

What to Say: Effective GOTV Conversations

Connect With the Voter

<p><i>Emphasize a connection with the voter or that you are a local.</i></p>	<p>Hi, I'm [name].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I've seen you in my history class. • I'm your neighbor over on Dover Street. • I'm from the local League of Women Voters.
<p><i>Include a personal story somewhere in the conversation.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I remember my first time voting. I had just turned 18 and was... • I usually vote on my lunch hour at a polling place close to where I work because that's what's convenient for me. What will work for you? • I dressed up as a suffragist, hat and all, and took my 9-year-old twins with me to the polling place last election.
<p><i>End with a tie-in to the voter.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The last thing I want to ask is, "Do you have any questions for me about voting?" • So I have you down for voting on [day & date] over at [location] and I'll follow-up with you by [telephone, text, post card].

Focus on Voting, Not Issues or Candidates

- I'm out talking with [students, neighbors, people in the park, the kind of people who vote] about [the upcoming election, voting, voter registration]. Do you have a minute?
- I'm calling you today because you are the kind of person who votes. I won't take much of your time, but I want to make sure that you have everything you need to know about voting in the upcoming election.
- I'm out here today collecting reasons why people vote. Do you have a few minutes to talk to me?
 - What makes voting important for you?
 - On a scale of 0 to 10, how likely are you to vote election? Great, we're collecting reasons people vote -- what made you say [response] rather than 2? (or 0, if they said 3 or below)
 - On a scale from 0 to 10, 0 being I'm never, ever going to vote; 5 being I might vote, might not; and 10 being I'm a super-voter, I'm always going to vote and I'm definitely voting this time, what number describes you?...And why did you say [response] instead of a 2?...Well, the fact that you think voting is important is totally awesome and I completely agree.

Use Gentle Social Pressure

<p><i>Be positive.</i></p> <p><i>Acknowledge the anticipatory rewards of Early Voting.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your [classmates, neighbors, etc.] have been telling me that they are definitely voting in this election. Do you plan on voting? • We're expecting a high turnout this election. • This is going to be a close election, so being a voter is very important in the outcome. • Voting early shows your commitment to being a voter and lets you anticipate the outcome without worrying how you'll make it to the polls on a busy Tuesday. And you'll be bothered by fewer phone calls!⁴
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<i>Let them know that others are paying attention to their vote.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I see from public records that you were a voter in the last presidential election but not the last local election or the midterm before that. Will you be a voter this time? • The public voter rolls show that you are a reliable voter. • I see you were a voter last time. Thank you for being a responsible citizen! • Congratulations on being a first-time voter! Remember that <u>who</u> you vote for is secret, but <u>whether</u> you vote goes in the public record.
<i>Ask for a voting commitment.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will you mail in your voter registration form this week? • Can I count on you being a voter? • Can your [<i>classmates, neighbors, etc.</i>] count on you to join them at the polls this election? • Because you think voting is important, would you mind signing this pledge to vote?
<i>Indicate how you will follow-up.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's the best number to reach you for a get-out-the-vote reminder? Would you like a call or a text? • I'll remind you to vote by mailing you your pledge card shortly before Election Day. • I'll call you after the election to see how it went. Who you vote for is secret, but I'd like to know how it went for you at the polling place.

Help Make a Plan for Voting

<i>Think through the steps of voting.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think you'll vote by mail, vote early, or vote on Election Day? • Do you know where your polling place is? • What day do you plan to vote? When will you go? • Where will you be coming from? How will you get there? • Will you go by yourself or with someone else?
<i>Get ready to vote.</i>	<p>Many people I've been talking to want more information about the candidates on the ballot. Can I help you with that?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you know about VOTE411? (Explain) • Do you prefer a printed voters guide? (Explain how to get one) • The League is holding a nonpartisan candidate forum.... • These websites provide helpful information.... (Provide state or local social media card)

Talking Around Excuses⁵

<i>My vote doesn't count</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even in Texas we have close elections (give example). • Not voting definitely doesn't count. • Your vote is your voice. Even if it's not on the winning side, it can show there is another opinion. • Votes count most in local elections and party primaries when there are fewer people voting.
<i>I don't have time.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you vote on a Saturday or Sunday? • Early voting offers additional times to vote, even on weekends, and you can generally avoid long lines.
<i>I'm not well enough informed.</i>	<p>Figuring out what's on the ballot and whom to vote for can be mind-boggling, but there are some shortcuts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you know about VOTE411? (Explain) • Check out candidate websites, but remember they are biased. • Ask your friends to help, and share the information. • The League is holding a nonpartisan candidates forum....

<i>I don't like any of the candidates.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not voting lets others decide for you. • No matter how you feel, one has to be closer to your views than another. • Not voting benefits the one you least want elected. • Voting in primaries helps choose the candidates.
<i>I'm protesting against the system.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And those in power appreciate your support for the status quo.

Example Conversations

Hi, I'm Karina ... I'm out here today for the local League of Women Voters just collecting reasons why people vote. Do you have a few minutes to talk to me? ... So, on a scale from 0 to 10, 0 being I'm never, ever going to vote; 5 being I might vote, might not, and 10 being I'm a super-voter, I'm always going to vote and I'm definitely voting in this election, what number describes you? ... And why did you say a 6 instead of a 2? ... Well, the fact that you think voting is important is totally awesome, and I completely agree. Because of that, would you mind taking a pledge to vote? ... Can you just fill this out for me? [*Hand pledge card*] And if it's ok with you, we'd love to send you a text reminder before Election Day to vote. ... Thank you so much.¹

Hi, I'm Becca, your neighbor over on Pine Street. And I'm just out today talking with neighbors about the upcoming election. Do you have a minute? ... The neighbors have been telling me that they are definitely going to vote in this election. Do you plan on being a voter? ... Do you know where to vote? [*Check/confirm polling place.*] For me, I usually go on my lunch break because that works for me. Do you know what time you'll be voting? ... A tip if you don't mind, just set your alarm a little early so it gives you some extra time. The official record shows that you voted in 2012 and 2016, but not in 2014. Can I count on you being a voter this year? ... The last thing I have is: Do you have any questions about voting? ... So we have you down for voting in the morning on [*day*] at [*location*] and we'll follow up with you after the election just to see how it went. Thanks for your time.¹

Can we count on you being a voter on or before Election Day?

If yes: Great!...it sounds like a lot of people in [*community*] will be voting this year. It's an important election, and we're so excited that you'll have the chance to stand up for our community by casting a vote. Can I remind you of your polling place? Do you know when you might go to vote on Tuesday? In the morning, afternoon, evening? Do you have a plan for getting there?^{6,p21}

If no: OK, what other information can I provide to you to help make voting a little easier? I'd be happy to tell you a little more about what to expect at the polls....^{6,p21}

30-second elevator speech: I've been hearing a lot about the upcoming election. I'm voting because I know my vote is my voice. How important is it for you to be a voter this election? ... Early voting is going on now. What are your plans for going to the polls? ... Can I count on you being a voter in this election?^{7,8,9}

Sources

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