

# Citizenship and Participation

*How do we have a voice in our community?*

## Introduction

Has your family ever talked about how to spend a weekend or a vacation? Did you get to say what you thought? If so, then you probably felt better about the choice your family made. If not, then your family may have made a decision that you didn't like. Even if we don't get exactly what we want, we all like to have a voice in the decisions that affect us.

The same is true in your town or city. People want to have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. Many people want to make their voices heard in the federal government as well. They can make their voices heard in many ways, such as voting or attending public meetings. Also, helping to make important decisions in the community is part of being a good citizen. In this lesson, you'll learn about ways to make your voice heard in your community.

CITIZENSHIP AND PART...

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## Social Studies Vocabulary

ballot

peaceful

candidate

register

civil rights

republic

demonstration



Civics

### 1. People Choose Our Leaders

You know that the United States has a government. But how does that government work?

The United States government is a **republic**. In a

republic, the people choose leaders to make decisions for the country. The leaders are chosen in a democratic way. This means that citizens vote for their leaders.

Our government's power comes from the citizens. Citizens have a say in who makes decisions in our government. They consent, or agree, to let leaders run the country.

When members of government are chosen, they represent the people who elected them to office. They may have told these people what they planned to do. Now, they have a responsibility to keep their promises. Most importantly, they must do what is best for the people they represent.

The members of the government aren't the only people who have responsibilities. All citizens have responsibilities, especially those who can vote. U.S. citizens who are at least 18 years old have the right to vote.

The United States relies on its citizens to vote for the leaders of the country. It is important that the voters stay informed on the issues so that they can choose a good person to represent them.

One of the best ways to stay informed is by reading the news. The news brings important information to people. However, sometimes newspapers want you to vote for certain people. It is best to read different

newspapers so you can make the best decision for yourself.

Voting gives people a chance to make changes. You might not always like laws that are made, but new leaders are chosen every few years. You can choose to vote for someone new who agrees with you.

