

Lesson 15:

Expanding Voting Rights

Teacher Version

Essential Question

How has the U.S. Constitution expanded voting rights over time?

Lesson Bridge

Review Lesson 13: Colonial Forms of Political Participation

- Voting
- Jury Service
- Militia Service
- Leadership and Public Service

Review Lesson 14: Citizen Participation Today

- Citizens participate in government in many ways today, including Jury Service
- Voting is another important way citizens participate

Bridge Question:

- Has everyone always had the right to vote?

Hook Question

Who can vote in the United States today?

Key Vocabulary

Introduce and clarify the following terms:

- Suffrage
- Amendment
- Poll Tax
- Voting Rights Act
- Political Participation

Reading and Text Coding

AL = Amendment or Law

B = Barrier to Voting

E = Expanded Voting Rights

I = Important Information

- Teacher Modeling—I Do
- Guided Practice—We Do
- Independent Practice—You Do

Directed Note-Taking Graphic Organizer

Category	Evidence (paragraph #)	What this evidence shows
Fifteenth Amendment		
Nineteenth Amendment		
Twenty-fourth Amendment		
Twenty-sixth Amendment		
Voting Rights Act		

Video Segment (10 minutes)

Video: [James Wilson](#)

Teacher Prompt: “In today's text, we learned that when the U.S. Constitution was written, voting rights were limited, and the states decided who could vote. Over time, constitutional amendments and important laws expanded voting rights so that more Americans could participate in the political process. Now we are going to meet James Wilson, one of America's Founding Fathers, who believed that government receives its authority from the people. He played a critical role in giving the people the power to vote (called popular sovereignty), choosing one main leader, the president, to run the country, and using a special group of voters to help choose the president (known as the Electoral College). As you listen and watch, think about how James Wilson's ideas connect to expanding voting rights and increasing participation in self-government.”

Note: The biography and video introduce students to James Wilson and his belief that government derives its authority from the consent of the people. The text remains the primary source for understanding how the U.S. Constitution expanded voting rights over time.

Video Segment (10 minutes)...cont'd

- ***Students complete Handout #4 while watching.***
- ***Teacher prompts (after video and biography):***
 - "Why did James Wilson believe government should receive its authority from the people?"
 - "How do James Wilson's ideas connect to the expansion of voting rights over time?"
 - "How did James Wilson help shape the Constitution?"
 - "Why is voting an important way for citizens to participate in self-government?"

Interpretive Discussion

- ***Teacher Prompt:*** “Which amendment or law do you think resulted in the greatest expansion of voting rights?”
- ***Students discuss:***
 - Fifteenth Amendment
 - Nineteenth Amendment
 - Twenty-fourth Amendment
 - Twenty-sixth Amendment
 - Voting Rights Act

Interpretive Discussion...cont'd

- ***Teacher Prompt (after students talk):*** “Today's text showed how constitutional amendments and laws expanded voting rights over time. James Wilson believed that government receives its authority from the people. Based on what you've read and learned, which amendment or law do you think did the most to make that idea a reality?”

Debate: Which amendment or law resulted in the greatest expansion of voting rights? (10-12 minutes)

Position statements:

Position A: The 15th Amendment

Position B: The 19th Amendment

Position C: The 24th Amendment

Position D: The 26th Amendment

Position E: The Voting Rights Act of 1965

Note: The Directed Note-Taking categories provide evidence students may use to support any position.

Debate: Which amendment or law resulted in the greatest expansion of voting rights? (10-12 minutes)...cont'd

The Debate Question

Which amendment or law resulted in the greatest expansion of voting rights?

Debate Directions

Choose the amendment or law you believe resulted in the greatest expansion of voting rights. Explain why you believe it best reflects the author's message. Support your position with evidence from the text, the James Wilson biography, or the video.

Final Writing Prompt

Revolutionary Writers Essay: James Wilson and Voting Rights

James Wilson, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, believed that lawful government is founded on the consent of the governed.

Which amendment or law do you believe resulted in the greatest expansion of voting rights?

Students should write a paragraph that:

- states which amendment or law they believe resulted in the greatest expansion of voting rights.
- explains why they chose that amendment or law.
- uses evidence from the text, biography, and video.
- explains how the amendment or law expanded voting rights.

Final Writing Prompt...cont'd

Important: This essay is the primary assessment for Lesson 15 and also serves as one of nine potential student essays for the FIREWORKS250 Revolutionary Writers Essay Competition for students with teachers participating in cohort 2. Participating teachers should save all student essays. Students will select their best essay at the end of the year to submit for the competition.

Closure (5 minutes)

- **Teacher prompt:** “Today we learned that the U.S. Constitution expanded voting rights over time through constitutional amendments and important laws. We focused on how the 15th, 19th, 24th, and 26th Amendments, along with the Voting Rights Act, helped more Americans participate in our democracy.”
- **Turn-and-Talk:** “Which amendment or law do you think resulted in the greatest expansion of voting rights? Why?”
- **Exit Ticket:** “Which amendment or law expanded voting rights, and how did it help more Americans participate in democracy?”