

VOTER LOGISTICS

Even in federal elections, local commissions and boards are responsible for handling the logistics, counting , etc. of votes (as it would be impossible for the federal government to conduct all elections in all states).

What happens is:

1. A county, city or general geographic region is divided into wards, which are broken further into precincts. These precincts are small and assigned one polling place.
2. The local area is given a time during which in person ballots can be sent. The state controls voter registration, district lines + tallies, candidacy procedure, etc. (things that are more in the scope of the local government than federal).
3. Before and during the election, these local bodies will report to a statewide official on the process and any issues that may arise.
4. After election day, local officials will count, verify the votes and wait for absentee ballots.

As a voter, you can:

1. Send off a ballot on Election Day (the AU Ballot): printed at public expense, available only at polling locations, and completed with confidentiality, this is the traditional vote that you would see.
2. Absentee voting: voters who are unable to make to a polling location are able to mail in a completed ballot or otherwise vote off of the official election day.
3. Early voting: you can also vote before the Election Day. The local area usually offers a period before Election Day where any person who has the proper credentials and qualifications can come in and vote, which puts less logistic burden on poll workers, election officials, etc.
4. Digital voting: while not fully implemented, a number of people have suggested using the Internet as a means of voting. There are a number of things wrong with this plan, such as the vulnerability to hacking, however, it does also have its benefits.

VOTER TURNOUT

Voter turnout is the percentage of eligible, voting-age citizens that will actually vote. A number of factors exist as to why a person may or may not vote:

1. Registration.
 - a. As was found in the Taylor Swift FRQ, the concept and implementation of registration presents a substantial structural barrier to voters, especially residents who live in states with strict voter registration laws.
 - b. A number of pieces of legislation have been passed to alleviate this obstacle:
 - i. The National Voter Registration Act of '93 (or the motor voter law), created a number of standards nationwide, one of which being that state run agencies such as the local MVA must allow people to register to vote there. Previously, dedicated offices for registration were used.
 - ii. The Help America Vote Act of '02 (HAVA) sets out more national standards, such as: *all states must upgrade to an electronic voting*

system at some point, all states must make an effort to enable individuals with disabilities to participate, all states must allow people to change their choice before committing and submitting, members of the military must be able to vote from overseas, registering voters need a license or SSN that will be verified on election day, etc.

- iii. The HAVA act demonstrates some of the barriers to voting, such as outdated procedures, inability to reach a polling station (either because of disability or some other factor)
 - iv. Finally, most places have opened up registration procedures to include online voting, “print out a PDF and send it to us”, “walk into the MVA and register”. This still has a number of problems, such as the fact that some people just don’t have the required IDs to register.
2. Prior conviction of a felony.
 - a. Most states prohibit felons from voting while imprisoned.
 - b. Most states will however regrant that right after release or parole.
 - c. 12 states however take away the right permanently.
 - d. Giving former felons the right to vote is a controversial issue in the United States today.
 3. Lack of resources and waits in line
 - a. Minorities are more likely to wait a longer time in line at polling locations.
 - b. Polling locations in primarily minority communities are usually less staffed or otherwise not as well set up as other polling locations.
 - c. The more people wait, the more likely they are to not vote next time.
 4. Midterm vs General
 - a. Elections that take place in between Presidential terms for Congresspeople are usually less active and usually draw in more people who feel strongly about their political beliefs.
 5. Political efficacy
 - a. Political efficacy is the amount of weight people think their vote has on the overall outcome of the nation.
 - b. People who don’t get what they were promised, people who rooted for a candidate who lost in the end, or people who are generally content with government and see no need to vote have a low political efficacy: they do not have much faith that their vote will make a difference.
 - c. Some people also justify this by becoming involved in their local communities through volunteering, activism, etc.
 6. Your voting bloc
 - a. A voting bloc is a certain demographic isolated from the entire voting eligible population that can be analyzed individually.
 - b. A number of gaps in registration and voting exist between different voting blocs.
 - c. The gaps are as follows (according to the textbook):
 - i. Gender. Women tend to oppose crackdowns on the convicted, capital punishment, and support spending on social welfare, resulting in them leaning towards the Democratic Party. Men usually go harder on the

convicted and are usually more fiscally conservative, thus resulting in them siding with the Republican Party more. Women also tend to vote in slightly higher numbers than men.

- ii. Being young. The youngest voting bloc tends to have the lowest turnout. People explain this using a number of reasons, such as, “not politically socialized enough”, or “not enough life experience”. Despite this, the younger generation tends to be more politically interested and more connected through the Internet.
- iii. Being old. The older voting blocs tend to vote consistently; they have a great number of things at stake such as social benefits, investments, etc.
- iv. Race or ethnicity.
 - 1. African Americans tend to view the justice system less favorably, view intl issues as less important to dom. issues such as people in need, and have had historically low voter turnout in comparison to white people.
 - 2. Hispanics tend to have a low voter turnout in comparison to white people, consider issues such as immigration and citizenship to be wedge issues
 - 3. Asian Americans tend to have concerns over civil rights and liberties, but also tend to vote conservatively on issues such as business and ethical beliefs (which tend to align with values from their origin).
- v. Religion.
 - 1. White, Evangelical people tend to vote very conservatively, view issues such as religion in the public sphere to be important, and tend to oppose ideas such as evolution.
 - 2. Catholics. Because of historical anti-Catholic rhetoric in the past, Catholics historically tended to side with Democrats, which still holds true today but not to the extent that it used to. Catholic values such as opposition to birth control and opposition to the death penalty result in a mix today.
 - 3. Jews tend to participate in large number and side mainly with Democrats, and due to historical violations of civil rights and liberties, have tended to lean liberal.
- vi. Socioeconomic status.
 - 1. Upper class people tend to embrace capitalistic and conservative ideals, and business owners want less interference, resulting in that voting bloc tending to swing right.
 - 2. Wage earners historically viewed politics through the lens of the workplace and their union, and although unions have lost much of their influence, union members still tend to vote left. This has been the way it is historically as well, with early advocates of child labor and workplace safety laws tending to vote Democrat too.