



Chapter 1: Your Vote, Our Election

How has voter history shaped who gets to vote now? Learn the history of the vote and voter eligibility, the types of elections voters can participate in, and who influences U.S. elections.

Conversation Questions

1. What should be required in order to vote?
2. How might people decide to vote or not vote?
3. What do you think people can or should do if they are not satisfied with the available candidates running in an election?
4. What are some ways to support those who cannot vote?

Key Definitions (adapted from USA.gov)

- *Registered voter* – someone who is qualified and has applied and been added to their area's voter registration system
- *Popular vote* – the votes cast during an election for a candidate or about an issue; whichever candidate, with the exception of the president and vice president, or decision about an issue gets the most votes has won the popular vote
- *Electoral vote* – the electors who comprise the electoral college gather to cast the state's votes in the Electoral College; they vote for the candidate who won the popular vote in their state during a presidential election
- *Ballot* – a list of candidates and proposed laws that voters mark to make choices; may be made of paper and marked with a pen or hole punch, or may be electronic and voters mark their choices with the push of a button or by touch screen

Read

“Schools have key role to play in youth voting” by Louis Freedberg for EdSource

<https://bit.ly/3i0hx8f>

This article considers how schools can take a more active role in voter education, with recommendations on how to address the reasons why young people often don't vote.





“Nonvoters Are Not Privileged.” by Glenn Greenwald for *The Intercept*

<https://bit.ly/3lVmzVY>

This analysis focuses on how nonvoters are often mischaracterized as white and privileged, and how this narrative negatively impacts the many nonvoters who are often poor, young, and/or persons of color.

Watch

“The fight for the right to vote in the United States” by Nikki Beaman Griffin from *TED-Ed*

<https://bit.ly/3jZtyva>

This video explores how voting rights in the United States have changed since the first election in 1789 and covers the history of the long fight for a more inclusive electorate.

“Why do so many Americans not vote?” from *The Bottom Line* for *Al Jazeera*

<https://bit.ly/33aMXSR>

Steve Clemons with Evette Alexander, Ted Johnson, and Kellen Edmonson discuss the reasons behind eligible voters in the United States sitting out of elections and what that means for a representative government.

“The Vote” from *PBS: American Experience*

<https://to.pbs.org/3bCSp4U>

One hundred years after the passage of the 19th Amendment, *The Vote* tells the dramatic culmination story of the hard-fought campaign waged by women in the United States for the right to vote — a transformative cultural and political movement that resulted in the largest expansion of voting rights in U.S. history.





Listen

“And Nothing Less” podcast series from *Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission, PRX, and the National Park Service*

<https://bit.ly/2F48vs4>

Hosted by Rosario Dawson and Retta, this podcast series features commentary and insights on how activists in the suffragist movement persevered in the right to vote, with an emphasis upon individuals whose stories are less known yet just as important.

“Political Prisoners?” from *Code Switch for NPR*

<https://n.pr/3IZAEBy>

This podcast episode discusses prison gerrymandering and the ineligibility to vote for the incarcerated.

