

LWVOR Civics Lesson Resources: 2024 Election Oregon's Political Parties and Closed Primary

The League of Women Voters of Oregon (LWVOR) Student Mock Election (OSME) will offer students a realistic voting experience for the Fall 2024 General Election. For the election, we would like to encourage Oregon educators to prepare students for their future voting life. This includes voting as a nonaffiliated voter, which is the largest status for young voters. It will be important for students to understand the consequences of their party affiliation for primary elections in Oregon and also that for the upcoming general election, all voters will receive the same ballot. You will find resources below to help plan a lesson to inform your students about future primary elections.

Lesson Goal: Students will learn how to register to vote and to understand what each recognized party represents and how the closed primary system works in Oregon.

Materials: Voter registration cards, mock ballots, and access to the internet for research.

Time Required: This lesson can be addressed in one, two, or more class periods, depending on how deeply you want to dig into Oregon's parties and the closed primary process with your students.

Learning Objective: Students will learn how to cast an informed vote in an Oregon primary.

Structure/Activities: We suggest four interconnected activities for this lesson:

1. [POLITICAL PARTIES IN OREGON](#) - Have small groups research the platforms and views of the 9 officially recognized political parties in Oregon. Each group then reports to the class on their understanding of what each stands for.
2. [REGISTERING TO VOTE IN OREGON](#) - Have eligible students register [online](#) or on paper forms. Print [voter registration cards](#) for students to learn how to register to vote. Have younger students look over the cards so that they understand how to fill them out. [NOTES: The mailing address might be different from the "residence." The residence address is what determines which ballot the voter receives. This is important for students who might be living on a college campus but wanting to vote in their home precinct. Also, it is important not to have ineligible students (not yet 16 years of age, not a US citizen, or not an Oregon resident) actually fill out the forms, as this could be construed as encouraging voter fraud.]
3. [OREGON'S CLOSED PRIMARY ELECTION](#) - Students will study and learn about the Oregon closed primary election and how party registration affects their voting rights.
4. [THE 2024 SPRING MOCK ELECTION](#) - Students should have an experience with voting in the primary election. The mock election ballot will be an authentic example of a nonaffiliated primary voting experience.

Assessment: Student assessment can be formal or informal and might include participation in small group presentations and class discussion and voting in the mock election.

NOTES:

- This lesson is appropriate for students from **grades 6 to 12**. Younger students will gain an interest in the act of voting and should be encouraged to become a source of information for their voting family members.
- Anyone who is at least 16 years old with an Oregon Driver's License, Permit, or Oregon ID card) has [automatically been registered to vote](#). Students who are going to be 18 on or before Election Day (November 5, 2024) are qualified to vote.

- Eligible voters can easily check their voter registration status on [Vote411](#). The last day to [update or register their voter registration](#) is Oct 15, 2024. [Younger registered voters (16 to 18) can check their registration status with their local [county elections office](#).]

ACTIVITY 1: Political Parties in Oregon

Have small groups research one party's platforms and views.

- Make sure all of the 9 officially recognized political parties in Oregon are represented. (Be sure to point out that the "No Labels Party" is a new party in Oregon.)
- Each group then reports to the class on their understanding of what each stands for.
- That small group will be the "expert" for discussions that need the perspective of a particular party.

Background Information

Oregon's Political Parties: There are two major and seven minor political parties in Oregon. To form a party, you must first file a Petition to Establish a Political Party. The chief petitioner has 2 years to gather enough signatures to establish their party. The minimum number of signatures is 1.5% of the total votes cast for Governor in the last election.

Joining a political party is always free, and you can change your party anytime by updating your registration at oregonvotes.gov/myvote or by completing a new Oregon Voter Registration Card. You can register [online](#) or pick up a form at most libraries or any [county election office](#) (or you can print [this](#) one for yourself) to send through the mail. On page 2 of the paper form, you will find a list of every election office in the state, along with current contact information.

Online registration will use your DMV signature (that's the one on your Oregon Driver's License/Permit or Oregon ID card) for voter identification. That signature MUST match the one you sign on the back of your ballot envelope. If you need to update your signature, you must use a paper registration form. You can drop off a completed paper registration form at any of the 36 county [election offices](#) in the state, regardless of the county in which you intend to vote. Registered voters can opt to join any of the officially recognized political parties in Oregon.

Two Major Parties:

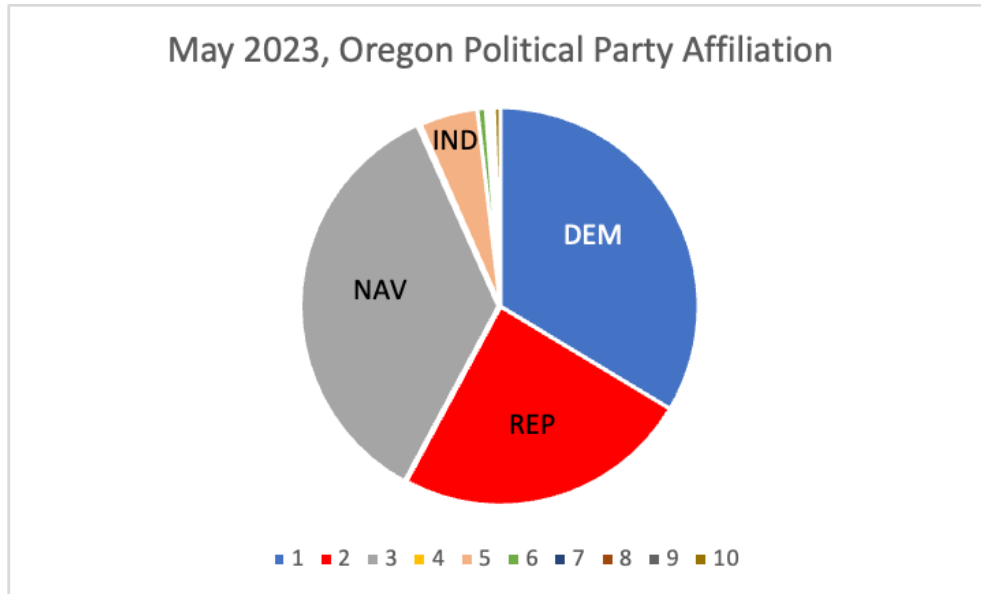
- [Democratic Party](#) of Oregon
- [Republican Party](#) of Oregon

Seven Minor Parties:

- [Constitution Party](#) of Oregon
- [Independent Party](#) of Oregon
- [Libertarian Party](#) of Oregon
- [No Labels Party](#) of Oregon
- [Pacific Green Party](#)
- [Progressive Party](#) of Oregon
- [Working Families Party](#) of Oregon

Nonaffiliated Voters (NAVs): Voters can also choose to be a Nonaffiliated Voter (NAV), having no party designation. NAVs have recently begun to outnumber those voters registered for any

one of the 9 officially recognized parties. As of May 2023, there were 3,005,261 registered voters statewide. Of these, 57.9% are registered for one of the two major parties and 42.1% are neither of them. In 2022 for the first time, the [percentage of NAVs](#) exceeded either major party. As of May 2023, the percentages are NAV - 35.4%, Dem - 33.6%, Rep - 24.3%. That leaves about 6.7% for the other seven minor parties. You can find more information about the parties by clicking on [Oregon Political Parties](#) on the Secretary of State website. Below is a pie chart for students to see the respective sizes of the most populous parties.



OTHER RESOURCES:

The Two Party System:

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/classroom/2016/10/political-parties-two-is-company-threes-a-crowd-lesson-plan/>

ACTIVITY 2: Registering to Vote in Oregon

Print sample [voter registration cards](#) for students to learn how to register to vote.

- Have eligible students register [online](#) or on paper forms. (If the latter, have students mail or deliver the forms to the election office. Younger students can look over the cards so that they understand how to fill them out.
- You can use the election office's instructions for filling out the registration form to help students understand it. There are instructional brochures available in most county election offices for those who are helping others register. An example is provided on the last page of this lesson plan.
- Check with your county elections office to see if it is possible to have your students tour the office.

Background Information (from [OR Secretary of State website](#))

Automatic Voter Registration: The Oregon Motor Voter (OMV) registration law took effect on Jan 1, 2016, making Oregon the first state in the nation to implement automatic voter registration. Automatic registration is available to those who apply for an original, renewal, or replacement driver's license, permit, or identification card. They must provide proof of citizenship at a Driver and Motor Vehicle Division (DMV) office. The DMV registration process takes approximately three weeks until a voter's registration is effective. If an election will occur in the two months following the DMV interaction, one of the other methods of registering to vote should be used to ensure the voter will be eligible to vote. Paper voter registration forms can also be mailed or hand-delivered to a county election office, or a voter can complete the form electronically at oregonvotes.gov. Forms are located in many public buildings, in every county elections office and in many state agencies including the Office of the Secretary of State, Elections Division.

Voting in Oregon: Oregon elections are conducted only by mail. Voters who are registered as of the 21st day before an election are mailed a ballot to vote and return by election day. The use of vote by mail was first approved on a limited basis by the Legislature in 1981 and was made permanent in 1987. In 1998, Oregon voters amended state law to require that the primary and general elections in May and November of even-numbered years also be conducted through vote by mail. Beginning in 2000, primary and general elections have been conducted by mail. In 2007, the Legislature provided that all elections be conducted by mail. In 2019, the Legislature approved funding for postage paid envelopes to be provided for returning ballots starting in 2022.

OTHER RESOURCES:

You can find more examples of activities to help students understand voting in Oregon in the [LWVOR Civics Education Curriculum](#).

ACTIVITY 3: Oregon’s Closed Primary Election

Voters registered with a major party holding the primary election can participate in its primary election. Candidates listed on a primary nominating ballot for a major political party are limited to those registered with that political party. Voters who wish to vote for candidates in the major party must register with the major party by the Voter Registration and Party Change Deadline, 21 days before the Primary Election Day.

More information about open and closed primary elections can be found [here](#).

Candidates also choose to be or not to be affiliated with any political party. Nonaffiliated candidates are sometimes called “independent” by the media and voters. It is important to remember that this does not mean they are affiliated with the Independent Party of Oregon.

Primary elections are held by parties to nominate their choice for the General Election in November. Partisan offices like Governor, US Senator, or State Representative, will not include nonaffiliated or minor party candidates in the closed primary. Since those candidates are not affiliated with the two major parties, they cannot participate in the primary election. This is a state law, not a decision made by local officials.

Many local offices, like county commissioners, district judges, city councilors, mayors and election officials are nonpartisan, and they do appear on nonaffiliated primary ballots. Ballot measures also appear on all ballots.

OTHER RESOURCES:

Oregon Government: <https://opb.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/great-states-oregon-6.1/activity/>

4-Minute Oregon Government Video:

<https://opb.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/great-states-oregon-government/video/>

May 2022 Media report on the closed primary

<https://www.kgw.com/article/news/local/the-story/oregons-closed-primaries/283-92c30fff-0dad-4c56-a47c-8a9611e53f4>

ACTIVITY 4: Voting the LWV of Oregon Student Mock Election (OSME)

Students should have an experience with voting in the primary election. The mock election ballot will be an authentic example of a nonaffiliated primary voting experience.

Why should we vote? In the November 2022 General Election, the [Secretary of State reports](#) that less than half (46.4%) of eligible Oregon voters, aged 18-34, actually submitted their ballots. Young voters are by far the least participatory in our government. Other age groups voted with percentages of from 65% to 84%, with an overall voting percentage for that election of 67%. Many elections have issues and candidate races on the ballot that have a lasting effect on the lives of everyone, but particularly the young people who will soon be in charge. Young voters can make a big difference if we all vote!

What's on my ballot? If students have participated in the first two activities, they should have enough information to recognize that their nonaffiliated mock ballot will not allow them to vote for partisan candidates. Take some time to review what will be on the partisan ballots in this election. You should be able to find a sample ballot for both of the major parties in the Primary.

What if I don't register for a party? Students should discuss the races that are excluded from their nonaffiliated ballots. They should also be aware that voters have the option of registering for whichever party fits them best, but also that they can change their party affiliation for the primary elections if they want to vote in partisan races.

Mock Election Voting Instructions:

1. Print and distribute the mock ballots, one per student.
2. Have students vote as a nonaffiliated voter.
3. Count the votes for your students.
4. Report your results using the [GoogleForm](#) provided.

How to Fill Out a Voter Registration Form in Oregon

Oregon Voter Registration Card

you may use this form to

- register to vote
- update your information

If you are not yet 18 years of age, you will not receive a ballot until an election occurs on or after your 18th birthday.

- Print with a black or blue pen to complete the form.**
- Sign the form.**
- Mail or drop off the form at your County Elections Office.**

Your County Elections Office will mail you a Voter Notification Card to confirm your registration.

The deadline to register to vote is the 21st day before an election.

Only registered voters are eligible to sign petitions.

You can find contact information for any County Elections Office [here](https://sos.oregon.gov/elections/Pages/countyofficials.aspx).
(<https://sos.oregon.gov/elections/Pages/countyofficials.aspx>)

Your ballot will be for this address's county and district.

The address you put here is where your ballot will be mailed. This is important for people who use a PO Box or for family members who are temporarily living away from home but still want to vote in their home county.

Choose only one identification method!

The card MUST be signed and dated and in the elections office within 5 days of the date.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Falsifying a voter registration card is a crime.

This section is only for changes to your name and/or address on your previous registration.

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qualifications

Are you a citizen of the United States of America? yes no

Are you at least 16 years of age? yes no

! If you mark no in response to either of these questions, do not complete this form.

personal information *required information

Public	John	Q
last name*	first*	middle
123 Any Street (Not a PO Box), AnyTown, Oregon 97XXX		
Oregon residence address, city and zip code (include apt. or space number)*		
01/01/2000		
date of birth (month/day/year)*	county of residence	
Optional	Optional	
phone	email	
Only if different from residential address		
mailing address, including city, state and zip code (required if different than residence)		

Oregon Driver's License/ID number

Provide a valid **Oregon Driver's License, Permit or ID:**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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If you have an OR ID, skip the next box.

I do not have a valid **Oregon Driver's License/Permit/ID.**
The last 4 digits of my Social Security Number (SSN) are:

Complete the section below ONLY if no OR ID.

x x x - x x - 1 2 3 4

I do not have a valid Oregon Driver's License/Permit/ID or a SSN. I have attached a copy of **acceptable identification.**

political party

Not a member of a party

Constitution

Democratic

Independent **Choose only one!**

Libertarian

Pacific Green

Progressive

Republican

Working Families

Other _____

signature

I swear or affirm that I am qualified to be an elector and I have told the truth on this registration.

sign here _____ date today _____ **Date Completed**

! If you sign this card and know it to be false, you can be fined up to \$125,000 and/or imprisoned for up to 5 years.

registration updates

Complete this section if you are updating your information.

If you have changed your name since last vote

previous registration name	previous county and state
If you have changed your address	
home address on previous registration	date of birth (month/day/year)