

Virtual Troop Meeting

VIRTUAL MEETING PLAN: *SENIOR BEHIND THE BALLOT*

In a democracy like ours, voting isn't just a right—it's a responsibility. It's how you make your voice heard and make choices about how you think things should be done in government. In this badge, you'll learn the importance of voting and find out about the electoral process in the United States and around the world.



PREPARE

This guide is designed to be used alongside GSUSA's Behind the Ballot badge materials. Buy or download:

- [The Senior's Girl Guide to Girl Scouting](#) (\$19.99)
- [Volunteer Toolkit](#) meeting scripts and resources (Free)

TECHNOLOGY

Girls will need to have an internet connection and device (computer, smartphone, tablet) to join a video chat/conference service to host troop meetings. Encourage everyone to leave their cameras on and mute themselves while the leader is sharing. Google Hangouts and [Zoom](#) are popular. Zoom offers the first 40 minutes free. For girl safety, we recommend you do not publicly post or share recorded meetings outside your troop.

SUPPLIES

Send parents a list of supplies to gather before beginning the first badge meeting.

- Computer or cell phone for virtual meeting
- Internet access for research
- Camera to record video
- Blank paper
- Pens/colored pencils/markers

STRUCTURE

Designed for 5 virtual meetings, 40+ minutes/each, plus badge work at home between meetings.

- ☐ Reflect: Talk about activity since previous meeting. Have girls explained what they learned during their research from the last topic
- ☐ Topic: Introduce the topic
- ☐ Question: Pose the questions to the girls. Most of the questions will need to be researched after the meeting or if you have enough time divide the girls into small groups and have each group answer one of the questions.
- ☐ Activity Intro: Explain the badge activity for girls to complete before the next meeting. Follow up with an email to the family that includes instructions.
- ☐ More to Explore: Share facts from the booklet about elections and women in politics.
- ☐ Close: Virtual friendship circle.
What is a virtual friendship circle? You get to design one together as a troop!

VIRTUAL MEETING 1: ELECTIONS

☐ Promise & Law

☐ Topic Intro

Step 1: Find out more about elections

Elections are how we choose leaders and vote on how we want things done in our country.
Compare local, state, and national elections.

☐ Questions:

Most of the questions will need to be researched after the meeting or if you have enough time divide the girls into small groups and have each group answer one of the questions.

Research the basic processes for local, state, and national elections. For one you might be electing a mayor, another your governor or state senator, and for another president.

How often do you vote for each elected position?

What are the differences between the three elections?

What is the difference between a primary and general election?

☐ Activity:

Make a chart for your resource.

☐ More to Explore

Understand the electoral college:

When Americans vote for a president and vice president, they're actually voting for presidential electors, known collectively as the Electoral College. It is these electors chosen by the people, who then formally elect the chief executive. Find out more about Electoral College and the electors. How many electors are assigned to each state? What is the origin of the system?

Why do we vote in November:

Federal elections are held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November in even-numbered years; presidential elections are held every four years. November was originally picked because the harvest was in and farmers could take time off to vote. Also, travel was easier throughout the North before winter set in.

☐ Close

Reflect on what you did in the meeting.

Talk about the week's activity and answer any last questions

Virtual Friendship Circle

VIRTUAL MEETING 2: VOTING

☐ Promise & Law

☐ Reflect

Show off the chart you created for the last step.

☐ Topic

Investigate the ins and outs of voting

Discover details on the simple but very important process of voting

Explore Voter Technology

Find out how voting technology methods vary from state to state, from the manual punch-card system to an electronic ballot maker.

☐ Questions

Most of the questions will need to be researched after the meeting or if you have enough time divide the girls into small groups and have each group answer one of the questions.

What new technologies were used in the last election?

How do people who are differently abled vote?

Explore the movement toward voting on the Internet. What are the pros and cons?

☐ Resources

You might seek information about online voting on the Government Computer News site (GCN.com)

Try to think critically in how you search for your answers. Try searching "California voting technology".

Like with any research paper you would do in school use scholarly sources; such as credible newspapers, government websites, etc.

☐ Close

Reflect on what you did in the meeting.

Talk about the week's activity and answer any last questions.

Virtual Friendship Circle

VIRTUAL MEETING 3: LOCAL VOTING

☐ Promise & Law

☐ Reflect

What did you learn about voter technology?

☐ Topic

Get Out the Vote

Voting is the most important right we have. If you're 18 or older, you're eligible to vote. Yet in the 2004 election, just over half of the approximately 44 million eligible young voters (under age 30) filled out a ballot. And in 2008, only 56.8 percent of all eligible voters turned up at the polls.

That's a lot of voices going unheard!

The Federal Election Commission (FEC) provides statistics on voter turnout. Look at statistics for the last three elections in your area to help inform your work in this step. Target a demographic that needs encouragement in your area, and do one of the choices.

☐ Activity Intro

Make a voter reminder calendar showing when elections are held locally

On the calendar, you might include nonpartisan websites and reference sites where new voters can get solid information about candidates and issues.

A blank 12-month calendar would be the most ideal for this activity.

☐ More to Know

Women and the Vote:

Suffrage is the right to vote—a right women earned on August 26, 1920, when the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was finally ratified after an arduous 100-year battle. And it all came down to one man's vote. Thirty-five of the necessary 36 states had ratified the amendment. The final vote was up to Harry Burns, a 24-year-old legislator from Nashville, Tennessee. Although Burns was anti suffrage, his mother urged him to vote for it. And mother knows best. Burns voted yes and the rest is history.

The 26th Amendment:

The 26th Amendment to the Constitution made 18 the legal voting age. One of the reasons it was passed was because, prior to 1971, 18-year-olds were being drafted to fight in the military, yet they couldn't vote.

☐ Close

Reflect on what you did in the meeting.

Talk about the week's activity and answer any last questions

Virtual Friendship Circle

VIRTUAL MEETING 4: CAMPAIGN

☐ Promise & Law

☐ Reflect

Show off your voting calendars!

☐ Topic

Plan a Campaign

Get an up-close look at what it's like to campaign for an elected office.

☐ Activity Intro

Create a campaign ad

First study campaign ads from three recent elections.

Are they negative? Warm and fuzzy? Or a bit of both?

Now develop your own print or video campaign ad—and make a campaign slogan! (To be done after the meeting, aim for 2-4 minutes)

☐ More to Know

For fun make a campaign song or a political cartoon. President Franklin Roosevelt's song was "Happy Days Are Here Again," and President Bill Clinton campaigned to the rock song "Don't Stop Thinkin' About Tomorrow" by Fleetwood Mac. You could write your own song or find an existing one that fits your campaign theme or you could make a cartoon? Political cartoons can be an effective way to make a point about a candidate or party. Take a look at works by famous political cartoonists, such as Thomas Nast from the 1880s. Did you know that Dr. Seuss also drew political cartoons? Check out the differences between some of the older cartoons and the newer ones. If you're inspired, draw your own cartoon based on a current political issue.

Top Office Contenders:

These women have made a run for U.S. President or Vice President. We haven't seen a woman in the Oval Office yet—but it's only a matter of time!

- Victoria Woodhull was a well-known feminist and the first woman (along with her sister) to work as a Wall Street broker. In 1872, the Equal Rights Party nominated her for president. She is considered by many to be the first woman to run for president, despite the fact that she was under 35 and the government did not print her name on the ballot.
- Margret Chase Smith was the first woman to be elected to both the US House of Representatives and the US Senate. In 1964, at the Republican National Convention, she became the first woman to have her name placed in nomination to Barry Goldwater.
- Shirley Chisholm was the first African American woman elected to Congress. In 1972, she made history again, declaring her candidacy for the Democratic nomination for president. She got her name on the 12 primary ballots, making her the first African American on the

ballot as a major-party presidential candidate. She was also the first woman to run for the Democratic presidential nomination.

- Pat LaMarche is a politician, writer, and Radio host from Maine. She was the vice-presidential nominee for the United States Green Party in 2004. She ran with presidential candidate David Cobb.
- Geraldine Ferraro was the first woman—and the first Italian American—to be nominated by a major political party as its candidate for vice president. She ran on the Democratic ticket with Walter Mondale in 1984, but lost the election to Ronald Regan and George H.W. Bush.
- Elizabeth Dole ran for the Republican nomination for president in the 2000 election. Though she pulled out of the race before any of the election primaries, in the 2003 she became the first woman to serve as a senator from North Carolina. She served until 2009.
- Sarah Palin made history as the first female vice-presidential nominee of the Republican Party. She ran with presidential candidate John McCain in 2008. McCain lost the election to Barack Obama.
- Hillary Clinton has come closer than any other woman to winning the presidential nomination of a major U.S. political party. She came in second in the 2008 Democratic primaries, losing to Barack Obama in one of the closest primary races in history.

❑ Close

Reflect on what you did in the meeting.

Talk about the week's activity and answer any last questions

Virtual Friendship Circle

VIRTUAL MEETING 5: INTERNATIONAL VOTING

☐ Promise & Law

☐ Reflect

Share your campaign videos

☐ Topic

Explore Voting in Other Countries

The U.S. isn't the only country that elects its leaders by popular vote. However, elections have different rules and procedures all over the world. Check out how citizens in other countries vote.

Pick three countries from different regions, and describe their voting procedures. To make things more fun investigate countries from different continents.

☐ Questions

Most of the questions will need to be researched after the meeting or if you have enough time divide the girls into small groups and have each group answer one of the questions.

What type of voting technology do they use?

Where are their polling places, and how are they regulated?

Who is eligible to vote?

☐ International Women in Power

In 1960, Sirivamo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka became the world's first female elected prime minister. In 1974, Argentina elected Isabel Perón as the first female president. Each of the following women held the highest political position in her country for the years listed. Some were elected, and some were appointed. How many of these names are you familiar with?

- Corazon Aquino: Philippines, President, 1986-1992
- Agatha Barbara: Malta, President, 1982-1987
- Gro Harlem Brundtland: Norway, Prime Minister, 1981, 1986-1989, 1990-1996
- Benazir Bhutto: Pakistan, Prime Minister, 1988-1990, 1993-1996
- Helen Clark: New Zealand, Prime Minister, 1999-2008
- Dame Eugenia Charles: Dominica, Prime Minister, 1980-1995
- Mireya Elisa Moscoso de Arias: Panama, President, 1999-2004
- Vigdís Finnbogadóttir: Iceland, President, 1980-1996
- Indira Gandhi: India, Prime Minister, 1966-1977, 1980-1984
- Tarja Kaarina Halonen: Finland, President, 2000-2012
- Maria Liberia-Peters: Netherlands Antilles, Prime Minister, 1984-1986, 1988-1993

- Golda Meir: Israel, Prime Minister, 1969-1974
- Mary Robinson: Ireland, President, 1990-1997
- Margaret Thatcher: Great Britain, Prime Minister, 1979-1990
- Mary McAleese: Ireland, President, 1997-2011
- Angela Merkel: Germany, Chancellor, 2005-present
- Jennifer Smith: Bermuda, Prime Minister, 1998-2003
- Vaira Vike-Freiberga: Latvia, President, 1999-2007
- Sheikh Hasina Wajed: Bangladesh, Prime Minister, 1996-2001, 2009-present

☐ Close

Reflect on what you did in the meeting.

Talk about the week's activity and answer any last questions

Virtual Friendship Circle

At your next virtual meeting, have girls share and reflect on the information they learned about voting in other countries.

Congratulations, your Girl Scout Seniors have earned their Behind the Ballot badge!