

# Voting Makes a Difference

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“Today you can choose a playground activity, class. You can run relay races or play on the swings. Raise your hand if you want to run races. Raise your hand if

you want to play on the swings. Okay, the swings win!”

This example shows democracy in action. In Greek, the word democracy means, “rule by the people.” The majority, or most, of the people in this class voted that they wanted to play on the swings. So because the swings had the most votes, the swings won.

The United States government is a democracy, so it is ruled by its people. Because it’s such a large country, the people can’t vote on every decision. Instead, they vote for leaders who will represent their wishes. The leaders then make decisions based on what people tell them. How do the people tell the government what they want? They vote!

Every United States citizen has the right to vote. Adults vote on issues about your school, your town, and

your country. By voting, they tell their government what they want to happen. For example, people might vote on whether to buy new playground equipment for a park.

Even though voting is important, many people do not vote. Some think that one vote won’t make a difference, but this is not the case. For example, in 1820, one vote kept James Monroe from being elected president.

In the United States, the legal age to vote in a government election is 18. But you can participate in the voting process long before you become 18. Ask your mom or dad to work with you to look up information on topics that interest you. Talk to others about issues that are important to you. Get in the habit of knowing what’s going on around you and taking a position. That way, you’ll be prepared to vote like a responsible citizen.



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