



## Global Voices Information Sheet

### The Haitian Election



#### **Background on the Haitian General Election, 2010-2011**

- On Jan. 12, 2010, a magnitude 7.0 earthquake hits Haiti just outside the capital of Port-au-Prince. Most of the city is destroyed. An election that was supposed to take place on Feb. 28, 2010 is postponed.
- Presidents in Haiti are only allowed to serve two terms. Sitting President Rene Preval had already served those two terms. The country needed to elect a new president.
- The election is postponed to Nov. 28, 2010. In September, a list of 38 candidates is released.
- In the midst of campaigning, a cholera epidemic breaks out and quickly spreads across the country, affecting thousands. There is much debate over whether or not the election should be postponed, but it goes ahead as planned.
- On Election Day, there are widespread allegations of fraud, including ballot-stuffing, vote buying and intimidation.
- To become president, a candidate needs to receive 50 per cent of the popular vote. If that does not happen, the top two candidates would compete in a runoff election in January.
- In early December, the preliminary results of the elections are announced. No candidate wins 50 per cent of the vote, and the top two candidates include the man accused of rigging the election. As a result, protesters take to the streets, immobilizing the city.
- The runoff election is postponed as the reports from international observers surface, calling the election a fraud. On Jan. 26, 2011, the candidate accused of rigging the election drops out of the race.
- The second round of the general election takes place on March 20, 2011. Results are expected on March 31.

#### **Key Terms**

- **ballot stuffing**—the illegal act of one person submitting multiple ballots during a vote in which only one ballot per person is permitted
- **disenfranchised**—deprived of the rights of citizenship especially the right to vote
- **fraud**—something intended to deceive; deliberate trickery intended to gain an advantage
- **intimidation**—the act of discouraging someone through fear
- **literacy**—the ability to read and write

## Global Voices Elementary Educator Resources

### Note to Educators:

The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom.

In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. Activities are structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Extension and conclusion activities are included to challenge students and finally, encourage them to reflect on the issues at hand.

Since these activities are designed as discussions rather than formal lessons, assessment strategies are not included.

### Themes and Course Connections

- Themes: Haiti, leadership, election, education, and poverty.
- Course Connections: Language and Social Studies.

### Materials

- Chart paper or blackboard
- Global Voices column

### Specific Expectations and Learning Goals

Students will:

- Develop and express responses to issues and problems.
- Reassess their responses to issues on the basis of new information.
- Participate in active group work and class discussions.
- Communicate effectively in written and spoken language or other forms of expression.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically.
- Develop, express, and defend a position on an issue and explain how to put the ideas into action.

### Knowledge and Understanding

1. Education (estimated time: 20 minutes)
  - a. Ask students to let their imaginations run wild and list off the goals they want to achieve in their life. List answers on the board
  - b. After the list is complete, ask students to choose one goal listed on the board and reflect on this goal by answering the following questions:
    - i. Why is this my goal?
    - ii. How do I achieve this goal?
  - c. Promote a class discussion around students' answers to these questions.
  - d. Following the discussion, ask the students if their dreams would be possible without an education.
  - e. Moving on, ask students, popcorn style, to list the things that allow them to access education, such as safe school buildings, textbooks, etc. Write these down on the board.

- f. Finally, have students write a reflection about how education can make their goals a reality.

## Thinking

1. Guided Reading: The Global Voices Column (estimated time: 20 minutes)
  - a. Have students sit in a circle and distribute one copy of the Global Voices column to each student.
  - b. Pre-reading steps:
    - i. Make predictions: ask students to read the title of the column and view the pictures. After doing so, ask them to make predictions as to what the column is going to be about.
    - ii. Introduce vocabulary: fraud, disenfranchised, ballot stuffing, election, vote, democracy, etc.
    - iii. Assess prior knowledge: ask students to discuss what they already know about these topics.
  - c. Reading steps:
    - i. Go around the circle and have each student read a section of the column to the class, so that everyone gets a turn to read.
    - ii. As students are reading, offer guidance and coaching by providing prompts, asking questions, and encouraging attempts at reading strategy application.
  - d. Post reading steps:
    - i. Encourage students to provide a summary of the column in order to ensure they have understood the series of events.
    - ii. Ask questions about the text to judge comprehension.
2. Media Literacy (estimated time: 15 minutes)
  - a. Divide the class into small groups and distribute chart paper to each group.
  - b. On the chart paper, ask each group to write the heading of the column in the center of the page.
  - c. Ask each group to write all the words that come to mind after reading the column around the center title, creating a word web.
  - d. When students have completed their word webs, ask them to answer the following questions in their groups:
    - i. What is the message of this column?
    - ii. Who created this message?
    - iii. What creative writing techniques are used to attract the readers' attention?
    - iv. How might other people understand this message differently than me?
    - v. What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in this column? Which ones are left out?
    - vi. What statistics or facts are listed in the column?
    - vii. Why has this message been created?
    - viii. Do you agree with this message?
    - ix. What do you know? What are you unsure of? What would you like to know?
  - e. As a class, discuss the students' word webs as well as their answers to the above questions. Discuss why it is important to understand the source and potential bias of a resource offering news information.

## Communication

1. Illiteracy: Think-Write-Pair-Share (estimated time: 30 minutes)
  - a. In the Global Voices column it is stated that illiteracy is "inextricably linked to the violence, the fraud and disorder that plague Haiti's electoral process."

- b. Begin by clarifying any questions students may have about this statement before proceeding to the activity.
- c. Think: ask students to think about this statement and what it means.
- d. Write: ask students to write down a short reflection about the meaning of this statement and its implications in Haiti.
- e. Pair: ask the class to divide into pairs and share their thoughts and written work, discussing this together.
- f. Share: when pairs have finished discussing, bring the class back together and discuss student ideas.
- g. Use the following suggested questions to direct discussion:
  - i. What is illiteracy?
  - ii. If someone is illiterate, what problems might they face in their life? (For example, not being able to read a restaurant menu, a bus schedule, etc.)
  - iii. How can the violence, fraud and disorder caused in Haiti's recent election be linked to illiteracy?

### Application

1. The election (estimated time: ongoing)
  - a. As they read in the Global Voices column, Haitians took the polls for the second round of voting in the Presidential election.
  - b. Explain to the class that they are going to monitor the results of the election together.
  - c. Divide the class into pairs.
  - d. Allow students the opportunity to explore the results on the internet. Allow students 10 minutes to complete their research.
  - e. Bring the class back together and discuss student findings.
  - f. Hold a discussion around the following questions:
    - i. Who won the election?
    - ii. What does this mean for the people of Haiti?
    - iii. Has the new leader made any promises to address the illiteracy rate in Haiti? What are they?