

ELECTION SELF- REFLECTION GUIDE



"...FOSTER INDIVIDUAL AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY..."

A TIME TO ENGAGE

Positive Civic Engagement Requires Reflection on Both The "Me" and The "We"

At the University of Alabama's **Crossroads Civic Engagement Center**, we know that civic discourse is fundamental to a thriving democratic society at the Capstone and beyond. However, through our work with student and community dialogue programs on the most challenging topics of the day, we also know that there is a time and place for "talking politics."

In moments of elevated emotions and division amongst neighbors (as in the case of contentious national elections), it is easy to forget that we all need personal space to process events and thoughts as individuals. This self-reflection is especially important before entering into community conversations about politics or any other challenging topic. We believe that positive civic engagement requires reflection on **both** the *me* and the *we*.

As such, UA Crossroads recommends processing national elections in two stages:

- 1** Consider the questions *and types of questions* included in this **reflection guide for individuals**. Reaffirm your own personal values and the hopes you have for your community and the nation.
 - 2** Once there has been time for reflection, it may be time for engagement. However, positive civic discourse requires intention and practice. UA Crossroads offers a collection of **tools and guides for group dialogue** at the online locations listed below.
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Election Self-Reflection Guide

Quick Guide:

Start Here

- Describe your emotions on election night.
- Now that Election Day is over, what are your primary fears related to our American democracy?
- Now that Election Day is over, what are your primary hopes related to our American democracy?
- What surprised you about this election cycle?
- Which of your assumptions were challenged by this election?

Community and Isolation

- In 2016, one in six Americans stopped talking to a friend or family member due to politics. How have your relationships been impacted by the election season?
- Since 2020, one of our major societal themes has been "isolation." In what ways has this election season made you feel isolated?
- In what ways has this election season made you feel more connected to your community or society?
- One chief executive and members of Congress are charged with a responsibility to all in our U.S. society. As a member of the "body politic," what is your responsibility to your fellow Americans?
- What is one thing you wish your fellow Americans understood about you today?
- What is one thing you wish you understood more about your fellow Americans?

Moving Forward

- How has your understanding of "democracy" changed this year?
- What is one issue that you hope will not be forgotten after this election season is over?
- The electoral process allows for an occasional demonstration of power on the part of "We the People." What are other ways that you can engage in democracy moving forward?
- Many representatives and civic leaders were elected to positions of power in the recent election. If you were in a room with all of them, what would you tell them?
- What will you do today, and moving forward, to build a stronger community and democratic society for everyone?

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What will you do today, and moving forward, to build a stronger community and democratic society for everyone? _____

WHAT'S NEXT?

DIALOGUE IS FUNDAMENTAL TO A THRIVING DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

After personal reflection on your own experiences, you may be ready to enter into dialogue with others. Civic dialogue is crucial for our democracy to work, but it requires intention and practice. The **Resource Library**, hosted online by Crossroads Civic Engagement Center, includes helpful tools and links including:

- **Introductory videos on the fundamentals of Campus Dialogues**
- **Sample Group Norms**
- **Dialogue A.C.T.S Questions**
- **Question crafting guide**
- **Dialogue Guides on major topics of the day**
- **Civic action resources**
- **Resources from campus partners**

For these dialogue and civic engagement resources, visit www.crossroads.ua.edu