**YOUTH LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE**

# My Mock Election Teacher Instructions

Dear Educator,

Thank you for your interest in the YLI My Mock Election! We hope the information below answers your questions. If you have additional questions, the YLI staff is happy to assist you. Contact us by email at ylihelp@virginia.edu or by telephone toll-free at 866.514.8389.

## User's Guide Contents

**NOTE: YLI's My Mock Election program IS NOT the YLI National Mock Election. My Mock Election is a program that teachers can be used at any time for a variety of purposes such as political elections, student elections, school referenda and much more.**

Questions? Call YLI staff toll free at 866.514.8389 (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern) or email ylihelp@virginia.edu.

1

# Part 1: About the YLI My Mock Election

**Why hold a mock election?**

The YLI My Mock Election program is a free voting exercise available to K-12 educators and students nationwide. Not only does the YLI My Mock Election program offer student voting but also comprehensive lesson plans. Holding a mock election at your school will allow your students the opportunity to get involved in the voting process, helping them understand and realize that every vote counts, while building strong civic values among students.

**Is this activity right for my students?**

The YLI Mock Election is designed for K-12 students. The customization feature of the YLI Mock Election allows teachers to add and delete races depending upon grade level or interest. Considering technology access is an important part of planning your participation in the YLI Mock Election. Paper ballots are an option for schools that have little access to computers. The steps listed below will help you prepare for your students' participation the YLI Mock Election.

**Steps for Success:**

1) **Know your Mock Election dates**
Creating a mock election enables a flexible time schedule.  However, it is important to simulate an actual election by setting dates in advance and preparing for the mock election.

2) **View the Mock Election Demo**
We encourage teachers to view the Mock Election Demo before student voting begins. You may view the demo from your Mock Election home page or by logging in and accessing the Mock Election/Getting Started page.



Use the link to view the Mock Election Demo.

Questions? Call YLI staff toll free at 866.514.8389 (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern) or email ylihelp@virginia.edu.

### 3) Reserve Computer Lab Time

Computer labs make a great polling place. As soon as you decide to participate, reserve a place for your students to vote! Planning in advance will prevent scheduling conflicts and make the process run smoothly. It takes the average class about 15 minutes to vote in a lab. Make a point to see Frequently Asked Questions #1 at the end of this guide to find suggestions on how to make voting go even more smoothly.

***Paper ballots are also available if computers are not an option for your students! Directions follow in this section.***

### 4) Know Your Teacher Code and Print Student Instructions

Each teacher has a unique code, and this is how the YLI system knows which ballot to show for your students when they vote. You can see your teacher code when you log in; it is a seven digit number beginning with the abbreviation for your state.  You can find it by looking in the **upper right-hand corner** once you are logged in.  Students will need to know the teacher code BEFORE voting. To assist with this process, you can download the Printable Student Instructions from your **Mock Election Getting Started** section to post for students while they vote. This Student Instructions sheet automatically fills in your teacher code when you print it.



**Sample** Teacher Code- Do Not Use!

### 5) Ready to Vote!

Once you have secured computer access or printed paper ballots and distributed your teacher code, your students are ready to vote.
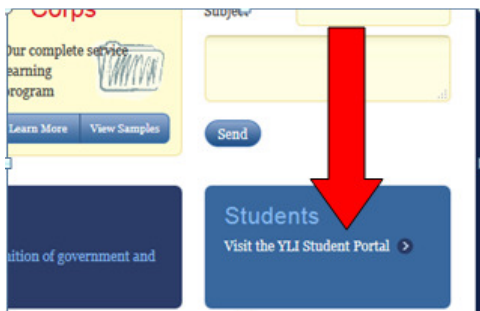


Students access your My Mock Election from the Student Portal link on the lower right of the YLI homepage at **www.youthleadership.net**

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3

## Part 2: Mock Election Access & Creating a Mock Election–

How do I access the My Mock Election, create my ballot or create a paper ballot?

1. To access the My Mock Election just login and click the Mock Election prompt from the profile page. The My Mock Election can be reached by clicking on the My Elections tab in the center of the page.
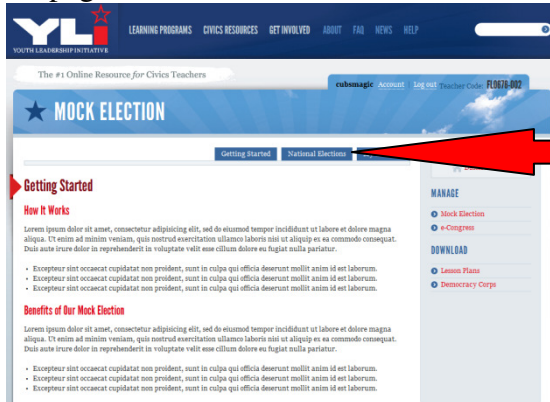


Use the "My Elections" link to create and customize a mock election that suits your students and your needs year round.

2. To create a My Mock Election click the "Create an Election" link. You will then be required to name your election before continuing.
3. To create a race and add candidates first click the "Add First Race" link. You must then give your race a name before you can enter a candidate. Next click the "Add First Candidate" link. You can then enter the candidate information including name, party, and title. Once you have entered the appropriate information, you can click the "Add Another Candidate" link to repeat the process until complete. Click the "Add Another Race" link if you would like to add additional races.
4. To create referenda click the "Add First Referendum" link. Give your referendum a title and question. Click the "Add Another Referendum" link for each additional referendum you wish to include.
   * To delete a race, candidate or referendum click on the trash can icon in the upper right corner within the box of the race, candidate or referendum you wish to delete, then click ok when prompted.
5. When you are finished with your ballot click the "Save Election" link at the bottom of the screen. If you wish to delete the election click the "Cancel" link. Both options take you to the My Elections tab where you can view your created elections.
6. To edit a ballot click either the mock election you wish to edit or click "preview," then "Edit Ballot." You can then select the information you wish to edit. Be sure to save changes by clicking "Save" and "Update"! You can edit and customize your ballot until the first vote is cast on that ballot. After that, the ballot is locked.
7. To begin voting click the red X under the "Voting" column and it will change to a green checkmark. Your students may begin voting.
8. To create a paper ballot click the "Preview" link under the mock election you wish to use and click the "Print Ballot" link once you are satisfied with the ballot.
9. To finish voting and show results click the green checkmark in the "Voting" column and click the X in the "Results" column and it will change to a green checkmark. **Make sure everyone has voted before closing the election.** You may need to refresh the page to show the results of the ballot.

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4

> \* <u>To check the participation</u> click the "Participation" link under the mock election you wish to view.  This option will appear during voting after the first vote is cast.

10. <u>To enter the results of the paper ballot</u> start the vote as mentioned in instruction 7, click the "Paper Ballots" link under the mock election you wish to record, enter the votes accordingly and click the "Save Results" link at the bottom.  A message will appear confirming that the entries have been recorded.  To view results of the paper ballot follow instruction 9.


# <u>Part 3</u>: Frequently Asked Questions about the YLI Mock Election

### 1)  <u>How can I involve other teachers at my school in the YLI Mock Election?</u>

Only one educator needs to be signed up in order for all teachers and students at that school to participate in YLI's Mock Election. However, we encourage participating civics and government teachers to register with YLI individually so that they may take advantage of supporting resources, such as online lesson plans.

The entire student body may participate regardless of how many teachers within a school are registered. Below are a few important tips and considerations.

- A good first step to coordinating school-wide participation is to create polling places. Computer labs work well, although this isn't an option for all schools.
- To share computers in a lab or library, teachers can sign up for a 15-minute window during which they take their class to vote. In addition, the process may go more quickly if a teacher can arrange to open YLI's homepage, [www.youthleadership.net](www.youthleadership.net), on each computer before students arrive. The YLI website may also be set as a "Favorite" link on each computer's internet browser for easier access beforehand.
- Each registered YLI teacher is assigned a unique code that is a combination of their state's abbreviation and seven numbers (e.g. NJ1234-111). If you are running your entire school's Mock Election and you wish to have all of the student voter names (see Frequently Ask Question #4 below for an explanation on entering the student's username) visible from your Mock Election page, all of the students should use your teacher code. Each teacher has the ability to customize their class' ballot. In this case teachers should be sure to use individual teacher codes. **Students must know their teacher code to vote**. You can print the Student Instructions from the website to post around your school polling places. (The Student Instructions include your unique teacher code.)

### 2)  <u>What resources does YLI provide to support the Mock Election?</u>

YLI educators can access online lesson plans about candidates for governor, campaigning and other election topics in the Lesson Plans section of the YLI website after logging in. Visit the **Getting Started** link from the Mock Election page.  Here you will find links to all of YLI's great supporting resources for Mock Elections including downloadable decorations for your school and classroom .

For in-depth analysis of current political happenings, visit the Crystal Ball at [www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball](www.centerforpolitics.org/crystalball) , a comprehensive website produced by the University of Virginia's Center for Politics. The Crystal Ball features analyses of presidential elections, Senate, House and gubernatorial races and more.

### 3)  <u>What is a teacher code? Why is it necessary?</u>

Each YLI-registered teacher is assigned a unique code so that the YLI system can automatically deliver the correct ballot to students when they sign in. The teacher code also allows YLI teachers to view classroom and school-specific voting results after polls are closed.

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**5**

<u>Why does YLI ask students to register their name during voting?</u>

Student voter registration names do not need to be registered prior to the Mock Election. Student enter their names during the voting process so teachers may track which students have voted and when. Teachers can view these names and voting times by logging in and clicking on the Participation link on the Mock Election page of the website. Teachers and YLI staff will NOT be able to see HOW students voted.  You will be able to see who voted and when.

4) <u>Will our school's election results be published?</u>

Your  election results are available only to you. You, however, are welcome to report the results of your school's Mock Elections however you wish.

5) <u>My school has limited access to computers. How can we participate in a Mock Election?</u>

To accomplish student voting online with a limited number of computers, coordinate voting times for all participating classes and consider the following suggestions:
- Sign up for 15-minute blocks (or longer depending on the number of computers and students) during those times in which you may take your students to vote.
- Make sure students know their school code before voting. This will make the process more efficient.
- Work with your media specialist to open YLI's homepage, <u>www.youthleadership.net</u>, on each computer before students arrive, allowing students to begin the voting process right away. You can also set the YLI website as a "Favorite" link on each computer's Internet browser for easier access.
- Schedule student voting during the first week of the Mock Election to allow for rescheduling in case your school's computers become unavailable or there is inclement weather.

A **paper ballot option** is available as described above for schools that have limited technology, anticipate problems, or experience problems during voting. It is also possible for some of your students to vote online and others to use paper ballots.

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**6**