

## Voting Rights

**Time Needed:** One class period

**Materials Needed:** Student worksheets, PowerPoint (paper option also available)

**Copy Instructions:**  
Student Materials (*class set; double-sided*)

**Learning Objectives** Students will be able to:

- Identify the laws and amendments that altered U.S. voting laws
- Identify obstacles to voting
- Describe the role of Susan B. Anthony in securing women's right to vote
- Determine whether individuals living at various times in U.S. history would have been able to vote

## STEP BY STEP

- ☐ **ANTICIPATE** the lesson by asking the following question stream: "Have you ever voted in some kind of election or contest? When and for what? Were there rules for who could vote? Why do we have rules for voting?" (if they are struggling mention American Idol, Student Council, etc.)
- ☐ **DISTRIBUTE** the *So you think you can VOTE?* student worksheet
- ☐ **REVIEW** the instructions and structure of the student worksheet.
- ☐ **RUN** the *So you think you can VOTE?* PowerPoint. Read through the slide show with the students, asking any relevant questions that come up.
  - ☐ **OPTIONAL:** Ask the students to identify the message or content of the images provided. (Poll tax political cartoon, woman with newspaper, etc.) Ask, "What can we learn from the image that helps us with the facts on the slide?"

**PAPER ALTERNATIVE:** You may use the Voting Rights Chart to support or replace the information in the PowerPoint presentation.
- ☐ **MONITOR** that all students are actively filling in their worksheets as the slide show progresses.
- ☐ **REVIEW** Voting Rights chart and instructions for 'Do They Have the Right to Vote?' independent assignment. Read through the example question together.
- ☐ **ASSIGN** the completion of the worksheet.

# Voting Rights

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



**So you think you can VOTE?** Different groups gained the right to vote throughout the history of the United States. Keep track of the details below.



**In colonial times** and during the early years of our country, men had to prove that they owned \_\_\_\_\_ in order to be able to vote. Where did this idea come from?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**All adult men** were guaranteed the right to vote in the year \_\_\_\_\_, when the \_\_\_\_\_ Amendment was passed. Who could now vote? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Women** were guaranteed the right to vote in the year \_\_\_\_\_, when the \_\_\_\_\_ Amendment was passed. Which state gave women the vote first? \_\_\_\_\_ When was that? \_\_\_\_\_

**American Indians** were given U.S. citizenship and the right to vote in the year \_\_\_\_\_, when the president signed the \_\_\_\_\_ . Who was the president at that time? \_\_\_\_\_

**Residents of the District of Columbia**, our nation's capital, gained the right to vote in presidential elections in the year \_\_\_\_\_ when the \_\_\_\_\_ Amendment was passed.

Although the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment said that race could not keep men from voting, **some states prevented African Americans from voting**. Name three barriers:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

The Civil Rights Movement brought changes to the voting laws and practices in the U.S. What did the 24th Amendment ban in 1964? \_\_\_\_\_ What was passed in 1965? \_\_\_\_\_

The Constitution changed **the voting age** from **21** to \_\_\_\_\_ when the \_\_\_\_\_ Amendment was passed in 1971. Which war influenced this change? \_\_\_\_\_

# Voting Rights

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Do they have the right to vote?** Use today's lesson and the voting rights chart to decide whether or not each person can vote and to state the reasons behind your decision.

Hi! I'm Mike. I am 17 years old and live in Illinois in 2011. Can I vote?



☐ **YES!**

☒ **NO!**

1. How do you know? Describe the law or amendment that determines Mike's voting rights.

Mike is too young! The 26th Amendment made it legal for 18 year olds to vote, but Mike is only 17.

2. How do you know? Describe the law or amendment that determines Shari's voting rights.

My name is Shari. I am 63, I live in Indiana, and the year is 1998. Can I vote?

☐ **YES!**

☐ **NO!**



Good day, I'm John! I am a poor man living in Rhode Island in 1792. Can I vote?



☐ **YES!**

☐ **NO!**

3. How do you know? Describe the law or amendment that determines John's voting rights.

4. How do you know? Describe the law or amendment that determines Smith's voting rights?

My name is Smith. I live in Alabama in the year 1955. I can read, but I live in poverty. Can I vote?

☐ **YES!**

☐ **NO!**



Hi! I'm Lea. I am 35 and live on the Cherokee reservation in North Carolina in 1987. Can I vote?



☐ **YES!**

☐ **NO!**

5. How do you know? Describe the laws or amendments that determine Lea's voting rights.

# Voting Rights

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Do they have the right to vote?** Use today's lesson and the voting rights chart to decide whether or not each person can vote and to state the reasons behind your decision.

My name is Mary. It is 1962 and I live in D.C. and would like to vote for the President. Can I?



☐ **YES!**

☐ **NO!**

6. How do you know? Describe the law or amendment that determines Mary's voting rights.

7. How do you know? Describe the law or amendment that determines Steve's voting rights.

I'm Steve. It is 1972, and I turned 18 while fighting in Vietnam. Can I vote?

☐ **YES!**

☐ **NO!**



I am, Marvin, a wealthy land owner in Maine. It is 1815. Can I vote?



☐ **YES!**

☐ **NO!**

8. How do you know? Describe the law or amendment that determines Marvin's voting rights.

9. How do you know? Describe the laws or amendments that determine Susan's voting rights. Be careful on this one!

I am Susan. It is 1880, and I am a former slave living in Wisconsin. Can I vote?

☐ **YES!**

☐ **NO!**



I'm just a kid and can't vote yet. But, I bet you could help me with my homework. I learned that early in U.S. history, only male landowners could vote. Is this true?



☐ **YES!**

☐ **NO!**

10. Where did the colonists get the idea that only male land owners should vote?



# Voting Rights

**\*\*TEACHER GUIDE \*\***



**So you think you can VOTE?** Different groups gained the right to vote throughout the history of the United States. Keep track of the details below.



**In colonial times** and during the early years of our country, men had to prove that they owned property/ land in order to be able to vote. Where did this idea come from? English laws and customs

**All adult men** were guaranteed the right to vote in the year 1870, when the 15th Amendment was passed. Who could now vote? African American men

**Women** were guaranteed the right to vote in the year 1920, when the 19th Amendment was passed. Which state gave women the vote first? Wyoming  
When was that? 1869

**American Indians** were given U.S. citizenship and the right to vote in the year 1924, when the president signed the Indian Citizenship Act. Who was the president at that time? President Calvin Coolidge

**Residents of the District of Columbia**, our nation's capital, gained the right to vote in presidential elections in the year 1961 when the 23rd Amendment was passed.

Although the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment said that race could not keep men from voting, **some states prevented African Americans from voting**. Name three barriers:

1. literacy tests
2. grandfather clause
3. the poll tax

The **Civil Rights Movement** brought changes to the voting laws and practices in the U.S. What did the 24th Amendment ban in 1964? poll taxes What was passed in 1965? Voting Rights Act

The Constitution **changed the voting age from 21** to 18 when the 26th Amendment was passed in 1971. Which war influenced this change? The Vietnam War

# Voting Rights

**\*\*TEACHER GUIDE \*\***

**Do they have the right to vote?** Use today's lesson and the voting rights chart to decide whether or not each person can vote and to state the reasons behind your decision.

Hi! I'm Mike. I am 17 years old and live in Illinois in 2011. Can I vote?



☐ **YES!**

☒ **NO!**

1. How do you know? Describe the law or amendment that determines Mike's voting rights.

Mike is too young! The 26th Amendment made it legal for 18 year olds to vote, but Mike is only 17.

2. How do you know? Describe the law or amendment that determines Shari's voting rights.

The 19th Amendment was passed in 1920 and gave women the right to vote.

My name is Shari. I am 63, I live in Indiana, and the year is 1998. Can I vote?

☒ **YES!**

☐ **NO!**



Good day, I'm John! I am a poor man living in Rhode Island in 1792. Can I vote?



☐ **YES!**

☒ **NO!**

3. How do you know? Describe the law or amendment that determines John's voting rights.

John needs to own land to be able to vote in 1792. States didn't start to lift the property requirement until the 1820s

4. How do you know? Describe the law or amendment that determines Smith's voting rights?

Smith would have been required to pay a poll tax, but could not have afforded it. The 24th Amendment did not ban the poll tax until 1964.

My name is Smith. I live in Alabama in the year 1955. I can read, but I live in poverty. Can I vote?

☐ **YES!**

☒ **NO!**



Hi! I'm Lea. I am 35 and live on the Cherokee reservation in North Carolina in 1987. Can I vote?



☒ **YES!**

☐ **NO!**

5. How do you know? Describe the laws or amendments that determine Lea's voting rights.

The Indian Citizenship Act made Native Americans citizens and gave them voting rights in 1924. The 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote in 1920.

# Voting Rights

**\*\*TEACHER GUIDE \*\***

**Do they have the right to vote?** Use today's lesson and the voting rights chart to decide whether or not each person can vote and to state the reasons behind your decision.

My name is Mary. It is 1962 and I live in D.C. and would like to vote for the President. Can I?



☒ **YES!**

☐ **NO!**

6. How do you know? Describe the law or amendment that determines Mary's voting rights.

DC residents got the right to vote in presidential elections in 1961 with the 23rd Amendment. Women began voting in 1920 with the 19th Amendment in 1920.

7. How do you know? Describe the law or amendment that determines Steve's voting rights.

The 26th Amendment moved the minimum voting age from 21 to 18 in 1971.

I'm Steve. It is 1972, and I turned 18 while fighting in Vietnam. Can I vote?

☒ **YES!**

☐ **NO!**



I am, Marvin, a wealthy land owner in Maine. It is 1815. Can I vote?



☒ **YES!**

☐ **NO!**

8. How do you know? Describe the law or amendment that determines Marvin's voting rights.

Marvin could vote because state laws **ONLY** allowed male landowners to vote prior to the 1820's.

9. How do you know? Describe the laws or amendments that determine Susan's voting rights. Be careful on this one!

Although former slaves were allowed to vote by the 15th Amendment in 1870, Women didn't get to vote until 1920 with the 19th Amendment.

I am Susan. It is 1880, and I am a former slave living in Wisconsin. Can I vote?

☐ **YES!**

☒ **NO!**



I'm just a kid and can't vote yet. But, I bet you could help me with my homework. I learned that early in U.S. history, only male landowners could vote. Is this true?



☒ **YES!**

☐ **NO!**

10. Where did the colonists get the idea that only male land owners should vote?

Colonists and early Americans got their ideas about voting from English law and custom. They believed that landowners were responsible enough to make political decisions.

## Voting Rights: A Brief History

GROUP OF AMERICANS	DATE	LAW OR AMENDMENT	FACTOID
Adult White Men with Property	Colonial Times	Traditional <i>English Law</i> and Custom	Many believed only landowners were responsible enough to make political decisions.
	1789	<i>The Constitution</i> gave the states the power to decide who could vote.	The Founding Fathers couldn't agree on rules for voting, so they passed the responsibility on to the states.
All White Adult Men	1820s-1880s	<i>State Constitutions</i> lifted the property requirement over a period of 60 years.	Thomas Paine supported ending the property requirement, while John Adams feared 'mob rule' without it.
All Adult Men	1870	<i>15th Amendment</i> : voting shall not be denied on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.	This was one of three 'Civil War Amendments' granting freedom and rights to ex-slaves. Later, many state laws, called Jim Crow Laws, were passed to undermine them.
Women	1920	<i>19th Amendment</i> : voting shall not be denied an account of sex	Women could vote in Wyoming by 1869, but it took the work of Susan B. Anthony and many others to get the amendment passed to extend this right nationwide.
Native Americans	1924	<i>Indian Citizenship Act</i> : gave native peoples the rights and privileges of American citizenship	Previously, Native Americans were not considered Americans, but rather members of their own tribal governments.
Residents of Washington, DC	1961	<i>23rd Amendment</i> : DC residents can vote for the president and have electoral votes based on population, as long as the number is less than the least populous state.	Washington, DC is not a state and only has a non-voting representative in Congress. Before the 23rd Amendment, these citizens could NOT vote for the President!
All American Citizens	1964	<i>24th Amendment</i> : banned the use of poll taxes in elections	A poll tax was one of many restrictions placed on African Americans' voting rights in the Jim Crow South.
All American Citizens	1965	<i>Voting Rights Act</i> : further protected the voting rights of all Americans by reinforcing the 15th Amendment.	This act outlawed voting practices used to discriminate against African Americans, like literacy tests and voter intimidation.
Citizens 18 years old and up	1971	<i>26th Amendment</i> : citizens who are 18 years of age or older cannot be denied the right to vote on account of age	In the 1960s and '70s thousands of young men were drafted to fight in the Vietnam War. Many were too young to vote. Supporters of this amendment chanted, "Old enough to fight, old enough to vote!"