

# Voting is as easy as 1-2-3!



 **Easy Voter Guide**

[www.easyvoter.org](http://www.easyvoter.org)



1. Sign up to vote



2. Get ready to vote



3. Go vote!

# 1. Sign up to vote

## To sign up to vote, you have to be:

- 18 years or older
- a U. S. citizen
- not in prison or on parole for a felony



## To get a voter registration form:

- Call **1-800-345-8683** to have a form sent to you.
- Pick one up at the library, post office, DMV, or other public places.
- Visit **www.myvotecounts.org**.

It's FREE! Just fill out the form out and mail it in. You don't even need a stamp. You will get a postcard in the mail that tells you that you are registered.



## When should I sign up?

- Sign up (register) at least 15 days before an election.
- You don't have to register again unless you move, change your name, or change your political party.

## Do I have to join a political party?

- When you sign up to vote, you will be asked if you want to join a political party.
- A political party is a group of people who share the same ideas about what government should do.
- There are seven parties in California.
- If you register with a party, you vote for that party's candidates in the primary election. Or, you can choose "Decline to State" (sometimes called "Independent") and not be a member of a political party.

PARTY REGISTRATION—Check one box	
9	<input type="checkbox"/> American Independent Party
	<input type="checkbox"/> Democratic Party
	<input type="checkbox"/> Green Party
	<input type="checkbox"/> Libertarian Party
	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Law Party
	<input type="checkbox"/> Peace and Freedom Party
	<input type="checkbox"/> Republican Party
	<input type="checkbox"/> Decline to State
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____	

### Primary Election:

Voters select candidates from their party for different elected offices.

### General Election:

Winners from the primary run against each other to see who will be elected. Voters can choose candidates from any party.

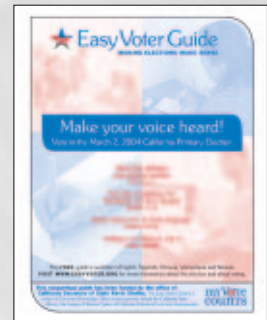
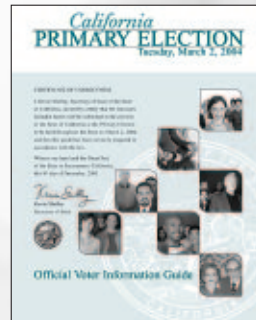
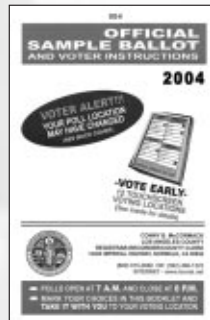
## 2. Get ready to vote

### Get informed

Before you vote, learn about what you will be voting on. **You do not have to vote on everything.** You can just vote on the things you care about.

To help you prepare, all registered voters get two booklets in the mail:

- a *Sample Ballot* that lists all of the candidates and measures that will be on your ballot. It also shows where you vote (your “polling place”).
- the *Voter Information Guide* about statewide candidates and ballot measures, from the California Secretary of State’s Office



You can also use the *Easy Voter Guide* and [www.easyvoter.org](http://www.easyvoter.org) website which tells you about the statewide candidates and ballot measures in plain language.

All of these have **nonpartisan** information, which means they just give facts and do not take sides about how you should vote. You may also get mail from campaigns and hear advertisements trying to tell you how to vote. These are **partisan**.

Talk about the issues and candidates with your family and friends and follow the news about the election. Get information from many different places so you can make the choices that are right for you. Mark your choices on your Sample Ballot and use it when you vote.

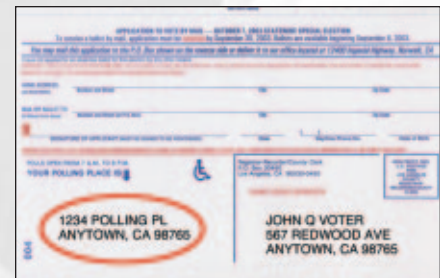


### Decide how you will vote

You can choose if you want to vote:

1. At your polling place
2. At home with an “absentee ballot”
3. Before election day at locations chosen by your county elections office

Find your polling place (“precinct”) by looking at the back cover of the Sample Ballot from your county elections office. Or, you can look it up at [www.easyvoter.org](http://www.easyvoter.org).





# 3. Go vote!

## What happens if I vote at my polling place?

- You will be asked your name and to sign a book that lists all the voters in your area.
- If you are first-time voter, you may be asked to show identification.
- The pollworker will give you a paper ballot to mark in a private booth or a card to put into a voting computer.
- If your name is not on the list, you can still vote with a “provisional” ballot. You will be given a number to call to find out if your vote was counted.
- Do not feel rushed and ask for help if you need it.



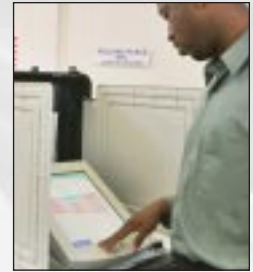
Signing in at the polling place



Getting your ballot or computer card



Voting with a paper ballot



Voting with a computer

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## What if I want to vote at home?

- You must apply for an absentee ballot in writing. You can use the application on your Sample Ballot. Your request must be received at least one week before the election.
- If you want to be able to vote at home in every election, you can check the box for “Permanent Absentee Voter.” (Keep in mind that if you skip an election and don't vote, you will need to reapply for the next election.)
- Sign and mail in the completed ballot to arrive by election day. Or, you can drop it off at any polling place.
- If you change your mind and want to vote at your polling place, you will be asked to give back the absentee ballot. Only one vote per person!

In many counties, you may also be able to vote before election day. Check with your county elections office for locations.

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Visit [www.easyvoter.org](http://www.easyvoter.org) for more information about how to vote and about the next election.

 Easy Voter Guide

The nonpartisan Easy Voter Guide Project is a collaboration of the California State Library, The James Irvine Foundation and the California Secretary of State's Office. Supported in part by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered in California by the State Librarian. This guide was edited by adult literacy students and community members in the hope that more people will exercise their right to vote. Contact the Easy Voter Guide Project at [info@easyvoter.org](mailto:info@easyvoter.org) or (415) 454-6500 for more information or with suggestions.