

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

## It Was Election Day in Our Town

It was 7:00 AM on city election day and the workers at the **polling place** were ready. The voting booths stood waiting. The **ballots** lay on the tables ready to be marked. Workers kept looking at the door to see who would be the first to vote that day. And they waited. And they waited.

About 10:00 Mr. Valdez, election judge, came in to vote-the first voter all day. The precinct volunteers told him that the voter **turn-out** was the lowest ever: only one voter. “Don’t worry,” he said. “People know how important it is to vote. They’ll eventually come.” After he left the polling place, though, he thought it might be a good idea to call some registered voters to encourage them to vote.

This is what the people he called said. For each response below, think of a reply that might motivate the citizen to think twice about their decision not to vote. Remember to make your reply respectful and thoughtful.

- a. “It’s just a city election. I don’t vote in those. I just vote for the president.”

\_\_\_\_\_

- b. “My child is sick- I can’t vote.”

\_\_\_\_\_

- c. “It’s raining- I don’t want to go out today.”

\_\_\_\_\_

- d. “I work nights. I need to sleep during the day.”

\_\_\_\_\_

- e. “I don’t even know who’s running.”

\_\_\_\_\_

- f. “I’m just one person. It won’t matter if I don’t vote.”

\_\_\_\_\_

- g. “I lost my voting card.”

\_\_\_\_\_

- h. “Politicians are all alike. It doesn’t matter who gets elected.”

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Other voters did eventually go to the poll, but the voter turnout was only 10 percent. That means nine registered voters out of 10 did not vote in the election. Some people believe that our democratic government is in trouble when most people give up their opportunity to vote. Then only a few people can make decisions that affect everyone.

Think about the bad consequences that could happen if most people in your town do not bother to vote.

- Who has power in that situation?
- Who is powerless in that situation?
- How could power to govern your town be misused?
- Who might be glad that more citizens did not vote?



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## Election Day Follow Up Assignment

Choose your assignment:

1. Imagine that you are Mr. Valdez. Write a letter to the editor of your town's newspaper. In your letter, explain what happened on election day and what you think about it. Be as specific as you can in explaining at least three reasons for your opinion. Make your letter as persuasive as possible.
2. Look into the future in your town where few people take the time to vote. Imagine what this town government will be like in 50 years. Imagine the kinds of laws the city council might have passed. Imagine what the town will look like. Imagine who will have benefited and who will have been hurt by this set of events. Write a short story in which you describe the way this town turned out. You may make up names for characters, laws, events, and so forth, as you need them in the story.

