

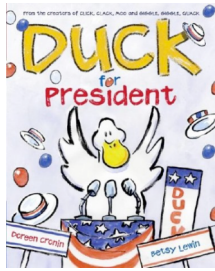
ELECTION CONNECTION

By
Michael Sajkowitz

With the media becoming more and more focused on the upcoming election, and the airwaves monopolized by political stories, your children may be starting to wonder what all the fuss is about. You can take this as an opportunity to combine education and fun while making your child feel like they are involved in the process right alongside the grown-ups.

DUCK FOR PRESIDENT

(for pre-schoolers)



For the young ones, this award winning modern classic-to-be by Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin represents a perfect introduction to this topic, framing its story around Farmer Brown’s animals and one duck who thinks that he can run things better than Brown himself. The duck embarks on a series of campaigns, which find him first running the farm, then the town, the state and eventually the entire country as the President.

SCHOOLHOUSE ROCK!

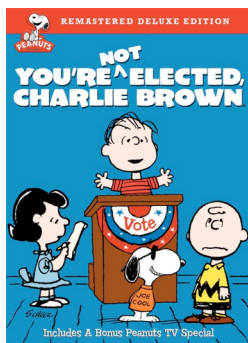
(for grade-schoolers)



Along with wonderful treatises on grammar (“Conjunction Junction”) and mathematics “Three Is a Magic Number”), the Schoolhouse Rocks! series paid plenty of attention to political science. The Electoral College is examined in “I’m Gonna Send Your Vote to College” while “Sufferin’ til Suffrage” breaks down the history of voting rights for women. “I’m Just a Bill” is a must-see classic that can tie everything together with its simple to follow review of how ideas come to be laws.

YOU’RE NOT ELECTED, CHARLIE BROWN

(for junior high-schoolers)



Pop culture icon Charlie Brown has a ubiquitous presence for so many special occasions from Easter to Halloween to Christmas and he does not disappoint when it comes to our electoral process. First aired in 1972, only a few months after America began its journey down the path towards the Watergate scandal, “You’re Not Elected, Charlie Brown” chronicles Linus’ run for school president (and his narrow one-vote victory when his opponent realizes that Linus is the better candidate for the job). Fun as all of the Peanuts adventures are, this episode provides a lighthearted story for kids who will soon

find themselves voting for their own school president.

MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON

(for high-schoolers)



For young teens, an introduction to this Frank Capra classic is well within order. Chronicling an idealist's demoralizing downfall at the hands of the cynical and corrupt political machine, "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington", in the end, is a powerful affirmation of integrity. Having refused to betray his principles, even under the threat of personal destruction, Jimmy Stewart's title character is left standing as the kind of hero every American should strive to be. This film belongs on every parents required viewing list as they hope to raise their children into adults of character.

Cast your vote to include your children in the political process in a fun and educational way. After your home grown campaigning is done and the kids are settled in bed, assuming you have not had enough politics for the day, you can wrap up the night with grown-up classics like the Watergate-era drama "All The President's Men" or the original political assassination thriller "The Manchurian Candidate".