

If you want more information, all of this content can be found at [Accredited Schools Online](#)

Source: Accredited Schools Online

The infographic is a vertical sequence of six blue panels, each representing a step in the voting process. Each panel contains a title, a paragraph of text, and an icon. The steps are: 1. Register to Vote (document icon), 2. Research Political Parties, Candidates (capitol icon), 3. Know the Issues (map icon), 4. Check State Rules & Regulations (person with checkmark icon), 5. Find Your Polling Place (map with location pin icon), and 6. Cast Your Ballot (hand on screen icon). A small red Pinterest logo is in the top right corner of the first panel.

STEP 1: REGISTER TO VOTE

Voter registration is not federally managed, meaning states and territories have unique requirements. Most states allow residents to register online, in person, or via a paper form, provided they are qualified to vote and meet the registration deadline. If a voter knows they won't be in their state at the time of an election, they can fill out the Federal Postcard Application for absentee voting.

STEP 2: RESEARCH POLITICAL PARTIES, CANDIDATES

Being an informed voter allows individuals to select candidates based on their stated platforms without relying on party propaganda or media coverage. By researching parties and candidates, informed voters are able to make knowledgeable decisions about who their votes support. [The American Association of State Colleges and Universities](#) offers a comprehensive guide to becoming an informed voter.

STEP 3: KNOW THE ISSUES

Once a new voter is familiar with the basic tenets of political parties, they are able to learn about the issues at stake during the election. Be it a presidential or city council election, candidates almost always share the vision for their time in office on their website. Voters should review this information and consider how it aligns with their personal beliefs about how government should function.

STEP 4: CHECK STATE RULES & REGULATIONS

Most voting stations are open at least 12 hours on election day, allowing students or those with busy workdays ample time to vote. Although only 35 states currently require voters to show a photo ID, first-time voters who registered by mail have other requirements. According to federal law, individuals who have not voted previously must bring a valid photo ID or a bill, pay stub, or government document showing their name and current address.

STEP 5: FIND YOUR POLLING PLACE

State election offices assign polling locations based on a voter's address, so students and others who aren't sure where to go to vote can either contact their election office or use [Get to the Polls](#) to find out where they should be. Information about state and local election offices can be found via the search tool on [USA.gov](#).

STEP 6: CAST YOUR BALLOT

Gone are the days of hanging chads and delayed results, as states now use electronic voting systems, either optical scanning or touch screens on election day. Gizmodo provides [a list of states and the type of machines used](#) by each so students and other first-time voters feel confident and knowledgeable. Voters may not have to vote for every office on the ballot, and are also allowed a write-in if the candidate of their choosing is not on the official ballot.



Who: Any individual with a physical, cognitive, developmental or other type of disability.



Why They Are Important: Americans with disabilities represent 19 percent of the country's population, or one-fifth of all those eligible to vote. Still, only 27.5 percent of voters with disabilities took part in the 2012 election, mostly due to voting difficulties. The Election Assistance Commission is working to resolve issues during the last major election to ensure more voters with disabilities are able to make their voices heard.

Hot button issues for voters with disabilities may include the health care, education, accessibility, funding for research, minimum wage versus living wage and mental health resources.



Voting Groups & Organizations:

[American Association of People with Disabilities](#)

The AAPD hosts the Disability Vote Project, an initiative to ensure Americans with disabilities are able to engage in the political process.

[Disability & Voter Turnout](#)

Rutgers' School of Management and Labor Relations compiled a list of resources chronicling how many Americans with disabilities have voted in previous elections.

[National Disability Rights Network](#)

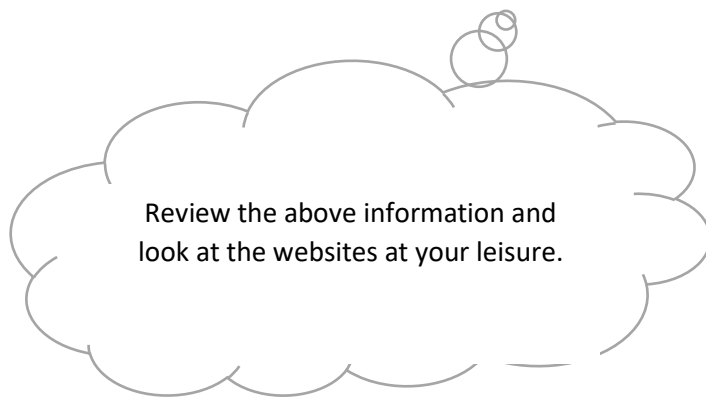
This organization provides information for both youth and adult voters with disabilities looking for resources for upcoming elections.

[Resources for Voters with Disabilities](#)

The Election Assistance Commission provides links to resources and websites designed to make the voting process run more smoothly for those with disabilities.

[Understanding Voting Rights and the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

Individuals who want to learn how this act and other laws protect the voting rights of Americans with disabilities can review this document provided by the U.S. Department of Justice.



Review the above information and look at the websites at your leisure.

BREAKING IT DOWN: VOTING RIGHTS & RULES

When George Washington was elected America's first President, only six percent of the country was allowed to vote. Voting rights have expanded significantly since 1789, but it took much devotion and sacrifice to ensure every eligible American has the opportunity to take part in this civic activity. Here are the rights every U.S. citizen has when it comes to voting.



NATIONAL RIGHTS & RULES

✓ Age Requirements

All voters in national elections must be 18 at the time of the election. Some states allow individuals who are 17 to vote in the primaries, provided they will be 18 when the general election takes place.

✓ Disability Assistance

According to federal provisions, individuals who are visually impaired, unable to read or write, or affected by another disability are allowed to bring someone to provide assistance while casting their vote. A few states also provide curbside voting for voters who can't easily leave their vehicles.

✓ Help for First-Time Voters, Others

Individuals may feel a bit nervous the first time they step into the polling station, but federal law allows poll workers to offer extra assistance to these voters. Voters are also allowed to ask for help if their polling station has installed new equipment since the last time they went to the polls.



STATE-SPECIFIC RIGHTS & RULES

✓ Voter Identification

As of 2016, 33 states had laws requiring some type of identification be shown on election day. Individuals planning to cast a ballot should research the [rules of their state](#) before setting off for the polling station.

✓ Early Voting

This method of voting was developed to provide Americans with every opportunity to make their voice heard, even if they are out of town or otherwise engaged on election day. Most states have rules in place about early voting, including approved locations and set dates. These can be found by contacting a local voting official or viewing a complete list provided by [Vote.org](#).

✓ Closed vs. Open Primaries

Although primaries run the gamut between closed and open voting – with other options including partially closed, partially opened, top two, and open to unaffiliated voters – each type relates to whether or not voters unaffiliated with a party can vote. While closed primaries don't allow unaffiliated voters to vote for partisan candidates, open primaries will accept votes for either candidate from those who aren't registered with a specific party. [Check your state's primary designation](#) with the National Conference of State Legislators.

CHOOSING A PARTY OR POLITICAL AFFILIATION

The political spectrum in America is traditionally been described on a left to right axis, with Democrats on the left, Republicans on the right, and Independents resting across the middle. The two parties make up the mainstay political system, with smaller parties such as Libertarians and Greens peppered amongst them. Declaring a party affiliation is only required to vote in closed primaries, so students and other first-time voters can decide whether or not they want to align or remain independent when it comes time to vote.

DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Prominent Political Figures: *Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, Joe Biden, Nancy Pelosi*

As one of the two main parties of America, the Democratic Party has been in operation since 1828. The current Democratic Party, popularized by a donkey logo, follows a modern liberal platform focused on human rights, equality, universal healthcare, affordable education, environmental sustainability and progressive taxation based on income.

GREEN PARTY

Prominent Political Figures: *Jill Stein, Ralph Nader, Gayle McLaughlin*

The current iteration of the Green Party was formed in 2001 on the back of several earlier groups. The party espouses four values, including ecological wisdom, social justice, grassroots democracy, and nonviolence. Sometimes referred to as Greens, there are currently 137 elected officials from this party serving throughout the country. In terms of platform, it is most closely aligned to the Democratic Party.

LIBERTARIAN PARTY

Prominent Political Figures: *Gary Johnson, Ron Paul, William Weld*

Created in 1971, the Libertarian Party is focused on minimizing government and maximizing freedom. As fierce proponents of small, non-invasive governing, the libertarian platform is fiscally conservative yet socially liberal. The party also takes a non-interventionist stance on issues related to foreign policy.

REPUBLICAN PARTY

Prominent Political Figures: *Donald Trump, Mitch McConnell, Paul Ryan, John McCain*

Also commonly referred to as the GOP, or Grand Old Party, the Republican Party is one of the two main American political parties and was founded in 1854. As the party of Lincoln and Roosevelt, the platform traditionally revolves around small government, free enterprise, family values, tighter immigration policies and gun ownership rights.

INDEPENDENT STATUS

Prominent Political Figures: *Bernie Sanders, Angus King, Jesse Ventura*

Although there is an Independent Party, not all politicians that run with independent status follow the same system of beliefs and platforms. Each Independent candidate should be thoroughly researched to determine their primary objectives, priorities and personal beliefs. The actual Independent Party focuses on upholding unalienable rights while stressing family and citizenship, limited taxation, free enterprise and government's responsibility as an agent of and for the people.

If you want more information, all of this content can be found at [Accredited Schools Online](https://www.accreditedschools.com/)

Click the link above to

1. Take the quiz: "Which Party Do I Identify With?"
2. Research Voting Myths v. Facts

See the screengrab below to navigate the page's toolbar

The screenshot shows a website page with a navigation toolbar at the top containing links for Accredited, Online Programs & Rankings, Schools By Location, Career & Professional Programs, Online K-12 Schools, Financial Aid, and Resources. Below the toolbar is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Higher Education Resources > First Time Voters. The main heading is "Navigating The Election Process For Students & First Time Voters" with a sub-heading "A Beginners Guide To Election Rights, Rules And Regulations". To the right is a circular graphic with icons for "REGISTER", "VOTE", "VOTING MYTHS", and "VOTING AWAY FROM HOME". Below the heading is a profile picture of Brenda A. Gadd and a paragraph of introductory text. A red checkmark is drawn over the text. At the bottom is a table of contents with eight items: "How to Vote in Six Easy Steps", "First-Time Voter Demographics", "Voting Rights & Rules", "Choosing a Party or Political Affiliation", "Quiz: Which Party Do I Identify With?", "Voting Myths vs. Facts", "Voting Away from Home", and "What's on the Ballot?". Below the table of contents is a blue heading "HOW TO VOTE IN SIX EASY STEPS".

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Navigating The Election Process For Students & First Time Voters

A Beginners Guide To Election Rights, Rules And Regulations

 Brenda A. Gadd

First-time voters are some of the most important Americans to show up on Election Day because they represent the new voices making their wishes for government known. Because Millennials now represent both the largest group of first-time voters and 31 percent of the population, their votes have the power to enact great change at the polls. Learning about how the voting process works and getting registered can seem overwhelming – especially for students and other young people who already have enough on their plates. The following guide simplifies what it takes to cast your first vote and offers helpful advice to prepare you for the polls. Keep reading to learn how easy it is to make a difference.

How to Vote in Six Easy Steps	First-Time Voter Demographics	Voting Rights & Rules	Choosing a Party or Political Affiliation	Quiz: Which Party Do I Identify With?	Voting Myths vs. Facts	Voting Away from Home	What's on the Ballot?
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HOW TO VOTE IN SIX EASY STEPS