

Woodrow Wilson House

Education Resources – Lesson Plan – The Right to Vote

Grade Level: 10

Learning Outcomes/Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students should:

- Understand the weight and importance of the right to vote
- Apply the knowledge of the history of voting to today's system of voting
- Understand the constitutionality of voting; the language behind it and how it has changed over time.

I Can Statements:

Students understand the role of rules and laws in our daily lives and the basic structure of the U.S. government.

Essential Questions

- Is voting a right or a privilege?
- What is the “story of voting rights” we tell about the United States?
- What is the actual “story of voting rights” in the United States?

Essential Vocabulary (students will learn):

- Suffrage
- Legislation

Engagement Activities:

- Look at the website about the timeline for voting rights in the USA <https://www.history.com/news/voting-rights-timeline>
- Give students the Louisiana State Literacy Test and time them. Explain that this test was given to people so they could have the right to vote.
- What percentage of students finished?
- Go over answers.
- What percentage of students passed the exam?
- Discussion about the test.
- Watch the Woodrow Wilson House Speaker Series Video: [Alice Paul, Woodrow Wilson, and the Fight for the Right to Vote | Tina Cassidy](#)

Element of 21st Century Learning:

Voting today is one of the many rights that we are afforded as American citizens. However, it has not always been this way. Women, people of color, immigrants, and many more have had their voice and vote suppressed for centuries. Even today, there are systemic structures within our society that keep many from actively utilizing their vote.

Materials & Preparation Needed:

- Louisiana State Literacy Test and answer sheet
- A device in which to show the Woodrow Wilson House video
- Video question sheet
- Sticky notes
- Instruction sheet for writing a letter to their Representative

Instructional Procedures:

Take Louisiana State Literacy Test

Ask students, "Why does voting matter?"

- Let students discuss this as a group, individually answer
- Essential questions could include: "Who has the right to vote in this county?", "What kinds of things do we vote on? Why is this necessary in our society?"

Lead a good and productive conversation around voting. Let the students run the conversation, but try to guide their thoughts (look to the Essential questions above). Next, gauge prior knowledge of the class on the history of voting rights.

- "Has everyone always been able to have the same voting rights?"
- "What groups of people have been largely discriminated against in regard to voting? What kept them from voting?"

Discuss the idea of discrimination, laws, and loopholes.

Instructional Sequence:(Include Guided practice Independent practice)

1. Show students the Woodrow Wilson House Speaker Series Video:
 - a. Before: Ask students if they know what a suffragette is. Do they know of any examples?
 - b. Watch the video Alice Paul, Woodrow Wilson, and the Fight for the Right to Vote | Tina Cassidy
 - c. During: While watching the video, students should actively listen and pay attention by filling out the worksheet/questionnaire.
 - i. Frequently pause during the video to gauge understanding and create discussion.
 - d. After: Have students go over their answers on their papers. Double check for misunderstandings and commonly missed talking points.
2. After discussing the video, move into a conversation about voting rights. Should we make amendments to our voting system today? What amendments would you make?
3. Ask students again, "Why does your vote matter?"/"Why is voting important?"
 - a. Lead the conversation to a topic of important subjects today that we vote on every election (ex. Racial equity, police brutality, Equal Rights Act, etc.).
 - b. Ask students, "If you could create a new law, or amend an old one right now, what would it be?"
 - i. On sticky notes, students will write their ideas (limit each person to a number of notes).
 - ii. Put the sticky notes on the board. Read them out loud to the class. Have each student write down their favorites and take a vote at the end of class to see which ones are most liked. Vote until you have 5 new laws.
 - iii. Students will write on a sheet of paper, labeled 1-5, on the new "laws" that they like, from their favorite to least favorite.
4. Explain the group assignment/project (To be completed in the following 3 classes)
 - a. Group students based on their preference for the laws they preferred. There should be 3-5 members in each group.
 - b. The assessment: Students will decide as a group whether to make a poster, powerpoint, skit, etc. on how they would propose this new law. Make sure it is convincing!
 - i. After the presentation, there will be an anonymous vote on whether the class would pass the new law. Must have a majority for it to pass!
 - c. In addition, students will write a group letter to their Congressman explaining their ideas and project. The letter should be no more than 2 pages long. They will then print it out and send it to their Congressional Representative!

Closure:

Hand students exit tickets.

Assessment:

Group project, letter to Congressman/ woman

Adaptations for Diverse Learners:

Visual aids can be used for visual learners. For Spanish speakers all materials could be translated into Spanish.

Woodrow Wilson House

The Right to Vote- The State of Louisiana Literacy Test

(This test is to be given to anyone who cannot prove a fifth grade education.)

Do what you are told to do in each statement, nothing more, nothing less. Be careful as one wrong answer denotes failure of the test. You have 10 minutes to complete the test .

1. Draw a line around the number or letter of this sentence.
2. Draw a line under the last word in this line.
3. Cross out the longest word in this line.
4. Draw a line around the shortest word in this line.
5. Circle the first, first letter of the alphabet in this line.
6. In the space below, draw three circles, one inside (engulfed by) the other.

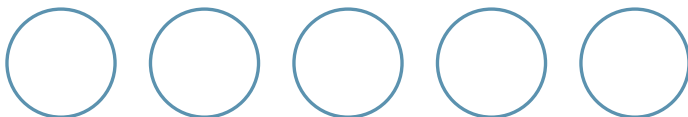
7. Above the letter X make a small cross.
8. Draw a line through the letter below that comes earliest in the alphabet.

Z V S B D M K I T P H C

9. Draw a line through the two letters below that come last in the alphabet.

Z V B D M K T P H S Y C

10. In the first circle below write the last letter of the first word beginning with "L."



11. Cross out the number necessary, when making the number below one million.

10000000000

12. Draw a line from circle 2 to circle 5 that will pass below circle 2 and above circle 4.



13. In the line below cross out each number that is more than 20 but less than 30.

31 16 48 29 53 47 22 37 98 26 20 25

14. Draw a line under the first letter after "h" and draw a line through the second letter after "j."

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q

15. In the space below, write the word "noise" backwards and place a dot over what would be its second letter should it have been written forward.

16. Draw a triangle with a blackened circle that overlaps only its left corner.

17. Look at the line of numbers below, and place on the blank, the number that should come next.

2 4 8 16 _____

18. Look at the line of numbers below, and place on the blank, the number that should come next.

3 6 9 _____ 15

19. Draw in the space below, a square with a triangle in it, and within that same triangle draw a circle with a black dot in it.

20. Spell backwards, forwards.

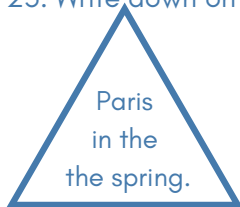
21. Print the word vote upside down, but in the correct order.

22. Place a cross over the tenth letter in this line, a line under the first space in the sentence, and a circle around the last the in the second line of this sentence.

23. Draw a figure that is square in shape. Divide it in half by drawing a straight line from its northeast corner to its southwest corner, and then divide it once more by drawing a broken line from the middle of its western side to the middle of its eastern side.

24. Print a word that looks the same whether it is printed frontwards or backwards.

25. Write down on the line provided, what you read in the triangle below:



26. In the third square below, write the second letter of the fourth word.



27. Write right from the left to the right as you see it spelled here.

28. Divide a vertical line in two equal parts by bisecting it with a curved horizontal line that is only straight at its spot bisection of the vertical.

29. Write every other word in this first line and print every third word in the same line, [original type smaller and first line ended at comma] but capitalize the fifth word that you write.

30. Draw five circles that one common inter-locking part. [sic]

Source:

http://rights.teachingmatters.org/files/images/african/1965_test.html

Grading The Louisiana Literacy Test

The Louisiana Literacy Test was designed so that the test-takers would pass or fail simply at the discretion of the registrar who administered the test. The questions were so imprecisely written that the examiner could decree almost any answer correct or incorrect, at his whim. The reality was that registrants the county commissioners wanted to prevent from voting – primarily black applicants, but also certain lower-class whites in disfavor with county officials – were destined to fail the test, regardless of the answers they gave.

Black applicants could be failed for something as simple as a single spelling or punctuation error. However, many examiners chose to deceive test-takers by changing the rules or interpreting paradoxical questions in different ways.

- For example, although question 5 says to “circle” something, questions 1 and 4 say to “draw a line around” something. If the examiner insisted a circle was not a line, the applicant failed.
- Question 10 asks for something to be done to “the first word beginning with ‘L’” –does it mean the first word in this sentence, or the first word on the page?
- Question 24 wants the applicant to “print a word that looks the same whether it is printed frontwards or backwards.” One would assume that a word like BOB would work just fine, but if the examiner expected “backwards” to be in mirror-writing, the B’s would be inverted and thus incorrect.
- The solution to question 25, in spite of the trick question in the triangle, could be that the examiner expected the word “down” to be written on the line!
- In question 27, does the examiner expect only the word right to be written, or does he want the word right plus all the words that follow it? And if the test-taker printed his answer instead of using cursive (“I said write, not print!”), he would fail.
- Another factor in passing or failing the test was the time requirement – registrants had to respond to 30 complicated questions in 10 minutes, a time frame which could easily be waived for white voters.
- There were limitless ways to fail this test, and the registrar, with the blessings of a white-controlled county government, exercised complete power over the success or failure of every applicant.

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The Right to Vote- The State of Louisiana Literacy Test Answers

The State of Louisiana

Literacy Test (This test is to be given to anyone who cannot prove a fifth grade education.)

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3. Cross out the longest word in this line.
4. Draw a line around the shortest word in this line.
5. Circle the first, first letter of the alphabet in this line.
6. In the space below draw three circles, one inside (engulfed by) the other.
7. Above the letter X make a small cross.
8. Draw a line through the letter below that comes earliest in the alphabet.
Z V S ~~B~~ D M K I T P H C
9. Draw a line through the two letters below that come last in the alphabet.
~~Z V~~ B D M K T P H S Y C
10. In the first circle below write the last letter of the first word beginning with "L".
11. Cross out the number necessary, when making the number below one million.
~~X~~000000000
12. Draw a line from circle 2 to circle 5 that will pass below circle 2 and above circle 4.
13. In the line below cross out each number that is more than 20 but less than 30.
31 16 48 ~~29~~ 53 47 ~~22~~ 37 98 ~~26~~ 20 ~~25~~

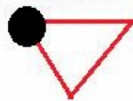
14. Draw a line under the first letter after "h" and draw a line through the second letter after "j".

a b c d e f g h i j k + m n o p q

15. In the space below, write the word "noise" backwards and place a dot over what would be its second letter should it have been written forward.

e s i o n

16. Draw a triangle with a blackened circle that overlaps only its left corner.



17. Look at the line of numbers below, and place on the blank, the number that should come next.

2 4 8 16 32

18. Look at the line of numbers below, and place on the blank, the number that should come next.

3 6 9 12 15

19. Draw in the space below, a square with a triangle in it, and within that same triangle draw a circle with a black dot in it.



20. Spell backwards, forwards.

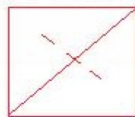
s d r a w r o f

21. Print the word vote upside down, but in the correct order.

v o t e

22. Place a cross over the tenth letter in this line, a line under the first space in this sentence, and circle around the last the in the second line of this sentence.

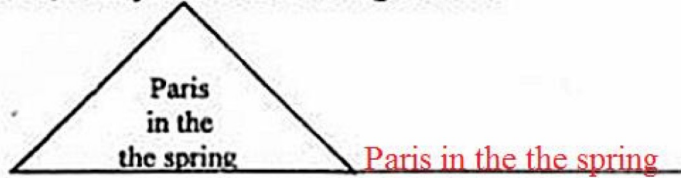
23. Draw a figure that is square in shape. Divide it in half by drawing a straight line from its northeast corner to its southwest corner, and then divide it once more by drawing a broken line from the middle of its western side to the middle of its eastern side.



24. Print a word that looks the same whether it is printed frontwards or backwards.

I

25. Write down on the line provided, what you read in the triangle below:



26. In the third square below, write the second letter of the fourth word.



27. Write right from the left to the right as you see it spelled here.

right

28. Divide a vertical line in two equal parts by bisecting it with a curved horizontal line that is only straight at its spot bisection of the vertical.



29. Write every other word in this first line and print every third word in same line, (original type smaller and first line ended at comma) but capitalize the fifth word that you write.

every word this line Print third in line

other this and third same

30. Draw five circles that one common inter-locking part.



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The Right to Vote- Alice Paul, Woodrow Wilson, and the Fight for the Right to Vote Video Questions

Watch Alice Paul's video using one of these links -

[Alice Paul, Woodrow Wilson, and the Fight for the Right to Vote](#) | [Tina Cassidy](#)

or

<https://www.woodrowwilsonhouse.org/speaker-series/>

1. What amendment gave women the right to vote?
2. Who was Alice Paul?
3. Where did the term suffragette come from?
4. What kinds of rules kept women subordinate?
5. Where did women have full voting rights in 1913?
6. What was the main suffrage group?
7. What did Alice Paul do the day before WW inauguration? (13:33)
8. What was the new form of protest? (24:29)
9. What event triggered sentences up to six months for women suffragists? (24:59)
10. How were Black men and women kept from voting? Who else could not vote?
11. When was the 19th Amendment ratified?

Questions for after the video:

1. Name some similarities between Wilson's era and the current rise in white nationalism.
2. Was the Equal Rights Act (ERA) fully ratified? What would your argument be in front of Congress to pass the ERA? Do you think it should be passed?