

The Importance of Voting: Remembering the 100th Anniversary of the Right to Vote for Women

Elementary School Lesson

Grade Level: K-5 (adaptable)

Core Idea: Making a Claim Statement About Voting and Building an Evidence-Based Argument:

Select an Issue:

- Extend Daylight Saving Time for all 12 months
- Ban plastic bags in stores
- Schools should provide an educational program encouraging youth in K-12 schools to save money.
- Require a full-time police officer in every school in NJ
- Require students with allergies to wear an ID tag
- Provide 10 hours of health education on the causes of diabetes in Grades K-5
- You may also vote to elect two or more people to a position in your school or community

1. **Have everyone write down on a piece of paper their name and their decision on the issue(s) selected.** (Vote Yes, Vote No, Undecided.) The vote may also be taken by computer.

Autocratic Decision: Have one designated adult (teacher, principal, superintendent) make the decision.

Representative Decision: Elect or select a representative group of students in the classroom (3,5,7 students) to make the decision by a majority vote.

Partial Democratic Decision: Allow for a discussion and vote by all the boys in the class.

Democratic Decision: Allow for a discussion and vote by everyone in the class (students and teachers).

2. **State your Claim on the piece of paper or give students a few claims and let them check the one they think will be the most accurate one.** Examples of Claim Statements:

- a. Voting will change as more people are given the opportunity to vote.
- b. Voting will not change when girls are given the right to vote.
- c. The class will agree with the way the teacher (or another adult) votes.
- d. The vote will be close on this issue or on these issues.
- e. The discussion and information changed the way some people in the class voted.
- f. If the vote is taken by students in other classes of the same grade (age group) the results will be the same. (or different)
- g. If the vote is taken by students in different grades (students with different ages), the results will be the same (or different)
- h. Adults will agree with the way the students voted.
- i. Voting/Election results are usually close.

3. **Enter the data on the following Table:** (Expand this chart if more than one issue is used for voting)

Issue	Process	Decision	Votes	Observations
Daylight Saving Time	Autocratic			
Daylight Saving Time	Representative Council			
Daylight Saving Time	Vote by Boys			
Daylight Saving Time	Vote by Everyone			

Use the evidence in the Table above to determine the advantages and disadvantages of how the decision was made. Did the decision change as the privilege of voting was expanded?

For the teacher: Compare this to the expansion of who could vote in the United States from colonial days to today. Before 1971, voter restrictions were based on gender, color, race, age, property ownership, religion or creed, ability to read and write, and the amount of money they had.

Men age 21 and over who owned property without any mortgage or debt. In New Jersey in the 18th century men had to own 100 acres of land (an acre is approximately the size of a football field) and have a certain amount of cash.

All men over the age of 21 who were citizens, except slaves, Native Americans, and people of color.

All men over age 21 who were citizens. (15th Amendment)

All men over age 21 who paid a fee (poll tax) and passed a literacy test. (The poll tax and literacy test requirement ended in 1964 with the 24th Amendment.)

All men and women over the age of 21 who are citizens who paid a fee (poll tax) and passed a literacy test.

All men and women over the age of 18 who are citizens. (Since 1971 with the 26th Amendment)

Note: In some states people with a green card can vote in a local or state election. In Colonial America, some people were not permitted to vote because of their religious beliefs. (Quakers, non-Christians)

Did the discussion in class change the decision of anyone who voted? Why?

Why is it important to vote?

For the Teacher: Use these links for examples of decisions in close elections:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_close_election_results

<https://www.npr.org/2018/11/03/663709392/why-every-vote-matters-the-elections-decided-by-a-single-vote-or-a-little-more>

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/close-us-presidential-elections/>

The 19th Amendment was passed in the U.S. Senate **by two votes**. It was defeated every year in the U.S. Congress for 44 years. (1875-1919)

- A. Discuss the importance of giving the privilege of voting to everyone in the class.
- B. Discuss the best way to handle the students who disagreed with the outcome in each of the votes taken.
- C. Explain the meaning of majority (50% plus one more) and minority.
- D. Depending on your class and may want to ask if the privilege of voting should be extended to people in prison who are convicted of a felony or serious crime, lower the age to 16, and if people living in U.S. territories (U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and Puerto Rico be allowed to vote for the president?
- E. Depending on your class, discuss how to make voting easier for people with disabilities, in nursing homes, and in hospitals.

- F. Depending on your class, discuss how people serving in the armed forces, people traveling in another country or out of their local community on Election Day, college students living away from home, and what to do in the event of stormy weather.
- G. Identify the places in your community where people vote. Also, explain that in some states, Identification is required. (Driver's License, bill with your address, etc.)

The word suffrage is a Latin word that means the right to vote on an issue or to elect representatives. It is also translated to mean the right to vote on a tablet or with a ballot. Voting is a franchise or a privilege that is given by the government.