

Lesson 3

Focus Question Three

Step #3: Application

Strategy: Applying Information to a Different Setting

Activities

Follow-up the previous discussion of citizen involvement in the political process by analyzing the data at this website to determine the percentage of Germans voting in the most recent election to the German Bundestag. The English language portion of the Bundestag's official web site is located at www.bundestag.de/htdocs_e/.

Note: The data shows a 77 % voter turnout for the 2005 elections to the German Bundestag.

Use **Handout #15** (Interest in Politics and Where it Comes From) to help students decide if "medium/communication activity" is a factor in generating more interest in the political process.

- ▶ **Which activity appears to be the most effective in generating interest? The least effective?**
- ▶ **Are you surprised by any of the results?**
- ▶ **Would you say that these results would hold true for the United States?**

Use **Worksheet #3** (Comparing Voting in the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany) to research differences in voting patterns in the United States and Germany. Focus the discussion on:

- ▶ **Role of political parties in motivating citizens to become involved**
- ▶ **The proportion of eligible voters actually participating in national elections**

Have the students use what they have learned about citizen involvement in German politics to make some recommendations for how to motivate United States citizens to become more involved in the political process. For example:

- ▶ **How might politicians from both political parties better get their message to the voters?**
- ▶ **What issues seem to be the most important to the voters? How can we get our politicians to more fully address these issues?**
- ▶ **Is there a place in U. S. politics for additional parties to bring these issues to the forefront?**