



85th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage Celebration & Exhibit High School Lesson Plans

As students in high school are rapidly approaching the legal voting age, it is important to educate them of their voting rights and responsibilities. This lesson will focus on encouraging young people to get excited about voting.

Introductory activity:

As a class kickoff activity, have students begin class by writing down one law that they would enact if they could (just one sentence describing the law) on a post-it note. Have all students read their law aloud, and place the post-it note on a poster board labeled “ballot” at the front of the room. After all of the “laws” are posted on the “ballot,” call on only the girls and minority students (each student one at a time to appear random) in the class to remove their “law” from the “ballot.”

Ask the students if they noticed a pattern. Students will be quick to point out that only white boys were allowed to keep their laws on the board. Ask the students why the girls and minorities had to remove their laws. Guide responses toward the theme of suffrage laws in the 1800s and early 1900s.

Inform them that they represent a town in 1865 on election day, when only white males were allowed the right to vote.

Lead the class in a discussion about the great laws that were removed from the ballot, and the voices that were never allowed to be expressed, all because women and minorities were not allowed to vote.

Lesson:

Provide students with the Suffrage Timeline document. Discuss the timeline in class, paying close attention to the incredible length of time it took for minorities and women to earn the right to vote. Define the word suffrage on the board for student notes.

Suffrage: the right to vote; a vote or the act of voting

Lead the class in a critical thinking discussion based on the following question:

Now that you know the history of suffrage, are you more likely to vote when you turn 18? Why or why not?

Based on student responses, lead the students toward points that allow them to recognize the rights and responsibilities associated with voting.

Have students take notes on the following information on how to vote in Dallas (if you are not a resident of Dallas, modify the information for your city, most all city elections departments have information available on the Internet, or you can call your city department for more information).

How to vote in Dallas

- Dallas County Elections Department Web site: <http://www.dalcoelections.org/>
- Voting application: <http://www.dalcoelections.org/register.pdf>
- Who may vote in Texas:
 - Any United States citizen residing in Texas who is
 - Registered to vote
 - At least 18 years old on Election Day
 - Not a convicted felon (unless sentence, probation and parole are completed)
 - Not be declared mentally incapacitated by a court of law
 - To inquire about the status of your voter registration, call the voter registrar's office in the county in which you reside. To find the number, go to: <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/votregduties.shtml> and scroll to your county.
 - In some states you have to bring photo identification (ID) with you to vote.

After taking notes, explain the assignment to the students.

Student Activity:

The following activities could be completed together, or independently, depending on time.

Step one: Voting Statistics Scavenger Hunt: review and complete the research notes handout, using the Internet for assistance. This activity could be done during class time in a computer lab.

Step two: Write a report summarizing the current voting crisis: Students should first report the voter statistics, and then interpret what this trend means for society. Teachers should develop their own perimeters for this assignment based on student ability, i.e. length of report, number of secondary sources required, use of bibliography, etc. After creating the requirements for the report, provide students with a rubric, such as the one provided in this lesson, or create your own using <http://rubistar.4teachers.org> as a guide.

Step three: Voter registration campaign: Working in groups of four, develop a voter registration campaign for the seniors of their school to help diminish the current voting crisis.

Provide students with the student activity handouts for further explanation.

Suffrage Timeline

1776: Abigail Adams writes to her husband, John, asking him to “remember the ladies” while at work on the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration’s wording specifies that “all men are created equal.”

1837: Mary Lyon founds Mt. Holyoke College in Massachusetts. This would eventually become the first-four year college exclusively for women in the United States, and leads to the opening of several others over the next few years.

1848: The first Women’s rights convention is held in Seneca Falls, New York. Out of this event came the “Declaration of Sentiments,” which lists and summarizes the main goals of women fighting for equal suffrage.

1851: Sojourner Truth, a former slave, attends a women's rights convention in Akron, Ohio, where she delivers her famous “Ain’t I a woman?” speech before a captivated audience.

1866: Elizabeth Caddy Stanton and Susan B. Anthony form the American Equal Rights Association, an organization working toward universal suffrage for white and black women and men.

1868: Fourteenth Amendment ratified, extending to all citizens the protection against unjust state laws. This is the first time the Constitution defines “citizens” and “voters” as “male.”

1870: Fifteenth Amendment is ratified, giving black men the right to vote.

1872: Susan B. Anthony and fellow supporters are arrested and tried in Rochester, New York for attempting to vote in the presidential election.

1884: Belva Lockwood, the first woman to practice law before the Supreme Court, runs for president on the National Equal Rights Party ticket.

1890: The National Women’s Suffrage Association and the American Women’s Suffrage Association merge to become the National American Women’s Suffrage Association (NAWSA).

1895: Elizabeth Cady Stanton publishes the *Woman’s Bible*, which creates controversy within NAWSA.

1913: Borrowing tactics from suffrage groups from England, the National Women’s Party, headed by Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, participate in hunger strikes and picketing. They also organize a suffrage parade on the eve of Woodrow Wilson’s inauguration, resulting in a riot.

1920: After ratification from 36 states, the Nineteenth Amendment is adopted, giving women the right to vote.

1923: The National Women’s Party first proposes the Equal Rights Amendment to eliminate discrimination on the basis of gender. It has never been ratified.

Name _____

Date _____

Research Notes

The following statistics will assist you as you complete your report on the current status of voting records in our country. The women's voting statistics are provided for you, using the Internet, research voting statistics of men and minority men. After logging this data in the spaces below, compare and contrast the information. Write a two paragraph data analysis as a foundation for your report. This research notes handout must be turned in with your report.

Female voting statistics

- Women make up 51 percent of the population and therefore are a majority.
- More than 70 million women are not registered.
- Twenty-two million eligible unmarried women did not vote in the last election.
- Unmarried women make up the largest non-voting block.
- 29.7 percent of eligible women are not registered to vote.
- Of the 70.9 percent of women who are registered to vote, only 60.7 percent actually vote.

Minority women voting statistics

- 29.7 percent of eligible African-American women are not registered to vote.
- Of the 70.3 percent of African-American women who are registered to vote, only 9.7 percent actually vote.
- 41 percent of eligible Hispanic women are not registered to vote
- Of the 59 percent of Hispanic women who are registered to vote, only 46.1 percent actually vote.

From US Census Bureau 2000 and Women's Voices. Women Vote.

Male voting statistics

- _____ men are not registered to vote.
- Of the _____ percent of men who are registered to vote, only _____ percent actually vote.

Minority men voting statistics

- _____ percent of eligible African-American men are not registered to vote.
- Of the _____ percent of African-American men who are registered to vote, only _____ percent actually vote.
- _____ percent of eligible Hispanic men are not registered to vote
- Of the _____ percent of Hispanic men who are registered to vote, only _____ percent actually vote.

Write your two paragraph data analysis on the back of this page.

Name _____

Date _____

Voting Crisis Report Qualifications

This report should:

- Define the current voting crisis by reporting voter registration and turn-out statistics for men and women.
- Analyze the difference between voting statistics for men and women, and minority men and women as compared to the entire population.
- Assert why it is important for our country that voter statistics improve.
- Propose what can be done to improve our nation's voter statistics.

GRADE	A	B	C	D
Organization	Information is very organized with well-constructed paragraphs and subheadings.	Information is organized with well-constructed paragraphs.	Information is organized, but paragraphs are not well-constructed.	The information appears to be disorganized. 8)
Amount of Information	All topics are addressed and all questions answered with at least 2 sentences about each.	All topics are addressed and most questions answered with at least 2 sentences about each.	All topics are addressed, and most questions answered with 1 sentence about each.	One or more topics were not addressed.
Quality of Information	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It includes several supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It provides 1-2 supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. No details and/or examples are given.	Information has little or nothing to do with the main topic.
Sources	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented in the desired format.	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented, but a few are not in the desired format.	All sources (information and graphics) are accurately documented, but many are not in the desired format.	Some sources are not accurately documented.
Mechanics	No grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors.	Almost no grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	A few grammatical spelling, or punctuation errors.	Many grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.
Notes	Notes are recorded and organized in an extremely neat and orderly fashion.	Notes are recorded legibly and are somewhat organized.	Notes are recorded.	Notes are recorded only with peer/teacher assistance and reminders.