



State of California – Military Department
California Cadet Corps

CURRICULUM ON CITIZENSHIP

Strand C2: Citizenship

Level 11

This Strand is composed of the following components:

- A. Improve Yourself
- B. Improve Your Community**
- C. Improve Your State, Country, and Planet



Table of Contents

B. Improve Your Community.....	3
Objectives	3
B0. Improve Your Community.....	4
B1. Voting.....	4
B2. Speaking/Testifying to Government (School Boards, City Councils, etc.)	10
B3. Individual Community Service Opportunities	11
B4. Unit Community Service Opportunities.....	12
References	13

B. Improve Your Community

Standard #2: Students learn duty, service, and responsibility as a citizen of their school, their community, the State of California, and the United States.

OBJECTIVES

DESIRED OUTCOME (Followership)

At the conclusion of this training, Cadets will have a better concept of how they may better serve their community, and will actively seek to do so.

Plan of Action:

1. At your 18th birthday, register to vote, seek information regarding the candidates and initiatives, and vote responsibly in every election.
2. Attend a meeting of your local School Board, determine its procedures (how to get onto the agenda, rules for speaking, how the meetings proceed)
3. Select an individual community service project and spend a minimum of three hours in support of it; ensure your CACC unit logs your hours.
4. Participate in a unit community service project with cadets from your CACC battalion

B0. Improve Your Community

One of the California Cadet Corps major objectives is to make our cadets better citizens of their community, state, and nation. Whether you are a US Citizen or have citizenship from another country, you are living here, and we want to enable you to make a positive difference in your community.

We spent *A: Improve Yourself* talking about ways you can be a better person, whether it's developing the critical thinking skills that allow you to properly assess the information that floods into your life, citizenship or effectiveness skills, or improving your knowledge of the world. If you can transform yourself into a better person, we become a better team – your improvement affects those around you.

This section will address several ways you can interact and have a positive impact on those in your community – the place where you live. If we all (or most of us) do that, we will improve our community, and, indeed, our nation. The topics we will address in this section are Voting, Expressing your Voice to Government, and Community Service.

B1. Voting

Definition of *vote* (Webster, 2020)

intransitive verb

1 : to express one's views in response to a poll *especially* : to exercise a political franchise

2 : to express an opinion *consumers ... vote with their dollars*— Lucia Mouat

transitive verb

1 : to choose, endorse, decide the disposition of, defeat, or authorize by vote *he was voted out of office*

2a : to adjudge by general agreement : **DECLARE**

b : to offer as a suggestion : **PROPOSE**

We vote all the time. We vote in class, as part of school decisions, in our clubs, in the workplace – even at home. You might take a vote as to which movie you want to see with a group of friends. You may make decisions within your group through informal voting. Usually our informal voting uses a *majority* system, but occasionally (if there are multiple choices), we use a *plurality*.

Merriam-Webster defines *majority* as “a number or percentage equaling more than half of a total.” (Webster, 2020) *Plurality* is “an excess of votes over those cast for an opposing candidate,” or “a number greater than another.” (Webster, 2020) In other words, a *majority vote* means you have to get more than 50% of the vote, while a *plurality vote* means the option with the largest highest number of votes, even if it's less than 50%, wins.

An electoral system is a set of rules that determine how elections are conducted and how their results are determined. The rules govern the voting process, and give credibility to the outcome. The rules can include when elections are held, who can vote, how people or proposals get on the ballot, how ballots

are counted, limits on campaign spending, how you are allowed to advertise, collecting donations, etc. There are many variations of electoral system throughout the world; don't assume the way we vote in the United States is the same way other countries vote – the rules can be very different. Even in the US, people disagree on the best way to conduct our elections, and different states do their elections differently from each other. We won't get too deep into defining our voting system, but it is important to understand it insofar as how it affects you.

We like to say that everyone who is eligible should vote in our political elections. That may not always be true, but let's look at it. We want you to be a contributing member of our society, to have a positive effect on what happens in your community. In that capacity, it seems like you have a responsibility to participate in the process of running the community – and part of that process is the election of our government and contributing your opinion regarding proposals that are put to the electorate.

Who can vote? Generally, if you're a US Citizen and at least 18 years old, you can vote in US general elections. Exceptions to this are:

- Prisoners serving time for felony convictions (except in Maine & Vermont)*
- People deemed "mentally incapacitated"
- Residents of US territories (Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, US Virgin Islands)
- States have different rules about ex-felons voting. Many can after serving their sentence, some can't, and some allow the ex-felon to petition to have their right to vote restored.
- In some states, people without proper ID or a permanent address

It IS your responsibility to vote – but only if you vote responsibly. As a country, we want an informed electorate – people who learn about the candidates and propositions and vote for who and what they believe in. Unfortunately, many people vote for wrong reasons. They vote for someone they think is beautiful or handsome, or they vote for someone because a family member or friend said that's who they were voting for. They approach the ballot when it's time to vote without having read or learned about what will happen as a result of their vote. Unfortunately, it's easier to vote dumb than to vote smart, and you get what you pay for! Opposing sides to an issue or opposing candidates put out lots of information that may be false, may be an unproven argument, or may just be slander about their opponent. There's not a lot of truth used in the process of getting votes.

There are sources you can use to get better information. What you want to find is an unbiased expert opinion of an issue – someone who will look at the matter from both sides and bring out the positive and negative aspects of both sides of the issue without emphasizing one side or the other. The Secretary of State's Office (the arm of state government responsible for elections) provides information on both sides of all propositions, and provides information from each candidate who chooses to submit it. They generally do a good job of presenting all arguments (for and against), and trying to predict the cost and long term effect of Yes or No votes.



Some nonpartisan sources for information are:

<https://www.politifact.com/>

<https://www.factcheck.org/>

League of Women Voters: www.cavotes.org/

How to Vote:

1. You must register to vote in order to be able to vote in an election. The deadline for registering is two weeks prior to the election.
2. You may select from the six political parties in California (Republican, Democratic, Green, Peace & Freedom, American Independent, and Libertarian), or you may register without choosing a political party.
3. In primary elections, you vote for candidates running for your party. In general elections, you vote for your top choice candidate – they don't have to be running on your party's ticket.
4. Three of the political parties, American Independent, Democratic, and Libertarian, will allow voters with "no party preference" to ask for their ballots in the primary election. This allows you to select the party's candidate for President.
5. For US Representatives, CA State Senators, and CA State Assembly Members, voters in a primary will have all candidates for these offices on their ballot, and may vote for any candidate regardless of party. The top two candidates with the most votes (regardless of party) will run against each other in November.
6. You may request a Vote-by-Mail ballot up to one week prior to the election. These used to be called 'absentee ballots', but now are used by many as a more convenient way to vote. You can mail them in or drop them off at a polling place on Election Day, or at various depositories prior to Election Day.
7. You do not have to vote on everything on the ballot. Your vote counts if you place it, but there's no penalty for skipping an office or an issue. If you don't know anything about it, it's better NOT to vote.
8. You do not currently have to present ID at the polling place in order to vote. You do have to tell them who you are and your address, and they check you off against the registered voter roster.
9. How to vote differs widely in different polling jurisdictions. Most still use ballots where you either fill in the bubble or punch it out. There is an increase in electronic voting, but the (real) fear of hacking has slowed transition to this method.

**The Electoral College (Eiven, 2019)**

The Electoral College is a Constitutional process established by the founding fathers to elect the President and Vice President of the United States. It was designed as a compromise. Some delegates at the 1787 Constitutional Convention wanted Congress to choose the President while others preferred a democratic popular vote. The Electoral College satisfied both requirements.

The leaders who built the framework of the US government also wanted to ensure that states with smaller populations were fairly represented in the election and expressed concerns that the common man was not well informed enough to choose an effective President.

How does the Electoral College work?

The Electoral College consists of 538 electors. The President is not chosen directly by qualified voters but by a majority vote of at least 270 electors. Each presidential candidate has pre-assigned electors in each state.

Political parties in every state choose a new slate of electors during each presidential election cycle. States have different laws governing the process and political operatives will often choose from a pool of individuals committed to the objectives of the party.

Each state's appropriation of electors is equal to its representation in Congress. For example, Colorado has seven members in the US of Representatives and two Senators. Therefore, the state has nine electors. Texas has 36 House members, two Senators and 38 electors. Although the District of Columbia isn't a state, the 23rd Amendment of the Constitution allocated it three electors.

Every four years, during the Presidential election, voters in each state choose the electors for a particular candidate. Citizens voters do not choose the President directly. The candidate's name on the ballot is just a stand-in for a group of electors who, in most cases, will vote for that candidate. Most states use a winner take all system that distributes all electoral votes to the candidate who wins the state's popular vote. Maine and Nebraska use a slightly different system.

Once the election is concluded each state's governor prepares a document that lists all the Presidential candidates on the state's ballot. This "Certificate of Ascertainment" also includes the names of each candidate's electors, the name of the winning candidate and a listing of electors that will attend a meeting in December.

This "Meeting of Electors" usually takes place at State capitals and the electors vote for the President and the Vice President using separate ballots. Those votes are recorded onto a "Certificate of Vote", a document that is subsequently sent to the National Archives and to Congress.

Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate come together in early January at a joint session of Congress to tally all the states' electoral votes. The sitting Vice President oversees vote count, announces the results and officially declares the next President and Vice President of the United States.

Pros and Cons of the Electoral College**Pros:**

- **Smaller states get a voice.** Without the Electoral College presidential candidates would be less incentivized to consider the needs of less populated states. Wyoming has a population of just under 600,000 residents, New York has just under 20 million. While New York has 29 electoral votes, Wyoming still has three. In a tight race, those three votes can make a difference. If there were no electoral college a candidate would certainly consider high profile issues like New York's infrastructure problem and Wall Street's efforts to affect the global economy. They would be less inclined to address Wyoming's energy concerns and certainly wouldn't make a campaign stop in the Cowboy State.
- **The Electoral College helps ensure the election concludes in a timely manner.** If there are voting or tallying irregularities time consuming national recounts are not necessary. The Electoral College affords officials a fair opportunity to recount votes in specific states.

- **The Electoral College accommodates a smooth transition of power.** The structure of the Electoral College requires the President-elect to achieve national support. Everyone, everywhere may not like the results of the election. Nonetheless, in order to win 270 electoral votes, many people, everywhere support the victor. That fractured cohesiveness, in theory, encourages a smooth transition of power.

Cons:

- **The Electoral College can disregard the will of the majority.** In the 2000 presidential election, Al Gore won the popular vote. In 2018 Hillary Clinton won the popular vote. Both lost the Electoral College and neither became president. Al Gore lost to George Bush by just five Electoral votes. The Bush v Gore contest was so close that it came down to a single contested Florida district, later awarded to Bush by the US Supreme Court. Bush won the presidency by six electoral votes. Trump vs Clinton wasn't as close but Trump's victory represented an ideological sea change for those opposed to his rhetoric and policies. When disappointed voters consider the results of an Electoral victory they often get the feeling that their vote doesn't matter.
- **Critics of the Electoral argue that swing states have too much electoral power.** In any given, national election there are safe states and there are swing states. Political parties confidently rely on favorable vote tallies in safe states. Presently, California is a safe state for Democrats and Alabama is a safe state for Republicans. Presidential candidates may be less inclined to visit those states or take their needs into consideration. Swing states are far more competitive and can reasonably be won by either candidate. In the 2020 election battleground states like Florida, Arizona and Pennsylvania would likely receive the lion's share of allocated advertising dollars and much of the news media's attention.
- **Rogue electors add uncertainty into the process.** In most states electors are "unbound". Without laws that require an elector to vote in accordance with the state's popular vote or in lockstep with the victorious party's wishes, a rogue elector could conceivably cast a ballot for any candidate. The honor system generally works and this rarely happens. Nonetheless, the potentiality concerns electoral critics. In 2016 a co-founded movement called the "Hamilton Electors" tried to find 37 electors to vote for a more moderate Republican than Donald Trump while in that same election Hilary Clinton lost five electors.

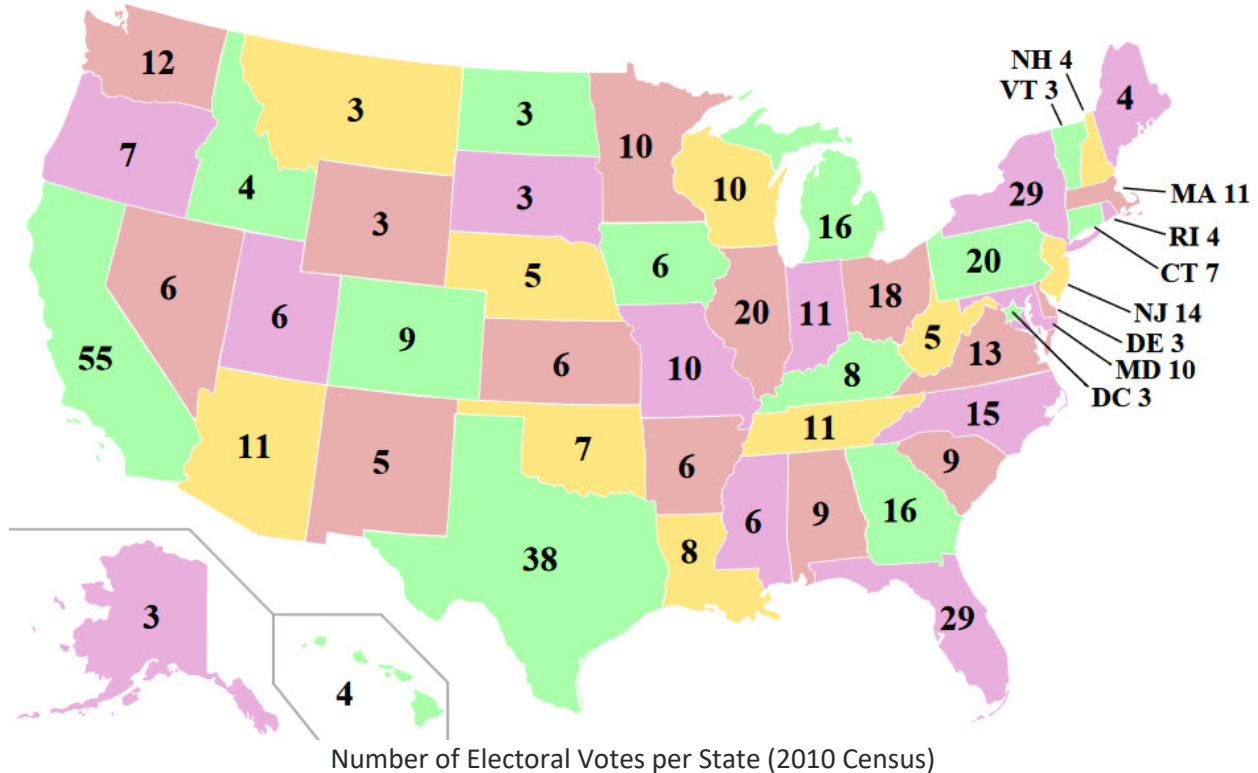
Electoral college vs the Popular vote.

Giving states with smaller populations a voice is the fundamental advantage that the Electoral College has over the popular vote. The process was designed to create a fair playing field and was constructed with American federalism in mind. Federalism affords smaller population states opportunities to affect government at the national level. Since the number of electors allotted to every state is calculated by adding House districts and Senate representation, and since every state has two Senate members, lesser populated states are guaranteed a seat, albeit a smaller one, at the nation's election table.

The primary advantage to the popular vote over the Electoral College is that voters, regardless of state, are equally represented in the final, national vote tally. Critics consider the Electoral College undemocratic because individual votes are disproportionately more valuable in smaller states. Colorado has a population of 5.7 million. Wyoming's population is almost 576,000. Colorado has nine electoral votes and Wyoming has three. Colorado has roughly 633,000 people per electoral vote. Wyoming has roughly 192,000 people per electoral vote. A Wyoming citizen's vote is just over three and a half times more valuable than that of a Colorado voter.

Electoral college members: Who are the electors?

The 538 electors aren't actually chosen until election day. Prior to the election political parties in each state choose a slate of potential electors. When voters go to the polls they're not actually voting for a favored presidential candidate. They vote for the political party that will send its electors to the Electoral college. In 2016 the Republican party sent 306 members and the Democratic party sent 232.



According to the US Constitution, members of the House or Senate cannot be electors nor can any "person holding an Office of Trust or Profit under the United States." In addition, the 14th Amendment forbids state officials who have "engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the United States or given aid and comfort to its enemies" from being electors.

In each state, the political parties choose potential electors on self-designated dates from the Spring to Fall. States have different laws regulating how electors are chosen and what their specific responsibilities would be. The selection process often takes place at state conventions.

In California Democratic Congressional and current Senate primary winners nominate electors while the state's Republican party nominees for elected office, from Governor to Senate primary winners to state committee officers to the President of each Republican volunteer organization, choose electors.

Voting is considered one of our cherished rights – there are many people in the world who don't get to vote at all for their government, or whose vote isn't fairly counted in one way or another. They envy our ability to have a say and play a role in electing our government. But it's not easy, and it takes work to make sure you learn enough about what's presented on the ballot to make an informed decision. But that work is our responsibility as citizens, and you should take that responsibility seriously. As someone who was once a cadet in the California Cadet Corps, you should always do your civic duty, and vote (responsibly)!

B2. Speaking/Testifying to Government (School Boards, City Councils, etc.)

Whether as a member of the California Cadet Corps or in some other capacity, you may have an opportunity to speak before a government entity. This is a big responsibility, and you should understand the processes involved.

From Congress on down, we (the people) are represented by our elected government. We have a right and responsibility to participate in the governmental process. This happens at the local level in school board meetings, city council meetings, or meeting with politicians. It's similar at higher levels, with a little more formality (usually).

Why are you there?

The reason for your interaction with a government body makes a big difference in your experience with it. If you're being awarded, recognized, or thanked, it's quite different from petitioning the body for something you want to happen. You may be invited to a school board or city council meeting for the former, or you may decide you want to speak to the council about an issue you're passionate about.



Some basic Guidelines:

Whether you're on the receiving or the giving end of interaction, there are a few guidelines that are universal. (Voice, 2018) (Boards, 1995 / 2020)

- Ensure you're on the agenda. They'll have a process for this
- Arrive early
- Dress well – it shows courtesy toward the organization and process
- Keep within the time limits set by the board/council
- Have some friends there to enjoy your moment and give support
- If it's a CACC issue, wear your uniform and represent us well! You should be in Class B's or A's
- Learn who's on the board – who they are and, if appropriate, who your allies and enemies are
- If it's the School Board, consider involving some cadets (with parental permission)
- If you're making an argument, be organized, have data, supporting documents, etc.
- Be courteous
- You can also use this specific format: Story of Self, Story of Us, and Story of Now. Start with your own story—a short bio about yourself and why you're testifying. Then, discuss the issue that the population you're representing is facing using the evidence you've gathered. This will lead you into your conclusion, a call to action or reason to make change now. (Voice, 2018)
- Tell legislators what they don't already know – don't waste time unnecessarily. Don't repeat what others have already said. If someone else already said what you were going to say, waive the opportunity to speak unless you have something to add
- Provide copies of written testimony to members (every board member should receive their own copy), and to appropriate staff members, and even to media and other observers
- Don't read your written testimony
- Put key points in priority order so you cover the most important things first
- Be brief!
- Make eye contact

- Answer questions honestly. If you don't know, say so. Offer to get the answer (then follow up, get the answer, and get it to the board/committee)
- Avoid a public confrontation. Be polite and professional
- Speak from the heart

B3. Individual Community Service Opportunities

Individual community service is a concept fully embraced by the California Cadet Corps, and indeed by our society and educational system. We all live as part of a community, and service to that community relates directly to our core value of Selfless Service. We all want neighbors and local government to look out for the people we live with, and learning that through practice is both educational and satisfying. In a more self-serving way, community service is also something that looks good on your resume or college application. Businesses and schools like to hire or admit people who are involved in their community and help out their fellow man. If that motivates you to perform community service, we hope that you'll actually learn from the experience that service to others is positive and satisfying.



So how can you help your community? We couldn't possibly name all the ways, but we can give you some suggestions. Your school, church, or local government may also have some programs or suggestions on how you can become involved in helping those in need. There are many agencies and organizations whose mission it is to help the community – you can easily find some in areas of which you share interest.

Here are some ideas of ways you can volunteer or participate in community service projects that benefit

others (Schwartz, 2019):

- Donate slightly used items – do you have old but usable toys, books, or clothes that others could use? Or volunteer to help at local clothing/book drives.
- Pick up trash, especially as part of a local project – clean up a beach or a park.
- Volunteer with an organization that sends packages to deployed or wounded soldiers, write letters to soldiers (tell them about what you do in Cadet Corps!), or participate in / help at ceremonies or events honoring veterans.
- Offer to assist a neighbor, especially the elderly or disabled, by mowing their lawn, helping with groceries, cleaning their yard, walking their dog, etc. And you get to know your neighbors – always a good thing 😊
- Read to children at the library or community center
- Help at the SPCA or Animal Shelter – walking dogs, cleaning, or spending time with the animals to give them attention



- Tutor kids in a subject you're good at
- Participate in a community event for charity (i.e. Run/Walk for Life), or volunteer to help by handing out water, setup, cleanup, etc.
- Participate in events to help the community on Earth Day – plant trees, clean up areas, etc.
- Help at non-profit organization fundraising events
- Help serve or clean up at a local shelter, whether on holidays or anytime
- Be a mentor to a younger student through organizations like Big Brothers/Big Sisters or Boys & Girls Clubs
- Do volunteer work at the local library
- Work with special needs kids or adults in local or national organizations like Special Olympics
- Visit people at elder care facilities
- Volunteer to usher at a local performing arts venue
- Join an organization that helps out in the community – Civil Air Patrol, Police Athletic League, etc.



Images from Free-Images.com

B4. Unit Community Service Opportunities

In much the same way we encourage cadets to participate in individual community service, we want California Cadet Corps units to offer unit-level community service their cadets can participate in together. This not only benefits the community, but it helps build values, esprit de corps, and teamwork in the cadet unit.

In the Cadet Corps Annual General Inspection (AGI), which grades cadet units on how well they're implementing the standards of the Cadet Corps program, Community Service is the first inspectable item on a rubric of 48 standards we judge the unit on. The unit is doing a satisfactory job if "the unit has participated in at least 1 unit community service activity during the past 12 months. Unit must provide rosters demonstrating at least 10% of the unit (or 20 cadets, whichever is less) participated in the activity (for Middle Schools, the standard is 10% of cadets, or 15 cadets, whichever is less). To receive an Excellent rating, the unit must participate in 2 unit community service activities, and to receive a Superior rating, the unit must participate in 3 unit community service activities per year. These are good standards to use when setting your unit goals for the year!

What kind of projects can a unit embrace to perform community service? Many of the same things individuals can do are appropriate for units as well. There are many organizations in your community dedicated to help the community in various ways, and most would welcome participation in their project by a Cadet Corps unit. You can help the Marines in their Toys for Tots toy drive over the Christmas holiday season, you can help clean up parks and beaches, you can visit elder care homes, you can help serve and clean up at shelters – any type of project that 15-20 people can be actively engaged in qualifies, and you will be welcomed by those who are passionate about helping the community. Your

unit can really make a difference, and it gives cadets a great perspective about how they can play a role in helping their community.

For many cadets, unit community service is the best way to get started on lifetime service to others. There are benefits that don't come into play in individual community service. The activity you participate in can be a leadership experience for your cadets, who can help plan the event (even if it's an organization's event, you have to work out participation by cadets, approval by the school, transportation, how each participant will fit in the needs of the project, supervision). Your unit and school have more community visibility, and can benefit from the publicity within the community and school for having participated in the event. Keeping groups of cadets active in Cadet Corps activities helps develop unit esprit de corps and build retention in the program for some cadets who enjoy the varied activities you provide and enjoy working with other cadets. Cadets who participate in unit community service projects develop the knowledge of how those projects work and are more motivated to continue to serve the community, and are more likely to participate in individual service projects, which benefits the unit in both the AGI (for individual community service) but by having caring, engaged cadets as part of the unit.

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