

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Reasons and Evidence

Read the short story and answer each question.



Should Voting Be Mandatory?

In many democratic countries, voting is a right—but not a requirement. Some people think everyone should be *required* to vote in elections, while others believe voting should always be a personal choice.

One reason people support mandatory voting is that it helps represent everyone. When more people vote, the results better reflect the views of the entire population. According to the Pew Research Center, only about 60% of eligible Americans vote in presidential elections—and even fewer in local ones. That means decisions are often made by a small group of voters.

Supporters also say that voting is a responsibility, not just a right. Just like paying taxes or serving on a jury, they believe citizens should participate to keep the government working fairly. Countries like Australia already have laws that require citizens to vote—and they see turnout rates above 90%.

On the other side, some argue that forcing people to vote isn't fair. People may not feel informed or may disagree with all the choices on the ballot. Critics say that voting should be meaningful, not something done just to avoid a fine. They also argue that mandatory voting may lead to people making random or uninformed choices.

Some experts suggest a middle ground, like making Election Day a national holiday or offering more voting education, so people feel encouraged—not forced—to participate.

So, should voting be mandatory? It's a debate that raises important questions about freedom, fairness, and the future of democracy.



Name: _____

Should Voting Be Mandatory?

1. What evidence is used to support the idea that mandatory voting increases participation?

- A. Australia has voter turnout rates above 90%.
- B. Americans vote more during rainy elections.
- C. Most people don't understand ballots.
- D. Some people vote multiple times.

2. Why do some people believe voting should stay optional?

- A. People would rather vote by phone.
- B. They think voting is a meaningless tradition.
- C. They want citizens to make informed, personal choices.
- D. Ballots are only available in certain states.

3. Fill in the blank:

Supporters of mandatory voting say it is a _____, just like paying taxes or serving on a jury.

4. What are two reasons given in the article for making voting mandatory? How does the author support each reason?

5. What is one possible compromise mentioned in the article, and how does it try to solve the debate?



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: U

Lexile Level: 925L-1075L

Grade Level: 5th Grade, Middle of the Year

Genre: Persuasive Informational Text / Civics

Introducing the Text

“Today we’ll read an article that explores whether voting should be required by law. We’ll look closely at how the author uses evidence and reasoning to support different points. As you read, think about how each side builds their argument and which evidence you find most convincing.”

Vocabulary: mandatory, responsibility, turnout, ballot, democracy

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think voting is important in a democracy?
 2. Do you think people should have to vote, or should it be a choice?
 3. What are some ways we make our voices heard in government?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What reasons are given to support mandatory voting?
 2. How do opponents argue against forcing people to vote?
 3. What examples or evidence does the author include?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. What do you think is the strongest point on each side of the debate?
 2. Do you agree with the compromise ideas mentioned? Why or why not?
 3. If you could make one change to how voting works in the U.S., what would it be?
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Activity Idea

Have students hold a mock classroom vote on a fun topic (like a class pet or game), but only allow half the class to vote. Then, repeat with everyone participating. Lead a discussion comparing the two outcomes and how voter participation affects fairness. Follow with a short writing reflection connecting this to the article.

