Hi! I'm Billy Ballot and I have some cool stuff to tell you about Florida Elections!

A Guide for Students by the Supervisor of Elections
Pinellas County, Florida
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We the People

of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article 1.

Section 1.

All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 2.

Clause 1. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

Clause 2. No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty Years, been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

Clause 3. Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers; which shall be determined by adding to the whole Number of Free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons. (See Note 2.)

The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by Law direct. The Number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every 30,000, but each State shall have at least one Representative, and until such enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be entitled to choose three, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations one, Connecticutt two, New-York six, New-Jersey four, Pennsylvannia eight, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North-Carolina six, South-Carolina five, and Georgia three.

Clause 4. When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the Executive Authority thereof shall issue Writs of Election to fill such Vacancies.

Clause 5. The House of Representatives shall choose their Speaker and other Officers and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.

Section 2.
Voting is the heart of our representative democracy because it allows the people to state their beliefs and select the candidates that will best represent them in government. In many countries, citizens do not have the same rights and privileges as Americans do.

**Word Scramble**

RMFEDOE __________   EIBLFES __________

RCCDMEOAY __________   ETOV __________

Answers on page 16
Choosing our Representatives

To select our representatives in government, registered voters go to the polls during an election to cast their ballots. But voters need to be informed before casting their ballots. Part of being an informed voter is to think about issues, examine each candidate’s positions and then select the one whose views best match yours.

If these three candidates wanted to be elected to the Student Council, which one would you vote for? Examine their platform (their positions on issues) and then cast your vote.

**Teachers should give students a fair amount of homework.**  
**All students should learn to use computers.**  
**Kids should do three hours of homework each night.**  
**No computers in schools.**  
**School is boring, so it doesn’t matter if classrooms have books.**  

**Every student should have all he or she needs to learn in the classroom.**  
**Only the “smart” kids should get new books.**  
**Schoolwork doesn’t really matter.**  
**Computers are OK for playing games, but they don’t teach you anything.**

I am voting for _________________________________  

**to represent me in the Student Council.**
Florida is the nation’s fourth largest state and has a population of about 19 million people. There are 67 counties in the state.

Which one is your home county? Color it in green.

How many Florida counties can you name in 30 seconds?

Write the names of three counties nearest to the one you live in:
Florida Quick Facts

Color these symbols of our state:

- Capital City: Tallahassee
- Nickname: The Sunshine State
- State Beverage: Florida Orange Juice
- State Tree: Sabal Palm
- State Flower: Orange Blossom
- State Bird: Mockingbird
- State Animal: Florida Panther
- State Reptile: Alligator

Each Florida county has a Supervisor of Elections, whose office is responsible for making sure elections are conducted fairly and accurately. The supervisor must abide by all federal, state and local laws. Each Supervisor of Elections registers voters, maintains voting records, issues voter information cards, trains poll workers who staff polling places on election day and educates voters about the election process.

Ask the reference librarian in your school or community library to help you find the name of your county's Supervisor of Elections:

My county's Supervisor of Elections is ____________________________________________

Who Can Vote and How Can You Register?

When you turn 18 you can register to VOTE!

Create your own Voter Information Card below and decorate it!

Voters must be U.S. citizens who are 18 years of age or older. To vote in Florida, they must be residents of the state who are not registered to vote anywhere else. Voters can register at their Supervisor of Elections office, Tax Collector offices, libraries and other sites throughout their county. Voters can register at any time, but to vote in an upcoming election, they must be registered at least 29 days before Election Day.

_____________________________ County, Florida

Voter Name and Address: ________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

Date Registered:          Date of Birth:          Political Party:          
Who's in Charge?

The Supervisor of Elections

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Voter Information Card

County, Florida

Voter Name and Address:

Date Registered: Date of Birth: Political Party:

When you turn 18 you can register to VOTE! Create your own Voter Information Card below and decorate it!
Florida counties use optical ballot scanners.

Optical ballot scanners “read” ballots much the same way that tests you take in school are graded. Voters fill in ovals and the machine counts their votes by reading the marks on the paper ballot.

All voters may request an absentee/mail ballot from the Supervisor of Elections office. Absentee/mail ballot envelopes must be signed and returned to the Supervisor of Elections office in person or by mail.

Florida also provides for early voting in the Supervisor of Elections offices and other selected locations, before certain elections.
Let’s suppose Florida kids could vote in an election for their favorite snack. The ballot might look something like this:

Fill in the circle next to your favorite snack.
Congratulations!
You’ve just become a voter!

Create your own sample ballot below and get your friends and family to vote:

What were the results of your own election?

Congratulations! You’ve become a Supervisor of Elections!
1787 The U.S. Constitution gives white male property owners age 21 and older the right to vote.

1789 George Washington becomes the first president.

1793 The National Voter Registration Act (Motor Voter) makes voter registration more convenient by increasing the number of government agencies serving as registrars. Clinton becomes the 42nd president.

1807 Vermont is the first state to adopt the paper ballot for statewide elections. Harrison becomes the 23rd president.

1861 - 65 Civil War

1861 - 77 Presidents: Lincoln - A. Johnson - Grant

1861 - 77 The 15th Amendment guarantees the right to vote to all men age 21 or older, regardless of race or ethnic background.

1865 The Voting Rights Act authorized the federal government to take over voter registration and prohibited discrimination in voting procedures because of race or color. L. B. Johnson starts second term as President.

1869 Nixon becomes the 37th president.

1870 Photograph

1877 - 89 Presidents: Hayes - Garfield - Arthur - Cleveland

1877 - 89 Inventions: Typewriter

1882 New York becomes the first state to adopt the lever-type voting machine. Cleveland - McKinley - T. Roosevelt - Taft - Wilson

1889 New York becomes the first state to adopt the paper ballot for statewide elections. Harrison becomes the 23rd president.

1892 New York first uses the lever-type voting machine.

1893 - 1912 Riding in an automobile!

1894 The Tennessee Early Voting Act made that state the first to establish early voting, providing a period of 15 days in which to vote early before Election Day without declaring a reason for this early casting of votes.

1908 Barron Obama becomes the 44th President and tweets “Four more years” when he is re-elected in 2012.

1964 Fulton and DeKalb counties in Georgia are the first to use the punch-card ballot.

1965 The Voting Rights Act authorized the federal government to take over voter registration and prohibited discrimination in voting procedures because of race or color. L. B. Johnson starts second term as President.

1966 Both optical scan systems and electronic touch-screen voting machines were first used in the 1966 presidential election. Clinton wins second term as President.

1969 Nixon becomes the 37th president.

1971 The 26th Amendment lowers the voting age across the nation to 18.


1974 - 93 Dropping quarters at the arcade.

1994 The Tennessee Early Voting Act made that state the first to establish early voting, providing a period of 15 days in which to vote early before Election Day without declaring a reason for this early casting of votes.

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Our United States of America sure has made progress when it comes to voting. Find your way through the years and see if you can make it to the 21st century!
When Can You Vote?

Federal, State, County and Local Elections

Do you know your:
Country?
State?
County?
City/Town?

Voters in America have many responsibilities. One is to take part in elections regularly. There are many chances to vote. For example, voters select the president and their representatives in the U.S. Congress in federal elections. State elections are held to select the governor, representatives in the state’s Senate and House and other officials. County commissioners and other officials, including the Supervisor of Elections, are chosen during county elections. If you live in a city or town, you may choose your mayor and representatives during a local election.
Here are some types of elections:

**Primaries:** Voters choose candidates within their own political party only. The two major political parties are the Democratic and Republican parties. There are many other minor political parties. Florida uses a closed-primary system which means that during a Republican primary, only voters who have identified themselves as Republicans when they registered can vote in Republican races. The same rules apply for a primary election for Democrats. All voters may vote in nonpartisan races, for school board members and judges.

**General Election:** All registered voters may vote for any candidate, regardless of their political party, and on any ballot questions.

**Special Election:** In addition to General and Primary elections, Special Elections can be called any time of the year. A common reason might be to vote on a referendum or issue that requires the voice of the people to become a law.

**Presidential Preference Primary:** Every four years, voters have a chance to have their say on several candidates running for president. During this type of primary, the candidate with the majority of votes is likely to become the party’s nominee in the upcoming presidential election.

If you were running for president, what would be one of your campaign issues?
Imagine that you are running for president. Design a campaign poster that would tell voters what you stand for and why they should vote for you:

Here are the symbols of the Republican and Democratic parties.

Republican Democratic

Create a new party that describes how you feel about issues. Design a symbol for your new party.

Even though America is a representative democracy, voters do not directly elect the president and vice president. Instead, members from all 50 states and the District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.) make up the Electoral College and vote for the candidates after the votes are cast by citizens. The votes cast in the election are called the popular vote. Those votes do not actually decide who the next president and vice president will be. As established in the Constitution, votes by the Electoral College members decide. The number of Electoral College members equals the number of senators and representatives from each state plus members for the District of Columbia. In most states, the presidential and vice presidential candidates with the most popular votes in a state wins ALL of that state’s electoral votes. After the presidential election in November, the Electoral College members meet in December at their state capitols to cast their votes. These votes are counted in Congress in January when the winners are confirmed.
Imagine that you are running for president. Design a campaign poster that would tell voters what you stand for and why they should vote for you:

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Candidates are Everywhere

To let voters know what they stand for, candidates campaign before an election. They make speeches, create brochures and place ads on TV and radio, in newspapers and on the internet to tell voters what they will do if elected. Voters should carefully study each candidate’s record and platform instead of voting for the candidate with the best or most expensive ads.

If you were running for president of your class, what would you promise your classmates you would do for them if you were elected?

Campaign promise 1:

Campaign promise 2:

Campaign promise 3:

Consider how many of these promises you would actually be able to fulfill if you were elected. Were they realistic?
Kids Can’t Vote, but They Can Make a Difference

• In 1982, Florida kids were allowed to vote for the state animal. Students chose the Florida panther.

• Stacy Hillman, a 10-year-old Florida student, started Pennies to Protect Police Dogs in 2001 to raise funds to protect animals who work in law enforcement. Through Stacy’s efforts, Baker County officials were able to purchase bulletproof vests for police dogs similar to the ones their human partners wear.

• Kids involved in organizations such as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts perform community service as part of their membership.

• Students were the first to recite the Pledge of Allegiance in 1892. Can you fill in the blanks in the Pledge of Allegiance? Select the words from the list below:

I pledge allegiance to the ____________
of the _____________________ of America and
to the _____________________ for which it stands,
one ______________ under God,
indivisible, with ______________
and ______________ for all.
You've Made The Grade!

You're now on your way to becoming a future voter. When you're 18, you'll be able to take part in one of America's greatest freedoms and privileges.

Encourage adults you know to register to vote and to take part in the process. Together, we can all make a difference in America!

Read and sign the Future Voter card below as a reminder:

I'm a Future Voter!
I plan to register and vote when I'm 18 and to stay educated about candidates and issues that affect me and my community.

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**Word Scramble**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RMFEDOE</th>
<th>FREEDOM</th>
<th>EIBLFES</th>
<th>BELIEFS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RCCDMEOAY</td>
<td>DEMOCRACY</td>
<td>ETOV</td>
<td>VOTE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I pledge allegiance to the __________ flag
of the ______________ United States of America and
to the __________ republic for which it stands,
one __________ nation under God,
indivisible, with __________ liberty
and __________ justice for all.
You’ve Made The Grade!

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Name: __________________________

FREEDOM
DEMOCRACY
BELIEFS
VOTE
justice
liberty
nation
republic
United States
flag
I pledge allegiance to the __________ of the _____________________ of America and to the ____________________ for which it stands, one ______________ under God, indivisible, with _______________ and ______________ for all.