

# Our Democracy: The Right to Vote

## Recommended books



- [The Ballot Box Battle](#) by Emily Arnold McCully (ages 6-9)
- [Because They Marched: The People's Campaign for Voting Rights that Changed America](#) by Russell Freedman (ages 9-12)
- [Bold & Brave: Ten Heroes Who Won Women the Right to Vote](#) by Kirsten Gillibrand (ages 6-9)
- [Chasing Freedom: The Life Journeys of Harriet Tubman and Susan B. Anthony](#) by Nikki Grimes (ages 9-12)
- [Child of the Civil Rights Movement](#) by Paula Young Shelton (ages 6-9)
- [Civil Rights Pioneer: A Story About Mary Church Terrell](#) by Gwenyth Swain (ages 9-12)
- [Elizabeth Leads the Way](#) by Tanya Lee Stone (ages 6-9)
- [Elizabeth Started All the Trouble](#) by Doreen Rappaport (ages 6-9)
- [Equality's Call: The Story of Voting Rights in America](#) by Deborah Diesen (ages 6-9)
- [Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to the Ballot Box](#) by Michael Bandy and Eric Stein (ages 6-9)

*More books on the next page >*

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- [Ida B. Wells: Let the Truth Be Told](#) by Walter Dean Myers (ages 6-9)
- [Let the Children March](#) by Monica Clark-Robinson (ages 6-9)
- [Lillian's Right to Vote: A Celebration of the Voting Rights Act of 1965](#) by Jonah Winter (ages 6-9)
- [March: Book One](#) by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin (ages 9-12)
- [Marching with Aunt Susan: Susan B. Anthony and the Fight for Women's Suffrage](#) by Claire Rudolph Murray (ages 6-9)
- [Martin's Big Words: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.](#) by Doreen Rappaport (ages 6-9)
- [Miss Paul and the President: The Creative Campaign for Women's Right to Vote](#) by Dean Robbins (ages 6-9)
- [My Name Is Truth: The Life of Sojourner Truth](#) by Ann Turner (ages 6-9)
- [A Picture Book of Martin Luther King, Jr.](#) by David Adler (ages 6-9)
- [Preaching to the Chickens: The Story of Young John Lewis](#) by Jabari Asim (ages 6-9)
- [Susan B. Anthony](#) by Alexandra Wallner (ages 6-9)
- [Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer](#) by Carole Boston Weatherford (ages 9-12)
- [We March](#) by Shane Evans (ages 3-6)
- [You Want Women to Vote, Lizzie Stanton?](#) by Jean Fritz (ages 9-12)
- [The Youngest Marcher: The Story of Audrey Faye Hendricks, a Young Civil Rights Activist](#) by Cynthia Levinson (ages 6-9)

# Activity: Celebrating Heroes Who Fought for the Right to Vote

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## Get kids thinking

On June 21, 1788, the Constitution became the official framework of the government of the U.S. It explains how our government will be set up and run. The Constitution creates the three branches of government and gives them the power to govern. It also protects the citizens of the United States and guarantees their basic rights.

For a quick overview of the Constitution, kids can watch these videos:

- [The Constitution for Kids](#)
- [The Constitution](#) (School House Rock)

Not all U.S. citizens were granted the right to vote by the 1788 Constitution. At that time, about two-thirds of white men were given this powerful right. Blacks and women had to fight for the right to vote.

There are three important additions (Amendments) to our Constitution and one important federal law that guarantee and expand voting rights:

- **15th Amendment (1870)**: The right for Black men to vote
- **19th Amendment (1920)**: The right for women to vote
- **26th Amendment (1971)**: The voting age was lowered from 21 to 18
- **Voting Rights Act\* (1965)**: Prohibits racial discrimination in voting (such as poll taxes). The Voting Rights Act also guaranteed the voting rights of Native Americans, whether or not they live on reservations.

\*Note: In 2013, the Supreme Court decided that a key part of the law could no longer be used. That key part required jurisdictions with a history of discrimination to get federal approval for any proposed changes in voting procedures to make sure that the changes would not harm minority voters.

## Our Democracy: We Vote!

# Activity: Celebrating Heroes Who Fought for the Right to Vote

Who fought for voting rights for women and African Americans? Encourage kids to learn about some of the heroes who worked long and hard for this right that we sometimes take for granted. Some risked their lives during the Civil Rights Movement fighting for voting rights. Here are some heroes that kids can explore through books, research, and activities:

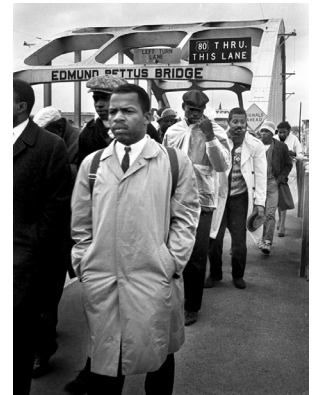
- Susan B. Anthony
- Nannie Helen Burroughs
- Fannie Lou Hamer
- Martin Luther King, Jr.
- John Lewis
- Alice Paul
- Jeannette Rankin
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton
- Lucy Stone
- Mary Church Terrell
- Sojourner Truth
- Ida B. Wells



Suffragists



Ida B. Wells



John Lewis



# Activity: Celebrating Heroes Who Fought for the Right to Vote

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## Let's get started!

Read some of the recommended picture book biographies together with the kids, and let them explore some of the books on their own.

### Ask the kids:

- Which voting rights activists are you interested in?
- What were the times like when they grew up?
- How did they become involved in speaking out and fighting for voting rights?
- What obstacles did they face? What do you do when you face a challenge or obstacle?
- Did they need to be brave? Can you think of examples? Can you think of times when you needed to be brave to accomplish something?
- How do you think they felt when the right to vote was finally won? How do you feel when you've worked really hard on something and you are successful?
- If you could have dinner with your person, what questions would you ask?

Have each child choose one voting rights hero to learn more about. Help the kids find more information about each activist, through books, Internet research, and television documentaries. Older kids can engage in more research independently.

### Here are some online museum sources to explore:

- [Five African American Suffragists You Should Know](#) (National Museum of African American History and Culture)
- [National Voting Rights Museum and Institute](#)
- [The Right to Vote](#) (Library of Congress)

# Activity: Celebrating Heroes Who Fought for the Right to Vote

- [Untold Stories of Black Women in the Suffrage Movement](#) (video)
- [Votes for Women](#) (Smithsonian)
- [Voting](#) (National Museum of African American History and Culture)
- [Votes for Women: A Portrait of Persistence](#) (Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, archived on Google Arts and Culture)
- [Women's History Online Exhibits](#) (National Women's History Museum)

## Once the kids have finished their explorations, you can try one of these activities:

- Create illustrated **hero cards**, with a portrait on one side and some facts about your hero on the other side. You can use the template cards on the next page, or create your own with blank index cards or heavy-weight paper.
- Create a **portrait of each activist** (include their name and dates). Frame and display the portraits in a "Hall of Heroes." Or, combine the portraits with additional information about each hero into a book or ebook (PDF format).
- Create an illustrated voting rights timeline on a large sheet of Kraft paper or create a multimedia timeline using an online tool. See this list from Common Sense Education of [timeline makers and templates](#).
- Write a thank you card to your hero.



**HERO**

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