

Voters and Voter Behavior

“It is not enough that people have the right to vote. . . . People must have the reason to vote as well.”

—Jesse Jackson (1988)

People who have struggled to win the right to vote know how important it is. Although, since 1789, suffrage has expanded to include many more people—notably African Americans and women—many Americans do not exercise this important right. A variety of factors influence whether and how people vote.



◆ *Stump Speaking*, a hand-colored engraving by Louis-Adolphe Gautier, 1856, shows a candidate addressing voters.



Standards Preview

H-SS 12.2.4 Understand the obligations of civic-mindedness, including voting, being informed on civic issues, volunteering and performing public service, and serving in the military or alternative service.

H-SS 12.5.4 Explain the controversies that have resulted over changing interpretations of civil rights, including those in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Peña*, and *United States v. Virginia* (VMI).

H-SS 12.6.4 Describe the means that citizens use to participate in the political process (e.g., voting, campaigning, lobbying, filing a legal challenge, demonstrating, petitioning, picketing, running for political office).

H-SS 12.6.6 Analyze trends in voter turnout; the causes and effects of reapportionment and redistricting, with special attention to spatial districting and the rights of minorities; and the function of the Electoral College.

Chapter 6 in Brief

SECTION 1

The Right to Vote (pp. 148–150)

- ★ The history of the expansion of the right to vote in the United States can be divided into five distinct steps.
- ★ The Constitution places five restrictions on the States' power to set voting qualifications.

SECTION 2

Voter Qualifications (pp. 152–157)

- ★ All of the States set citizenship, residence, and age requirements for voting.
- ★ Other voting qualifications have been imposed by various States over time. Literacy tests and tax payment have been eliminated; registration is required in all but one State today.

SECTION 3

Suffrage and Civil Rights (pp. 159–163)

- ★ The 15th Amendment, ratified in 1870, declared that the right to vote cannot be denied to a citizen because of race.
- ★ Southern States used a variety of devices to circumvent the 15th Amendment and deny African Americans the vote. These tactics included literacy tests, white primaries, and gerrymandering.
- ★ Congress finally took action to protect minority voting rights in the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, and 1964.
- ★ The Voting Rights Act of 1965 and its later amendments finally ensured African American suffrage.

SECTION 4

Voter Behavior (pp. 164–172)

- ★ Millions of Americans who are qualified to vote do not do so.
- ★ Those who choose not to vote often lack a feeling of political efficacy. Age, education, income, and geography also affect whether a person is likely to vote or not.
- ★ Sociological factors—such as occupation, gender, and ethnic background—influence a person's voting choices.
- ★ Psychological factors—including party identification and perception of the candidates and issues—also contribute to voter behavior.



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1

The Right to Vote

Section Preview

OBJECTIVES

1. **Summarize** the history of voting rights in the United States.
2. **Identify and explain** constitutional restrictions on the States' power to set voting qualifications.

WHY IT MATTERS

Democratic government can succeed only if its citizens are willing to vote. The history of the United States has been marked by a steady expansion of the electorate through the elimination of restrictions on voting qualifications.

POLITICAL DICTIONARY

- ★ **suffrage**
- ★ **franchise**
- ★ **electorate**

Soon, you will be eligible to vote—but will you exercise that right? The record suggests that while *you* may do so, many of your friends will not, at least not for some time. The record also suggests that some of your friends will never vote. Yet, clearly, the success of democratic government depends on popular participation, and, in particular, on the regular and informed exercise of the right to vote.

The History of Voting Rights

The Framers of the Constitution purposely left the power to set suffrage qualifications to each State. **Suffrage** means the right to vote. **Franchise** is another term with the same meaning.¹

Expansion of the Electorate

When the Constitution went into effect in 1789, the right to vote in the United States was restricted to white male property owners. In fact, probably not one in fifteen adult white males could vote in elections in the different States. Benjamin Franklin often lampooned this situation. He told of a man whose only property was a jackass and noted that the man would lose the right to vote if his jackass died. “Now,” asked Franklin, “in whom is the right of suffrage? In the man or the jackass?”

Today, the size of the American **electorate**—the potential voting population—is truly impressive. Some 220 million people, nearly all citizens who are at least 18 years of age, can now qualify to vote. That huge number is a direct result of the legal definition of suffrage. In other words, it is the result of those laws that determine who can and cannot vote. It is also the result of some 200 years of continuing, often bitter, and sometimes violent struggle.

The history of American suffrage since 1789 has been marked by two long-term trends. First, the nation has experienced the gradual elimination of several restrictions on the right to vote. These restrictions were based on such factors as

¹Originally, the Constitution had only two suffrage provisions. Article I, Section 2, Clause 1 requires each State to allow anyone qualified to vote for members of “the most numerous Branch” of its own legislature to vote as well for members of the national House of Representatives. Article II, Section 1, Clause 2 provides that presidential electors be chosen in each State “in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct.”



▲ These historical flags (left to right: pre-1777, c. 1820, c. 1865) illustrate the expansion of the nation and growth of the electorate.

religious belief, property ownership, tax payment, race, and sex. Second, a significant share of what was originally the States' power over the right to vote has gradually been assumed by the Federal Government.

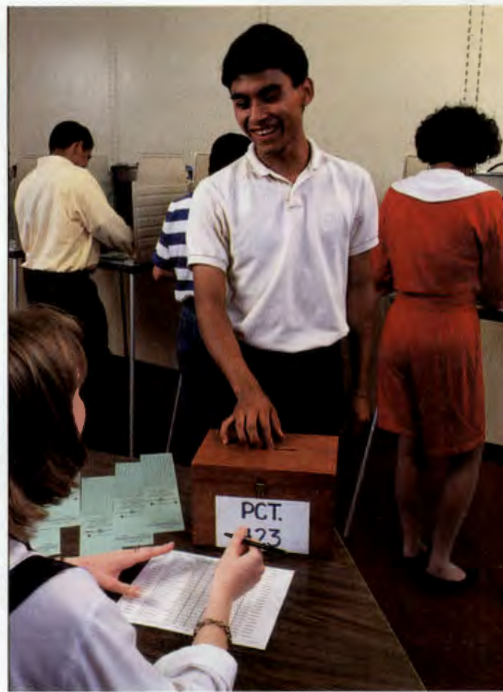
Extending Suffrage: The Five Stages

The growth of the American electorate to its present size and shape has come in five fairly distinct stages. The two trends described above—elimination of voting restrictions and growing federal control over voting—are woven through those stages. You will see several illustrations of both of these trends over the course of this chapter.

1. The first stage of the struggle to extend voting rights came in the early 1800s. Religious qualifications, instituted in colonial days, quickly disappeared. No State has had a religious test for voting since 1810. Then, one by one, States began to eliminate property ownership and tax payment qualifications. By mid-century, almost all white adult males could vote in every State.

2. The second major effort to broaden the electorate followed the Civil War. The 15th Amendment, ratified in 1870, was intended to protect any citizen from being denied the right to vote because of race or color. Still, for nearly another century, African Americans were systematically prevented from voting, and they remained the largest group of disenfranchised citizens in the nation's population.

3. The 19th Amendment prohibited the denial of the right to vote because of sex. Its ratification in 1920 completed the third expansion



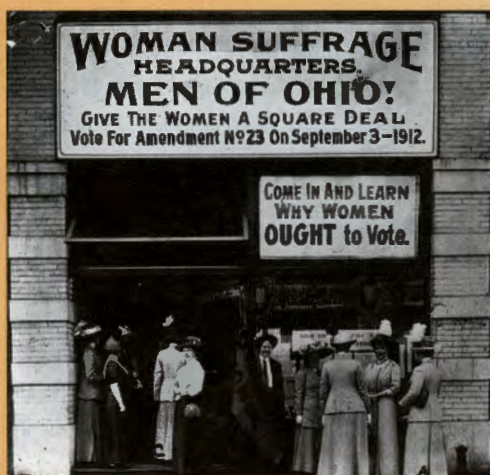
◀ This 18-year-old is casting a vote for the first time.

Critical Thinking
Do you think 18 is the right minimum age for voting? Why or why not?
H-SS 12.2.4

of suffrage. Wyoming, while still a territory, had given women the vote in 1869. By 1920 more than half of the States had followed that lead.

4. A fourth major extension took place during the 1960s. During that time, federal legislation and court decisions focused on securing African Americans a full role in the electoral process in all States. With the passage and vigorous enforcement of a number of civil rights acts, especially the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and its later extensions, racial equality finally became fact in polling booths throughout the country.

The 23rd Amendment, passed in 1961, added the voters of the District of Columbia to the presidential electorate. The 24th Amendment, ratified in 1964, eliminated the poll tax



◀ **Suffragist Struggle**
American suffragists first demanded the right to vote in 1848 at a meeting in Seneca Falls, New York. It took until 1920 to achieve ratification of the 19th Amendment, extending the vote to women in every State in the country.
H-SS 12.5.4

(as well as any other tax) as a condition for voting in any federal election.

5. The fifth and latest expansion of the electorate came with the adoption of the 26th Amendment in 1971. It provides that no State can set the minimum age for voting at more than 18 years of age. In other words, those 18 and over were given the right to vote by this amendment.

The Power to Set Voting Qualifications

The Constitution does not give the Federal Government the power to set suffrage qualifications. Rather, that matter is reserved to the States. The Constitution does, however, place five restrictions on how the States use that power.

1. Any person whom a State allows to vote for members of the “most numerous branch” of its own legislature must also be allowed to vote for representatives and senators in Congress.² This restriction is of little real meaning today. With only minor exceptions, each of the States allows the same voters to vote in all elections within the State.

2. No State can deprive any person of the right to vote “on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude” (15th Amendment).³

3. No State can deprive any person of the right to vote on account of sex (19th Amendment).⁴

4. No State can require payment of any tax as a condition for taking part in the nomination

or election of any federal officeholder. That is, no State can levy any tax in connection with the selection of the President, the Vice President, or members of Congress (24th Amendment).

5. No State can deprive any person who is at least 18 years of age of the right to vote because of age (26th Amendment).⁵

Beyond these five restrictions, remember that no State can violate any other provision in the Constitution in the setting of suffrage qualifications—or in anything else that it does. A case decided by the Supreme Court in 1975, *Hill v. Stone*, illustrates this point.

The Court struck down a section of the Texas constitution that declared that only those persons who owned taxable property could vote in city bond elections. The Court found the drawing of such a distinction for voting purposes—between those who do and those who do not own taxable property—to be an unreasonable classification, prohibited by the 14th Amendment’s Equal Protection Clause.

²Article I, Section 2, Clause 1; the 17th Amendment extended the “most numerous branch” provision to the election of senators.

³The phrase “previous condition of servitude” refers to slavery. This amendment does not guarantee the right to vote to African Americans, or to anyone else. Instead, it forbids discrimination on these grounds when the States set suffrage qualifications.

⁴This amendment does not guarantee the right to vote to women as such. Technically, it forbids States the power to discriminate against males or females in establishing suffrage qualifications.

⁵This amendment does not prevent any State from allowing persons younger than age 18 to vote. It does prohibit a State from setting a maximum age for voting.

Section 1 Assessment

Key Terms and Main Ideas

1. Describe two long-term trends that have characterized the history of **suffrage** in the United States.
2. Describe five distinct stages in the growth of the American **electorate**.
3. Who exercises the **franchise**?
4. What restrictions does the Constitution place on the States in setting suffrage qualifications?

Critical Thinking

5. **Demonstrating Reasoned Judgment** It is the year 1970. Suppose that you are a young adult testifying before Congress in favor of granting the vote to 18-year-olds. What arguments would you present in order to make your case?



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6. **Drawing Inferences** Why do you think the Federal Government took more and more control over the setting of voter qualifications? Why could the States not have accomplished the same ends?

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Skills for Life

Casting Your Vote



H-SS 12.6.4

Why have people risked their lives to get and keep the right to vote? In the United States, we tend to take this right for granted. Yet if we were ever deprived of it, we would surely come to recognize its great value.

The voting process may vary slightly from place to place, but in general, these steps apply:

1. Determine if you are eligible to vote. To qualify to vote, you must be an American citizen at least 18 years of age and a resident of the State in which you vote.

2. Register to vote. In every State except North Dakota, you must register to vote. You can register locally, usually at city hall or the county courthouse. Registration tables are often set up in shopping malls, supermarkets, libraries, and fire stations before an election. You can register by mail, and in many places, via the Internet. To register you will need proof of your age, such as a birth certificate.

3. Study the candidates and issues. Identify the candidates for each office and the duties of the office. Then research the candidates' views on major issues. Besides voting for candidates for office, voters often have the opportunity to directly approve or reject proposed State and local



laws. Don't wait until you are in the voting booth to become familiar with these issues.

4. Go to your polling place. In many States, voters receive a voter registration card identifying their precinct and polling place. Newspapers often publish lists of polling places prior to an election. Polls are usually open from 7:00 or 8:00 A.M. to 7:00 or 8:00 P.M. At the polling place, your name will be checked against a list of registered voters to make sure you are eligible to vote. A growing number of States now require all voters to show some proof of their identity, such as a driver's license, passport, or birth certificate. You will be directed to a booth with some type of voting device, or you will be given a paper ballot and directed to a voting booth.

5. Cast your vote. Follow the instructions on the voting device or ballot, so your vote will be counted properly. Do not feel rushed. If you have a question, ask an official. Make sure you've made a choice in every contest in which you wish to vote.

Test for Success

(a) Brainstorm at least three possible sources of voter information for voters in your area. (b) What sources would you consider most reliable?

2

Voter Qualifications

Section Preview

OBJECTIVES

1. **Identify** the universal requirements for voting in the United States.
2. **Explain** the other requirements that States have used or still use as voting qualifications.

WHY IT MATTERS

All States have citizenship, residence, and age requirements for voting. Other voting qualifications differ from State to State. Some requirements—especially those that were used to disenfranchise certain groups—have been eliminated over time.

POLITICAL DICTIONARY

- ★ **transient**
- ★ **registration**
- ★ **purge**
- ★ **poll books**
- ★ **literacy**
- ★ **poll tax**

Are you qualified to vote? Probably not—at least not yet. Do you know why? In this section, you will see how the States, including yours, determine who can vote. You will also see that the various qualifications they set are not very difficult to meet.

Universal Requirements

Today, every State requires that any person who wants to vote must be able to satisfy qualifications based on three factors: (1) citizenship, (2) residence, and (3) age. The States have some leeway in shaping the details of the first two of these factors; they have almost no discretion with regard to the third one.

Citizenship

Aliens—foreign-born residents who have not become citizens—are generally denied the right



▲ These people are participating in a ceremony making them American citizens—one qualification for voting.

to vote in the United States. Still, nothing in the Constitution says that aliens cannot vote, and any State could allow them to do so if it chose. At one time about a fourth of the States permitted those aliens who had applied for naturalization to vote. Typically, the western States did so to help attract settlers.⁶

Only two States now draw any distinction between native-born and naturalized citizens with regard to suffrage. The Minnesota constitution requires a person to have been an American citizen for at least three months before he or she can vote in elections there. And the Pennsylvania constitution says that one must have become a citizen at least one month before an election in order to vote in that State.

Residence

In order to vote in this country today, one must be a legal resident of the State in which he or she wishes to cast a ballot. In most States a person must have lived in the State for at least a certain period of time before he or she can vote.

The States adopted residence requirements for two reasons: (1) to keep a political machine from importing (bribing) enough outsiders to affect the outcome of local elections (a once common practice), and (2) to allow new voters

⁶Arkansas, the last State in which aliens could vote, adopted a citizenship requirement in 1926. In a few States, local governments can permit noncitizens to vote in local contests—e.g., city council elections—and a handful do.

at least some time to become familiar with the candidates and issues in an election.

For decades, every State imposed a fairly lengthy residence requirement—typically, a year in the State, 60 or 90 days in the county, and 30 days in the local precinct or ward.⁷ The requirement was a longer one in some southern States—for example, one year in the State, six months in the county, and three months in the precinct in Alabama, Louisiana, and South Carolina, and a year in the State, a year in the county, and six months in the precinct in Mississippi.

Residence requirements are not nearly so long today. In fact, most States now require that a voter be a legal resident but attach *no* time period to that qualification. About a fourth of them say that a voter must have lived in a State for at least 30 days. In a few, the period is somewhat shorter—for example, 29 days in Arizona, 28 in Kentucky, 20 in Minnesota, and 10 in Wisconsin.⁸

Today's much shorter requirements are a direct result of a 1970 law and a 1972 Supreme Court decision. In the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1970, Congress banned any requirement of longer than 30 days for voting in presidential elections.⁹ In *Dunn v. Blumstein*, 1972, the Supreme Court found Tennessee's requirement—at the time, a year in the State and 90 days in the county—unconstitutional. The Court held such a lengthy requirement to be an unsupportable discrimination against new residents and so in conflict with the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause. The Supreme Court said that "30 days appears to be an ample period of time." Election law and practice among the States quickly accepted that standard.

Nearly every State does prohibit **transients**, persons living in the State for only a short time, from gaining a legal residence there. Thus, a traveling sales agent, a member of the armed services, or a college student usually cannot vote in a State where he or she has only a temporary physical

⁷Recall, the precinct is the smallest unit of election administration; see page 140. The ward is a unit into which cities are often divided for the election of members of the city council.

⁸Until recently, Arizona imposed a 50-day requirement period. The Supreme Court upheld Arizona's residence law in *Marston v. Lewis* in 1973, but it also declared that that law "approaches the outer constitutional limits."

⁹The Supreme Court upheld this in *Oregon v. Mitchell* in 1970.



"THAT'S WHAT'S THE MATTER."
BOSS TWEED. "As long as I count the votes,
what are you going to do about it? say?"

Interpreting Political Cartoons This 1870 cartoon depicts the "boss" of a corrupt New York City political "machine." **How do you think a dishonest administration might arrange to "count the votes" to its own advantage?**

residence. In several States, however, the courts have held that college students who claim the campus community as their legal residence can vote there.

Age

The 26th Amendment, added to the Constitution in 1971, declares:

FROM THE
Constitution

"The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age."

—26th Amendment

Thus, no State may set the minimum age for voting in any election at more than 18. In other words, the amendment extends suffrage to citizens who are at least 18 years of age. Notice, however, that any State could set the age at less than 18, if it chose to do so.

Until the 26th Amendment was adopted, the generally accepted age requirement for voting was 21. In fact, up to 1970, only four States had put the age under 21. Georgia was the first State to allow 18-year-olds to vote; it did so in 1943, in the midst of World War II. Kentucky followed suit in 1955. Alaska entered the Union in 1959 with the



Interpreting Political Cartoons (a) What attitudes make this cartoon character a nonvoter? (b) What is the cartoonist's opinion of these attitudes?

voting age set at 19, and Hawaii became a State later that same year with a voting age of 20.

Both Alaska and Hawaii set the age above 18 but below 21 to avoid potential problems caused by high school students voting in local school-district elections. Whatever the fears at the time, there have been no such problems in any State since the passage of the 26th Amendment.

Efforts to lower the voting age to 18 nationwide began in the 1940s, during World War II. These efforts were capped by the adoption of the 26th Amendment in 1971, during the war in Vietnam. That amendment was ratified more quickly than any other amendment to the Constitution. This fact is testament to the emotional weight of the principal argument in its favor: "Old enough to fight, old enough to vote."

How have 18-to-20-year-olds responded to the 26th Amendment? In short, not very well. In election after election, young voters are much less likely to vote than any other age group in the electorate. In 1972, 48 percent of the 18-to-20 age group voted, but by 2000 that figure had plummeted to 28 percent. It did rise in 2004, and substantially—to nearly 38 percent. But contrast that figure with the turnout of Americans 65 and older. Despite the infirmities that may accompany their age, their rate regularly exceeds 60 percent, and it did so again in 2004.

In a growing number of States, some 17-year-olds can now cast ballots in primary elections.

Those States allow anyone whose 18th birthday falls after the primary but before the general election to vote in the primary election.

One State, Nebraska, has come very close to effectively lowering the voting age to 17 for all elections. There, any person who will be 18 by the Tuesday following the first Monday in November can qualify to vote in any election held during that calendar year.

Other Qualifications

The States have imposed a number of other qualifications over time—notably, requirements based on literacy, tax payment, and registration. Only registration has survived as a significant requirement.

Registration

Forty-nine States—all except North Dakota—require that most or all voters be registered to vote. **Registration** is a procedure of voter identification intended to prevent fraudulent voting. It gives election officials a list of those persons who are qualified to vote in an election. Several States also use voter registration to identify voters in terms of their party preference and, thus, their eligibility to take part in closed primaries.

Voter registration became a common feature of State election law in the early 1900s. Today, most States require all voters to register in order to vote in any election held within the State. A few do not impose the requirement for all elections, however. In Wisconsin, for example, only those in urban areas must register to vote.¹⁰

Typically, a prospective voter must register his or her name, age, place of birth, present address, length of residence, and similar facts. The information is logged by a local official, usually a registrar of elections or the county clerk. A voter typically remains registered unless or until he or she moves, dies, is convicted of a serious crime, or is committed to a mental institution.

State law directs local election officials to review the lists of registered voters and to remove the names of those who are no longer eligible to

¹⁰Wisconsin does not require registration by voters who live in rural areas or in cities with populations of less than 10,000.

vote. This process is known as **purging**, and it is usually supposed to be done every two or four years. Unfortunately, the requirement is often ignored. Where it is, the **poll books** (the official lists of qualified voters in each precinct) soon become clogged with the names of a great many people who, for one reason or another, are no longer eligible to vote.

There are some who think that the registration requirement should be abolished, everywhere. They see the qualification as a bar to voting, especially by the poor and less educated.

Those critics buttress their case by noting that voter turnout began to decline in the early 1900s, just after most States adopted a registration requirement. They also point to the fact that voter turnout is much higher in most European democracies than in the United States. In those countries voter registration is not a matter of individual choice; by law, public officials must enter the names of all eligible citizens on registration lists. The United States is the only democratic country

in which each person decides whether or not he or she will register to vote.

Most people who have studied the problem favor keeping the registration requirement as a necessary defense against fraud. However, they also favor making the process a more convenient one. In short, they see the problem in these terms: Where is the line between making it so easy to vote that fraud is encouraged, and making it so difficult that legitimate voting is discouraged?

Most States have eased the registration process over the last several years, and in 1993 Congress passed a law that required every State (but North Dakota) to do so. That law, dubbed the "Motor Voter Law," became effective in 1995. It directs every State to (1) allow all eligible citizens to register to vote when they apply for or renew a driver's license; (2) provide for voter registration by mail; and (3) make registration forms available at the local offices of State employment, welfare, and other social service agencies. The Federal Election Commission reports that by 2000 some

Watched the campaign on television



Gave money to a campaign



Interpreting Graphs

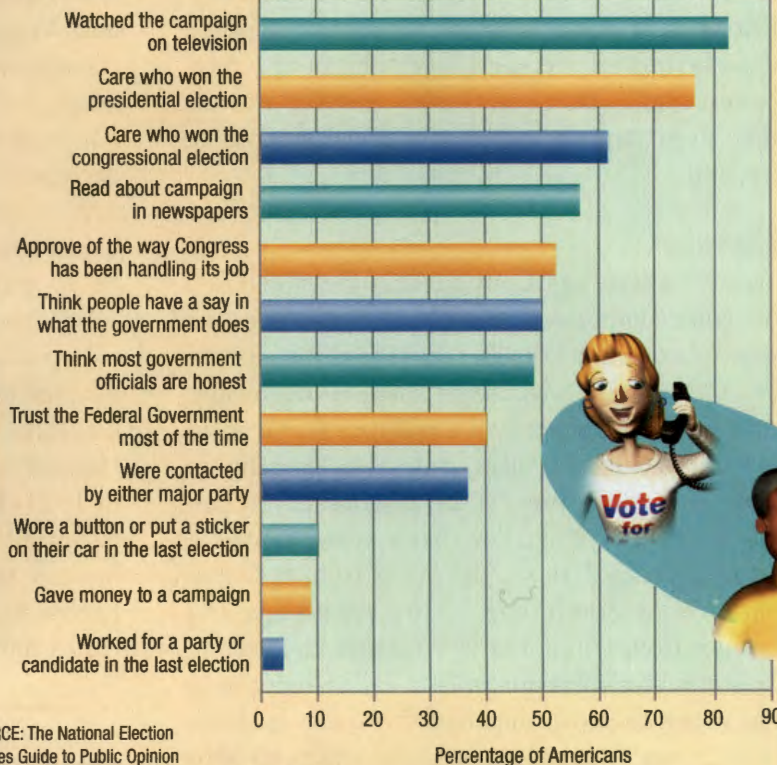
(a) Approximately what percentage of Americans participate in some way in political campaigns?

(b) Judging by the attitudes shown in the graph, what could be done to increase that participation?

H-SS 12.6.4

Political Participation and Awareness in America

Percentage of Americans who...



Were contacted by either major party



SOURCE: The National Election Studies Guide to Public Opinion and Electoral Behavior, University of Michigan, 2000

Interpreting Political Cartoons Voter literacy tests were often used to discourage African American voters.

According to the cartoonist, what unexpected results did these tests sometimes have?



“By th’ way, what’s that big word?”

8 million persons had registered to vote as a direct result of the Motor Voter Law.

The law also requires every State to mail a questionnaire to each of its registered voters every four years, so that the poll books can be purged for deaths and changes of residence. It also forbids the States to purge for any other reason, including failure to vote.

Maine and Wisconsin allow voters to register at any time, up to and including election day. Elsewhere a voter must be registered by some date before an election, often 20 or 30 days beforehand.¹¹ That cutoff gives election officials time to prepare the poll books for an upcoming election.

Literacy

Today, no State has a suffrage qualification based on voter **literacy**—a person’s ability to read or write. At one time, the literacy requirement could be, and in many places was, used to make sure that a qualified voter had the capacity to cast an informed ballot. It also was used unfairly in many places to prevent or discourage certain groups from voting. For many years, it was a device to keep African Americans from voting in parts of the South, and Native Americans and Latinos from voting in the West and Southwest.

Some literacy requirements called for potential voters to prove they had the ability to read; other States required proof of the ability to both read and write. Still others required the ability to

read, write, and “understand” some printed material, usually a passage taken from the State or Federal Constitution. Often, whites were asked to “understand” short, plainly worded passages; African Americans were faced with long and highly complex passages.

Connecticut adopted the first literacy qualifications in 1855. Massachusetts followed in 1857. Both of these States were trying to limit voting by Irish Catholic immigrants. Mississippi adopted a literacy requirement in 1890, and shortly, most of the other southern States followed suit. Southern literacy qualifications usually included an “understanding clause”—again, requiring potential voters to demonstrate comprehension of some printed material.

While those qualifications had been aimed at disenfranchising African Americans, they sometimes had unintended effects. Several States soon found that they needed to adjust their voting requirements by adding so-called “grandfather clauses” to their constitutions. These grandfather clauses were designed to enfranchise those white males who were unintentionally disqualified by their failure to meet the literacy or taxpaying requirements.

A grandfather clause was added to the Louisiana constitution in 1895; Alabama, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Virginia soon added them as well. These clauses stated that any man, or his male descendants, who had voted in the State before the adoption of the 15th Amendment (1870) could become a legal voter without regard to any literacy or taxpaying qualifications. The Supreme Court found the Oklahoma provision, the last to be adopted (in 1910), in conflict with the 15th Amendment in *Guinn v. United States* in 1915.

A number of States outside the South also adopted literacy qualifications: Wyoming in 1889, California in 1894, Washington in 1896, New Hampshire in 1902, Arizona in 1913, New York in 1921, Oregon in 1924, and Alaska in 1949. Its unfair use finally led Congress to eliminate literacy as a suffrage qualification in the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1970. The Supreme Court agreed in *Oregon v. Mitchell*, 1970:

¹¹In Idaho, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and Wyoming, a person who is qualified to vote but misses the deadline can register (and then vote) on election day.

PRIMARY
Sources

“In enacting the literacy test ban . . . Congress had before it a long history of the discriminatory use of literacy tests to disfranchise voters on account of their race.”

—Justice Hugo Black, Opinion of the Court

At the time Congress banned literacy tests, 18 States had some form of literacy requirement.

Tax Payment

Property ownership, proved by the payment of property taxes, was once a very common suffrage qualification. For decades several States also demanded the payment of a special tax, called the **poll tax**, as a condition for voting. Those requirements and others that called for the payment of a tax in order to vote have disappeared.

The poll tax was once found throughout the South. Beginning with Florida in 1889, each of the 11 southern States adopted the poll tax as part of their effort to discourage voting by African Americans. The device proved to be of only limited effectiveness, however. That fact, and opposition to the use of the poll tax from within the South as well as elsewhere, led most of those States to abandon it. By 1966, the poll tax was still in use only in Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia.¹²

The 24th Amendment, ratified in 1964, outlawed the poll tax, or any other tax, as a condition for voting in any federal election. The Supreme Court finally eliminated the poll tax as a qualification for voting in all elections in 1966. In *Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections*, the Court held the Virginia poll tax to be in conflict with the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection



▲ This photo was taken in Mississippi, in 1978, when African American suffrage was supposed to be assured. **Critical Thinking** What tactics does the sign use to intimidate African Americans who want to register to vote? **H-SS 12.5.4**

Clause. The Court could find no reasonable relationship between the act of voting on the one hand and the payment of a tax on the other.

Persons Denied the Vote

Clearly, democratic government can exist only where the right to vote is very widely held. Still, every State does purposely deny the vote to certain persons. For example, none of the 50 States allows people in mental institutions, or any other persons who have been legally found to be mentally incompetent, to vote. A fourth of the States still prohibit anyone who commits a serious crime from ever gaining or regaining the right to vote. A few States also do not allow anyone dishonorably discharged from the armed forces to cast a ballot.

¹²By that time, the poll tax had been abolished in North Carolina (1924), Louisiana (1934), Florida (1937), Georgia (1945), South Carolina (1950), Tennessee (1951), and Arkansas (1964).

Section 2 Assessment

Key Terms and Main Ideas

1. For what reasons do most States require voter **registration**?
2. What is the Motor Voter Law? What is its purpose?
3. (a) Why do election officials keep **poll books**? (b) Why is it a good idea to **purge** them every few years?
4. How was the **poll tax** used as a voting qualification?

Critical Thinking

5. **Drawing Conclusions** (a) Do you think that one must be able to read in order to be a well-informed voter? Why or why not? (b) Do you think literacy is more or less important now than it was 100 years ago?



Standards Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: mqa-2062

6. **Recognizing Bias** What were grandfather clauses? How did they discriminate against African Americans?



For: An activity on voter registration requirements
Web Code: mqd-2062

The Dangers of Voter Apathy



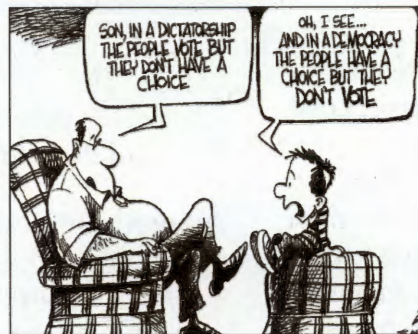
Analysis Skills HR4, HI3

Curtis Gans directs the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, a non-partisan research organization that studies the causes of declining voter participation and looks for solutions. Here, Gans discusses low voter turnout and what can be done to reverse the trend.

Over [recent decades], the percentage of eligible Americans who vote has declined by 20 percent in both presidential and off-year elections. More than 20 million Americans who used to vote frequently have ceased participating altogether. The United States—with voter turnouts of around 50 percent in presidential elections and 35 percent in off-year elections—now has the lowest rate of voter participation of any democracy in the world.

More than half of America's nonparticipants are chronic nonvoters: people who have never voted or hardly ever vote, whose families have never voted, and who are poorer, less-educated, and less-involved participants in American society. But a growing number of Americans are simply dropping out of the political process—many of whom are educated, white-collar professionals. In addition, a growing number of younger Americans are failing to enter the political process. Both of these trends constitute a major national concern, for there is a very real danger that the habits of good citizenship will die and that government of the people, for the people, and by the people will become government of, for, and by the few. . . .

The scars of the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal run deep. To many Americans, politics seem to be characterized by poor public leadership, increasingly complex issues, and ever-growing and inflexible government with few successes in meeting public needs. . . .



What does the cartoon suggest about voter apathy?

Sadly, for the average citizen, nonparticipation is becoming an increasingly rational act. Reversing this trend and instilling both hope and vigor among American voters will not be an easy task. But I think a few steps will improve participation in America. For example, we need to increase the amount and sophistication of civic education in our homes and schools. We must

also develop policies that address the central concerns of the electorate, while realigning and strengthening the two-party system. . . . It is important for us to instill in our young people a sense of values that emphasizes something larger than the self.

In the end, voting is a religious act. Each citizen must come to believe that—despite the thousands of elections that are not decided by one vote—his or her vote *does* make a difference. It is that faith that needs to be restored.

Analyzing Primary Sources

1. How much has voter participation declined in recent decades?
2. What reasons does Gans give to explain the decline in voter participation?
3. What suggestions does Gans give for increasing voter participation?
4. Why should we be concerned about the declining rate of voter participation in the United States?

Section Preview

OBJECTIVES

1. **Describe** the 15th Amendment and the tactics used to circumvent it in an effort to deny African Americans the vote.
2. **Explain** the significance of the early civil rights legislation passed in 1957, 1960, and 1964.
3. **Analyze** the provisions and effects of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

WHY IT MATTERS

The 15th Amendment declared that the right to vote cannot be denied on account of race. Nevertheless, a variety of tactics were used in southern States to disenfranchise African Americans. The Supreme Court struck down a number of these efforts, and, beginning in the 1950s, Congress passed laws to protect minority voting rights.

POLITICAL DICTIONARY

- ★ **gerrymandering**
- ★ **injunction**
- ★ **preclearance**

How important is the right to vote? For those who do not have it, that right can seem as important as life itself. Indeed, in the Deep South of the 1960s, civil rights workers suffered arrest, beatings, shocks with electric cattle prods, even death—all in the name of the right to vote. Their efforts inspired the nation and led to large-scale federal efforts to secure suffrage for African Americans and other minority groups in the United States.

The Fifteenth Amendment

The effort to extend the franchise to African Americans began with the 15th Amendment, which was ratified in 1870. It declares that the right to vote cannot be denied to any citizen of the United States because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. The amendment was plainly intended to ensure that African American men, nearly all of them former slaves and nearly all of them living in the South, could vote.

The 15th Amendment is not self-executing, however. In other words, simply stating a general principle without providing for a means to enforce implementation was not enough to carry out the intention of the amendment. To make it effective, Congress had to act. Yet for almost 90 years the Federal Government paid little attention to voting rights for African Americans.

During that period, African Americans were generally and systematically kept from the polls

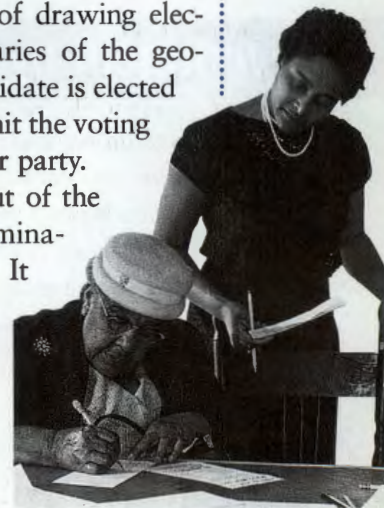
in much of the South. White supremacists employed a number of tactics to that end. Their major weapon was violence. Other tactics included more subtle threats and social pressures, such as firing an African American man who tried to register or vote, or denying his family credit at local stores.

More formal “legal” devices were used, as well. The most effective were literacy tests. White officials regularly manipulated these tests to disenfranchise African American citizens.

Registration laws served the same end. As written, they applied to all potential voters. In practice, however, they were often administered to keep African Americans from qualifying to vote. Poll taxes, “white primaries,” gerrymandering, and several other devices were also regularly used to disenfranchise African Americans. **Gerrymandering** is the practice of drawing electoral district lines (the boundaries of the geographic area from which a candidate is elected to a public office) in order to limit the voting strength of a particular group or party.

The white primary arose out of the decades-long Democratic domination of politics in the South. It was almost a given that the Democratic candidate for an

► An African American woman registers to vote.



office would be elected. Therefore, almost always, it was only the Democrats who nominated candidates, generally in primaries. In several southern States, political parties were defined by law as “private associations.” As such, they could exclude whomever they chose, and the Democrats regularly refused to admit African Americans. Because only party members could vote in the party’s primary, African Americans were then excluded from a critical step in the public election process.

The Supreme Court finally outlawed the white primary in a case from Texas, *Smith v. Allwright*, 1944. The Court held that nominations are an integral part of the election process. Consequently, when a political party holds a primary it is performing a public function and it is, therefore, bound by the terms of the 15th Amendment.

The Supreme Court outlawed gerrymandering when used for purposes of racial discrimination in a case from Alabama, *Gomillion v. Lightfoot*, in 1960. In this case, the Alabama legislature had redrawn the electoral district boundaries of Tuskegee, effectively excluding all blacks from the city limits. The Court ruled that the legislature’s act violated the 15th Amendment because the irregularly shaped district clearly was created to deprive blacks of political power.

Led by these decisions of the Supreme Court, the lower federal courts struck down many of the practices designed to disenfranchise African Americans in the 1940s and 1950s. Still, the courts could act only when those who claimed to be victims of discrimination sued. That case-by-case method was, at best, agonizingly slow.

Finally, and largely in response to the civil rights movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Congress was moved to act. It has passed several civil rights laws since the late 1950s. Those statutes contain a number of sections specifically intended to implement the 15th Amendment.

Early Civil Rights Legislation

The first law passed by Congress to implement the 15th Amendment was the Civil Rights Act of 1957, which set up the United States Civil Rights Commission. One of the Commission’s major duties is to inquire into claims of voter discrimination. The Commission reports its findings to Congress and the President and, through the media, to the public. The Act also gave the attorney general the power to seek federal court orders to prevent interference with any person’s right to vote in any federal election.

The Enduring Constitution

Government by the People

1900

When the Constitution was written, only white male property owners could vote. Over time, the United States has become more and more democratic. The major features of that evolution are chronicled in this time line.

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Analysis Skills CS1, CS2, HI1

1870

15th Amendment—designed mainly to give former slaves the right to vote—protects the voting right of adult male citizens of every race.



1913

17th Amendment—calls for members of the U.S. Senate to be elected directly by the people instead of by State legislatures.

The Civil Rights Act of 1960 added an additional safeguard. It provided for the appointment of federal voting referees. These officers were to serve anywhere a federal court found voter discrimination. They were given the power to help qualified persons to register and vote in federal elections.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is much broader and much more effective than either of the two earlier measures. It outlaws discrimination in several areas, especially in job-related matters. With regard to voting rights, its most important section forbids the use of any voter registration or literacy requirement in an unfair or discriminatory manner.

The 1964 law continued a pattern set in the earlier laws. In major part, it relied on judicial action to overcome racial barriers and emphasized the use of federal court orders called injunctions. An **injunction** is a court order that either compels (forces) or restrains (limits) the performance of some act by a private individual or by a public official. The violation of an injunction amounts to contempt of court, a crime punishable by fine and/or imprisonment.

Dramatic events in Selma, Alabama, soon pointed up the shortcomings of this approach. Dr. King mounted a voter registration drive in that city in early 1965. He and his supporters hoped that they could focus national attention on the issue of African American voting rights—and they most certainly did.

Their registration efforts were met with insults and violence by local white civilians, by city and county police, and then by State troopers. Two civil rights workers were murdered, and many were beaten when they attempted a peaceful march to the State capitol. The nation saw much of the drama on television and was shocked. An outraged President Lyndon Johnson urged Congress to pass new and stronger legislation to ensure the voting rights of African Americans. Congress responded quickly.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 made the 15th Amendment, at long last, a truly effective part of the Constitution. Unlike its predecessors, this act applied to *all* elections held anywhere in this country—State and local, as well as federal.

Originally, the Voting Rights Act was to be in effect for a period of five years. Congress has

1924

Indian Citizenship Act grants all Native Americans the rights of citizenship, including the right to vote in federal elections.

1964

24th Amendment bans poll tax as requirement for voting in federal elections.

1995

Federal "Motor Voter Law" takes effect, making it easier to register to vote.

1925

1950

1975

2000

1920

19th Amendment guarantees American women the right to vote in all elections.

1965

Voting Rights Act protects the rights of minority voters and eliminates voting barriers such as the literacy test. Expanded and renewed in 1970, 1975, and 1982.

1971

26th Amendment sets the minimum voting age at 18.

2003

Federal Voting Standards and Procedures Act requires States to streamline registration, voting, and other election procedures.

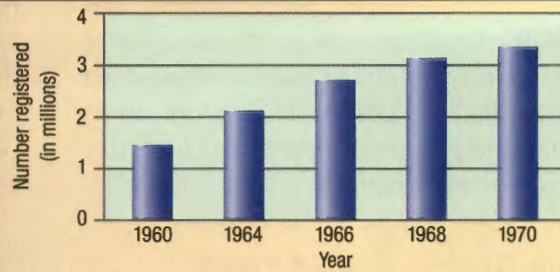


Analyzing Time Lines

1. Which amendments have granted voting rights to specific groups of people?
2. What has been the general trend of constitutional changes related to voting?



Southern Black Voters, 1960–1970



SOURCE: *Historical Statistics of Black America*

Interpreting Graphs In the photo at left, civil rights demonstrators risk injury and even death in the 1965 Selma march for voting rights. **How many new African American voters registered in the South between 1960 and 1970? H-SS 12.5.4**

extended its life three times, in the Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1970, 1975, and most recently 1982. The present version of the law was made effective for 25 years; its provisions are scheduled to expire in 2007.

The 1965 law directed the attorney general to challenge the constitutionality of the remaining State poll-tax laws in the federal courts. That provision led directly to *Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections*, in 1966 (see page 157).

The law also suspended the use of any literacy test or similar device in any State or county where less than half of the electorate had been registered or had voted in the 1964 presidential election. The law authorized the attorney general to appoint voting examiners to serve in any of those States or counties. It also gave these federal officers the power to register voters and otherwise oversee the conduct of elections in those areas.

Preclearance

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 created a further restriction on those States where a majority of the electorate had not voted in 1964. The act declared that no new election laws, and no changes in existing election laws, could go into effect in any of those States unless first approved—given **preclearance**—by the Department of Justice. Only those new or revised laws that do not “dilute” (weaken) the voting rights of minority groups can survive the preclearance process.

The preclearance hurdle has produced a large number of court cases since the passage of the law. Those cases show that the laws most likely to run afoul of the preclearance requirement are those that make these kinds of changes:

- (1) the location of polling places;
- (2) the boundaries of election districts;
- (3) deadlines in the election process;
- (4) from ward or district election to at-large elections;
- (5) the qualifications candidates must meet in order to run for office.

Any State or county subject to the voter-examiner and preclearance provisions can be removed from the law’s coverage through a “bail-out” process. That relief can come if the State can show the United States District Court in the District of Columbia that it has not applied any voting procedures in a discriminatory way for at least 10 years.

The voter-examiner and preclearance provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act originally applied to six entire States: Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Virginia. The act also applied to 40 North Carolina counties.

The Supreme Court upheld the Voting Rights Act in 1966. In the case of *South Carolina v. Katzenbach*, a unanimous Court found the law to be a proper exercise of the power granted to Congress in Section 2 of the 15th Amendment. That provision authorizes Congress to use ‘appropriate’ measures to enforce the constitutional prohibition against racial discrimination in voting.

Amendments to the Act

The 1970 amendments extended the law for another five years. The 1968 elections were added to the law’s triggering formula; the result was that

a number of counties in six more States (Alaska, Arizona, California, Idaho, New Mexico, and Oregon) were added to the law's coverage.

The 1970 law also provided that, for five years, no State could use literacy as the basis for any voting requirement. That temporary ban as well as residence provisions outlined in the law were upheld by the Supreme Court in *Oregon v. Mitchell* in 1970.

In 1975, the law was extended again, this time for seven years, and the five-year ban on literacy tests was made permanent. Since 1975, no State has been able to apply any sort of literacy qualification to any aspect of the election process.

The law's voter-examiner and preclearance provisions were also broadened in 1975. Since then they have also covered any State or county where more than 5 percent of the voting-age population belongs to certain "language minorities." These groups are defined to include all persons of Spanish heritage, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Alaskan Natives.

This addition expanded the law's coverage to all of Alaska and Texas and to several counties in 24 other States, as well. In these areas, all ballots and other official election materials must be printed both in English and in the language of the minority, or minorities, involved.

The 1982 amendments extended the basic features of the act for another 25 years. In 1992 the law's language-minority provisions



▲ *I Have a Dream* This famous speech, delivered by civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., was a highlight of the 1963 March on Washington, which drew more than 200,000 people. **H-SS 12.5.4**

were revised: they now apply to any community that has a minority-language population of 10,000 or more persons.

Over the years, several States and a handful of counties in a few other States have been removed from the law's coverage, through the "bail-out" process. Today, eight entire States remain subject to the Voting Rights Act: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas. At least some counties in eight other States are also covered by the statute: California, Florida, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, South Dakota, and Virginia.

Section 3 Assessment

Key Terms and Main Ideas

1. What is **gerrymandering**? What other devices were used to disenfranchise African Americans?
2. What part do **injunctions** play in the Civil Rights Act of 1964?
3. What is **preclearance**? How can a State "bail out" of the preclearance provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965?
4. (a) Identify the major civil rights laws enacted since 1950. (b) Describe voting rights provisions in these laws.

Critical Thinking

5. **Drawing Conclusions** Even after the ratification of the 15th Amendment, African Americans in the South were denied the right to vote because the amendment was not implemented. (a) What does that tell you about American attitudes from 1870 until the 1950s? (b) Why did those attitudes change?



Standards Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: mqa-2063

6. **Recognizing Cause and Effect** (a) How do you think the historical denial of voting rights to African Americans affected the makeup of Congress and many State legislatures? (b) How did that result, in turn, affect the likelihood that these legislatures would pass civil rights laws?

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Section Preview

OBJECTIVES

1. **Examine** the problem of nonvoting in this country, and describe the size of the problem.
2. **Identify** people who do not vote.
3. **Examine** the behavior of those who vote and those who do not.
4. **Understand** the sociological and psychological factors that affect voting and how they work together to influence voter behavior.

WHY IT MATTERS

Low voter turnout is a serious problem in this country. Among those who do vote, sociological and psychological factors work together to influence voter behavior over time and in particular elections.

POLITICAL
DICTIONARY

- ★ off-year election
- ★ political efficacy
- ★ political socialization
- ★ gender gap
- ★ party identification
- ★ straight-ticket voting
- ★ split-ticket voting
- ★ independent

“Your vote is your voice. Use it.” That’s the advice of Rock the Vote, an organization that encourages young voters ages 18–25 to participate in the election process. In the United States, and in other democratic countries, we believe in all voices being heard. That is, we believe in voting.

Over the next several pages you will look at voter behavior in this country—at who votes and who does not, and at why those people who do vote, vote as they do.

Nonvoters

The word *idiot* came to our language from the Greek. In ancient Athens, idiots (*idiotes*) were those citizens who did not vote or otherwise take part in public life.

Tens of millions of Americans vote in presidential and congressional elections; in State elections; and in city, county, and other public elections. Still, there are many millions of other Americans who, for one reason or another, do not vote. There are some quite legitimate reasons for not voting, as you will see. But this troubling fact remains: Most of the millions of Americans who could—but do not—go to the polls cannot claim any of those justifications. Indeed, they would have been called idiots in the Greece of 2000 years ago.

The Size of the Problem

The table on page 165 lays out the major facts of the nonvoter problem in American elections. Notice that on election day in 2004 there were an estimated 215.7 million persons of voting age in the United States. Yet only some 122.3 million of them—only 56.7 percent—actually voted in the presidential election. Nearly 95 million persons who might have voted did not.

In 2004 some 114 million votes were cast in the elections held across the country to fill the 435 seats in the House of Representatives. That means that only 53 percent of the electorate voted in those congressional elections. (Notice the even lower rates of turnout in the **off-year elections**—that is, in the congressional elections held in the even-numbered years between presidential elections.)

Several facets of the nonvoter problem are not very widely known. Take, for example, this striking fact: There are millions of nonvoters *among those who vote*. Look again at the 2004 figures on page 165. Nearly eight million persons who voted in the last presidential election could also have voted for a congressional candidate, but they did not choose to do so.

“Nonvoting voters” are not limited to federal elections. In fact, they are much more common in State and local elections. As a general rule, the farther down the ballot an office is, the fewer the

number of votes that will be cast for it. This phenomenon is sometimes called “ballot fatigue.” The expression suggests that many voters exhaust their patience and/or their knowledge as they work their way down the ballot.

Some quick examples illustrate the phenomenon of ballot fatigue: In every State, more votes are regularly cast in the presidential election than in the gubernatorial election. More votes are generally cast for the governorship than for other Statewide offices, such as lieutenant governor or secretary of state. More voters in a county usually vote in the races for Statewide offices than vote in the contests for such county offices as sheriff, county clerk, or district attorney, and so on.

There are other little-recognized facets of the nonvoter problem, too. For example, the table on this page shows that turnout in congressional elections is consistently higher in presidential years than it is in off-year elections. That same pattern holds among the States in terms of the types of elections; more people vote in general elections than in either primary or special elections.

Why People Do Not Vote

Why do we have so many nonvoters? Why, even in a presidential election, do as many as half of those who could vote stay away from the polls?

Clearly, the time that it takes to vote should not be a significant part of the answer. For most people, it takes more time to go to a video store and pick out a movie than it does to go to their neighborhood polling place and cast a ballot. So we must look elsewhere for answers.

“Cannot-Voters”

To begin with, look at another of those little-recognized aspects of the nonvoter problem. Several million persons who are regularly identified as nonvoters can be much more accurately described as “cannot-voters.” That is, although it is true that they do not vote, the fact is that they cannot do so.

The 2004 data support the point. Included in that figure of nearly 95 million who did not vote in the last presidential election are at least 10 million who are resident aliens. Remember, they are barred from the polls in every State.

Voter Turnout, 1968–2004

Year	Population of Voting Age ¹	Votes Cast for President		Votes Cast for U.S. Representatives	
	(in millions)	(in millions)	(percent)	(in millions)	(percent)
1968	120.285	73.212	60.9	66.288	55.1
1970	124.498	—	—	54.173	43.5
1972	140.777	77.719	55.2	71.430	50.7
1974	146.388	—	—	52.495	35.9
1976	152.308	81.556	53.5	74.422	48.9
1978	158.369	—	—	55.332	34.9
1980	163.945	86.515	52.8	77.995	47.6
1982	169.643	—	—	64.514	38.0
1984	173.995	92.653	53.3	83.231	47.8
1986	177.922	—	—	59.619	33.5
1988	181.956	91.595	50.3	81.786	44.9
1990	185.812	—	—	61.513	33.1
1992	189.524	104.425	55.1	96.239	50.8
1994	193.650	—	—	70.781	36.6
1996	196.507	96.278	49.0	89.863	45.8
1998	200.929	—	—	66.033	33.9
2000	205.813	105.397	51.2	99.457	48.4
2002	210.321	—	—	73.844	35.2
2004	215.694	122.295	56.7	114.414	53.0

¹As estimated by Census Bureau. Population 18 years of age and over since ratification of 26th Amendment in 1971; prior to 1971, 21 years and over in all States, except: 18 years and over in Georgia since 1943 and Kentucky since 1955, 19 years and over in Alaska and 20 and over in Hawaii since 1959.

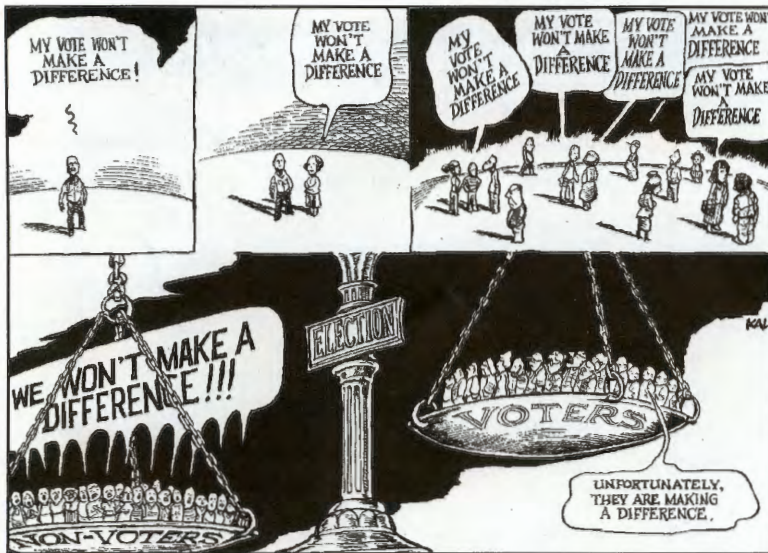
SOURCES: *Statistical Abstract of the United States*; Federal Election Commission



Interpreting Tables This table shows voter turnout two ways: total numbers and percent of eligible voters. (a) **In what year shown did voting percentage peak for presidential races?** (b) **In what year did voting peak for congressional races?** **H-SS 12.6.6**

Another 5 to 6 million citizens were so ill or otherwise physically disabled that they simply could not vote in an election. An additional 2 or 3 million persons were traveling suddenly and unexpectedly, and so could not vote.

Other groups of cannot-voters can be discovered in the nonvoting group. They include some 500,000 persons in mental health care facilities or under some other form of legal restraint because of their mental condition; more than two million adults in jails and prisons; and perhaps as many as 100,000 who do not (cannot) vote because of their religious beliefs (for example, those who believe that acts such as voting amount to idolatry).



Interpreting Political Cartoons What does the “weight” of the nonvoters tell you about the kind of difference they are making?

Racial, religious, and other biases still play a part here, too—despite the many laws, court decisions, and enforcement actions of the past several years aimed at eliminating such discrimination in the political process. An unknown but certainly significant number of people could not vote in 2004 because of (1) the purposeful administration of election laws to keep them from doing so and/or (2) various “informal” local pressures applied to that same end.

Actual Nonvoters

Even so, there are millions of actual nonvoters in the United States. Thus, in 2004 more than 80 million Americans who could have voted in the presidential election did not.

There are any number of reasons for that behavior. As a leading example: Many who could go to the polls do not because they are convinced that it makes little real difference who wins a particular election.

That fairly large group includes two very different groups of nonvoters. On the one hand, it includes many who generally approve of the way the public’s business is being managed—that is, many who believe that no matter who wins an election, things will continue to go well for themselves and for the country.

On the other hand, that group also includes many people who feel alienated—many who deliberately refuse to vote because they don’t trust political institutions and processes. They

either fear or scorn “the system.” To them, elections are meaningless, choiceless exercises.

Another large group of nonvoters is composed of people who have no sense of **political efficacy**. They lack any feeling of influence or effectiveness in politics. They do not believe that they or their votes can have any real impact on what government does.

Other Factors Affecting Turnout

Other factors also affect whether voters show up at the polls. Cumbersome election procedures—for example, inconvenient registration requirements, long ballots, and long lines at polling places—discourage voters from turning out on election day. Bad weather also tends to discourage turnout.

Another possible, though hotly debated, factor is the so-called “time-zone fallout” problem. This refers to the fact that, in presidential elections, polls in States in the Eastern and Central time zones close before polls in States in the Mountain and Pacific time zones. Based on early returns from the East and Midwest, the news media often project the outcome of the presidential contest before all the voters in the West have gone to the polls. Some people fear that such reports have discouraged western voters from casting their ballots.

Of all the reasons that may be cited, however, the chief cause for nonvoting is, purely and simply, a lack of interest. Those who lack sufficient interest, who are indifferent and apathetic, and who just cannot be bothered are usually woefully uninformed. Most often, they do not know even the simplest facts about the candidates and issues involved in an election.

Comparing Voters and Nonvoters

One useful way to get a handle on the problem of nonvoting is to contrast those persons who tend to go to the polls regularly with those who do not. There are many differences between them.

The people most likely to vote display such characteristics as higher levels of income, education, and occupational status. They are usually well integrated into community life. They tend to be long-time residents who are active in or at least comfortable with their surroundings. They are likely to have a strong sense of party identification and to believe

Voting by Groups in Presidential Elections, 1972–2004* (By Percentage of Votes Reported Cast)

	1972		1976		1980			1984		1988			1992			1996			2000			2004*	
	D	R	D	R	D	R	I	D	R	D	R	I	D	R	P	D	R	G	D	R			
National Vote	37.5	60.7	50	48	41	50.7	6.6	41	59	46	54	43.2	37.8	19	49.2	40.7	8.4	48.7	48.6	2.7	48.5	51.5	
Sex																							
Men	37	63	53	45	38	53	7	36	64	44	56	41	37	22	45	44	11	43	52	3	44	56	
Women	38	62	48	51	44	49	6	45	55	48	52	46	38	16	54	39	7	53	45	2	52	48	
Race																							
White	32	68	46	52	36	56	7	34	66	41	59	39	41	20	46	45	9	43	55	3	43	57	
Nonwhite	87	13	85	15	86	10	2	87	13	82	18	77	11	12	82	12	6	87	9	4	83	17	
Education																							
College	37	63	42	55	35	53	10	39	61	42	58	43	40	17	47	45	8	46	51	3	42	58	
High school	34	66	54	46	43	51	5	43	57	46	54	40	38	22	52	34	14	52	46	2	54	46	
Grade school	49	51	58	41	54	42	3	51	49	55	45	56	28	16	58	27	15	55	42	3	–	–	
Age																							
Under 30	48	52	53	45	47	41	11	40	60	37	63	40	37	23	54	30	16	47	47	6	60	40	
30–49	33	67	48	49	38	52	8	40	60	45	55	42	37	21	49	41	10	45	53	2	43	57	
50 and older	36	64	52	48	41	54	4	41	59	49	51	46	39	15	50	45	5	53	45	2	49	51	
Religion																							
Protestant	30	70	46	53	39	54	6	39	61	42	58	41	41	18	44	50	6	42	55	3	38	62	
Catholic	48	52	57	41	46	47	6	39	61	51	49	47	35	18	55	35	10	52	46	2	52	48	
Politics																							
Republican	5	95	9	91	8	86	5	4	96	7	93	7	77	16	10	85	5	7	92	1	6	93	
Democrat	67	33	82	18	69	26	4	79	21	85	15	82	8	10	90	6	4	89	10	2	91	7	
Independent	31	69	38	57	29	55	14	33	67	43	57	39	30	31	48	33	19	44	49	7	48	40	
Region																							
East	42	58	51	47	43	47	9	46	54	51	49	47	35	18	60	31	9	55	42	3	56	39	
Midwest	40	60	48	50	41	51	7	42	58	47	53	44	34	22	46	45	9	48	49	3	48	45	
South	29	71	54	45	44	52	3	37	63	40	60	38	45	17	44	46	10	45	54	1	45	51	
West	41	59	46	51	35	54	9	40	60	46	54	45	35	20	51	43	6	48	47	5	47	49	

D = Democratic candidate; R = Republican candidate; I = Independent candidate (John B. Anderson, 1980; Ross Perot, 1992); P = Reform Party candidate (Ross Perot, 1996); G = Green Party candidate (Ralph Nader, 2000). Figures do not add to 100% in some groups because of rounding and/or minor party votes.
SOURCE: The Gallup Organization. *For preliminary 2004 election results, see Stop the Presses, pages 843–844.



Interpreting Tables Some groups of voters have favored one or the other major party over time. **In this table, which group most clearly demonstrates that point? H-SS 12.6.6**

that voting is an important act. They also are likely to live in those areas where laws, customs, and competition between the parties all promote turnout.

The opposite characteristics produce a profile of those less likely to vote. Nonvoters are likely to be younger than age 35, unmarried, and unskilled. More nonvoters live in the South and in rural, rather than urban or suburban, locales. Today, women are more likely to vote than men. This fact of political life has been apparent since the presidential elections of the 1980s and was reconfirmed in 2004.

A few of the factors that help determine whether or not a person will vote are so important that they influence turnout even when they are not supported by, or are in conflict with, other factors. Thus, those persons with a high sense of political efficacy are likely to vote—no matter what their income, education, age, race, and so on.

The degree of two-party competition has much the same kind of general, across-the-board effect. It, too, has an extraordinary impact on participation. Thus, the greater the competition between candidates, the more likely people will be to go to the polls, regardless of other factors.

Despite the greater weight of some of these factors, however, note this point: It is the combined presence of several factors, not the influence of one of them alone, that tends to determine whether a person will vote or not.

Voters and Voting Behavior

As you have just seen, tens of millions of potential voters do not go to the polls in this country. But many millions more do. How do those who do vote behave? What prompts many to vote most often for Republicans and many others to support the Democratic Party?

Answers to these questions are not as hard to find as you might think. Voting has been studied more closely than any other form of political participation in the United States. This is due partly to the importance of the topic and partly to the almost unlimited

amount of data available. (There have been innumerable elections in which millions of voters have cast billions of votes over time.) That research has produced a huge amount of information about why people tend to vote as they do.

Studying Voting Behavior

Most of what is known about voter behavior comes from three sources.

1. *The results of particular elections.* Of course, how individuals vote in a given election is secret in the United States. However careful study of the returns from areas populated largely by African Americans or by Catholics or by high-income families will indicate how those groups voted in a given election.

2. *The field of survey research.* The polling of scientifically determined cross sections of the population is the method by which public opinion is most often identified and measured. The Gallup Organization conducts perhaps the best known of these polls today.

3. *Studies of political socialization.* This is the process by which people gain their political attitudes and opinions. That complex process begins in early childhood and continues through each person's life. Political socialization involves all of the experiences and relationships that lead people to see the political world, and to act in it, as they do.

In the rest of this chapter, you will consider voter behavior—how and why people vote as they do. In Chapter 8, you will take a closer look at public opinion, at the techniques of survey research, and the process of political socialization.

Factors That Influence Voters

Observers still have much to learn about voter behavior, but many sociological and psychological factors clearly influence the way people vote. Sociology is the study of groups and how people behave within groups. The sociological factors affecting voter behavior are really the many pieces of a voter's social and economic life. Those pieces are of two broad kinds: (1) a voter's personal characteristics—age, race, income, occupation, education, religion, and so on; and (2) a voter's group affiliations—family, co-workers, friends, and the like.

Frequently Asked Questions

Voting

How many choices does a voter have in a typical election contest?

Most elections in the United States are two-candidate contests. That is, they are elections in which two candidates run against one another for each office listed on the ballot. Candidate A versus Candidate B for this office, Candidate C versus Candidate D for that office, and so on down the ballot.

In any two-candidate race, a voter has not just two but, in fact, *five* options. He or she can:

- 1) vote FOR Candidate A
- 2) vote FOR Candidate B
- 3) vote AGAINST Candidate A (by marking the ballot for Candidate B)
- 4) vote AGAINST Candidate B (by marking the ballot for Candidate A)
- 5) decide not to vote for either candidate

Remember, the fifth choice, not voting, might very well be the result of a reasoned decision.

Any Questions?

What would you like to know about voting? Brainstorm two new questions and exchange them with a classmate. What did you learn?



Psychology is the study of the mind and of individual behavior. The psychological factors that influence voter behavior are a voter's perceptions of politics, that is, how the voter sees the parties, the candidates, and the issues in an election.

The differences between these two kinds of influences are not nearly so great as they might seem. In fact, they are closely related and they constantly interact with one another. How voters look at parties, candidates, or issues is often shaped by their own social and economic backgrounds.

Sociological Factors

From the table on page 167, you can draw a composite picture of the American voter in terms of a number of sociological factors. A word of caution here: Do not make too much of any one of these factors. As you examine the data, keep this point in mind: The table reports how voters, identified by a *single* characteristic, voted in each presidential election from 1976 through 2004. Remember, however, that each voter possesses not just one but *several* of the characteristics shown in the table.

To illustrate the point: College graduates are more likely to vote Republican. So are persons over age 50. African Americans, on the other hand, are more likely to vote for Democrats. So are members of labor unions. How, then, would a 55-year-old, college-educated African American who belongs to the AFL-CIO vote?

Income, Occupation

Voters in lower income brackets are more likely to be Democrats. Voters with higher incomes tend to be Republicans. This pattern has held up over time, no matter whether a particular election was a cliff-hanger or a blow-out. In 2004, voters with incomes below \$15,000 a year backed Democrat John Kerry by a 3 to 2 margin, as did those making between \$15,000 and \$29,999. Voters who made \$30,000 to \$49,999 split their votes almost exactly evenly between the senator and President Bush.

Voters in higher income groups supported the President by wide margins. Thus, among those making more than \$100,000 a year, Mr. Bush had a 3 to 2 advantage.



▲ **Worth the Wait** Blacks in South Africa fought for many years to gain the right to vote. In the first multiracial elections, held in 1994, many people stood in long lines for hours in order to exercise this hard-won right.

Most often, how much one earns and what one does for a living are closely related. Professional and business people, and others with higher incomes, tend to vote for Republican candidates. Manual workers, and others in lower income groups, usually vote for Democrats. Thus, with the single exception of 1964, professional and business people have voted heavily Republican in every presidential election in the modern era, including 2004.

Education

Studies of voter behavior reveal that there is also a close relationship between the level of a voter's education and how he or she votes. College graduates vote for Republicans in higher percentages than do high-school graduates; and high-school graduates vote Republican more often than do those who have only gone through grade school.

Gender, Age

There are often measurable differences between the partisan choices of men and women today. This phenomenon is known as the **gender gap**, and it first appeared in the 1980s. Women generally tend to favor the Democrats by a margin of five to ten percent, and men often give the GOP a similar edge. The gender gap was less apparent in 2004 than in previous presidential elections. President Bush won 48 percent of all of the votes cast by women in that election.

A number of studies show that men and women are most likely to vote differently when such issues as abortion, health care or other

social welfare matters, or military involvements abroad are prominent in an election.

Traditionally, younger voters have been more likely to be Democrats than Republicans. Older voters are likely to find the GOP and its candidates more attractive. Thus, in every presidential election from 1960 through 1980, the Democrats won a larger percentage of the votes of the under-30 age group than of the 50-and-over age bracket. That long-standing pattern was broken by Ronald Reagan's appeal to younger voters in 1984, and by George Bush in 1988. However, Bill Clinton restored the Democrats' claim to those voters in 1992 and 1996. In 2000, Al Gore won 47 percent of the under-30 vote, George W. Bush received 47 percent, and most of the balance (6 percent) went to the Green Party's Ralph Nader. John Kerry won the major slice of the votes of that age group—54 percent—in 2004.

Religious, Ethnic Background

Historically, a majority of Protestants have most often preferred the GOP. Catholics and Jews have been much more likely to be Democrats.

President Bush won 62 percent of the votes cast by all Protestants and 67 percent of those cast by white Protestants in 2004. A larger-than-usual percentage of Catholics—48 percent—also backed the President. He won only 25 percent of the ballots cast by Jewish voters, however.

Moral issues—in particular, same-sex marriage—were unusually prominent in 2004. And church attendance has lately emerged as a significant indicator of partisan preference. Sixty-three percent of voters who go to church at least once a week marked their ballots for Mr. Bush in 2004.

For decades now, African Americans have supported the Democratic Party, consistently and massively. They form the only group that has given the Democratic candidate a clear majority in every presidential election since 1952. There are now more than 40 million African Americans, and they make up the second largest minority in the country.

¹⁴In 1960, John F. Kennedy became the first Roman Catholic President. His election marked a sharper split between Catholic and Protestant voters than that found in any of the elections covered by the table on page 167.

In the North, African Americans generally voted Republican until the 1930s, but then moved away from the party of Abraham Lincoln with the coming of the New Deal. The civil rights movement of the 1960s led to greater African American participation in the South. Today, African Americans vote overwhelmingly Democratic in that region, too.

The United States is now home to more than 42 million Latinos, people with Spanish-speaking backgrounds. Until now, Latinos have tended to favor Democratic candidates. Note, however, that the label “Latino” conceals differences among Cuban Americans, who most often vote Republican, and Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans, who are strongly Democratic. The rate of turnout among Latinos is comparatively low—less than 40 percent in 2004.

Geography

Geography—the part of the country, the State, and/or the locale in which a person lives—also has an impact on voter behavior. After the Civil War, the States of the old Confederacy voted so consistently Democratic that the southeast quarter of the nation became known as the Solid South. For more than a century, most Southerners, regardless of any other factor, identified with the Democratic Party.

The Solid South is now a thing of the past. Republican candidates have been increasingly successful throughout the region over the past 40 years or so. This has been true in presidential elections and at the State and the local levels, as well. Historically, the States that have supported the Republicans most consistently are Maine and Vermont in the Northeast and Kansas, Nebraska, and the Dakotas in the Midwest.

Voters' attitudes also vary in terms of the size of the communities in which they live. Generally, the Democrats draw strength from the big cities of the North and East. Many white Democrats have moved from the central cities and taken their political preferences with them, but Republican voters still dominate much of suburban America. Voters in smaller cities and rural areas are also likely to be Republicans.

Family and Other Groups

To this point, you have seen the American voter sketched in terms of several broad social and economic characteristics. The picture can also be drawn on the basis of much smaller and more personal groupings, especially such primary groups as family, friends, and co-workers.

Typically, the members of a family vote in strikingly similar ways. Nine out of ten married couples share the same partisan leanings. As many as two out of every three voters follow the political attachments of their parents. Those who work together and circles of friends also tend to vote very much alike.

This like-mindedness is hardly surprising. People of similar social and economic backgrounds tend to associate with one another. In short, a person's group associations usually reinforce the opinions he or she already holds.

Psychological Factors

Although they are certainly important, it would be wrong to give too much weight to the sociological factors in the voting mix. For one thing, these factors are fairly static. That is, they tend to change only gradually and over time. To understand voter behavior, you must look beyond such factors as occupation, education, ethnic background, and place of residence. You must also take into account a number of psychological factors. That is, you must look at the voters' *perceptions* of politics: how they see and react to the parties, the candidates, and the issues in an election.

Party Identification

A majority of Americans identify themselves with one or the other of the major parties early in life. Many never change. They support that party, election after election, with little or no regard for either the candidates or the issues.

The hefty impact of **party identification**, or the loyalty of people to a particular political party, is the single most significant and lasting predictor of how a person will vote. A person who is a Democrat or a Republican will, for that reason, very likely vote for all or most of that party's candidates in any given

Voices on Government

Ray Suarez has been a news reporter and correspondent for some 30 years, most recently for *The News Hour with Jim Lehrer*. He has won numerous awards for his stories. In this excerpt, Suarez discusses how city populations and voting patterns are changing.



“One million Latinos in Chicago and its suburbs, and more than two million each in Los Angeles and New York, force you away from a binary black-white view of the struggles over the city. The new math means that standing between white and black is a new brown interest group waiting to be courted, often holding the balance of power in municipal elections. In Miami, San Antonio, and, increasingly, Dallas, you can't win without Latino support.”

Evaluating the Quotation

According to Suarez, how has the ethnic balance in cities been changing? How does this change affect politics?

election. The practice of voting for candidates of only one party in an election is called **straight-ticket voting**.

Party identification is, therefore, a key factor in American politics. Among many other things, it means that each of the major parties can regularly count on the votes of millions of faithful supporters in every election.

Several signs suggest that, while it remains a major factor, party identification has lost some of its impact in recent years. One of those signs is the weakened condition of the parties themselves. Another is the marked increase in **split-ticket voting**—the practice of voting for the candidates of more than one party in an election. That behavior, which began to increase in the 1960s, is fairly common today.

Another telling sign is the large number of voters who now call themselves **independents**. This term is regularly used to identify those people who have no party affiliation. It includes voters who are independent of both the Republicans and the Democrats (and of any

minor party, as well). “Independent” is a tricky term, however.¹⁵ Many who claim to be independents actually support one or the other of the major parties quite regularly.

The loose nature of party membership makes it difficult to determine just what proportion of the electorate is independent. The best guesses put the number of independents at somewhere between a fourth and a third of all voters today. The role that these independent voters play is especially critical in those elections where the opposing major party candidates are more or less evenly matched.

Until recently, the typical independent was less concerned, less well informed, and less active in politics than those voters who identified themselves as Republicans or Democrats. That description still fits many independents.

However, a new breed of independent voter appeared in the 1960s and 1970s, and their ranks have grown over the years. Largely because of the political events and personalities of that period, these “new” independents preferred not to join either major party. Today, these independents are often young and above average in education, income, and job status.

¹⁵Note that the term “independent” is sometimes mistakenly used to suggest that independents form a more or less cohesive group that can be readily compared with Republicans and Democrats. (Although the Gallup Poll data on page 142 do not intend such comparisons, they can be misread to that effect.) In short, independents in American politics are not only independent of Republicans and Democrats; each of them is also independent of all other independents.

Candidates and Issues

Party identification is a long-term factor. While most voters identify with one or the other of the major parties and most often support its candidates, they do not always vote that way. One or more short-term factors can cause them to switch sides in a particular election, or at least vote a split ticket. Thus, in 2004, exit polls indicate that 5 percent of those persons who usually vote Republican voted for John Kerry for President, and 7 percent of those who normally support Democratic candidates marked their ballots for the President.

The most important of these short-term factors are the candidates and the issues in an election. Clearly, the impression a candidate makes on the voters can have an impact on how they vote. What image does a candidate project? How is he or she seen in terms of personality, character, style, appearance, past record, abilities, and so on?

Just as clearly, issues can also have a large impact on voter behavior. The role of issues varies, however, depending on such things as the emotional content of the issues themselves, the voters’ awareness of them, and the ways in which they are presented to the electorate.

Issues have become increasingly important to voters over the past 40 years or so. The tumultuous nature of politics over the period—highlighted by the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, the feminist movement, the Watergate scandal, and economic problems—is likely responsible for this heightened concern.

Section 4 Assessment

Key Terms and Main Ideas

1. How does a person’s sense of **political efficacy** affect his or her voting behavior?
2. What is the **gender gap**?
3. How are **party identification** and **straight-ticket voting** related?
4. List three sociological factors that affect voting behavior.

Critical Thinking

5. **Predicting Consequences** What might be the results for the nation if all eligible voters were required to cast ballots? Why?



Standards Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice

Web Code: mqa-2064

6. **Formulating Questions** Suppose you are a pollster. List three questions you would ask to determine if someone will vote in the next election, and three questions to find out what party he or she would be likely to support.



For: An activity on voter participation

Web Code: mqd-2064

Who Decides Who May Vote?



Analysis Skills HR4,
HI3, HI4

The Constitution gives States authority to set voting qualifications. In the past, some States purposely used that power to exclude certain groups—most notably African Americans—from the electoral process. Does Congress have the authority to limit the power of States to set voter qualifications?

Oregon v. Mitchell (1970)

In 1970, the States of Oregon, Texas, and Idaho sued the Federal Government (specifically, Attorney General John Mitchell) to challenge four provisions of the Voting Rights Act Amendments passed by Congress that year. One provision lowered the minimum voting age to 18 in all elections in the United States—federal, State, and local. Another barred the use of any literacy test in any election in this country for a five-year period. A third provision prohibits the States from setting residence requirements for voting in presidential elections at more than 30 days. The final provision established national rules for absentee voting in presidential elections. (Absentee voting allows people unable to go to their polling places on election day to receive and mark their ballots, and return them—usually by mail—before or no later than election day.) These provisions were clearly intended to allow more people to participate in the electoral process.

The case was heard by the Supreme Court in its original jurisdiction. (In other words, the case was not appealed to the Court from a lower court.) Fifteen States, though not part of the suit, filed briefs (written arguments) with the Court in the case. The American Civil Liberties Union, the NAACP, the Democratic National Committee, and various other groups also filed briefs.

Arguments for Oregon

1. Only the States have the power to set voting qualifications for State and local elections. Congress has no authority to require the States to allow persons between 18 and 21 to vote in State and local elections.

2. The Constitution does not give Congress the right to require the States to use different qualifications for voting in federal elections than those States adopt for their own elections.
3. States have the authority to set standards for voters, such as a minimum level of literacy or a minimum period of residence in the State.

Arguments for Mitchell

1. Congress may set standards for voter qualifications in federal elections.
2. Congress may prevent the States from excluding certain groups of citizens from the voting rolls for State elections, if the exclusion tends to discriminate against people based on characteristics such as race or national origin. (Such discrimination by States violates the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause.)
3. Congress may prevent States from imposing a residency requirement that makes it impossible for people who have recently moved to vote in presidential elections.

Decide for Yourself

1. Review the constitutional grounds on which each side based its arguments and the specific arguments each side presented.
2. Debate the opposing viewpoints presented in this case. Which viewpoint do you favor?
3. Predict the impact of the Court's decision on changes in voter eligibility and voter participation in the United States. (To read a summary of the Court's decision, turn to pages 799–806.)

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Political Dictionary

suffrage (p. 148), **franchise** (p. 148), **electorate** (p. 148), **transient** (p. 153), **registration** (p. 154), **purge** (p. 155), **poll books** (p. 155), **literacy** (p. 156), **poll tax** (p. 157), **gerrymandering** (p. 159), **injunction** (p. 161), **preclearance** (p. 162), **off-year election** (p. 164), **political efficacy** (p. 166), **political socialization** (p. 168), **gender gap** (p. 169), **party identification** (p. 171), **straight-ticket voting** (p. 171), **split-ticket voting** (p. 171), **independent** (p. 171)



Standards Review

H-SS 12.2.4 Understand the obligations of civic-mindedness, including voting, being informed on civic issues, volunteering and performing public service, and serving in the military or alternative service.

H-SS 12.5.4 Explain the controversies that have resulted over changing interpretations of civil rights, including those in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Peña*, and *United States v. Virginia (VMI)*.

H-SS 12.6.4 Describe the means that citizens use to participate in the political process (e.g., voting, campaigning, lobbying, filing a legal challenge, demonstrating, petitioning, picketing, running for political office).

H-SS 12.6.6 Analyze trends in voter turnout; the causes and effects of reapportionment and redistricting, with special attention to spatial districting and the rights of minorities; and the function of the Electoral College.

Practicing the Vocabulary

Using Words in Context For each of the terms below, write a sentence that shows how it relates to this chapter.

- suffrage
- electorate
- registration
- poll tax
- injunction
- off-year election
- political efficacy
- political socialization
- straight-ticket voting
- independents

Fill in the Blank Choose a term from the list above that best completes the sentence.

- Suffrage and _____ mean approximately the same thing.
- A(n) _____ is a court order that can be used to compel a public official to carry out a law.
- Some people do not have a sense of _____ and therefore do not bother to vote.
- Voters with a strong allegiance to a party often engage in _____ when they go to the polls.

Reviewing Main Ideas

Section 1

- What two long-term trends mark the expansion of the American electorate?
- What are the five stages of the extension of suffrage?
- What are the constitutional restrictions on the power of the States to set voting qualifications?

Section 2

- List the three factors that all 50 states use to set voter qualifications.
- For what two reasons did States adopt residence requirements for voting?
- What is a literacy requirement for voting, and how was it used to deny suffrage to certain groups?
- What is a grandfather clause, and what was its purpose with respect to literacy tests?
- How did Congress require States to ease their registration requirements in 1993?

Section 3

- (a) What was the purpose of the 15th Amendment? (b) List three ways that some southern States tried to circumvent the 15th Amendment.
- To whom does the Civil Rights Commission report its findings?
- How did Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s voter registration drive affect the passage of national civil rights legislation?
- Explain two key provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Section 4

- (a) What is a nonvoting voter? (b) How is this phenomenon related to so-called "ballot fatigue"?
- Describe three differences between voters and nonvoters.
- Explain how income, education, and age usually affect party affiliation.
- Explain how party identification develops, and how it affects the way individuals vote.

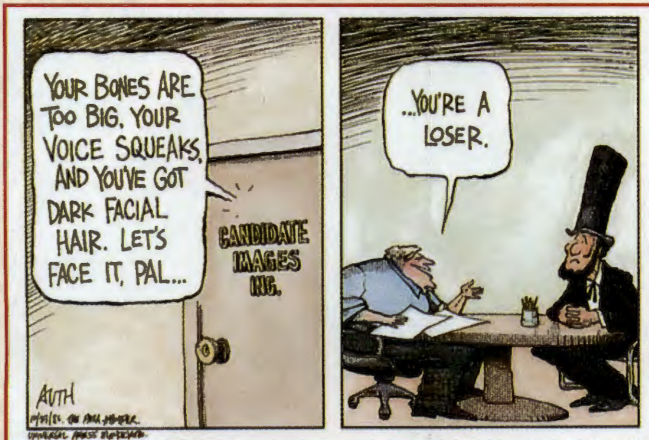
Critical Thinking

Analysis Skills CS1, CS4, HR1, HI1

31. **Applying the Chapter Skill** What criteria would you use in deciding for whom to vote in an election?
32. **Identifying Central Issues** What does the record of the expansion of suffrage tell you about trends in the United States from 1789 to the present?
33. **Demonstrating Reasoned Judgment** Do you think that resident aliens, those who have summer homes in a town, and other tax-paying transients should be allowed to vote in elections that determine how their taxes will be spent? Explain the reasons for your answer.
34. **Testing Conclusions** Some people suggest that we should not try to increase voter turnout in this country because that would only encourage uninformed voting and result in bad choices made for the wrong reasons. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Analyzing Political Cartoons

Use your knowledge of American history and government and this cartoon to answer the questions below.



35. Many factors affect voter behavior. At which factor is the cartoonist poking fun?
36. What do you think the cartoonist thinks of the way the American electorate chooses its leaders today versus 150 years ago?



You Can Make a Difference

Chances are that many of your 18-year-old friends and classmates have not registered to vote. You and your classmates can help other teens make a difference in the political process. Since laws vary from State to State, start by asking your local election officials how and where one registers to vote in your community. Take a poll of students to see how many have already registered. Then, working with school administrators, plan a voter registration drive, using posters and press releases to publicize your campaign.

Participation Activities

Analysis Skills CS1, CS4, HR4

37. **Current Events Watch** There are still places in the world where people are struggling to achieve the right to choose the leaders who govern them. Select one such country, and read about recent efforts to gain or expand suffrage there. Write a brief report on the struggle. Conclude by predicting whether and/or when the struggle for suffrage will succeed.
38. **Time Line Activity** Using information from the chapter, make a time line of the federal laws (including constitutional amendments) that were designed to ensure the suffrage of African Americans. Which, in your opinion, was the most important law? Why?
39. **It's Your Turn** You have been hired to increase voter turnout in local elections in your community. Review the causes for low voter turnout and determine how they might apply to various groups in your community. Prepare a proposal to the election committee. Describe three tactics you would use to increase local voter turnout and explain why they might work. **(Writing a Proposal)**



Standards Monitoring Online

For: Chapter 6 Self-Test Visit: PHSchool.com
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As a final review, take the Magruder's Chapter 6 Self-Test and receive immediate feedback on your answers. The test consists of 20 multiple-choice questions designed to test your understanding of the chapter content.