

Where are the Voters?: Crafting a Winning Political Campaign Strategy

Christina Marsett

This unit is written to amalgamate skills and content that ninth grade students should be learning in both Civics and Geography. More often than not, the concepts from each of these disciplines are taught in isolation. However, integrating them within on another has the power to bring each area of study alive for students. In this unit, the marriage of Civics and Geography highlights the real-world applications of geographic skills, while integrating real data from our local area into Civic processes. The unit is designed to be taught near the start of the course, and is therefore one of students' first experiences thinking in terms of both disciplines. In working through this unit, students will gain an understanding of the extra-Constitutional role of political parties, with an emphasis on the campaign process. Students will also begin to put their geographic thinking skills to use as they progress through the unit, moving from identifying patterns and processes on a map to using geospatial technology to create and manipulate their own maps. Students will also become familiar with Esri's ArcGIS Online platform throughout this unit, as they manipulate existing maps on the platform, select data layers to create their own maps, and make creative decisions about how this data will be displayed. The unit culminates in students creating a figurative political candidate and developing the candidate's campaign strategy based on the location of voters.