

## Lesson 4 Making a Choice

### Teacher preparation:

1. Get sample ballots for the students from your county or city. You may be able to download, using [www.co.\(name of county, city\).mn.us](http://www.co.(name of county, city).mn.us). For example, Ramsey County is [www.co.ramsey.mn.us](http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us). Or, get *Voter's Guides* for students. These are produced by the League of Women's Voters, [www.lwvnmn.org](http://www.lwvnmn.org) and must be purchased. The Star Tribune also publishes a Voter's Guide that is available at no charge in libraries and other public places.
2. Make copies of the story and questions for all students.
3. Copy "On the Issues" for an extension lesson

**Warm up:** Write on the board this incomplete sentence and brainstorm with students what some of the things you do before you make a choice, such as get information, talk to friends, etc. *Before I make a choice, I \_\_\_\_\_*

**Review of previous lesson:** Write vocabulary words you learned in the previous lesson on the board for review. Ask students to reconstruct the story of the previous lesson, and then ask for questions or thoughts about this lesson.

**Story and Questions:** See instructions for Lesson 1

**Activity:** Hand out sample ballots or voters' guides. Show students how it is organized and what information is available. Explain abbreviations that are used, such as DFL, IP and GOP. Then have students work in pairs to get information about a candidate who is running for office in their city, state or country. Select specific offices for students, so the major candidates are covered, such as president or representative. Have students report back, and when all have finished, have a mini-debate about the candidates.

**Closure:** Review the vocabulary words you learned, and repeat the main themes of the lesson. Ask students to talk about one thing they learned today.

## *Carlos Makes a Choice*

Last week in ESL class, Carlos decided to go to a town meeting to hear candidates speak. He was interested in their opinions on immigrants' rights. He went to the community center for the town meeting and he listened to many candidates.

In class this week, Carlos told Sue and his classmates about the town meeting. He said there were candidates from many political parties at the town meeting.

He told his classmates, "The two major parties in Minnesota are the Democrats and the Republicans. Others are the Green Party, the Independence Party and the Libertarian Party."

"I am still confused about the candidates' positions on immigration," Carlos said. "And what about political parties? Are there differences between the parties?"

"Yes, there are differences between political parties," replied Sue. "Knowing the political party of the candidates helps you to understand what they believe and how they will probably vote.

"The Democratic Party is the liberal party. Generally, the Democratic Party believes that it is the government's role to protect the health and welfare of individuals in the country. The Republican Party is the conservative party. The Republican Party believes that individuals should take care of themselves with little government help."

Carlos asked, "How do I find out the candidates' party?"

"The political parties hand out cards that many voters use to decide how to vote," said Sue. "You can also get a free Voter's Guide at the library. It will give you information about candidates and their political party."

"I have another question," said Carlos. "What should I do if I don't know about some of the candidates?"

"You don't have to vote for everyone on the ballot," said Sue. "Vote for the candidates you know about and you trust. That is the best anyone can do. The most important thing is that you vote."

Now Carlos will make his decision. First, he will read the Voter's Guide. Second, he will listen to a debate. Third, he will talk to some friends who have studied the candidates and issues. He will ask for their opinions. Then, he will make his choice.

## Questions for *Carlos Makes a Choice*

1. Where did Carlos go to get more information about the candidates?
2. What are the major political parties? What are some of the other parties?
3. Which party believes that individuals should take care of themselves with little government help? \_\_\_\_\_  
Which party believes government should give more help protect the health and welfare of individuals? \_\_\_\_\_  
Which party do you think can help immigrants most? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How can Carlos find out the candidates' political party?
5. What is Carlos planning to do before he makes his choice?
6. What do you plan to do before you make your choice?