



## Take Action: Why Vote? Your Place in the History of Voting

### Why Vote?

**Directions:** Watch Music Video: Yellopain, My Vote Don't Count (<https://bit.ly/2y4cx06>) OR Read Lyrics: Yellopain, My Vote Don't Count (<https://bit.ly/2SOFZyz>)


Answer the following questions:

Questions	Your Response
1. What have you heard about voting from friends and family?	
2. Does that make you think of voting as related to your life or unrelated to your life?	
3. Based on Yellopain's explanation, why is it important to vote? Use the following quote from the video for reference: <i>"We gotta focus on the Legislative Branch, yeah, they the ones that make the laws. Yeah they the ones write how much food stamp money you get on the card...See their election every two years but we don't ever even go to those. The congress, they can raise minimum wage, but don't even really know it though."</i>	

## Timeline: A Brief History of Voting Rights in the U.S.

**Directions:** Read through **Timeline:A Brief History of Voting Rights In The US** and answer the questions.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF VOTING RIGHTS IN THE US



**1776**  
Voting eligibility was left up to states to decide. At this point only **land owning white men** were allowed to vote.

**1856**  
**All white men** were allowed to vote, regardless of land ownership.

**1870**  
15th Amendment is passed and grants **all US Citizen who are men**, regardless of race the right to vote. However, states begin to enact barriers, such as poll taxes and literacy tests, to keep African American men from voting.

**1920**  
With the passing of the 19th amendment, **women** are granted the right to vote, this however excludes Native Americans as they are not yet considered US citizens. African Americans still face state imposed barriers to voting.

**1924**  
The Indian Citizenship Act grants **Native Americans** US Citizenship, which thereby grants them the right to vote, however, many states enact barriers to keep them from the polls, such as requiring standard addresses in order to register.

**1964**  
Congress passes the 24th amendment which bans poll taxes and other fees in order to vote.

**1965**  
Congress passes the **Voting Rights Act**, removing legal barriers that kept people of color from voting.

**1971**  
After much student activism and protests around the Vietnam war, the 26th Amendment passes, **lowering the voting age from 21 to 18.**

**1993**  
The **National Voter Registration Act**, making it possible to register to vote at DMVs and public assistance centers.

**2013**  
The Supreme Court case **Shelby County v. Holder** struck down part of the 1965 Voting Rights Act which allowed the Department of Justice to review and ensure that any changes in voting procedures made by certain towns, counties, and states did not create barriers to voting for minority voters.

**Present**  
What does voting look like in your state? Does your state have any barriers in place that keep certain communities from voting?

### Questions

In what year did women gain the right to vote?

Over time, has voting become available to more or fewer people in the United States?

What have been some barriers to growth?

### Key Terms

**Advocacy** is the act of supporting and taking action for a cause.

To be **Disenfranchised** is to be prevented from voting

A **Poll Tax** is a fee that an individual has to pay prior to voting.

A **Literacy Test** is a test that determines one's ability to read and write.

**Voting Rights** are a person's ability to choose elected officials or, at the state and local levels, participate in questions placed on the ballot