COMMUNITY CLASSROOM

ENGAGING STUDENTS AND TEACHERS THROUGH FILM

COMMUNITY CLASSROOM: VOTE DEMOCRACY! EDUCATOR GUIDE

Educators can use the VOTE DEMOCRACY! Educator Guide to support viewing of PLEASE VOTE FOR ME, IRON LADIES OF LIBERIA, CHICAGO 10 and AN UNREASONABLE MAN while engaging students in discussions about democracy abroad, elections, third-party politics, gender, the role of dissent in democracy and media literacy. These lessons and activities also provide a context for understanding and further investigating the changing nature of democracy around the world.

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Activity 5

Women and Democracy
(90-120 minutes + assignments)

"All of the progress that we've made can be attributed to the fact that we've got strong women leadership in the government. These are all strong women that have led the processes of change and renewal. With all the problems and all the scares, I remain optimistic that Liberia will rise again."

—President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Women and Democracy
(90-120 minutes + assignments)

Grade Level: 9–12, College
Subject Areas: Government, Political Science, Social Studies, Current Events, Language Arts, Debate, Sociology, Women's Studies

Objectives: Students will
- analyze and critically view film as text and pull out quotations for further discussion
- participate in small-group and class discussions
- learn about women in prominent positions in the U.S. government
- make inferences from public statements about a politician's views
- present a persuasive argument about the impact of women on government

Skills: Stating and supporting opinions in class discussion and in writing, critical reading and viewing, researching, persuasive writing techniques, note taking and oral presentation

Materials: Board or overhead projector, chart paper, **IRON LADIES OF LIBERIA Video Module, Teacher Handout A, Student Handout B, IRON LADIES OF LIBERIA Discussion Guide** and art supplies.

From the Women's Suffrage movement in the United States to Africa's first elected female president to the possibility of the United States' first female presidential nominee from a major party, the voice of women in democracy has been and continues to be a critical struggle. In this lesson, students examine the significant women-led administration of Liberia and consider whether the world's governments would be different with more women in power. Students will also consider the ways in which notable women in American politics have challenged government to change or maintain the status quo.

Procedures

1. Divide a chart paper into two sides: "Should" and "Should Not." Have students brainstorm what women/girls "should" like to do, what they "should" be like and how they "should" act based on stereotypes in the media, popular culture and society at large. Do the same for the "Should Not" side.

2. Discuss using the following guiding questions:
   - How do you, your friends and the adults you know fit these stereotypes? How are they different from these stereotypes?
   - How do these stereotypes of how women/girls "should" and "should not" be influence some people your age?
   - Name some women you know personally or have seen in the news or popular culture who do not fit these stereotypes.
   - How might these stereotypes affect women in leadership positions?
   - How might women in leadership positions challenge these stereotypes?

3. Introduce this quotation from IRON LADIES OF LIBERIA:

They call me 'Iron Lady' because they feel I am very strict, tough. I want to prove a point: That women can be trusted and placed in dangerous positions. And they can even do better.

–Beatrice Munah Sieh, Chief of Police of Liberia

Have students write a response using this sentence stem:

- The United States and other countries around the world might be slow in accepting women in top leadership positions because…

Have the class share and then call on a few students to read their sentences.

4. View the **IRON LADIES OF LIBERIA Video Module** and prompt students to observe President Johnson Sirleaf and her interactions and dealings with the citizens of Liberia, corporations and world leaders. While they watch, have students record quotations from various speakers that reveal attitudes toward the president and the other women leaders for further reference and discussion after the film, for example:

Name	Description	Quotation
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf	President of Liberia	
Beatrice Munah Sieh	Chief of Police of Liberia	
Former soldier	Leader/spokesperson for the Armed Forces of Liberia (deactivated military)	"That's the right way, Ma."

NOTE: See **Student Handout B: Speaker and Quotes Grid**

5. Think-Pair-Share

- Think – Choose one of the quotations from your chart. Write a journal response using these questions: What is the speaker's view of the President and/or the women in government? If you could respond to the statement, what would you say?
- Pair – With a partner, compare what you wrote about your respective speakers. Discuss using the following guiding questions: Would the two speakers agree with each other? What would they say in response to each other's statements? Which of the speakers most represents your view?
- Share – You and your partner share with the class using these speaking stems: We agree with _____ , who says… /We disagree with _____ , who says…

6. Explain that the class will now look at quotes from past and present women in positions of power in government. Note to teachers: Also research local female politicians and community leaders to include in the list of quotations. Distribute the quotes in **Teacher Handout B** to students in the class who will read them aloud and identify the speaker.

Have students discuss their initial reactions to the quotations using these speaking stems:

- A voice that stood out to me was _____ because …
- I think she means that …

7. Assignment: Research Project

Do further research on one of the women quoted above or research another woman in a position of power in government (community, local, state, national or international; historical or contemporary). Research should include biographical information, more quotes, speeches or writings and analysis of the woman's views on gender, politics and leadership. Some good online sources include the International IDEA's page "Voter Turnout by Gender" (www.idea.int/gender/vt.cfm) and the WSS of the Association of College and Research Libraries' page "Women and Politics" (http://www.libr.org/wss/wsslinks/politics.html). Create a multimedia presentation that includes information from the research. This should be on poster board or overhead transparencies or in the form of a PowerPoint presentation and may include video clips, sound files and images, along with text highlights.

Extension Activities:

1. Invite a panel of guest speakers to come into the classroom to address student questions and comments about women in politics and community leadership positions. Use the expertise of the panel members to learn more about what it is like to be a woman in politics. Include politicians from your local city and county governments, directors of local advocacy and nonprofit organizations and local business leaders. Have students prepare questions for the panel in advance.

NOTE: See **Teacher Handout A: Guidelines for Convening a Community Forum**.

2. Write an opinion-editorial piece arguing whether governments and politics are run differently when women are in positions of power. Use selections from the quotations exercise and make inferences as to what the statements say about the speaker's philosophies and views on government. Support your opinion with additional background information and address opposing viewpoints and counter-arguments. Make predictions about the future of the U.S. government and the role of women politicians in it.

Name:_____ Date:_____

Student Handout B: Anticipation Guide (Activity 2: Third-party Voices)

Directions: Read each statement below carefully and mark Agree or Disagree based on your own knowledge, previous learning, experience or best educated guess. After sharing, we will read an article that discusses these ideas and you will be able to find out which statements you correctly identified:

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Were you correct? Yes	No
1. There are two major political parties in the U.S.				
2. A candidate from a third party has never won a Presidential election.				
3. A candidate from a third party has never won an election for state governor.				
4. Independent or third party candidates may participate in the Presidential Debates.				
5. There are other democratic countries with a greater number of political parties represented in their government.				

Teacher Handout A: Guidelines for Convening a Community Forum

Inviting community members into the classroom to share their insights and expertise can enhance student's learning by showing how the issues they are studying affect people around them. Consider inviting community members who represent multiple perspectives so the discussion can reflect the complexity of a particular issue as well as the diversity of your state and community. Introducing students to the contributing roles of scholars, advocates and policy-makers, along with those most affected by a policy or program, emulates a process of good information gathering. An appropriately facilitated discussion with opposing viewpoints also helps build understanding of democratic debate. If possible, involve students in researching and inviting the local panel members and developing the discussion questions. An outcome of this activity might be to connect students to service learning or other mentoring opportunities with community organizations.

Planning a Panel

STEP 1: Using the Educator Guide, determine which Activity area you would like to focus on and incorporate a Community Forum.

STEP 2: Using the table below as a guide, develop a plan for your preferred panel participants.

STEP 3: Using the Educator Guide and the Discussion Guide, compile a list of potential discussion questions to share with potential panelists.

STEP 4: Using your knowledge of community organizations, your student's contacts and research with some of the search tools provided, recruit your panelists.

STEP 5: Plan the format of your forum, finalize the discussion questions, select or designate a facilitator.

Here is a list of organizations that might assist you with identifying representatives for a community panel.

Suggested Panel Members	Organization examples	Search Tools
Campaign staff of a local, state or federal office-holder	Congress.org National Conference of State Legislators National Association of Counties	www.congress.org (search by ZIP code for local, state and congressional representatives http://www.ncsl.org/public/leglinks.cfm http://www.naco.org/Template.cfm?Section=Find_a_County&Template=/cffiles/counties/usamap.cfm
Government watch-dog organizations	Common Cause League of Women Voters	www.commoncause.org (search State Organizations) www.lwv.org (search "find a local league")
Women political leaders	Center for American Women and Politics, Rutgers	http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/Facts4.html (search by state)
Local journalists or filmmakers	Local newspaper, journalism school, film school	

Teacher Handout B: Women and Democracy Quotations

All of the progress that we've made can be attributed to the fact that we've got strong women leadership in the government. These are all strong women that have led the processes of change and renewal. With all the problems and all the scares, I remain optimistic that Liberia will rise again.
-Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia, 2006-present

It is simply the truth that the political system that I am part of has degenerated to the point that it needs fundamental change.
-Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, President of the Philippines, 2001-present

Women have always been respected in the Indian culture. The purdah [Muslim and Hindu practice of physical segregation of women and men and concealment of the woman's body] system was introduced to protect them from the Muslim invaders. However, times have changed. India is now independent and hence, the systems should also change. Now that women are progressing in every field, we should morally support and encourage them by leaving such practices behind.
-Pratibha Patil, President of India, 2007-present

I suppose leadership at one time meant muscles; but today it means getting along with people.
-Indira Gandhi, third and sixth Prime Minister of India, assassinated in 1984

I don't have any formula for ousting a dictator or building democracy. All I can suggest is to forget about yourself and just think of your people. It's always the people who make things happen.
-Corazon Aquino, President of the Philippines, 1986-1992

The narrow notion of every person for himself does not belong in today's world.
-Michaelle Jean, Governor General of Canada, 2005-present

The Finland of the 21st century can thrive only if women of learning—in common with their male counterparts—are guaranteed the opportunity to use their creative potential to the full.
-Tarja Halonen, President of Finland, 2000-present

Reconciliation is more beautiful than victory.
-Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, President of Nicaragua, 1990-1997

Peace is a battle. Peace is never given freely, never acquired. Its conquest is the result of courage and of respect for others. It demands awareness and commitment from everyone. Peace is not the law imposed by the mighty, but that which is founded on equality and dignity of all peoples.
-Chandrika Kumaratunga, President of Sri Lanka, 1994-2005

If we have to use force, it is because we are America. We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see further into the future.
–Madeleine Albright, first woman U.S. Secretary of State, 1997-2001

You don't have to have fought a war to love peace.
-Geraldine Ferraro, first woman to represent a major US political party as candidate for Vice President, 1984

You know, I wish the world well. I want Iraq to have democracy and the Haitians to have democracy. I want the people of Afghanistan to thrive. Lord knows, we spend enough money there to help them. What about people at home? Isn't that our first responsibility?
-Barbara Boxer, U.S. Senator from California, 1993-present

Maybe it will take a woman to clean up the House.
-Nancy Pelosi, first woman U.S. Speaker of the House, 2007

America must be light to the world, not just a missile.
-Nancy Pelosi, first woman U.S. Speaker of the House, 2007

We must respond [to the attacks of 9/11/01], but the character of that response will determine for us and for our children the world that they will inherit…A rush to launch precipitous military counterattacks runs too great a risk that more innocent men, women, children will be killed. I could not vote for a resolution that I believe could lead to such an outcome.
-Barbara Lee, US Congresswoman from California on her lone vote against the 2001 resolution to declare war on Iraq

They are after our way of life and we have to deal with them. There is no other way other than with strength [on the London terrorist attack, 7th July 2005].
-Condoleeza Rice, first African American woman (second woman and second African American) US Secretary of State, 2005-2009

We are here to advance the cause of women and to advance the cause of democracy and to make it absolutely clear that the two are inseparable. There cannot be true democracy unless women's voices are heard. There cannot be true democracy unless women are given the opportunity to take responsibility for their own lives.
-Hillary Rodham Clinton, US Senator, former US First Lady, Candidate for Democratic Presidential Nomination 2008, US Secretary of State, 2009-present

I was well on the way to forming my present attitude toward politics as it is practiced in the United States; it is a beautiful fraud that has been imposed on the people for years, whose practitioners exchange gelded promises for the most valuable thing their victims own: their votes.
-Shirley Chisholm, first African American woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, 1968-1983

Yes, I will bring the understanding of a woman to the Court, but I doubt that alone will affect my decisions. I think the important thing about my appointment is not that I will decide cases as a woman, but that I am a woman who will get to decide cases.
-Sandra Day O'Connor, first woman U.S. Supreme Court Justice, 1981-2006

And frankly, being a woman I think gives me a slightly different take on a lot of the issues and on a lot of the solutions to the problems we face.
-Carol Moseley-Braun, first African American woman elected to the U.S. Senate, 1993-1999

My father was watching the local news at my office two days ago and the reporter came on to talk about my selection as Speaker. The reporter talked about my being the first woman speaker…and the first openly gay speaker. And without missing a beat, my dad stuck out his chest and proudly yelled at the TV–you forgot Irish, you bum! Let me say that I am incredibly proud that in the most diverse city in the world, that diversity is seen as a strength–not an impediment.
-Christine Quinn, first woman elected New York City Council Speaker, 2006

RECOMMENDED NATIONAL STANDARDS

Curriculum Standards for English Language Arts National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies and their understanding of textual features.

4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communication with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.

7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion and the exchange of information).

Curriculum Standards for Social Studies Expectations of Excellence, National Council for the Social Studies

Performance Expectation 1: Culture
- Predict how data and experiences may be interpreted by people from diverse cultural perspectives and frames of reference.
- Interpret patterns of behavior reflecting values and attitudes that contribute or pose obstacles to cross-cultural understanding.
- Construct reasoned judgments about specific cultural responses to persistent human issues;

Performance Expectation 4: Individual Development and Identity
- Identify, describe, and express appreciation for the influences of various historical and contemporary cultures on an individual's daily life;
- Describe the ways family, religion, gender, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status and other group and cultural influences contribute to the development of a sense of self;
- Examine the interactions of ethnic, national or cultural influences in specific situations or events;
- Analyze the role of perceptions, attitudes, values and beliefs in the development of personal identity;
- Compare and evaluate the impact of stereotyping, conformity, acts of altruism and other behaviors on individuals and groups;
- Work independently and cooperatively within groups and institutions to accomplish goals;

Performance Expectation 6: Power, Authority, and Governance
- Examine persistent issues involving the rights, roles and status of the individual in relation to the general welfare;

Performance Expectation 9: Global Connections
- Analyze or formulate policy statements demonstrating an understanding of concerns, standards, issues and conflicts related to universal human rights;
- Identify and describe the roles of international and multinational organizations.
- Illustrate how individual behaviors and decisions connect with global systems.

For specific content standards on subjects such as social sciences, ethics and media literacy, please refer to your respective State Standards.

GUIDE CREDITS

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About COMMUNITY CLASSROOM:
COMMUNITY CLASSROOM is an exciting resource for educators providing short video modules drawn from the Emmy® Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens. Independent Lens*, a 29-week series airing Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS stations across the country, features unforgettable stories about a unique individual, community or moment in history. Drawn from the U.S. and abroad, these stories reflect the diversity of our world through the lens of contemporary documentary filmmakers. The CLASSROOM video modules are supported with innovative, resource-rich curricula for high school, college and youth educators. Video modules are 5-10 minutes in length and can be viewed online or on DVD-ROM. Content is grouped into subject specific segments that correspond to lesson plans and are standards-based.

COMMUNITY CLASSROOM is a product of the Independent Television Service and KQED Education Network, with support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Educational content was developed with guidance from PBS Teachers, National Association for Multicultural Education, National Council of Churches, American Association of Community Colleges, 4-H, National Council for the Social Studies, and National Council of Teachers of English.

About ITVS:
The Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the Emmy Award-winning weekly series *Independent Lens* on Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. ITVS is a miracle of public policy created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television, bringing TV audiences face-to-face with the lives and concerns of their fellow Americans. More information about ITVS can be obtained by visiting itvs.org. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people.

About *Independent Lens*:
Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. Hosted this season by Terrence Howard, the acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about a unique individual, community or moment in history. Presented by ITVS, the series is supported by interactive companion websites and national publicity and community engagement campaigns. Further information about the series is available at www.pbs.org/independentlens. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS, and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen.

About KQED Education Network:
KQED Education Network engages with community and educational organizations to broaden and deepen the impact of KQED media to effect positive change. Through parent education and professional development workshops, public screenings, multimedia resources, and special events, Education Network reaches more than 200,000 Bay Area residents a year and serves people of all ages, with a particular emphasis on reaching underserved communities. Learn more about its three unique services, Early Learning, Educational Services, and Community Engagement, at kqed.org/HistoryEd.

About PBS:
PBS is a media enterprise that serves 354 public noncommercial television stations and reaches almost 90 million people each week through on-air and online content. Bringing diverse viewpoints to television and the Internet, PBS provides high-quality documentary and dramatic entertainment, and consistently dominates the most prestigious award competitions. PBS is a leading provider of educational materials for K-12 teachers, and offers a broad array of other educational services. PBS's premier kids' TV programming and Web site, PBS KIDS Online (pbskids.org), continue to be parents' and teachers' most trusted learning environments for children. More information about PBS is available at pbs.org, one of the leading dot-org Web sites on the Internet.