Voter Suppression: Lesson Plan

**Topic**

Voter suppression refers to any measure that makes it more difficult for a certain group of eligible voters to cast their ballots. Often, these measures are justified as necessary to prevent voter fraud, or instances where a ballot is cast illegally by an ineligible voter or someone impersonating a voter at the polls. However, these tactics are often used to discourage certain people from voting altogether, and ultimately change the election outcome.

**Possible subjects/classes**

| History, Government, Social Studies | 30-45 minutes |

**Video link:**

https://academy4sc.org/topic/voter-suppression-the-battle-for-the-ballot/

**Objective:** *What will students know/be able to do at the end of class?*

Students will be able to...
- Define voter suppression.
- List examples of how voter suppression happens today.
- Articulate how and why voter suppression targets some demographic groups more than others.

**Key Concepts & Vocabulary**

Voting rights, voter registration, elections

**Materials Needed**

Worksheet, Internet access, Pencil and paper

**Before you watch**

*Turn & Talk:* Tell students to think about who was allowed to vote in the first American elections and talk about it with a partner or small group. Then, prompt them to think and discuss who is allowed to vote in our elections now.
### While you watch

Complete the While You Watch section of the Worksheet.

### After you watch/discussion questions

Complete the Short Answer section of the Worksheet as a class.

### Activity Ideas

**Research:** Give students 10-15 minutes to look up what voter suppression policies their specific state may or may not use. Then, make a list of notable policies on the board for the whole class. Make sure to discuss why each policy may be a form of voter suppression and who is most vulnerable. Some policies to look in include

- [Voter ID Laws](#)
- [Voter Registration Rules](#)
- [Voter Purging](#)
- [Felony Disenfranchisement](#)
- [Gerrymandering/Redistricting](#)

**Write a Letter:** Instruct students to write a letter to the government (state or federal) about voter suppression. Students should address the following:

- What voter suppression is
- Why voter suppression is unfair/undesirable
- One specific policy that can suppress voters and an explanation of how the policy works, the problem it presents, and a potential solution or policy change that could be made to make voting more accessible

### Sources/places to learn more

1. “Vote Suppression.” *Brennan Center for Justice*,
   [www.brennancenter.org/issues/ensure-every-american-can-vote/vote-suppression](http://www.brennancenter.org/issues/ensure-every-american-can-vote/vote-suppression).
2. “Fighting Voter Suppression.” *ACLU*,