Voter Suppression & Voter Rights

In the United States, the right to vote is a fundamental, but contested component of our democracy. In this month's newsletter we highlight two books that focus on the struggle and fight to secure voting rights for all people. Although historically marginalized groups have organized to dismantle discriminatory voting laws, many of the gains made for generational access to the right to vote have been jeopardized by voter suppression, obstacles in voter registration, and voter identification requirements. We selected books that focused on the importance of sustaining voting rights to ensure a healthy and thriving democracy, while also acknowledging lessons learned from marginalizing the voices of people of color in the voting rights movement. The resource list we provide is meant to cultivate an intersectional perspective on voting rights that captures the nuances within the history of voting rights in the United States.

"In the unceasing ebb and flow of justice and oppression we must all dig channels as best we may, that at the propitious moment somewhat of the swelling tide may be conducted to the barren places of life." - Jane Addams
Older Reader

*With Courage and Cloth: Winning the Fight for a Woman's Right to Vote by Ann Bausum (2004) Scholastic*

With Courage and Cloth focuses on the period of the women's suffrage movement from 1913 to 1920 when the 19th Amendment was passed. The women featured in this book were smart organizers and advocates who faced violence and mistreatment during their protests. They used radical tactics to address issues that impacted a population of women's rights, but were not always inclusive of issues that impacted women of color. Through impeccable documentation and graphic archival photographs, the author adds another rich and personal layer to the history of voting rights in America.

Classroom Connection

The interactive graphic about women's voting rights was created using Thinglink. Educators can integrate this app or web-based platform in their lessons to have students create content in response to key ideas from the book that inform their understanding of women’s voting rights in the United States. This example uses videos, timelines, images, and readings to expand ideas about the women's suffrage movement that compliment or complicate information presented in the book.

Click on the image to the right and it will take you to take you to the interactive version of the Thinglink.
Younger Reader Book Review


**Penguin Random House**

So many people throughout the United States' history have fought for the right to vote. Americans of color, especially Black Americans, have been disproportionately discriminated against when it comes to voting. This is the story of Lillian, based on a woman from Pittsburgh born in 1908. The tale walks alongside Lillian as she climbs a hill to the voting booth. There are flashbacks to enslavement, Reconstruction, poll taxes, women's suffrage, the Jim Crow era, and the Civil Rights Movement. This book provides the context and history leading to Lillian’s vote, the people who resisted and fought to make sure she could use her voice.

Classroom Connection

The 2nd graders at PS 142 in New York City read this book with their teacher each year around election time. Lillian’s Right to Vote offers a personal narrative for kids to connect to as well as critical context of what it means to vote in the United States. Children ask questions like “Who allows other people to vote?”, “Who’s not allowed to vote?”, “What do we vote for?”. Students vote with their feet during a game of “Agree, Disagree, Unsure” about their opinions on everything to do with voting. They consider the repercussions of excluding formerly or currently incarcerated folks, they think about the age limit for votes, and kids debate about how voting is done and whether or not it’s accessible to everyone.
Theme Resources & Connections

**Resources to use with Children:**
Brainpop Video: [Voting](#)

**Evolution of Voting Rights in the US**
National Park Services: [Black women and voting rights](#)

NewsELA
- [Recalling an Era When the Color of Your Skin Meant You Paid to Vote](#)
- [Prisoner Rights Group Hopes to Ease Laws Preventing Felons from Voting](#)

**Resources for Educators:**
ACLU: [Voting Rights](#)
Asian American Legal Defense Fund: [Voting Rights and Democracy](#)
Native American Rights Fund: [Voting Rights](#)
New York Times: [Voting Rights Act](#)
PSB Media Collection: [Voting Rights Act of 1965](#)
Ruth Bader Ginsberg’s [Dissent](#) on VRA (2013)
[Women’s March](#)
[Southern Poverty Law Center](#)

---

We would love to know how you are engaging students with these titles in your classrooms and schools. Please share artifacts using the hashtag #JACBA
Upcoming Themes

December 2019: Kids as Agents of Social Change

Older Reader: *The Color of My Words* by Lynn Joseph
Younger Reader: *Brave Girl: Clara and the Shirtwaist Makers’ Strike of 1909*, written by Michelle Markel and illustrated by Melissa Sweet

Submit your curriculum connections for one of the books in the upcoming themed issues. Send materials with brief 1 paragraph explanation to price-dennis@tc.edu

Contributing Editors
Contributing editors: Noelle Mapes (PS 142), Detra Price-Dennis (Teachers College, Columbia), and Emily Smith-Buster (Austin Independent School District)