

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Pre-reading**
**Directions: Answer the question below:**

1. Today, we're going to learn about voting. Who do you think should have the right to vote in elections in the United States? Explain.

Students should feel free to share their

opinion.

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2. Now, we are going to watch a short video about the history of voting in America. Complete the True or False questions below by circling the correct answer:

Question	Statement	True or False
1	When George Washington was elected president, all men had the right to vote.	<del>True</del> or <del>False</del>
2	President Andrew Jackson worked hard to make sure that women would have the right to vote.	<del>True</del> or <del>False</del>
3	The 15th Amendment stated that a person could not be prevented from voting based on their race or skin color.	<b>True</b> or <del>False</del>
4	Once the 15th Amendment was passed, it was easy for African-Americans to vote.	<del>True</del> or <del>False</del>
5	The 19th Amendment technically gave all women the right to vote, but it was still hard for many African American women to actually vote.	<b>True</b> or <del>False</del>
6	The Voting Rights Act in 1965 made it easier for African-American men and women to vote.	<b>True</b> or <del>False</del>
7	The 26th Amendment gave people aged 18-20 the right to vote.	<b>True</b> or <del>False</del>



3. Based on the video we just watched, how would you describe the history of voting in America? What groups of Americans have had to consistently fight for their right to vote?

Answers will vary. However, students should explain that women and African-Americans have often been disenfranchised in America.

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# African American Suffragists

Margaret Gushue

In the United States, women didn't have the right to vote until the 19th amendment, which was passed in 1920. Until the law was passed, women fought tirelessly for the right to vote. These women were known as suffragists. In this informational text, Margaret Gushue discusses the African American suffragists who contributed to the fight for women's right to vote. As you read, answer the questions beside the text.

## WHOLE CLASS READING

**[1]** Imagine being in class and your teacher asks a question to the whole room. You're excited because you have the answer, and you cannot wait to share it. But the teacher will not call on you. The teacher doesn't even seem to notice that you have your hand in the air, waiting to be called on. Your fellow students don't seem to notice you either. No matter what you do, the teacher is not going to let you speak. Imagine how frustrating that would feel.

**[2]** Being ignored in class is a little like what women faced before the passing of the 19th amendment. Before this amendment — no matter your age, race, or job — if you were a woman, you were not allowed to vote. This meant you had no say when it came to politics. You had no power to change things. If you tried to vote, you could be sent to jail!

## QUESTIONS

### Paragraph 1-2:

**Turn and Talk:** What problem did women face? Why was this a problem?

- *Women were not allowed to vote.*
- *This was a problem because women didn't have a say in politics; their voices were ignored.*

## PARTNER READING

**[3]** Women had to fight to get the right to vote through marches and protests. Women's suffrage, which means women's right to vote, became a popular movement in the United States after the Civil War. The women who fought for these rights were known as suffragists. The larger movement ended in 1920 with the passing of the 19th amendment, which gave female U.S. citizens the right to vote.

## QUESTIONS

### Paragraph 3:

**Turn and Talk:** What did the suffragists fight for? Were they successful?

- *They fought for voting rights for women. They succeeded in 1920 when the 19th amendment was passed.*

## PARTNER READING

## QUESTIONS

[4] Before the passing of this amendment, African American women wanted to join the movement for voting rights, but the white suffragists would not let them. White suffragists tried to distance themselves from the African American suffragists. White women believed they had a better chance on their own of convincing men to let them vote. This meant that not only were African American women denied rights by the government for being women but they were also ignored by white women because of the color of their skin. African American women responded to being ignored by forming their own groups in the fight to become equal citizens.

[5] While there were many African American women who fought for women's suffrage, there were a few that became famous for their work. Harriet Tubman, for instance, was quite frail by the time women's suffrage became a popular issue, but she still gave speeches to crowds. Her message was that all people, regardless of gender or color, were equal and should be able to participate in politics. Harriet Tubman died before the 19th amendment was passed, but other African American women continued the fight, such as Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells, and Mary Church Terrell.

### Paragraph 4-5:

**Turn and Talk:** Why didn't the white suffragists want to work with the African American suffragists?

- *The white suffragists thought that men would be less likely to support their right to vote if they championed the cause of African-Americans too.*

**Find Evidence:** Underline the details that show how Harriet Tubman fought for voting rights.

## WHOLE CLASS READING

## QUESTIONS

### SOJOURNER TRUTH

[6] Sojourner Truth was born a slave but was freed at the age of 29, when New York ended slavery within the state in 1827. Once she was free, she traveled all over the United States, giving speeches about her life as a slave. Truth believed all people were equal, and her speeches helped others understand the struggles African Americans and women of all races faced. Her most famous speech is "Ain't I A Woman," which she gave at the 1851 Women's Convention. In it, she highlighted the different ways African American women were treated compared to white women. While Sojourner Truth did not live to see women granted the right to vote, her speeches and writing inspired other African American activists.

### Paragraph 6:

**Write:** How did Sojourner Truth fight for equality?

- *Sojourner Truth traveled around the U.S. and spoke about her experiences as a slave. She also gave many speeches advocating for African-American women's rights.*

## PARTNER READING

## QUESTIONS

### IDA B. WELLS

[7] Ida B. Wells was a writer inspired by the work of Sojourner Truth. Wells was never a slave, but she was still mistreated because of the color of her skin. Because of these experiences, she decided to become an activist who fought for equality for all people. At first, her work focused on equality for African Americans, but she later focused on women's rights. She learned that many African American women did not have the resources to learn about politics, which made her work even harder to educate them. She started the Alpha Suffrage club, bringing African American suffragists together to become a more powerful group.

[8] Ida B. Wells attended the National American Woman Suffrage Association parade in Washington D.C. in 1913. The white suffragists tried to make her and other African American women march at the back of the parade. Wells refused to participate until she was allowed to march alongside the white women. This story became widely told and drew attention to the struggles African American women faced within the women's suffrage movement.

### Paragraph 7-8:

**Write:** What are two ways that Ida B. Wells fought for African American women's right to vote?

- *Ida B. Wells created the Alpha Suffrage club. The club was for African American women who collectively fought for voting equality.*
- *Wells also attended the National American Women Suffrage Association parade in 1913 and persuaded the organizers to let her march along the white protesters.*

## INDEPENDENT READING

## QUESTIONS

### MARY CHURCH TERRELL

[9] Mary Church Terrell, like Ida B. Wells, became famous for her activism. She was born in 1863 to former slaves in Memphis, Tennessee. At a young age, she became aware of the treatment she received as both a woman and an African American. Terrell and Wells worked together multiple times in their lives to bring attention to the mistreatment of African Americans. Terrell wanted to be active in the women's suffrage movement but was overlooked due to the color of her skin. As a result, she founded the National Association of Colored Women and became their first president.

[10] Both Wells and Terrell became important members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (or NAACP). The group played a key role in the fight against

### Paragraph 9-10:

**Write:** What are two ways that Mary Church Terrell fought for African American women's right to vote?

- *Mary Church Terrell brought attention to the mistreatment of African Americans.*
- *To bring attention to the problem, she founded the National Association of Colored Women.*
- *She was also a key member of the NAACP, a group that fought for justice.*

racial injustice after women received the right to vote.

## Exit Ticket - Writing Activity

**Directions:** Complete the graphic organizer and then answer the writing prompt.

**Writing Question:** Write a summary that describes how African-American suffragists like Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Ida B. Wells, and Mary Church Terrell fought to gain African-American women the right to vote.

*Answers will vary. However, students should include some of the following main ideas:*

- *Harriet Tubman fought for voting rights by giving speeches about equality.*
- *Sojourner Truth fought for equal rights by giving speeches at events throughout the United States. Truth also made the argument that black women deserved the same rights as white women.*
- *Ida B. Wells fought for voting rights by creating an organization called the Alpha Suffrage club. This group helped African American women to organize and advocate for equal rights.*
- *Mary Church Terrell also created an organization that helped African American women organize and advocate for equal voting rights.*