

## Personal Archive Prompt: Item that Communicates Your Experience with the 2020 Election/s

This prompt asks you to identify an item that communicates your experience with the 2020 Elections to include in your PA. Unlike other prompts that ask you to choose a particular *type* of item (self-portrait, map, article of clothing), here the type of item is entirely your choice. **Mark for yourself (and your viewer/reader) how have I experienced the election/s of 2020 (April 2020 and November 2020)?**

**IMPORTANT:** You are in **NO WAY** compelled to disclose if/how/who you voted for. This prompt is intended to help you think through the items, practices, choices, and conversations **AROUND** the election/s.

[Be sure to scan/take a photograph of the item to include as the item in your papers.]

### Why the 2020 Election/s?

Exercising our right to vote is an important way of engaging in the democratic process. However, voting rights have not always been secured for all and efforts to suppress voting and disenfranchise remain alive and well. Be it a midterm election, a primary election, a presidential election, or a school board election -- the results of any election have very real and direct bearing on the lives of individual people.

In our collective memory, the elections of 2020 (including the primary elections in April 2020 and the Presidential election in November 2020) seem to have no match, in terms of what the stakes are. Discourse on the large and public scale compels us, more than ever, to consider who can vote, who will vote, and what their motivations for doing so might be.

With these ideas in mind, think carefully about what item you choose that communicates your experience with the protests, etc. Consider the following to help you choose and describe your item:

- In what way/s have I participated in the lead-up to the election/s (e.g. with campaigns, phone banking, seeking out information online, engaging in conversation with others)?
- If I was able, how/why/when/in what way (meaning in-person or by mail or dropbox) did I cast my vote? Why did I choose this?
- Are there any items I use (like clothing, signs, buttons, stickers) that signal my alliance how and why I chose to vote, and vote in the way I did?

The answers to these questions should help you compose the description of the item.

After you create/identify your image, follow the directions under the heading [How to Complete Personal Archive Prompts] in the document [Introduction for Students: The Personal Archive Assignment].

### Example from the Archives



*Instructor's Choice: insert an example from an institutionally affiliated archive or archive of your choice. Alternately, use the example below.*

Examples below come from the (very recently digitized!) collection [Milwaukee Socialism: The Emil Seidel Era](#)

- [Voter Inspection Card](#)
- [Socialist Party Platform Demands, 1922](#)
- [Socialist Party State Platform](#)

More about the collection: Socialists in Milwaukee enjoyed extraordinary success at the ballot box in the twentieth century, including a record of three socialist mayors. Emil Seidel served as mayor from 1910-1912 and became [Eugene Debs' running mate](#) when Debs ran for president in 1912. [Victor Berger](#) became the first socialist to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, in 1910. [Daniel Hoan](#), the second socialist mayor, led the city from 1916-1940 and was praised by non-socialists for his fiscal leadership and public health achievements. [Frank P. Zeidler](#), the city's third socialist mayor, was elected at the dawn of the Cold War, in 1948, and served three terms in office before deciding not to run for re-election in 1960.

This digital resource offers an introduction to some of the rich materials related to the history of socialist politics in Milwaukee contained in the collections of the UWM Archives. Our collections are focused especially on Milwaukee's first socialist mayor, Emil Seidel. This digital collection includes the entirety of Seidel's personal papers, his official papers from his time serving as Mayor of Milwaukee, and his unpublished autobiography. Additionally, the digital collection includes selections from the UWM Special Collections' monographs by and about the Milwaukee Turners (paragraphs above from the collection landing page).

