



A GAME OF CARDS

(60-90 minutes over two days)

OBJECTIVE

Students recognize the progressive empowerment of groups in the United States, while analyzing how the government has increasingly extended civil rights to marginalized groups and broadened opportunities for participation

MATERIALS

Index cards; *Chronology of the Growth of Suffrage* handout.

GET READY

- ✓ Prepare an index card for every student, marking the backs of the cards with one of the following symbols. Make an equal number of cards with each symbol.
 - @ = White male with property
 - % = White male without property
 - ^ = African-American male
 - & = Female
 - * = Native American
 - _ = Immigrant noncitizen
 - + = Apathetic nonvoting citizen
 - O = Citizen too young to vote
- ✓ At this point, do not indicate in any way what the symbols stand for.
- ✓ Make a copy of the *Chronology of the Growth of Suffrage* handout for each student

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ Have students choose a ballot issue to actually decide (for example, selecting a guest speaker or a field trip site).
- ✓ Distribute at random the cards you have prepared; deflect attention away from what is on the backs of the cards, even if asked about it. Say, *Write your name on the front of the card*

and below your name, write your selection (Example "Legislature" or "Court" in the case of selecting a field trip site.)

- ✓ Collect all the cards with @ on them. Count the results and announce that the decision has been made. Report the outcome.
- ✓ Students whose cards were not collected may demand that their cards be counted as well. Think about this, and then collect the ballots marked %. Again, excluded students will complain; respond by collecting cards marked ^. The final time, collect ballots marked & and *, and express that no more votes are included. Tally those you collected and announce the decision.
- ✓ Explain to the students what the symbols represent and that their ballots have been accepted in the order in which the vote was extended to each group in the United States. (Those students with cards marked _, +, and O do not vote because either their symbols represent groups who have not acquired suffrage or groups that have the right to vote and choose not to use it.)
- ✓ Distribute copies of *Chronology of the Growth of Suffrage* for students to read. Encourage your students to read over it carefully.
- ✓ Next, break your class up into groups of four. Give each group a stack of 30 large index cards or 30 half-pieces of paper. Tell the groups to copy the events from the handout onto the index cards/pieces of paper without the dates. (It is very important that your students do not copy the dates because they will be building a timeline without the aid of the handout.)



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(continued)

- ✓ Have each group put their handouts away and create a suffrage timeline by putting the events in chronological order from earliest event to most recent.
- ✓ Go over the sequencing of the events and reward the team that creates a correct timeline first.
- ✓ Finally, assign each of your students one of the dates from the timeline. Have your students conduct further research on these events and write short essays that summarize the impact each event had on the expansion of suffrage. (Encourage your students to support their assignments with primary information.)
- ✓ In the order of the *Chronology of the Growth of Suffrage* timeline, have each of your students read aloud their event and essay.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *Why were groups so anxious to gain the right to vote? Did the franchise bring them what they hoped it would? Why or why not?*
- ★ *To the students with the + cards: What message would you give to the class about your experience? (You can ask any of the groups to share their experience in this activity.)*
- ★ *Will additional groups ever be given the vote in the United States? Why or why not?*
- ★ *Were you surprised by the dates of some of the events? If so, what surprised you?*
- ★ *Was it difficult to create the suffrage timeline? What made it challenging?*
- ★ *What did you learn about the event you researched that really interested you?*
- ★ *Do you think it's possible that years from now there will be new events to add to the timeline? If yes, what do you think are some possible events?*

SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT:

- ★ *Have students complete the essay identifying an issue related to the denial of civil rights to a particular minority group and explain how at least one branch of the federal government helped to extend civil rights or opportunities for participation to that group of people.*



CHRONOLOGY OF THE GROWTH OF SUFFRAGE

- 1776** At the time of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the right to vote is based on property ownership. Suffrage is reserved primarily for white, male Protestants over the age of 21. There are a few instances of African-Americans owning property.
- 1787** With the drafting of the Constitution, states are given the power to regulate their own suffrage laws and they favor white, male property owners.
- 1789** George Washington is elected president by the Electoral College. Only six percent of the entire population is involved in the election.
- 1791** Vermont, the 14th state, moves the country along with a pioneering spirit as they declare all adult, white males, irrespective of property ownership or religious preference, can vote.
- 1816** Twenty-five years later, Indiana, Illinois, and Alabama join the Union and establish voting rules similar to Vermont's. By 1821 Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York follow suit. Between 1820 and 1830 the voting electorate doubles. Voter population increase is an impetus to the development of political parties.
- 1842** Rhode Island does not join most other states with reformed voting rights and continues to require property ownership to qualify to vote. This issue causes much controversy, and rival state governments are elected in Providence and Newport. Thomas W. Door begins a movement known as the Door Rebellion which is victorious and forces Rhode Island to adopt a new constitution in 1843. This provides broader suffrage provisions.
- 1848** African-Americans and women are still subject to discriminating practices at the polls and no significant advancement for their cause has occurred, even though reformers have long voiced opposition to the white male only vote. The plight of women is denounced by Elizabeth Cady Stanton at a gathering of 100 women's rights advocates in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. She reads a proclamation that "all men and women are created equal" and the convention passes several resolutions which call for women being given the vote. The Women's Suffrage Movement has begun.
- 1865** A Civil Rights Act defines citizenship and prohibits discrimination based on race. However, President Andrew Johnson vetoes the bill, stating that it favors the rights of African-Americans over whites. The Republican Congress overrides the veto, hoping to lure the vote of former slaves.
- 1868** Slave states allow no African-American person to vote. After the Civil War, lawmakers enact the **14th Amendment** to the Constitution granting citizenship to African-Americans and permitting them to vote. However, state officials still attempt to deny them this right.
- 1869** The National American Women Suffrage Association is founded, with Susan B. Anthony as president.
- 1870** The **15th Amendment** to the Constitution is ratified, providing African-Americans the right to vote and prohibiting state and local governments from denying that right.
- 1872** Victoria Woodhull contends that under the provisions of the 14th and 15th Amendments, women are citizens of the United States and should be allowed to vote.



CHRONOLOGY OF THE GROWTH OF SUFFRAGE CONTINUED

- 1872** Susan B. Anthony votes and is arrested for violating a federal law that forbids the votes of confederates or traitors.
- 1875** The Supreme Courts rules in *Minor v. Happersett* that suffrage is not coexistent with the right to citizenship granted in the 14th Amendment, and that the extent of women's rights is up to state legislatures.
- 1876** Poll taxes, grandfather clauses, and literacy tests are introduced in many southern states. These measures are designed to restrict the ability of African-Americans to register and vote.
- 1890** Wyoming becomes a state and is the first to provide suffrage for women in its constitution.
- 1913** The **17th Amendment** to the Constitution is ratified. It allows popular election of U.S. senators. No new group receives the right to vote, but the voting power is expanded.
- 1920** The **19th Amendment** to the Constitution guarantees suffrage for women.
- 1940** Native Americans are made citizens by an act of Congress. However, in New Mexico and Arizona, Native Americans cannot vote because they do not pay property taxes.
- 1943** Georgia lowers its voting age from 21 to 18 in state and local elections.
- 1947** Miguel Trijillo, a Native American and former Marine, wins a suit against New Mexico for not allowing him to vote. Since Native Americans pay most forms of taxes, they are subject to taxation without representation. New Mexico and Arizona are required to give the vote to all their Native American citizens.
- 1957** By provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1957, the Justice Department may punish interference or disruption of protection for African-American voters.
- 1960** The Civil Rights Act of 1960 allows courts to appoint federal referees to protect voting rights. Obstruction of these court orders is a federal offense.
- 1961** The **23rd Amendment** to the Constitution allows residents of the District of Columbia to vote for president and vice-president. Until this amendment, residents were unable to vote since the District is not a state.
- 1964** The Civil Rights Act of 1964 guarantees the right to register to vote without fear of reprisal.
- 1964** The **24th Amendment** to the Constitution guarantees that no person can be denied the right to vote due to an inability to pay a tax prior to voting. The "poll tax" is now considered unconstitutional.
- 1965** Martin Luther King, Jr. leads 25,000 people on a march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, to dramatize the need for more voting rights.
- 1965** The Voting Rights Act is amended to ban the use of literacy tests, poll taxes, and other barriers to voting.
- 1971** The **26th Amendment** to the Constitution lowers the voting age to 18.