

## Chapter 1 : History Of Federal Voting Rights Laws | CRT | Department of Justice

*The Voting Rights Act of On June 6, , President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, also known as VRA, into law prohibiting all kinds of discrimination in voting. It also made any form of racial discrimination punishable by law.*

The Voting Rights Act of The Enactment By concerted efforts to break the grip of state disfranchisement had been under way for some time, but had achieved only modest success overall and in some areas had proved almost entirely ineffectual. The murder of voting-rights activists in Philadelphia, Mississippi, gained national attention, along with numerous other acts of violence and terrorism. President Johnson issued a call for a strong voting rights law and hearings began soon thereafter on the bill that would become the Voting Rights Act. Congress determined that the existing federal anti-discrimination laws were not sufficient to overcome the resistance by state officials to enforcement of the 15th Amendment. President Johnson signed the resulting legislation into law on August 6, Section 2 of the Act, which closely followed the language of the 15th amendment, applied a nationwide prohibition against the denial or abridgment of the right to vote on the literacy tests on a nationwide basis. Among its other provisions, the Act contained special enforcement provisions targeted at those areas of the country where Congress believed the potential for discrimination to be the greatest. Under Section 5 , jurisdictions covered by these special provisions could not implement any change affecting voting until the Attorney General or the United States District Court for the District of Columbia determined that the change did not have a discriminatory purpose and would not have a discriminatory effect. In addition, the Attorney General could designate a county covered by these special provisions for the appointment of a federal examiner to review the qualifications of persons who wanted to register to vote. The Voting Rights Act had not included a provision prohibiting poll taxes, but had directed the Attorney General to challenge its use. Virginia State Board of Elections, U. Between and the Supreme Court also issued several key decisions upholding the constitutionality of Section 5 and affirming the broad range of voting practices that required Section 5 review. As the Supreme Court put it in its decision upholding the constitutionality of the Act: Congress had found that case-by-case litigation was inadequate to combat wide-spread and persistent discrimination in voting, because of the inordinate amount of time and energy required to overcome the obstructionist tactics invariably encountered in these lawsuits. After enduring nearly a century of systematic resistance to the Fifteenth Amendment, Congress might well decide to shift the advantage of time and inertia from the perpetrators of the evil to its victims. The and Amendments Congress extended Section 5 for five years in and for seven years in During the hearings on these extensions Congress heard extensive testimony concerning the ways in which voting electorates were manipulated through gerrymandering, annexations, adoption of at-large elections, and other structural changes to prevent newly-registered black voters from effectively using the ballot. Congress also heard extensive testimony about voting discrimination that had been suffered by Hispanic, Asian and Native American citizens, and the amendments added protections from voting discrimination for language minority citizens. In , the Supreme Court held certain legislative multi-member districts unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment on the ground that they systematically diluted the voting strength of minority citizens in Bexar County, Texas. This decision in *White v. The Amendments* Congress renewed in the special provisions of the Act, triggered by coverage under Section 4 for twenty-five years. Congress also adopted a new standard, which went into effect in , providing how jurisdictions could terminate or "bail out" from coverage under the provisions of Section 4. Furthermore, after extensive hearings, Congress amended Section 2 to provide that a plaintiff could establish a violation of the Section without having to prove discriminatory purpose. The legislation eliminated the provision for voting examiners. Updated July 28,

## Chapter 2 : Voting Rights Act of 1965 » Resources » Surfnetkids

*Worksheet 4: "Tweet" the Voting Rights Act of Voting Rights Act excerpt "Tweet" 1. "AN ACT To enforce the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and for other purposes. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act shall be known as the "Voting Rights Act of " SEC. 2.*

They will examine the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and watch clips from the movie Selma. Most importantly, students will think critically about sources of information. Warm Up Activity Pass out Background one-pager for students to read. The right to vote was first guaranteed to black men in with the passage of the 15th Amendment. But for nearly years after, that right was systematically obstructed in many places across the nation. Even now, voting rights remain contentious, with portions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 having been struck down by the Supreme Court in 2013, and new voter ID laws sparking heated debate over the impact on voter participation. Play video clip "Application 2. Alabama was a flashpoint for civil rights battles. Furthermore, widespread poll taxes discouraged the poor and penalized those who chose to vote even if they succeeded in getting registered. By 1901, there were counties in Alabama where not a single black person had voted in any election for the previous 50 years. Play video clip "Give us the vote 3. In Selma, where only of 15, black citizens were registered, citizens continued their long fight against institutionalized racism. The national civil rights group, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee known as SNCC, started organizing in the area in 1960, but faced considerable resistance, particularly from segregationist Sheriff Jim Clark who utilized local posses to intimidate, arrest and flat-out beat up those engaged in voter drives. Play video clip "Join Us 4. Do you think you would have participated if you were alive in 1965? Why or why not? Video clips courtesy of Paramount Pictures Main Activity Explain to students that they are going to watch three short videos and analyze the content and critically think about the intended audiences for each different video. Have them think about the following questions: What audience do you think the video is intended for? What clues let you know? Who is the central leader or hero of the March? Think carefully if it is realistic that one person was responsible for so much or if that makes the story easier to tell. How are African-Americans portrayed? How are white Americans portrayed? What else do you notice? Make sure to give students time to write down their thoughts and space to express their thoughts on what they are seeing.

## Chapter 3 : Voting Rights Act of | Student Handouts

*This quiz and worksheet combination will show your understanding of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. During the quiz, you will be tested on areas such as the Selma protests and the case Shelby County v. Holder.*

**Securing the Right to Vote: Background** Throughout American history, African Americans have struggled to gain basic civil rights, such as the right to vote. When marchers gathered at the foot of the Edmund Pettus Bridge, in Selma, Alabama, on March 7, 1965, to demand voting rights, the nation was forced to acknowledge the depth and breadth of racial discrimination and bigotry that existed in the United States. In the century following the Civil War, African American citizens were consistently denied rights given to white Americans. By looking at political, social, economic, and cultural institutions of post-Civil War America, students will gain an understanding of the struggle for civil and human rights. The Selma-to-Montgomery march for the constitutional right to vote significantly advanced this nation closer toward its goal of "justice for all. The events that took place in Alabama ultimately caused the United States to reexamine how it addressed matters of race, human rights, economic empowerment, social justice, political justice, and basic civil rights. The public struggle for African Americans to be treated as first-class citizens pushed the United States to live up to its creed, so eloquently espoused in the documents upon which this nation was established. We are confronted with a moral issue. It is as old as the Scriptures and is as clear as the American Constitution. The heart of the question is whether all Americans are to be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities. So it was at Lexington and Concord. So it was a century ago at Appomattox. So it was last week in Selma, Alabama. There is no Negro problem. There is no southern problem. There is no northern problem. There is only an American problem. Many of the issues of civil rights are very complex and most difficult. But about this there can and should be no argument. Every American citizen must have the right to vote. Yet the harsh fact is that in many places in this country, men and women are kept from voting simply because they are Negroes. No law that we now have on the books. There is no Constitutional issue here. The command of the Constitution is plain. There is no moral issue. It is wrong--deadly wrong--to deny any of your fellow Americans the right to vote in this country. There is only the struggle for human rights. It is the effort of American Negroes to secure for themselves the full blessings of American life. Their cause must be our cause, too. And we shall overcome.

**Objectives** To investigate the conditions, such as Jim Crow laws and other segregation policies, under which African Americans lived in Alabama and other parts of the South from 1865 to 1965. To analyze the impact of the Selma-to-Montgomery voting rights march. To apply information gained from primary documents and class activities in understanding the strategies used by African Americans in pursuing the right to vote, and to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies.

**Motivation** Share the following quotations with the class: Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient Causes;. Registering to Vote To help students understand the difficulty African Americans faced in becoming registered voters prior to the passage of the Voting Rights Act, have them participate in this experiential voter registration activity. First, explain to the students that literacy tests were used in Alabama and six other states to prevent blacks from voting. White citizens were not required to take the test in order to register. The teacher will serve as the registrar and will determine who is "qualified" to vote. Set a time limit for completing the test in order to leave time for students to discuss the experience. Determine which students qualify to vote and allow students to discuss their reactions to the requirements. In Alabama, voters had to provide written answers to a twenty-page test on the Constitution and on state and local government.

**Document Analysis** Ask students to work in groups, with each group analyzing one of several key documents relevant to the voting rights struggle, using the Document Analysis Worksheet to guide its work. When the groups have completed the exercise, have them present their work to the entire class.

**Suggested Resources for this Activity.**

## Chapter 4 : Voting Rights Act of 1965 | Yahoo Answers

## DOWNLOAD PDF VOTING RIGHTS ACT OF 1965 WORKSHEET

*Katzenbach before the House Judiciary Committee on the proposed Voting Rights Act of , March 18, Statement of Hon. Robert Y. Button, Attorney General of the State of Virginia, March 29, President Lyndon Johnson's speech to Congress on voting rights: The American Promise, March 15, Statement and editorial from the Southern States Industrial Council, April 6, Letter from Mrs. E. Jackson in favor of the Voting Rights Act of , March 8,*

### Chapter 5 : Voting Rights Act | Scholastic

*The 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, President Johnson's signing of the Civil Rights Act of , the Voting Rights Act of , and the Immigration and Nationality Act of provide the backdrop for a series of lesson.*

### Chapter 6 : Every-Day Edits: Voting Rights Act of | Education World

*Voting Rights Act of Click for a PDF (portable document format) printable version of this Every-Day Edit activity. Scroll down or click for work sheet text and answer key.*

### Chapter 7 : Voting Rights Act Lesson Plan | PBS LearningMedia

*Library The Voting Rights Act of About; Blog; Careers; Contact; Donate; FAQ; Partners; Press; Research; Español.*

### Chapter 8 : NEA - Teaching About the Selma to Montgomery Marches, Grades

*Activity: Voting Rights Act jigsaw and discussion As a class, read Ballot Battles, Part 1: The Voting Right Act of found in An Illustrated History of the Voting Rights Act on the Lowdown.*