EPISODE 319

How Americans Vote

Full transcript · point of view · vocabulary review

Hi! I'm Georgiana, and I'm back with a new episode. I'm here to help you speak English fluently. And what do you need to speak fluently? You need to LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN, and LISTEN. :)

Ok, let's start!

1. Who Can Vote in the U.S.?

In the United States, you must meet a few requirements to vote:

You must be a U.S. citizen.

You must be 18 years old or older.

You need to **register to vote**.

Some states allow you to register on the day you vote, but in many states, you must register ahead of time.

2. Types of Elections

There are different types of elections in the U.S.:

Presidential Elections: These happen every four years to elect the President.

Midterm Elections: These take place halfway through a President's term every two years.

Local Elections: These can happen every year and include voting for local government positions, like the mayor or city council.

3. How to Vote

Once you're registered, here's how the voting process works:

A. Choose How to Vote

There are three main ways to vote:

Vote in person on **Election** Day – Go to a voting location (called a **polling place**).

Vote early in person – Many states let people vote before Election Day.

Vote by mail – You can send your vote in by mail, but you may need to request a **ballot**.

B. What to Bring

If you're voting in person, check if your state requires you to bring an ID, like a driver's license. Some states require ID, but others do not.

C. Fill Out the Ballot

When you arrive, you'll receive a ballot. The ballot lists all the candidates and questions you can vote on. You mark your choices on the ballot. In most cases, you fill in a bubble or check a box.

D. Submit Your Vote

Once you finish, you'll submit your ballot. Some places have machines that scan it; others have a box where you drop it off. And don't forget, you'll get a sticker that says, "I Voted!" It's a nice way to celebrate and show you participated.

4. Common Vocabulary for Voting

Here are a few important words to know:

Ballot: the paper or form where you mark your vote.

Polling place: the location where you go to vote.

Absentee ballot: a ballot you mail in, often used if you're out of town or can't vote in person.

Candidate: a person running for office, like the President or Senator.

So, voting can feel complicated, but once you know the basics, it's simple. It's a great way to have a say in your community and country.

Now, let's practice.

Point of View

Past & Future

Read the same story in two different points of view and notice how the grammar changes naturally.

First version

Present Tense - Hannah's Viewpoint

Hi! I'm Hannah, and today is a big, emotional day for me—it's my first time voting in the U.S. As I stand in line, clutching my **voter ID**, I feel a mix of nerves and pride.

All around me, people are chatting, some with serious expressions, others laughing with friends. There's this shared feeling in the air—like we all know we're doing something important together.

An older man in front of me turns around. He gives me a gentle smile. "First time?" he asks softly. I nod, and he pats my shoulder. "You'll remember this. I've been voting for decades, and it always matters." His words comfort me. I take a deep breath and feel my nerves settle.

When it's my turn, I step up to the check-in desk. The **poll worker** smiles warmly as she hands me my ballot. "Good luck in there," she says with a wink. I walk over to a small booth, feeling the weight of the moment. The ballot in front of me is more than paper—it's my voice, my chance to make a difference. I carefully mark my choices, each stroke of the pen filling me with a sense of purpose.

With my ballot complete, I head to the machine to cast my vote. My hands tremble a bit as I slide it in. The machine lights up, and a poll worker claps quietly. "Congratulations! You did it."

Second version

Past Tense - Third Person

Hannah had a big, emotional day—it was her first time voting in the U.S. As she stood in line, clutching her voter ID, she felt a mix of nerves and pride. All around her, people were chatting, some with serious expressions, others laughing with friends. There was a shared feeling in the air—like everyone knew they were doing something important together.

An older man in front of her turned around and gave her a gentle smile. “First time?” he asked softly. She nodded, and he patted her shoulder. “You’ll remember this. I’ve been voting for decades, and it always matters.” His words comforted her. She took a deep breath and felt her nerves settle.

When it was her turn, she stepped up to the check-in desk. The poll worker smiled warmly as she handed her a ballot. “Good luck in there,” she said with a wink. Hannah walked over to a small booth, feeling the weight of the moment. The ballot in front of her was more than paper—it was her voice, her chance to make a difference. She carefully marked her choices, each stroke of the pen filling her with a sense of purpose.

With her ballot complete, she headed to the machine to cast her vote. Her hands trembled a bit as she slid it in. The machine lit up, and a poll worker clapped quietly. “Congratulations! You did it.”

Thanks for listening, and I’ll see you in the next episode.

Review

Vocabulary from This Episode

Review the most useful words and expressions before listening again.

01 **eligible voter** a person legally allowed to vote.	05 **voter ID** identification used to confirm a voter's identity.
02 **register to vote** officially add your name to the list of voters.	06 **poll worker** a person who helps operate a polling place.
03 **polling place** the location where people vote.	07 **cast a vote** officially submit your choice in an election.
04 **ballot** the paper or electronic form used to record a vote.	08 **election** the process of choosing a person or policy by voting.

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