

Name _____

Date _____



Voting

Today we're going to talk about voting...in just a minute.

Voting is a method by which groups of people make collective decisions. It is a cornerstone of democratic governments, in which citizens vote to have a say in how their government operates. The origins of democracy can be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome.

In the US, voting is most often associated with presidential elections every four years, although elections take place every year to determine officeholders at the federal, state, and local levels.

A citizen's right to vote is guaranteed in several places throughout the Constitution. At first, the federal government let states decide on voter qualifications, and it was mostly white male landowners who got to vote. Over the years, Constitutional amendments secured the right to vote for white women, Black Americans, and others.

Throughout US history, voting rights have expanded to include previously excluded groups. But at the same time, there have been continued challenges and instances of voter suppression. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 banned suppression tactics like literacy tests. But in 2013, the Supreme Court ruled that states no longer have to get preclearance from the federal government to change their voting laws—so the protections of the Voting Rights Act can no longer be enforced.

Why are fair and free elections so important in a democratic government?