



Voter Suppression: Lesson Plan

Topic	
<p>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.</p>	
Possible subjects/classes	Time needed
History, Government, Social Studies	30-45 minutes
Video link:	
https://academy4sc.org/topic/voter-suppression-the-battle-for-the-ballot/	
Objective: <i>What will students know/be able to do at the end of class?</i>	
<p>Students will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	
<p>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.</p>	



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.
2. "Fighting Voter Suppression." *ACLU*, <https://www.aclu.org/issues/voting-rights/fighting-voter-suppression>.
3. Abrams, Stacey et al. *Voter Suppression in U.S. Elections*, edited by Jim Downs, University of Georgia Press, 2020.