

Election Day: Nhung, Mai and Tran Cast their Votes

Nhung votes absentee

Nhung has been a citizen for eight years. She has gone to her polling place to vote for every election, but this year she will not be able to go. She is going to Vietnam to visit her family.

Voting is very important to Nhung. She asks her cousin, Mai, to help her. “How can I vote if I won’t be here on election day?”



“You can vote absentee,” he says. “Anyone can vote absentee. Many people vote this way because they are in the military or it is difficult to get to their polling place. Some people prefer to vote before the election because they don’t want to wait in line to vote on election day.”

Mai tells Nhung she can vote absentee a month before the election. Her vote is sent to her county’s election office. It needs to get there by election day. She can go online to get an application and information about how to vote absentee. The web site is www.sos.state.mn.us. The early votes are kept in a safe place in the county office where you live. They are counted on election day with all the other votes.

“Thanks for your help, Mai,” says Nhung. After voting absentee, Nhung is satisfied that she participated in the election. Then, she went to Vietnam.

Mai and Tran vote at their polling place

It is general election day, the first Tuesday in November. It is 7:00 am. The polls just opened. Mai and his mother Tran are the first ones at their polling place. They have until 8:00 pm to vote, but they want to do it early. Mai has already registered to vote, but Tran, has never voted before. She just became a citizen in September.

Their polling place is at the public school in their neighborhood. They learned this by going online to www.sos.state.mn.us. They know which school door to enter because there is a United States flag outside. It is next to a sign that says VOTE HERE. Inside the school are signs telling them where to go.

When they get to the polling room, a man asks if they are registered. Mai says yes, he is registered, but his mother is not registered.

“Go over to that table, young man” the man say, “the table with the sign that says Roster. Tell them your name so they can find it in the registration. Then sign your name. They will tell you what to do next.”

The man tells Tran to go to the Election Day Registration table. She doesn’t understand what the man says.

Mai says, “My mother doesn’t speak English. Is there anyone here who speaks Hmong and can interpret for her?”

The man replies, “Yes, there are interpreters here for many languages but they are busy now. You can interpret for your mother after you have voted. She can wait here. Do you want to do that?”

“OK,” says Mai. He goes to the Roster table to sign in and get his ballot. Then Mai goes to the Voting Booth. He brought a sample ballot from one of the political parties to help him remember the names of the candidates he wants to choose. Mai fills in the circle with a pencil next to the names of the people he has decided to vote for.

When he has finished voting, Mai puts his ballot in the Vote Tabulator that counts his vote. A woman gives him a red sticker that says, I VOTED. He puts it on his jacket. He feels good that he voted.

Now Mai helps his mother register. He learned what identification Tran would need by going online to www.sos.state.mn.us. Tran has a Minnesota identification card, so she can register easily. Then they go together to all the rest of the tables and to the Voting Booth. After that, she puts her vote in the Vote Tabulator.

After voting, Tran also gets a sticker that says I VOTED. She puts it on her hat. She also feels good that she voted. Mai is proud of his mother.

Questions for Discussion: *Nhong, Mai and Tran Cast their Votes*

1. Why does Nhong vote absentee? What are reasons other people vote absentee?
2. Where do Mai and Tran go to vote? How did Mai find their polling place?
3. Use the map to follow the pre-registered voter. What is different on the map for the voter who is registering on election day?
4. Are there interpreters at the polling place? Why doesn't Tran use an interpreter?
5. What did Mai and Tran get after they voted? How did they feel? How do you think you will feel after you vote?

Teacher Instructions: *Casting a Vote*

Basic information about voting: Citizens may choose the way to vote, either absentee or at the polls. Absentee, or early voting, starts 46 days prior to the election and their ballot must be received at the county office on or before election day. As of 2020, the voter must go on-line for an absentee application, then it will be mailed to the voter. It is not necessary to be registered to apply for absentee voting. An excellent guide to information about elections and voting, including absentee voting, is a short video at www.mnvotes.org. If computers are available for students, direct them to this website.

For voting at the polling place on election day, citizens either need to be pre-registered, or they can register at the polling place, as long as they have proper identification. Depending on when you registered to vote, you may need to bring proof of residence to the polling place.

One of four methods for identification may be used:

- Accepted identification with current name and address in their home precinct
 1. MN driver's license or permit or Minnesota ID card
 2. Student ID card or fee statement with current address
- Photo ID with current utility bill that is due within 30 days of election and has voter's name and current address
- Vouch by a voter registered in the precinct, if the voter doesn't have one of the above authorized proofs of identity

To find one's polling place or address of county office for absentee address, go to the Secretary of State's website www.mnvotes.org. Sample ballots and information on candidates also can be found there, under Elections and Voting.

Teacher preparation:

1. Make copies of the sample polling place diagram for all students. Bring coins to class to use for the "game," two coins per student.
2. Write the methods for identification to register on election day on the board.
3. Bring blank stickers (2" x 3") and markers to make I WILL VOTE or I WILL TELL OTHERS TO VOTE badges

Review of previous lesson: Write vocabulary words you learned in the previous lesson on the board for review. Ask students to reconstruct the story of the previous lesson, and then ask for questions or thoughts about that lesson.

Vocabulary:

Accepted identification
Polling place (poll)
Absentee or early voting
Roster
Voting booth
Cast a vote
Vote tabulator

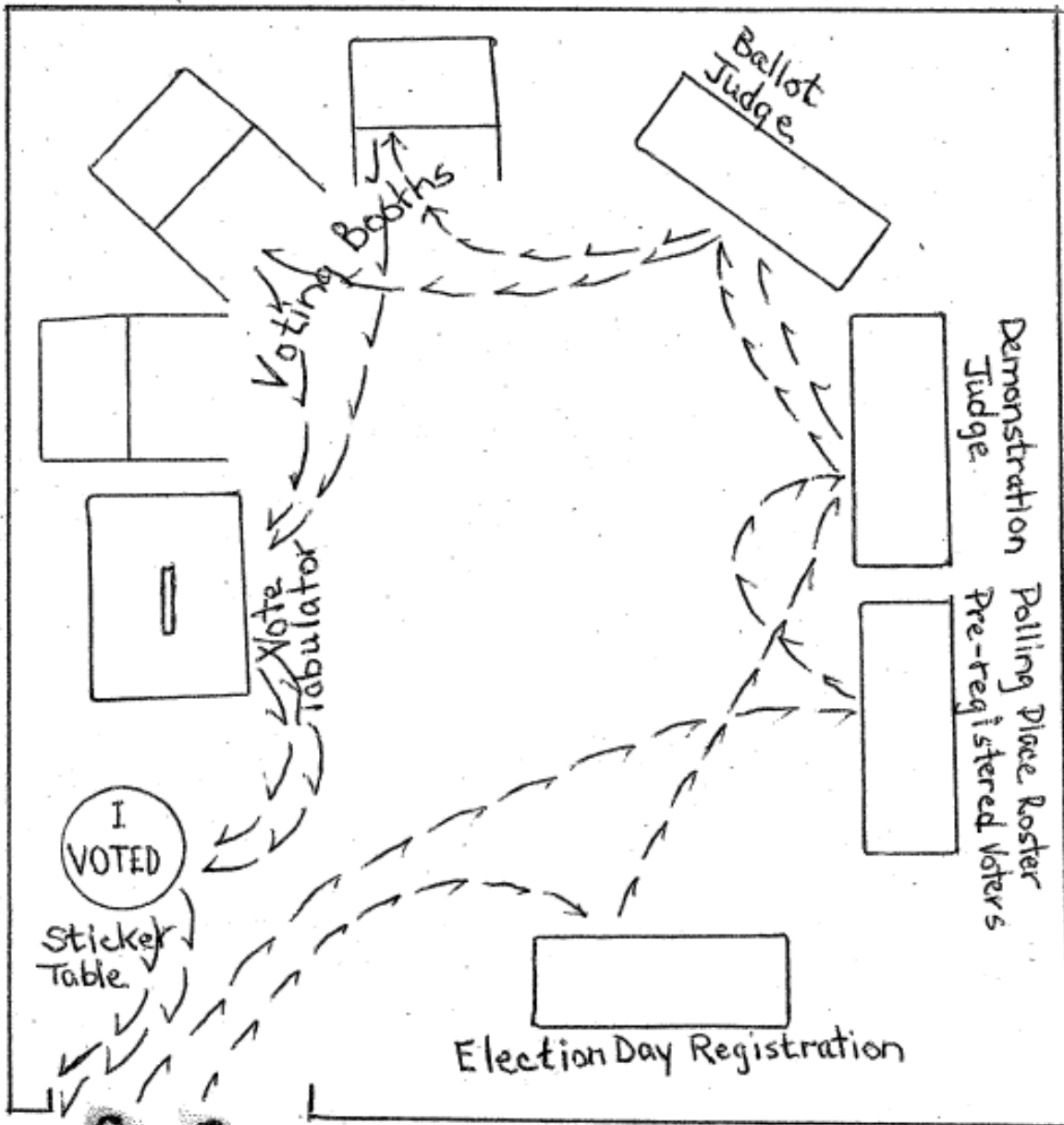
Story and Questions: *Nhong, Mai and Tran Cast their Votes*

Activities:

1. “Casting your Vote” game. Hand out the polling place diagram to each student, or have them work in pairs. Use two coins for each map and have students use the coins take Mai and Tran through the voting procedure while you reread the story. Use one coin for Mai and another for Tran.
2. If computers are available, have students go to www.mnvotes.org. to watch a video on the voting process and to get information regarding absentee voting. The ballot for absentee voting is not accessible on-line and needs to be mailed to the applicant.

Closure: Review the vocabulary words they learned, and repeat the main themes of the lesson. Ask students if they plan to vote. Do they know where their polling place is? Will they go to vote with a friend or family member? What time do they plan to go? How will they get to the polling place?

Wrap-up: Hand out blank stickers and markers to students. Ask them to decorate a sticker and write I WILL VOTE, or another phrase of their choosing on the sticker, then put it on their clothing.



Mai Tran



Sample Polling Place

- Pre-registered Voter
- Voter registering-Election Day

Adapted from
MN Secretary of State's Office