Q: If I vote straight-ticket on my ballot can I also vote in individual races?

Voting the straight-ticket portion of a ballot is optional.

Straight-ticket voting is a choice at the top of the ballot that automatically votes for every candidate for the party selected. However, a voter can decide to vote the straight-party option *and* for candidates in individual races.

Their choice for an individual race overrides the party choice in the straight ticket section if a voter picks a candidate from a different party than the party chosen at the top.

However, casting a straight-ticket ballot doesn't mean a voter's work is complete. There are plenty of nonpartisan races, including Michigan Supreme Court seats and city and village offices, as well as ballot proposals that aren't covered by straight-ticket votes.

The rules for general elections, like the one coming up on Nov. 5, are different than those for primary elections.

In primary elections, candidates are running against people within their own parties to determine which candidate or candidates will move on to the general election and run against candidates from other parties. That's why primary voters have to stick to a certain party.

In the general election, voters can choose people from different parties for different races. They could choose a Republican for County Commission, a Democrat for the state House, a Green Party candidate for prosecutor and a Libertarian for president.