



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 Secondary 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: Canadian and World Studies, English and Social Sciences and Humanities.

Materials

- Chart paper or blackboard
- Computers and internet
- 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: 15 minutes)
 - a. Divide the class into groups of four.
 - b. In their groups, ask students to discuss the following, taking point form notes on each topic:
 - i. The benefits education has and will have on their life.
 - ii. The benefits education has on society.
 - c. When groups have finished their discussions, ask each group to choose one point from each topic and ask them to explain their reasoning to the class.
 - d. Before the conclusion of the activity, ensure students are aware of the benefits of education and how fortunate they are to receive an education.

Thinking

1. Reading Comprehension: Global Voices Column (estimated time: 15 minutes)
 - a. Pre reading steps:
 - i. Introduce the topic and encourage students to discuss what they already know about the topic, making predictions around what the column is about.
 - b. Reading steps:
 - i. Read: students must read the text independently, highlighting important points throughout the column.
 - ii. Ask: students must ask themselves what the story is about, recording five questions they are unsure of after reading the column.
 - iii. Paraphrase: encourage students to write point form notes in their own words around what the column is about.
 - c. Post reading discussion:
 - i. What are the main points of the column?
 - ii. What emotions did this column evoke in you?
 - iii. What problem is identified in the column?
 - iv. What questions do you have about the column?
2. Media Literacy (estimated time: 15 minutes)
 - a. Ask students to practice their media literacy skills by working independently to identify the following:
 - i. Title: include the full title of the article (also called the headline).
 - ii. Author: give the author's full name.
 - iii. Newspaper: the full name of the newspaper from which the column is taken.
 - iv. Date: the day the column appeared in the newspaper.
 - v. Subject: the overall topic that the column is describing.
 - vi. Event: the event that led to the writing of the column
 - vii. Main Idea: identify what the author is proving or arguing. Is the author trying to convince readers to take a side? If so, what opinion is the author encouraging?
 - viii. Evidence: list several facts/arguments that support the main idea and help to convince readers or inform them of the issue. Does the author provide enough factual material to support his/her ideas?
 - ix. Significance: explain why this issue is important and whom it may affect.
 - x. Point of View: is the article, in your opinion, balanced or biased? Are different viewpoints presented? Which viewpoints are left out?
 - b. When this is complete, bring the class back together and discuss student answers.

Communication

1. The election (estimated time: 45 minutes)
 - a. Haitians took the polls for the second round of voting in the Presidential election.
 - b. Ask the class if they heard the results on the election and if so to explain details.
 - c. Encourage the class to perform further research to learn the details of the election.
 - d. Divide the class into pairs.
 - e. Allow students that opportunity to explore the results on the internet. Ask students to find information on the details of the election, the election results, the events the day of, the reaction of the Haitian people, etc.
 - f. Allow students 20 minutes to complete their research.
 - g. Bring the class back together and discuss student findings.
 - h. Over the next few days or weeks, ask students to monitor Haiti and the affects of the election results. Discuss this frequently during class time.

Application

1. Illiteracy (estimated time: take home assignment)
 - 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. Ask students to write a five paragraph essay complete with topic sentences and thesis arguing for this point.
 - c. Encourage students to use information from the Global Voices column and encourage them to do any further research necessary to acquire evidence.
 - d. Final papers can be handed in for grading.