

The County Election: A History of Voting Rights in America For Grades 9-12

Lesson #1 - Examining Quotes and Images

Pre-Lesson

1. Start by asking students what they know about voting today. This could be an online class discussion or a written assignment. Ask:

- What are our rights?
- What are the requirements in our state?
- What's the process? In what different ways can we vote?
- Why do Americans vote?

2. Ask students to research today's voting requirements for several states and write down answers to the following questions. Some useful websites are listed below.

- Who gets to vote?
- What are the requirements? Do they differ from state to state?
- What is the process involved in voting? In what different ways can we vote?
- Did anything surprise you? What and why?

[U.S. Vote Foundation](http://www.usvote.org)
[Vote.org](http://www.vote.org)

Introduction

To be done by online discussion or as a written assignment to be shared when all have responded. If utilizing Google, an online poll or form can be created, or a Jamboard with sticky notes might be used.

- How do you feel when playing a sport or game and losing?
- Do you think that you should be able to win all the time? If so, why?
- Do you think it's fair to change the rules of a game so that everyone has an equal chance to win? Why or why not?

Voting in America changed over the years to make the process fair for all citizens.

Procedure

1. Provide each student with the items in the list below. You may choose the best method of delivery. The items are available in a separate word document and/or as a slideshow. They might also be posted via Jamboard with students adding digital sticky notes with their comments. They can use a blank timeline or graphic organizer to organize their findings. Examples of both are at the end of this lesson.

For a "live lesson", laminated cards with pictures can be mounted in the classroom like a museum exhibit and students can make note of what they learn from observing each image. Examples of what they might observe are also listed below.

Ask students to note by year and location:

- who could vote
- requirements for being able to vote
- information about the process
- any other information that caught their interest

Items to be used

John Adams quote
excerpt from the "Declaration of Rights and Sentiments"

image- "The First Vote"

15th Amendment

image- Women Voting in Boston in 1888

Algernon Crapsey quote

19th Amendment

Excerpt from a letter written during "Freedom Summer", 1964

Observations might include:

John Adams quote

- Men who didn't own property couldn't vote, but some were considering changing this law. Adams felt it was asking for more trouble to permit them to vote because then women and children would want that right and who knows who else!
- People were not all equal. Men who owned property were ranked higher, and thus were considered to have better judgment and could vote.

Excerpt from the "Declaration of Rights and Sentiments"

- Some people, especially women, believed that men and women were equal and that women had the right to vote, but men didn't let them do so

Image- "The First Vote"

- Any Black man in Virginia could now vote
- They voted by putting a coin into the candidate's jar
- Voting was not private- anyone could see how someone voted
- There are no women of any color in the picture

15th Amendment

- American citizens of any race could vote, even if they had once been slaves or servants

Image- Women Voting in Boston in 1888

- In Massachusetts, women could vote
- People voted by marking paper ballots and putting them in a box

Algernon Crapsey Quote

- Although Black people could vote, it was dangerous to do so
- Violence sometimes happened when African Americans tried to vote
- Black people thought it was extremely important to vote even if it was very dangerous to do so

19th Amendment

- All women in the U.S. could vote

Excerpt from a letter written during "Freedom Summer" in 1964

- Even though they were allowed to vote, Black people in Mississippi weren't registering. One reason was because white registrars were prejudiced and didn't believe Black people were smart enough to vote.

2. Students should begin to explain the history of voting rights in America. They can either write a summary of what they have learned, or share via an online discussion. Another idea is to have them exchange timelines or graphic organizers and go over each other's work using a master provided by the instructor. If this is not feasible, give them a summary of the class's responses by what method works best for all.

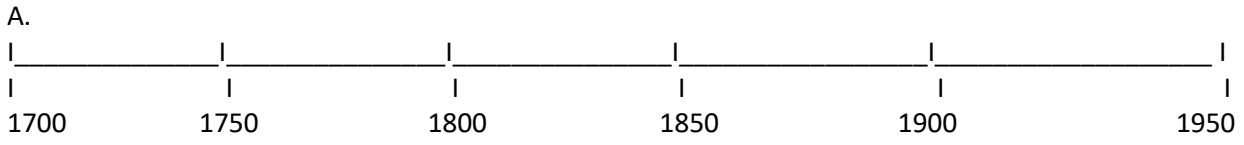
Further information to share with students:

- Algernon Crapsey is little-known, but was rather radical in his religious views and was the last American persecuted by the Episcopal church for heresy. A short bio is here: [Algernon Crapsey bio](#) . A Google search

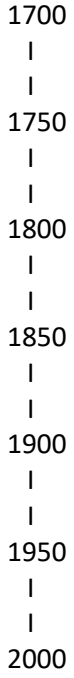
might be done to see his writings. Most are lengthy. A sampling of titles includes “Political Crimes and their Consequences” (manageable length), “Meditations on the Five Joyful Mysteries” (long), and “A Voice in the Wilderness, Being a Plea for the Restoration of Primitive Christianity” (long).

Sample Time Line Styles for *The County Election*, Lesson #1

Students fill in important dates from slide show information



B.



Sample Graphic Organizer for *The County Election*, Lesson #1

| <i>Image #</i> | <i>Date of image</i> | <i>Who was voting?</i> | <i>How did they vote?</i> | <i>Questions you would like to ask the document</i> | <i>What are some conclusions you can make about voting at this time?</i> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <i>Ex. 1</i> | <i>1867</i> | <i>An African American man</i> | <i>There are two jars and the voter puts his ticket into the jar for the person he wants to win.</i> | <i>Did they have to check in somewhere? Did they have to be a certain age? Did white men vote at the same place and in the same manner? etc.</i> | <i>Women do not appear to be voting regardless of race. People of some recognized economic status are voting Only African American men are in line - segregation appears to be in place</i> |

Note: for SPED students, the first column could show the image or quote, rather than just its number.