

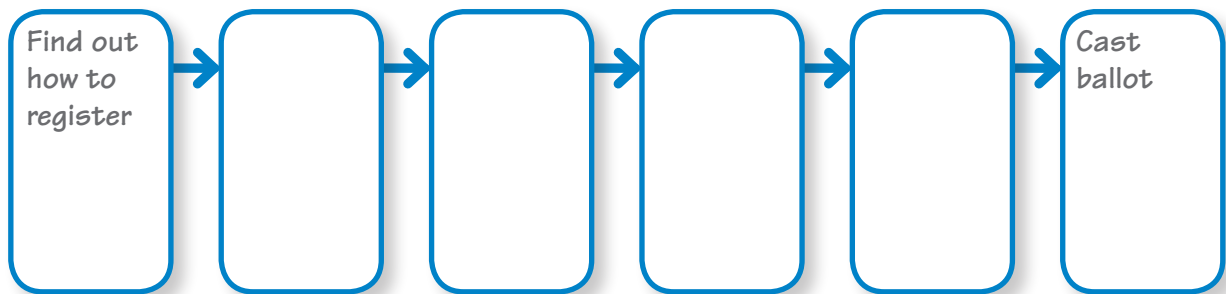
6 Voters and Voter Behavior

Warmup



Why do voters act as they do?

- A.** Think about all the steps that might be involved with casting a ballot in an election. What steps must a voter take in order to carry out this task responsibly? Identify as many steps as you can and place them in the flowchart below.



- B.** What are some of the factors that might prevent a person from casting a vote in an election?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

- C.** Voting in an election requires that the voter choose between one of two or more candidates. What factors influence how a person votes in an election? List as many factors as you can think of here.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Exploration

I. The Right to Vote

➔ Find Out

A. When the United States came into being, voting rights were basically limited to white men who owned property. Using your print or online textbook or other sources, identify key developments in the expansion of voting rights. Record these events in the space provided, then connect them to the blank time line below.

1800 1850 1900 1950 2000

👤 What Do You Think?

B. Based on the information above, how would you describe the general attitude about voting rights and how it has changed over the history of the United States?

 **What Do You Think?**

C. Why do you think the nation has expanded voting rights? What does this suggest about the importance of voting rights in the American system of government?

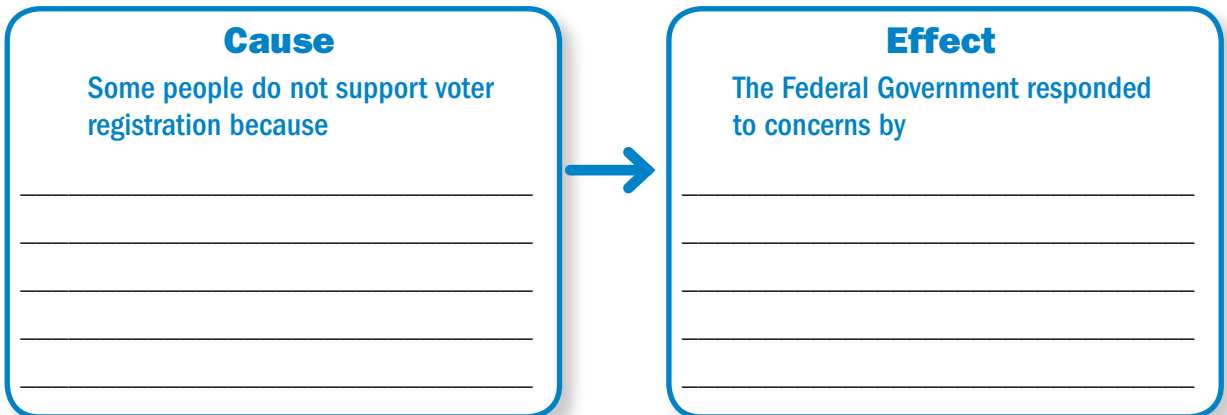
II. Voter Qualifications

 **Find Out**

A. Using your print or online textbook or other sources, identify the requirements that a person wishing to vote today may have to meet. Also list the reasons that an otherwise eligible voter may be disqualified.

Possible Voter Qualifications	Possible Reasons for Voter Disqualification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • •

B. Using your print or online textbook or other sources, identify the common concerns about voter registration in the United States, and what has been done in recent years to address those concerns.



→ Find Out

C. Another voting-related controversy in the United States is a move by some States to require identification for voting. Use your print or online textbook or other sources to learn about voter ID. Then summarize the two sides of the issue below:

For Voter ID

Against Voter ID

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

👤 What Do You Think?

D. Based on what you have recorded above, what is the balance that the federal and State governments must strike when trying to establish voting requirements for the electorate?

III. The Struggle for Civil Rights

→ Find Out

A. Using your print or online textbook or other sources, fill in the chart below with information about the long struggle for African American voting rights.

<p>Cause</p> <p>15th Amendment— African American men win voting rights</p>	<p>Effect</p> <p><i>Some States responded by . . .</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Cause</p>	<p>Effect</p> <p><i>African Americans and others respond by . . .</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Cause</p>	<p>Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • •
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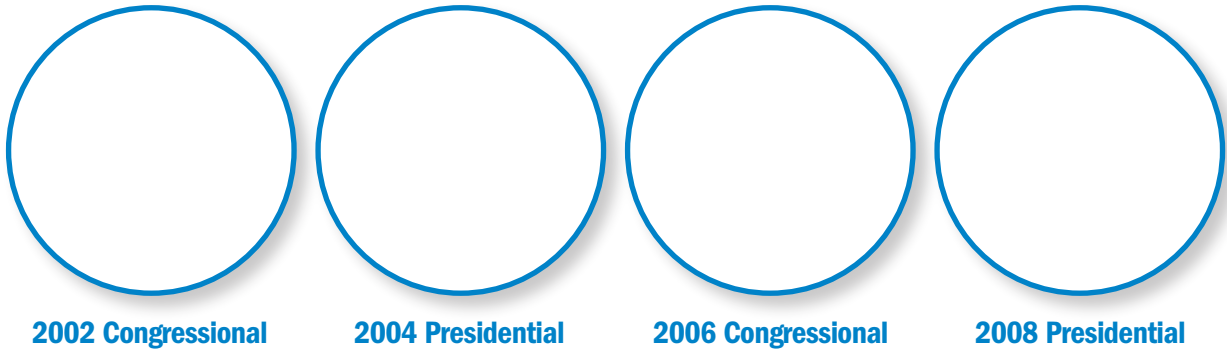
What Do You Think?

B. In the larger sense, the long struggle for civil rights was about human dignity and freedom. But more specifically, it was about voting rights. On a separate sheet of paper, write a paragraph that explains what this episode in United States history suggests about the importance of voting rights. Then address the following question: Despite the long and difficult struggle for voting rights, why do some people choose not to vote?

IV. Voter Behavior

Find Out

A. Use your print or online textbook or other sources to find data about voter turnout in the past four national elections. Use the information you have found to complete the circle graphs below.



B. Voter turnout is low in the United States compared to many other democratic nations. Use your print or online textbook or other sources to find some possible reasons why millions of people do not take part in elections. List the possible reasons below.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

 **What Do You Think?**

C. Suppose you were talking to an eligible voter who was planning not to take part in an upcoming election. Make an argument in favor of taking part in elections that addresses some of the possible reasons for not voting.

 **Find Out**

D. Experts who study political behavior have identified patterns in the voting behavior of the American people. Not every individual’s behavior is predictable, but there are some factors that relate highly with certain voting behaviors—who votes, and which parties he or she supports. Identify some of the key factors that influence voter behavior and list them in the chart below.

Factors That Influence Voter Behavior	
Sociological Factors	Psychological Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • •

 **What Do You Think?**

E. Suppose you were preparing to vote in an upcoming election. What are the issues and factors that you would consider in deciding your vote? Which factors seem unimportant? Write a brief summary of your decision-making process.

Apply What You've Learned Activity

Use this worksheet to answer the Apply What You've Learned questions in your print or online textbook, and interview a voting-age adult in your community. Use the space below to summarize the information you collect.

Part I—Qualifying to Vote

Registration requirements

- Where _____
- When _____

Residency requirements

Identification requirements

Basis for voter disqualification

- Mental competence standard: _____
- Rules if dishonorably discharged from military: _____
- Rules for voting for felons: _____

Where do you vote in your community? _____

Part II—Voter Attitudes

- (a) _____
- (b) _____
- (c) _____

A. Did your interview subject know correctly how to register to vote in your community? Explain.

B. Do you agree with your subject's suggestions for improving voting procedures? Explain.

C. Do you think that the process for voting should be made easier or more difficult, or should it be left the same? Explain your answer.

Essay



Why do voters act as they do?

Few things are so closely linked to our understanding of democracy than the act of voting. The effort to secure and expand voting rights has been at the heart of some of this nation's fiercest struggles. As you read the quotations below, think about the meaning of the franchise to the American people.

So long as I do not firmly and irrevocably possess the right to vote I do not possess myself. I cannot make up my mind—it is made up for me. I cannot live as a democratic citizen, observing the laws I have helped to enact—I can only submit to the edict of others.

— *Martin Luther King, Jr., Give Us the Ballot, We Will Transform the South, May 17, 1957*

Under every view of the subject, it seems indispensable that the mass of the citizens should not be without a voice in making the laws which they are to obey, and in choosing the magistrates who are to administer them.

— *James Madison at the Constitutional Convention, 1787*



What Do You Think?

What is your opinion? Write a response to the Essential Question, **Why do voters act as they do?** Consider your thoughts on the quotations above, the Guiding Questions in your textbook, and the activities you have completed in your Journal. See page 219 for a rubric for writing an Essential Question essay.



Don't Forget

Your answer to this question will help you think about the Unit 2 Essential Question: **In what ways should people participate in public affairs?**