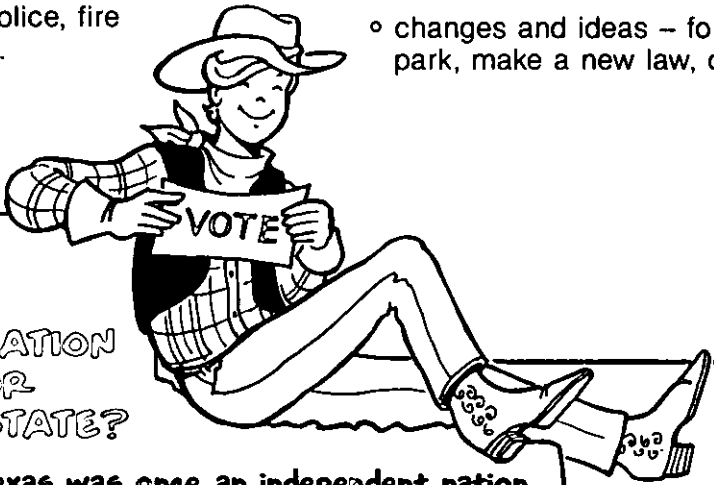
PROTECT LIVES AND PROPERTY,
by passing laws against crimes and by providing police, fire and other services.

THE PEOPLE'S JOB IS to:

STAY INFORMED
about events in their community, state, nation – even in other parts of the world.

BE INVOLVED
by letting the government know their opinions and ideas, and by pitching in to help solve problems.

VOTE
in every election. People can vote for:
◦ candidates – people who want to be elected to government jobs, such as president, governor, or school board member.
◦ changes and ideas – for example, whether to build a park, make a new law, or change an old law.



NATION OR STATE?

Texas was once an independent nation. Its people very much wanted Texas to join the United States. Some U.S. citizens thought this was a good idea. Others did not. In 1845, the United States Congress (the House of Representatives and the Senate) agreed to decide. They knew it would be close -- and they were right! In the end, one vote made Texas our country's 28th state.

DID YOU NOTICE the colored and underlined letters in the story?

Use them in the same order in which they appear to fill in the blanks – and learn more about "the power of the people!"

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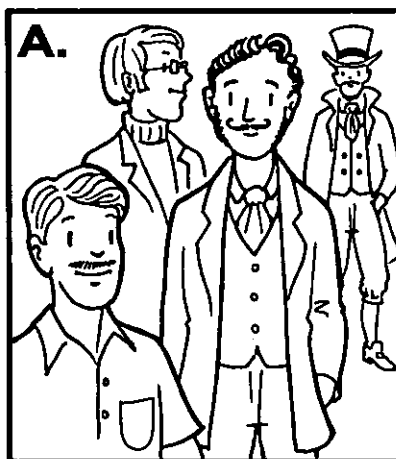
VOTING IS A RIGHT

Let's assume these people all speak English and are at least 21 years old. WHO CAN VOTE? To answer, check the box next to each election year.

as well as a responsibility. We Americans often take this right for granted -- but we didn't always have it.

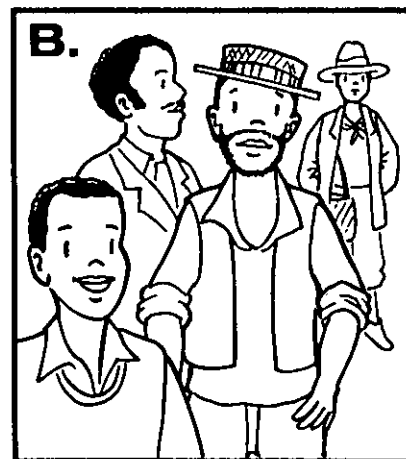
A SHORT HISTORY OF VOTING IN AMERICA

- **1776-1783:** The American Revolution. The people of England's 13 colonies fight for the right to choose their government. The colonies become the United States of America.
- **1787:** White men age 21 and older who own property have the right to vote.
- **1807-1843:** One by one, the states give all white man age 21 and older the right to vote.
- **1870:** Men of every race, age 21 and older, have the right to vote.
- **1920:** Women of every race, age 21 and older, have the right to vote.
- **1964:** States can no longer make people pay to vote. (Some states had done this to keep poor black Americans from voting.)
- **1965:** States can no longer require voters to speak English. (Some states had done this to keep some Hispanic-Americans from voting.)
- **1970:** People no longer have to pass special tests to have the right to vote. (In some places, tests had kept people who didn't have much education from voting.)
- **1971:** People age 18 and older have the right to vote.



Could they vote in:

	YES	NO
1856?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1910?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1962?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1992?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



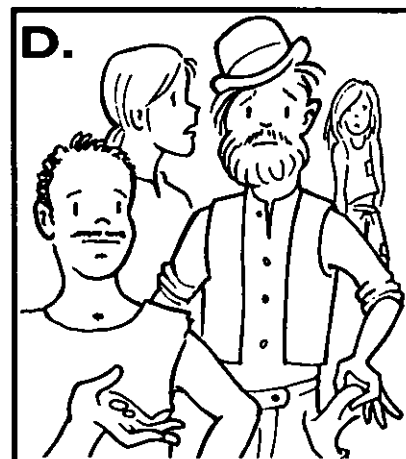
Could they vote in:

	YES	NO
1856?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1910?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1962?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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1856?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1910?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1962?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1992?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

YOUR PATH TO THE POLLS

The place where people vote is called the "polls" or "polling place." Learn how you will get there by matching each picture to its description.

1. LEARN ABOUT THE POLITICAL PROCESS

Read books that explain how elections and governments work. Take part in student councils and class governments, if your school has them.

2. LEARN THE ISSUES

Read newspapers and magazines. Listen to candidates on TV. Talk to them if they visit your area. Check out political ads and pamphlets. Learn about every candidate -- or all sides of an issue.

3. REGISTER TO VOTE WHEN YOU'RE 18

All states except North Dakota require people to "register" (sign up) to vote. Different states have different rules about when to register. For example, you may have to register at least 30 days before an election.

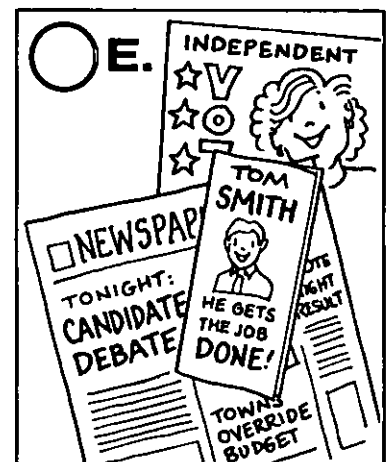
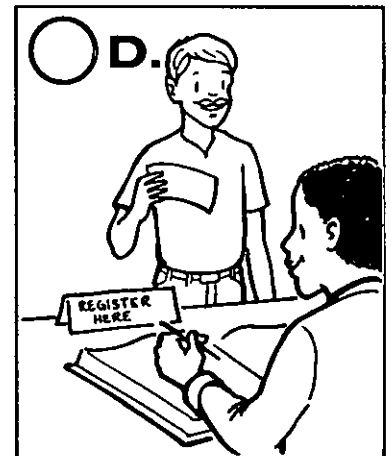
Depending on where you live, you may register by mail, or register at a bank or local government building. You'll fill out a special card with your name, address and date of birth.

4. GO TO THE POLLS ON ELECTION DAY

The election workers will check a list to make sure you're registered. Then you'll go into a voting booth.

5. VOTE!

Some places have voting machines. To vote, you'll move handles next to the names of candidates and election issues. Other places have paper ballots. You'll write on the ballot, or punch a hole in it to show your vote. Then you'll put it in a ballot box.



LEARN ABOUT VOTING WHERE YOU LIVE

Ask a parent:

- Where do voters register in our area?
 - Where is our polling place?
 - Do we use voting machines or paper ballots?
- (If your parent doesn't know, he or she can find out by calling your town or city hall, local courthouse, or library.)

JOIN THE KIDS' CAMPAIGN!

Right now, young people are urging their government to encourage recycling, prevent drug abuse, fight crime -- and much more!

WHAT'S AN ISSUE THAT'S "HOT" TO YOU?
Write it here:

FIND OUT WHAT
YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT!
Complete the broken letters.

N I A Y F
F C C T F D S

urging voters to support your cause. Ask store owners to put them in their windows. Make buttons out of cardboard. Ask your friends to wear them.

V I F I ' F L E T T E R S

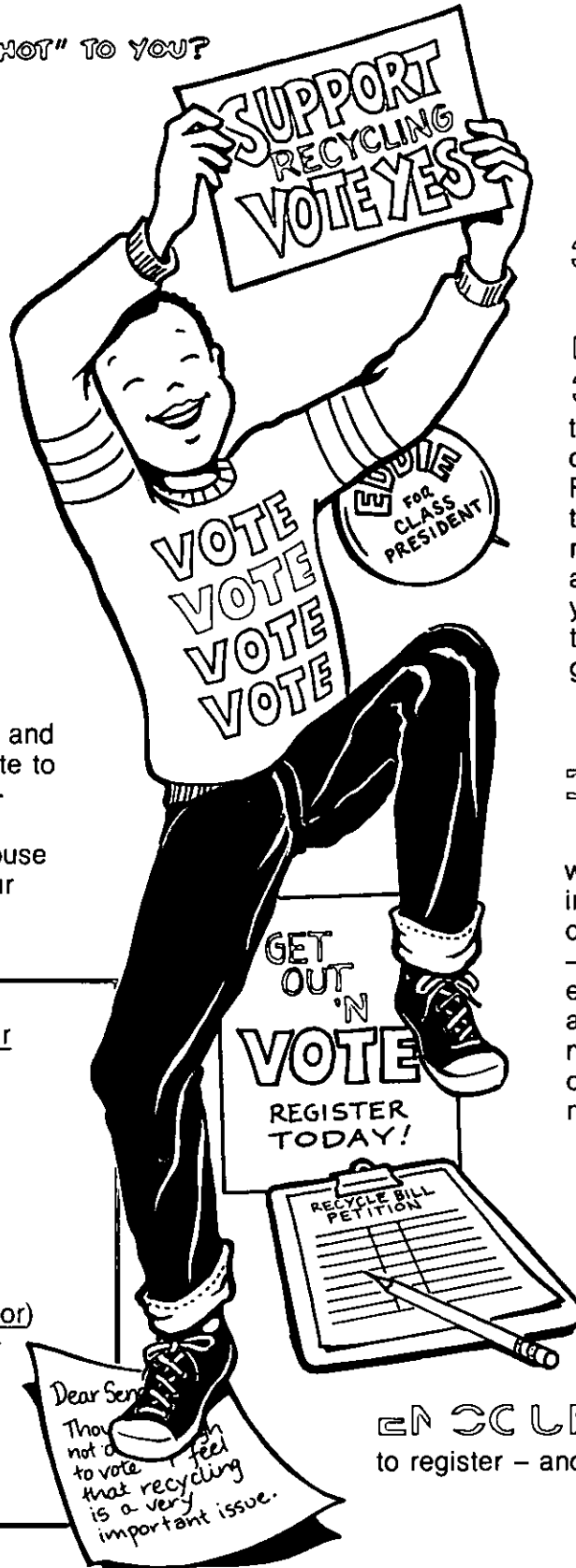
to elected officials. Briefly say what you want the official to do, and why. For example, you could write to your U.S. Senator and Congressman or Congresswoman (the person from your area in the House of Representatives). Address your letters like this:

The Honorable (full name of your
Congressman or Congress-
woman)
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. (or Ms.) (last name):

Senator (full name of your Senator)
U. S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator (last name):



SHARPEN
YOUR
POLITICAL
SKILLS

through student government, clubs, or class activities. For example, if your club thinks there should be a recycling center in your area, start a petition. When you have a lot of names, take it to your town or city government.

BE A
/CL J I T E F R

with groups that share an interest in your cause. You can even join a political party -- you don't have to be old enough to vote. People your age can prepare letters for mailing, add up the results of surveys, and help in many other ways.

Dear Sen
Thou
not d
to vote
that recycling
is a very
important issue.

EN C C L P A G E A C T I T S ;
to register -- and to vote for your cause!

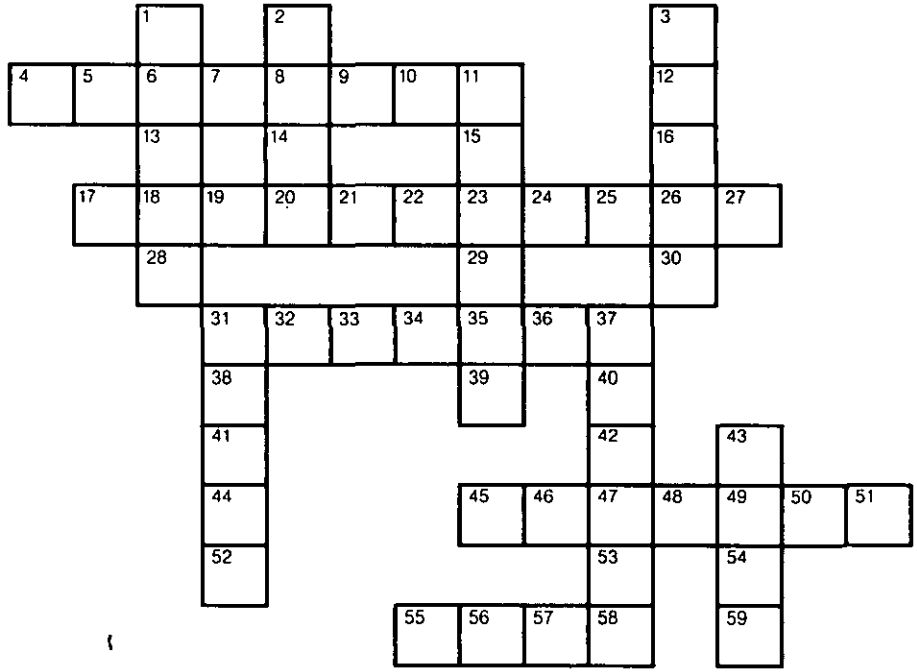
We did it! Our posters got people to vote for the recycling center!

Way to go! What should we work on next?

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

Learn more about voting. Find the word in the list that best completes each sentence. Then, fit the word into the puzzle.

- | | |
|----------|-------------|
| parties | count |
| Grand | bill |
| proposed | donkey |
| ahead | address |
| vote | independent |
| list | secret |



ACROSS

- A "proposition" is a _____ law that citizens can vote on in an election.
- A voter who does not join a political party is called an _____ voter.
- A voter only has to register once, unless he or she moves to a new _____, or (in some states) doesn't vote for several years.
- Political _____ are groups of people who have similar ideas about what the government should be.
- A party "platform" is a _____ of issues that a party supports.

DOWN

- Even if your candidates lose, your votes _____. The winners know not everyone agrees with them – and that if they want to be elected again, they'd better listen to you!
- Only about half of the adults eligible to _____ use this right!
- A nickname of the Republican Party is _____ Old Party, or "G.O.P."
- A _____ is the symbol of the Democratic Party.
- If voters know they'll be away on election day, they can ask for an absentee ballot. This lets them vote _____ of time.
- Your vote is _____. You don't have to tell anyone how you voted.
- A _____ is a proposed law that is decided by the local, state or national government, rather than by citizens in an election.

A SPECIAL MESSAGE

After you complete the puzzle, find the box that has the same number as the one below each blank. Fill in the blank with the letter from the box.

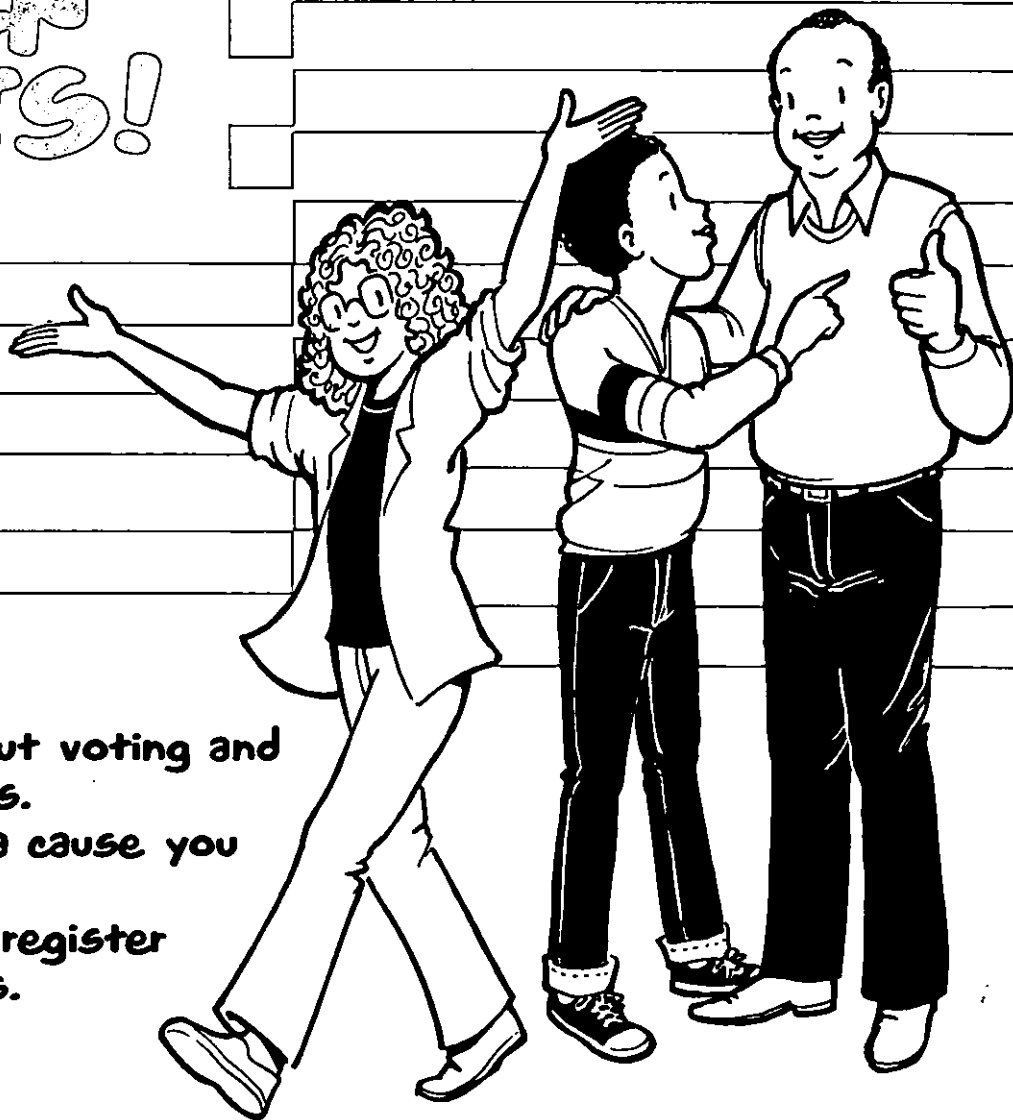
_____ 2 _____ 15 _____ 48 _____ 49 _____ 18 _____ 3 _____ 17 _____ 37 _____ 31
 _____ 4 _____ 12 _____ 20 _____ 42 _____ 49 _____ 15 _____ 13 _____ 51 _____ 47 _____ 56 _____ 3 _____ 38 _____ 58

ANSWER KEY

PAGE 3: One vote can change history!
 PAGE 4: A. 1. yes 2. yes 3. yes 4. yes
 B. 1. no 2. yes 3. yes 4. yes
 C. 1. no 2. no 3. yes 4. yes
 D. 1. no 2. no 3. no 4. yes
 PAGE 5: 1. C
 2. E
 3. D
 4. A
 5. B
 PAGE 6: Make posters; write letters.
 sharpen your political skills;
 be a volunteer; encourage adults
 PAGE 7: Voting is a precious right!
 G
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So--

EVERY CITIZEN COUNTS!



- ✓ **LEARN MORE** about voting and the political process.
- ✓ **GET INVOLVED** in a cause you care about.
- ✓ **URGE ADULTS** to register and go to the polls.

AND WHEN IT'S YOUR TURN -- VOTE!