

Voting Rights & Responsibilities

Enduring Understanding

The United States and all state governments establish certain criteria for voting.

Essential Questions

What are the voting rights and responsibilities of a United States citizen?

What is the voting process in Arkansas and in the United States?

What are the qualifications for voting?

How is voting a right and responsibility?

Student Shall Be Able To:

C.5.5.9 — Identify the rights and responsibilities of United States citizenship

- *voting*
- *obeying laws*
- *volunteerism*

C.5.5.11 — Identify the proper procedure for voting in the United States and in Arkansas

- *registration*
- *voting sites*
- *maintaining the right to vote*

C.5.5.12 — Discuss ways citizens participate in government at the state and local level

Materials Needed/Attachments

Attachment 1 — The United States Constitution, Summary & Amendments

Attachment 2 — Voter registration requirements

Attachment 3 — Voter registration application

Teaching Strategies

1. Organize the class into small groups of students and ask them to imagine that they have just formed a new club. Have them develop a set of rules, or by-laws, for the club's constitution. These rules should deal with the election of officers and admission of new members.
2. Then, ask each group to discuss how the following issues would be interpreted using their club's constitution. Members of each group should be prepared to discuss their group's opinions with the rest of the class. Possible questions could be:
 - *Should a student who joined the club two days ago be allowed to vote for club president? Why or why not?*

- *Should a student who is visiting from out-of-town and attending a meeting be allowed to vote in the club's election? Why or why not?*
 - *Should everyone interested in the club be allowed to join? If no, why not? What is the criteria for membership?*
 - *Do club members vote on all new members?*
3. Have students review United States Constitution Amendments 9, 10, 14, and 15, to understand where the state receives power to establish voting regulations, to define citizenship, and to identify it is the Constitution that gives citizens the right to vote. (See *Attachment 1, pages 3-4*, A Summary of the Constitution and Amendments of the United States)
 4. Follow with a discussion of qualifications (rules) that voters in Arkansas must meet in order to vote. (See *Attachment 2*, State of Arkansas Voter Registration Requirements)
 5. Use the "Voter Registration" form from the Secretary of State's office to illustrate how citizens must register to vote. (See *Attachment 3, pages 1-2*, Arkansas Voter Registration Application)

Assessments/Rubrics

Teacher observation of student participation in class discussion.

Extension

Students will create a brochure or pamphlet explaining the importance of voting. This material may be shared with parents at an open house/parent night.

The United States Constitution

A Summary of the Constitution of the United States

Preamble

Reasons for the Constitution: The people of the United States made this Constitution and put it into practice for the following reasons:

1. To have a better government than under the Articles of Confederation
2. To give everyone fair treatment
3. To keep peace within the country
4. To defend the country from enemies
5. To live comfortably and well
6. To keep people free both now and in the future.

Article 1

Legislative Branch

Description (Section 1): The legislative branch of government, or Congress, makes all the laws. It has two parts, or houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives.

House of Representatives (Section 2): Members of the House of Representatives serve a 2-year term. They are elected by the people. Representatives must be at least 25 years old, citizens of the United States for at least 7 years, and the citizens of the state they represent.

The number of representatives from each state depends on that state's population. In order to decide on the number of representatives from each state, the government must count the people every 10 years. This is called a census.

The Senate (Section 3): The Senate is made up of two senators from each state. Senators have a 6-year term. Senators must be at least 30 years old, citizens of the United States for at least 9 years, and citizens of the state they represent.

The Vice President of the United States is in charge of the Senate, but may only vote in case of a tie.

Rules (Sections 4-7): Instructions on how to operate both the House and the Senate are covered. Behavior of members, record keeping, pay, and how a bill becomes a law are noted.

Duties (Sections 8-10): The exact duties of Congress are listed. Congress makes all money and trade laws. Congress decides how people can become citizens of the United States and can declare war if necessary. Powers Congress and the states do not have are also listed.



The United States Capitol

Article II

Executive Branch

Description (Section 1): The executive branch is made up of the President of the United States and those who help carry out laws passed by Congress. The President manages the government. A President must have been born in the United States, must be at least 35 years old, and must have lived in the United States for at least 14 years.

Duties (Sections 2-4): Some of the President's jobs include carrying out the laws made by Congress, responsibility for all the armed forces, pardoning crimes, and reporting to Congress at least once a year on what the nation is doing. The President makes treaties and appoints government leaders; the Senate must give its approval.

If the President does wrong, he may be removed from office.



The White House

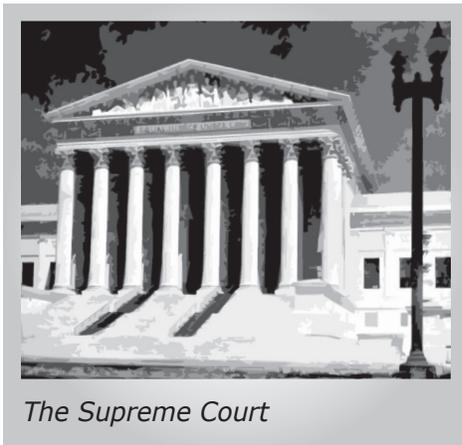
Article III

Judicial Branch

Description (Section 1): The judicial branch of government is the federal court system. The Supreme Court is the nation's highest court. It has the final say in all matters of law. Judges are appointed, not elected to office.

Duties (Section 2): The federal courts have a say in all cases that are not entirely within a state.

Treason (Section 3): The crime of treason, trying to overthrow the government, is explained.



The Supreme Court

Article IV

The States

Rules about the states (Sections 1-4): All states must accept acts, records and laws of other states. A citizen of one state must be given the same rights as the citizens of another state he or she may be in. The governor of one state may send an accused criminal from another state back to that state for trial.

New states may be added to the United States. The United States government will protect all states from enemies.

Article V

Amendments

Making changes: The Constitution may be amended, or changed.

Article VI

Highest Law

Above all others: The Constitution of the United States is the highest law in the land. State laws must be under this law. All national and state lawmakers and officers must support the Constitution.

Article VII

Passing the Constitution

Ratification: This Constitution becomes law when 9 of the 13 states ratify it, or approve it.

Amendments

Amendment I: Congress may not make rules to change freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, or the right of people to come together in a peaceful way or to end petitions to their government.

Amendment II: The people have the right to keep and bear arms.

Amendment III: During peacetime, the government cannot make citizens keep soldiers in their homes.

Amendment IV: People or their homes may not be searched unreasonably.

Amendment V: Persons accused of serious crimes have the right to a jury trial. They may not be forced to give evidence against themselves. Their lives, freedom and property may not be taken from them unfairly. If the government takes a person's property for public use, it must pay the owner for it.

Amendment VI: Persons accused of serious crimes have the right to a speedy and public trial. They must be told of the charges against them. They have the right to legal representation. They have the right to see and question those who accuse them.

Amendment VII: In most cases, there must be a right to a jury trial.

Amendment VIII: It is illegal to require excessive bail, impose excessive fines, and inflict cruel and unusual punishment to others.

Amendments IX and X: If the Constitution does not give a certain right to the United States government, and also does not forbid a state government to have that right, the states and the people have it.

Amendment XI: The power of the judicial branch is limited to certain kinds of cases.

Amendment XII: Electors vote for President and Vice President separately.

Amendment XIII: Slavery may not exist in the United States.

Amendment XIV: People born in the United States or naturalized here are United State citizens. They are also citizens of the state in which they live. States may not make laws that limit the rights of citizens of the United States. They may not take away a person's life or freedom of property unfairly. They must treat all people equally under the law.

The United States Constitution

- Amendment XV:** No citizen may be denied the right to vote because of race.
- Amendment XVI:** Congress has the power to collect taxes.
- Amendment XVII:** United States Senators are elected by the people.
- Amendment XVIII:** Liquor may no longer be manufactured or sold in the United States.
- Amendment XIX:** No citizen may be denied the right to vote because of sex.
- Amendment XX:** Presidents start their new term on January 20; Congress starts its new term on January 3.
- Amendment XXI:** The Eighteenth Amendment to this Constitution is repealed, or taken back.
- Amendment XXII:** Presidents are limited to two terms in office.
- Amendment XXIII:** Residents of Washington, D.C., have the right to vote for President.
- Amendment XXIV:** Citizens need not pay a tax in order to vote for President, Senators or members of Congress.
- Amendment XXV:** In case the President becomes too ill to carry on the job, the Vice President will take over as Acting President until the President is well.
- Amendment XXVI:** No citizen who is 18 years of age or older may be denied the right to vote because of age.
- Amendment XXVII:** If Senators and Representatives vote to increase or decrease their pay, the change in their pay cannot take effect until a federal election has taken place.

United States Constitutional Amendments Regarding the Right to Vote

<i>Amendment</i>	<i>Year Passed</i>	<i>Reason Right to Vote May Not Be Denied</i>
XV	1870	"race, color, or previous condition of servitude"
XIX	1920	"on account of sex"
XXIV	1964	"failure to pay any poll tax or other tax"
XXVI	1971	"any citizen 18 years of age or older"



State of Arkansas Voter Registration Requirements

To register to vote in Arkansas you must:

- Be a United States citizen
- Be an Arkansas resident (residing in Arkansas at least 31 days before the first election in which you will vote).
- Be age 18 or turn 18 on or before the next election.
- Not be a convicted felon whose sentence has not been discharged or pardoned.
- Not be presently adjudged as mentally incompetent as to your ability to vote by a court of competent jurisdiction.
- Not be registered elsewhere — in another county in Arkansas or another state.



Registering to Vote

Secretary of State
ATTN: Voter Registration
P. O. Box 8111
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-8111

First
Class
Postage
Required

From:

Deadline Information

To qualify to vote in the next election, you must apply to register to vote 30 days before the election. If you mail this form, it must be postmarked by that date. You may also present it to a voter registration agency representative by that date. If you miss the deadline you will not be registered in time to vote in that election.

If you are qualified and the information on your form is complete, you will be notified of your voting precinct by your local County Clerk.

To Mail

Fold form on middle perforation, remove plastic strip, seal at bottom, stamp and mail.

Questions?
Call your local County Clerk
or
Secretary of State's Office Voter Services
1-800-482-1127
TDD 1-800-262-4704

Contact your County Clerk if you have not received confirmation of this application within two weeks.