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Family Reading Guide for "Your Vote Matters"

Conversation starters for parents and children

Getting Started

What This Book Is About

"Your Vote Matters: How We Elect the US President" is a comprehensive, kid-friendly guide to the American presidential election process. From who is eligible to run, through primaries and caucuses, to the Electoral College and Election Day, the book walks readers through every step with clear explanations, full-color infographics, and helpful visuals. It also includes guidance on how to think about choosing a candidate—making it not just a process guide but a genuine introduction to civic reasoning.

Key Themes Your Child Will Encounter:

- **Democratic participation:** Voting is described as a right and a responsibility, and the book emphasizes why participation matters at every level
- **How government works:** The Electoral College, primaries, caucuses, and the presidential role are all explained in accessible terms
- **Critical thinking:** The section on how to evaluate candidates introduces the habit of civic reasoning—comparing positions, checking sources, asking questions
- **Civic identity:** The book invites children to see themselves as future citizens whose participation will shape the country they live in
- **History of voting rights:** The book touches on who has and hasn't had the right to vote, grounding civic participation in a historical context

Tip for Parents: This is a wonderful book for exploring civic participation together, regardless of your family's political views. The book is nonpartisan—it explains the process without advocating for any party or candidate. Use it as an opportunity to share your family's civic values (the importance of participating, of thinking carefully, of understanding the process) rather than your political preferences.

Discussion Questions

About Elections and How They Work

- What surprised you most about how the president is elected?
- What does the Electoral College do—and why do you think it exists?
- What is the difference between a primary and a caucus?
- What does the president actually do once they're sworn in?

About Voting and Civic Participation

- Why do you think some people don't vote? What might make them change their minds?
- What do you think you would look for in a presidential candidate?
- If you could vote tomorrow, what would be the most important issue to you?
- What would happen if nobody voted? Why does participation matter?

Fun Conversation Starters

- If you were running for president, what would your campaign slogan be?
- What do you think would be the hardest part of being president?



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- If you designed your own election system from scratch, what would it look like?
 - What question would you most want to ask a presidential candidate?
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Discussion Activities

Exploring Elections Together

- Look up your state's primary or caucus system—how does it work?
- Find the Electoral College map together and count the votes each region represents
- Research one past presidential election that was decided by a very small margin
- Discuss: Why do some elections feel more important than others?

Practicing Civic Reasoning

- Practice evaluating a mock candidate: What positions matter most to your family? What questions would you ask?
 - Look at how your family has participated in elections—local, state, or national
 - Research one person who fought for voting rights in American history
 - Discuss: What does it mean to vote responsibly? How do you decide?
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Conversation Tips for Parents

Making Civics Feel Real

- Share your own experience of voting—what it feels like, why you do it, and what you think about in the booth
- Be honest about complexity: elections are not always simple or fair, and that's worth discussing honestly
- Let your child's questions guide the conversation—curiosity about how the system works is exactly what this book is designed to spark
- Avoid partisan framing: this is an opportunity to teach process and values, not party loyalty

Building Long-Term Civic Habits

- Talk about voting as a family practice—not just a political act but a civic ritual worth taking seriously
 - Discuss local elections: school boards, city councils, ballot measures—these affect daily life and are often decided by very few votes
 - If your child is old enough, bring them with you when you vote
 - Explore volunteer opportunities in your community that connect civic values to action
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Questions by Age Group

For Younger Readers (Ages 6–8)

- What is one thing you have to be to run for president?
- What happens on Election Day?
- Why does the book say your vote matters?
- What is one job the president has after being elected?



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For Older Readers (Ages 9–12)

- How does the Electoral College work—and do you think it's a fair system? Why or why not?
- What is the difference between a primary, a caucus, and the general election?
- What does it mean to vote responsibly—what should you think about before choosing a candidate?
- Why do you think some Americans choose not to vote, and what might encourage them to participate?

Activity Ideas

Creative and Civic Projects

- Design a campaign poster for yourself or an imaginary candidate running on issues that matter to you
- Write a one-paragraph "platform" explaining what you would do as president and why
- Create your own Electoral College map—color states and count votes for a mock election
- Hold a classroom or family mock election on a low-stakes question (best pizza topping, best movie) and debrief the process

Research Projects

- Research a historical presidential election—who ran, what the issues were, and how close it was
- Learn about the history of voting rights in the US—who has been excluded, and how that changed
- Investigate your state's voter registration requirements and process
- Research how other countries elect their leaders—how is the US system similar or different?

"Your Vote Matters" is not just a book about elections—it's a book about belonging to something larger than yourself. Democracy works when people participate: when they learn how it works, think carefully about the choices it offers them, and show up. By reading this book together and talking about what you find, you're already doing civic education. That's how it starts—with curiosity, with conversation, and with the belief that your voice, and your child's future voice, genuinely matters.