

My Vote Counts (We Do It For The Culture)



Problem Solving

Grade(s): 6-8

Learning objective/s or description

Students explore how emotions like frustration, hope, and anger influence civic engagement by analyzing perspectives on voting, reflecting on community issues, and identifying actions they can take to advocate for change.

- Define how emotions connect to political participation and civic responsibility
- Analyze YelloPain's spoken word performance to identify emotional appeals and their significance
- Reflect on personal views about voting and discuss multiple perspectives
- Develop an understanding of how civic action—even without voting rights—can make an impact

Materials needed:

- YelloPain's "My Vote Don't Count" video
- Graphic organizer (for quote reflections)
- Chart paper/board
- Journals or notebook paper
- Writing utensils
- Google slides
- Spanish Google slides

Any tips or important information

Lesson structure:

Opening Circle/Cypher

Ritual: Libation / Acknowledgements / Apologies / Announcements / Affirmations

Community Builder/ HOOK: “Politics and Power” (10 min)

Define *Politics* and *Power* together

Pair–Share reflection prompts:

- What does politics/power mean to you?
- What community issue makes you feel something strong—and what’s that emotion?

Switch partners once

Group Share: Highlight how emotions like anger, pride, or frustration often drive change

Enrichment Activity

PART ONE: “Emotions and Voting” (30 min)

Video + Discussion

Watch YelloPain’s “My Vote Don’t Count”

Prompt Questions:

How does YelloPain use emotion to communicate his message?

What part of the video stood out to you, and why?

Pair–Share → Whole Group Discussion: Centering emotion and civic action

PART TWO: “Why Vote?” (35 min)

Introduce Quotes (3 perspectives on voting)

Read aloud and project/display

- **Quote 1:** “Elected officials make decisions about things we care about—like whether our school gets more funding or if social media/TikTok is regulated. Voting can help ensure that those decisions benefit us.”
- **Quote 2:** “No matter who’s in office, it feels like nothing changes for people like us. Politicians don’t really know what we need.”
- **Quote 3:** “Voting can make a difference on some issues, like local policies, but it’s only part of the picture when it comes to what impacts our lives.”

Individual Reflection (10 min)

Choose one quote to respond to using a graphic organizer:

- What emotions/experiences drive this view?
- Why might someone disagree?
- What laws or issues directly affect you, and how do they make you feel?

Small Group Cypher (10 min)

Group by quote choice → Discuss shared and differing views

Whole Class Cypher (10–15 min)

Share insights across groups

Teacher prompts to challenge thinking:

- Would you feel differently with more resources or representation?
- Can you think of local/state issues where voting did (or didn't) make a difference?

PART THREE: SEL Journaling (15 min)

Prompt:

- Choose a law or issue you care about
- Describe how it affects you or people you know
- What action could you take—without voting rights—that could make a difference?
- How does turning your feelings into action help you feel powerful?

Closing Circle

What's one thing you liked about today?