**Don’t Vote if You Didn’t Do Your Homework**

*Task:*

*1. Complete a CODED read 2. Annotate (have a conversation on paper)*

[**Thursday's Editorial**](http://www.studentnewsdaily.com/archive/editorials-for-students/)**—   Posted on October 28, 2010**

 **(by Selwyn Duke, AmericanThinker.com) –** It has become apparent that most Americans simply don’t take voting very seriously.  This is especially true of those who encourage voting.  They’ll tell us that walking into a polling place and pulling a lever is our civic duty, but this isn’t true.  Our civic duty is to cultivate wisdom in ourselves and become conversant with the issues; the walking and pulling part is just a natural byproduct of that.

Yet so many try to pull others to the polls, claiming that mass participation in the electoral process somehow makes our country better.  I guess it is in the way that having everyone take a turn in the cockpit of a 747 would make air travel better or having everyone try his hand at brain surgery would make brains healthier. …

As for common myths, encouraging people to vote doesn’t advance the common good.  After all, we would agree that having an educated populace is a prerequisite for a healthy electoral process.  Yet we also know that most people aren’t well-educated on the issues of the day.  Therefore, it cannot be good for everyone to vote.

If any would dispute this, just listen to these Howard Stern man-on-the-street interviews conducted prior to the 2008 election.  The radio jock had an interviewer [attribute] John McCain’s positions to Barack Obama and ask Obama supporters if they approved.  It went something like this:*“Do you like Obama’s pro-life stance?   Can you accept his choice of Sarah Palin as vice-presidential running mate?”*   What do you think the answer was?   If you didn’t guess that they were just fine with*“Obama’s”* positions, please remember to vote November 3.

The truth is that get-out-the-vote efforts, as I wrote in 2008, “can quite correctly be defined as an effort to rally the idiot vote disguised as a noble exercise in democracy.” A good example is this breaking story about Ohio high school students who were taken to vote during school hours, allegedly given sample ballots only for Democrat candidates, and then treated to ice cream. And some Democrats have even advocated granting 14-year-olds the right to vote. Hey, why not? We can set up polling places in paintball and laser-tag facilities and a registration icon on YouTube. …..

On the other hand, we could just accept the simple rule of thumb here: If someone doesn’t have the get-up-and-go to get out and vote without being prodded, it follows that he won’t have the greater get-up-and-go necessary to inform himself on the issues, in which case he shouldn’t vote. So it’s just a case of nature taking care of itself. After all, if people aren’t voting, it’s for the same reason why they don’t play the piano, paint, or follow politics: They’re not interested in those things. And when you’re not interested in something, you invariably won’t be very good at it.

Yet people will talk about the importance of exercising constitutional rights. They forget about moral rights, however. And if you would maintain that an uneducated person has a moral right to vote, then you should accept that a butcher has a moral right to operate on your child because, for some inexplicable reason, getting everyone involved in an endeavor somehow makes it better.

And based on this idea, we see a lot of posturing about getting people “engaged in the process.” As I also wrote in 2008, however,*… it’s all talk. A process is just that, a process, “a systematic series of actions directed to some end,” while voting is simply an action. Or perhaps we could say it’s a reaction — catalyzed by one’s own knowledge and passion.*

*If people really were interested in the health of the “process,” they would start at the beginning of that “systematic series of actions” — which is the step whereby you encourage people to care, study and inform themselves — not at the end with voting. They would understand that once this step was tended to, people would naturally cast ballots, as it is merely a by-product of personal political health.*

Then again, could it be that certain elements in our society know that if they tend to the beginning of that process, the end of it won’t be to their liking? And what does it say about a group, … when its success hinges on growing and rallying the idiot vote?

As for our national success, voter participation is key. And if we can get it down to five percent, we just might make the Founding Fathers smile.  So I’ll issue a public service announcement:

If you’re not reading this article, please do your duty this November 2.  Stay home.

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**Questions**

1. a) What is the main idea of Selwyn Duke’s commentary?

b) Ask an adult if he/she agrees with Mr. Duke’s main idea and to explain his/her answer.

2. Next to each of the following statements made by Mr. Duke, write agree or disagree and explain each of your answers:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ “Our civic duty is to cultivate wisdom in ourselves and become conversant with the issues…” (from paragraph 1)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ “…we would agree that having an educated populace is a prerequisite for a healthy electoral process. Yet we also know that most people aren’t well-educated on the issues of the day. Therefore, it cannot be good for everyone to vote.” (para. 3)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ “The truth is that get-out-the-vote efforts … can quite correctly be defined as an effort to rally the idiot vote disguised as a noble exercise in democracy.” (para. 5)

3. What solution can you offer for the problem Mr. Duke presents in his commentary?