

The Fight for Voting Rights

“Everybody can’t be a Martin Luther King. Everybody can’t be a great speaker. Everybody can’t lead a great movement. But everybody can do something.” - Henry E. Frye, first African American Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court.

Overview

In this lesson, students will examine the fight for African American voting rights during the 1950s-60s through a PowerPoint discussion, readings, and oral history excerpts. Students will learn about the various barriers to voting that African Americans faced, the ways in which people fought to expand voting rights, and the ways in which the expansion of voting rights affected political representation in the United States. This lesson culminates with an activity in which students are tasked with creating a skit for a new Voter Education Project with the goal of educating Americans about the fight for voting rights and increasing voter registration and turnout.

Grades

8-12

NC Essential Standards for 8th Grade Social Studies

- 8.H.3.3 Explain how individuals and groups have influenced economic, political and social change in North Carolina and the United States
- 8.H.3.4 Compare historical and contemporary issues to understand continuity and change in the development of North Carolina and the United States
- 8.C&G.1.2 Evaluate the degree to which democratic ideals are evident in historical documents from North Carolina and the United States
- 8.C&G.1.4 Analyze access to democratic rights and freedoms among various groups in North Carolina and the United States
- 8.C&G.2.1 Evaluate the effectiveness of various approaches used to effect change in North Carolina and the United States
- 8.C&G.2.2 Analyze issues pursued through active citizen campaigns for change (e.g. voting rights and access to education, housing and employment)
- 8.C&G.2.3 Explain the impact of human and civil rights issues throughout North Carolina and United States history

NC Essential Standards for American History: Founding Principles, Civics & Economics

- FP.C&G.2.7 Analyze contemporary issues and governmental responses at the local, state, and national levels in terms of how they promote the public interest and/or general welfare
- FP.C&G.3.3 Analyze laws and policies in terms of their intended purposes, who has authority to create them and how they are enforced
- FP.C&G.3.4 Explain how individual rights are protected by varieties of law
- FP.C&G.3.6 Explain ways laws have been influenced by political parties, constituents, interest groups, lobbyists, the media and public opinion
- FP.C&G.3.8 Evaluate the rights of individuals in terms of how well those rights have been upheld by democratic government in the United States
- FP.C&G.4.3 Analyze the roles of citizens of North Carolina and the United States in terms of responsibilities, participation, civic life and criteria for membership or admission

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- FP.C&G.4.5 Explain the changing perception and interpretation of citizenship and naturalization
- FP.C&G.5.1 Analyze the election process at the national, state and local levels in terms of the checks and balances provided by qualifications and procedures for voting

NC Essential Standards for American History II

- AH2.H.2.1 Analyze key political, economic, and social turning points since the end of Reconstruction in terms of causes and effects
- AH2.H.3.3 Explain the roles of various racial and ethnic groups in settlement and expansion since Reconstruction and the consequences for those groups
- AH2.H.4.1 Analyze the political issues and conflicts that impacted the United States since Reconstruction and the compromises that resulted
- AH2.H.4.3 Analyze the social and religious conflicts, movements and reforms that impacted the United States since Reconstruction in terms of participants, strategies, opposition, and results
- AH2.H.5.2 Explain how judicial, legislative and executive actions have affected the distribution of power between levels of government since Reconstruction
- AH2.H.8.3 Evaluate the extent to which a variety of groups and individuals have had opportunity to attain their perception of the “American Dream” since Reconstruction

Materials

- NC Voting Rights: Then & Now PowerPoint. Available in Carolina K-12’s Database of K-12 Lessons, here: <https://k12database.unc.edu/files/2018/01/FightforVotingRightsPPT.pdf>
 - To view this PDF as a projectable presentation, save the file, click “View” in the top menu bar of the file, and select “Full Screen Mode”
 - So that teachers have detailed information, several slides of the PPT as provided are very text heavy. Teachers are encouraged to edit the PPT’s information to best meet their particular learning objectives. For an editable version of the PPT, email Carolina K-12 at CarolinaK12@unc.edu with the title of the PowerPoint in the subject line.
- “Alabama Literacy Test” handout, attached
- “A Dream Undone” handout, attached
 - Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/29/magazine/voting-rights-act-dream-undone.html>
- “The Battle for North Carolina” handout, attached
 - Source: <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/10/the-battle-for-north-carolina/501257/>
- UNC Southern Oral History Project Excerpts:
 - Andrew Young discusses voter intimidation in the South in 1950s (A-0080) - <https://soundcloud.com/sohp/voting-rights-1-andrew-young>
 - John Lewis discusses the importance of the Voting Rights Act (A-0073) - <https://soundcloud.com/sohp/voting-rights-2-john-lewis>
 - John Lewis discusses how citizens can use voting to help themselves (A-0073) - <https://soundcloud.com/sohp/voting-rights-3-john-lewis>
 - Henry Frye discusses the effects of the Voting Rights Act (A-0377) - <https://soundcloud.com/sohp/voting-rights-4-henry-frye>
 - Henry Frye discusses working as a lawyer in the early 1960s (A-0377) - <https://soundcloud.com/sohp/voting-rights-5-henry-frye>
 - John Lewis discusses Freedom Summer (A-0073) - <https://soundcloud.com/sohp/voting-rights-6-john-lewis>
 - Rosanell Eaton discusses registering voters (G-0195) - <https://soundcloud.com/sohp/voting-rights-7-rosanell-eaton>
 - John Lewis discusses his desire to get everyone registered and continued voter education (A-0073) - <https://soundcloud.com/sohp/voting-rights-8-john-lewis>

- Transcripts of interviews with John Lewis (optional)
- OPTIONAL: Additional SOHP Clips
 - Rosanell Eaton discusses being involved in civic affairs (G-0195) – <https://soundcloud.com/sohp/voting-rights-9-rosanell-eaton>
 - Henry Frye discusses African American elected officials before the Voting Rights Act (C-0091) - <https://soundcloud.com/sohp/voting-rights-10-henry-frye>
 - Henry Frye discusses registration laws in the 1950s & 60s (A-0377) - <https://soundcloud.com/sohp/voting-rights-11-henry-frye>
 - Rosanell Eaton discusses her continued activism (G-0195) - <https://soundcloud.com/sohp/voting-rights-12-rosanell-eaton>

Student Preparation

- Students should have a basic understanding of the democratic process of voting to elect representatives in government. Students should understand this is a basic right of citizens in a democracy.
- Students should have general knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement (Montgomery Bus Boycotts, Martin Luther King, Jr., etc.), but this lesson plan is designed to provide students with more background knowledge into disenfranchisement of African Americans and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
- Students should understand the processes of registration and voting in North Carolina.

Teacher Preparation

- For a more comprehensive look at Jim Crow laws, see Carolina K-12’s lesson, “Moments in the Lives of Engaged Citizens Who Fought Jim Crow”:
 - <http://civics.sites.unc.edu/files/2012/05/MomentsintheLivesofEngagedCitizens.pdf>
- For a more comprehensive look at the history of African American voting rights in North Carolina, see Carolina K-12’s lesson, “African American Voting Rights and the NC Constitution, here:
 - Lesson Plan: <http://civics.sites.unc.edu/files/2012/04/AARightsNCConstitution102.pdf>
 - Accompanying PPT: <http://civics.sites.unc.edu/files/2012/04/AfAmVotingRightsPPT1.pdf>

Procedure

Day1

Warm Up: Why is it important to Vote?

1. As a warm up, project slide 2 of the Fight for Voting Rights PowerPoint and have students respond to the following prompt:
 - Do you think it’s important to vote? Why or Why not?
 - Which of these quotes supports your opinion?
 - Your vote is your voice. Be heard!
 - You can either vote by voting or vote by not voting. If you don’t vote, someone else’s vote counts more. It’s math.
 - “The ballot is stronger than the bullet.” – Abraham Lincoln
 - “The vote is precious. It is almost sacred. It’s the most powerful non-violent tool we have in a democratic society and we’ve got to use it.” –John Lewis

Teachers should provide 3-5 minutes for students to consider and respond to the prompt. After sufficient time has passed, ask for student volunteers to share their thoughts out loud. Further discuss:

- Do you think voting is important? Why or why not?
- What are the requirements for voting in the United States and North Carolina?
 - *Must be a U.S. citizen*

- *Must be a resident of the county, and prior to voting in an election, must have resided at his or her residential address for at least 30 days prior to the date of the election.*
- *Must be at least 18 years old*
- *Must not be serving a sentence for a felony conviction (including probation or on parole*
- *Source: <https://www.ncsbe.gov/Voters/Registering-to-Vote>*
- Have these always been the requirements for voting? When have they been different?
 - *Answers may include: property ownership was a requirement to vote, only men were allowed to vote until the 19th Amendment in 1920, etc.*

3. Move to slide 3 and share the text of the 15th Amendment. Ask a student to volunteer to read it aloud. Discuss:

- What right(s) does the 15th Amendment protect?
- Why do you think it was necessary to add this Amendment the Constitution? When was it passed?
- What groups have historically been denied the right to vote?
 - *Women, African American men & women, American Indians, non-landowners, people under 21 or 18, etc.*
- What methods were used to deny people their right to vote?
 - *Laws, grandfather clauses, literacy tests, violence, intimidation, etc.*

4. Next, ask students if they're familiar with the term, "Jim Crow" or "Jim Crow Laws." Ask students to define the term and provide some examples of Jim Crow laws. Once students have had a few minutes time to think, choose a few students to share their definitions and examples. Write their responses on the board. At the conclusion of the discussion, circle any of the definitions and/or laws that relate to voting.

- Why do you think Jim Crow laws focused on preventing African Americans from exercising their right to vote?
- What does that tell you about the right to vote?

5. Next, ask students:

- Should people prove that they can read and write before they are allowed to vote? Why or why not?

Allow students to respond and discuss for 2-3 minutes before proceeding. (In the next activity, students will realize that literacy tests were not a simple matter of being able to read and write.)

Examining Literacy Tests with Henry Ell Frye & Roselle Eaton

6. Without providing students with additional information, read the following list of a real person's accomplishments:

- *graduated valedictorian from high school*
- *attended NC A&T University and graduated summa cum laude (which means with the highest distinction)*
- *has a bachelor of science degree in biology and a double minor in chemistry and air science*
- *entered the US Air Force; commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant; served as an Ammunition Officer in Japan and Korea and rose to rank of Captain during four years with the Air Force*

After reading the list, ask students the following questions:

- Do you think this person should be able to vote? Why or why not?
- Do you think this person could pass a literacy test? Why or why not?

7. Inform students that this is a description of Henry Ell Frye. He grew up on a farm near Ellerbe, NC (about an hour from Greensboro) and in August 1956, he attempted to register to vote which involved a literacy test. He did not pass the test.
 - After hearing about his accomplishments, are you surprised that he couldn't pass a literacy test? What might that tell you about the literacy test?
 - Do you think you could pass a literacy test?

8. Divide the class in half and provide one half with the attached, "A Dream Undone" handout and the other half with the attached, "Battle for North Carolina" handout. Instruct students to create a ["T chart"](#) on a separate sheet of paper. Students should label one column "Henry Ell Frye" and the other column "Roselle Eaton." Write the following questions on the board and ask students to answer them on in the appropriate column on their T chart:
 - Have you ever heard of this person before?
 - What obstacles did this person face when trying to vote?
 - Were they able to overcome those obstacles and register to vote? How?
 - How did their experience living under Jim Crow shape how they lived their lives?
 - Would you consider this person a hero? Why or why not?

Provide students with 10 minutes to read their handouts and answer the questions. At the end of the allotted time, pair students up into groups of 2 or 4. Make sure that each group consists of an equal number of Henry Ell Frye and Roselle Eaton handouts. Instruct each group to share what they learned about their assigned person's experience. The students that are listening should complete the empty column of their T chart while they listen to their groupmates present. Provide groups with 5-10 minutes to discuss their readings. Review the questions above as a class to check for understanding.

9. Next, distribute the attached "Alabama Literacy Test 1965" handout. Provide students with 5 minutes to complete the test. Ignore any complaints about that not being enough time to finish the test. After the allotted time, review the attached answers with class and have student check their own papers. Once students have reviewed the answers, discuss:
 - How did you feel while taking this test? Was it easy or difficult?
 - How much time do you think you should've been given to complete the test?
 - Did you know the correct answers? What was your score?
 - Were you anxious if you thought it might affect your grade and class average?
 - Can you imagine if it affected whether or not you would be able to exercise your right to vote?
 - How did this test differ from the one Roselle Eaton had to take?

Inform students that this was only part of the test – the actual test had 68 questions and if someone missed more than 7 answers, he/she was not allowed to register. In many cases, the test takers weren't given enough time to finish the test, so even if they knew all the answers, they wouldn't be allowed to finish. In other cases, the literacy test consisted of memorizing an obscure section of the state or US Constitution.

Other Types of Vote Suppression under Jim Crow

10. Inform students that literacy tests weren't the only way to stop people from voting under Jim Crow. Tell students that they will be listening to excerpts from oral histories of African Americans who lived under Jim Crow. Before playing the clips, ask students:
 - Are you familiar with the term "oral history?"
 - How would you define oral history?

- *Oral history is the collection and study of historical information using sound recordings of interviews with people having personal knowledge of past events*

11. After introducing students to the concept of oral histories, review slides 4-6, which contain links to clips of people discussing different types of voter suppression in the Jim Crow South as well as a primary source document for Freedom Village.

- Slide 4 – “Types of Voter Intimidation in Jim Crow”
 - Poll Taxes & Grandfather Clauses
 - Audio Clip: Andrew Young discusses voting in the South in the 1950s (2:39)
- Slide #5-6 – “A Call for Help”
 - Ask a student to read an excerpt from a brochure about “Freedom Village,” a tent city created in Tennessee after African Americans were evicted from their homes after registering to vote. Then move to the next slide to view images from the Freedom Village brochure.
- Discuss:
 - Besides literacy tests, what other methods were used to stop or deter African Americans from voting or registering to vote during Jim Crow?
 - *Murder, threats of violence, poll taxes, eviction, etc.*
 - Based upon the images, how would you describe life in Freedom Village?
 - Do you think you would risk your home or life to vote? Why or why not?
 - Do you consider these voting rights activists heroes? Why or why not?
 - Recall the 15th amendment (slide 3) “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” Why do you think literacy tests, poll taxes, grandfather clauses, and other forms of suppression happened in the face of the 15th amendment?
 - *Little or no enforcement of the 15th Amendment by the Federal Government; poll taxes, literacy tests, and grandfather clauses didn't violate the 15th amendment because they depended on characteristics other than race, etc. In practice, they were applied to discriminate against African Americans.*
 - In his story, Henry Ell Frye mentions the Voting Rights Act? What do you know about the Voting Rights Act? What do you think it did?
- **Optional Activity:** Visit the PBS website, “The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow: Voting Then and Now” (https://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/voting_start.html). This website poses a series of situations centered on an African American attempting to vote during the Jim Crow era. At each stage, the user encounters an obstacle to voting and must choose to continue or to stop. The activity can be completed in two ways:
 - Review the scenarios as a class by having the teacher click “Continue” and reviewing each scenario.
 - If computers, tablets, or smartphones are available, students can complete the activity individually. Instruct them to click “Continue” for each scenario and to ignore the sample literacy test because it’s the same one they’ve already completed. It should take students about 5 minutes to complete the activity on their own.
 - Before showing students the site, warn them that some of the images contain racial slurs and disturbing images of hanging effigies of African Americans.
 - Once the activity has been completed, refer to the last scenario where the sheriff is saying, “I don’t think today is a good day for you to cast a ballot,” while loading his gun. Ask students: How would you feel about voting if the sheriff did that to you before you went to vote?

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The Voting Rights Act

12. After discussing students' prior knowledge of the Voting Rights Act, review slides 7-11, which discuss the impact of the Voting Rights Act:
- Slide 7 – “Voting Rights Act of 1965: What Did It Do?”
 - Are there any states on the list that surprise you? What does it tell you that Alaska, New York, California, and South Dakota are covered by the Voting Rights Act section 5?
 - Slide 8 – “The Voting Rights Act at 50: How It Changed the World”
 - Ask a student to read the excerpt from TIME magazine aloud.
 - The article refers to “Bloody Sunday,” what do you think happened on Bloody Sunday?
 - *On March 7, 1965, Alabama state troopers brutally assaulted peaceful civil rights marchers who were marching from Selma to Montgomery to demand the right to vote.*
 - What happened to Sheriff Jim Clark after the Voting Rights Act passed?
 - Slides 9-10 – Excerpts from the Voting Rights Act: Sec 4 & 10, with important information highlighted in red (optional, for teachers who want their students to examine more primary sources.)
 - Slide 11 – Play the clip of Congressman John Lewis discussing the importance of the Voting Rights Act. A transcript is included on the slide.
13. At the end of the lesson, have students complete the following exit ticket: Write a short paragraph to explain what barriers to voting were banned by the voting rights act of 1965 and why the law was necessary. Collect student paragraphs to monitor for understanding or need to reteach any part of the lesson.

Day 2

Exploring the Effects of the Voting Rights Act and How It Came to Pass

14. As a warm up, display slide 12, which displays the “Growing Ranks of Registered Voters” chart. Ask students to quietly view the graph and answer the questions on the slide. After a few minutes, discuss the questions as a class.
- What do the states in the table have in common? Why are these states (rather than others) included here?
 - Look closely at the data in the table. What overall trend do you see? What do you think accounted for the trend?
15. Move to slide 13, which shows two graphs of Black Legislators in the South. Discuss the following questions:
- Start with the graph that shows 1868-1900. What do you notice about the number of black legislators elected during that time period? When did the number reach its peak? Based on what you know about American history, what do you think accounted for that peak?
 - Based on what you know about American history, what do you think caused the sharp decline that followed?
 - Now look at the later time period, 1960-1992. When did the number of elected black legislators begin to rise? What do you think was the cause of that rise?
- **Teacher Option:** The last African American congressman before Jim Crow era was George Henry White from North Carolina. Teachers can examine George Henry White’s life and career with Carolina K-12’s “George Henry White: The American Phoenix” lesson: <http://civics.sites.unc.edu/files/2013/11/GeorgeHenryWhiteAmericanPhoenix8.pdf>
16. Move to slide 14 and play the John Lewis audio clip.

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- Why did politicians ignore African Americans’ demands before the Voting Rights Act?
 - According to John Lewis, in what ways did African Americans exercise their newfound political power in the 1970s?
- **Teacher Option:** Play the Henry Frye audio clips for students on slides 15-16 and listen to him discuss additional effects of the Voting Rights Act.

The Fight for Voting Rights

17. Shift the discussion from the effects of the Voting Rights Act to the activism that brought the Voting Rights Act into existence. Ask students:
- How did people fight back against Jim Crow?
 - What actions brought about legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965?
18. Review slides 17-23, which share a few examples of voting rights activism during the Civil Rights Movement.
- Slide 17: Freedom Summer
 - What was Freedom Summer?
 - Why did the SNCC and COFO focus their efforts on Mississippi?
 - How did many white people in Mississippi respond to Freedom Summer? Why do you think they responded this way?
 - Slide 18: Voter Education Project
 - What did the VEP do?
 - Do we need a Voter Education Project today? Why or why not?
 - Slide 19: The Selma to Montgomery March and Bloody Sunday
 - Review the information on the slide. Click the hyperlinked sentence “Television footage of the attack shocked the nation” to play a 3:30 minute “Bloody Sunday in Selma Alabama,” YouTube video, which shows events leading up to the Selma march as well as footage from Bloody Sunday: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3fq79yKGaQ>
 - What was the purpose of the Selma to Montgomery March?
 - Why is it called “Bloody Sunday?”
 - How is the reaction to the Selma march similar to the reaction to Freedom Summer?
 - Why do you think the Alabama state troopers reacted so violently to the demonstrators?
 - How do you think much of the country reacted to the footage from Bloody Sunday? How do you think the federal government responded to Bloody Sunday?
 - Slide 20: The Selma to Montgomery March and Bloody Sunday
 - Why do you think Dr. King led another march after the events of Bloody Sunday? Would you want to march with him after seeing the footage from Bloody Sunday?
 - What was the effect of the Selma to Montgomery marches?
 - Do you think the Voting Rights Act would’ve passed into law if people hadn’t been fighting for it?
 - Do you agree with Dr. King’s statement, “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice?” Why or why not? Can you give examples that support your opinion?
 - Slide 21 – John Lewis Describes Freedom Summer and the Selma Marches
 - What does “one man, one vote” mean?
 - According to John Lewis, what one event gave birth to the Voting Rights Act?
 - Slide 22 – Audio clip in which Rosanell Eaton describes registering a woman to vote
 - What was the purpose of Rosanell Eaton’s skit? Why do you think she developed it?

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- *To register people to vote; Possible answers include, helping people understand how to register without being able to read.*
- How did the woman she registered to vote react to being registered? Why do you think she was so happy?

Voting Today & Voter Education Project 2020

19. Display slide 23 and ask students to quietly read and answer the questions about voter turnout today. After students have sufficient time (3-5 minutes), discuss the questions.
20. Next, move to slide 24 and play the clip of John Lewis discussing the need for continued Voter Education Programs. Finally, move to slide 27 and play the short clip of Barack & Michelle Obama discussing the Selma marches and the importance of voting today.
21. After listening to the clip and viewing the video, tell students that they're going to be working on a new Voter Education Project. The purpose of this new VEP is to get people to register and vote in the 2020 election. Divide the class into groups of 3-5. Distribute the attached "Voter Education Project 2020" handout and review the instructions as a class. After providing students with a project due date, allow students to use the remaining class time to work on their projects.
22. On the day that projects are due, allow each group to present their voter education skit to the entire class. Provide each student with the attached graphic organizer and instruct them to complete the handout as they view each skit. Once all of the groups have presented, discuss the following questions:

Additional Activities

- If teachers would like to discuss voter ID laws in North Carolina, the following lesson plans from Carolina K-12 can be used
- Teachers can also assign the full "Battle for North Carolina" article

Name: _____

1. Which of the following is a right guaranteed by the Bill of Rights?

____ Public Education ____ Employment ____ Voting ____ Trial by Jury

2. The federal census of population is taken each five years. ____ True ____ False

3. If a person is indicted for a crime, name two rights which he has.

4. A U.S. senator elected at the general election in November takes office the following year on what date?

5. A President elected at the general election in November takes office the following year on what date?

6. Which definition applies to the word "amendment?"

____ Proposed change, as in a Constitution ____ Making of peace between nations at war ____ A part of the government

7. A person appointed to the U.S. Supreme court is appointed for a term of _____.

8. When the Constitution was approved by the original colonies, how many states had to ratify it in order for it to be in effect? _____

9. Does enumeration affect the income tax levied on citizens in various states? _____

10. Persons opposed to swearing in an oath may say, instead: (solemnly _____)

11. To serve as President of the United States, a person must have attained: ____ 25 ____ 35 ____ 40 ____ 45 yrs.

12. What words are required by law to be on all coins and paper currency of the U.S.?

13. The Supreme Court is the chief lawmaking body of the state. ____ True ____ False

14. If a law passed by a state is contrary to provisions of the U.S. Constitution, which law prevails?

15. If a vacancy occurs in the U.S. Senate, the state must hold an election, but meanwhile the place may be filled by a temporary appointment made by _____

16. A U.S. senator is elected for a term of ____ years.

17. Appropriation of money for the armed services can be only for a period limited to ____ years.

18. The chief executive and the administrative offices make up the _____ branch of government.

19. Who passes laws dealing with piracy? _____

20. The number of representatives which a state is entitled to have in the House of Representatives is based on

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Alabama Literacy Test Answer Key

1. Which of the following is a right guaranteed by the Bill of Rights? **Trial by Jury**
2. The federal census of population is taken each five years. **False, every 10**
3. If a person is indicted for a crime, name two rights which he has. **Habeas corpus, lawyer, speedy trial**
4. A U.S. senator elected at the general election in November takes office the following year on what date? **January 3**
5. A President elected at the general election in November takes office the following year on what date? **January 20**
6. Which definition applies to the word "amendment?" **Proposed change, as in a Constitution**
7. A person appointed to the U.S. Supreme court is appointed for a term of **life (with good behavior)**
8. When the Constitution was approved by the original colonies, how many states had to ratify it in order for it to be in effect? **9**
9. Does enumeration affect the income tax levied on citizens in various states? **Yes**
10. Persons opposed to swearing in an oath may say, instead: (solemnly **Affirm**)
11. To serve as President of the United States, a person must have attained: **35 years**
12. What words are required by law to be on all coins and paper currency of the U.S.? **In God We Trust**
13. The Supreme Court is the chief lawmaking body of the state. **False**
14. If a law passed by a state is contrary to provisions of the U.S. Constitution, which law prevails? **US Constitution**
15. If a vacancy occurs in the U.S. Senate, the state must hold an election, but meanwhile the place may be filled by a temporary appointment made by **the Governor**
16. A U.S. senator is elected for a term of **6** years.
17. Appropriation of money for the armed services can be only for a period limited to **2** years.
18. The chief executive and the administrative offices make up the **Executive** branch of government.
19. Who passes laws dealing with piracy? **Congress**
20. The number of representatives which a state is entitled to have in the House of Representatives is based on **population (as determined by the census) less untaxed Indians**

“Everybody can’t be a Martin Luther King. Everybody can’t be a great speaker. Everybody can’t lead a great movement. But everybody can do something.” - Henry E. Frye, former Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court.

On the morning of his wedding, in 1956, Henry Frye realized that he had a few hours to spare before the afternoon ceremony. He was staying at his parents’ house in Ellerbe, N.C.; the ceremony would take place 75 miles away, in Greensboro, the hometown of his fiancée; and the drive wouldn’t take long. Frye, who had always been practical, had a practical thought: Now might be a good time to finally register to vote.

He was 24 and had just returned from Korea, where he served as an Air Force officer, but he was also a black man in the American South, so he wasn’t entirely surprised when his efforts at the registrar’s office were blocked. Adopting a tactic common in the Jim Crow South, the registrar subjected Frye to what election officials called a literacy test. In 1900, North Carolina voters amended the state’s Constitution to require that all new voters “be able to read and write any section of the Constitution in the English language,” but for decades some registrars had been applying that already broad mandate even more aggressively, targeting perfectly literate black registrants with arbitrary and obscure queries, like which president served when or who had the ultimate power to adjourn Congress. “I said, ‘Well, I don’t know why are you asking me all of these questions,’” Frye, now 83, recalled. “We went around and around, and he said, ‘Are you going to answer these questions?’ and I said, ‘No, I’m not going to try.’ And he said, ‘Well, then, you’re not going to register today.’”



Sitting with me on the enclosed porch of his red-brick ranch house in Greensboro, drinking his wife’s sweet tea, Frye could joke about the exchange now, but at the time it left him upset and determined. When he met Shirley at the altar, the first thing he said was: “You know they wouldn’t let me register?”

Henry Frye | The first black chief justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court, Frye, 83, was prevented by a Jim Crow literacy test from registering to vote on his wedding day in 1956.

“Can we talk about this later?” she replied.

So, what happened next? Was Henry Frye ever able to vote?

After a few weeks, Frye drove over to the Board of Elections in Rockingham, the county seat, to complain. An official told him to go back and try again. This time a different registrar, after asking if he was the fellow who had gone over to the election board, handed him a paragraph to copy from the Constitution. He copied it, and with that, he became a voter.

But in the American South in 1956, not every would-be black voter was an Air Force officer with the wherewithal to call on the local election board; for decades, most had found it effectively impossible to attain the most elemental rights of citizenship. Only about one-quarter of eligible black voters in the South were registered that year, according to the limited records available. By 1959, when Frye went on to become one of the first black graduates of the University of North Carolina law school, that number had changed little. When Frye became a legal adviser to the students running the anti-segregation sit-ins at the Greensboro Woolworth’s in 1960, the number remained roughly the same. And when Frye became a deputy United States attorney in the Kennedy administration, it had grown only slightly. By law, the franchise extended to black voters; in practice, it often did not.

What changed this state of affairs was the passage, 50 years ago this month, of the Voting Rights Act. Signed on Aug. 6, 1965, it was meant to correct “a clear and simple wrong,” as Lyndon Johnson said. “Millions of

This lesson plan was completed in collaboration with teacher Jesi Knowles-Brock as part of the 2017 Carolina Oral History Teaching Fellows Program in Civil Rights, sponsored by UNC-Chapel Hill’s [Southern Oral History Program](#) and [Carolina K-12](#).

Americans are denied the right to vote because of their color. This law will ensure them the right to vote.” It eliminated literacy tests and other Jim Crow tactics, and — in a key provision called Section 5 — required North Carolina and six other states with histories of black disenfranchisement to submit any future change in statewide voting law, no matter how small, for approval by federal authorities in Washington. No longer would the states be able to invent clever new ways to suppress the vote. Johnson called the legislation “one of the most monumental laws in the entire history of American freedom,” and not without justification. By 1968, just three years after the Voting Rights Act became law, black registration had increased substantially across the South, to 62 percent. Frye himself became a beneficiary of the act that same year when, after a close election, he became the first black state representative to serve in the North Carolina General Assembly since Reconstruction.

In the decades that followed, Frye and hundreds of other new black legislators built on the promise of the Voting Rights Act, not just easing access to the ballot but finding ways to actively encourage voting, with new state laws allowing people to register at the Department of Motor Vehicles and public-assistance offices; to register and vote on the same day; to have ballots count even when filed in the wrong precinct; to vote by mail; and, perhaps most significant, to vote weeks before Election Day. All of those advances were protected by the Voting Rights Act, and they helped black registration increase steadily. In 2008, for the first time, black turnout was nearly equal to white turnout, and Barack Obama was elected the nation’s first black president.

Adapted for length and content by Carolina K-12 from the following source: The New York Times Magazine, “A Dream Undone,” <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/29/magazine/voting-rights-act-dream-undone.html>

The Battle for North Carolina

(Excerpt)

[By Vann R. Newkirk II, October 27, 2016, *The Atlantic*](#)

Political, social, and demographic forces in the battleground of North Carolina promise a reckoning with its Jim Crow past.

Rosanell Eaton grew up in that dark age. Her home on a country road outside of Louisburg, North Carolina is filled with the artifacts from the fight for civil rights. Clippings of old newspapers lauding her work on voting rights mingle with photographs of civil-rights pioneers and **commendations**¹ stamped with President Obama's seal. From a stately yellow armchair in the corner of her room, she regales visitors who sit on her plastic-covered couches with tales of voter-registration drives for black folks back when people like her were still lynched for voting. Very few—if any—living African Americans in North Carolina have fought for voting rights for as long as Eaton.

Born in rural Franklin County in April 1921, Eaton is the granddaughter of people who were once enslaved, and her birth came just two decades after Waddell's coup and Simmons's constitution. Black people in Franklin County just didn't vote or try to vote much back then, and Eaton became motivated when she learned that it had not always been so. "You didn't hear much about voting in school, and I was interested in the history," she told me. "So I asked my ma one day about taking me to Louisburg to see about voting."

One morning in 1942, after Eaton's 21st birthday, she climbed on the family's mule-drawn wagon with her mother and brother and traveled the eight miles to the Louisburg courthouse. The three white men there were **nonplussed**.² "They asked me what was I there for," Eaton says. "And I told them that I came down to see about getting registered."

In order to even prove herself eligible to vote, Eaton recalled, she had to put her hands by her side, stare straight ahead, and recite the Preamble to the Constitution, **verbatim**.³ Whether those three administrators were aware of the staggering irony of their demand or not, she stood straight, stared at a spot behind them on the wall, and aced the recitation, word for word. Apparently, so few black people had even been bold—or foolhardy—enough to even take the test that the registrars had no thought of intimidation beyond that point. "You did a mighty good job," one man told Eaton. "Well, I reckon I have to have you to sign these papers."

While the early stirrings of the civil-rights movement—often referred to as the Second Reconstruction—began in churches, bus depots, and lunch counters across the South, Eaton soon developed a reputation as an activist in her own right in her corner of the backwoods of Franklin County. Early on, she was given permission to register other people, and eventually led a small black voter outreach team across the county and state.

Despite the **draconian**⁴ literacy tests and intimidation that kept most black voters away from the polls in the state for almost 30 years after her own registration, Eaton used the mounting social momentum of the era as motivation. Her work eventually intersected with the paths of better-known activists and movements in the '60s in Selma and Washington, D.C. Juggling life as a teacher and mother, she saved extra money and scrounged to take cross-state and cross-country trips to spread the gospel of the ballot. Eaton says that she has probably registered close to 10,000 voters, and has voted in every election since her registration.

¹ Commendations – recommendation, praise, or award

² Nonplussed – to render utterly perplexed; puzzle completely

³ Verbatim – in the exact same words; word for word

⁴ Draconian – rigorous; unusually severe or cruel

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Name: _____



Directions: Voting is one of our most fundamental rights; however, many people in the United States do not exercise that right. A recent [Pew Research Study](#) estimates that only 64% of the voting age population was registered in the US in 2016, compared to 91% in Canada & the UK, 96% in Sweden, and nearly 99% in Japan. According to the US Elections Project, about 139 million Americans, or 60.2% of the voting-eligible population, cast a ballot in the November 2016 election. Out of the 35 OECD member nations, the US ranked 28th in voter turnout. The numbers are even lower for mid-term and off-year elections.

To combat low registration and turnout, the North Carolina Board of Elections has created **Voter Education Project 2020**. The purpose of this project is threefold: educate people about the history of voting rights, & the importance of voting, encourage people to register, and to get people to the polls on election day in November 2020. Your job as a member of VEP 2020 is to create a short skit that addresses these three topics.

Step 1: Brainstorm - You and your groupmates should begin by discussing the following questions:

- What are three reasons why voting is important?
- Why do you think voter turnout is so low in the United States? Why do you think registration and turnout is so high in those other countries listed above?
- Do you think people would be more apt to register and vote if they knew how hard people fought for the right to vote?
- Which one event from the struggle for voting rights do you think all Americans should know about? (15th Amendment, Voting Rights Act, Bloody Sunday, an event not listed, etc.?) Why is this one the most important?
- Create a list of three obstacles people still face when trying to register to vote or when voting on election day. Brainstorm a solution to each of those obstacles.

Step 2: Research & Writing – After your group has brainstormed the questions above, choose one of the following roles. More than one person can have the same role:

- **Writer** – Your job is to write a 3-5-minute skit. The skit should consist of three acts:
 - Act One should address the question: *What should people know about the history of voting rights?*
 - Act Two should address the question: *How can we encourage people to register?*
 - Act Three should address the question: *How can we increase turnout/get people to the polls on election day?*Work with the prop makers and researchers to develop the skit.
- **Prop maker** – Your job is to create props for your skits using materials provided by your teacher. Work with the writers and researchers to develop the props.
- **Researcher** – Your job is to provide the writers and prop makers with background information for the skit. Using what you've already learned as well as resources provide by your teacher (websites, textbooks, etc.), research your answers for the brainstorm questions and the skit questions above. Use the following websites as a starting point for your research:
 - **Voter Education Project:** <https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/woodruff/fyi/the-voter-education-project>
 - **WRAL:** <http://www.wral.com/editorial-practical-recommendations-to-boost-voter-turnout/17245667/>
 - **Pew Research:** <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/05/15/u-s-voter-turnout-trails-most-developed-countries/>
 - **National Voting Rights Museum:** <http://nvrmi.com/>
 - **Common Cause NC:** <http://commoncausenc.org/>
 - **Democracy NC:** <https://democracync.org/the-issues/voting-and-elections/>

Step 3: Practice & Performance – Your group will perform your skit for the class. Although not everyone has to have a speaking part, everyone in the group should participate. Practice and revise your skit as a group to ensure that it doesn't run over the 5-minute time limit, and to make sure that it's easy to understand.

Due date: _____

Excerpt from the Oral History Interview transcript of John Lewis- Southern Oral History Program

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November 20, 1973

Interviewer: Jack Bass, Walter De Vries

Jack Bass: "John, how important, or how do you assess the importance of the Voting Rights Act itself?"

John Lewis: "Well, I think the Voting Rights Act, no question about it, was a turning point and probably one of the most significant points in this whole struggle for black people to become truly free and liberated in the American society, particularly in the South. It made it possible for hundreds and thousands of people to become registered."

Bass: "How important is it for it to be renewed in 1975?"

Lewis: [Tape Repaired] "In many parts of the south, the county courthouse is still the only place where people can come to register. It's not convenient, not just for black people but it's not convenient for white people, particularly low income people and this administration has done very, very little to enforce the Voting Rights Act. Only on one occasion in 1971 have we had Federal Registrar Laws sent into any parts of the South and that was in Mississippi in June of 1971."

Excerpt from the Oral History Interview transcript of John Lewis- Southern Oral History Program

November 20, 1973

Interviewer: Jack Bass, Walter De Vries

Jack Bass: "What's it mean so far, the public policies and the way in which blacks are treated and the way in which resources are distributed and the way government services are provided, what does it mean in those terms?"

John Lewis: "I think, without question, a growing number of white elected officials recognize that the black vote is a vote to be reckoned with and that they must be able to produce some type of services. They must be responsive to the needs. And on local levels in some communities they are doing just that. It may not be the same tune or the same scale that they are doing it to the white community."

Bass: "Any specific examples come to mind, particularly in places where things, where you had been in the early '60s where things were rough?"

Lewis: "Well, we get reports here, registration reports filed. I cannot think of any particular one now but probably looking through the file we could check into this. Well, people have been trying to get simple things like a sewer system or getting streets paved in particular area, getting low-income housing. And people are being able to get that now because they registered and they are voting."