

KIDS  
VOTE!  
JOCO

**Voting Activity Booklet**

# Letter from Fred

Dear Young Voter,

I'm so excited that you joined our Kids VOTE JoCo program this year! Your excitement about voting is really amazing, and I'm proud of you for taking this important step in learning how to be an active and smart citizen as you grow up.

Voting is not just something we get to do; it's a powerful way to share your ideas and make your voice heard in your community. Every vote is important, and each one helps shape the world around us.

Sometimes, the person or choice we pick doesn't win, and that's okay. That's just how democracy works! Just like your vote counts, the votes of your friends and neighbors count too. Every time we vote, whether our candidate wins or loses, it's a chance to learn and grow.

I hope this experience inspires you to get involved in your community. As you grow older, we hope you keep voting in elections. When you turn 16, you can even become a student election worker. It's a great way to help with voting in your area and learn even more about the process.

Thank you again for joining! We look forward to seeing you vote when you're old enough!

With appreciation,



Frederick L. Sherman  
Johnson County Election Commissioner

Hi! I'm Votey! I have spent my entire life teaching kids just like you about the importance of voting.

Over the pages of this booklet, I will share some of my favorite facts about voting. We will cover elections from the big national elections all the way down to local elections in your city and school district. Along the way we will learn some exciting history and fun facts about voting in Johnson County!!

So grab your Kids VOTE pencil and let's have some fun as we learn about how important voting is!



## About the Election Office

The Johnson County Election Office works hard to help people vote. They make sure elections are safe, fair, and accurate for everyone in the community.

Johnson County has more than 470,000 registered voters. These voters live in 19 cities and seven townships and are part of eight school districts. The Election Office runs the elections so people can choose their leaders from local to national levels.

To help with elections, the Election Office hires up to 2,000 workers. These workers help at over 140 polling places and at early voting sites before Election Day.

In between elections, the Election Office keeps track of the voter registration records. When someone moves, they fill out a new registration form to update their address. This means the office handles thousands of updates to keep the voter list current.

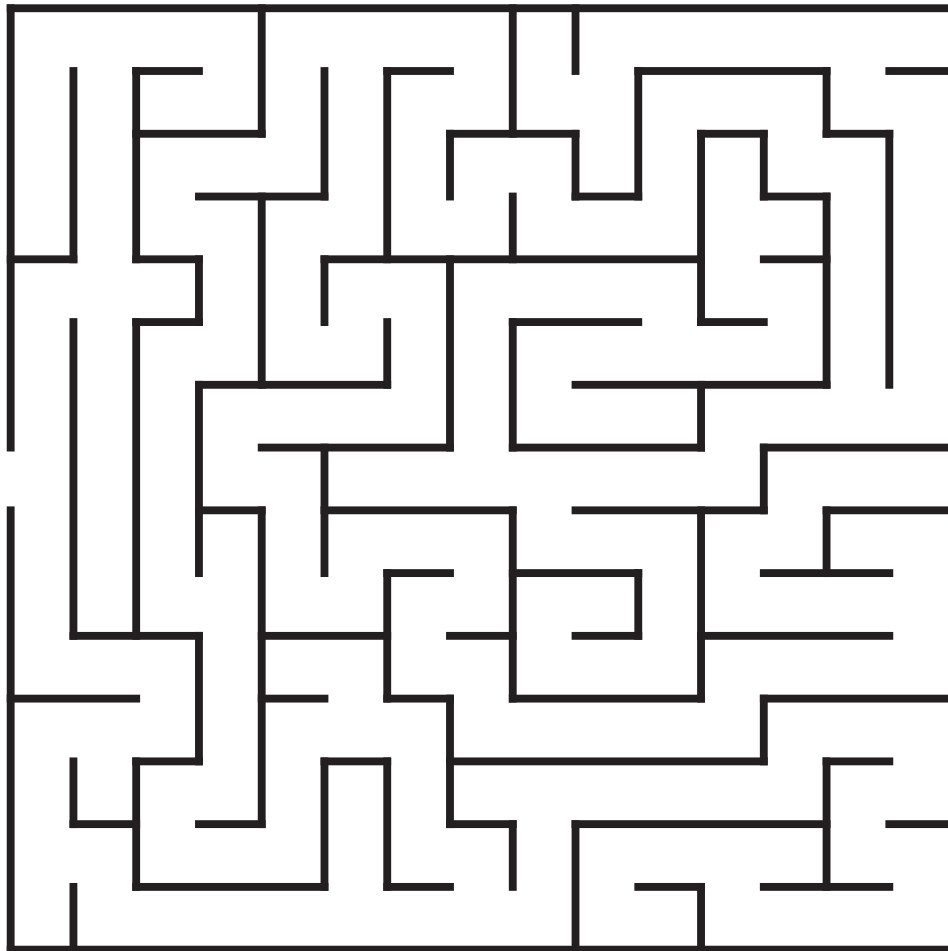
The Johnson County Election Office is dedicated to its mission of serving the public by administering secure, accessible, impartial and accurate elections.

# What is voting?

We vote to help make important decisions. You might even vote without realizing it! Does your family ever “vote” on which restaurant to eat at or what TV show to watch? Do you all vote on where to go for vacation or which park to visit on a nice day? Just like your family votes to decide things, our country believes that citizens should have a say in what happens in their city, county, state, or country. And we do this by voting!

Now we can't hold a vote to make every decision. Instead, we choose representatives to make decisions for us. These representatives work for us at every level of government. Their job is to make decisions on behalf of the people that they represent.

## Help Votey get to his “I Voted” sticker!



Solution provided on page 22.

# Stops on the voting path

- 1. Register to vote:** In Kansas, you need to fill out a form to register before you can vote. This form asks for basic information like your name, address, and date of birth. If you want to join a political party, you can also choose that on the form.

Once you are registered, you stay registered. But if you move or need to change any information, you have to tell the Election Office.

- 2. Know the issues and candidates:** It's important to learn about the questions and candidates on your ballot. The Election Office makes that easy by posting sample ballots prior to every election. Looking at your sample ballot before you go vote allows you to do your research and determine who should earn your vote!
- 3. Choose your voting method:** As a Johnson County voter, you will have three ways to vote! You can ask for a ballot to be mailed to you, vote at an early voting location before Election Day or vote at your assigned polling place on Election Day.

You can find more information about these options at [www.jocoelection.org](http://www.jocoelection.org).

- 4. Wait for election results:** After the polls close on Election Day, you can see unofficial results from the election. Those results remain unofficial until certified a couple of weeks after Election Day.

Thanks for the help! Thanks to you, I got my "I Voted" sticker!!

When you turn 18, you will need to complete a series of steps just like I did. But don't you worry, they're easy and just like you helped me, the Election Office has really great employees who are excited to help you.



# The Constitution

The United States Constitution is an important document that explains how our country works, what our government does, and the rights of the people. It was first adopted on September 17, 1787, and it is still used today!

**Sets the foundation:** The Constitution is the most important law in the country. All other laws must follow what it says and protect the rights it gives to people.

**Making Changes:** The Constitution is called a “living document” because it has changed to meet the needs of the people. A change to the constitution is called an amendment. So far, there have been 27 amendments. To make a change, it must be approved by 3/4 of the states. It was last changed in 1992!

**Outlines individual rights:** Individual rights of citizens are identified in the Bill of Rights and later amendments to the Constitution. The Bill of Rights was adopted in 1791 and has the first 10 amendments to the constitution. These rights are many of the foundational rights we enjoy today!

**Defines our governing structure:** The constitution set up our government, which has three parts: the Executive, the Legislative and the Judicial branches. These branches work together and keep each other in check. Each branch has unique powers and duties.



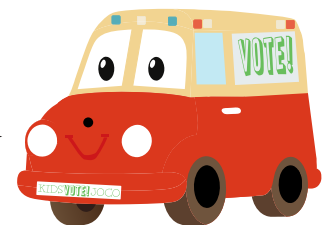
# Voting-related Amendments

**12th Amendment | June 15, 1804:** The 12th Amendment changed how Presidents and Vice Presidents are elected in the United States.

**15th Amendment | February 3, 1870:** The 15th Amendment was the first of several passed to allow more people to vote. Before this amendment, some laws kept certain groups from voting. This amendment made it illegal to stop someone from voting because of their race or color.

**17th Amendment | April 8, 1913:** The 17th Amendment changed how U.S. senators are elected. Before this, senators were chosen by their state's legislature. Now, people in each state vote directly for their senators.

Did you know that the seventeenth amendment was drafted by US Senator from Kansas? Senator Joseph Bristow, who served in the Senate from 1909 to 1915, proposed this amendment in 1911.



**19th Amendment | August 18, 1920:** The 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote. Women in Kansas could vote earlier, but this amendment made it happen for the whole country.

**20th Amendment | January 23, 1933:** The 20th Amendment changed when federal officials start their terms. Instead of starting in March, they now start in January

**22nd Amendment | February 27, 1951:** The 22nd Amendment limits Presidents to two terms in office.

**23rd Amendment | March 29, 1961:** The 23rd Amendment allowed people in Washington, D.C., to vote in presidential elections. It provides the District of Columbia with three electoral votes. To learn more about electoral votes, check out page nine!

**24th Amendment | January 23, 1964:** The 24th Amendment made it illegal to charge a poll tax. Poll taxes were fees that some states charged people to vote. It was used to keep people from voting.

**26th Amendment | July 1, 1971:** The 26th Amendment lowered the voting age from 21 to 18. Until then, you'll always have the Kids VOTE JoCo program!

# True or False

True

False

The Constitution was originally adopted by the states on July 4, 1776.

True

False

The 26th Amendment lowered the voting age to 18.

True

False

An amendment must be adopted by all the states in order to be added to the Constitution.

True

False

The first 10 amendments to the Constitution are collectively called the Bill of Rights.

True

False

The Constitution created five branches of government.

True

False

The 19th Amendment granted women the right to vote nationwide.

Solution provided on page 22.



Did you know that each state has its own constitution? The Kansas Constitution explains how the state government works. It also gives rights to its citizens.

The Kansas Constitution can change over time to meet the needs of the state through a process called amendments! I guess it's another "living document"!!



# The Electoral College

The Electoral College might sound like a school, but it's actually how we pick our President every four years!

When someone votes for a President, they are really voting for that candidate's electors. Electors are people chosen by a political party to vote in the Electoral College if their candidate wins.

Each state gets a certain number of Electoral College votes based on how many representatives it has in Congress. For example, Kansas has six votes: two for its U.S. Senators and four for its U.S. Representatives. A big state like California has 54 votes while a smaller state, like North Dakota, has just three votes.

After each state's election is certified, the candidate who gets the most votes in that state will get to have their electors participate in the Electoral College. Those electors will proudly cast their votes for that candidate.

**1** Electors chosen for each candidate before the election



**2** Election results are certified at state level in early December

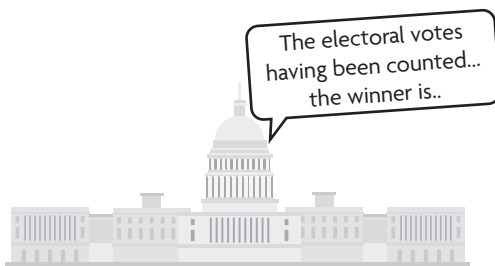
For Electors for Favorite Color of the United States	
Green.....	153,072
Pink.....	187,415
Purple.....	29,951
Yellow.....	18,728
Write-in.....	7
Undervotes.....	168
Overvotes.....	42

**CERTIFIED**

**3** Winning electors cast votes at meeting of Electoral College



**4** Electoral college votes from every state are sent to Congress

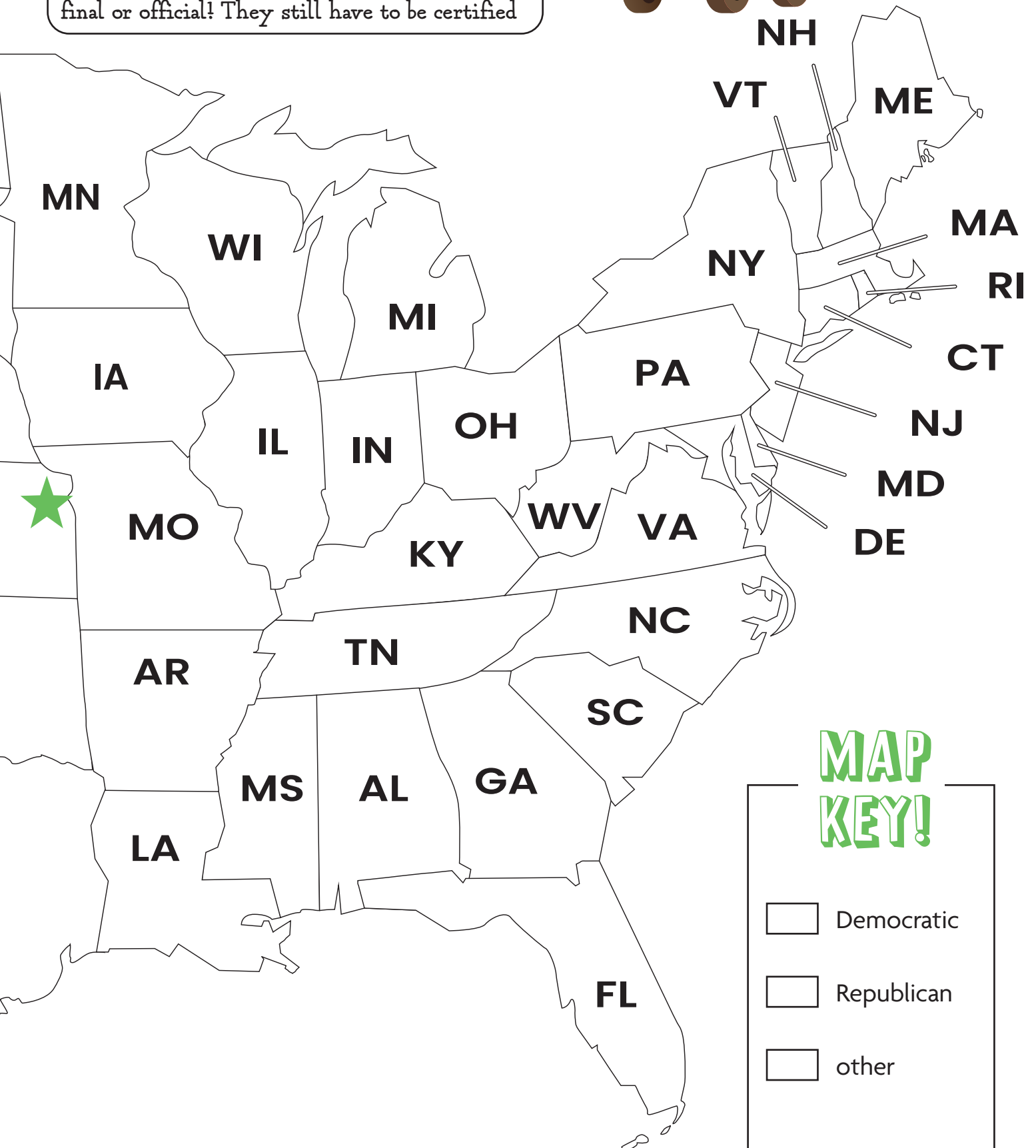
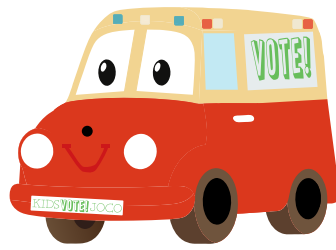


The office of President is unique in elections because it's the only office that uses the Electoral College. All other contests are elected by the popular vote, where a candidate gets credit for every individual voter's vote.



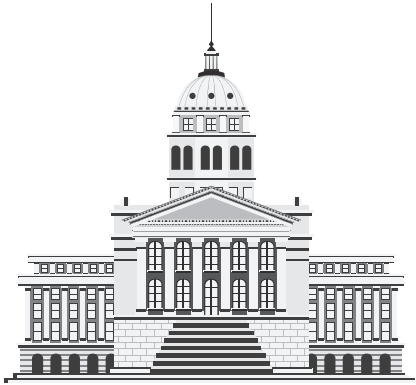


Now that you understand how the Electoral College works, use crayons to fill in states when a winner is declared, but remember, election results on Election Night are never final or official! They still have to be certified



# Elected state offices

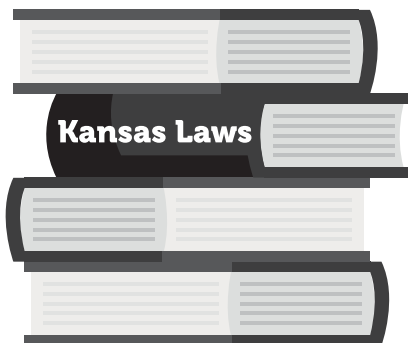
Kansas has three branches of government, just like the federal government! These branches are modeled after the branches of government found in the U.S. Constitution.



## Executive Branch

The executive branch in Kansas includes the Governor and other statewide elected officials like the Secretary of State. These officials run different parts of the state government. They are elected to 4-year terms.

In addition to setting up much of the government, the Governor also reviews the bills the legislature passes. The Governor can sign the bills to make them laws or veto them if they don't agree.



## Legislative Branch

The legislative branch in Kansas has two groups: the Kansas Senate and the Kansas House of Representatives. Together, they write and pass bills that become laws.

The Kansas Senate has 40 senators. Each senator represents about 70,000 people in Kansas. Johnson County has 10 senate districts.

The Kansas House of Representatives has 125 members. Each member represents about 23,000 people in Kansas. Johnson County has members 27 state representative districts.

## Judicial Branch

The judicial branch in Kansas interprets and applies laws. This branch also makes sure that laws passed by the legislative branch follow the Kansas and U.S. constitutions.

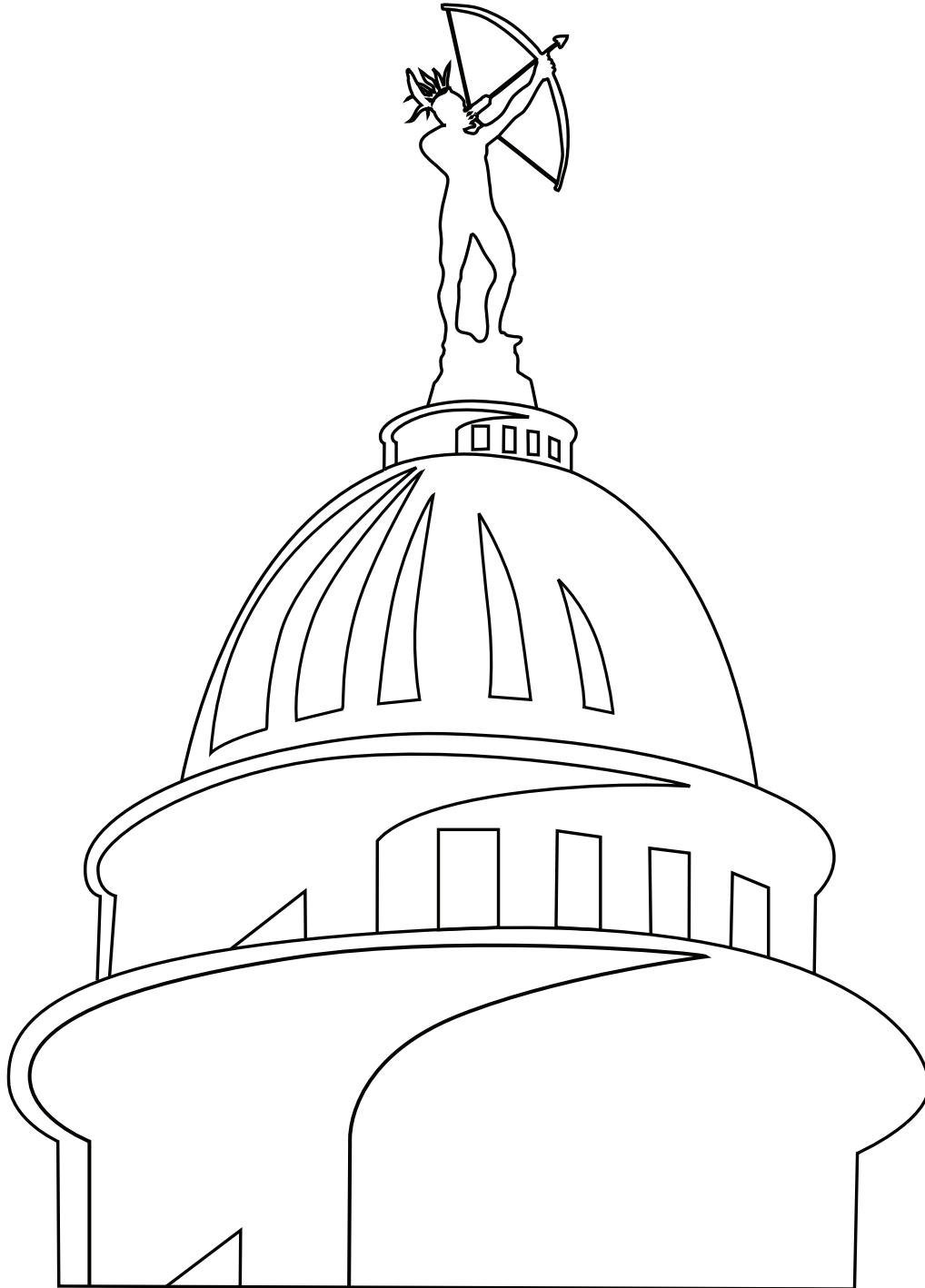
The judicial branch has many different levels. The highest court is the Supreme Court of Kansas. Other levels include the Court of Appeals and the District Court.



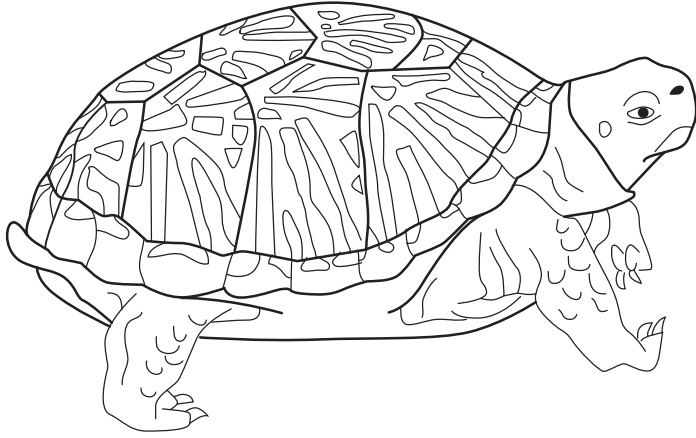
# State capitol building

The capital city of Kansas is Topeka! Here, you will find the capitol building. This is where the State Senate and House of Representatives meet.

At the very top of the capitol building, a statue represents the state's motto, "Ad astra per aspera," which means, "To the stars through difficulties." It reminds us that reaching for our dreams can be hard, but it is worth it!



# Our fantastic state symbols



## **Ornate Box Turtle**

The ornate box turtle was declared the official state reptile in 1986. You can find this wild turtle all across Kansas as it makes its home in prairies, pastures and fields.

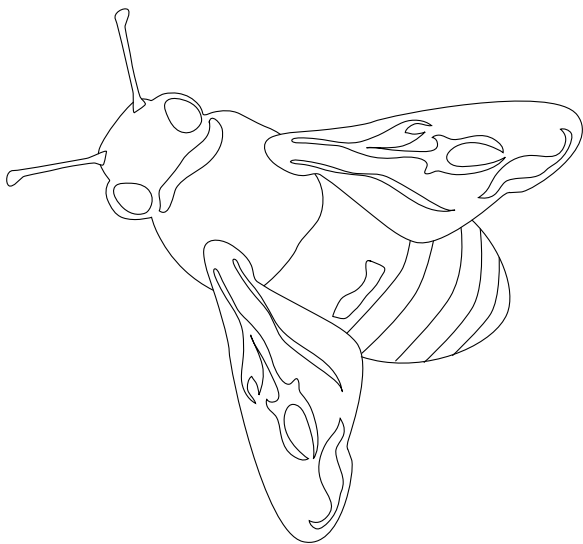
## **American Buffalo**

The American buffalo was named the official animal of Kansas in 1955. These majestic creatures roamed all over the great plains eating the prairie grasses.



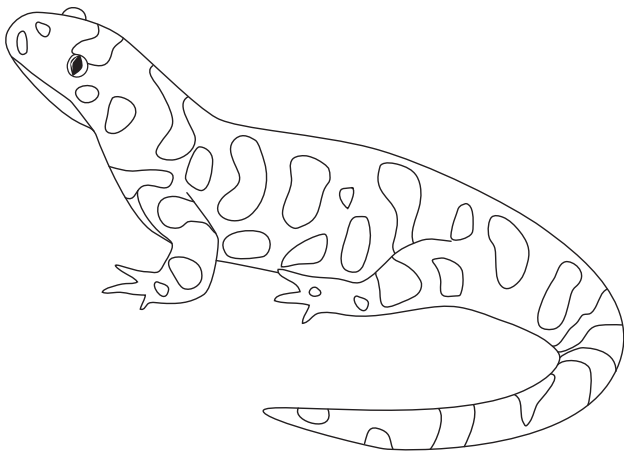
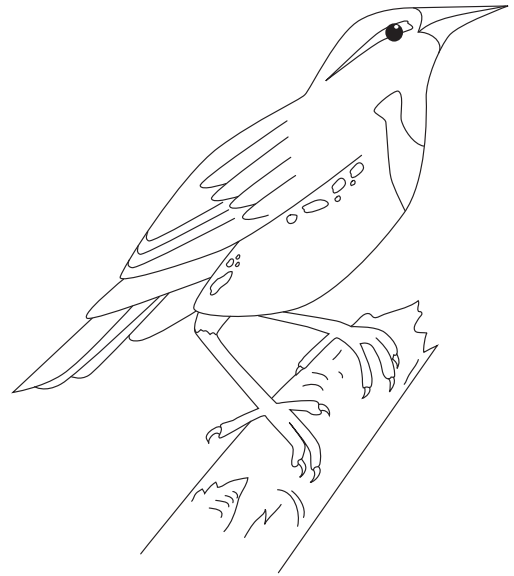
## **Honeybee**

The honeybee earned its official designation as the state insect in 1976 because of the important part it plays in pollination. This is especially important in an agricultural state like Kansas!



## Western Meadowlark

The western meadowlark became the official state bird in 1937. If you look closely, you will see this bird with its bright yellow chest all across our beautiful state. A fun fact is that we share this state bird with five other states!

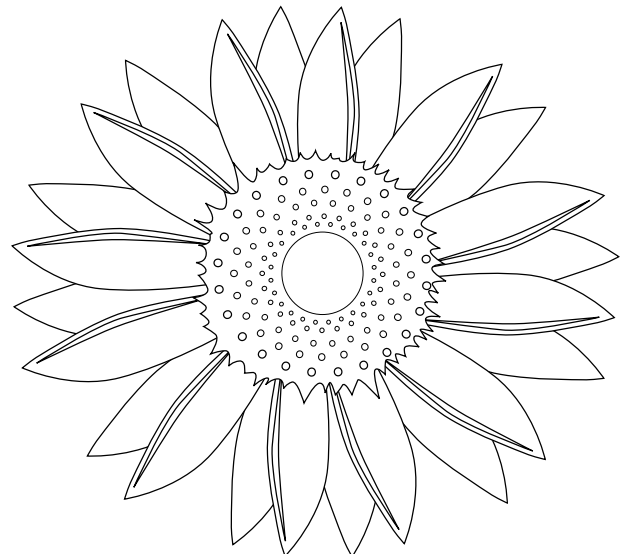


## Barred Tiger Salamander

The barred tiger salamander slithered into the spot of official state amphibian in 1994. These slimy lizard-like amphibians can grow to be 14 inches long, but you may not find them very easily as they live most of their lives underground and only come out at night.

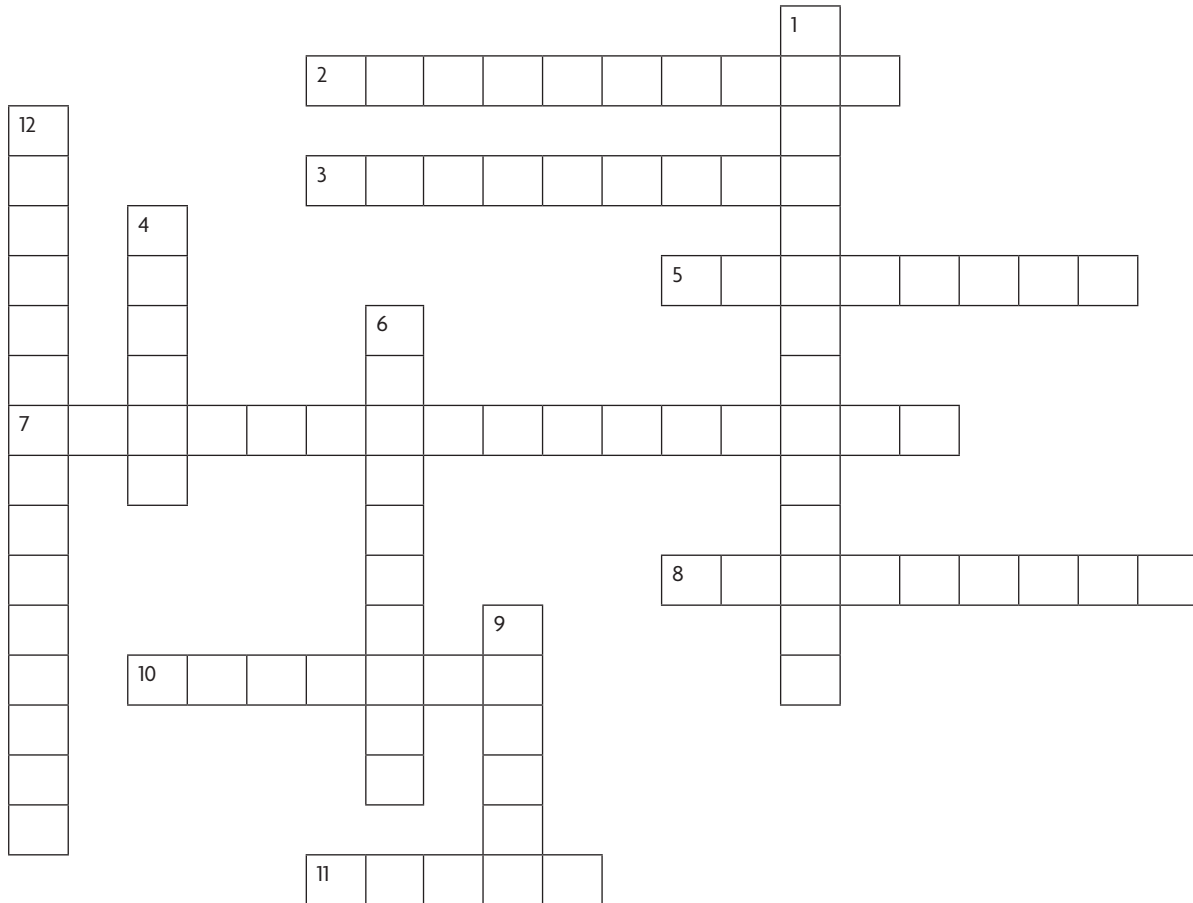
## Wild Native Sunflower

The sunflower is the official state flower of Kansas and has been since 1903. You will spot it on the state quarter and the Kansas flag. It even gives us one of our nicknames: The Sunflower State.



# Kansas crossword puzzle

Use what you've learned to fill in this Kansas crossword! If you don't know an answer, ask an adult for help!!



## Across

2. The state's official tree
3. This state symbol carries its home (2 words)
5. This state symbol makes a sweet treat
7. To the stars through difficulty (4 words)
8. The state insect might visit this
10. The state animal
11. This popular crop gives Kansas one of its nicknames

## Down

1. The state's official song (4 words)
4. The name of our beloved state
6. This bird is protected as our state bird
9. The state capital
12. Slimy state amphibian (2 words)

Solution provided on page 22.



# JoCo city word search

Put your word search skills to the test to find the 19 cities in Johnson County! Look forwards, backwards, up, down and diagonal to find them all!!

C S T Y T W F M M Y L Y J G V P S S L R  
R V L G P O A E E L A E N K M D D H A X  
J O Y L H N R L I D G O K H F Z O A K T  
X A E M I R G H F A I R W A Y T O N E V  
R R T L I H G P R U A M W B S L W N Q G  
N S E A A N N J L P C E V Z H L N O U T  
Y I M N I N G O D E S Q O B A B O N I M  
U P C R D S D N I T A I P J W F I E V W  
L Y P W N R A P W S I W D D N V S K I D  
E S T X T L A O A X S E O H E D S A R U  
N N O Q R T O G E R S I C O E W I L A J  
E S E E G D R E B O K A M F D E M L F K  
X O V X Y H R H T W E L P J O Y O X X V  
A O D C I R U O A X Q P N O T R E G D E  
H W P R A I R I E V I L L A G E Q L L O  
Q L P H F K S R Q V V A N G U F V M L L  
W E S T W O O D H I L L S K Q F Y T Y A  
L P C M X P K T A I V E N R S A K B P T  
H M A M I S S I O N T G U E U Z Z O W H  
L P J D F H Z J K O K P P P I L H G A E

De Soto  
Edgerton  
Fairway  
Gardner  
Lake Quivira  
Leawood  
Lenexa

Merriam  
Mission  
Mission Hills  
Mission Woods  
Olathe  
Overland Park  
Prairie Village

Roeland Park  
Shawnee  
Spring Hill  
Westwood  
Westwood Hills

# Timeline of events

Election Day is certainly an important day, but for folks at the Election Office, it's only one day in a series of important days. Let's walk through the timeline for an election below and learn more about each step of the way!

**SEPT 01**

**Preparation begins**

Ballot preparation begins after the primary election is certified at the state level.

**SEPT 20**

**Military ballots sent**

Military and citizens outside the U.S. are allowed to vote through a federal program. Ballots for these voters are sent 45 days before an election.

**SEPT 23**

**Begin testing equipment**

The Election Office tests every piece of voting equipment prior to being used in an election.

**Nov 04**

**Early voting ends**

State law closes early voting at noon the day before the election. This allows the Election Office to focus on final preparations for the big day!

**Nov 05**

**ELECTION DAY!**

Election Day is the last day for voting in an election. Polling places are open for at least 12 hours to provide ample opportunity for voters.

**Nov 06**

**Select audit precincts**

State law requires precincts to be randomly selected for an audit after Election Day. This is done by drawing them from a bowl!

The timeline shown below is based on the 2024 Presidential Election, but every single election has deadlines like this that are defined by federal and state laws!

**OCT 05**

**Begin worker training**

Training of up to 2,000 election workers requires multiple weeks of classes offered multiple times each day.

**OCT 16**

**Begin mailing ballots**

State law allows the mailing of ballots to voters with an active request beginning 20 days before the election.

**OCT 19**

**Begin early voting**

The Election Office generally opens three Saturdays before the election in big elections and two Saturdays prior to smaller elections.

**Nov 12**

**Handcount audit**

Ballots in the audit are hand counted by bipartisan teams. These totals are used to check that the voting machines counted the votes correctly!

**Nov 18**

**Election certification**

The election is certified at a meeting called a canvass. This process is overseen by county leaders.

**Nov 22**

**Election post-test**

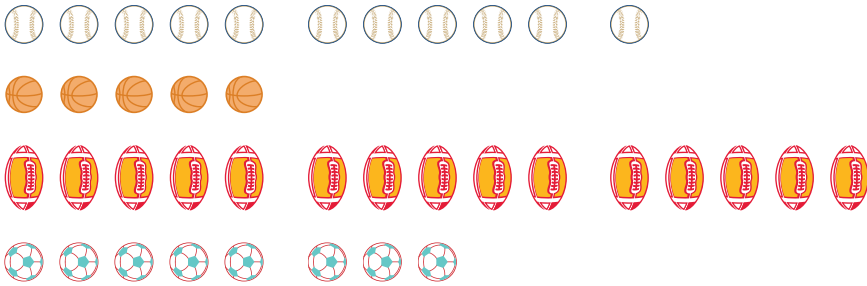
One final test of the election is completed after certification to ensure equipment continues to operate correctly.

# Election audit activity

A hand-count audit is done after every major election in Johnson County. You can practice your auditing skills with the activity below.

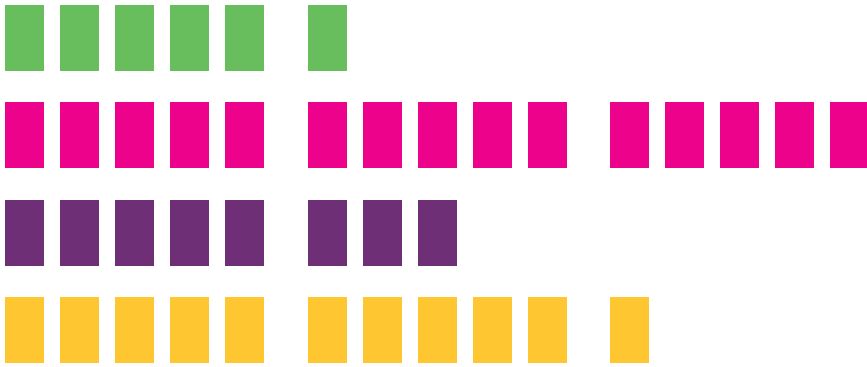
Find a friend to count with you and write your results in the “Audit Count” column. Then give it to an adult to check the results and make sure they match! Take your time and count carefully!

## Favorite sport



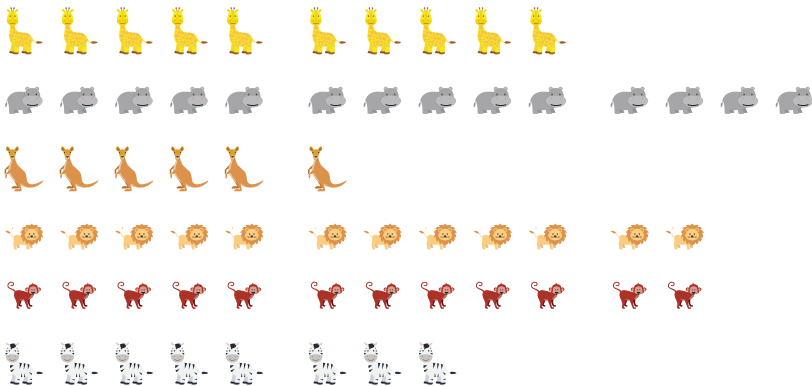
	Audit Count	Votey's Count
Baseball		11
Basketball		5
Football		15
Soccer		8

## Favorite color



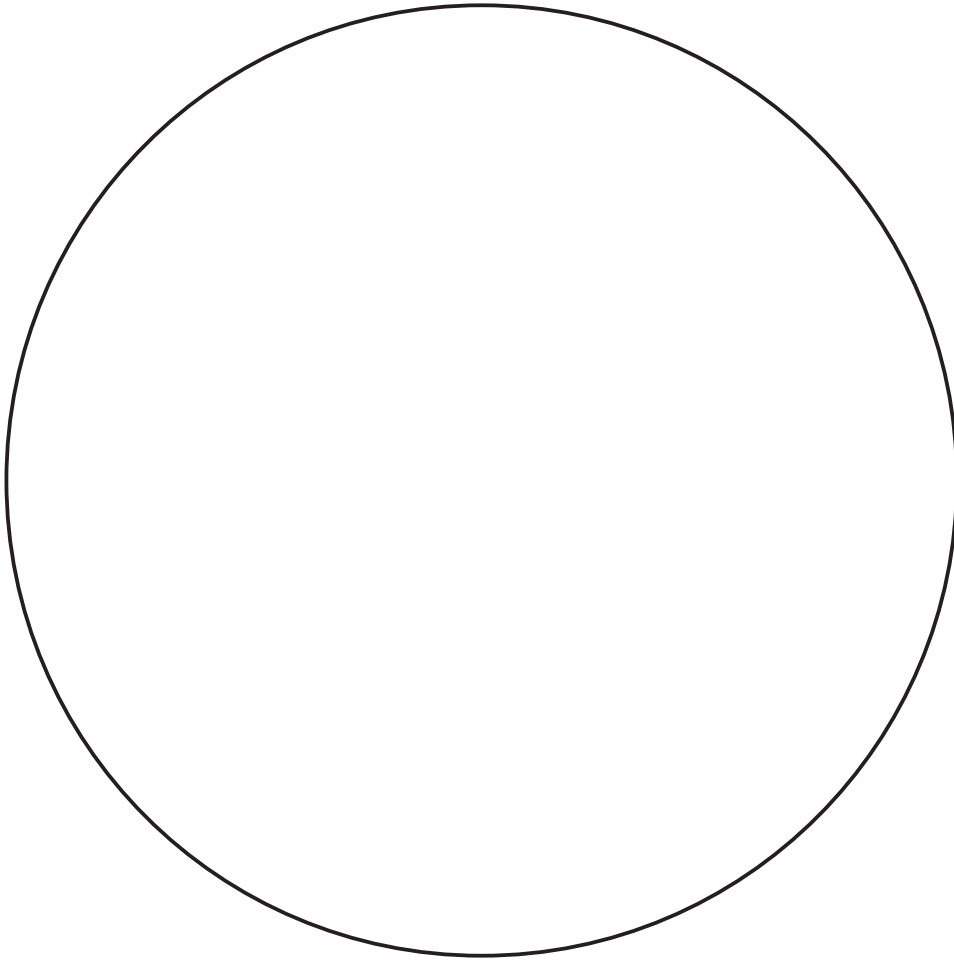
	Audit Count	Votey's Count
Green		6
Pink		15
Purple		8
Yellow		11

## Favorite zoo animal



	Audit Count	Votey's Count
Giraffe		10
Hippo		14
Kangaroo		6
Lion		12
Monkey		12
Zebra		8

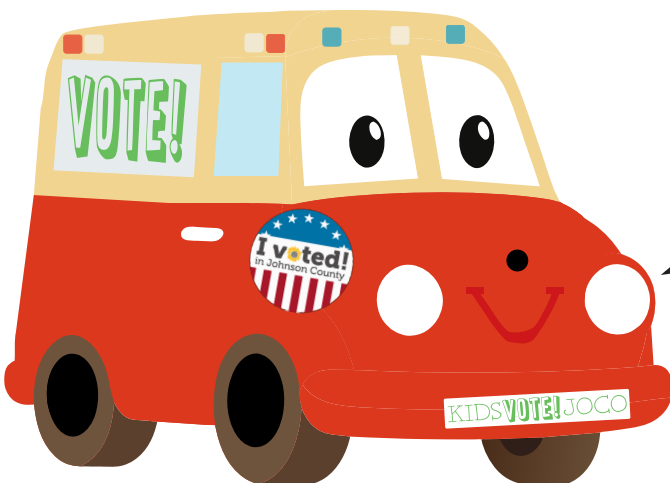
# “I Voted” stickers



“I Voted” stickers are a popular part of voting all across the country. They are a fun way to show that you voted and to remind others to vote, too!

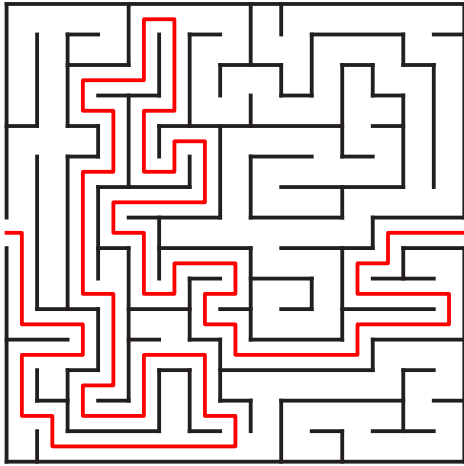
Johnson County has a great “I Voted” sticker, but I bet you can design a great option using your imagination and all the stuff we’ve learned together.

What does voting mean to you now?



# Puzzle solutions

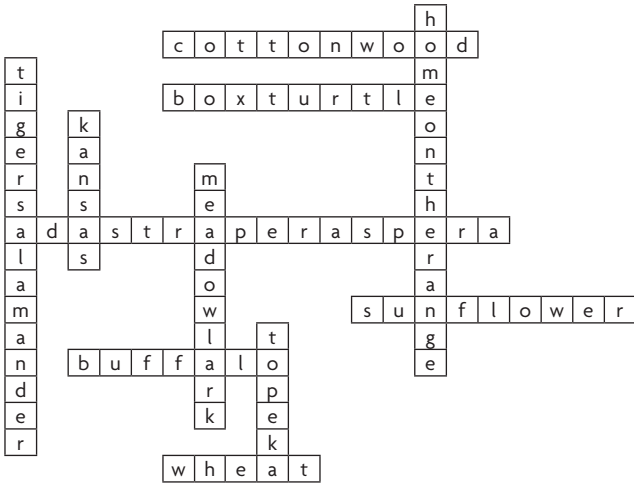
## Help Votey get to his "I Voted" sticker!



## Constitution True/False

- True  False The Constitution was originally adopted by the states on July 4, 1776.
- True False The 26th Amendment lowered the voting age to 18.
- True  False An amendment must be adopted by all the states in order to be added to the Constitution.
- True False The first 10 amendments to the Constitution are collectively called the Bill of Rights.
- True  False The Constitution created five branches of government.
- True False The 19th Amendment granted women the right to vote nationwide.

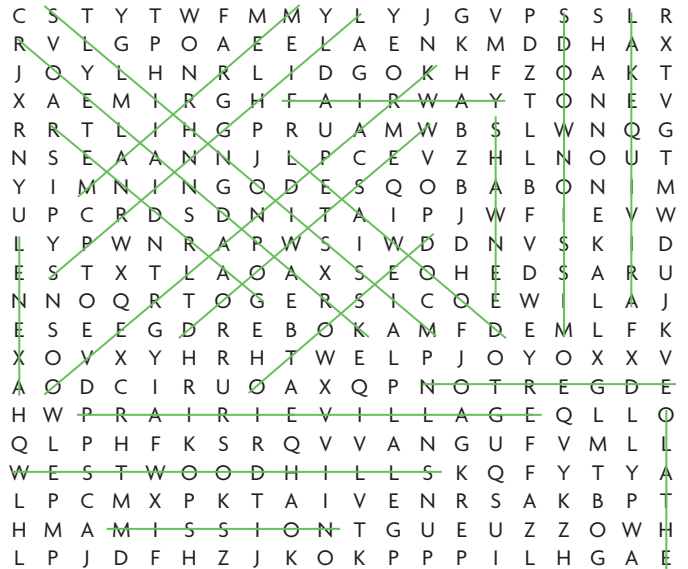
## Kansas crossword



- Across**
- The state's official tree
  - This state symbol carries its home
  - This state symbol makes a sweet treat
  - To the stars through difficulty
  - The state insect might visit this
  - The state animal
  - This popular crop gives Kansas one of its nicknames

- Down**
- The state's official song
  - The name of our beloved state
  - This bird is protected as our state bird
  - The state capital
  - Slimy state amphibian

## JoCo city word search



- |              |                 |                |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| De Soto      | Merriam         | Roeland Park   |
| Edgerton     | Mission         | Shawnee        |
| Fairway      | Mission Hills   | Spring Hill    |
| Gardner      | Mission Woods   | Westwood       |
| Lake Quivira | Olathe          | Westwood Hills |
| Leawood      | Overland Park   |                |
| Lenexa       | Prairie Village |                |

# Election lingo for kids

Elections and voting have a lot of language that you might not use every day. Next time you're watching the news, see if you hear these election-related terms!

<b>Ballot</b>	A paper that contains all the contests, candidates and questions that a person is allowed to vote on.
<b>Candidate</b>	A person running for an elected office.
<b>Early voting</b>	Voting that takes place at special voting locations that are open before Election Day. In Kansas, counties are allowed to open early voting up to 20 days before the election.
<b>Election worker</b>	A person who works at a polling place to support the voting process. You can sign up to be an election worker when you turn 16!
<b>Electoral College</b>	A group of electors who cast votes on behalf of the citizens of a particular state to select the President and Vice President.
<b>General Election</b>	An election where voters choose who they want to elect to a public office. The winner of the General Election gets the job.
<b>Incumbent</b>	A person who is currently in office and is running to stay in that office for another term.
<b>Mail ballot</b>	A ballot that is mailed to a voter so they can mark it at home and return before the election is over. In Kansas, any registered voter is allowed to request a mail ballot.
<b>Photo ID</b>	A card, like a driver's license, that a voter shows to prove who they are when checking in to vote.
<b>Polling place</b>	A building, often a church or community building, that is set up with equipment and workers to allow people to vote.
<b>Primary Election</b>	A special type of election used to narrow down the number of candidates in a contest. The winner(s) of the Primary Election will move forward to the General Election.
<b>Voter registration</b>	The process by which eligible citizens sign up to vote.

JOHNSON COUNTY  
KANSAS

**Election Office**

[www.jocoelection.org](http://www.jocoelection.org) | 913-715-6800