

HOW CAN WE VOTE?

PART 1

Ages:

Ages 15-18

Description:

Discussion and information about how non-eligible voters can talk to their friends and families about voting.

Time:

30 minutes

Materials Needed:

- None

Instructions

Read over the information about voting, voter suppression, and voter access. Grab some friends and use the discussion questions to find ways YOU can get involved with our democratic process!



Voting

What is voting? Why is it important?

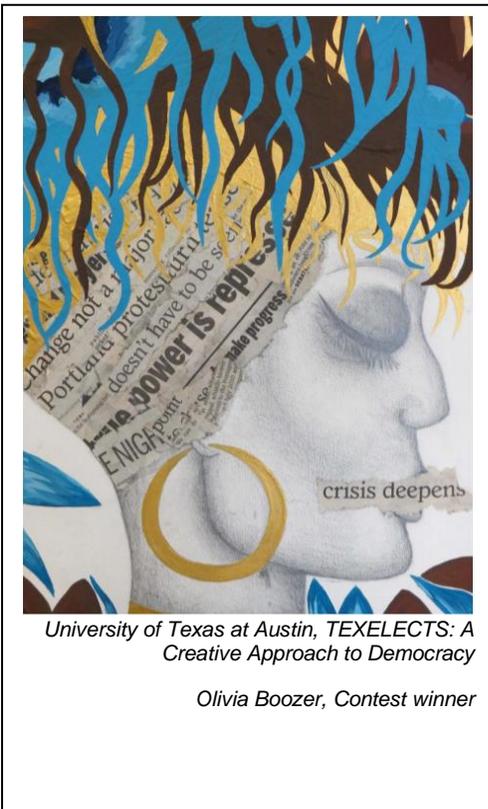
From Polling Place Project, pollingplaceproject.org

“Voting is a fundamental right of any citizen that enables them to choose the leaders of tomorrow. In many countries, minimum age for voting is 18 years. Voting not only enables the citizens to vote for political parties, but it also helps them to realize the importance of citizenship. Many people do not vote thinking one vote will not make a change, but as a matter of fact, it does. A nation’s political foundations are built using elections... Voting is a basic process that keeps a nation’s governmental system works. It enables the citizens to choose their own government. It also allows the people to choose their representatives in the government. The purpose of every government is to develop and implement various policies for the benefit of its citizens.

It also enables the person with the right to question the government about issues and clarifications. Voting is the way to express the opinion of a citizen in a democratic nation. Voting is crucial to activating the democratic process.

On the day of the election, voters won't just have the capacity to choose their representatives in government for the following term, and they can also decide on measures like security issues that concede the government authority to borrow funds for development projects and different advancements. Also, in some cases, voters cast their voting sheets on social issues."

Voter Access Issues



There are many different conversations around voter access. Can people adequately get to the polls to vote? Should childcare be provided on election day so that parents can get to the polls? Should election day be a national holiday so that people who work can get to the polls? These conversations have been researched, studied, and brought up to elected officials. Let's look deeper into voting issues and access...

Read the following excerpt from Pew Research Center.

"Many of the millions of Americans voting in Tuesday's midterm elections will have to do so while working around the demands of their jobs – hitting their polling places before work, taking an extra-long lunch break or going afterward and hoping to make it before the polls close. As they stand in line, many of them may wonder why it is that the United States votes on a Tuesday, of all

days. (To be fair, more than 38 million Americans already have voted early in person, by mail or by absentee ballot, according to a tally maintained by University of Florida political scientist Michael McDonald.)

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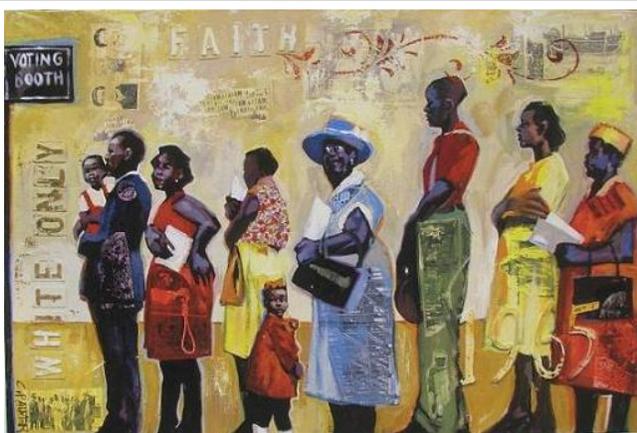
In the 21st century ... America's election schedule makes it an outlier among advanced industrial democracies. A Pew Research Center analysis finds that 27 of the 36 member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development hold their national elections on the weekend, while two others (Israel and South Korea) hold elections on weekdays but make those days national holidays so economic hardship won't be a barrier to electoral participation.

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There have been repeated proposals in the U.S. over the years to either move Election Day to the weekend or make it a federal holiday, on the grounds that doing so would boost turnout. A recent Pew Research Center poll found bipartisan majority support for the idea: 71% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents and 59% of Republicans and GOP leaders said they would support making Election Day a national holiday. But while proposals to do that have periodically been introduced in Congress, none have gotten very far....”

DeSilver, Drew (2018). Weekday elections set the U.S. apart from many other advanced democracies. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/11/06/weekday-elections-set-the-u-s-apart-from-many-other-advanced-democracies/>

Voter Suppression



The Black Art Depot

“Voting Line”, Charly Palmer, depicting several African Americans standing in line to vote after the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

What is voter suppression?

Laws are meant to support the people. But often, we see laws doing the opposite. At the federal and state level of government we see efforts that attempt to obstruct a person’s ability to vote. “Voting should be as easy and convenient as possible...”.

There are many ways voting is suppressed in our country. We will explore just a few that are happening in 2020.

Where can you see voter suppression?

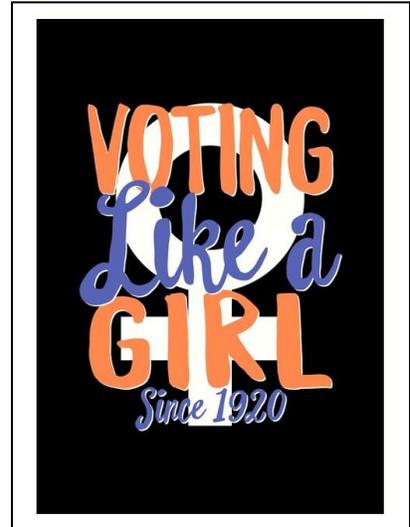
- [Voter ID laws](#): Identification requirements may make it harder for an individual to vote.
- [Voter registration restrictions](#): Restrictive terms and requirements for voter registration.
- [Voter purges](#): When election administrations “clean up” voter rolls.

Rafei, Leila. (2020). Block the vote: Voter suppression in 2020. ACLU.

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Use the discussion questions below to learn how YOU can become involved!

Or, with your parent/guardian's permission, use the [#girlsincindy](#) to start a conversation on social media



ACTIVITY RECAP

Discovery Questions: [Follow the Experience Learning Cycle model]

- Why is voting important to you?
- How can you help others see the importance in voting?
- How can you influence politics without voting?

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