

Electoral Dysfunction Viewing Guide Answers

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Viewing Guide **ANSWER KEY: Electoral Dysfunction (2012)**

Instructions: Use and answer the questions below to help guide your comprehension of this film.

1. We have 13,000 election jurisdictions in this country that run elections 13,000 different ways.
2. What does the U.S. Constitution say about the "right to vote"?
There is no right to vote in the U.S. Constitution. The Framers of the Constitution were unsure whether it was a right or a privilege.
3. Which is the only government office specified to be an elected position?
House of Representatives
4. Who did the Framers of the Constitution leave to answer the question of voting?
The States
5. What was one of the rejected methods of choosing the President?
Have Congress choose the President, or Have a national election/popular election
6. In the classroom, which wins the popular vote between colored pencils and markers?
Markers
7. Which wins the electoral vote between colored pencils and markers? What is the child in the green sweatshirt so upset about?
Colored Pencils, the popular votes are being ignored
8. If the four biggest U.S. states have more or "extra" electoral votes, what does it mean to be

Electoral dysfunction viewing guide answers are crucial for understanding the complexities and challenges faced by electoral systems around the globe. As elections are the cornerstone of democracy, the integrity and functionality of these processes directly influence political stability and citizen engagement. This article delves into the key aspects of electoral dysfunction, examining the causes, consequences, and potential solutions while providing a comprehensive viewing guide for stakeholders interested in this pressing issue.

Understanding Electoral Dysfunction

Electoral dysfunction refers to any irregularities, inefficiencies, or failures within electoral systems that can undermine their legitimacy. Such dysfunction can manifest in various forms, including voter suppression, gerrymandering, lack of transparency, and inadequate electoral infrastructure. Understanding the root causes of these issues is vital for fostering a healthy democratic environment.

Common Causes of Electoral Dysfunction

1. **Voter Suppression:** This occurs when certain groups of people are systematically discouraged or prevented from voting. Tactics include strict voter ID laws, purging voter rolls, and limiting access to polling places.
2. **Gerrymandering:** The manipulation of electoral district boundaries to favor one party over another can disenfranchise voters and skew representation in government.
3. **Lack of Transparency:** When the electoral process is opaque, it breeds mistrust among voters. Issues such as unclear ballot designs, complicated voting procedures, and secretive counting processes can contribute to this problem.

4. **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Poorly managed polling places, insufficient voting equipment, and a lack of trained personnel can lead to long lines, technical malfunctions, and ultimately, voter frustration.

5. **Political Polarization:** Extreme political division can lead to a breakdown in cooperation and compromise, resulting in legislative gridlock and a lack of public trust in electoral outcomes.

Consequences of Electoral Dysfunction

The ramifications of electoral dysfunction are profound, impacting not only individual elections but also the broader political landscape.

Impacts on Voter Trust

When citizens perceive the electoral process as flawed, their trust in democratic institutions wanes. This can lead to:

- Decreased voter turnout
- Increased political apathy
- A rise in extremist political movements

Legitimacy of Electoral Outcomes

Electoral dysfunction can call into question the legitimacy of electoral outcomes. For instance, if voters believe that their votes do not count or that the system is rigged, they may reject the results, leading to social unrest or even violence.

Impact on Governance

Elected officials who come to power through dysfunctional processes may prioritize party loyalty over constituent needs. This can result in:

- Ineffective governance
- Policies that do not reflect the will of the people
- Increased polarization and division within society

Viewing Guide to Electoral Dysfunction

To better understand electoral dysfunction, it is essential to engage with various forms of media and analysis. Below is a viewing guide that provides resources and themes to explore.

Documentaries and Films

1. "The Best Democracy Money Can Buy": This documentary examines the influence of money on elections and the repercussions for democracy.
2. "Recount": A dramatization of the 2000 presidential election recount in Florida, highlighting the complexities and controversies surrounding electoral processes.
3. "The Great Hack": This film delves into the role of data in modern elections, exploring how personal data can be manipulated to influence voter behavior.

Books and Academic Articles

1. "Election Meltdown: Dirty Tricks, Distrust, and the Threat to American Democracy" by Richard L. Hasen: This book discusses various forms of electoral dysfunction in the U.S. and proposes reforms to enhance electoral integrity.
2. "The Vote: A Citizen's Guide to Voting" by The League of Women Voters: This guide provides essential information about voting rights and the electoral process, empowering citizens to engage effectively.
3. "Gerrymandering: A Citizen's Guide to Redistricting" by Justin Levitt: This book offers insights into the practice of gerrymandering, its effects on representation, and potential solutions.

Podcasts and Interviews

1. "Pod Save America": A political commentary podcast that often discusses electoral integrity and dysfunction in American politics.
2. "The Democracy Works Podcast": This podcast explores various aspects of democracy, including challenges to electoral processes and potential reforms.
3. Interviews with Election Officials: Engaging with local election officials can provide firsthand insights into the challenges of administering elections and the impact of dysfunction on their work.

Potential Solutions to Electoral Dysfunction

Addressing electoral dysfunction requires a multifaceted approach that combines policy reform, public education, and grassroots activism.

Reforms to Consider

1. **Voter Registration Improvements:** Implementing automatic and same-day voter registration can help increase participation and reduce barriers to voting.
2. **Redistricting Reform:** Establishing independent commissions for redistricting can help combat gerrymandering and ensure fair representation.
3. **Voting Technology Upgrades:** Investing in secure and accessible voting technologies can enhance the voting experience and increase transparency in the electoral process.
4. **Enhanced Voter Education:** Providing clear and accessible information about the voting process can empower citizens to participate fully and effectively.
5. **Promoting Civic Engagement:** Encouraging community involvement and activism can help create a more informed electorate that demands accountability from elected officials.

Conclusion

Understanding electoral dysfunction is vital for anyone interested in the health of democratic systems. By engaging with the viewing guide provided and exploring the causes and consequences of these issues, stakeholders can become informed advocates for electoral integrity. Addressing electoral dysfunction not only improves the electoral process itself but also restores public trust in democracy, ensuring that every voice is heard and represented. Through collective action and informed dialogue, we can work towards a more robust and equitable electoral system.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is electoral dysfunction?

Electoral dysfunction refers to problems and inefficiencies in the electoral process that can lead to unfair outcomes, disenfranchisement, or lack of public trust in democratic institutions.

What are common indicators of electoral dysfunction?

Common indicators include low voter turnout, gerrymandering, voter suppression, irregularities in vote counting, and lack of access to polling places.

How can electoral dysfunction impact democracy?

Electoral dysfunction can undermine the legitimacy of elections, diminish public confidence in government, and ultimately lead to decreased political engagement and participation among citizens.

What role does media play in electoral dysfunction?

Media can amplify electoral dysfunction by spreading misinformation, failing to cover important electoral issues, or framing narratives that promote polarization instead of informed debate.

What strategies can be implemented to address electoral dysfunction?

Strategies include implementing automatic voter registration, enhancing transparency in campaign financing, independent redistricting commissions, and improving access to voting through extended hours and remote options.

What is the significance of public trust in elections?

Public trust is crucial for the legitimacy of electoral outcomes; when people believe in the fairness of the process, they are more likely to accept results and participate in future elections.

How does technology influence electoral dysfunction?

Technology can both mitigate and exacerbate electoral dysfunction; while online voter registration and secure voting systems can improve access, misinformation and cyber threats can undermine electoral integrity.

What are the consequences of gerrymandering?

Gerrymandering can lead to uncompetitive elections, dilute the voting power of certain demographic groups, and distort representation, ultimately eroding democratic accountability.

What can voters do to combat electoral dysfunction?

Voters can educate themselves about the electoral process, advocate for reforms, participate in local government, and support organizations that promote voting rights and fair elections.

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