

# VOTING RIGHTS

High School level

Grade	Strand	Standard	Code	Benchmark
9	Citizenship and Government	Civil Skills	9.1.1.2	Demonstrate the skills necessary to participate in the election process.
9	Citizenship and Government	Governmental Institutions and Political Processes	9.1.4.5	Analyze how the United States political system is shaped by elections and the election process and procedures involved in voting.

Core Concept: How does the government protect each citizen's right to vote and thus our ability to participate in our democracy?

## Preliminary Activities

- Use the following links to read about the three important cases relating to voting rights:
  - Minor v. Happersett, 88 U.S. 162 (1874):  
<https://www.britannica.com/event/Minor-v-Happersett>
  - United States v. Reese, 92 U.S. 214 (1875):  
<https://www.oyez.org/cases/1850-1900/92us214>
  - Shelby County v. Holder, 570 U.S. 529 (2013):  
<https://www.oyez.org/cases/2012/12-96>
- Read the text of the Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution here: <https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-15/>
- Read the text of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution here: <https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-19/>
- Read a summary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 here: <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/voting-rights-act>

## Discussion Questions

1. What specific problems did the Voting Rights Act seek to fix?

2. In Shelby County, the majority of the Court held that the federal oversight provision of the Voting Rights Act was unconstitutional as no longer necessary. Do you agree?
3. Why did four of the justices dissent in Shelby County? Do you agree with their arguments?
4. Why do you think some states try to place restrictions on citizens' voting rights?
5. Are there restrictions that you think should be required to prevent fraud in elections? Would those restrictions pass muster under the Fifteenth or Nineteenth Amendments and the Voting Right Act?
6. Discuss ways to prevent widespread voter fraud while ensuring citizens' ability to vote.
7. What do you think would happen to the voting rights of black people and women if there were no Fifteenth or Nineteenth Amendments?
8. Do you think the rules regarding voting should be the same in every state?
9. Does what you've learned about voting rights make you more or less excited to vote in an election? Why or why not?