



CCN Election Assignment Templates

Assignment 3: How do I cast my vote? A how-to guide for first-time voters

The Center for Community News' Election & Democracy Program has created a series of sample templates for faculty to give to students. Faculty are welcome to use any and all of these and amend them as they see fit for their classes.

For any questions, comments or suggestions, email CCN Program Coordinator Sarah Gamard at sarah.gamard@uvm.edu.

When to assign this project: Within the first two weeks of the fall semester

Why: Every year, colleges welcome a new batch of students who don't know how to cast their vote. This project helps provide crucial information to younger voters on campus and helps student reporters dip their feet into election coverage. These stories would be distributed via student media and social media to reach young voters.

How: This is likely best as a collaborative project. Use this as a chance to introduce students to multimedia reporting and working as a "newsroom." Some students can be assigned to interview election workers or officials; voter advocacy groups such as the American Democracy Project, which have a presence on campuses across the U.S. to help students get registered to vote; as well as first-time voters to show how educated they currently are on where and how to vote versus their attitude toward the stakes of the election. If you have students who are interested in video, photojournalism, social media or graphics for news, this is a great opportunity to get them to hone their skills. (This is especially important for students who aren't sure whether to register in their precinct at home or on campus.) This group project can include a written explainer, graphics, a Q&A, etc.

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The goal of this on-campus coverage is for student reporters to provide timely and useful information to fellow students or local underserved communities to increase voter participation, as many first-time voters or residents may not know how or where to vote.

Example:

Assignment	Name
Multimedia graphics	
Interview with an election official	
Interview with voter advocacy group	
Summary of voting and registration deadlines	
Summary of how to find your precinct	
Summary of how to vote absentee	

Tips for faculty:

- If you have a relatively small class, e.g. a few to a dozen students, you can assign each student to work on a different part of a collaborative story. For example, you can assign one student to interview a voter advocacy organization, and another to interview an elections official on where to find your precinct, etc. You can also have some other students do photography, video or graphics to create a multimedia explainer.
- You can also create a spreadsheet and have students sign their names on the aspects of the story they want to cover.