

Unit: Importance of Clean Elections

By Benigno Calingo Bagabaldo

I. GENERAL OBJECTIVES:

- A. To realize the importance of clean elections.
- B. To appreciate government officials who maintain honest elections.
- C. To know our rights and privileges as citizens.

II. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

A. Knowledge and Understanding:

To know:

1. the meaning of suffrage
2. the requisites for people before they can vote.
3. the different kinds of elections in the Philippines
4. the difference between election and plebiscite
5. the persons who are not qualified to vote
6. what is a certificate of candidacy
7. the limitation on reelection
8. the reasons for limiting office tenure
9. the different election restrictions
10. what an election precinct is
11. what a polling place is
12. what compose the board of inspectors
13. the duty of watchers
14. how registration of voters is done
15. how voting is done
16. how the board of inspectors count the votes
17. the duties of the provincial board of canvassers
18. the duties of the municipal board of canvassers
19. what an election contest is
20. how to combat corrupt practices during election time
21. the duties of the Commission on Elections

B. Attitudes and Appreciations:

To develop proper attitude of:

1. voting wisely
2. helping make election clean
3. firm determination
4. respecting government officials
5. self-reliance
6. sticking to the democratic ways of proceedings

To appreciate:

1. the honest works of government officials
2. the role of teachers during election time

3. democracy in action
4. duties of the treasurers during election time

C. Habits and Skills:

To develop the habit of:

1. gathering data effectively
2. working with accuracy and neatness
3. campaigning against corruption during election time
4. cooperating with others
5. sharing experiences during discussions

To develop skills in:

1. the use of reference materials
2. interviewing persons
3. reading facts with understanding
4. the deliberation of oral reports
5. the making of written reports
6. the use of manipulative tools needed for construction activities

III. SUGGESTED CONTENTS:

A. Meaning of suffrage:

Suffrage may be defined as the right to vote in an election. In a broader meaning, it is not only the right to vote but also the right to be voted to an elective office in the government. It is not only a right but a privilege, because not all persons can enjoy it like the "right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

B. The Duty to Vote:

Aside from being a privilege, suffrage is a duty for those who exercise it. The success or failure of the government, the quality of officials in the public service and the policies of the administration depend directly or indirectly upon the voters.

C. Suffrage in the Philippines:

Before the arrival of the Spaniards, there was no suffrage in the Philippines. No officials were elected, and elections were unknown.

During the Spanish period, suffrage was very limited. With very rare exceptions, no Filipino was elected to a high office.

D. Kinds of Elections:

1. General Election — By general elections are

meant the elections for municipal, provincial, and national officials

2. National Elections — By national elections are meant the elections for national officials — President, Vice-President, Senators and Members of the House of Representatives.

3. Local Elections — Local elections mean the elections for municipal city, and provincial officials only.

4. Regular Elections — Regular elections are elections held throughout the whole country at regular periods specified by law. We have regular elections for national offices every two years and regular elections for provincial and municipal offices every four years.

5. Special Elections — Special elections are elections held upon the call of the President on a date different from that of regular elections. This is called:

a. because a regular election was not held on the date provided by law

b. because a vacancy has occurred in an elective office. Unlike regular elections, special elections are not national but are confined to the locality where an office is to be filled.

E. Elections and Plebiscites:

In procedure, elections and plebiscites are similar. In both occasions the qualified voters go to the polls and write their wish on the secret ballots; there are precincts, election inspectors, and poll clerks; the ballots cast are canvassed; and the results are proclaimed to the nation.

It is in the objective that elections and plebiscites differ. In elections, the qualified voters vote for candidates to certain political offices; while in plebiscites, they vote on certain issues presented to the nation for decision.

F. Qualifications of Voters:

1. a citizen (male or female) of the Philippines not otherwise disqualified by law

2. twenty-one years of age or over; must be able to read and write;

3. a resident in the Philippines for at least one year and in the municipality where he proposes to vote for at least six months preceding the election.

G. Persons Disqualified to Vote:

1. officers and enlisted men of the active regular army

2. persons who have been sentenced by final decision of the court to suffer imprisonment of not less than 18 months and have not been fully pardoned by the President

3. persons who have violated their allegiance to the Republic of the Philippines

4. insane or feeble-minded persons

5. person who cannot prepare their ballots themselves.

H. Certificate of Candidacy:

At least forty days before a regular election and twenty days before a special election, duly sworn certificates for national offices:

For Presidency, Vice-Presidency, Seats in the Congress — must be filed with the Commission on Elections in quadruplicate

For provincial offices — to the Secretary of the Provincial Board of the Province

For municipal offices — to the Municipal Secretary of the town

I. Limitation on Reelection:

Some elective officials are limited as to the number of times they may be reelected to the same office. A third consecutive reelection for provincial governors and municipal mayors is prohibited. They are limited to three consecutive terms.

J. Reasons for Limiting Office Tenure:

1. to prevent government officials from staying in office too long (they might abuse their power.)

2. to give a chance to other able persons to be elected to government offices.

K. Elections Restrictions:

1. No candidate shall spend for his election campaign more than the total amount of his salary for one year.

2. No one is allowed to hold benefit dances, beauty contest or theatrical shows during the two months immediately preceding an election for the purpose of raising funds for a candidate.

3. It is unlawful for any company or corporation engaged in public utility or in developing our natural resources to contribute money to a candidate.

4. During registration and voting days, it is unlawful for any person to campaign for or against any candidate within the polling place or within a radius of thirty meters of said polling place.

5. It is unlawful for any candidate or political party, during meetings and on the eve and the day of the election, to give free transportation, food, cigars, or drinks to the voters.

6. It is unlawful to hold cockfights, boxing, and other sort of entertainments on registration or election days.

7. It is unlawful to sell or give away wine on a registration day, during the two days before the election, and on election day.

8. It is prohibited to carry guns or deadly weapons in the polling place or within a radius of thirty meters of said polling place during registration days and on election day.

9. No judge, fiscal treasurer or assessor of any province, no member of the Army or local police, and no civil service employee can help any candidate nor influence any voter to cast his vote for a particular candidate.

10. Foreigners are prohibited from aiding candidates or interfering in the election.

L. Election Precincts:

In order that voting could be easier for the voters, the municipal council divides the municipality into districts called election precincts. A precinct must not according to law, have more than 250 voters. The municipal secretary posts maps of the precincts in the municipal building, in the polling places, and in three other conspicuous public places of the town. Each map shows the boundaries of the precinct. In this way the voters know in which precinct they belong and where they are to vote on election day.

M. Polling Places:

At least seventy days before each regular election, the municipal council chooses a building in each precinct where the people may vote. This building is called the polling place.

N. Board of Inspectors:

The Commission on Elections directly or through its authorized provincial representatives, appoints for each precinct three election inspectors and one poll clerk and their substitutes. They compose the board of inspectors.

O. Watchers:

Every candidate for a national or provincial office, for mayor and vice-mayor or for city councilor, has the right to have a watcher in every polling place. The candidates for councilors of a municipality or of a municipal district of each party collectively have the right to appoint a watcher. The watchers carefully watch the proceedings of the board of inspectors.

P. Registration of Voters:

In order that a qualified voter may vote, he must be registered in the list of voters. For this purpose, certain days, called registration days, are set aside before the election.

For the registration of voters, the board of inspectors of each election precinct holds meetings at the polling place on the days fixed by law before the day of election.

Q. Method of Voting:

Election shall begin at 7:00 o'clock in the morning and shall continue until 6:00 o'clock in the evening. If after 6:00 o'clock there are still voters within thirty meters of the polling place who have not yet cast their votes, the board of inspectors shall give to each one a numbered card, signed by one of its members. These voters with the cards are allowed to vote after the closing time of 6:00 o'clock P.M.

R. Counting of the Votes:

As soon as the voting is finished, the board of inspectors publicly counts the votes cast in the precinct. The board does not adjourn until the counting is com-

pleted. During the counting of the votes, the watchers of the different candidates are allowed to go inside and see the ballots as they are being counted, but they are not permitted to touch them. They can make protests as to the manner and correctness of reading the ballots.

S. Provincial Board of Canvassers:

Canvassing of votes means the examination of the statements of results from the boards of inspectors of the various precincts and adding up all votes cast for a particular office. All votes cast in the province for national and provincial offices are canvassed by the provincial board of canvassers consisting of the provincial governor, the members of the provincial board, the provincial treasurer, the provincial auditor, and the provincial fiscal.

T. Municipal Board of Canvassers:

To know the results of the election for municipal offices, the municipal council constitutes itself into a municipal board of canvassers. It has no power to recount the votes or to inspect any of them. It merely proceeds from the statements of the election returns prepared by the different boards of election inspectors in the municipality.

U. Election Contests:

The result of any election can be contested on the following grounds: (1) existence of election frauds or irregularities; (2) disloyalty of the winning candidates to the Philippines; (3) ineligibility of the winning candidate to the office.

V. The Commission on Elections:

The enforcement and administration of all laws relative to the conduct of elections is vested by the Constitution in an independent Commission on Elections. This body is composed of three members appointed by the President with the consent of the Commission on Appointments. They hold office for a term of nine years and may not be reappointed.

W. Importance of Clean Elections:

The ballot is the great instrument of a successful democracy. By casting it during the election, the people express their will. Hence, those who tamper with it, tamper with the people's will. Elections must be clean otherwise democracy will become a farce.

IV. INITIATING THE UNIT:

Preparatory Activities:

A. Classroom structure with different visual materials pertaining to honest and clean election.

B. Arrangement of reading materials accordingly so that children will be free in seeing and reading them.

C. Inviting resource person to talk about the topic on elections.

D. Sharing personal experience about the previous election.

E. Informal discussion of the unit to be taken up.
Anticipated problems:

1. What are the kinds of elections in the Philippines?
2. What do you mean by suffrage?
3. What are the qualifications of a voter?
4. Who are those disqualified to vote?
5. What is the importance of clean elections?
6. What is an election precinct?
7. What is a polling place?
8. What is a certificate of candidacy?
9. What are some election restrictions?
10. What composed the board of inspectors?
11. What are the duties of a watcher?
12. Why do we still have a registration of voters?
13. How are voting done in the Philippines?
14. How are votes counted?
15. What compose the Provincial Board of Canvas-sers?

V. DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES:

A. Research activities:

Topics for reseach;

1. Meaning of suffrage
2. The duty to vote
3. Suffrage in the Philippines
4. Kinds of elections
5. Elections and plebiscites
6. Qualifications of voters
7. Persons disqualified to vote
8. Certificate of candidacy
9. Limitation on reelection
10. Reasons for limiting office tenure
11. Election restrictions
12. Election precincts
13. Polling places
14. Board of inspectors
15. The watchers
16. Registration of voters
17. Method of voting
18. Counting of votes
19. Provincial board of canvassers

20. Municipal board of canvassers
21. Election contests
22. The commission on elections
22. The importance of clean elections

B. Expressional Activities:

1. Dramatization
2. Writing short playlets
3. Composing poems or 'tula' about the unit
4. Writing themes
5. Copying and making sample ballots
6. Writnig a certificate of candidacy
7. Writing platforms of a certain make-believe candidate
8. Writing of campaign speeches
9. Conducting a class debate
10. Holding a class election of officers
11. Drawing, painting, pictures about election
12. Making of dioramas
13. Reading of previous news about elections
14. Making of slogans pertaining to clean elections.

C. Group reports about the result of the:

1. Findings on the research activities
2. Creative or expressional activities

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITIES:

1. Class program
2. Class exhibits
3. Party

VII. EVALUATION:

1. Evaluating class behavior
2. Answering prepared questionnaires
3. Writing summaries
4. Test covering the unit

VIII. REFERENCES:

Government of our Republic — Zaide

The Government of the Republic of the Philip-pines — Tolentino-Zaide

Primer of the Philippine Constitution—Sinco

General Instructions by the Commission on Elec-tions

Election Code by the Commission On Elections

