

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO VOTE

Time Allocated: Two 50-55 minute periods, plus 15-20 minutes of a class period for a follow-up discussion.

Correlation to the Alabama High School Graduation Exam:

Standard II, Objective 2

Standard V, Objective 2

Correlation to the Alabama Course of Study:

United States Studies: 1877 to Present – Sixth Grade Standards: 13

Citizenship – Seventh Grade Standards: 3 & 11

United States History from 1877 to the Present – Eleventh Grade Standards: 2, 5 & 12

American Government — Twelfth Grade Standards: 5

Lesson Objectives:

The student will be able to:

1. Cite the Constitutional provisions for voting rights.
2. Explain the development of suffrage rights from the beginning of our country to the present.

Materials Needed:

1. List of “leaders” names on board or transparency
2. Handout: Constitutional Voting Chart

Introduction— Lesson 1:

Question: What gives us, as citizens of the United States, the right to vote? Discuss.

Major Instructional Sequence:

1. Brief lecture: As the new American states grew, so did the will of women to be included as full partners in the new representative democracy. Many of the battles for women’s suffrage were fought by unknown heroines, but the names of their leaders have been preserved. The following is a list of nine leaders who helped secure the right to vote for women in the United States:
Susan Brownell Anthony Carrie Chapman Catt
Elizabeth Cady Stanton Mary E. Walker
Mary A. R. Livermore Belva A. B. Lockwood
Emmeline G. Pankhurst Anna Howard Shaw
William Lloyd Garrison
2. Students may work independently or in small groups to research and learn about the leaders and the activities of the struggle for the right to vote for women.

Closure or Evaluation:

Students share findings of their research.

Materials Needed:

1. Handout: What Does The U.S. Constitution Say About Voting Rights
2. A copy of the Constitution of the United States

Introduction – Lesson 2:

Question: How have Congress and the President enhanced the right to vote?

Major Instructional Sequence:

1. Brief lecture: Inform students about the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, 1964, 1965, 1970, 1975, & 1982. These laws were a continued effort to secure the right to vote for all Americans. Major provisions of these acts which encouraged voter registration and voting are:
 - founding of the Civil Rights Commission
 - establishing federal voting referees
 - forbidding voter registration discrimination
 - suspending literacy tests
 - supporting “open” voter registration efforts
 - requiring minority language ballots
2. Provide each student with a copy of the handout, “What Does The U.S. Constitution Say About Voting Rights?” and a copy of the Constitution of the United States.
3. Students may work independently or in small groups to complete the handout.

Closure or Evaluation:

Students’ findings may be used as a formal evaluation, or the class could hold and informal discussion.

Follow-up Activity:

All students would benefit from student interviews of local citizens who have experienced changes in voting rights. Grandparents and other relatives may recall how the poll tax was paid, or what taking a literacy test meant. Talking with retired poll watchers, mayors, registrars, and probate judges who visit the classroom will certainly bring a new appreciation and perhaps encouragement to the young voters of tomorrow.

WHAT DOES THE U.S. CONSTITUTION SAY ABOUT VOTING RIGHTS?

CONSTITUTION	YEAR	VOTING PROVISION
Article I Section 2 Clause 1		
Article II Section 1 Clause 2		
15th Amendment		
17th Amendment		
19th Amendment		
23rd Amendment		
24th Amendment		
26th Amendment		