Vote!
by Eileen Christelow

Overview
It's hard to imagine a more accessible introduction to voting. The words are straightforward, the art whimsical and creative, and two darling dogs provide color commentary on the action. The frame story is a mayoral election in which the mother of a young, African American named Angela Johnson is one of the candidates. The book follows the action from political rallies, fund-raisers, and debates through the election, ending with a successful recount.

Grade 2

LEARNING TARGETS

✓ I can explain the process that Chris Smith goes through to get elected Mayor.

✓ I can identify rules that the people in the book had to follow to make sure it was a fair election.

✓ I can explain rules about who is allowed to vote.

✓ I can identify reasons that voting is important.

✓ I can explain why following the rules for elections and voting is important.
STANDARDS

2nd Grade Civics

2.1.1.1 Demonstrate voting skills, identify rules that keep a voting process fair, and explain why voting is important.

2.1.4.8.1 Compare and contrast student rules, rights and responsibilities at school with their rules, rights and responsibilities at home; explain the importance of obeying rules.

2nd Grade Language Arts

2.1.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

2.1.3.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

2.6.1.1 Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

GUIDE

Before you begin reading, explain that this book follows Chris Smith all the way through an election. There are a lot of steps that we go through in the course of an election. While you read, use a white board or large piece of paper to keep track of all the steps.

1. Chris Smith announces her candidacy (I’m Chris Smith, candidate for Mayor)
2. Campaigning – convincing people to vote for Chris – by talking to people
3. Spreading information about what Chris believes through newspaper, tv, radio, internet
4. Debating other candidate
5. Polls
6. Volunteers helping spread the word about their candidate
7. People donating money to the campaign
8. Running political advertisements
9. Election Day

Civics Standard 2.1.1.1

Language Arts Standard 2.1.1

Elmer the dog explains how the Smith family voted to for their dog. He feels that voting was the fairest way to choose which dog to get. Why? (in voting the choice that most people want is the winner – rather
than just taking a chance) Ask the class if they have ever voted for something in order to make a choice, either at home or at school. Give students a chance to share examples.

Civics Standard 2.1.1.1

Sparky the dog wants to vote in the election. We know that dogs can’t vote! Who should be allowed to vote? Angela says that people can’t vote until they are 18. Why can’t kids vote? Angela reminds the voters to register. Why do we require people to register to vote? (make sure they are qualified to vote, make sure they only vote once in one polling place) Ask students if they can think of any people who should not be allowed to vote in the election for Mayor? What about someone who doesn’t live in the town, but is only visiting during the election? Why is it important that people follow the rules about voting? (to make sure the election is fair and the right person gets to be Mayor, to make sure all voters feel that their vote has been fairly counted)

Civics Standard 2.1.1.1 2.1.4.8.1

Language Arts Standard 2.1.1

Angela feels that it is important that everyone votes in the election. Why? List reasons described in the book. (People who don’t vote are letting others decide for them. Many people have fought hard to give everyone the right to vote. Sometimes an election is decided by just a few votes.)

Civics Standard 2.1.1.1

Language Arts Standard 2.1.1

Chris Smith and her opponent Bill Brown don’t agree. Sometimes they disagree about what the next Mayor should do when they are elected. Sometimes they disagree about how to campaign. Can you identify some of the places where they disagree? (funding for schools or the stadium, what to do about Sparky during the debate, Brown’s ads about Smith being a big spender) How does Chris Smith show that she disagrees with Brown? Does she yell at him? Is there any evidence in the book that Chris helps her campaign by remaining calm? (after the debate people approve that she helped Sparky, Chris wins the election)

Civics Standard 2.1.1.1

Language Arts Standard 2.1.1 2.1.3.3

There is a recount for the election in the book because the election is decided by a small number of votes. Why does that mean that there should be a recount? (to make sure the election was
fair, to make sure that every vote was fairly and correctly counted) Does that rule seem fair? How does Chris Smith react when she is told there will be a recount? (she feels that it is fair and says she would ask for one if she had lost by such a close number) How do you think the voters feel about the recount? (people who voted for Brown might feel more confident that the election was fair) If voters in an election didn’t feel that it was run carefully by the rules, do you think they would vote in the next election?

Civics Standard 2.1.1.1 2.1.4.8.1
Language Arts Standard 2.1.1 2.1.3.3

**SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS**

Tell students that they will get a chance to vote for the book that you will read aloud later in the week. Give them three possible books to choose from. Have students write a paragraph explaining what book they would vote for and why. Post the paragraphs where others can read them. Encourage the class to read the paragraphs. Explain that it may help them decide which book to vote for. Later in the week hold a vote, and then read the book that wins.

Civics Standard 2.1.1.1
Language Arts Standard 2.6.1.1

The cartoons of Elmer and Sparky talking are fun! Have students draw a cartoon of these dogs, or of different animals, talking about voting. Students should include 3 important things they learned about voting and elections.

Civics Standard 2.1.1.1

In the book we see pictures of Bill Brown’s television ad, but we don’t see any ads for Chris Smith. Allow students to work in small groups to make an ad for Chris Smith. Tell them the ad needs to use information about Chris that we learned in the book, and should make people want to vote for her! Give each group a chance to act out their ad for the class.

**NOTES**