

Case 9: What is on your ballot, and where do you check?

Content note

This case explains general rules. It is not legal advice for your situation.

Overview

Students read a story in which Dec, who turns 18 in October, looks past the headline race on his sample ballot. He finds a school board race, a city council race and a transit bond. They compare the ballot with a creator’s voter guide that mixes facts with picks, and they read Vote.gov’s guidance for people 18 and under. They then write a personal checklist of official sources for registration, deadlines and their own sample ballot.

Before this case

Students should already be able to:

- tell an official source from an unofficial one
- write for a specific audience and channel
- state a rule only as far as its source supports it

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- write nonpartisan voting information that sends readers to official sources
- separate facts from recommendations
- explain how a student away from home can find out where to register, without stating any state’s rule

Objectives, continued

- protect readers’ private information

Materials

- This chapter, one copy per student
- Evidence A, B, C and D
- Vote.gov’s page for people 18 and under, and the Twenty-Sixth Amendment
- CIRCLE’s report of April 14, 2025, and Ballotpedia’s report of September 26, 2025

The task in this edition

Task: Write a nonpartisan voting-information guide for a student organization’s social accounts or a campus library display. Add a short note explaining how the guide avoids the problems in the creator’s voter guide.

Students make: Guide, 300—400 words, plus a note of about 100 words

Pacing

Opener (page 170): 4 min. Short on time: 3 min. Students read What happened on their own.

Key terms (pages 171 and 172): 4 min. Short on time: skip.

Look at the evidence (page 177): 8 min. Short on time: 7 min. Students fill in only the What it shows boxes.

Pacing, continued

Look at the evidence (page 178): 5 min. Short on time: 3 min. Read Evidence D aloud; skip its boxes.

Key idea (pages 179 and 180): 10 min. Short on time: 8 min. Skip In the news.

Sort the evidence (pages 181 and 182): 6 min. Short on time: skip.

Practice (page 183): 6 min. Short on time: skip.

Your task (pages 184 and 185): 15 min. Short on time: 14 min. Fill in the official-sources box together.

Your draft (page 186): 30 min. Short on time: 30 min.

Check your work (pages 187 and 188): 8 min. Short on time: 5 min. Students answer the check questions only.

Questions to discuss (pages 189 and 190): 10 min. Short on time: 5 min. Discuss question 4 only.

Talk about this case at home (page 191): at home.

Periods: full chapter 106 minutes; one period 75 minutes.

Case 9 plan, continued

Standards	Codes of ethics, continued	Try it at your school, continued
Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric AAC&U’s rubric for taking part in community life, including civic communication and working within community structures toward a civic aim. In this case: Students give peers nonpartisan steps to find their own ballot and deadlines (Civic Communication). Information Literacy VALUE Rubric AAC&U’s rubric for finding, evaluating and using information for a purpose, ethically and legally. In this case: Students rely on official sources and label the creator’s guide as a mix of facts and recommendations (Evaluate Information and Its Sources Critically). Authority Is Constructed and Contextual A source’s authority depends on its creator’s expertise and on the question it is being used to answer. In this case: Students explain why a state or local election office, not a creator’s post, is the authority on deadlines. Searching as Strategic Exploration Searching for information is an exploration that takes planning, several sources and changes of direction. In this case: Students plan how a reader finds their own state’s registration rules and sample ballot.	Codes of ethics, continued • RTDNA Code of Ethics: Opening statement (before the guiding principles) • Credo for Ethical Communication: “We advocate sharing information, opinions, and feelings...” (one of nine unnumbered principles) Heat map ■□□ Opener (page 170): Low ■□□ Key terms (pages 171 and 172): Low ■□□ Look at the evidence (page 177): Low ■□□ Look at the evidence (page 178): Low ■□□ Key idea (pages 179 and 180): Low ■■□ Sort the evidence (pages 181 and 182): Medium ■□□ Practice (page 183): Low ■■□ Your task (pages 184 and 185): Medium ■■□ Your draft (page 186): Medium ■□□ Check your work (pages 187 and 188): Low Try it at your school Find your official election information. • With a trusted adult, visit vote.gov and choose your state or territory • Check eligibility, preregistration and registration rules for your age	Try it at your school, continued • Find a sample ballot for your address and circle one local office • Learn what that office does before researching candidates Who to ask: Your county or local election office, a civics teacher, a school librarian Safety: Never share your address, birthdate or voter information in group chats. Use official government sites (.gov) for registration. Sources • Vote.gov, “Your state or territory’s voting information,” No date listed • Vote.gov, “Preparing to vote: age 18 and under,” No date listed • USAGov, “Sample ballots and voter guides,” No date listed • National Constitution Center, “The 26th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution,” No date listed

Case 9: What is on your ballot, and where do you check?

Dec turns 18 before the election on November 3, 2026, and his feed covers only one race on his ballot.

On your own Read What happened. Underline the contests Mateo finds below the big race. About 4 minutes.

Your role: You're the one who finds Dec's official sample ballot before anyone tells him how to vote.
New skill: Check an official source for your own area.



Mateo and Gia work in a notebook at a café table.

What happened

It is Sunday at the library desk. Dec turns 18 in October, before the general election on November 3, 2026. His feed is full of posts about one big race. Mateo and Gia are helping him find out what else is on his ballot.

They look at a sample ballot for the November election. The front shows the big race from Dec's feed. The second page has more: a school board race, a city council seat and Measure T, a transit bond. Mateo notices that nobody is posting about Measure T.

A creator's voter guide is also going around. It says registration closes "the 14th," but it never names a state. It also tells people how to vote on the school board race and Measure T. Gia is writing a reminder for the group chat.

Mateo has his own problem. He may still be registered at his mom's address in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Dec says he does not need anyone to pick for him. He needs to know what is on his ballot and whether he is registered in time.

Your question: What is on Dec's ballot, and where should he check his own information?

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 4 min.

✂ Short on time: 3 min. Students read What happened on their own.

💬 Say this

"Dec's feed is full of one race. What else do you think is on his ballot?" — List guesses on the board. Keep them for the sample ballot.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students think a ballot holds only the big national races. **Listen for:** "It's just president or Congress." **Then:** Point to the second page of the sample ballot in the story: school board, city council, Measure T.

📖 Support

- Read What happened aloud while students follow along.
- Explain that a measure is a question voters decide directly, like Measure T.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

Key terms

On your own Read each key term and its example. Then write your first guess in the box. About 4 minutes.

Sample ballot A sample ballot is a preview of the contests and measures that will appear on your ballot.

En español: boleta de muestra

In this case: Dec's sample ballot lists a school board race, a city council seat and Measure T below the big race from his feed.

Registration Registration is signing up with your election office so that you are on the list of people who can vote.

En español: inscripción electoral

In this case: Dec turns 18 in October and needs to know whether he is registered in time. The guide's deadline names no state.

Voter guide A voter guide is a document that explains or recommends choices in an election.

En español: guía para votantes

In this case: A creator's voter guide mixes one deadline with two picks: "vote Candidate B" and "Measure T: yes, obviously."

Jurisdiction A jurisdiction is the place or area where a particular government or rule has authority.

En español: jurisdicción

In this case: Mateo may still be registered in New Bedford, Massachusetts. A different place can mean a different ballot and a different deadline.

Who is involved



Mateo

Helping Dec read the sample ballot

"Dec's feed is all the big race. Then you flip the sample ballot: school board, city council, a transit bond. Nobody's posting about Measure T."



Gia

Writing the group-chat reminder

"The creator's guide says 'registration closes the 14th.' Whose 14th? It doesn't even say which state."

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 4 min.

✂ Short on time: skip this page.

💬 Say this

"Which key term explains why Mateo's ballot might not match Dec's?" — Wait for jurisdiction.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students treat a voter guide and a sample ballot as the same document. **Listen for:** "The guide is the ballot." **Then:** Ask which one lists the contests for an address and which one tells you how to vote.

📚 Support

- Pair students who share a language to explain each term in their own words.
- Many election offices publish Spanish materials. Show where to find them.
- **Cognates:** election (elección), candidate (candidato), jurisdiction (jurisdicción), official (oficial), district (distrito), amendment (enmienda), constitution (constitución), vote (voto).

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

🔑 Answer key

Any first guess is fine. Students return to it on the My take page.

Before you look at the evidence, what do you think is on Dec's ballot?

➤ My first guess is federal, state and local contests, but only his address can tell us which ones.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

This page continues page 171. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 171.

Reading passage

Jurisdiction, information and the first ballot

On your own Read the passage. At each Stop and think box, pause and answer the question in your head or with a partner. About 5 minutes.

Words to know

- **Sample ballot:** A sample ballot is a preview of the contests and measures that will appear on your ballot.
- **Voter guide:** A voter guide is a document that explains or recommends choices in an election.
- **Registration:** Registration is signing up with your election office so that you are on the list of people who can vote.
- **Jurisdiction:** A jurisdiction is the place or area where a particular government or rule has authority.
- **Claim:** A claim is a statement that something is true. You can check a claim with evidence.
- **Material connection:** A material connection is a relationship with a brand, like payment or a free product, that viewers might not expect.

The story: Two first-time voters, two ballots

Dec turns 18 in October, before the general election on November 3, 2026. His feed has taught him that the election is about one race. At the library desk on Sunday, Mateo, 22, and Gia, 21, help him read a sample ballot that says otherwise. Beneath the federal race sit a state senate seat, a judicial retention, two school board seats, a city council seat and Measure T, a transit improvements bond. Mateo observes that no one is posting about Measure T.

A creator's voter guide circulates in the group chat. It combines one apparent fact, that registration closes "the 14th," with two unexplained recommendations: a school board candidate described as "the only one who cares about students" and "yes, obviously" on Measure T. Dec rejects the premise that he needs someone to choose for him. His questions are practical and prior to any choice. What is on his ballot, and is he registered in time?

Mateo's situation adds a complication many college students share. He moved from New Bedford, Massachusetts, for school and may still be registered at his mom's address. If so, his ballot, his deadline and even his election office differ from Dec's. He plans to check that night.

Your role is to find Dec's official sample ballot before anyone tells him how to vote.

⌚ Pacing

Reading: about 5 min (720 words). Short on time: read it aloud together, pausing at each Stop and think.

❓ Stop and think

1. **After "The story: Two first-time voters, two ballots":** Is a voter guide with unlabeled recommendations misleading, or simply incomplete, and why?
2. **After "Information versus recommendation":** How does jurisdiction shape both what appears on a ballot and what a voter should research?
3. **After "Rights, rules and professional norms":** What obligations, if any, should creators who publish voter guides have to disclose authorship and funding?

❓ **Stop and think.** Is a voter guide with unlabeled recommendations misleading, or simply incomplete, and why?

Information versus recommendation

A **sample ballot** is a preview of the contests and measures that will appear on your ballot. A **voter guide** is a document that explains or recommends choices in an election. Treating the two as interchangeable is the core error the case targets. The sample ballot defines the decision set. A guide proposes a way through it.

The analysis draws on the ladder of earlier skills. Case 1 established that a **claim** must be checked against an original source. The guide's deadline fails that test because it lacks a jurisdiction, so it cannot be confirmed for any reader. Case 8 established the importance of a **material connection**, a relationship with a brand, like payment or a free product, that viewers might not expect. The guide omits its author and funding. That omission does not show bias, but it removes the information a reader needs to weigh its recommendations.

A **jurisdiction** is the place or area where a particular government or rule has authority. Jurisdiction operates twice here. It determines which contests a voter sees, since ballots are assembled by address. It also determines which office can act on an issue. A voter concerned about transit needs to know which body runs the buses before evaluating Measure T or a council candidate.

Registration is signing up with your election office so that you are on the list of people who can vote. Gia's reminder models responsible civic communication under uncertainty. It gives no deadline, because none would be accurate for everyone. It points to Vote.gov for each person's own registration and ballot, and it asks people not to post their addresses in the chat.

❓ **Stop and think.** How does jurisdiction shape both what appears on a ballot and what a voter should research?

Rights, rules and professional norms

The Twenty-Sixth Amendment sets a national floor, protecting the vote for citizens 18 and older (National Constitution Center, no date listed). Its history is tied to the wartime argument "old enough to fight, old enough to vote" (The National WWII Museum, October 27, 2020). Implementation belongs largely to the states. Most allow preregistration, and some permit 17-year-olds to vote in primaries if they will be 18 by the general election (Ballotpedia News, September 26, 2025). States have pursued other measures to raise youth registration as well (NPR, August 6, 2023).

Participation is substantial and uneven. CIRCLE estimates that about 47 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds voted in 2024, with wide variation across states (CIRCLE, April 14, 2025).

This page continues page 173. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 173.

Rights, rules and professional norms, continued

National Voter Registration Day coverage has emphasized registering people for elections “up and down the ballot” (PBS NewsHour, September 19, 2023).

Professional codes offer a template for a nonpartisan guide. The SPJ code instructs journalists to “label advocacy and commentary” (SPJ Code of Ethics, September 6, 2014). The RTDNA code holds that journalism “does not tell people what to believe or how to feel” (RTDNA Code of Ethics, June 11, 2015). The NCA credo endorses “sharing information, opinions, and feelings when facing significant decisions, while also respecting privacy and confidentiality” (NCA Credo for Ethical Communication, 2024). Gia’s request that no one post an address applies that last clause to a group chat.

 **Stop and think.** What obligations, if any, should creators who publish voter guides have to disclose authorship and funding?

Sources

Real source | Vote.gov | No date listed

Your state or territory’s voting information

Real source | National Constitution Center | No date listed

The 26th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution

Real source | The National WWII Museum | October 27, 2020

“Old Enough to Fight, Old Enough to Vote”: The WWII Roots of the 26th Amendment

Real source | Ballotpedia News | September 26, 2025

Most states allow teenagers to pre-register to vote before turning 18, and some let them vote in primaries

Real source | NPR | August 6, 2023

Some states are trying to boost youth voter registration. Here’s what they’re doing

Real source | CIRCLE (Tufts University) | April 14, 2025

New Data: Nearly Half of Youth Voted in 2024

Real source | PBS NewsHour | September 19, 2023

New state and local efforts try get more people to vote

Real source | Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) | 2014

SPJ Code of Ethics

Real source | Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) | 2015

RTDNA Code of Ethics

This page continues page 173. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 173.

Sources, continued

Real source | National Communication Association (NCA) | 2024

Credo for Ethical Communication

Notes

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This page continues page 173. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 173.

Look at the evidence

On your own Read each document. For each one, write what it shows and what it leaves out. About 8 minutes.

Evidence A | Sample ballot

Sample ballot for the November general election

Federal: U.S. Representative. State: State Senator; Superior Court judge (retention). Local: Board of Education, District 3 (vote for two); City Council, Ward 5. Measures: Measure T, transit improvements bond.

Look closely: Which contests sit below the big race, and which one touches Dec's school?

What it shows

➤ Contests at three levels of government, and a transit bond.

What it leaves out

➤ The address it applies to and what each office controls.

Evidence B | Voter guide post

A creator's voter guide

All you need for November!! Registration closes the 14th. School board: vote Candidate B, the only one who cares about students. Measure T: yes, obviously.

Look closely: Which line could you check, and which lines tell you how to vote?

What it shows

➤ A checkable claim beside advocacy that is not labeled as advocacy.

What it leaves out

➤ Which state "the 14th" is for, and who wrote and paid for it.

Case 9 | Look at the evidence | College educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

✂ Short on time: 7 min. Students fill in only the What it shows boxes.

💬 Say this

"Put one finger on a line you could check and one on a line that tells you how to vote." — Use two highlighter colors if you have them.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students treat the guide's picks as facts because the guide sounds sure. **Listen for:** "It says obviously, so it's true." **Then:** Ask what source could prove "Measure T: yes." None can; it is a pick.

📄 Support

- Give each document on its own half-page.
- Read the sample ballot aloud, one level of government at a time.
- **Cognates:** election (elección), candidate (candidato), jurisdiction (jurisdicción), official (oficial), district (distrito), amendment (enmienda), constitution (constitución), vote (voto).

🔗 Stretch

- Ask why Gia's reminder leaves out a deadline on purpose, and what each reader has to do instead.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

Look at the evidence, continued

Evidence C | Group-chat draft

Gia's reminder

Check your registration and your own sample ballot at vote.gov. Deadlines depend on your state. Please don't post your address here.

Look closely: What does Gia share, and what does she ask friends to keep private?

What it shows

➤ An official lookup route and a privacy request, with no picks.

What it leaves out

➤ Specific dates, since each state sets its own.

Evidence D | Statement

What Dec needs

"I turn 18 in October. I don't need someone picking for me. I need to know what's on my ballot and whether I'm registered in time for November."

Look closely: What two questions does Dec need answered, and which source answers each?

What it shows

➤ The reader's real need: his own ballot and his registration status.

What it leaves out

➤ His state and deadline, which only an official source can supply.

What is still missing from the evidence?

➤ Dec's state and deadline, whether he is registered, his own sample ballot, what each local office controls, and who funds the creator's guide.

Case 9 | Look at the evidence | College educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 5 min.

✂ Short on time: 3 min. Read Evidence D aloud; skip its boxes.

💬 Say this

"Put one finger on a line you could check and one on a line that tells you how to vote." — Use two highlighter colors if you have them.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students treat the guide's picks as facts because the guide sounds sure. **Listen for:** "It says obviously, so it's true." **Then:** Ask what source could prove "Measure T: yes." None can; it is a pick.

📄 Support

- Give each document on its own half-page.
- Read the sample ballot aloud, one level of government at a time.
- **Cognates:** election (elección), candidate (candidato), jurisdiction (jurisdicción), official (oficial), district (distrito), amendment (enmienda), constitution (constitución), vote (voto).

🔗 Stretch

- Ask why Gia's reminder leaves out a deadline on purpose, and what each reader has to do instead.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

Key idea: sample ballots

On your own Read the key idea and the code of ethics. Then answer the question in the box. About 10 minutes.

A **sample ballot** is a preview of the contests and measures that will appear on your ballot. A measure is a question that voters decide directly, such as Measure T. A **voter guide** is a document that explains or recommends choices in an election. The two have different purposes. Start with the ballot for your address, and then check a guide's facts apart from its picks.

Your address decides which contests appear on your ballot. A **jurisdiction** is the place or area where a particular government or rule has authority. A friend two districts over may see different local races. A school board and a city council have different jobs, so each one makes different decisions. Before you research candidates, find out which office has power over the issue you care about.

Registration is signing up with your election office so that you are on the list of people who can vote. Rules and deadlines vary by state, so do not copy a friend's deadline. The Twenty-Sixth Amendment protects the right to vote for citizens 18 and older. Most states let people preregister before they turn 18. Several states let 17-year-olds vote in a primary if they will be 18 by the general election.

Professional standards

Real source | Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ)

SPJ Code of Ethics: Seek Truth and Report It

"Label advocacy and commentary."

In plain words: Journalists who follow the SPJ code mark opinions and recommendations so readers can tell them apart from facts.

Question: The creator's guide mixes a registration deadline with "vote Candidate B." Which lines are checkable facts, and which are picks?

Your answer

The checkable line is ____; the picks are ____.

➡ The checkable line is the deadline, which names no state. The picks are Candidate B and Measure T, and the guide never labels them as advocacy.

Case 9 | Key idea | College educator edition

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 10 min.

✂ Short on time: 8 min. Skip In the news.

💬 Say this

"The SPJ code says to label advocacy. Which lines in the creator's guide are advocacy?" — Wait for the two picks.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students treat the SPJ code as a law that creators must follow. **Listen for:** "The creator broke the rules." **Then:** Say: "SPJ's code binds no one by law. It shows how journalists label opinion."

📖 Support

- Read the quotation aloud. Point out the label: a real source, quoted word for word.

🔗 Stretch

- Use the RTDNA row: what would a guide that helps Dec decide include about the school board race?

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

A square QR code with a black and white pixelated pattern, located in the bottom right corner of the page. It is positioned to the left of the 'Real source' text.

Real source | NPR | August 6, 2023

Some states are trying to boost youth voter registration. Here's what they're doing

Explains preregistration and other state steps that let teens sign up before they turn 18.



Explains preregistration and other state steps that let teens sign up before they turn 18.



Rules differ by state, so where you live decides when you can register and what you vote on.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

This page continues page 179. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 179.

Sort the evidence

On your own Match each of Dec's questions to the rule or office that answers it. Then write whose view is missing. About 6 minutes.

Separate the two questions Dec has: what is on his ballot, and can he vote. Which rules and offices answer each, and which source should he check first?

Which contests and measures appear on Dec's ballot

Who decides

His address and district lines, drawn through redistricting

Under which rule

Who lives with it

Your way in

[Vote.gov](#), which links to his state or local election office

Whether Dec can register and vote in November

Who decides

Under which rule

Twenty-Sixth Amendment: the vote at 18 cannot be denied on account of age
State rules on preregistration, deadlines and 17-year-old primary voting

Who lives with it

Your way in

[Vote.gov](#), which links to his state or local election office

Pacing

Full chapter: 6 min.

Short on time: skip this page.

Say this

“Dec has two questions. Which rule or office answers each one?” — Model the registration question together.

Watch for

Misconception: Students think the Twenty-Sixth Amendment sets every voting rule. **Listen for:** “The Constitution says when you register.” **Then:** The amendment protects the vote at 18. States set registration rules and deadlines.

Support

- Let students draw the arrows before they write sentences.

Heat check

Medium. The missing-perspective question can turn to students' own eligibility.

Cool-down: Keep answers about Dec and his friends. No student shares their own or a family member's eligibility.

Whose perspective is missing?

Whose view is missing from these documents? What would you ask them?

The view that is missing is _____. I would ask _____.

Dec's local election office. I would ask whether he is registered and what his deadline is, since his state is not named.

Notes

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This page continues page 181. The notes for both pages are on the sheet for page 181.

Practice: choose a response

On your own Choose what you would do with a friend's sample ballot. Then fix the two marked phrases. About 6 minutes.

You live at a new address. A friend sends their sample ballot and says, "Just use this one." What should you do?

- ☐ A Use it, because you and your friend live in the same state.
- ☒ B Check your registration and find the official sample ballot for your address.
- ☐ C Use a creator's voter guide instead, since it covers the whole election.

Why I chose it

👉 B. A copies someone else's jurisdiction, and a guide cannot tell you which contests apply to your address. B starts with official information.

Improve a draft

A student's first draft

Guys the election is coming up and it's a big one!! **1** Registration closes on the 14th so do it now. Here's the voter guide I use, it tells you exactly who to vote for so you don't have to research. Also **2** drop your addresses and I'll check if you're registered for you. Only the big race really matters anyway, the rest is small stuff. My cousin in another state said the same deadline works for her too, so just use mine. Let's go vote!!

Rewrite each marked phrase so it says only what the evidence supports.

Rewrite phrase 1

👉 Each state sets its own deadline.
Check yours through vote.gov.

Rewrite phrase 2

👉 Look up your own registration at vote.gov. Keep addresses out of the chat.

🕒 Pacing

Full chapter: 6 min.

✂ Short on time: skip this page.

💬 Say this

"A friend sends their sample ballot and says, "Just use this one." What do you do?" — Take a vote before any discussion.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: Students choose A because the friend lives in the same state. **Listen for:** "Same state, same ballot."

Then: Point to the key idea: a friend two districts over may see different local races.

📖 Support

- Read the three options aloud before students choose.

🔥 Heat check

■□□ Low.

👉 Answer key

A revised version: Election reminder: registration deadlines and voting options depend on your state, so check yours at vote.gov, which links to your state's election office. You can also look up your sample ballot for your own address there. It shows everything you'll vote on, including school board and local measures, not just the big race. If you use a voter guide, check the facts it gives and remember its picks are someone's opinion. Under 18? Many states let you preregister, and some let 17-year-olds vote in primaries. Check your state's rules. No need to share your address here.

College

Your task

On your own Read the steps. Fill in the planner boxes before you start your draft. About 15 minutes.

Write a nonpartisan voting-information guide for a student organization's social accounts or a campus library display. Add a short note explaining how the guide avoids the problems in the creator's voter guide.

Use: Case documents: the sample ballot, the creator's voter guide, Gia's reminder draft and Dec's and Mateo's statements. Real sources: Vote.gov's page for people 18 and under, the Twenty-Sixth Amendment, CIRCLE's report on youth voting (April 14, 2025) and Ballotpedia's report on preregistration (September 26, 2025).

You'll make: Guide, 300–400 words, plus a note of about 100 words

Time: 75 minutes

- 1 List the official sources your guide will use: Vote.gov and each reader's own election office.
- 2 Write down the facts you can state for every reader, from Vote.gov and the amendment.
- 3 Explain how a student away from home finds out where to register, using Mateo as the example.
- 4 Draft the guide on the Your draft page, with no picks.
- 5 Write a note of about 100 words on how your guide avoids the creator's guide's problems.
- 6 Finish the guide at 300 to 400 words for a social account or a library display.



Prefer typing? Scan to open the online workspace.

Official sources the guide uses

[Vote.gov and the reader's own state or local election office.](#)

Case 9 | Your task | College educator edition

Pacing

Full chapter: 15 min.

✂ Short on time: 14 min. Fill in the official-sources box together.

Say this

“Your readers live in many states. What can you say that is true for all of them?” — List only facts from Vote.gov and the amendment.

Watch for

Misconception: The guide states one state's rule as if it applied everywhere. **Listen for:** “Registration closes the 14th everywhere.” **Then:** Ask whose state that is. Replace it with where each reader checks.

Support

- Checklist from the workshop: election office, registration, deadlines, sample ballot
- Highlighting key: checkable facts in one color, recommendations in another
- Official-source list: Vote.gov and the reader's own state or local election office

Stretch

- Explain how a student living away from home can find out where to register, without stating any state's rule. Use Mateo, who moved from New Bedford for college, as the example.

Heat check

■ ■ □ **Medium.** Students may add picks for candidates or measures they support.

Cool-down: Remind students the product is nonpartisan. Replace any pick with where to check the facts.

Your task, continued

Facts I can state for every reader

☛ You must be 18 to vote. Most states allow preregistration, and several let some 17-year-olds vote in primaries. Rules vary by state.

Students living away from home

Ask the election office which address and process apply to you. Mateo, who moved from New Bedford, has to do the same.

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

This page continues page 184.

Standards

AAC&U VALUE rubric: Civic Engagement VALUE Rubric; Information Literacy VALUE Rubric.

ACRL Framework: Authority Is Constructed and Contextual; Searching as Strategic Exploration.

The Case plan sheet gives each code in plain words.

OT Answer key

A strong response:

- Sends readers to Vote.gov and their own state or local election office for rules and deadlines
- States only what the Vote.gov page and the Twenty-Sixth Amendment support, and says rules vary by state
- Explains how a student away from home can find out where to register
- Makes no recommendation on any candidate or measure
- Tells readers not to post their address, birthdate or voter information

Your draft

On your own Write your draft in the boxes. Use your planner from the page before. About 30 minutes.

Your guide, first draft

🔗 Voting information for students. This guide is nonpartisan. It does not recommend any candidate, party or ballot measure. Start at [vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov) and choose your state or territory. It links to your state or local election office, which sets registration rules and deadlines. Rules vary by state, so do not copy a friend's deadline. Find the sample ballot for your own address. It lists every contest, including school board races and local measures. Under 18? You must be 18 to vote, but most states allow preregistration, and several let some 17-year-olds vote in primaries. Check your state's rule. Living away from home for school? Ask the election office which address and process apply to you. Keep your address, birthdate and voter information out of group chats and comments.

Note: how this guide avoids the creator's guide's problems

🔗 The creator's guide gave a deadline, "the 14th," with no state, and mixed it with picks it never labeled. This guide gives no dates at all. It sends each reader to the official source for their own state and states only what [Vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov) and the Twenty-Sixth Amendment support. It makes no recommendation, and it asks readers to keep private information out of the chat.

Case 9 | Your draft | College educator edition

🕒 Pacing

Full chapter: 30 min.

✂ Short on time: 30 min.

💬 Say this

"Read your guide as Mateo, who may still be registered in another state. Does it tell him what to do?" — Check the away-from-home section in every draft.

👁 Watch for

Misconception: The note restates the guide instead of comparing. **Listen for:** "My guide tells people to use [vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov)." **Then:** Ask for one problem in the creator's guide and how the new guide fixes it.

🔗 Heat check

■ ■ ■ **Medium.** Students may add picks for candidates or measures they support.

Cool-down: Remind students the product is nonpartisan. Replace any pick with where to check the facts.

🔗 Answer key

What to notice in the sample:

1. Sends readers to an official source first.
2. States only what the sources support.
3. Answers the away-from-home question without stating any state's rule.
4. Protects readers' private information.

Check your work

On your own Answer the Check your work questions and mark your level in each rubric row. Then write one change you made. About 8 minutes.

Does every rule in your guide come from an official source? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Does your guide say that rules vary by state? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Does it make no recommendation on any candidate or measure? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Does it tell readers not to post their address, birthdate or voter information? ☒ Yes ☐ No

How your work is scored

Mark one box in each row.

Skill	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Advanced
Evidence	☐ Copies one person's deadlines.	☐ Mentions official sources vaguely.	☐ Points to official sources for each person's state.	☐ Points to official sources and explains why rules differ.
Reasoning	☐ Treats a guide as the ballot.	☐ Mentions the ballot but not local contests.	☐ Separates ballot, guide and registration.	☐ Explains why local offices matter to the audience.
Audience & purpose	☐ Collects private info.	☐ Generic hype.	☐ Useful, private, nonpartisan.	☐ Includes people not yet eligible.
Revision	☐ No change.	☐ Adds a link.	☐ Replaces copied deadlines with official routes.	☐ Explains how each change helps friends in different situations.

Pacing

Full chapter: 8 min.

 Short on time: 5 min. Students answer the check questions only.

Say this

“Mark your level honestly. Then make one change and say why.” — Ask for one official source added or one pick removed.

Watch for

Misconception: Students keep a copied deadline. **Listen for:** “Registration closes the 14th.” **Then:** Point to the Evidence row. Replace the date with the official place to check it.

Heat check

 Low.

Answer key

How to assess: Score with the case rubric. Add checks that every rule is attributed to an official source and that the guide makes no recommendation.

Proficient looks like:

- **Evidence:** Points to official sources for each person's state.
- **Reasoning:** Separates ballot, guide and registration.
- **Audience & purpose:** Useful, private, nonpartisan.
- **Revision:** Replaces copied deadlines with official routes.

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal blue lines, resembling notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Questions to discuss

On your own Write a short answer to each question. Then finish My take. About 10 minutes.

- 1 Which contest on the sample ballot could affect Dec's school or his bus?

➤ The Board of Education race and Measure T, the transit bond. Both touch his daily routine, and neither shows up in his feed.

- 2 Mateo may still be registered in New Bedford. Why might his ballot differ from Dec's?

➤ Registration ties him to an address. If it is still New Bedford, his contests and deadline come from there, so he should ask the election office which address applies.

- 3 Anika is 16. How can she be part of this election before she can vote?

➤ She can check preregistration for her state, learn what the school board does and share official links with friends who can vote.

- 4 When could a voter guide that recommends choices help a first-time voter?

➤ When its author and funding are clear and its picks are labeled. Read after the official ballot, it shows a voter one side of a contest.

My take

My claim: ____.

➤ First-time voters should start with official sources for their own address before reading any guide.

⌚ Pacing

Full chapter: 10 min.

✂ Short on time: 5 min. Discuss question 4 only.

💬 Say this

"Answer with a detail from the evidence, not a candidate or party you like." — Post the question numbers and take one answer per question.

➤ Stretch

- Ask what one local office on the ballot decides, and how a student could learn that before researching candidates.
- Going further: Which election office covers your address? Find it through Vote.gov. If you live away from home for school, write one question asking that office which address and rules apply to you.
- Going further: Plan an election reminder for your own group chat. Who might a group chat miss? Link to an official source so nobody has to trust a screenshot.
- Going further: Record a one-minute audio guide that tells listeners how to find their own sample ballot. Then write the same steps as a checklist. Check that both lead to the same official page.
- Going further: With a trusted adult, go to Vote.gov and choose your state or territory. Check the registration rules for your age, then find the sample ballot for your address. Never share your address or birthdate in a group chat.
- Find your county's sample ballot for the next election
- Research the history of the Twenty-Sixth Amendment

My take, continued

The best evidence is ____, because ____.

👉 The creator's guide, because its one fact names no state and its picks carry no label.

Someone who disagrees might say ____.

👉 A trusted friend's picks save time for busy voters.

The limit of the evidence is ____.

👉 No document shows Dec's state, so no deadline in this case can be checked.

I would change my mind if ____.

👉 The creator's guide named its author, gave a state for its deadline and labeled its picks.

Notes

This page continues page 189.

Heat check

■ ■ □ **Question 3: Medium.** Some students cannot vote for reasons other than age, and may feel singled out.

Cool-down: Keep answers about Anika. No student shares their own or a family member's eligibility.

Question 4 cool-down: Say: "We are not discussing any real candidate or party." Return to the creator's guide in Evidence B.

Talk about this case at home

Case 9: What is on your ballot, and where do you check?

In this case, a teen about to turn 18 finds local races on his ballot that his feed never mentions. Your student compared a sample ballot with a voter guide, then wrote a guide that points to official sources without telling anyone how to vote.

Questions to talk about

- 1 What offices appear on a local ballot, besides the big races?
- 2 Where can someone find official information about registering to vote?
- 3 How can you tell a fact in a voter guide from a recommendation?

Nobody needs to share personal stories or private information to talk about this case.



See the case online.

Case 9 | Talk about this case at home | College educator edition

🕒 Pacing

At home: this page takes no class time.

💬 Say this

“Take this page home or read it with someone you trust.” —
Nobody needs to share their own voting information or anyone else’s.