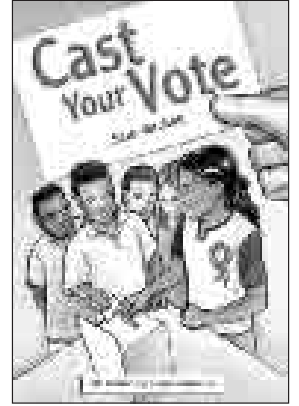


Cast Your Vote

by Sara Mitchell

illustrated by Donna McKenna



Book Summary

John's class is holding an election for class president, but he's not sure that he wants to run. By exercising his civic responsibility, John learns that he has some ideas worth sharing and a desire to change things for the better.

Features of the Book

- Chapter titles with cultural references and double meanings
- Different points of view
- Specialised vocabulary – *platform, Student Council, campaign, candidate*
- Figurative language – similes
- Humour
- Dialogue

Purpose

Cast Your Vote can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills and understandings:

- S** making and revising predictions;
- S** forming opinions based on evidence and personal preferences;
- S** analysing cause and effect;
- S** identifying forms of civic discussion and participation in a democracy.

Investigation Tools

- What's the Background? – Democracy, page 29
- Digging Deeper – Political Talk, pages 30–31
- Weighing Both Sides – Votes for All, page 32

The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Making and revising predictions
- S** Forming opinions based on evidence and personal preferences.
- S** Analysing cause and effect

Introducing the text

Ask the students to explain what is happening on the cover.

- *What are some words associated with voting and elections?*

List them on the board and add to the list throughout the lesson.

- *What are your predictions about the story?*

Briefly discuss elections and the concept of democracy. Ask the students to read “Democracy” on page 29 and “Votes for All” on page 32.

- *Now that you've read this background information, how can you change or add to your predictions about the story?*
- *Why should voting be taken seriously?*
- *What sort of people make good class or national presidents? What qualities should they have?*
- *Do you think people vote for the most popular person or for the best candidate? Why?*
- *How might you decide who is the best candidate?*

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read chapters 1 and 2, looking for how the characters influence and react to one another.

- *Why did Blake nominate John?*
- *Why did John accept? (Sophia's smugness)*
- *Where in chapter 2 does John show that he can think like a leader? (...the class president should try to make school a fair place for everyone – and fun..., page 10)*

Discuss the concept of platforms.

- *What might Sophia's platform be?*
- *What might John's be?*
- *What evidence in the text supports your predictions?*

Explain that once candidates decide on a platform, they run a campaign.

- *How might candidates promote their platform?*

Ask the students to read chapter 3 and then predict who will win the election. Ask them to give a reason for their choice. Read the title of chapter 4.

- *What do you think the author is hinting at?*

The students can now read the chapter.

- *What do you think John's big campaign idea will be?*
- *Which accusation is more dangerous to John's election chances? Why?*

Ask the students to think about Ms Cassidy's speech on election rules.

- *Do you think the cookies were a bribe? Why/why not?*
- *Who is the best candidate? Why?*

Ask the students to read to the end of the story.

Revisiting the Text

The activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson, during later reading sessions as mini-lessons, or as independent activities.

S Identifying forms of civic discussion and participation in a democracy

Ask the students to:

Either – organise an election for class president, librarian, newspaper editor, class representative, or sports captain. Ask the candidates to design a platform, conduct a campaign, and deliver an election speech. Other students can create election rules and procedures, make a ballot box and ballots, and run the election.

Or – research any local or national election and compare it with the events in the story.

S Forming opinions based on evidence and personal preferences

Ask the students to imagine that they are running for class president. Encourage them to develop a specific platform, outline a campaign strategy, and write an election speech describing why they are the best candidate.

S Analysing cause and effect

Ask the students to complete the blackline master on page 68 to describe how the characters' actions affected the story.

