
Activity The Mystery of the Voters Who Don't Vote

Directions. Read the *Handy Dandy Guide* and the mystery. Read the clues assigned to your group. Be careful. While all the clues are correct, only some are *useful* in solving the mystery. Decide which clues are most relevant to solving the mystery. Use the clues and one or more of the ideas from the *Handy Dandy Guide* to figure out a solution to the mystery. Write your solution.

Handy Dandy Guide

1. People *choose*.
2. People's choices involve *costs*.
3. People respond to *incentives* in predictable ways.
4. People create *economic systems* that influence individual choices and incentives.
5. People gain when they *trade* voluntarily.
6. People's choices have consequences that lie in the *future*.

The Mystery

Americans are known around the world for their love of liberty and democracy. Many Americans have fought and died to protect their system of government and way of life. Free elections are central to that system of government. Together with safeguards for protecting individual rights, free elections are the heart of American democracy.

Yet many Americans do not vote. Only about half of all eligible voters vote in presidential elections, for example.

Why don't more Americans vote?

The Clues

1. Because of "Motor Voter" legislation and other innovations, it is relatively easy for most Americans to register to vote.
2. At the federal, state, and local levels, there are many elections in the United States. An American who voted in all the elections for which he or she was eligible would do a lot of voting.
3. In presidential elections, long lines of voters often form at the polls.
4. It can be difficult for voters to find reliable information about candidates and issues—especially local candidates and state or local issues addressed in referenda.
5. Each state elects two United States Senators.
6. Few elections in the United States are ever decided by one or two votes.
7. There are two kinds of elections—primary and general.
8. The 26th Amendment to the Constitution made 18 the legal voting age.
9. Voting takes place in polling places.

Record your solution and explain it briefly here:
