Lesson Plan

National Standards for Civics and Government
V. What are the Roles of the Citizen in American Democracy?
C. What are the responsibilities of citizens?

Cartoon Title
261101 – *Blind man's bluff*

Materials
Cartoon graphic
Student Response Form

Background Information
U.S. citizens are not required to vote, although many groups have struggled for the right to vote. While there are age and registration requirements, there are few other restrictions on who can vote.

Between apathy, misinformation, and a general citizenry who feels removed from the inner workings of the political system, there is much room for complacency at the polls. Many voters who actually make it to the polls are still unsure of the issues and candidates they're voting for.

Can our democratic system better inform the constituents? Does our current system seek to inform or merely persuade the voters? Recent events have called into question even the validity of the actual voting machine. Are ballots engineered in a way to make the process easy and efficient for voters? Engage students in conversations about propositions and candidates on the local agenda and ask them to discern the means by which the electorate is included and involved in the voting process.

Enrichment Activities
Using three issues and candidates participating in the next local or national election, design a ballot and voting system that would be easy to read, provide information to voters, and ensure voters did not make ballot mistakes that would nullify their votes.

Research a campaign from a recent local or national election and provide an account sheet to delineate where funds were spent, how the message was disseminated, and what campaigning techniques proved the most effective.

Many groups have tried to tackle voter apathy by staging campaigns to bring voters to the polls regardless of their party affiliation. Rock the Vote was particularly targeting young voters. Create your own campaign to target a particular audience and design a campaign to bring voters to the polls.

Student Response Form

1. List three ways a citizen can cast a ballot.
    a.

    b.

    c.

2. List three rules candidates must follow regarding voting day procedures.
    a.

    b.

    c.

3. Is it better to vote "blind" or not vote at all? Explain your position.

4. Does it historically benefit a candidate to have a large voter turn out? Support your answer with facts.

5. Describe three deterrents that keep voters from having the facts when they go to the polls and provide alternatives to remove those stumbling blocks.