

VOTING RIGHTS

Middle School level

Grade	Strand	Standard	Code	Benchmark
7	Citizenship and Government	Governmental Institutions and Political Processes	7.1.4.1	Describe how laws are created. Classify the differences between civil, criminal, tribal and juvenile law.
7	History	Historical Sources and Evidence	7.4.20.1	Use historical sources to describe the strategies used by suffragists in their campaigns to secure the right to vote.

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 does the term "voting rights" mean to you?

2. What do you think would happen to voting rights for women or Black people if there were no Fifteenth or Nineteenth Amendments?
3. What are some reasons you think the government may want to place restrictions on voting rights, e.g., requiring state-issued identification at the polling place?
4. What kinds of limits do you think the government should be able to place on voting rights?
5. Discuss ways to prevent widespread voter fraud while ensuring each citizen's ability to vote.
6. Do you think the rules regarding voting should be the same in every state?
7. In Shelby County, the majority Court held that a portion of the Voting Rights Act was no longer necessary. Do you agree?
8. Do you think cases like Shelby County affect national elections? How?
9. Does what you've learned about voting rights make you more or less excited to vote in an election? Why or why not?