



## Ranked Choice Voting: Lesson Plan

Topic	
Ranked choice voting, or RCV, is an electoral system in which voters rank every candidate in order of preference instead of voting for just one candidate. Votes are redistributed according to preference until a candidate has over 50% of the vote in single-winner elections or more than the threshold percentage of votes in multi-winner elections.	
Possible subjects/classes	Time needed
Government Civics	30 - 45 min
Video link:	
<a href="https://academy4sc.org/topic/ranked-choice-voting-a-new-way-to-vote/">https://academy4sc.org/topic/ranked-choice-voting-a-new-way-to-vote/</a>	
Objective: <i>What will students know/be able to do at the end of class?</i>	
Students will be able to... <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explain how ranked choice voting works.</li><li>• Identify pros and cons of ranked choice voting.</li></ul>	
Key Concepts & Vocabulary	
ballot, plurality, electoral system, partisanship, coalition, third party	
Materials Needed	
Worksheet, computers, five packs of post-its in five different colors	
Before you watch	
<b>Turn &amp; Talk:</b> If voters could rank candidates in order of preference, how would that change the outcome of elections? How would it change how candidates campaign?	
While you watch	



Answer questions 1- 3 on the worksheet.

#### After you watch/discussion questions

1. Do you think RCV is a good idea? Why or why not?
2. Some people believe that RCV would cause the U.S. political scene to become less polarized. Do you agree? How does a polarized political sphere hurt our democracy?
3. Do you think RCV would increase voter turnout rates? Why or why not?

#### Activity Ideas

In Action: Stage your own ranked choice vote. Give every student 5 post-it notes, each in a different color (ideally, don't choose very popular colors like blue to avoid one color getting over 50% of the vote in the first round). Ask students to put their post-it notes in order so that their favorite color is on the top and least favorite color is on the bottom. Have each student bring their stack of post-its to the front of the room. With help from the class, go through the process of counting the votes. First, eliminate whichever color shows up at the top the least. For example, if there are the fewest orange post-it notes on top, take all the top orange post-its and throw them away, revealing the second choice of the students who put orange as their first choice. Keep doing this until over 50% of the post-it note stacks have the same color on top. (The activity should be similar to [this YouTube video](#) from MPR News.)

Debate: Split the class in half. Assign one half to be pro-RCV and the other half to be anti-RCV. Stage a debate between the two halves.

#### Sources/places to learn more

1. Fortin, Jacey. "Why Ranked-Choice Voting Is Having a Moment." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 10 Feb. 2020, [www.nytimes.com/2020/02/10/us/politics/ranked-choice-voting.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/10/us/politics/ranked-choice-voting.html).
2. Kambhampaty, Anna Purna. "New York City Voters Just Adopted Ranked-Choice Voting in Elections. Here's How It Works." *Time*, Time, 6 Nov. 2019, [time.com/5718941/ranked-choice-voting/](http://time.com/5718941/ranked-choice-voting/).
3. "More About Ranked Choice Voting." *FairVote*, [www.fairvote.org/rcv#where\\_is\\_ranked\\_choice\\_voting\\_used](http://www.fairvote.org/rcv#where_is_ranked_choice_voting_used).
4. "Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV)." *Ballotpedia*, [ballotpedia.org/Ranked-choice\\_voting\\_\(RCV\)](http://ballotpedia.org/Ranked-choice_voting_(RCV)).



5. "What's Ranked Choice Voting?" *Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center*, [www.rankedchoicevoting.org/what-is-rcv](http://www.rankedchoicevoting.org/what-is-rcv).