

Underage Democracy:

VOTING RIGHTS TIMELINE

OVERVIEW:

The Forward Montana Foundation Voting Rights timeline is a 50-minute exercise and discussion of the history of voting rights in the United States and Montana. Students are given a series of events and dates, and asked to order the events chronologically. Students are then invited to discover whether their expectations were correct and discuss the realities of establishing the right to vote for many people in the US.

OUTCOMES:

- Peer leaders will lead student participants in an activity and discussion surrounding the history of suffrage in the United States of America
- Students will understand how the fight for the right to vote fits within larger social justice
- Students will reflect on how systemic barriers to voting affect the ability of people to be part of the decision-making process in the United States

Time: 50 minutes
Grade level: 9th to 12th

Materials:

- POP Worksheet
- Voting Rights Facilitator Timeline
- Voting Rights Dates
- Voting Rights Descriptions
- Evaluations (Online)

SCHEDULE:

5 Minutes	Introduction	Peer leaders introduce the purpose and outcomes of the Voting Rights Timeline exercise.
15 Minutes	Voter Timeline Activity	Student groups assemble their Voting Rights Timeline.
5 Minutes	Presentation of Correct Timeline	Students share their timelines, peer leader(s) put the correct timeline order on the wall.
10 Minutes	Discussion	Students discuss their expectations and reality, and relate the history of voting rights to experiences with their family, friends or community.
10 Minutes	Small Group Discussion	Students break into small groups to discuss voting age and impact.
5 Minutes	Evaluation	Participants fill out evaluations.

**This template was adapted from a YVOTE California Voting Rights class exercise*



Educator Guide

VOTING RIGHTS TIMELINE

These exercises are intended to be student-led. Individual students or groups of students can be responsible for implementing the exercises for credit, extra-credit, or extra-curricular interest. Be sure to provide student leaders with guidance throughout the process, all physical materials necessary, and time to evaluate their success.

Pair this exercise with a relevant section in your curriculum to increase the impact for your students!

Two weeks before:

- Assign the exercise to a student leader or group of student leaders and provide them with the Student Facilitator Worksheet.

One week before:

- Review the Student Facilitator Worksheet with the student leader and ensure that they have an understanding of the exercise, confidence in leading the activities and discussion, and clarity around purpose and outcomes.
- Move student leaders through the timeline correctly and ensure they understand the context of the different dates, so they can help explain this to their peers.

Day of:

- Support student leaders in leading the lesson plan paying special attention to their facilitation of the discussion components.

Within one week after:

- Meet with student leaders to debrief their presentation and fill out the evaluation below and send it to Forward Montana Foundation.



VOTING RIGHTS TIMELINE

OVERVIEW:

This exercise was created by young people for young people. By the end of leading this discussion, you'll develop skills that you can use forever - like public speaking, facilitating discussions, and thoughtful evaluation. Plus, you'll learn about the history of voting rights in the US, barriers to voting, and the effects they have on our political world today.

Two weeks before:

- Read through this entire exercise and write down any questions you have for your teacher.
- Fill out the Student Facilitator Worksheet.
- Read the "How to Guide: Hosting Underage Democracy Online"

One week before:

- Review the Student Facilitator Worksheet and your list of materials with your teacher and bring your list of questions about the exercise.
- Prepare the voting rights timeline cards by printing and cutting them out. You'll need one set of timeline cards for every group of 8 to 10 students. For example, if your class has 30 students, you would print out 3 sets of timelines.
- Each student leader should pick two points on the timeline and do additional research about the people involved in the debate during the moment in time. You can select these two points based on what interests you most.

Day(s) of:

- Make sure you have all the supplies you need to be successful.
- Lead your peers through the exercise!

Within one week after:

- Meet with your teacher to talk about what went well, what needs to be changed, and what you would do differently in the future.

If you have any questions throughout this process, don't hesitate to contact Devin Filicichia at Forward Montana Foundation via email at devin@forwardmontana.org.



5 Minutes: Introduction

This is your opportunity to set the tone and energy in the room. Start off by introducing yourself. Next, you'll explain the purpose and outcomes of the Voter Rights Timeline, using the Student Facilitator Worksheet. Finally, you'll describe a basic outline of what the schedule will be.

DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY?

Sample script: "My name is [] and I'm stoked to leading us in a Voting Rights Timeline from Forward Montana Foundation's Underage Democracy program. This exercise was made by young people for young people. We get to explore the history of voting rights in this country, and gain a better understanding of barriers to voting and how they have been overcome. Let's get started!"

15 Minutes: Timeline Activity

1. Ask your class to split into three small groups (with larger, or smaller classes, this can be adjusted as you see fit). Make sure you have enough timeline card sets so that each group can receive a set.
2. Hand out the pre-cut date cards and pre-cut Event Description Cards to each group of students. Make sure they are not in order!
3. Ask your peers to match the event to the date as best they can. Remind your peers this activity isn't about getting every answer correct, but rather a chance to think critically about who has been allowed to be part of the democratic process. Encourage them to ask themselves and each other why they think that event happened at that time.
4. Give students up to 10 minutes to arrange their cards.
5. Give each group 2 minutes to give a quick overview of their timelines.

5 Minutes: Present Correct Timeline

Match the events with the real dates provided in your timeline packet - post in an easily-seen space, like at the front of the room. As you arrange the dates and events in the proper order, explain some of the background provided in your timeline packet and any additional information you found through your research.

10 Minutes: Discussion

Lead a discussion of the expected versus actual timeline, using the prompts below. Consider that democracy means giving people power to participate in their government by being a part of the decision-making process. This timeline shows WHO has been allowed to be a part of that process. This discussion should explore WHY and HOW certain groups were not allowed to vote, and what affect that might have on decision making processes. You can use the prompts below to help spark your discussion.



Prompts:

1. How many points did your group correctly place on the timeline?
2. What surprised you? What didn't surprise you?
3. What events on the timeline had you heard about before?
4. Who faced the most barriers to voting throughout history?
5. How were these barriers to voting changed?
6. Were any of your parents, grandparents, or great grandparents not able to vote because of laws in place during their lifetimes?
7. Do you think barriers to voting exist today? If so, how are the barriers different today than they were in the past? Who is most affected by these barriers? If not, why?
8. What are the consequences of only allowing a small portion of the population to vote?

REMEMBER: You are leading a discussion on a topic, not presenting on what you think. Give everyone space and time to answer questions, and don't be afraid of a few moments of silence after you ask a question - give your peers time to consider your questions.

10 Minutes: Small Group Discussion

Ask each group to discuss the following questions (you can write them on the board). As they're discussing the questions, move from group to group to help facilitate conversation.

- How can you make change in your community without having the right to vote?
- How might lowering the voting age affect our democracy and decision making processes?
- How might lowering the voting age affect those currently in elected office?
- Why do you think people under the age of 18 aren't allowed to vote?
- Do you think the voting age should be lowered?



EVALUATION:

Step 1:




Meet with your teacher within one week of leading your class through the Voting Rights Timeline exercise to evaluate how the exercise went.

Revisit your POP worksheet to discuss the following questions:

- What outcomes did you accomplish? If you weren't able to accomplish an outcome, why?
- What went well?
- What would you have done differently?

Step 2:

Fill out the Forward Montana Foundation evaluation form(s) below:

Educator Evaluation	Student Leader Evaluation	Student Participant Evaluation
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScP1TL2XcT6oH4Qtq58nm3v7UXj1acX3BE3ZUT2NYI_r_SZVTw/viewform	https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeF5gPXS6x5D-cLSbN9jdRmj1iillSWTSFdCfcIVZ4_RfEk4Q/viewform	https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSezIM7eiTZiKUC_dp n5Z6DKtpZLHTCtx-nzHc7H3EBaTHdrRNA/viewform
		

Step 3:

Celebrate! It can be hard leading our peers and you've done a great job!



STUDENT FACILITATOR WORKSHEET

Purpose:

- Why should our peers care about the history of voting rights?

- Why are you interested in leading this exercise?

Outcomes:

- What three things do you hope your peers take away from this exercise?

- What two skills do you hope you develop by leading this exercise?

Process:

- What part of the exercise are you most excited to lead? Why?

- What part of the exercise are you most nervous to lead? Why?

- What do you need to make this exercise successful?

- If you're working in a group, what parts of the exercise will you lead?



FACILITATORS' TIMELINE

This is your “Cheat Sheet” to the dates and events to correctly arrange the timeline. We encourage you to share the tidbits (in italics) when you reveal the timeline, to set the context.

1789 - George Washington elected

Only white landholding men over the age of 21 were allowed to participate in this election. These restrictions barred not only women and people of color from voting, but also many poor men who didn't own property from voting.

1826 - Religion restrictions to voting banned

Maryland becomes the last state to remove religious restrictions to vote -- previously, only Protestant men could vote -- allowing other white, landowning men over 21 the right to vote.

1856 - All white men over 21 can vote

North Carolina is the last state to remove property ownership as a requirement for voting.

1870 – Congress forbids states from preventing people from voting due to race

The 15th amendment passes, banning states from explicitly forbidding people from voting due to race. Unfortunately, groups are still presented at the local and state level with other barriers such as poll taxes (that many people of color and low income folks are too poor to pay), literacy tests, and in many cases, violent intimidation at the polls.

1872 - Women arrested after demanding the right to vote

Sixteen women, including Susan B Anthony, are arrested after they demand to be registered to vote and cast ballots in New York.

1878 - 19th Amendment allowing women to vote first introduced to Congress

Though this proposal to grant women the right to vote was first introduced to congress in 1878, it was not passed for another 42 years.

1887 - Native American men who give up their tribal affiliations are allowed to vote

The Dawes Act passes, granting Native American men who gave up their tribal affiliations the right to vote.

1890 - Non-Native women granted the right to vote in Wyoming

Wyoming is the first state to allow women to vote. In fact, it was part of Wyoming's constitution when it was granted statehood.



1914 - Non-native women win the right to vote in Montana

Montana men vote 53 to 47 percent to give non-native women the right to vote, joining ten other western states (Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Washington, California, Arizona, Kansas, Oregon, Nevada).

1916 - U.S. Representative Jeannette Rankin elected to represent Montana in Congress

Jeannette Rankin won this historic race with 6,000 more votes than the next candidate. To put her seat in context, Jeannette Rankin cast votes on the House of Representatives floor 4 years before many women could even cast a ballot for a local representative. What an amazing Montana legacy!

1920 - White women win the right to vote

White women win the right to vote when the 19th amendment is passed, a result of years of campaigning by the Suffragette Movement. Women of color, including Natives, aren't guaranteed the right to vote until as late as the 1960s.

1924 - Native Americans born in the United States granted citizenship & the right to vote

The Indian Citizenship Act passed in Congress granting citizenship, and thus the right to vote, to Native Americans born in the US. Yet, many states still denied Native Americans the right to vote in elections by not including Native Americans that lived on reservations, or simply ignoring the 1924 legislation. This lasts all the way until 1957, as states hold on to illegal practices. Read this to learn more:

<http://nativeamericannetroots.net/diary/352>

1926 - US Citizenship becomes a requirement to vote

Before this, you simply had to live in the area to vote.

1947 - Native Americans granted right to vote by some states

Miguel Trujillo, a Native American and former Marine, sues New Mexico for not allowing him to vote. He wins the court case and Arizona and New Mexico are required to allow all Native Americans to vote.

1952 - Asian Americans are granted the right to vote

This is a result of the McCarran-Walter Act, and it is only now that Asian Americans can become citizens and vote.

1957 - Native Americans living on reservations can vote in all 50 states

Utah is the final state to repeal legislation that prevents Native Americans living on reservations from voting. Even today, redistricting and limited access to polling stations make voting difficult for Native American communities throughout the United States.

1965 - Voting Rights Act passes

After years of pressure from the Civil Rights Movement, this act passes and makes many of the discriminatory voting laws that states had passed illegal, while providing a way for the federal



government to actually enforce the constitutional right to vote.

1971 - Voting age is lowered to 18

The 26th amendment is proposed by Senator Mike Mansfield from Montana to lower the voting age from 21 to 18. He argued that people who are old enough to fight for their country should be allowed a voice in electing their representatives.

2000 - Residents of US territories unable to vote in the US Presidential election

Though residents of colonies Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and the US Virgin Islands are citizens, a federal court declared they could not vote in presidential and congressional elections. This impacts more than 4 million people living in these areas. More information here:

<https://www.thoughtco.com/puerto-rico-matters-in-presidential-election-3322127>

2015 - Montana Secretary of State is challenged by Native Americans for violating the Voting Rights Act

Twelve plaintiffs sue the Montana Secretary of State, stating that elections offices, and thus opportunities to register and vote, were inaccessible to reservation communities. Ultimately, they requested that remote elections offices be set up on reservations in reservation communities to ensure access. The lawsuit also resulted in proposed legislation at the national level.



EVENT CARDS

George Washington Elected	Non-native women granted the right to vote in Wyoming
Religion restrictions to voting banned	Non-native women win the right to vote in Montana
All white men over 21 can vote	U.S. Representative Jeannette Rankin elected to represent Montana in Congress
Congress forbids states from preventing people from voting due to race	White women win the right to vote
Voting age is lowered to 18	Native Americans born in the United States granted citizenship & the right to vote
Women arrested after demanding the right to vote	US Citizenship becomes a requirement to vote
19th Amendment allowing women to vote was first introduced to Congress	Native Americans granted the right to vote by some states



Native Americans who give up their tribal affiliations are allowed to vote

Asian Americans are granted the right to vote

Montana Secretary of State is challenged by Native Americans for violating the Voter Rights Act

Native Americans living on reservations can vote in all 50 states

Residents of US Colonies unable to vote in the US Presidential election

Voting Rights Act is passed



DATE CARDS

1789	1826	1856
1870	1872	1878
1890	1914	1916
1924	1926	1947
1957	1965	1971
2015	1920	1887
2000	1952	



RESOURCES

Native American Right to Vote Timeline

<http://nativeamericannetroots.net/diary/352>

Montana Suffrage movement

<http://montanawomenshistory.org/suffrage/>

US Territories and the Right to Vote

<https://www.thoughtco.com/puerto-rico-matters-in-presidential-election-3322127>

Timeline

<https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2016/us-elections-2016-who-can-vote/index.html>

