

APSA Teaching and Learning Symposium on Teaching American Politics in Times of Uncertainty

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Summary – Are there multiple tiers in American Democracy? Do people’s rights differ based on their personal characteristics? Or location? Have these rights evolved over time? How? Founding Fathers beliefs about participation. What can we do today to expand rights? Which groups are more likely to engage in diverse types of participation?

Student Learning Outcomes-

Describe the role voting plays in a democracy.

Explain how voting rights have expanded over time.

Evaluate differences in turnout among various populations in the United States.

Resources – US Constitution. Teacher selected articles on turnout and participation from the Pew Research Foundation or other sources.

Pre-Activity Student Work – Review constitutional amendments that expanded voting rights. Review which groups are more or less likely to vote.

Activity Description- Could these people vote?

You have been given five categories of characteristics and six different years.

1. Create ~10 hypothetical individuals using the categories below (one characteristic per category)
0. For everyone decide whether s/he is ALLOWED to vote for *Congress*
0. For everyone decide the likelihood of this person is to actually vote and why or why not
1. In each category (excluding year and region) which group had the highest turnout rate in the 2024 election? Which had the lowest turnout rate?

Race/Ethnicity	Gender	Age	Region	SES Status	Year
White	Male	19	New York	Low	1840
Black	Female	26	Alabama	Medium	1862
Native American		35	California	High	1912
Latino		42	Washington, DC	Felon	1954
Chinese		76	Wyoming	Immigrant	1968
		90	Connecticut		1994
					2017

Reflection – A reflection paper including some of the following questions.

How did the activity get you to think about yourself as a citizen? How did the activity influence your understanding of the political process? Are you more or less likely to engage politically? How can we increase voter participation? Do we want higher levels of participation or is low participation a sign of a healthy democracy?

NACE COMPETENCIES: Critical Thinking and Equity and inclusion