



The Little Election is a great book to read to younger students just for fun. It is a fantastic book for older students to share with younger students. This simplistic portrayal of the electoral system lends itself to wonderful learning opportunities for young and old. Group older students with younger students while they enjoy the story. Then have them participate in as many of the following activities as possible together. This way everyone can gain a far greater understanding of an electoral system and have a whole lot of fun in the process.

Choose a time when a group of older students can sit in when you read this book to your class. Alternatively have older students read the book to small groups of younger students.

Complete as many of the following activities as time and enthusiasm allows. In some instances older students can 'scribe' for younger students and watch their performances. In other instances younger students can be the audience for all work older students are required to publish.

Getting Started

Discussing the story.

Which parts did the students like; who would they vote for Rory or Debra Jo Woo?

Did the students like the story, love it, hate it? Did they want Rory to win? Which parts were funny and which parts were gross? Start the informal voting process by getting a show of hands: Hands up people who wanted Rory to win. Hands up people who know someone that pees in the pool.

Describe all the gross things that little kids (and not so little kids) like to do to 'gross one another out'.

List all the things that students already vote on at school. (Representatives for the Student Council, Class Captains, team captains, what to play at little lunch...) Talk about the voting systems used to decide these things. [Eng, SOSE]

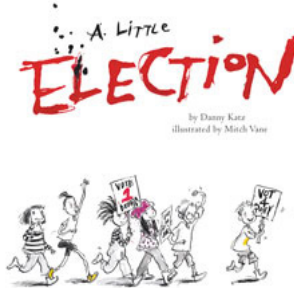
Discover why a secret ballot is important.

Take a vote on which is worse:

1. Sitting on chewing gum or wet bird poo.
2. Being licked on the face or being bitten on the bum.

Votes to be registered by raising a hand and counted.

Take a vote on which is OK and which is not OK:



1. Showing your undies to your classmates.

2. Peeing in the swimming pool.

Votes to be registered by moving to one side or the other of the classroom.

Take a vote on which is OK and which is not OK:

1. Wetting the bed at night after you have started school.

2. Taking a Teddy bear to bed after you have started school.

Votes to be registered by secretly writing OK or Not OK on a piece of paper.

Discuss why sometimes it is important for votes to be secret. Did some students find they felt influenced by how others were voting? Were some students tempted to change their vote when they saw where their friends 'stood'?

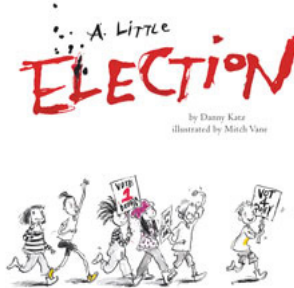
How do students feel about secret voting and voting where everyone gets to see how you vote? [Eng, SOSE, HPE, PD, Maths]

Argue whether or not this is actually possible. Mrs Gonsha said the Prime Minister is supposed to keep everyone safe and happy. (Page 6) Could the Prime Minister actually keep everyone happy and safe? Won't making some people happy only make others unhappy a lot of the time? (E.g. If you give all the workers a pay rise then some of the employers will be unhappy for sure.) [Eng, SOSE]

Encourage each student to stand on a 'platform' of their choice and 'make an important speech'. Mrs Gonsha made Rory and Debra Jo Woo stand up in front of all the voters and make an important speech. (Page 12 -13) The platform could be a lunch box, garbage can lid, a stack of books - be creative. The important speech is about getting elected as the Prime Minister of Australia. The student must state their name, the name of their party and name one important thing they are going to do when they are Prime Minister. Make it happen really fast - each speaker has 15 seconds. [Eng, SOSE, PD]

Check It Out: VOTE FOR DEBRA SHE'S SO SMART SHE ALWAYS GETS AN 'A' FOR ART. (Page 16) This chant has a definite rhyme and a rhythm. Read and re-read the chant. Discuss the rhyme and the rhythm. Work out which words rhyme and clap out the rhythm. [Eng, SOSE, Music]

Experiment with some words that rhyme. List some personal attributes and play with some rhythm and rhyme. Example: I'm real tuff, I do cool stuff. I'm so caring and so kind, I'm the nicest person you will find.



Instruct each student to complete the sentence and make up a chant for themselves: VOTE FOR _____ (student's own name) SHE'S SO _____ (e.g. tuff, great) SHE ALWAYS _____. (E.g. doing real cool stuff, been a really good mate)

Now try this one: VOTE FOR RORY HE'S SO COOL HE PEEES IN THE SWIMMING POOL. (Page 17) Rory's chant has a definite rhythm and rhyme too. Challenge students to complete this sentence and make up another chant for themselves: VOTE FOR _____ (student's own name) HE'S SO _____ HE _____. [Eng, SOSE, Music]

Stomp around chanting the new catch cries to get a real feel for the rhythm.

Wave impromptu banners and create a bit of 'atmosphere'.

Hold an Undies Election

Invite volunteers, three boys and three girls, to bring in their favourite undies (clean of course!) and three clothes pegs. Give each student a paper bag and ask them to list the virtues of their undies on the paper bag. Peg all the undies on a line in the classroom with the paper bag attached to each. Ask each owner to give a brief speech (pardon the pun) regaling the virtues of their favourite undies. Voters can vote for one pair of girls' undies and one pair of boys' undies by placing a piece of paper in the paper bag attached to the undies of their choice. Count the votes.

Repeat the above voting process but this time allow the owner of each pair of undies to offer the voters one thing if they vote in their favour. Count the vote - was it different to the first time? Discuss the outcome.

Acquire three 'interesting' pairs of anonymous boys' undies and three pairs of girls' undies and repeat the process without any speeches - let the undies speak for themselves! Count the votes and see whether the outcome is different when there is no person/name/personality attached to any of the undies. Discuss the findings.

Hold Little Elections

Hold little elections of all kinds or just one big election for something significant. Involve everyone in the election/s. Make it as serious or as seriously silly as you like. Make speeches, run a complete campaign, write leaflets, design posters, voting forms, ballot boxes and choose



voting booth attendants. Or keep it simple.

Involve the Media

Publish any number of news stories about the events that take place in the story, The Little Election, your Undies Election or any other election you may choose to hold with your class/es. Print, broadcast, put to air, interview, report, film, photograph anything and everything related to the election. Encourage students to use computers, publishing programs, printers, cameras and recorders to bring their media reports to life.

Complete some form of media coverage for these headline making events:

- . Prime Minister Flicks a Booger
- . Prime Minister Shows Undies
- . Prime Minister Buys Off the Voters
- . Prime Minister Involved in Scandal

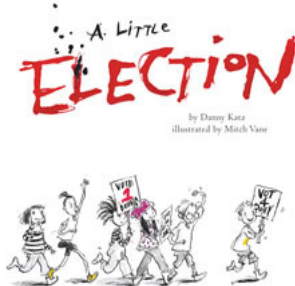
The media coverage might be a front page newspaper report or the lead story on the ABC television or radio news. It could be the subject of a talk back radio program: "Earlier today it has been alleged that during Question Time the Prime Minister flicked a booger at the Leader of the Opposition. Listeners please phone in and tell me what you think about that!" Write and record the dialogue for the radio announcer and the listeners phoning up.

Publish all written material in an election magazine or newspaper and distribute it for reading. Play all recorded material at a lunch time screening for the class/es involved and other interested parties.

Consider This: Is there is any truth to the statement: "Nice guys finish last"? In relation to The Little Election is it relevant to a certain extent? Did Rory seem like a very 'nice' person? Did Debra Jo Woo seem like a 'nice' person? Did the 'nicest' person win the election? In a nutshell:

Debra Jo Woo doesn't do gross things and is relatively well behaved. She appealed only to the voters who liked beautiful fairy angels like she did. Debra Jo Woo didn't offer to give all the voters anything that they really liked or take away anything they didn't like. Even though she promises to be beautiful, smart and creative Debra Jo Woo loses the election. Rory does gross things and is not very well behaved. Rory appealed to lots of the voters by giving them cake and toys (things kids want), and taking away teachers, maths and times tables (things people don't want). Even though he announces that he pees in the pool and shows everyone his undies Rory wins the election.

Discuss this with parents too. Ask them if they think politicians do similar things to get elected. Can they give examples? [SOSE, Eng]



PD

Analyse different situations and workout when it is and is not appropriate to say certain things and behave in certain ways. Can you say 'bum' in front of your friends but not in front of your grandparents? Is it appropriate to show your Mum's business acquaintance your undies?

HPE

List some of the things the Prime Minister has to do during an election campaign (travelling, meetings, speeches, kissing babies...). Is it important that he or she is fit and healthy to do these things? Find out what the current Prime Minister does every day to keep fit.

MATHS

Count votes on any number of 'little elections' and record the information in a variety of graphs. Vote on the most popular kids' book, TV program, game to play at little lunch... Vote on which graph is the most effective in each instance.

Display graphs somewhere prominent in the classroom.

FUN STUFF

Design a 'Vote For ...' leaflet, poster or flyer for yourself.

Make Vote 1 rosettes with paper and ribbon.

Draw pictures of everyone at the Undies Election using ink pens only (Just like Mitch Vane!)

Role play interviews with the newly elected Prime Minister.

Write tall stories about "When I was Prime Minister..."

SERIOUS STUFF

Investigate what the Prime Minister of Australia is really supposed to do.

Interview friends and family and ask them what they believe the current Prime Minister of Australia does do and what he or she should do. Report back to the class.

Research the Australia's past Prime Ministers. Were there any who able to keep the voters safe and happy?



black dog books

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Teacher Notes

A Little
ELECTION
by Danny Katz
illustrated by Mitch Vase

