

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENS
SS.912.CG.2.3 Explain the responsibilities of citizens at the local, state and national levels.

TABLE OF CONTENTS
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 80%;"> Essential Teacher Content Background Information Lesson Summary Suggested Student Activity Sequence & Pace Government Content Vocabulary Additional Resources, Answer Keys, and Sources </div> <div style="width: 15%; text-align: right; vertical-align: top;"> 2 4 6 8 9 </div> </div>

2023 BENCHMARK UPDATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Updated from SS.912.C.2.3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Changed from “Experience the responsibilities of citizens at the local, state, or federal levels.” to “<u>Explain</u> the responsibilities of citizens at the local, state and national levels.” ● Depth of Knowledge Changes within Benchmark <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Changed from “Experience” to “Explain” ● Addition of Benchmark Clarifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Benchmark clarifications are an addition to the 2023-2024 high school civics and government benchmarks. Benchmark clarifications are listed in the lesson summary below.

Essential Teacher Content Background Information

[Teacher Content Notes Not Appropriate For Student Use]

This section addresses the following topics:

1. Responsibilities of Citizenship
2. How Elections and Voting Impact Citizens at the Local, State, and National Levels
3. Voter Registration Requirements in Florida
4. Uniform Ballot Design in Florida

1. Responsibilities of Citizenship

Voting	Citizens have a responsibility for selecting public officials who will represent their interests in government.
Attending civic meetings	Civic meetings are ways for citizens to be active participants in their government. Interest groups, political parties, candidates for public office, religious organizations, the media and public officials hold civic meetings in order to inform and learn from the public.
Petitioning government	<p>The right of individuals to come together with others and collectively express, promote, pursue and defend common interests. This includes the right to assemble in public places, and the right to join an association. Peaceable assembly is also understood as freedom of association. The U.S Supreme Court has upheld laws requiring general permits, as well as prosecutions for illegal demonstrations under certain circumstances.</p> <p>The right of individuals to express themselves must be balanced against the need to maintain public order.</p> <p>People are protected when they bring to the government's attention their unresolved concerns, provide information to political leaders about unpopular policies and issues, and expose government misconduct. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that regulation of assembly may not be used to stifle dissent; unpopular groups may not be prevented from gathering based on the nature of the group's message.</p>
Running for office	Running for or being appointed to serve in public office as well as serving in public office are all important ways to participate in the political process.
Volunteering	Contributing to the common good is an essential component of citizenship in a constitutional republic. Coming together with friends, neighbors, or organizations to accomplish goals is an important foundation for a democratic society.
Being informed	Being an informed citizen allows you to engage in other civic responsibilities more effectively. Knowing about political candidates and their stances on issues for example, would allow you to be a more well-informed voter. Being informed also comes with the responsibility of finding trusted sources, examining all sides of an issue, and practicing good media literacy.
Respecting laws	While engaging in civic responsibilities and exercising the rights granted to individuals in the U.S. Constitution, one must recognize that there are situations when individuals' rights must be restricted for the public good. Laws must also be respected when communicating with elected officials.

2. How Elections and Voting Impact Citizens at the Local, State, and National Levels

Citizens vote because elections impact them on multiple levels. The Framers created a constitutional republic centered around the election of knowledgeable representatives of the people, who could make fair and just laws based on that knowledge and reflecting the will of the people. It is important to understand that more than half of the world's population does not have the right to vote for their leaders. Some places (like Russia or China) may have fraudulent elections or have elections with only one name on the ballot. In the U.S., there are specific guidelines for a genuinely free and fair election.

Citizens should vote in all elections, not just presidential elections. There is a downturn in voter turnout at midterm elections, but all elections affect our daily lives. In all elections the direction of things like budgets and taxes, infrastructure, safety and security, and the common welfare are at stake. At the national level, those elected will be involved in foreign policy decisions. In both national and state elections, individuals selected will help drive agendas and policy-making on major topics. And at the local level, basic everyday decisions like the school year calendar and whether to build a new fire station will be in the hands of the locally elected officials.

3. Voter Registration Requirements in Florida

- A. Be a citizen of the United States of America;
- B. Be a legal resident of Florida;
- C. Be a legal resident of the county in which you seek to be registered;
- D. Be at least 16 years old to preregister or at least 18 years old to register and vote;
- E. Not be a person who has been adjudicated mentally incapacitated with respect to voting in Florida or any other state without having the right to vote restored; and
- F. Not be a person convicted of a felony without having your right to vote restored.

Individuals can register to vote at any time in Florida. However, to be eligible to vote in an election, you must be registered 29 days before the election. Florida is a closed primary state. This means that when voting in a Primary Election, you can only vote in the party with which you are registered. The most up to date information can be found [here](#) from the Florida Department of State, Division of Elections.

4. Uniform Ballot Design in Florida

Florida Statute regulates the specifications for ballots in order to provide a uniform design. Every county must have the same ballot format and design. This prevents any candidate from having an advantage over another. The use of uniform designs is also important to make sure elections are run smoothly and if a recount must occur it can be in a timely manner. The need for uniform design was very clear after the 2000 election and the subsequent court case of *Bush v. Gore*. The most up to date specifications can be found [here](#) at Florida Statutes Online.

Lesson Summary

BENCHMARK	
SS.912.CG.2.3 Explain the responsibilities of citizens at the local, state and national levels.	
BENCHMARK CLARIFICATIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will identify various responsibilities held by citizens (e.g., voting, volunteering and being informed, respecting laws).• Students will understand the process of registering or pre-registering to vote and how to complete a ballot in Florida (e.g., uniform primary and general election ballot).• Students will discuss appropriate methods of communication with public officials (e.g., corresponding, attending public meetings, requesting a meeting and providing information).• Students will participate in classroom activities that simulate exercising the responsibilities of citizenship.	
FLORIDA CIVIC LITERACY EXAM COMPETENCY CONNECTION	
Competency 1: Understanding of the basic principles and practices of American democracy and how they are applied in our republican form of government	
OVERVIEW	
In this lesson, students will understand the various responsibilities held by citizens and the process for engaging in them.	
ESSENTIAL QUESTION	
What responsibilities do citizens have at the local, state and national levels?	
GOVERNMENT CONTENT VOCABULARY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ballot, civic meeting, general election, petitioning the government, primary election, public official, responsibility, uniform, volunteering, voter registration, voting	
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES	
Video as text	Scenarios
MATERIALS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Four Corners Labels• Responsibilities of Citizens activity sheet• Four Corners Activity slides• Voting in Florida slides• Uniform Ballot Structure Video Viewing Guide• Uniform Ballot Structure video (external link)• Florida Online Voter Registration System website (external link)• 3x5 index cards	

B.E.S.T. STANDARDS
<p>The grade in which this lesson is taught will determine the specific B.E.S.T. standards correlation. Thematically, this lesson aligns to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ELA.R.3.2 Paraphrase and Summarize• ELA.C.4.1 Researching and Using Information

Suggested Student Activity Sequence & Pace

DAY	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE
DAY 1	<p>Planning Note: Prior to class beginning, ensure that the “Four Corners Labels” are printed and taped to each corner of the room. The teacher may create their own labels instead of printing.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To begin this lesson, ask students to brainstorm different obligations and responsibilities of citizenship. Remind them that obligations are things citizens ‘must do’ while responsibilities are good things citizens ‘should do’. Give students time to brainstorm and then share out, recording their answers so all can see. Next, work through some of the examples students provided to label them as either obligations or responsibilities. Then, label whether they apply to the national, state, and/or local level of government. <p>Teacher Note: Obligations and responsibilities of citizenship should be prior knowledge from previous grade levels and courses. The topic is also addressed in SS.912.CG.2.2.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute a “Responsibilities of Citizens” activity sheet to each student. Review the list briefly with students. When you get to ‘Communicating with public officials’ pause and ask students: What are some appropriate ways to communicate with public officials? (write to them, attend public meetings, request an in-person meeting) Explain to students that today, they will look at different scenarios and discuss what responsibilities of citizenship are being demonstrated. Project the “Four Corners Activity” slides. Review the directions with the class and explain where each corner is located and what it represents. Project the first scenario. Read the scenario out loud and instruct students to move to their corner of choice. Once all students have moved to a corner of their choice, call on students from different corners and ask them to explain why they chose the option they did. Reveal the correct answer. <p>Teacher Note: Possible answers for each scenario are indicated in the speaker notes section of the slide.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Have students return briefly to their desks to summarize the scenario example on their “Responsibilities of Citizens” activity sheet. Repeat this process for the remaining scenarios. Once finished, have students return to their desks. Instruct them to come up with examples for the two responsibilities that were not addressed in the activity (voting and running for office). Call on a few volunteers to share.
DAY 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Begin the lesson by projecting the ballot images on slide 1 of the “Voting in Florida” slides and explaining to students that today, they are going to look more closely at one of the responsibilities identified yesterday: voting. Ask students to review the three images and descriptions underneath each. Ask students to brainstorm answers to the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the method used to cast ballots in an election matter? Regardless of the method, does the way the ballot is organized matter?

- Do you think one of the methods shown is best? Why?
 - Do you think the method used should be the same across the state? The nation?
3. Have students share their responses.
Teacher Note: Methods used to tabulate election results is also covered in SS.912.CG.2.9
 4. Project slide 2 and explain to students that in the United States today, the three methods shown previously are the dominant ones. Ask students: What does Florida use?
 5. Lead students to the understanding that in Florida, ballots must have a uniform design. Every county must have the same ballot format and design. This prevents any candidate from having an advantage over another and allows for easier recounts if that is necessary. The need for uniform design was very clear after the 2000 election and the subsequent court case of *Bush v. Gore*.
Teacher Note: While not a requirement of the benchmark, the punch card image on slide 1 is from the 2000 election if you would like to explain in more depth.
 6. Pass out a “Uniform Ballot Structure Video Viewing Guide” to each student.
 7. Explain that today, students will learn more about Florida’s uniform ballot structure and how to complete a ballot when voting in primary and general elections.
 8. Play the “[Uniform Ballot Structure](#)” video from the Lou Frey Institute.
 9. Instruct students to take notes on the viewing guide while watching the video.
 10. Pause the video as needed to check for understanding of key questions posed during the video.
 11. When the video is completed, review the viewing guide together as a class, instructing students to add to their notes to fill in any gaps.
Teacher Note: Use the answer key provided to help guide discussion.
 12. Project slide 3 of the “Voting in Florida” slides and ask students to identify the primary source document shown (Florida Voter Registration Application).
 13. Explain to students that knowing how to complete a ballot is an important piece to being an informed voter. But, in order to exercise this responsibility, you must meet certain eligibility requirements and register.
 14. Project the “[Florida Online Voter Registration System](#)” website from the Florida Department of State.
 15. Navigate the website as a class and review: eligibility requirements, how to submit an application, the ability to pre-register, and when to register.
 16. As you navigate the website, instruct students to take notes on the back of their “Uniform Ballot Structure Video Viewing Guide” or on separate paper.
 17. To end class, have students complete an exit ticket on a 3x5 index card in which they write down one question they still have about the voting registration process and/or how to complete a ballot in Florida.

Extension Suggestion 1: Invite a representative from your nearest Supervisor of Elections office to come in as a guest speaker. Use the questions students developed at the end of the lesson to help guide a Q&A and further ensure students understand voting in Florida.

Extension Suggestion 2: Have students participate in a mock election. Reach out to The Lou Frey Institute for help setting one up!

Government Content Vocabulary

Word/Term	Definition
ballot	a piece of paper upon on which a vote is marked
civic meeting	a meeting that is held for the people to share their opinions with government officials
general election	an election held to fill all or most of the elected spots in government; held at regular intervals
petitioning the government	the right to ask the government to solve a problem or to express an opinion about how the government is being run
primary election	an election where voters narrow down party candidates for the purpose of choosing who runs in a general election
public official	an elected or appointed official serving in national, state, or local government
responsibility	something a person should do
uniform	remaining the same; unchanging
volunteering	the act of giving up time, labor, or talent without being forced or paid
voter registration	the requirement that citizens who meet eligibility must enroll on an electoral roll in order to be permitted to vote in elections
voting	the act of choosing someone or something in an election

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Florida Department of Education: Florida Civic Literacy Exam Homepage](#)

Florida Department of Education's Civic Literacy Reading List

- N/A

ANSWER KEYS

Sample Answers: Responsibilities of Citizens activity sheet

Sample Answers: Uniform Ballot Structure Video Viewing Guide

SOURCES

Specifications for Ballots: <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes>

Voter Registration Requirements and Information: <https://registertovoteflorida.gov/home> and

<https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/for-voters/voter-registration/register-to-vote-or-update-your-information/>

and <https://www.myfloridaelections.com/Voting-Elections/Register-To-Vote>

Uniform Ballot Structure video created by The Lou Frey Institute