Resource Guide: African Americans and the Vote

Thank you for your interest in participating in NOPL's 2020 Black History Month poster contest with your classroom! In hopes of making it as easy as possible to bring this important topic to your classrooms, we've compiled the following guide to provide you with resources you can share with your students or incorporate into lessons.

Books specifically about African Americans voting:


- *Granddaddy’s turn: a journey to the ballot box* by Michael S. Bandy & James Ransom (2015). Roughly for ages 6-9


Books about the Selma to Montgomery voting rights marches:


Video Resources on African Americans and the Vote
Making Tough Choices with Kid President. In this 5-minute video, YouTube star Kid President (Robby Novak) discusses how to make tough choices and briefly discusses voting. While not a history of the Voting Rights Act, this video could be used to engage younger students in the topic of voting and making decisions. Best for elementary schoolers.

Common - Voting 101: The Voting Rights Act. In this brief video narrated by rapper Common, a short primer on the Voting Rights Act is made engaging through eye-catching graphics and a quick pace. Best for middle schoolers and high schoolers.

Fighting for Voter Rights. In this 26-minute video, activists in Ohio show what defending people's right to vote looks like on the ground during the 2016 presidential election. Available through Kanopy with a library account. Best for high schoolers.

African Americans Recall 1960s Fight for Voting Rights. In this 3-minute video from Voice of America, Voting Rights activism and activists are shown using historical and modern footage. Best for middle schoolers and high schoolers.

Podcast Episodes

Shut Out - Episode 1: You Flunked. This 25-minute episode of Shut Out discusses the techniques used in the Jim Crow era to disenfranchise Black voters, including poll taxes and literacy tests. Best for middle schoolers and high schoolers.

Lesson Plans

Classroom Resources from Teaching Tolerance. Lesson plans, texts, and more video resources for a variety of ages.

To Vote or Not to Vote. A series of videos and accompanying lesson plans from PBS.