

MARTIN LUTHER KING

LESSON 3

VOTING RIGHTS IN THE USA

<p>Objectives/learning outcomes</p> <p>Pupils will:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the importance of the right to vote.• Understand how and why Black Americans were denied the right to vote.• Explain the importance of the right to vote and how they would ensure they had this right if they were denied it.	<p>Starter</p> <p>Class Election</p> <p>Conduct an election for an important change in your school e.g. school meals service, homework, length of the school day, a class president. Tell the pupils that they will be allowed to vote and make the decision. Use and adapt the ballot papers below and create a ballot box. Exclude some pupils. Tell them they will only be allowed to vote if they can guess the number of jelly beans in a jar or sweets in a bag. When the election is over ask the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Was this election conducted fairly?2. Did everyone in the class have a "voice" in this election?3. If ALL students in the classroom had been allowed to vote, would it be possible to have had a different outcome? Why might this be frustrating to the group that was left out? Why would it matter if they were left out?4. What could the pupils who were not allowed to vote most effectively do to obtain the right to vote in this classroom?
<p>Activities and homework</p> <p><u>Activity 1</u> Who should be allowed to vote?</p> <p><u>Activity 2</u> Voting qualification Literacy Tests</p> <p><u>Activity 3</u> The importance of using your vote</p> <p><u>Homework</u> The American Constitution</p>	<p>Plenary</p> <p>Ask pupils to feed back on their activity 3 task.</p> <p>If the right to vote was so important, how far would they go to ensure they were able to vote if they were denied it.</p>

STARTER ACTIVITY

<p><u>CLASS ELECTION</u> In the election for class president I want to vote for</p> <p>SMITH <input type="checkbox"/> JONES <input type="checkbox"/> ROBINSON <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><u>CLASS ELECTION</u> In the election for class president I want to vote for</p> <p>SMITH <input type="checkbox"/> JONES <input type="checkbox"/> ROBINSON <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><u>CLASS ELECTION</u> In the election for class president I want to vote for</p> <p>SMITH <input type="checkbox"/> JONES <input type="checkbox"/> ROBINSON <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><u>CLASS ELECTION</u> In the election for class president I want to vote for</p> <p>SMITH <input type="checkbox"/> JONES <input type="checkbox"/> ROBINSON <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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ACTIVITY 1**Who should be allowed to vote?****TASK**

Which groups are allowed to vote in the United Kingdom?

	The different Groups	Yes or No
1.	18 year olds	
2.	Citizens who are blind	
3.	Homeless	
4.	People committed to mental hospitals	
5.	People dishonourably discharged from the armed forces	
6.	People who have committed a crime	
7.	90 years olds	
8.	People with a disability	
9.	Non- English people	
10.	Citizens who are deaf	
11.	Citizens who cannot read	
12.	People in prison	
13.	Members of the House of Lords	

Answer

1. Y	2. Y	3. Y	4. Y	5. Y	6. Y	7. Y
8. Y	9. Y	10. Y	11. Y	12. N	13. N	

THE RIGHT TO VOTE

Explain how people have struggled to win the right to vote. Use the Suffragettes as an example. Voting is not only a freedom that we have the right to exercise, but we also have the responsibility to "voice" our opinions and feelings by voting.

Discuss the following with pupils:-

Some adults in the United Kingdom today do not exercise their right to vote in elections. Why do you think this is so? Is it important to vote? Should voting rights be limited to only certain people or even made compulsory as in Australia?

ACTIVITY 2

TASK

The literacy test was among the most grotesque examples of prejudice. Try giving one of the tests [either the Louisiana or Alabama] to your pupils and see if they can pass, therefore qualifying to vote. **Don't tell them what it is until they have completed the test. Give them 10 minutes.**

After pupils have completed the test explain that Blacks in the southern states have not always had the right to vote. Alabama and Louisiana for example virtually had denied the right to vote to Black Americans. Even though the American Civil War freed them from slavery and amendments to the U.S. Constitution gave Black citizenship and the right to vote, they were still denied it. In order to vote they were often given ridiculous "intelligence tests" when attempting to register to vote. Whites did not have to take these "tests" to qualify. Display the jar of jellybeans while explaining how Black men and women were sometimes asked to guess the number of jellybeans in a jar as an "intelligence test". Sometimes they were expected to recite the Declaration of Independence or perform in other ridiculous ways, just to be told they didn't qualify. Ask the pupils to describe how they felt when they had been expected to guess the number of jellybeans in the jar to qualify as a voter in the class election.

The State of Louisiana Literacy Test

This test is to be given to anyone who cannot prove a fifth grade education. Do what you are told to do in each statement, nothing more, and nothing less.

You have 10 minutes to complete the test.

Be careful as one wrong answer denotes failure of the test.

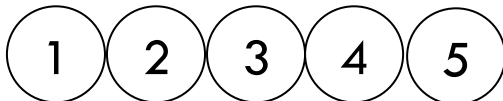
1. Draw a line around the number or letter of this sentence.
2. Draw a line under the last word in this line.
3. Cross out the longest word in this line.
4. Draw a line around the shortest word in this line
5. Circle the first letter of the alphabet in this line.
6. In the space below draw three circles, one inside (engulfed by) the other.
7. Above the letter X make a small cross.
8. Draw a line through the letter below that comes earliest in the alphabet

Z V S B D M K I T P H C

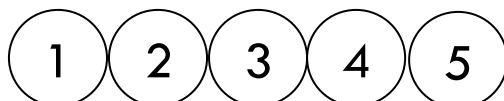
9. Draw a line through the two letters below that come last in the alphabet.

Z V S B D M K I T P H C

10. In the first circle below write the last letter of the first word beginning with "L"



11. Draw a line from circle 2 to circle 5 that will pass below circle 2 and above circle 4.



12. In the line below cross out each number that is more than 10 but less than 30

13. 31 16 48 29 53 47 22 37 98 26 20 25

14. Draw a line under the first letter after "h" and draw a line through the second letter after "j".

a b c d c f g h l j k l m n o p q

15. In the space below, write the word "noise" backwards and place a dot over what would be its second letter should it have been written forward.

16. Draw a triangle with a blackened circle that overlaps only its left corner.

17. Look at the line of numbers below, and place on the blank, the number that should come next.

2 4 8 16 _____

18. Look at the line of numbers below, and place on the blank, the number that should come next

3 6 9 _____ 15

19. Draw in the space below, a square with a triangle in it, and within that same triangle draw a circle with a black dot in it.

20. Spell backwards, forwards-

21. Paint the word vote upside down, but in the correct order.

22. Place a cross over the tenth letter in this line, a line under the first space in this sentence, and circle around the last the in the second line of this sentence.

23. Draw a figure that is square in shape. Divide it in half by drawing a straight line from its northeast corner to its opposite corner, and then divide it once more by drawing a broken line from the middle of its western side to the middle of its eastern side.

1965 Alabama Literacy Test

1. Which of the following is a right guaranteed by the Bill of Rights?

_____ Public Education

_____ Employment

_____ Trial by Jury

_____ Voting

2. The federal census of population is taken every five years.

_____ True _____ False

3. If a person is indicted for a crime, name two rights which he has.

5. A President elected at the general election in November takes office the following year on what date?

6. Which definition applies to the word "amendment?"

_____ Proposed change, as in a Constitution

_____ Make of peace between nations at war

_____ A part of the government

7. A person appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court is appointed for a term of

8. When the Constitution was approved by the original colonies, how many states had to ratify it in order for it to be in effect?

10. Person opposed to swearing in an oath may say, instead:

(solemnly)

11. To serve as President of the United States, a person must have attained:

_____ 25 years of age

_____ 35 years of age

_____ 40 years of age

_____ 45 years of age

13. The Supreme Court is the chief law making body of the state.

_____ True _____ False

14. If a law passed by a state is contrary to provisions of the U.S. Constitution, which law prevails?

15. If a vacancy occurs in the U.S. Senate, the state must hold an election, but meanwhile the place may be filled by a temporary appointment made by

16. A U.S. senator is elected for a term of _____ years.

17. Appropriation of money for the armed services can be only for a period limited to _____ years.

21. The Constitution protects an individual against punishments which are _____ and _____.

22. When a jury has heard and rendered a verdict in a case, and the judgment on the verdict has become final, the defendant cannot again be brought to trial for the same cause. _____ True _____ False

23. Name two levels of government which can levy taxes:

1965 Alabama Literacy Test Answers

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trial by Jury only 2. False (every 10 years) 3. Habeas Corpus (immediate presentation of charges); lawyer; speedy trial. 5. January 20 6. Proposed change, as in a Constitution 7. Life (with good behaviour) 8. Nine 10. Affirm 11. 35 13. False 14. U.S. Constitution 15. The governor 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Six 17. Two 21. Cruel and unusual 22. True 23. State and local
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Would you have past the Alabama Literacy Test?

Explain to the pupils that they have just taken one of the literacy tests Blacks had to take to qualify to vote. Most Whites couldn't have passed the literacy test at the time. A college educated Black person couldn't pass the voting literacy test because that person lacked the only important qualification to pass that test and that was a White skin.

Between August 1964 and July 1965, the State of Alabama used 100 different literacy tests to make it difficult for people to "study" for the test. Applicants were asked to pick a test at random from a loose-leaf notebook.

There were 68 questions. You had to get 90% to pass the test.

Discuss with pupils the following:-

1. How they would feel if you were denied the right to vote?
2. Why did White southerners want to prevent Blacks from voting?
3. What were they afraid of?

Especially in the South, there were many rural districts where Black Americans outnumbered Whites. White officials could be voted out of office and laws that were discriminatory in nature could be changed. Voting meant political power.

HOMWORK

The American Constitution

Excerpts from the U.S. Constitution

Amendment XIII (1865)

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

Amendment XIV (1868)

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor to deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Amendment XV (1870)

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, colour, or previous condition of servitude.

Excerpts	What did it promise the American people?
Amendment XIII (1865)	
Amendment XIV (1868)	
Amendment XV (1870)	

TASKS

1. Read the excerpts from the American Constitution. Complete the table by summarising what it promised the American people.
2. Explain why Black Americans felt that the American Constitution was not protecting them?