

**SUFFRAGE TIMELINE**

(30 minutes)

OBJECTIVE

Students learn that the population with voting rights has drastically changed over the years.

MATERIALS

U.S. Suffrage Timeline handout; *Suffrage Timeline Questions* handout

GET READY

- ✓ Break your students up into small groups of two or three (or if your students are younger, work together as a class on the activity).
- ✓ Make photocopies of the *U.S. Suffrage Timeline* handout and the *Suffrage Timeline Questions* handout for each group of students.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Provide a definition of suffrage and explain who has the right to vote today.
- ✓ Inform your students that they are going to investigate the history of the right to vote in America.
- ✓ Give each group copies of the *U.S. Suffrage Timeline* handout and the *Suffrage Timeline Questions* handout.
- ✓ Go over the *U.S. Suffrage Timeline* handout with the entire class.

- ✓ Have the groups use the *U.S. Suffrage Timeline* handout to answer the questions on the *Suffrage Timeline Questions* handout.
- ✓ Once each group has completed the *Suffrage Timeline Questions* handout, have a class discussion comparing and contrasting answers to the questions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Which questions were the most difficult to answer? Why?*
- ★ *Were there questions that had no “right” answer? Which questions and why?*
- ★ *Were there any dates on the timeline that surprised you? How so?*
- ★ *Why is learning about suffrage so important for young citizens of the United States?*



U.S. SUFFRAGE TIMELINE

- 1776** The Declaration of Independence is signed. The right to vote is based on property ownership. Suffrage is primarily for white male Protestants over the age of 21.
- 1787** The Constitution is drafted. States are given the power to regulate their own suffrage laws and favor white male landowners.
- 1848** Because African-Americans and women will suffer discrimination at the polls, Elizabeth Cady Stanton sets forth resolutions for women's suffrage at the first convention of women's rights advocates.
- 1865** A Civil Rights Act defines citizenship and prohibits discrimination based on race. The Republican Congress overrides the veto of President Andrew Jackson, hoping to lure the vote of former slaves.
- 1868** With the Civil War over, lawmakers enact the 14th Amendment, granting citizenship to African-Americans and permitting them to vote. But state officials still attempt to deny them the right to vote.
- 1870** The 15th Amendment is ratified, providing the legal rights of African-Americans to vote and prohibiting state and local governments from denying that right.
- 1890** Wyoming becomes a state and is the first state to provide suffrage for women in its Constitution.
- 1920** The 19th Amendment is ratified, giving women the right to vote.
- 1947** Miguel Trujillo, a Native American and former Marine, wins a suit against New Mexico for not allowing him to vote. New Mexico and Arizona are required to give the vote to all Native Americans.
- 1957** The Civil Rights Act passes, allowing punishment for interference with, or disruption of, protection for African-American voters.
- 1964** The 24th Amendment passes, outlawing the poll tax.
- 1965** The Voting Rights Act passes after Martin Luther King, Jr. leads 25,000 people on a march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, to dramatize the need for more voting rights.
- 1970** The Voting Rights Act is amended to lower the voting age to 18 and ban the use of literacy tests.
- 1971** The 26th Amendment lowers the voting age from 21 to 18.



SUFFRAGE TIMELINE QUESTIONS

Name: _____

Use the *U.S. SUFFRAGE TIMELINE* handout to answer the following questions. If you can't give a definite answer to a question, state what additional information you would need to know.

1. You are a Native American living in Arizona in the 1920s. Can you vote?
2. You are a woman living in Wyoming in 1894. When were you first granted the right to vote?
3. What was the last U.S. population to earn the right to vote?
4. What U.S. Constitutional Amendment gave women the right to vote?
5. You are an African-American male living in Alabama in 1864. Can you vote?
6. You are an African-American male living in Alabama in the 1940s. Can you vote?
What might be keeping you from voting?
7. You are a white male in the 1790s and you do not own property. Can you vote?
8. What did the 24th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution accomplish?