



ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

How can I be an Election Ambassador?

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

- Students will be able to collaboratively design an exit survey for voters to gauge public opinion on key issues.
- Students will be able to name the expectations of the Election Ambassador program and sign up if interested.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

- PA 5.2.12.A. Evaluate an individual's civil rights, responsibilities and obligations in various contemporary governments.
- PA 5.3.C.E. Compare and contrast the different election processes for local, state, and national offices.

LESSON DURATION:

50-60 minutes

TYPE OF ACTIVITIES:

- ✓ Synthesize information from a visual presentation
- ✓ Design a survey for voters on important issues
- ✓ Prepare to be an Election Ambassador

MATERIALS:

- Teacher follow-up steps and FAQs (pp. 3-4)
- Election Ambassadors 1-pager (p. 5)
- Election Ambassadors permission slip (pp. 6-7)
- Student handout (pp. 8-9)
- Smartboard or projector
- Teacher laptop
- Election Ambassadors Powerpoint (provided)

Lesson 5: Becoming an Election Ambassador

Note: This lesson prepares students to participate in Committee of Seventy's Election Ambassador program, which is shifting this year from being coordinated centrally by Seventy staff to being coordinated by school-based teachers or other staff. More information about the program as well as follow-up actions for teachers can be found on p. 3.

HOOK/DO-NOW (5 MINUTES)

Give students three minutes to respond to this quick write question: "Have you ever been with a family member to an election site? If so, what do you remember about the voting process? If not, what are you curious to know about the voting process?" Call on a few students to share their responses.

Introduce today's essential question and lesson objectives.

ELECTION AMBASSADORS OVERVIEW (10 MINUTES)

Take 10 minutes to present to students the Election Ambassadors Powerpoint. While no teacher prior knowledge is required, reviewing the Powerpoint in advance is essential to ensure you are familiar with the important points—there is also space on slide 4 to add any incentives (such as extra credit) you're offering to students for participating. *Note: More information about the Election Ambassador program for teachers is available on p. 3 of this document.*

Students have a few questions to answer in their handout from the presentation to maintain engagement.

ELECTION AMBASSADOR SURVEY DESIGN (25 MINUTES)

Tell students that they will now be designing the Election Ambassador survey that Election Ambassadors from their class can use on Election Day.

- Give students 10 minutes to work in groups to brainstorm 2-4 potential questions for the class survey. Sample past questions have been provided for them. Encourage students to design questions around issues they have learned about and discussed earlier this week; for example, gauging public opinion around one of the top issues the class selected on day 2, or gauging public support for reforms to encourage voting the class suggested on day 4.

- Spend the remaining 15 minutes coming to consensus as a class (by voting or another consensus-gathering tool, although the teacher should also steer the class towards stronger, focused questions with clear, comprehensive answer choices).



- **Either during class or after, the teacher (with or without student involvement) should input the survey questions into a Google form students can use on Election Day.**
 - Learn how to create a survey in Google forms [here](#) or at bit.ly/70survey.
 - After your form is created, get a share-able link by clicking “Send” and “Link.” You may want to use a website shorter such as bit.ly to create a short link for students to be able to remember and share easily, or create and print a QR code [here](#) or at bit.ly/70QRcode.
 - After creating the form, print a copy of the form for each Election Ambassador; they will use this on Election Day with voters.

BECOMING AN ELECTION AMBASSADOR (10 MINUTES)

Distribute the Election Ambassador 1-pager and permission slip to all students.

Ask students who are interested in becoming an Election Ambassador to bring back their permission slips by the assigned date so they can be assigned a polling place.

- While students are encouraged to sign up, this is an optional program and it’s okay if only a few students are interested. Even if students don’t participate in the program, we hope they have gained a great deal of information over the course of this 5-day unit. We understand some students may have commitments on Election Day; others might just be less inclined to spend a few hours out at the polls. If only a few students decide to volunteer as Ambassadors, we’ll work with them to determine suitable team and polling place assignments.

If time remains, model a conversation between an Election Ambassador and a voter to administer the survey, and then have students role-play with a partner.

Sample script:

- *Election Ambassador: Excuse me, I’m a high school Election Ambassador volunteering with the Committee of Seventy. Do you mind answering 3 quick survey questions designed by me and my classmates for local voters?*
- *Voter: Sure – good for you!*
- *EA: Thank you! I’m just going to read the questions right from my phone and put your answers straight in. Here’s question #1 [read the first class survey question, including answer choices]*
- *V: [Answer question]*
- *[Continue with questions 2 & 3]*
- *EA: Thank you very much for your time, and thanks for voting!*
- *V: Thank you!*

EXIT TICKET (5 MINUTES)

Give students a few minutes to respond to the exit ticket prompt: “What are the three biggest ideas, take-aways, or questions you have after this week of learning about voting and elections?” Ask a few students to share their responses.

C70 POST-LESSON FOLLOW-UP

Please see the next page for teacher next steps to ensure students are ready to be Election Ambassadors!



ELECTION AMBASSADORS - TEACHER FOLLOW-UP REQUIRED

Before the day of the lesson (recommended to deliver by **two weeks before election**)

- Edit the Election Ambassadors Powerpoint as needed, particularly slide 4 (incentives for participating)
- If your school is in session on Election Day, check with your administration to see if any additional permission, authorization, or documentation is needed beyond the C70 permission slip in order for students to leave campus during the school day.

On the day of the lesson (recommended to deliver by **two weeks before elections**)

- Present Election Ambassadors Powerpoint presentation during lesson
- Distribute Election Ambassadors 1-pager (p. 5 of this file) and permission slip (pp. 6-7) to students – must be returned by **assigned date**)
- Create a Google form survey based on the survey questions generated by the class (during or after class) to be used by the Election Ambassadors on Election Day.
 - Learn how to create a survey in Google forms [here](#) or at bit.ly/70survey.
 - After your form is created, get a share-able link by clicking “Send” and “Link.” You may want to use a website shorter such as bit.ly to create a short link for students to be able to remember and share easily, or create and print a QR code [here](#) or at bit.ly/70QRcode.
 - After creating the form, print a copy of the form for each Election Ambassador; they will use this on Election Day with voters.

By **two weeks before elections**:

- Remind students to return their permission slips by the assigned date; do individualized follow-up to encourage students to participate.
- Collect all permission slips before and on **the assigned date**

By **two weeks before the elections**:

- Based on returned permission slips, assign students to teams of 2-4 people and to a polling place.
 - When possible, honor student preferences for team assignments; however, use your professional judgment based on student personalities, polling place location, and logistical realities to make team assignments.
 - When assigning teams to polling places, use the [polling place finder](http://bit.ly/70polling) at <http://bit.ly/70polling> from the PA Department of State. Unless parents specifically request for their students to be assigned close to their homes, we’d recommend locating polling places as close to the school as possible for ease of student travel. Many schools are polling places and would be ideal for students to visit. If you aren’t sure whether your school is a polling place in the upcoming election and can’t find the answer on the polling place finder, you can also check with your local [County Board of Elections](#) to ask.
- After making team assignments, submit [Election Ambassadors teacher form](http://bit.ly/70teacher) at <http://bit.ly/70teacher> with your school and student assignment information. Please ensure that you submit the form by the **assigned date**. If you have more than five student teams, you will need to submit multiple forms.

By **the Monday before the election**:

- Notify students of their team assignments, polling place, and recommended times.
- Distribute to participating students the following materials (will be shipped to your school the week before the election): Election Ambassador lanyard & ID, Election Ambassador Handbook, printed EA survey.
- Ensure students have the link for their class’ Election Ambassador survey to use on Election Day.
- Review Election Ambassador expectations for Election Day.

After Election Day:

- Distribute completion certificates to students who participated on Election Day (you may ask students to bring photos or election materials from the polling site to verify their participation).
- Assist students in obtaining incentives for completion (e.g., service learning hours, extra credit).
- Share any survey results compiled by students (and any other great stories, artifacts, photos from the day) with Pat Christmas at pchristmas@seventy.org.
- Share with students who participated the survey and follow-up materials that are shared by Pat in the days following the election.



ELECTION AMBASSADORS - TEACHER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What kind of supervision will my students have on Election Day?

Students visit polling sites in their teams without a chaperone or other supervision unless special arrangements are made by the teacher or school. Teachers do help coordinate students' team assignments prior to the election, and teachers (or other chaperones) are welcome and encouraged to join students at the polls if possible. For schools in session on Election Day, students can – if approved by their teacher/school – visit polls during class time, lunch/prep or after school.

What exactly would my students be doing on Election Day?

Each student team will meet on Election Day and visit at least one polling site in their agreed-upon neighborhood. Students are prohibited by state law from entering the voting area (where the machines are located) but can position themselves nearby the entrance. Here, they have three tasks: **1) administer the Election Ambassador Survey** to voters as they exit the polling site; **2) record images of partisan or campaign literature** (flyers, posters, etc.) they encounter; and **3) help address questions from voters.**

How long do students serve on Election Day?

The length of time students spend at the polls may depend on the number of volunteer-service hours they need or other requirements set by their teacher or school. We recommend that students record selfies from the polling site at the start and finish of their shift to validate time served. Polls in Pennsylvania are open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day. Teachers will designate the approximate hours of students' shifts when making team assignments.

What type of materials do students need and how do they get them?

For students whose names are submitted by teachers on the [Election Ambassadors teacher form](#) by the **assigned date**:

- **Election Ambassador Handbook**
- **Committee of Seventy lanyard** and Election Ambassador insert

Election law is complex. How can students help voters at the polls?

Many of the same issues and questions come up every election: *Is this my polling place? I'm an independent voter – am I allowed to vote today? What's this ballot question all about?* The handbook provided to students has answers to most of the questions that come up on Election Day. For more complicated issues or problems, it has contact information for the proper authorities. Students are urged to study the handbook as a reference, ready to locate the relevant section if the need arises. An **online self-assessment** and **multiple evening webinars** will also be provided to students the week before Election Day if they wish to prepare further. If you'd like to make this quiz part of your regular course or provide extra credit, we can provide their scores.

Is there a check to ensure registered students serve on Election Day?

We suggest that teachers verify participation by asking students to bring samples of campaign literature or sharing pictures from the day. Alternatively, teachers can arrange for students to call them to check in and out of their shifts at the polling place.

Are there any costs for students or schools to participate?

No fees are required. However, students should consider transportation costs when deciding where and with whom they plan to volunteer.

Can students serve as an Ambassador and volunteer with a candidate's campaign?

Students are welcome to work with a candidate campaign on Election Day if they wish; however, any partisan volunteering must be done outside of the time committed to serving as an Election Ambassador. **All work while volunteering with Seventy must be strictly nonpartisan.**

Other questions come to mind? Let us know. Contact Patrick Christmas at pchristmas@seventy.org.



Election Ambassador Corps

The Committee of Seventy has organized a nonpartisan volunteer-powered program to inform voters and improve elections since 1905. Today, Seventy coordinates an **Election Ambassador Corps** of high school students who can help answer voters' questions on Election Day and learn about the voting experience.

The program was launched in 2015 because the rate at which young people participate in elections continues to be deeply troubling. According to CIRCLE, a youth civic-engagement center, **only a fifth of young people (ages 18 to 29) cast ballots in the 2014 midterm elections** – the lowest ever recorded. Studies suggest voting is similar to any other habit, and early engagement can help ensure long-term behavior. This is why we recruit students to serve as Ambassadors, deploying them to local polling sites to observe and help improve the voting process – an early experience bolstering the likelihood that they become super voters with a long civic career in front of them.

Program Overview

In small teams with their classmates, students will visit polling sites at or nearby their schools or in their home neighborhoods. A week-long Seventy curriculum module on voting and elections, presented by partner teachers, covers why voting matters, the upcoming election, and the role of Election Ambassadors.

As Ambassadors, students will be prepared to:

- 1) **Administer an exit survey** to gather data and spur conversation between students and voters leaving their polling site (e.g., voting behavior, trust in government, reform proposals).
- 2) **Collect “sample ballots” and other campaign literature** distributed to voters outside polling places. Results help reveal the support candidates receive in different neighborhoods.
- 3) **Answer voters' questions** about voting procedures and the election. Students who serve on Election Day will be prepared with a handbook that includes an overview of the election, FAQs and other critical information for voters (e.g., voter assistance, provisional ballots, Voter ID).

Why serve as an Election Ambassador?

- **Build your resume** and gain first-hand experience with the electoral process.
- **Provide eyes on the ground** for Seventy staff and other election advocates.
- **Earn community or service learning hours** (if applicable) and receive a **Certificate of Completion**.
- **Help ensure that voters have a smooth and welcoming experience at the polls.** As someone with a basic understanding of voting procedures and the election, you may have a lot to offer an uncertain or confused voter.

For more information, visit www.seventy.org or contact Patrick Christmas at pchristmas@seventy.org.



Committee of Seventy Election Ambassador Program – Permission Slip

Dear Parents and/or Guardians:

On this upcoming **Election Day**, the Committee of Seventy will host their eighth **Election Ambassador Corps** program, where students from participating high schools will serve as Election Day volunteers. As a program participant, your student will be assigned to a team of peers from their school to visit polling places for several hours, where they can help answer voters' questions and observe the election. If you wish to give your student permission to participate in this program, **please review this document and have your student return it to their teacher by <INSERT ASSIGNED DATE>**.

By signing this permission slip, you and your student indicate an understanding that the participating student will be obliged to abide by the program guidelines:

As a member of the Election Ambassador Corps, the student agrees to:

- 1) Act in a strictly nonpartisan** fashion while serving as an Election Ambassador on Election Day.
- 2) Study the program handbook** and become familiar with election and voting procedures.
- 3) Help voters and others** who seek information about the voting process to the best of their ability.

Important Details:

- Participating schools provide a Seventy presentation to students in their schools that includes a brief overview of the election and tasks performed by Election Ambassadors. Their jobs include: **1)** helping voters with questions about the voting process (using a handbook provided by Seventy), **2)** administering an exit survey to voters leaving the polls, and **3)** collecting images of campaign flyers and posters.
- Students will be assigned a polling site with a group of peers by their teacher based on the information you provide below. **Seventy staff do not chaperone or supervise students on Election Day.** Please contact us immediately with any concern regarding a student's team or where they will be visiting a polling site.
- Student volunteers are instructed to stay outside the buildings housing polling places (where voting machines are located). Election law prohibits nonpartisan volunteers from entering polling places.
- We encourage Election Ambassadors to visit polls from 9:00 a.m. to noon on **Election Day** but the specific hours may differ depending on their school or a student's community/volunteer-service requirements (if applicable).

Committee of Seventy contacts:

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Policy Director

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Operations Director

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Please keep page 1 and complete and return page 2 (this page).

Committee of Seventy Election Ambassador Program
Election Day

I give my student, _____, permission to participate in the Committee of Seventy's Election Ambassador Program on Election Day _____. I understand that my student will be walking with a group of other students in a designated area of Philadelphia. I do hereby waive and release the Committee of Seventy, the sponsors, their staff and all persons related to the program from any and all claims that may arise as a result of any expenses, personal injury, loss or damages incurred by my son/daughter during his/her participation in the Committee of Seventy Election Ambassador Program. I have fully read this permission slip and understand its terms. I sign it voluntarily and with full knowledge of its significance.

Parent Information

Parent/Guardian Name _____ Date _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Signature _____

Would you like to receive nonpartisan election information from Committee of Seventy? Yes / No

In the event that you are unable to reach me, please contact:

Emergency Contact Name: _____

Emergency Contact Phone: _____

Assignment Preferences

Student's Home Address: _____

I prefer my student be assigned to a polling place close to their (circle one): School/ Home/ No Preference

List up to three classmates you/your student would prefer your student to be assigned to a team with:

1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

Student Oath of Participation

As a member of the Election Ambassador Corps, I agree to:

- 1) Act in a strictly nonpartisan fashion while serving as an Election Ambassador on Election Day.
2) Study my program handbook and familiarize myself with election and voting procedures.
3) Help voters and others who seek information about the voting process to the best of my ability.

Student Name _____ Date _____

Student Signature _____



Name _____

Date _____

Period _____

Day 5: Becoming an Election Ambassador

Do-Now

Have you ever been with a family member to an election site? If so, what do you remember about the voting process? If not, what are you curious to know about the voting process?

Election Ambassadors Presentation

Answer the following questions as your teacher presents the presentation about Election Ambassadors.

1. What kind of government does the Committee of 70 fight for?
2. Who develops the questions for the Election Ambassadors survey?
3. What are three ways to share pictures of campaign literature with Committee of 70?
4. Are Election Ambassadors allowed in polling places?
5. What should Election Ambassadors do if they witness electioneering, intimidation, or harassment at a polling place?
6. What can a voter fill out if their eligibility to vote is questioned?
7. What phone number can Spanish speakers call for language access assistance?



Election Ambassador Survey Design

Brainstorm 2-4 questions you want to ask voters at polling places. Examples from past years are included to help you brainstorm.

<p>What do you think is the most important issue facing Pennsylvania?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Taxes and finances b. Healthcare and insurance c. Economy and jobs d. Senior issues and social security e. Energy issues and gas prices f. Foreign policy, terrorism, war g. Immigration h. Drugs i. Social issues j. Education and schools k. Infrastructure and transportation l. Government and politics m. Crime, violence, guns n. Environment o. Other/don't know 	<p>How much of the time do you think you can trust the government to do what is right? Please answer for each level:</p> <p>Local (Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Just about always b. Most of the time c. Some of the time d. Rarely <p>State (Harrisburg)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Just about always b. Most of the time c. Some of the time d. Rarely <p>Federal (Washington, D.C.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Just about always b. Most of the time c. Some of the time d. Rarely 	<p>Would you support allowing independent and third party voters to vote in primary elections?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No c. Uncertain <p>Would you support allowing voters the option to request and submit absentee ballots before Election Day without offering a reason or excuse?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No c. Uncertain <p>Would you support allowing voters the option to vote for a certain period before Election Day at a select number of early voting locations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No c. Uncertain 	<p>Would you support amending the PA Constitution to create an independent citizens redistricting commission responsible for drawing congressional and state legislative districts?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No c. Uncertain <p>Most elections in the United States are "first-past-the-post" – the winning candidate only has to garner more votes than his or her competitors. Do you think the winner of an election should have to receive more than 50 percent of the vote?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No c. Uncertain

Exit Ticket

What are the three biggest ideas, take-aways, or questions you have after this week of learning about voting and elections?"